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Plate-less? Kuwait says 'no pass'

Traffic crackdown nets nearly 20,000 violations in one week

By Munif Nair

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 16: The General Traffic Department announced the results of campaigns conducted in various locations from June 8 to 14, 2026.

The campaigns resulted in the issuance of 19,938 traffic citations, the arrest of 51 wanted individuals, the handling of 2,736 miscellaneous vio-

lations, the arrest of 27 individuals who violated residency laws, the impoundment of 16 wanted vehicles, the arrest of one person without identification, the arrest of six individuals in an abnormal state, and the referral of 11 juveniles to the Juvenile Prosecution.

The campaigns also resulted in the impoundment of 419 vehicles and 21 motorcycles, and the detention of 46 individuals at the Traffic Detention Center. Authorities responded to 1,097 traffic accidents, including 160 accidents that resulted in casualties.

Meanwhile, traffic officers arrested a citizen for driving a vehicle without a plate number.

A security official informed the newspaper that the highway patrol officers got suspicious when they noticed the vehicle without a plate number. They stopped the car and checked the documents of the driver, leading to the discovery of a violation that necessitated legal measures, such as referral of the driver to the traffic police station and impoundment of the car.

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Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

Encourage entrepreneurs, inventors, and innovators

THE greatest successes are built on a strong idea, effective management, and unwavering determination. This summarizes the journeys of leading global business figures.

Countries do not focus on the nationality of an innovator; rather, they focus on what that individual and their company can contribute to the nation.

Jack Ma, a pioneer of innovation, was once a humble teacher in China who faced many hardships throughout his life. Today, he is considered one of the most important innovators in the business world, having owned several successful companies.

Japanese businessman Toshiya Kakiyuki founded Mirairo in 2009. Today, his net worth is estimated at approximately \$23 billion. Having a disability did not prevent him from innovating and achieving success.

Countries invest in innovators who represent added value. The United States is home to many entrepreneurs who started with modest capital and became driving forces in the economy, such as Elon Musk, Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg, and many others who have enriched the American experience and contributed to major projects, some of which have changed the face of the world.

Some Gulf countries began years ago to establish a development path based on utilizing foreign expertise. These individuals founded successful projects that served the local economy and became valuable assets.

Today, the world is witnessing significant changes. Countries are racing against time to build soft power based on a strong economy that serves the future and nurtures generations capable of greater innovation in the business world.

In Kuwait, there are many such individuals waiting for an opportunity. It is the government's responsibility to identify

and support them so that their projects succeed, rather than them leaving Kuwait for other countries that would benefit from their expertise.

Kuwait has several companies operating in partnership with the private sector. These companies could serve as incubators for such innovators. The country needs to establish a sustainable development project aimed at placing the national economy on par with developed economies and enhancing Kuwait's competitiveness within the region.

Several projects have been suspended for a long time. The argument, while valid, was that the National Assembly was hindering project implementation. Social pressures were indeed exerted on ministers and under-secretaries, which affected progress. However, this argument is no longer valid as there is no longer an obstructive National Assembly.

On the contrary, there is strict oversight that spares no one and firmly confronts any attempt at corruption. The current era has placed everyone on equal footing before the law.

I wonder why major projects have stalled. We have suffered from traffic congestion for a long time, while successive governments have not taken steps to complete the Kuwait Metro project.

The metro project has yielded significant benefits since its implementation in the UAE and Saudi Arabia.

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@Ahmedaljarallah

Ahmed aljarallah

ahmed@aljarallah.com



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Ministry of Defense photo
Kuwait's Defense Minister Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Sabah in a group photo with Chief of the General Staff Khaled Al-Shuraiaan, Deputy Chief of Staff Major General Pilot Sabah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, senior military commanders, and newly commissioned female officers during a ceremony marking a milestone in the Kuwaiti Armed Forces.

Defense Minister calls women's military integration a 'qualitative addition'

Kuwait marks milestone with women in armed service

KUWAIT CITY, June 16, (KUNA): Kuwait's Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Sabah said on Monday that the integration of women into the Armed Forces represents a qualitative addition to the military institution.

The remarks came in a statement issued by the Ministry of Defense following a ceremony in which the minister conferred ranks on a new

group of female officers from the first batch of university graduates after the issuance of an Amiri decree appointing them as officers in the Kuwaiti Army.

The minister congratulated the newly commissioned female officers, stressing that the confidence bestowed upon them through the Amiri decree issued by His Highness the Amir and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, Sheikh

Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, carries significant national responsibility.

He urged the officers to uphold discipline, dedication and professionalism, while continuing to develop their scientific and practical skills and exert every effort in serving the nation and safeguarding its security and stability.

Continued on Page 5

Media freeze on high-profile trial

KUWAIT CITY, June 16: The State Security and Terrorism Court issued a gag order in the case filed against 60 citizens, including former MPs, who are accused of joining and financing Hezbollah, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The order prohibits the publication or circulation of any details, facts, or documents related to the case or the investigations.

Peace hopes rise as Kuwait backs US-Iran 'accord'

GENEVA, June 16, (Agencies): A framework agreement agreed by the US and Iran to end their war could be a step forward towards stifling global armed conflicts and ushering in peace and stability, a Kuwaiti official told the UN Human Rights Council on Tuesday.

Expressing Kuwait's backing for the preliminary agreement between Washington and Tehran, Kuwaiti Deputy Representative to the UN Nasser Al-Ramzi deplored the "grave human rights violations," committed by Israeli Occupation forces across Palestinian territories, lamenting what he described as "systemic" acts of violence.

He went on to urge the international community to "shoulder its responsibility," and intervene in a bid to protect the Palestinians from the Israeli Occupation's "crimes," added the official. Elsewhere, Iran's top diplomat said Tuesday that the tentative deal to end the war with the United States would require Israel to withdraw from Lebanon - a condition Israel has already rejected and that could sink the agreement, leading to the resumption of all-out war.

The deal, which is between the U.S. and Iran, has not been made public, and officials have sometimes offered contradictory interpretations of what is in it. While Israel is not party to the agreement, it is part of the war: It joined the U.S. in launching strikes on Iran on Feb. 28, and has since fought the Iran-backed Hezbollah militant group in Lebanon and seized large swaths of that country.

Continued on Page 5



Photo by Samer Shiqer
The iconic Liberation Tower rises sharply above Kuwait City's skyline, its slender form piercing the hazy horizon as hot conditions grip the country on Tuesday.

Kuwait urges global action on Palestinian rights at UN

GENEVA, June 16, (KUNA): Kuwait's Permanent Representative to UN and other international organizations in Geneva, Ambassador Nasser Al-Hayen reaffirmed on Tuesday Kuwait's firm support for the Palestinian cause, condemning ongoing violations by officials of the Israeli occupation forces and extremist settlers.

He also condemned the incursions into Al-Aqsa Mosque compound and the raising of the Israeli flag within its courtyards under the protection of occupation forces.

This came during an interactive dialogue with the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, held on the sidelines of the 62nd session of the UN Human Rights Council.

Al-Hayen said such actions constitute a dangerous escalation that exacerbates regional tensions, threatens security and stability, and violates the historical and legal status quo in Jerusalem. He also warned against any demographic changes in the city.

The ambassador commended the commission's role in documenting violations committed by the occupation forces, including the use of excessive force, the blockade imposed



KUNA photo
Ambassador Nasser Al-Hayen, Kuwait's Permanent Representative to UN and other international organizations in Geneva.

on the Gaza Strip, forced displacement, home demolitions, deliberate starvation policies, the destruction of educational facilities in the West Bank, and attempts to evade accountability.

He renewed Kuwait's call on the international community to assume its responsibilities in halting these aggressive practices, protecting the Palestinian people, and enabling them to exercise their legitimate and inalienable rights, foremost among them the establishment of an independent state on the June 4, 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital, and obtaining full membership in the United Nations.

Ambassador Iqbal highlights push for deeper ties

Pakistan lauds Kuwait as 'bridge-builder,' voice of moderation in regional diplomacy

By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 16: Pakistani Ambassador to Kuwait Dr. Zafar Iqbal affirmed that Kuwait and Pakistan have the potential to elevate their relations to broader and more comprehensive levels in the coming phase, while praising the role of Kuwait in supporting dialogue, moderation and humanitarian efforts.

In an interview with the newspaper, Iqbal shed light on the perspective of his country about the recent regional developments, efforts to ease tensions, and the role that diplomacy can play in promoting security and stability.

Following are the details of



Pakistani Ambassador to Kuwait Dr. Zafar Iqbal

the interview:

Question: The recent diplomatic developments between Washington and Tehran have attracted considerable international attention. How do you assess the outcomes of these understandings, and what role has Pakistan played in supporting de-escalation efforts?

Answer: Pakistan welcomes

all efforts that contribute to reducing tensions, strengthening regional stability, and achieving peaceful resolutions to disputes. The region has faced challenges in recent years, and dialogue remains the most effective means of resolving differences and preventing conflict.

Pakistan has consistently advocated restraint, engagement and diplomatic solutions. We have maintained communication with regional and international partners and encouraged constructive dialogue as the preferred path forward. We also recognize the constructive role played by Kuwait under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

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Prayer Timings

Fajr	03:13	Asr	15:23
Sunrise	04:48	Maghrib	18:49
Zohr	11:49	Isha	20:22



Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Al-Ali Al-Sabah during his visit to Kuwaiti troops during the peak of the war.



Left to right: His Highness the Crown Prince of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah visits an army camp during the heinous aggression.

Patriotism, courage at its finest as Kuwait hit

Armed Forces sacrificed lives to save citizens, expats



Kuwaiti heroes who laid down their lives defending the motherland.

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 16: The Kuwait Armed Forces exhibited remarkable examples of heroism, courage and patriotism during the war, as it has been protecting the country from Iranian attacks and confronting hostile missiles and drones with precision, efficiency and determination.

Efforts of the Armed Forces helped safeguard the lives of citizens and residents, and preserve the integrity of the territory of Kuwait.

The role of the Armed Forces extended beyond a military mission, manifesting a deep sense of belonging, loyalty and commitment to the oath to defend the homeland and ensure its security and stability.

The Kuwaiti military showcased its operational capabilities in responding to the attacks. Air defense systems intercepted 893 drones, 379 ballistic missiles and 15 cruise missiles since the onset of hostilities on Feb 28. This performance proved the readiness and effectiveness of the Armed Forces in dealing with the threats.

The military command also issued 66 official statements addressing developments and detailing the interception of hostile drones and missiles, underscoring the professionalism of the Armed Forces in protecting the territory and airspace of the country.

Air defense units carried out interception operations with a high degree of accuracy, neutral-



Kuwait's Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Al-Ali Al-Sabah visits the airport just after the fuel tanks were hit by the Iranian drone.



Drone debris collection by the Kuwait National Guard personnel.

izing threats before they reached their intended targets through advanced early-warning and interception systems.

The Ministry of Defense reaffirmed that the airspace of Kuwait remains a red line.

Throughout the attacks, Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Al-Ali Al-Sabah, Chief of Staff Sheikh Sabah Jaber Al-Ahmad, and senior military officials conducted inspections of military sites and issued directives regarding the response to the attacks.

Military and security agencies, together with various State institutions, coordinated their ef-



Kuwaiti heroes who laid down their lives defending the motherland.

orts to maintain national security, demonstrating unity and commitment during the crisis.

Through its official spokesperson, Colonel Saud Al-Atwan, the ministry kept citizens and residents informed through regular statements and media briefings, explaining the role of the Armed Forces in responding to the attacks. These communications boosted public confidence in the determination and preparedness of the Armed Forces.

The ministry paid tribute to the martyrs, describing their sacrifice as a source of pride, honor and dignity, while recognizing their role in defending the nation and preserving its security.

It also expressed gratitude for the blessings of security and safety for the nation.

Following the announcement of the end of the war between the United States of America and Iran, citizens and residents took to social media to express pride in the efforts of the Armed Forces, security agencies, Kuwait National Guard (KNG), Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) and other State institutions in responding to the attacks.

They also expressed confidence in the ability of government agencies to overcome such challenges effectively and professionally.

Many extended their appreciation to the military institutions, stating that they showed exceptional courage and dedication, and that their actions will be remembered as examples of service and sacrifice. The public described them as the protective shield of Kuwait, symbols of courage and loyalty, and guardians of the nation.

They expressed gratitude to those who served, praying for mercy upon the nation's martyrs, recovery for the wounded, and continuous protection for Kuwait, HH the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and its people.

New action plan to probe co-op irregularities

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 16: The Ministry of Social Affairs announced a new mechanism for implementing the recommendations of the investigation committees about cooperative societies and unions, say sources familiar with the affairs of the ministry.

Sources told the newspaper that cooperative societies must comply with the recommendations of the investigation committees and to take the necessary administrative and legal steps regarding financial or administrative violations.

Sources explained that the mechanism requires the preparation of an action plan to implement the recommendations within a period not exceeding 30 days from the date they are received. Sources said the action plan must include the corrective measures to be taken, and clearly defined responsibilities and timetables for implementation. Sources added the action plan should be approved by the chairman of the board of directors or the manager and a copy of which must be submitted to the ministry. Sources stressed the need for the administrative staff of the cooperative

to implement the plan as scheduled, while calling for easing the work of the financial and administrative auditors at the ministry so they can monitor the implementation and document the measures taken in their periodic reports.

Sources added that regular reports should be submitted to the ministry, detailing the progress achieved, challenges encountered, and proposed solutions to ensure proper implementation.

They also underscored the need to comply with the performance indicators approved by the ministry for measuring the extent to which the recommendations are implemented. These indicators include the percentage of recommendations completed, the number of recurring violations, and the level of improvement in financial and administrative performance.

According to the sources, the periodic reports prepared by the Cooperative Control and Inspection Department will be the basis for comprehensive semi-annual reports issued by the General Department for Cooperative Affairs. These reports will include an assessment of compliance and implementation levels, identify entities that fail to comply, and recommendations on the legal and administrative measures to be taken in accordance with the laws and regulations governing cooperative work.



Sheikh Jarrah Jaber

Turkish FM Hakan Fidan

Kuwait, Turkiye review regional developments

KUWAIT CITY, June 16, (KUNA): Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah discussed on Monday over the phone latest regional developments and ongoing efforts on the backdrop of the US-Iran ceasefire agree-

ment with his Turkish counterpart Hakan Fidan.

The Pakistan-mediated deal mainly calls for "immediately and permanently" ending the conflict, and reopening the Strait of Hormuz.

Kuwait, Qatar ponder ways to bolster bilateral relations

KUWAIT CITY, June 16, (KUNA): Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Hamad Al-Mashaan received on Monday a phone call congratulating him on the post from Javier Colomina, NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for the Southern Neighborhood.

In a statement, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said, during the call, cooperation between the State of Kuwait and NATO, as well as the praised existing level of collaboration and ongoing coordination between the two sides through the NATO Regional Center and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, which Kuwait hosts, were discussed. The call also touched upon NATO's supportive stance to State of Kuwait.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's Ambassador to Qatar Ahmad Al-Shuraim met on Tuesday with Qatar's Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr. Mohammad Al-Khulaifi to discuss bilateral relations and ways to further strengthen cooperation between the two countries.

In a statement for KUNA, Ambassador Al-Shuraim said the meeting reviewed aspects of cooperation between the two brotherly nations and explored means of enhancing them, in addition to discussing a number of issues of mutual interest.

He noted that the meeting reflects the shared commitment to further consolidating ties with Qatar in a manner that serves the common interests of both countries across various fields.

Hi-tech, AI for 'smart homes'

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 16: The Second Kuwait Forum for State Development Projects, organized by the Kuwaiti Federation of Engineering Offices and Consultant Houses (KFEOCH) under the slogan, "Investment Opportunities for Housing and Mortgage Projects: Transparency and Sustainability - Principles of the New Era," concluded with recommendations on the adoption of modern technologies and artificial intelligence in the development of smart and sustainable residential cities and suburbs.

Participants called for the use of advanced technological infrastructure and smart networks to support future development projects.

They stressed the importance of adhering to the standards of the structural plan of the State and establishing clear sustainability indicators that contribute to improving the quality of life and ensuring the efficient use of resources in new housing projects.

These issues were discussed in three panel sessions titled, "Modern Standards for Smart and Sustainable City Planning," "Housing and Urban Planning Concepts in the Age of Automation - Between Rooting Identity and the Risks of Development," and "From Building Housing to Building Communities: What Determines a City's Long-Term Success?"

Eng. Nasser Khuraibet, Deputy Director General for Planning and Design at the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW), stated that incorporating sustainability principles into the planning of new cities can generate substantial savings in energy consumption, capital expenditure and operating costs.

He pointed out that Al-Mutlaa City, upon completion, is expected to require about 3,500 megawatts of electricity, including around 1,500 megawatts for the residential sector. He stated that applying sustainability standards could reduce energy consumption by between 10 and 20 percent, resulting in positive impact on future infrastructure requirements and operational expenses.

Other Voices

Environmental scam

By Ahmad alsarraf

WHEN a building, administrative system, or institution is founded on flawed principles and managed by individuals with limited mentality, it becomes extremely difficult to correct the resulting damage. This applies to any project, whether in the health or education sector.

The issue of the Mishref wastewater treatment plant, which has endured 16 years of inactivity, repeated maintenance, and subsequent breakdowns, is a clear example. This situation has taken place under the supervision of the Environment Public Authority, the Ministry of Public Works, the Ministry of Health, and other relevant bodies.

There appears to be no clear or decisive solution in sight for this environmental crisis, which has had a serious impact on residents of several blocks in Mishref, as well as beachgoers and consumers of fish caught

along the coast. The problem began in the summer of 2010, when an electrical fault caused the plant's distribution panels to catch fire, halting pump operations for several days.

With the delay in finding a solution, sewage overflowed, forcing the diversion of highly polluted wastewater into a backup overflow channel, which was ultimately discharged into the Gulf. Fish in the area found abundant food, and the weight

of Mead fish increased to nearly one kilogram, after previously weighing no more than 200 grams.

The area became filled with a foul odor, and the sea water became polluted. The contractor was summoned and investigated but was released without any charges being filed. The contractor had previously delivered the station fully operational.

The warranty period had expired; therefore, he was not responsible for the subsequent malfunctions.

The air and sea pollution continued for several months until the repair work was awarded to a large local company. However, due to financial reasons, the company decided to cease its operations, and the project was transferred to an international contractor in collaboration with a local contractor.

After a while, the international contractor withdrew due to financial and administrative reasons. The local contractor continued to struggle with the project, encountering further difficulties and ultimately having to replace the entire pumping system. The station resumed normal operation after approximately one year.

The problem reappeared at this station, this time due to a power outage that caused the pumps to stop working. Batteries were used, but they proved faulty due to the absence of a maintenance contract covering them. The malfunction caused the station's closing gate to sag and become stuck, further worsening the problem. As usual, the ministry had no option but to divert millions of cubic meters of wastewater into storm drains, which ultimately led to the sea and ended up affecting marine life.

Pollution levels in Kuwait Bay have risen significantly, and attempts to repair the station continue to this day.

All of this stems from the disastrous lack of maintenance contracts for such vital stations and the resulting administrative and technical chaos.

I do not blame the energetic Minister, Noura Al-Mashaan, for this problem. Al-Mashaan inherited a weak and dilapidated system.

Some individuals with no background in environment or engineering are supervising and managing the ministry's engineering department, its technical and administrative bodies, and other technical matters. As the English saying goes, "The blind are still leading the blind."



email: a.alsarraf@alqabas.com.kw

Lost in the labyrinths of splendid, peaceful past

"IN old Kuwait, we were accustomed to listening to traditional songs performed in eloquent classical Arabic, during a time when life was simple and smiles could be seen on every face," columnist **Ahmad Al-Dawas** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"We were not accustomed to witnessing violence or fights among people of the same nation. Instead, strong bonds of affection prevailed. Even the old American cars of that era were known for their durability and strength, with solid steel construction at the front and rear.



Ahmad Al-Dawas

"Kuwait's natural environment was also remarkably beautiful. As a child, I remember seeing rabbits in Al-Mutla'a in 1959.

"The Ministry of Information has a map of Kuwait, prepared by Austria, indicating the presence of gazelles west of Jahra. However, as the number of vehicles increased, the gazelles gradually migrated from Kuwait into Saudi Arabia, and they eventually disappeared as a result of hunting.

"Life in Kuwait during the 1960s and 1970s was simple. During that period, Kuwait achieved leading positions in many fields, particularly in sports, theatre, and culture. Security was so strong that many Kuwaitis would leave their doors unlocked.

"Relationships among people were friendly, and it was not uncommon for two drivers involved in a minor car accident to exchange a smile and a handshake.

"Some may remember that in the early years following Kuwait's independence, there were public telephone booths along Fahad Al-Salem Street, much like those seen in American films. Calls made from these booths were free of charge. They looked civilized, but unfortunately, some individuals vandalized them by smashing the glass panels and stealing the telephones.

"We also used to travel on Mercedes public buses, known for their comfortable leather seats. Over time, however, some passengers damaged the seats, tearing the upholstery and exposing the foam inside. As a result, the company replaced the comfortable leather seats with less comfortable plastic ones. Similar incidents occurred at Kuwait Airport.

"As time passed, people changed, and scammers emerged. While electronic advancements, the internet, and mobile phones offer many benefits, they also have drawbacks. In past years, scammers exploited electronic communication by contacting people over the phone, claiming to represent the Ministry of Health, and asking them to send personal information in order to issue a COVID-19 vaccination certificate. This allowed them to hack WhatsApp accounts and steal money from bank accounts. One victim lost KD 5,000, while another woman lost KD 1,000. Gangs operating outside Kuwait have also succeeded in convincing victims of supposed lucrative investment projects and persuading them to transfer money via email.

"Some scammers send messages claiming, 'Sorry, I transferred an amount to you by mistake. Please return the money.' When the victim complies, their bank account is hacked and the funds are stolen.

"At the end of 2025, the Central Bank of Kuwait warned about fraud methods that use artificial intelligence to accurately imitate real people's voices in order to steal money.

"I have always preferred the traditional way of handling paperwork and visiting government ministries in person with my documents. A single click on a computer could erase all your records and transactions with the government. Didn't I tell you the past was beautiful?"

Also:

"The tendency to conflate political issues has become a widespread phenomenon in some Arab circles that consider themselves political and intellectual elites," columnist **Khaled Ahmad Al-Tarrah** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"Recent Iranian attacks targeted the Gulf states and Jordan. However, some of these voices conflate the condemnation of Iranian and Israeli attacks on certain Arab countries with Iranian aggression against the Gulf states and Jordan.

"The Council on Arab and International Relations, acting as a political and intellectual platform or a pressure group expressing an unofficial opinion, issued a statement published on May 21, 2026, condemning both Iranian and Israeli attacks on some Arab countries.

"In reality, Israeli attacks on some Arab countries have a long and continuous history and are not limited to recent military operations, while Iranian attacks on the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and Jordan are a more recent development coinciding with the American war on Iran. These facts are clear and leave little room for ambiguity or confusion.

"Confusing facts do not create an objective understanding of events; rather, it leads to the loss and distortion of truth.

"The Iranian attacks on GCC countries and Jordan are a blatant act of aggression that does not allow for interpretation or equivocation. However, the distorted and biased Arab mind refuses to acknowledge these clear facts, preferring instead to remain within a space

of ambiguity and to present narratives that blur the distinction between aggressor and victim, thereby confusing public awareness.

"If this argument had originated from an individual such as Amr Moussa, a member of the Council on Arab and International Relations, it would not be surprising. Moussa has previously expressed similar views, which he considers part of the Arab cause, and these claims have been refuted.

"This is especially true given the history of strained relations between Kuwait and Amr Moussa since 2003, when he served as Secretary-General of the Arab League. According to the principles of political pressure, impartial analysis, and scientific observation, a mixture of facts cannot be presented as political or historical truth.

"Pressure groups and lobbies have the right to defend their interests and promote their visions, but they do not have the right to distort facts or rewrite history according to their beliefs.

"Removing events from their context, selectively presenting facts, and marginalizing essential truths transform politics into a tool for misleading public opinion rather than for interpreting and documenting reality.

"According to the principles of political pressure, impartial analysis, and scientific observation, a mixture of facts cannot be presented as political or historical truth. It is unacceptable for media platforms to become tools for perpetuating factual distortion or entrenching ambiguity in the interpretation of events under the influence of pressure groups and political agendas.

"Responsible media and sound reporting should serve the truth and clarify it, not promote ambiguity or mislead public opinion. Media coverage and documented reports should contribute to building an objective understanding of events rather than confusing public perception or distorting the facts.

"Iranian aggression cannot be separated from its political background, ideological dimensions, and the directives issued from decision-making centers in Tehran. This has been reflected in the activities of groups and entities linked to Iran in the region, including Iraq.

"Research centers, pressure groups, and lobbying firms are expected to base their policies on greater transparency, even when adopting conservative or differing perspectives. There is a fundamental difference between official meetings and the roles of unofficial forces, which are supposed to adhere to professional neutrality and clarity. Ambiguous interpretations reflect, in part, an immature Arab political landscape that lacks clarity in its objectives, methods, and approaches."

□ □ □

"On the occasion of the New Hijri Year, the Muslim Ummah commemorates the Prophet's (PBUH) Hijra, a momentous historical event that was not merely a migration from Makkah to Madina, but a turning point that shaped a new future for the Muslim community and laid the foundations of a state built on faith, justice, hard work, and careful planning," columnist **Muhammad Nasser Al-Alim** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"The Prophet's (PBUH) Hijra presented a practical model for shaping the future by combining the strength of faith with thorough preparation and the adoption of all necessary steps.

"The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) did not rely on wishes alone; rather, he developed a precise plan for the migration, selected the right companion, determined the appropriate route and timing, and placed his complete trust in Allah, confident that success and victory come from Him alone.

"The Hijra teaches us that challenges, no matter how great, should not be a cause to retreat or despair. Instead, they should be viewed as opportunities for renewal, growth, and progress towards broader horizons.

"Through the Hijra, Muslims moved from a stage of weakness to one of state-building and societal development, proving that sincere determination and strong faith can transform difficulties into success and achievement.

"The Hijra reinforced the values of unity, cooperation, and mutual support when the Prophet (PBUH) established bonds of brotherhood between the Muhajireen (Emigrants) and the Ansar (Helpers). In doing so, he built a cohesive and resilient society capable of overcoming challenges and achieving stability, progress, and development. These values are among the most important foundations for the success and prosperity of societies and nations today.

"As the world continues to experience rapid change and renewed challenges, the Prophet's (PBUH) Hijra remains a timeless source of inspiration for individuals, institutions, and nations alike. It offers lessons in clear vision, strategic planning, effective crisis management, and the ability to anticipate and prepare for the future."

— Compiled by Simi K. Kutty

Mol: Battlefield heroes

'Kuwait is a red line'



First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef visits Kuwaiti troops near northern border.



First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef talking to a contingent of Special Forces.

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 16: The Ministry of Interior (Mol) showed a high level of competence under all circumstances, depicting what was described as a national epic during the Iranian aggression.

The ministry consistently succeeded in ensuring the security of citizens and residents through its extensive deployment in various locations and sectors, under the direct supervision of senior leaders, headed by First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef and Undersecretary Major General Abdulwahab Al-Wuhaib.

Through its field operations and proactive measures against terrorist cells linked to the banned Hezbollah organization, the ministry reaffirmed the security of Kuwait is a red line that cannot be crossed and that security personnel remain committed to protecting the nation and preserving its stability round the clock.

From the earliest moments of the Iranian aggression, the ministry responded to reports of falling debris and shrapnel. Field teams from the Public Security, Traffic and Rescue sectors, along with other concerned authorities, were dispatched to the reported locations.

The incidents were handled swiftly and professionally in accordance with the highest safety standards, thereby, minimizing the risks and protecting lives and properties.

Through ongoing field operations and under the direct guidance of the First Deputy Prime Minister, security forces continued to deliver proactive and decisive responses against anyone seeking to threaten the security of the country.

It confirmed that it thwarted three terrorist cells linked to the banned Hezbollah organization that were allegedly planning sabotage operations aimed at destabilizing the country and undermining its sovereignty.

During the Iranian aggression, the ministry issued 23 official statements, including announcements related to the foiling of plots, the dismantling of terrorist cells affiliated with Hezbollah, and investigations into the collection of funds under religious pre-



Guarding the motherland.



Guns seized from terrorists.

sassinate State figures and harming the higher interests of the country.

In the same context, the ministry announced in April that it thwarted another plot targeting national security and involving the financing of terrorist entities.

The State Security Department arrested 24 citizens and identified eight more citizens who fled the country, all of whom were allegedly involved in collecting funds under religious pretexts.

News in Brief

Maritime safety standards boost

KUWAIT CITY, June 16: The Ministry of Interior affirmed that the new Maritime Facilities and Floating Units Law constitutes a comprehensive legal framework for regulating maritime facilities and floating units, thereby enhancing maritime safety standards and raising compliance levels, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

In a statement published on its official X account and accompanied by an awareness video, the ministry explained that the law regulates licensing and operational procedures and specifies technical requirements, as well as maritime safety and security standards.

The ministry emphasized the importance of adhering to the provisions of the law and its implementing regulations to ensure the safe and responsible use of maritime facilities and floating units.

□ □ □

Car ownership app: The Ministry of Interior announced on Tuesday the reactivation of the vehicle ownership renewal service online via the Sahel application, following the completion of development and modernization work in the systems of the Insurance Regulation Unit, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

□ □ □

Jail overturned: The Criminal Court overturned a ruling issued in absentia 11 years ago that sentenced a Kuwaiti citizen to two years' imprisonment with hard labor for assault, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

The court accepted his appeal and dismissed the case on the grounds that the limitation period for enforcement had expired.

The court explained that the incident began in 2014. The last valid legal action against the defendant was the in absentia ruling issued in 2015. The defendant was arrested and notified of the ruling in 2026. The criminal case had lapsed due to the expiration of the legally prescribed period, necessitating the annulment of the in absentia ruling and the issuance of a new judgment dismissing the case.

During the appeal hearing, Lawyer Khalil Haidar insisted that the criminal case had lapsed due to the statute of limitations, highlighting that more than ten years had passed since the last valid legal action in the case without any interruption of the limitation period.

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KFF stood firm in face of aggression

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HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah visits a group of fire-fighters on duty.



First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah in discussions with fire-officers at the site.

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 16: The Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) proved the high level of readiness and dedication from the outset of the Iranian aggression against the country.

The performance of its personnel underscored their commitment to protect lives and properties, and maintain public safety under challenging circumstances.

KFF displayed strong operational preparedness and carried out significant response efforts in dealing with debris, resulting from intercepted missiles and drones, as well as fires caused by the attacks in several locations.

These efforts highlighted the competence of KFF and its vital role in addressing field emergencies and protecting communities through determination and professionalism.

Since the beginning of the Iranian aggression on Feb 28, KFF maintained full operational readiness in all its centers in the governorates. Its response was supported by emergency plans and a high level of preparedness, carried out in coordination with the Kuwait Armed Forces, Ministry of Interior and Kuwait National Guard.

During the period of aggression, KFF showed its operational role through its direct response to an increasing number of reports related to incidents affecting vital fa-



Fire brigades guarded day and night for many days the airport site struck by the Iranian drones.

cilities and residential areas.

Firefighting teams responded rapidly to incidents, working to contain fires and prevent their spread, while seeking to protect lives and properties under difficult circumstances.

The extensive distribution of fire stations throughout the governorates played a vital role in enhancing response times to both usual and extraordinary incidents linked to the repercussions of the aggression.

This broad geographical coverage enabled emergency



Brig. Gen. Al-Gharib

teams to reach incident sites quickly, contributing significantly to limiting damage and bringing situations under control.

Through its official spokesperson, Brigadier General Mohammad Al-Gharib, KFF provided daily media briefings and explanatory statements outlining the nature of the incidents handled and the measures taken in response to routine and exceptional reports arising from the situation.

Grade 12 annual exams to begin on Wednesday: MoE

KUWAIT CITY, June 16: The Ministry of Education (MoE) announced that Grade 12 exams will begin on Wednesday, June 17, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In an official statement, the ministry clarified that, in accordance with the official holiday for the Islamic New Year 1448 on Tuesday, the Grade 12 exams for both the science and arts streams, as well as religious education, will be held according to the previously announced

schedules.

5-day water suspension: The Ministry of Public Works announced on Monday a five-day suspension of treated water pumping to the Al-Abdali farms as part of ongoing maintenance and development work, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The ministry clarified in a statement on its X account that the suspension will begin on June 20, 2026, and continue until June 25, 2026.

News in Brief

Mol arrests 14 in 8 different cases, seizes cache of drugs

KUWAIT CITY, June 16, (KUNA): Kuwait's Ministry of Interior announced the arrest of 14 suspects in eight separate cases involving the possession of various narcotic substances, psychotropic drugs and equipment used in the preparation and packaging of illegal drugs.

In a press statement on Tuesday, the ministry said the arrests came as part of the intensive efforts undertaken by the Criminal Security Sector to combat drug-related crimes and pursue traffickers and dealers.

The ministry said the operations resulted in the seizure of 1.425 kilograms of methamphetamine (shabu), 1.015 kilograms of hashish, 365 grams of marijuana and three grams of heroin.

Authorities also confiscated four A4-sized sheets soaked with synthetic chemical narcotics, 80 capsules of the controlled substance Lyrica, three psychotropic pills, six precision scales and various drug-use paraphernalia.

The ministry added that all suspects and seized items were referred to the competent authorities for legal action. It reaffirmed its commitment to continuing intensive security operations to track down drug traffickers and protect society from the dangers of narcotics.

Man crashes into cop car: An illegal resident (Bedoun) was referred to the Drug Control General Department on charges of driving under the influence and possessing methamphetamine, reports Al-Anba daily.

A case of collision and damage to state property was also filed. According to a security source, a car collided with a patrol vehicle from the rear while it was stopped at a traffic light in Hawally.

It was determined that the driver was under the influence of drugs. Further investigation revealed that he was a Bedoun resident who had a prior record of drug-related offenses. A search of the driver revealed a bag of methamphetamine in his possession.

Youth doing drugs: A young man in

his twenties was referred to the Drug Control General Department (DCGD) after being caught under the influence of drugs while walking on Kabad Road, reports Al-Anba daily.

A precautionary search revealed that he was in possession of a quantity of narcotics and drug paraphernalia.

He was referred with the seized items to DCGD for further investigation to determine the source of the drugs.

Nod to e-summoning: The acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Dr. Sulaiman Al-Suwailim, approved the electronic summoning of employees in administrative investigations via the Sahel application, reports Al-Jarida daily.

This step is part of the ministry's efforts towards digital transformation and the development of its administrative and legal work system.

Dr. Al-Suwailim carried out an official electronic summons through the application, marking the launch of the system and its adoption within the ministry's administrative investigation procedures.

The electronic summons aims to facilitate the process of notifying employees of investigation session dates and related decisions by sending electronic notifications via the Sahel application.

1kg drugs with suspect: Support Operations Department at Farwaniya Security Command referred a man to the Drug Control General Department on charges of drug trafficking, reports Al-Anba daily.

A quantity of hashish weighing approximately one kilogram was included in the referral file. The suspect was arrested after a suspicious vehicle was spotted parked in a dirt lot between residential houses.

According to a security source, a patrol noticed a car parked in a suspicious manner between houses. A man was standing next to the vehicle and picking up a bag from the ground before entering the car.

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Continued from Page 1

Encourage

The railway project to connect Kuwait with the Gulf countries is also stalled, as is the case with the solar energy project, which was launched about 15 years ago. To date, the project has only produced 0.040 percent of its expected output.

Some have claimed that local agents of international companies are hindering the progress of these projects. This argument is no longer valid, as the Cabinet contracts directly with global companies. So what is the reason behind the delay in completing these projects?

Many years ago, the B.O.T. (Build-Operate-Transfer) law was passed, granting investors usufruct rights for a period ranging from 25 to 50 years. This can save a lot of time and money, so why has this law not been implemented yet?

For about 30 years, we have heard about the Silk Road, but we have not seen it materialize, as if it were fiction.

There are many questions about why there are so many delays in project completion and decision-making. Why is the focus placed solely on restricting entrepreneurs and investors?

Plate-less?

Moreover, the General Traffic Department continued its campaign to apprehend drivers exceeding speed limits.

Traffic officers arrested three Kuwaiti citizens and one Asian who were driving at speeds of 180, 179 and 150 kilometers per hour, respectively.

A security source disclosed that the violators were taken to the traffic police station, their vehicles were impounded, and legal action was taken against them in accordance with the new traffic law.

Pakistan lauds

Kuwait has established itself as a respected voice of moderation and a bridge-builder in regional affairs, continuously supporting dialogue, mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence.

The security, stability and prosperity of Kuwait, as well as those of the Gulf region, remain essential. Any regional understanding can succeed only if it supports the security, sovereignty and prosperity of every country in the region.

Q: In light of the current challenges the region is facing, how optimistic are you about the success of ongoing dip-

lomatic efforts? What additional role can Pakistan play in promoting peace and stability?

A: Despite the continuing challenges, there are grounds for optimism, as the recent diplomatic engagement proved that dialogue remains possible even during periods of heightened tension.

Pakistan believes that lasting regional stability requires comprehensive dialogue, respect for sovereignty, non-interference in the internal affairs of states, and collective efforts toward economic development.

We will continue to support initiatives aimed at reducing tensions, encouraging communication, and strengthening regional cooperation. Kuwait's longstanding diplomatic tradition of moderation and bridge-building continues to make a valuable contribution to promoting regional peace and stability.

Q: What message does Pakistan wish to convey to the international community regarding the importance of dialogue, cooperation and the peaceful resolution of disputes?

A: The message of Pakistan is that dialogue must always take precedence over confrontation. Sustainable solutions are achieved through engagement, mutual respect and adherence to international law.

At a time of growing uncertainty around the world, all nations must invest in diplomacy, cooperation and development.

Q: How are current geopolitical developments influencing Pakistan's foreign policy priorities and its relations with countries in the region?

A: The foreign policy of Pakistan remains focused on peace, economic development, regional connectivity and mutually beneficial partnerships. Current geopolitical developments highlight the importance of balanced diplomacy and constructive engagement among states.

Pakistan is keen on strengthening cooperation with the Gulf states, neighboring countries and the international community in the fields of trade, investment, energy security, technology and regional stability. We believe that economic cooperation and shared prosperity provide the strongest foundation for achieving long-term peace and stability.

Q: Kuwait and Pakistan enjoy strong and longstanding relations. How do you assess the current state of bilateral ties between the two countries?

A: Pakistan and Kuwait share warm, fraternal and longstanding relations founded on mutual respect, trust and shared values. These ties continue to benefit from the vision and leadership

of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, as well as the commitment of both governments to expand cooperation in a wide range of sectors.

Both sides are working hard to translate this strong foundation into broader economic and institutional cooperation.

Pakistan highly values Kuwait as a trusted friend and an important partner in the Gulf region.

Q: What are the most significant expected outcomes of the agreements and memoranda of understanding that have been signed or are currently under discussion between Kuwait and Pakistan?

A: The agreements and memoranda of understanding currently under discussion are expected to create new opportunities for cooperation in investment, trade, labor, healthcare, food security, education, technology and infrastructure development.

Q: Which sectors offer the greatest opportunities for expanding economic cooperation and attracting Kuwaiti investment to Pakistan?

A: Pakistan is implementing reforms aimed at improving the investment climate and welcomes increased Kuwaiti participation in several promising sectors. Valuable opportunities exist in energy, food security, agriculture, logistics, information technology, healthcare, tourism, mining and infrastructure development.

Q: As Pakistan continues to implement its economic and development agenda, what opportunities do you see for solidifying cooperation with Kuwait in trade, investment and infrastructure development?

A: Pakistan welcomes greater Kuwaiti participation in its economic development and modernization efforts. The ambitious development agenda of Kuwait presents opportunities for Pakistani expertise and human resources to contribute to the country's continuous growth and modernization.

Pakistan holds Kuwait in the highest regard as a trusted friend, a respected partner, and a nation widely admired for its moderation, humanitarian leadership and constructive diplomacy. We deeply appreciate the incessant contributions of Kuwait to promoting regional peace, providing humanitarian assistance, and supporting development efforts in the Arab and Islamic worlds and beyond.

Pakistan stands firmly with Kuwait and reaffirms its unwavering support for its sovereignty, security, territorial integrity and stability.

We believe that the security of the Gulf is an integral component of regional and international stability. Just as Kuwait has consistently stood by

Pakistan during critical moments, Pakistan remains committed to standing shoulder to shoulder with Kuwait.

Kuwait marks

The commissioning ceremony began with the reading of the Amiri decree, followed by the administration of the legal oath by the female graduates.

The event was attended by Chief of the General Staff of the Kuwaiti Army Khaled Al-Shuraiaan, Deputy Chief of Staff Major General Pilot Sabah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and several senior military commanders.

Peace hopes

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said Israel's continued occupation of southern Lebanon would violate the deal.

"Without the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the territories they occupied during this war, the war has not fully come to an end," Araghchi said.

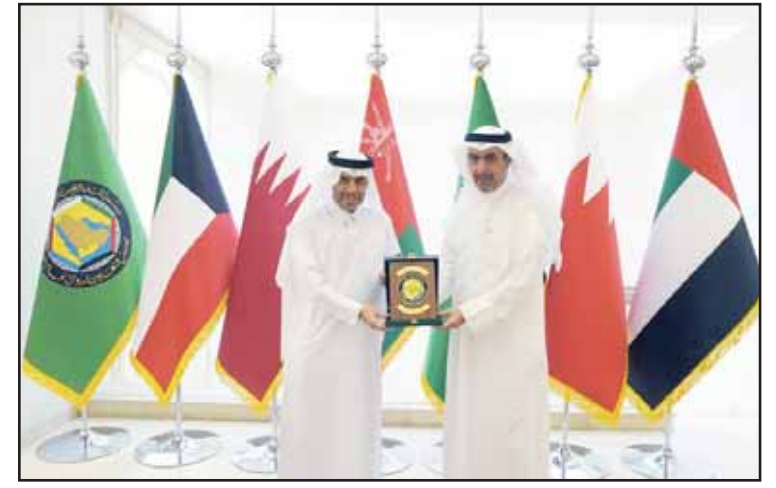
A U.S. official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss outlines of the agreement, has said the deal did not call for an Israeli withdrawal. And Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Monday that Israel would remain in Lebanon "as long as necessary."

The negotiations to end the war have been plagued by such disagreements before - leading to a prolonged but uneasy ceasefire that has failed to develop into a permanent end to hostilities and that has left the Strait of Hormuz, a crucial waterway for the world's energy supplies, effectively shut.

In other developments, Switzerland's foreign ministry said the signing ceremony for the deal will take place Friday at the Buirgenstock resort near the city of Luzern. Ministry officials said Tuesday that the location was proposed by Pakistani and Qatari mediators, along with the U.S. and Iran.

Pakistan, a key mediator, has said the deal called for an end to military operations, including in Lebanon, as Iran long insisted. But Araghchi's call for an Israeli withdrawal adds a new wrinkle.

It puts Israel in a dilemma as it juggles trying to degrade Hezbollah's military capabilities and restore deterrence without undermining an agreement championed by its most important ally, the United States.



KUNA photo
Head of the GCC Emergency Management Center Brigadier Dr. Rashid Al-Marri with Qatar's Ambassador to Kuwait Ali Abdullah Al Mahmoud.

Early warning systems enhanced

GCC center strengthens joint emergency response efforts

KUWAIT CITY, June 16, (KUNA): Head of the GCC Emergency Management Center Brigadier Dr. Rashid Al-Marri affirmed on Monday that the center continues implementing its programs and responsibilities in line with directives of GCC leaders and with support from the GCC Secretary-General.

In a statement to KUNA following a meeting with Qatar's Ambassador to Kuwait Ali Abdullah Al Mahmoud, Al-Marri said the center is developing monitoring and early warning systems while strengthening information exchange and coordination among competent authorities in GCC member states.

He added that the center is implementing joint Gulf initiatives and projects aimed at enhancing regional integration, protecting lives and property, and supporting sustainable development across GCC countries.

Al-Marri noted that the center remains the GCC's specialized agency for early warning, risk monitoring and assessment of threats with potential regional impact on member states.

During the visit, Ambassador Al-Mahmoud and his accompanying delegation were briefed on the center's mandate, responsibilities and role in strengthening joint GCC action in emergency and crisis management.

They were also informed of the center's efforts to support coordination and integration among relevant authorities in GCC countries and enhance preparedness to address various risks and emergency situa-

tions. The visit included a tour of the center's central operations room, where the delegation received an overview of monitoring and follow-up mechanisms, information-sharing procedures, early warning systems and operational measures for handling emergencies.

The delegation was also briefed on key joint Gulf initiatives and projects implemented by the center to strengthen national and regional capabilities in crisis management and emergency response.

The two sides discussed issues of mutual interest and ways to enhance cooperation and exchange expertise in support of GCC efforts to develop emergency and crisis management systems in line with best international practices.

Also:

RIYADH: Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council **Jassim Al-Budaiwi** on Sunday launched the Gulf Legislation Platform, aimed at strengthening legislative integration among GCC member states.

Al-Budaiwi said the platform was established under a decision by the permanent committee of legislative departments in GCC states to create a specialized electronic portal for Gulf legislation.

He added that the platform provides a unified reference for GCC legislation and offers advanced search services enabling government entities, legal professionals and researchers to access GCC and national laws efficiently.



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'WH uses law enforcement agency as weapon to go after president's opponents'

Trump's Justice Department investigating California Governor Newsom and wife

SACRAMENTO, Calif., June 16, (AP) — Democratic California Gov. Gavin Newsom on Monday accused the Justice Department of launching a politically motivated investigation into him and his wife, saying the Trump administration was targeting him as he weighs a presidential bid.

Newsom, a longtime political rival of the Republican president, said in a video posted on X that federal agents have knocked on the doors of his friends and former employees, and have asked for records. Newsom didn't provide specifics on the nature of the probe, but his office said the inquiry appears to have recently expanded into "increasingly personal matters involving the Governor's family and professional network."

"Donald Trump isn't just coming after me because of my mean tweets," Newsom said, referencing his use of social media to mock Trump. "He's coming after me because I'm considering running for president, because he hates that I've consistently called him out over and over again for his lies and deceit."

The full details of any Justice Department inquiries related to Newsom were not immediately clear. But the revelations were likely to escalate accusations from critics that the Trump administration is using the law enforcement agency as a weapon to go after the president's political opponents.

A person familiar with the matter denied the existence of an investigation specifically targeting the governor, but said there are multiple federal probes into people around him, including one related to his wife's taxes. That probe began last year, and political leadership in Washington was not involved in the decision to open it, said the person, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to publicly discuss ongoing investigations.

Another probe is related to Newsom's former chief of staff, Dana Williamson, who was indicted on federal charges that she was involved in a scheme to steal campaign money from former federal Health Secretary Xavier Becerra. Williamson in May pleaded guilty to charges including conspiracy to commit bank fraud. That investigation, which was launched by President Joe Biden's Justice Department, has expanded to include other staff, the person familiar



California Gov. Gavin Newsom speaks during a news conference on June 14, 2025, in Los Angeles. (AP)

with the matter said.

Newsom hasn't been accused of any wrongdoing related to Williamson's case.

The Justice Department declined to comment Monday. Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche declined to answer questions about Newsom during a brief photo opportunity with Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, on Capitol Hill Monday afternoon. Blanche had a scheduled meeting with Grassley to discuss his nomination to become attorney general. They are the latest Justice Department investigations surrounding one of

Trump's political foes.

The Justice Department has also opened investigations into or brought prosecutions against former FBI Director James Comey,

New York Attorney General Letitia James, former CIA director John Brennan and former Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell, among other perceived political enemies of the president.

"One by one, anyone who has challenged Donald Trump has ended up on his hit list, and today I proudly join that list," Newsom said in the video.

Investigators have subpoenaed records, and agents have reached out to organizations and people connected to the governor and his wife, according to Newsom's office. The governor's office accused the Justice Department of "searching for a crime that does not exist."

Newsom's office said it heard last week that federal agents had ramped up their efforts and were asking people tied to the governor and his wife about a range of issues, including their businesses, finances and personal matters. His office said it filed a public records request Monday seeking messages to or from Justice Department leaders mentioning Newsom or his wife during Trump's second term.

Jennifer Siebel Newsom, the governor's wife, said the investigation showed that Trump is unfit for office.

"There are clearly no boundaries to what Donald Trump will do to get his way or to challenge those who get in his way," she said in a statement.

The president has repeatedly gone after the Democrat-dominated state during his second term including by curbing a signature plan to reduce planet-warming emissions from cars, withholding aid for wildfire recovery and suing over state policies supporting transgender student-athletes. The state has pushed back by suing the federal government dozens of times.

Newsom also led a push to counteract a Trump-backed effort in Texas to redraw congressional districts to favor Republicans by championing a successful redistricting measure in California designed to win Democrats five additional House seats.

America

8 dead in B-52 bomber crash: A B-52 bomber crashed shortly after takeoff at a U.S. Air Force base in Southern California's Mojave Desert and burst into flames Monday, killing all eight people aboard, military officials said.

Aerial footage showed virtually nothing left of the aircraft that went down around 11:20 a.m. during a routine test mission at Edwards Air Force Base, which is north of Los Angeles. Black smoke rose from a large swath of charred desert near the runway on the base, with emergency vehicles nearby.

Those on the B-52 included government contractors and uniformed military. Aircraft manufacturer Boeing confirmed Monday evening that two of its employees were on board.

After reviewing footage of the crash, it was determined that no one could have survived, Col. James Hayes, the deputy commander for the 412 test wing at Edwards, said at a news conference.

"We lost eight great Americans," Hayes said, adding that officials were working to notify their families. (AP)

Hayes

'Skydivers were experienced jumpers': Several of the skydivers killed when their plane crashed moments after taking off from a Missouri airfield were experienced jumpers, including one of the nation's leading female jumpers.

Federal investigators were at the crash site Monday, a day after the plane carrying a pilot and 11 passengers slammed into a field and burst into flames, killing all on board, authorities said. Some family members of those who died were at the airport to watch the jump and witnessed the crash, said Bates County Sheriff Chad Anderson.

Authorities have not released the victims' names, but friends and colleagues began paying tribute. (AP)

Ex-Senate leader McConnell in hospital: Republican Sen. Mitch McConnell was admitted to a hospital Sunday, his spokesperson said, but there was no immediate information about why he was there or his prognosis.

McConnell, 84, was the longest serving Senate leader in history before stepping aside from that role while finishing his final term, which ends in January.

"Senator McConnell was admitted to the hospital this morning. He is receiving excellent care," spokesperson David Popp said in a statement without elaboration. It was not immediately clear whether the Kentucky lawmaker was in Washington, his home state or elsewhere. McConnell's health has been a subject of scrutiny for years. (AP)

Lawmakers will try to fix this week

Georgia's vote-counting method will soon be banned

ATLANTA, June 16, (AP) — When Georgia lawmakers return to the Capitol this week for a special session, they are expected to try to clean up an election mess of their own making.

The election system used throughout the political battleground state relies on a QR code printed on ballots to tally the votes. Legislators passed a law two years ago barring the use of that barcode for the official vote count beyond July 1 of this year, but no replacement method of tabulating votes was ever implemented.

One of the instructions Republican Gov. Brian Kemp laid out for lawmakers when he called the special session is to "address issues created" by that law. Meanwhile, the secretary of state's office and the State Election Board have further muddied the waters by issuing conflicting guidance for county election officials about how votes should be cast and counted.

If the issues are not resolved soon, there is likely to be confusion and possibly litigation over the state's elections after July 1. A special election to fill a U.S. House seat is scheduled for that month.

Georgia's current election system was first used statewide during the 2020 primary. After the general election that year, when Republican President Donald Trump narrowly lost the state to Democrat Joe Biden, Trump and his supporters claimed without evidence that the machines had deleted or switched votes.

Trump's backers continued to



Courtney Parker votes on a new voting machine, in Dallas, Ga., Nov. 5, 2019. (AP)

complain about the touchscreen voting machines, with some loyalists espousing wild conspiracy theories. Election integrity advocates also criticized the machines, saying they are vulnerable to hacking and that voters cannot be sure their selections are accurately reflected because people can't read QR codes.

Republican lawmakers in 2024 tried to address those concerns by passing a law banning barcodes for the "official tabulation count" after July 1, 2026. But in the two years since, no other counting method has been adopted. Now, the deadline is fast approaching and a major mid-term election looms.

Trump singled out those machines,

which are used in at least some counties in more than a dozen states, in his first executive order on elections shortly after he took office for his second term in January 2025. That order has been blocked by multiple courts and is not being enforced.

Last month, Kemp announced a special legislative session, scheduled to start Wednesday, to draw new congressional maps for the 2028 elections and to address the QR code issue.

It's possible that lawmakers could extend the deadline in the law to allow the QR codes to be used for now and give themselves some breathing room to come up with a new system before elections in 2028. But in the waning hours of the regular legis-

lative session earlier this year, they rejected a proposal that would have done that.

Even if lawmakers agree on a solution, it might be tough to implement before a special election to fill the remainder of the term of U.S. Rep. David Scott, who died in April. The special election is set for July 28, with early voting beginning July 6.

The secretary of state's office last week issued guidance to election officials in the six counties included in that congressional district. The office says it's preliminary and subject to change based on any developments from the special session.

The ballots will be run through the scanners, which will read the QR code to generate the election night vote count. Then, before county certification, electronic images created by the scanners for each ballot will be uploaded to a server, where optical character recognition software will be used to tally the votes using the human-readable text. The results of that second process will be the official tabulation count.

The secretary of state's guidance expressly says counties must continue to use the current election system, including the touchscreen voting machines, and that there is nothing in the law that authorizes the use of hand-marked paper ballots for in-person voting.

The State Election Board weighed in two days later with conflicting guidance. Board members argued the plan proposed by the secretary of state is not authorized by law.

Ukraine starts EU membership talks and faces years of reforms

BRUSSELS, June 16, (AP) — Ukraine on Monday officially started European Union membership negotiations, launching a process that will require its government to commit to years of political reforms even as it fights a Russian invasion.

Ukrainian Deputy Prime Minister Taras Kachka took part in an intergovernmental conference in Luxembourg to open talks that will help Kyiv align with the 27-member bloc's laws, standards and values.

"Aggression against Ukraine and threats against Europe is a permanent policy of Russia, so that's why we need to be united," Kachka told journalists. "That's why we need faster and very comprehensive accession to the European Union."

Ukraine sees EU membership as a security guarantee for a stable future once the war ends. Its best guarantee would be membership in the NATO military alliance, but the Trump administration insists that cannot happen, and others are wary of it joining while the war continues.

Moldova also officially launched its membership talks. Russia has long tried to keep the country within its orbit, and last year Moscow was accused of waging a disinformation campaign driven by artificial intelligence during elections.



From left: Finnish Prime Minister Petteri Orpo, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Latvia's Prime Minister Andris Kurbalvis pose for photo after a news conference at the Nordic and Baltic countries meeting in Tallinn, Estonia on June 9. (AP)

Countries hoping to join the EU must complete negotiations in 35 policy areas, or chapters, from agriculture to taxation and energy to trade, a process which can take years.

Monday's meeting saw the opening of five key chapters - grouped as "clusters" - that underpin the values and principles on which the bloc was founded, notably the rule of law, fun-

damental rights and the functioning of democratic institutions.

The chapters are judiciary and fundamental rights, justice, freedom and security, public procurement, and statistics and financial control. The cluster is important for some EU countries that worry about Ukraine's ability and willingness to fight corruption.

Last month, two national agencies fighting corruption named Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's former chief of staff as an official suspect in a major graft investigation, but they said the Ukrainian leader was not under suspicion.

Some European countries have pushed to get Ukraine in the bloc as quickly as possible. They see Ukraine as vital to Europe's security and have helped bolster its armed forces.

Last month, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz urged his EU partners to consider offering Ukraine "associate membership" to help breathe new life into talks aimed at ending more than four years of war with Russia.

Other countries - France and the Netherlands among them - have suggested work-arounds to bring Ukraine into the fold more quickly but without the rights of full membership.

tougher migration measures across the European Union. (AP)

Two men guilty of attacks in UK: The Russian-speaking handler, a shadowy figure known as "El Money," was not happy.

A string of arson attacks targeting a car and two London homes linked to British Prime Minister Keir Starmer had attracted little attention, possibly because the then 21-year-old attacker, a Ukrainian recruited online, was not very good at documenting them.

El Money wanted publicity and was prepared to pay.

The attacker, Roman Lavrynovych, was found guilty Monday alongside his accomplice. But the person - or network - behind the online persona of El Money has escaped public blame or punishment. (AP)

Europe

Greece vows tough migration policies: Greece's

migration minister on Monday called criticism from human rights groups a "badge of honor" and vowed to further toughen migration policies he called "the toughest - if not the toughest - in Europe."

Thanos Plevris' comments to private broadcaster Action 24 came as Greece's conservative government, facing a rise in migrant arrivals crossing the Mediterranean from eastern Libya, pursues closer cooperation with authorities in the divided North African country and backs



Plevris



The Swedish parliament (Riksdagen) votes on new justice legislation in Stockholm on June 15. (AP)

Sweden requires public workers to report migrants not authorized to live there

STOCKHOLM, June 16, (AP) — The Swedish parliament on Monday adopted a law obliging public sector workers to report to the police any migrants who are not authorized to live in Sweden. Critics said it will create a climate of fear and could negatively impact migrants' physical and mental health.

The law is part of Sweden's efforts to tighten its approach to migration and comes as the European Union overhauls its migration system, including to expedite deportations.

"This is the latest measure in a long list of extremely problematic regulations on migration," Jacob Lind, a migration expert from Malmö University, told the AP after the vote. "It has a symbolic meaning because it amounts to snitching by some very important state agencies."

John Stauffer from Swedish nonprofit Civil Rights Defenders told the AP that the fact that the law passed so narrowly, with 174 votes in favor and 172 against, indicates how much opposition there is in

Swedish society.

Teachers, doctors and social workers have been exempted from the reporting obligation, following criticism.

Sweden will now make it compulsory for employees of tax authorities, employment and social insurance agencies and prison and probation services, among others, to tell police when they have reason to believe the people they come in contact with do not have the documents required to live in the country.

"Reporting obligations imposed on public agencies create a climate of fear that harms not only undocumented people but everyone who depends on these institutions," Louise Bonneau from Brussels-based nonprofit PICUM, which supports migrants, told the AP.

The Swedish government has argued that it needs more measures to ensure those who are not legally allowed to stay in Sweden can be returned to their home countries.

The new law contradicts basic

human rights of migrants and encourages racial profiling, a group of researchers from three Swedish universities warned in March, referring to a discriminatory practice by which authorities suspect a person of crimes on the basis of their race or ethnicity rather than evidence.

The researchers interviewed public servants about the ethical concerns the new law will bring to their work.

In an example the researchers gave, if a mother who has no legal right to stay in Sweden gives birth, the midwife does not have to report her to police; however, the information about the baby will reach the tax authority, which is obliged to report the family.

"It creates a huge deterrence effect to be in contact with a health-care professional," Bonneau said. "We'll see what happens in practice. Will we see people fearing to be in contact with authorities, issues of maternal health, of the children being born?"

Asia

China's top political advisor meets Nepali foreign minister: China's top political advisor Wang Huning met with Nepali Foreign Minister Shisir Khanal in Beijing on Tuesday.

Wang, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), said China is ready to work with Nepal, under the strategic guidance of the leaders of both countries, to maintain high-level exchanges, enhance political mutual trust and deepen practical cooperation.

China hopes to continuously advance China-Nepal relations to better benefit the peoples of both countries, and the CPPCC National Committee is ready to make positive contributions in this regard, he said. (Xinhua)



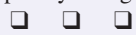
Firefighters battle flames after fire breaks out at S. Korea market: Firefighters battled flames Tuesday after a fire broke out at a traditional market in South Korea's capital Seoul, according to Yonhap news agency.

The fire started at about 2:34 p.m. local time (0534 GMT) in a temporary structure on the rooftop of the Yeongcheon Market in western Seoul, causing thick smoke to billow into the air.

The fire authorities deployed firefighting equipment and personnel to the scene to contain the blaze.

No casualties had been confirmed so far.

An investigation into the exact cause of the incident was expected to begin once the flames are completely brought under control. (Xinhua)



68 killed after strong quake hits S.Philippines: At least 68 people were killed and 33 are missing after a magnitude 7.8 earthquake struck off the southern coast of Mindanao, the Philippines, on June 8, said the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) on Tuesday.

In its latest report, the NDRRMC said the earthquake affected over 337,000 households, or some 1.38 million people. Nearly 68,000 houses sustained damage, among which over 12,380 were labeled as "totally damaged."

The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology said the tectonic earthquake occurred at 7:37 a.m. local time on June 8 at a depth of 33 km, with the epicenter 32 km southwest of the coast of Maasin town in Sarangani province on Mindanao Island. (Xinhua)



An aerial drone photo taken on June 4, 2026 shows a bridge crossing the Hutuo River and the urban scenery in Shijiazhuang, north China's Hebei Province. The Shijiazhuang section of the Hutuo River is about 205 kilometers long and flows through many districts and counties of the city. It is called the 'mother river' of the city. Since 2017, Shijiazhuang has implemented ecological restoration in stages along the river. Nowadays, the banks of the Hutuo River have become popular leisure destinations for local residents, while a growing number of emerging urban functions are also clustered here. (Xinhua)

Several hospitals evacuated patients

6.7-magnitude earthquake shakes part of Indonesia, causing damage and injuries

PALU, Indonesia, June 16, (AP): A 6.7 magnitude earthquake shook part of central Indonesia's Sulawesi island Tuesday, injuring at least eight people, causing scattered damage and rattling residents of a city devastated by a quake and tsunami eight years ago.

The strong shaking sent people fleeing into open areas in and around Palu, a city of about 400,000 people and the capital of Central Sulawesi province. Several hospitals evacuated patients, some with IV drips, outdoors as a safety measure.

Three regencies close to the epicenter - with a combined population of 1.2 million - have yet to be fully assessed. At least eight people were reported injured in Sigi and rushed to a nearby hospital, including two with serious injuries, according to the National Search and Rescue Agency.

Images from the area showed heavily damaged structures with partially collapsed roofs, shattered walls and debris scattered across the streets. The National Disaster Management Agency said information on the damage, possible casualties and displaced people was still being gathered.

"We have evacuated all guests from the hotel, including several guests who remained in their rooms," said Effendi Natali, a general manager of a four-star hotel in Palu.

"They all panicked, which is a natural reaction during an earthquake, but everyone is safe," Natali said, adding that the hotel sustained only minor damage.



This photo taken with a mobile phone shows patients of a hospital being evacuated to an open area after a 6.7-magnitude earthquake hit Palu, Central Sulawesi province, Indonesia, June 16. (Xinhua)

The initial quake was centered 43 kilometers (27 miles) east-southeast of Palu, and the U.S. Geological Survey said it was about 10 kilometers (6 miles) deep. Several aftershocks followed, the strongest being 5.2 magnitude.

People also moved away from coastal areas as a precaution in case the quake set off a tsunami. Indonesia's Meteorology, Climatology and Geophysical Agency said there was no danger of a tsunami but warned aftershocks could continue.

"The earthquake shaking was extremely strong," Palu resident Muhtar Ahmad said. "We are still traumatized by the previous earthquake, so we chose to remain outside because we are afraid that aftershocks may continue."

Indonesia is crossed by several seismic faults, and earthquakes and volcanic activity are common.

Many Sulawesi residents are haunted by the magnitude 7.5 earthquake that devastated Palu in 2018, setting off a 3-meter (10-foot) high tsunami and a phenomenon called liquefaction in which soil collapses into itself. More than 4,000 people were killed, including many who were buried when whole neighborhoods were swallowed in the falling ground.

In January 2021, a magnitude 6.2 earthquake near the city of Mamuju on Sulawesi island left at least 100 people dead, with thousands sleeping outdoors for days out of fear of aftershocks.

Colombia's ELN rebels declare ceasefire before Sunday's presidential election

BOGOTÁ, Colombia, June 16, (AP): Colombia's largest remaining rebel group announced a unilateral ceasefire Monday as the nation heads into a highly polarized presidential election next weekend.

In a statement published on its X account, the National Liberation Army, or ELN, said that it has told its fighters to cease attacks on the nation's military from June 20 to June 23. Colombia's presidential election will be held on Sunday, June 21.

The ELN said that it respects citizens' "right to vote freely" and added that it does not want to "threaten any of the candidates, or stop people from voting."

The rebels also warned against foreign interference in the elections.

"We cannot accept any involvement by leaders of other countries in political decisions that should only concern Colombians," the statement said.

Colombia's presidential election pits Sen. Iván Cepeda, an ally of President Gustavo Petro, against Abelardo de la Esparilla, a conservative lawyer, who was endorsed by U.S. President Donald Trump earlier this month. De la Esparilla has prom-



Supporters of presidential candidate Abelardo de la Esparilla attend a campaign rally in Buga, Colombia on June 14. (AP)

ised to take a more confrontational approach toward the nation's remaining rebel groups by canceling peace talks that started under Petro

Critics say that over the past four years, rebel groups in Colombia have used ceasefires to regroup, rearm and strengthen their grip over rural communities, where they extort business-

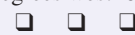
es and threaten anyone who stands in the way of illegal enterprises.

The Petro administration launched peace talks with the ELN in 2023, but the negotiations were canceled in 2025 after the rebels waged a series of attacks in northeast Colombia that forced more than 56,000 people to flee their homes.

Lat/Am

Quake hits waters off Cuba: An earthquake with a magnitude of 5.1 jolted waters off Cuba at 1737 GMT on Monday, the GFZ German Research Centre for Geosciences said.

The epicenter, with a depth of 10 km, was initially determined to be at 22.90 degrees north latitude and 85.19 degrees west longitude. (Xinhua)



Dominican owners to stand trial: The sibling owners of the Santo Domingo nightclub where a roof collapse killed 236 people and injured more than 100 last year will stand trial for involuntary manslaughter, a judge ruled Monday.

Antonio and Maribel Espallat, the owners of Jet Set nightclub, could face up to 2 years in prison if found guilty.

The April 8, 2025 collapse reverberated across the Dominican Republic, with authorities working frantically for days to reach people under the rubble.

The ruling Monday by Magistrate Reymundo Mejia Zorrilla of the First Court of Instruction of the National District in Santo Domingo drew frustration from victims' relatives who were hoping for homicide charges that carry stiffer penalties of up to 20 years in prison.

The ruling said that the case did not warrant a homicide charge because that would indicate the defendants knew that their negligence would cause the deaths of the victims. But if they could have foreseen the roof collapse, "logic and reason" suggest they would not have endangered their own lives in addition to those of the victims, the ruling said. (AP)

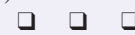
Africa

31 dead after bus crashes in Ethiopia: Police in Ethiopia say at least 31 people are dead and dozens more injured after a bus crash in the conflict-hit northern Amhara region.

The overcrowded bus was traveling from the Dessie area to the capital, Addis Ababa, early Monday when it veered off the road and plunged into a ravine, according to the Kombolcha Town Administration Police Division.

Many people died due to delays in emergency response as the area lacks basic infrastructure and ambulance services, forcing passengers to be transported in public vehicles.

The road where the accident occurred winds through hilly terrain and is widely known as hazardous. The cause of the crash remains under investigation.. (AP)



Kenya to pay compensation: Kenya will pay compensation to almost 2,000 victims of protest-related human rights abuses, President William Ruto said on Monday, marking a rare national reparations process outside the judicial system.

Violent protests in the East African nation have left a trail of destruction in which hundreds of people have died, were injured, or suffered business losses. In the most recent incident, two demonstrations over an Ebola quarantine center for Americans left three people dead and dozens of others injured.

The victims of human rights abuses will begin receiving compensation from next week after vetting by the state-funded human rights commission. The total pay out is expected to total \$15 million. (AP)

UN calls on Afghanistan's Taliban rulers to reverse crackdown on women

UNITED NATIONS, June 16, (AP): The UN Security Council unanimously adopted a resolution Monday calling on Afghanistan's Taliban rulers to swiftly reverse their crackdown on women and to combat militant groups inside Afghanistan that Pakistan accuses of carrying out cross-border attacks.

China's UN Ambassador Fu Cong, whose country sponsored the resolution, said the hope is that the Afghan government will "take more proactive measures to protect human rights, especially the rights of women, and project an image of openness, inclusivity and responsibility."

The resolution extends the UN political mission in Afghanistan until June 17, 2027, and authorizes it to support humanitarian aid deliveries "without discrimination" and to promote national and local governance "without any discrimination based on sex, religion or ethnicity, with the full, equal, meaningful and safe participation of women, ... minorities, youth and persons with disabilities."

The resolution's adoption follows the arrest of at least 30 women in the western city of Herat this month for allegedly violating the Taliban's strict dress code. A rare protest



A Taliban fighter stands guard as women wait to receive food rations distributed by a humanitarian aid group, in Kabul, Afghanistan on May 23, 2023. (AP)

sparked by the arrests was violently dispersed by Taliban police, who shot and killed one person and injured several others, according to the UN mission known as UNAMA.

The Taliban have run Afghanistan since 2021 in the wake of the chaotic withdrawal of US-led forces and have imposed a strict interpretation of Islamic law, or Shariah, includ-

ing draconian restrictions on women and girls, such as bans on education beyond primary school and on many jobs. Minorities have also been impacted.

The resolution authorizes the UN mission to facilitate talks between the Taliban and regional countries and the wider international community.

Uganda opposition figure seized by soldiers as army chief vows 'hurt and pain'

KAMPALA, Uganda, June 16, (AP): An opposition figure in Uganda was detained Monday on the orders of the army chief, whose increased role in his father's administration has worried opposition and human rights defenders.

Erias Lukwago was taken from his house by armed soldiers after he had sought to serve Gen. Muhoozi Kainerugaba, who is army chief and the president's son, with court papers related to Kainerugaba's threats against another opposition figure, according to Lukwago's party. Kainerugaba confirmed the arrest on his social media and threatened to inflict "hurt and pain" against him.

Lukwago is a former mayor of the Ugandan capital of Kampala and the president of the People's Front for Freedom opposition group. He is the attorney for Kizza Besigye, a four-time presidential candidate who faces treason charges in a criminal case that his supporters see as politically motivated.

Kainerugaba, the eldest son of Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, is an increasingly controversial figure in national politics. He has posted offensive tweets over the years and asserted that he will succeed his father in the presidency. This possibility has seemed increas-



Then Lt. Gen. Muhoozi Kainerugaba, (right), son of Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni, speaks to Attorney General Kiriwawa Kiwanuka, left, at a "thanksgiving" ceremony in Entebbe, Uganda, on May 7, 2022. (AP)

ingly likely as his 81-year-old father was sworn in for a seventh term in May and Kainerugaba has emerged as de facto ruler.

The army chief said on social platform X that Lukwago had crossed the line in pursuing a case against him and that he was holding him.

"This fool will learn the lesson he has been begging for," he said. He later posted photos of a blindfolded

Lukwago appearing to beg for mercy.

Before his arrest, Lukwago told reporters he had been trying to hold Kainerugaba accountable for his alleged role in the violation of Besigye's rights - including his abduction in Nairobi, the Kenyan capital, in November 2024 and his subsequent jailing without bail in Uganda. Kainerugaba has threatened to hang Besigye, accusing him of plotting to kill Museveni.

Kuwait oil down \$4.17 to \$90.67 pb

KUWAIT CITY, June 16, (KUNA): Kuwait crude oil down USD 4.17 during Monday's trading to reach USD 90.67 per barrel, compared with USD 94.84 pb on Friday, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation

(KPC) said Tuesday. Brent futures dropped USD 4.16 to USD 83.317 pb and West Texas Intermediate declined by USD 4.13 to USD 80.75 pb.

Business

KFHOnline offers over 200 digital banking services

Kuwait Finance House strengthens its leadership in digital banking innovation

KUWAIT CITY, June 16: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) continues to consolidate its leading position in digital banking through KFHOnline, available via mobile and the website. The platform provides integrated, secure, and user-friendly services tailored to customers' daily needs. These include advanced electronic payment and settlement solutions, online account opening, the buying and selling of gold, and a wide range of essential banking transactions.

KFHOnline offers over 200 digital banking services, featuring a modern design and smart solutions. The bank has completely upgraded the application, reinforcing its leadership in digital innovation and its commitment to providing advanced financial solutions for a seamless banking experience. This milestone also

highlights KFH's excellence in executing its digital transformation strategy.

The mobile application provides a wide range of local and international money transfer services such as WAMD money transfer service and co-branded international money transfer services in cooperation with Western Union. This service enables customers to conduct fast and secure transfers, whether in cash, directly to bank accounts, or to digital wallets worldwide, with access to Western Union's extensive global network.

Meanwhile, KFH Pay also provides a flexible and fast mechanism for fund transfers and requests, allowing customers to send payment links or use phone numbers to request funds from individuals or groups. Customers can create custom groups for these requests and easily



KFHOnline

track everyone's payment status through KFH Pay's "Transactions History" list, enhancing transparency and monitoring.

Applying for a financing online through KFHOnline app has become more convenient. Customer can submit their financing request through the Finance Services menu in the app and select Finance Request option, without the need to visit a branch.

KFH also provides a fully integrated ecosystem of digital banking card services, allowing customers to instantly issue virtual prepaid cards temporarily suspend and reactivate cards, view KFH Rewards points, and access full card details through the application.

The Bank has also made progress in allowing customers to update their Civil IDs and authenticate their identities

without using a physical card. Customers can easily transfer funds from their prepaid cards to their personal bank accounts. In addition, KFH customers with supplementary family cards can now manage limits for both those additional cards and their primary debit cards.

As part of enhancing added value, the bank added KFH Offers section, integrated into KFHOnline app, where customers can explore a diverse array of exclusive benefits.

This comprehensive suite of digital services reflects KFH's commitment to providing an integrated, technology-driven banking experience. This approach aligns with a strategic vision that anticipates industry trends, ensures sustainable excellence, and reinforces KFH's digital leadership.

KPC eyes Saudi pipeline link to boost crisis resilience

Kuwait navigates Hormuz crisis with Gulf coordination

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 16: Kuwait successfully navigated the Strait of Hormuz crisis through close coordination with other Gulf states, according to the recent report issued by Kuwait Oil Company (KOC).

At the same time, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) is intensifying efforts to link Kuwaiti oil production lines with Saudi pipeline networks to strengthen integration in the distribution of Kuwaiti oil during regional crises. These efforts are supported by the strategic alliance between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, their longstanding historical ties and their shared destiny.

The report affirmed the implementation of a comprehensive emergency plan that integrated the Saudi land bridge, regional air corridors and inland port procedures into a coordinated and organized system.

According to the report, the system proved that strong political determination and effective regional cooperation are vital to overcoming even the most challenging geographical obstacles. It pointed out that a crisis managed with strategic foresight could become an opportunity to build a stronger and more sustainable logistical infrastructure.

The report revealed that Kuwait dealt with the crisis through a multi-level emergency plan, which established a new logistical framework based on these pillars -- fully prepared and operational Saudi-Kuwaiti land bridge, organized air bridge capable of functioning under the most difficult conditions, and railway connection between Kuwait and Riyadh.

Emergency customs procedures, which are still under development, were tested in practical field operations and proved highly effective, confirm-

ing that this system is a lasting strategic asset for Kuwait rather than a temporary measure to address a short-term crisis.

The report also indicated that the infrastructure developed during the crisis, the transportation corridors that were established, and the strengthened regional partnerships will continue to exist and expand once the conflict ends.

It stated that the Saudi land bridge served as the foundation of Kuwait's strategy to overcome geographical challenges by directing imports through Jeddah Port and NEOM Port before transporting them overland across the Arabian Peninsula into Kuwait.

Saudi-Kuwaiti cooperation was clearly reflected in the expansion of the Khafji (Nuwaiseeb) border, the most significant gateway along this route, with its capacity increased to 44 lanes to accommodate the growing volume of truck traffic.

The Al-Ruqai (Salmi) border near Hafer Al-Batin also played an important role as a secondary gateway for goods moving northward from central Saudi Arabia.

Regarding air transport during the crisis, the report stressed that it evolved from a secondary option into a vital component of the supply chain.

The Kuwaiti supply network faced difficult challenges due to operational disruptions at Kuwait International Airport, including temporary closures related to maintenance activities.

In response, the relevant authorities presented flexible and innovative solutions to ensure uninterrupted supply flows. Kuwait Airways utilized cargo operations through Dammam Airport in Saudi Arabia and transported shipments by land to Kuwait. Cargo flights were used to deliver fresh food supplies directly to warehouses in the country.

The Qaisumah Airport in northern Saudi Arabia emerged as a notable example of innovation dur-

ing the crisis. Fresh food shipments from abroad were redirected there and immediately transported overland to Kuwait. This approach significantly reduced transit times and helped preserve the quality of chilled food products.

The report added that Kuwait General Administration of Customs (KGAC) reorganized procedures at the land borders to process airlifted shipments with the same efficiency and speed typically associated with airport operations, effectively bypassing conventional land-border processing methods.

The airlift operation was carefully managed according to actual needs, with nearly all chilled poultry products, dairy items and fresh produce arriving by air or through combined truck-and-aircraft transportation methods.

Moreover, essential spare parts for power generation facilities and other vital infrastructure were imported. Desalination operations were maintained to prevent the interruption of essential public services.

Electronics and clothing imports increased by 15 to 20 percent in air freight allocations despite the substantial rise in transportation costs.

Regarding the contributions of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Oman, the report disclosed that these two countries activated eastern bypass routes, transforming ports located outside the Strait of Hormuz into major gateways for regional trade.

The Port of Sohar on the Gulf of Oman recorded a remarkable increase in logistical activity, with containers transported overland into the UAE before being distributed through the Gulf road network to Bahrain, Qatar and Kuwait, while the Port of Fujairah and Khor Fakkan Port on the eastern coast in Sharjah experienced a noticeable surge in shipping traffic.

Kuwait refining capacity hits record 1.41m bpd

KNPC leads regional refining race, surpasses Aramco

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 16: Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) became the largest oil refining facility in the Middle East after acquiring the Zour Refinery, with its actual daily refining capacity reaching 1.4136 million barrels of oil, hence, securing the leading position in the region.

Saudi Aramco ranked second with a total daily refining capacity exceeding one million barrels. Its refining assets include the SATORP Refinery, which has a capacity of 460,000 barrels per day, and the Ras Tanura Refinery, whose capacity exceeds 550,000 barrels per day.

The Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) is in third place through its management of the Ruwais Refining Complex in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) -- the largest refining complex in the country, with a capacity exceeding 800,000 barrels per day.

The newspaper obtained information that KNPC produced 17,500 tons of marine fuel oil last year in accordance with new international specifications requiring a sulfur content of 0.5 percent. This was achieved through the atmospheric residual desulfurization unit.

At the same time, KNPC is continuing efforts to expand the refining capacity of Mina Al-Ahmadi and Mina Abdullah refineries by increasing the output of several operating units.

As part of these efforts, the company completed performance tests to raise the operational capacity of the atmospheric residual distillation units at Mina Al-Ahmadi Refinery from 50,000 barrels per

day to 55,000 barrels per day.

In Mina Abdullah Refinery, final insurance approval was obtained to increase the operating capacity of a number of units beyond their original design limits.

Among the approved increases are the atmospheric residual desulfurization unit, whose capacity was raised from 50,000 to 55,000 barrels per day, and the naphtha treatment unit, whose capacity increased from 23,500 to 25,800 barrels per day.

Capacity increases were also approved for other units at the Mina Al-Ahmadi and Mina Abdullah refineries, including the gasoline production unit (127-CCR) in Mina Abdullah, which was increased from 18,000 to 20,000 barrels per day, and the petroleum coke production unit (136-DCU) at Mina Al-Ahmadi, which rose from 37,000 to more than 44,400 barrels per day.

The same information indicated that KNPC completed the comprehensive maintenance of the clean fuels units at Mina Al-Ahmadi Refinery last year. It is the first major maintenance for the project and considered one of the largest maintenance operations ever undertaken at the refinery. The maintenance work covered about 1,500 pieces of equipment, while insulation for equipment and production lines totaled around 20,000 insulation points.

A total of 4,500 specialized and trained workers participated in the operation, which was completed without any accidents or work-related injuries, proving the strict compliance with health, safety and environmental standards.

The company also carried out performance up-

grades and efficiency enhancements through the adoption of advanced technology for the remote monitoring of rotating equipment and electric motors. The technology is designed to provide precise assessments of equipment readiness, enabling the prediction of potential failures before they occur, thereby, reducing time, effort and operational costs. It utilizes a small clip attached to electrical cables at power supply stations, allowing the technical teams to obtain accurate readings from equipment located in difficult-to-access areas. The technology was successfully tested on submersible pumps and air compressors at several locations in the Mina Abdullah and Mina Al-Ahmadi refineries.

According to the company, the adoption of this technology enabled the generation of precise scientific analyses in record time, contributing to greater operational efficiency and reliability. It added that the technology offers a practical solution, which eliminates the need for external consultants, enabling employees to carry out inspections and maintenance activities efficiently and without incurring additional costs.

The technology is expected to create valuable training opportunities for employees, promote internal collaboration, and support efforts to improve equipment performance and overall operational efficiency.

It is worth mentioning that the combined daily production capacity of the Mina Abdullah and Mina Al-Ahmadi refineries reached 798,600 barrels in 2025, while that of Zour Refinery reached 615,000 barrels per day.

Higher prices for gas, groceries and flights will likely outlast the Iran war

NEW YORK, June 16, (AP): A tentative deal to end the Iran war makes it reasonable to ask how soon prices will drop for gasoline, groceries, airline tickets and other items that got more expensive during the conflict.

Not so fast, experts say.

Even after oil starts flowing again from the Middle East, it could take a while for consumers to see a difference at local fuel pumps, supermarkets and other places they shop, according to economists and industry analysts.

Fighting over the Strait of Hormuz disrupted not only supplies of crude and refined fuel but also the supply chains for fertilizer, food and even footwear. Businesses expect higher costs to linger, which means their customers might need to prepare for that too.

"It is not clear, despite three months of war, that anything has been achieved that makes the American consumer better off," Brett House, an economist who teaches at Columbia Business School, said. "In fact, by almost any measure, not just the American consumer, but the world, is worse off as a result of this attack."

If the deal between the U.S. and Iran holds, here's how experts see the war's effects receding - or not - in the weeks ahead:

Following news of the tentative agreement, oil prices fell Monday to about \$80 for a barrel of U.S. benchmark crude. That compares to \$67 per barrel before the war and the price of over \$120 a barrel reached earlier in the conflict.

Refineries typically pay for crude oil a month or more in advance, so even after oil prices drop, they won't immediately be processing cheaper products.

"The tendency of gasoline prices to fall slowly is partly because the raw material takes weeks to work through the system until it's delivered to consumers,"

said Michael Lynch, a distinguished fellow at the nonpartisan Energy Policy Research Foundation.

In places without enough refining capacity to meet their needs, such as the West Coast of the U.S., gas prices will take longer to drop, said Mark Barteau, a professor of chemical engineering and chemistry at Texas A&M University.

In some Asian and African countries that rely more on oil from the Middle East, the supply shock led to school and government office closures and instructions to work from home, according to the International Energy Agency.

"The bottom line is that getting back to 'normal' will be a lengthy process involving many parties and countries," Barteau said. "Getting an agreement between the U.S. and Iran to open the strait is just the beginning."

Industry experts have spent months warning that even if the war ended, travelers should not expect airfares to go down immediately.

Airlines typically buy fuel in advance, adjust their schedules gradually and price tickets based heavily on demand, meaning lower oil and jet fuel prices can take weeks or months to get factored into the cost of commercial flights.

"I think it's unlikely that we're going to see a retreat or reduction in the cost of flying at any point this summer," Columbia's House said.

Fuel surcharges that some airlines outside the U.S. added are one of the first areas where passengers might get a reprieve, said Gordon Ho, a professor at the University of Southern California's business school.

"Consumers are going to say, 'Wait a minute, why are you still charging me a fuel surcharge?'" Ho said.

Reopening the strait is unlikely to deliver instant relief at the grocery store, according to David Ortega, a professor of food economics and policy at Michigan State University.

Fuel accounts for roughly 15% to 30% of the total cost of food, according to the Independent Grocers Alliance, a grouping of 7,500 global supermarkets.

But it can take months for an energy shock like the one caused by the Iran war to wind through the food supply chain and raise grocery prices. And once prices go up, it takes them a long time to come back down, especially when the future is unpredictable, Ortega said.

"We're likely still looking at inflationary pressure on food in the coming months," Ortega said. "There's still a good deal of uncertainty about how the reopening will unfold, and it will take time for fuel, diesel and retail fertilizer prices to come back down."

Rabobank, which is based in the Netherlands, said it expected war-related food price inflation to peak sometime next year in Europe. In the U.S., grocery prices are expected to rise 3.2% this year, which compares to a historical average of 2.6%, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Reopening the Strait of Hormuz would also be a welcome change for farmers and the production of food globally. Roughly 30% of the world's fertilizer passed through the waterway before the war began. Prices soared as the supply was effectively cut off, and shipments probably will take a long time to return to pre-war levels.

The consequences of the shortage facing farmers now may only intensify down the road, regardless.

manage traffic and demand fees," said Torbjorn Soltvedt, principal Middle East analyst at risk intelligence company Verisk Maplecroft.

Paying tolls would present a quandary for ship owners, since the U.S. and EU have designated the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps a terrorist organization, and the U.S. Treasury has sanctioned the entity Iran has announced to run its collections. Unless those sanctions are modified, paying exposes shippers and banks to sanctions.

Legal experts say allowing Iran to control passage would violate international law on freedom of navigation as set down in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which requires countries to permit peaceful passage through territorial waters. The strait's waters are shared by Iran to the north and Oman to the south.

Some producers in the Middle East paused extracting oil from the ground, known as a shut-in, when they ran out of storage space. Restarting those operations can be a slow process.

Countries such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, which were able to export some oil through alternate pipelines or routes besides the Strait of Hormuz, may be among the quickest to resume production, said Alan Gelder, senior vice president of refining, chemicals and oil markets at Wood Mackenzie, an analytics firm.

"Places like Iraq could be much more challenged because they've had a much bigger shut-in, their fields are more difficult ... it may well take about a year before they get back," he said.

Claudio Galimberti, chief economist at Rystad Energy, noted in an emailed comment that "sentiment has clearly improved. But sentiment is not the same as supply."

"It will take time for production to ramp back up, for logistics to normalize, and for the risk premium embedded in crude prices to dissipate," he said.

Countries won't restart until they know there is a durably open strait and that a ceasefire will last more than 30 or 60 days, said Daniel Sternoff, senior fellow at the Center on Global Energy Policy at Columbia University.

Economists at Capital Economics estimate that energy flows would reach 80% of prewar levels by September.

Even if the deal reopens the strait immediately, that will not immediately send inflation lower, economists say.

Inflation is "set to stay above target in most major economies throughout this year and the first half of next, even as growth remains relatively weak," said Neil Shearing, group chief economist at Capital Economics.

Inflation could even rise when government measures aimed at easing the energy shock expire, Joachim Nagel, the head of Germany's Bundesbank central bank said in a speech Monday.

That includes Germany's temporary lowering of fuel taxes by 17 euro cents per liter, which runs through June 30.

"It will take months for the oil supply to return to normal," Nagel said.

Offering 30% cashback for SELECT customers

Weyay Bank announces strategic partnership with Snoonu



Weyay, Snoonu launch strategic partnership in Kuwait.

KUWAIT CITY, June 16: Weyay Bank has announced a new strategic partnership with Snoonu, reinforcing its commitment to staying at the forefront of innovation while delivering exceptional digital experiences tailored to its customers' evolving needs.

As Snoonu recently entered the Kuwaiti market, Weyay is bringing this dynamic platform to its customers through an exclusive lifestyle-driven offering. The partnership introduces a special benefit for SELECT cardholders, providing them with enhanced value and seamless access to a wide range of digital services.

Snoonu has grown into one of the GCC's leading all-in-one platforms since its founding in 2019. The app offers a diverse ecosystem of services, including food delivery, grocery shopping, car wash services, electronics purchas-

ing, and more, all within a single, user-friendly interface. Its expansion into Kuwait marks a significant step in its regional growth strategy.

This collaboration aligns with Weyay Bank's ongoing focus on delivering meaningful value to its customers, particularly youth and university students, through partnerships that match their everyday lifestyles. As part of the offer, eligible student reward customers can enjoy an exclusive 30% cashback when spending on Snoonu using their SELECT card.

Beyond traditional offers, Weyay continues to empower customers with smart financial tools that help them better manage their spending and maximize everyday value. Through its app, customers can benefit from budgeting features, financial planning tools, and saving pots designed to promote smarter money habits. In addition, Weyay's integrated digital store provides a

seamless platform for accessing a wide range of services in one place.

Commenting on the partnership, Fawaz Al Nakib, Loyalty and Partnership Manager at Weyay Bank, said: "We are committed to empowering our customers, especially SELECT allowance customers, by offering tailored benefits and offers designed to match their needs. This collaboration allows our customers to enjoy a more seamless and rewarding experience through a platform that brings together the services they rely on every day."

From Snoonu's side, Khalid Al Busairi, PR & CSR Senior Manager, added: "Weyay and Snoonu share the same mindset when it comes to staying ahead with technology and constantly evolving to meet people's everyday needs. This partnership brings that shared vision to life, giving Snoonu users in Kuwait real value through a bank that moves at the same pace we do."

Other Voices

In uncertain markets, regulation builds trust

By Naser Taher

Founder and Chairman,
MultiBank Group



Naser Taher

Financial markets have always moved in cycles, but today's environment is different in both speed and complexity. Capital now moves across borders in seconds. Investors react instantly to interest rate decisions, geopolitical developments, currency movements, and global economic signals. Technology has made markets more accessible, and also more exposed to misinformation and short-term speculation.

In this environment, trust has become a foundation of financial stability.

For the Gulf region, this carries particular significance. The GCC is now a major centre for capital, trade, investment, and financial services. Governments across the region have invested heavily in economic diversification, digital infrastructure, and regulatory reform. These efforts have positioned the Gulf as a bridge between global markets and emerging economies.

Yet the region's long term success will not be determined by speed alone. It will be determined by the strength of its governance, the clarity of its regulations, and the confidence these give investors.

The past few years have shown that financial innovation works only when matched with responsibility. New technologies, digital platforms, and faster trading infrastructure have changed the way people participate in markets. They have expanded access and created new opportunities, but they have also introduced new risks. When access grows faster than understanding, investors can become vulnerable. When innovation moves faster than regulation, confidence can weaken. When markets are driven by noise rather than knowledge, stability becomes harder to protect.

This is why regulation should not be seen as a barrier to growth. Sound regulation enables of sustainable growth. It provides the framework that allows investors, institutions, and economies to operate with greater confidence, separating serious market participants from short term opportunists. It encourages transparency, accountability, and better standards of conduct.

For financial institutions, this means the responsibility goes beyond providing access. It means building a culture where investors understand risk, where compliance is embedded in operations, and where communication stays clear and balanced. Financial institutions earn trust through consistent discipline, not promises.

Investor education is also central to this process. Across global markets, many indi-

viduals now hold products and instruments that were once limited to professionals. Access is welcome, but it is not enough on its own. Investors need to understand volatility, leverage, and liquidity, and to base decisions on information rather than emotion. A better-informed investor base contributes to a more resilient market.

The same holds at an institutional level. As the Gulf continues to attract international capital, global investors will examine the quality of regulation, transparency, dispute resolution, governance standards, and market infrastructure. Capital follows opportunity, but it remains where there is confidence. This is where the GCC can lead.

Kuwait and the wider Gulf region have long taken a careful approach to financial stability. That caution is not hesitation. It reflects a recognition that long term market credibility depends on protecting investors and maintaining confidence in the financial system. As new financial models emerge, the balance between innovation and protection will become even more important.

The future of financial markets will belong to jurisdictions that can combine ambition with discipline. Markets need innovation alongside safeguards, technology alongside human judgment, and access alongside education. Above all, they need institutions that know credibility is earned slowly and lost quickly.

For the Gulf, the opportunity is clear. The region can continue building markets that are open and globally connected while grounded in regulation and investor protection. This balance will be essential as economies become more integrated and as capital flows become more competitive.

In uncertain times, trust is a strategic asset, not a soft one. It shapes how investors behave and helps economies stay resilient. The markets that recognise this will be better placed to grow and to endure.

The next phase of the region's financial development will be judged less by who moves the fastest than by who builds the strongest foundations. In finance, progress without trust is fragile. Progress built on regulation, transparency, and responsibility is what creates lasting value.

Kevin Warsh faces first Fed test amid inflation concerns

Oil drop eases pressure

WASHINGTON, June 16, (AP): Ever since Kevin Warsh was nominated by President Trump in late January to lead the Federal Reserve, a question has lingered: Will he seek to raise interest rates to tame inflation or cut them as Trump has long demanded?

On Wednesday, Warsh may provide the first hints of an answer when he oversees his first Fed policy meeting as chair and holds a news conference afterward. Bond markets, which can swing sharply on a chair's pronouncements, will be watching particularly closely for any signs of which way he leans.

"We expect the press conference to be pivotal," Jonathan Pingle, an economist at investment bank UBS, wrote in a note. "This will be Kevin Warsh's first public appearance as Chair. ... We do not really know what his policy views are."

Economists say Warsh will likely aim for a neutral approach, largely because he is taking over the Fed at a challenging time. Rising inflation has made it all but impossible for the Fed to cut interest rates anytime soon, which could stimulate growth and further raise prices. Hiring has improved noticeably since the beginning of the year, removing another key rationale for rate cuts. And the other 11 policymakers on the Fed's rate-setting committee - including Warsh's predecessor, former chair Jerome Powell - are split on whether an increase in the Fed's key rate will be needed or if it can stay unchanged.

Oil prices have fallen sharply on news that the U.S. and Iran have reached an initial deal to end their war, which could eventually cool inflation. Yet it's unclear whether a permanent agreement can be reached.

"The right thing to do now is wait and see," said William English, an economist at the Yale School of Management and a former top Fed economist.



Federal Reserve Chairman Kevin Warsh speaks during his swearing-in in the East Room of the White House, Friday, May 22, 2026, in Washington. (AP)

Inflation has jumped to a three-year high of 4.2%, the government said last week, mostly because of higher gas prices. Even Trump has backed off a bit from his relentless demands for lower rates, and instead has argued that rate hikes - which the Fed undertakes to cool the economy and slow inflation -- aren't necessary.

In an interview earlier this month on NBC's "Meet the Press," Trump said, "Kevin is fantastic and I want him to do whatever he wants," but added, "there's no reason to raise rates."

On Wednesday the Fed is widely expected to keep its key rate at about 3.6%, where it has remained since last December. When the Fed reduces its rate, over time it can lower other borrowing costs for things like mortgages, auto loans, and business loans.

Still, some changes are expected, which will disappoint those hoping for lower borrowing costs: The Fed is likely to drop language that suggests its next move will be a rate cut, and instead adopt wording that is more neutral. Several Fed policymakers in recent weeks have said that the Fed's most likely next move is a hike, rather than a cut.

The central bank is also scheduled to release its quarterly economic

projections on Wednesday, which include forecasts for how the Fed's key rate will change over the next three years. In March, those projections suggested the Fed would cut its rate once this year. Yet on Wednesday they will likely show no change in 2026, with maybe one or two cuts next year, economists say.

Warsh has criticized the projections for providing too much "forward guidance" to financial markets and leading Fed officials to stand by their forecasts for too long, even as the economy changes. Fed watchers will look closely to see if Warsh participates in the quarterly projections. If he doesn't submit his own forecasts, it could be a sign he will seek to get rid of them entirely in the coming months.

Outside of policy, Warsh is expected to bring a different style to the Fed than Powell, people who've worked with him say. He wants Fed policymakers to give fewer speeches, have more debates behind closed doors, and will likely avoid commenting on the daily ups and downs of the economy. Powell was relatively plainspoken and straightforward, while Warsh has suggested he sees the famously oracular Alan Greenspan, the Fed's

chair from 1987 to 2005, as a model.

"He's just going to say less, because he doesn't find that stuff very helpful," said Robert Tetlow, a former senior policy advisor at the Fed.

Randall Kroszner, an economist at the University of Chicago who served on the Fed's governing board from 2006 to 2009, when Warsh was also a governor, said the new chair would likely focus on bigger-picture questions, such as how AI will impact the economy. He will avoid thornier issues, such as whether tariffs raise inflation, which Powell was willing to address.

By avoiding such hot-button issues, the Fed could attract less negative attention from the White House, Kroszner said.

"He's going to stay away from those," Kroszner added. "If the Fed is to maintain its independence, it needs to maintain its focus."

While seeking Trump's nomination, Warsh called for "regime change" at the Fed and criticized the central bank for not preventing the 2021-22 inflation surge, when prices jumped 9.1% in a year, the biggest spike in four decades.

Yet Kroszner said that Warsh will likely to seek to build consensus around changing things like the Fed's communications policies, rather than imposing them. So far, former Fed officials say he hasn't sought to fire top staff.

"He's not there to break things," Kroszner said.

During his Senate confirmation hearing in April, Warsh said he would focus on quelling inflation.

"Inflation is a choice, and the Fed must take responsibility for it," he said then.

If he acts on that sentiment by keeping rates unchanged - or even raising them - Trump could end up disappointed in another Fed chair. He often threatened to fire Powell, whom he also appointed, for not cutting rates deeply enough.

"There's at least a risk here that six months down the road, Trump is fulminating about how he didn't get what he wanted from Warsh, and he'd like to fire Warsh," English said.

'China Shock 2.0' looms over Europe as Beijing reroutes exports

WASHINGTON, June 16, (AP): For eight years, the United States has waged an economic war on China, slapping big taxes on Chinese products before they enter America.

But the campaign hasn't dented China's industrial prowess.

The world's second biggest economy is exporting more products than ever. It's just redirecting them away from the U.S. tariff wall and toward more open markets in Europe and elsewhere in Asia.

The shift in Chinese trade risks creating a European sequel to the China Shock that wiped out hundreds of thousands of factory jobs in the American heartland in the 2000s and contributed to the political upheaval that put Donald Trump in the White House twice.

Despite U.S. sanctions, China last year notched a record global trade surplus - an astonishing \$1.2 trillion.

Earlier this year, French President Emmanuel Macron warned that Chinese exports are "literally killing a large part of the European industry" and admitted that Europe was "slow to see that."

The Europeans are clear-eyed now. China's trade practices will be near the top of the agenda this week as leaders of the G7 rich democracies gather in Évian-les-Bains, France. In briefings last week, French officials indicated that they hope to come out of the summit with a plan to tackle the China threat.

One possibility is that the European Union and others will build a higher tariff wall of their own against

Chinese imports. Currently, the EU imposes relatively low tariffs on China under World Trade Organization rules - though it hits specific Chinese products with higher ones (up to 35% on electric vehicles, for example).

"China's export surge, unless its leaders rein it in, will provoke a protectionist wave against Chinese imports worldwide," said Maurice Obstfeld, senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics and former chief economist at the International Monetary Fund. "All the more so if the current disruptions around the Iran war persist and cause a sharper global slowdown."

Economist Taylor Wang at HSBC warned this month that a China-EU trade dispute could threaten Chinese exports; Europe accounted for a big share of China's exports of electric vehicles, solar panels and lithium-ion batteries.

The Europeans also hope to persuade Trump to stop targeting U.S. allies like the European Union and Canada with punitive tariffs and to start working with them instead to counter China.

The first China Shock started around 2001 when the Chinese joined the World Trade Organization and gained low-tariff access to the lucrative markets of the United States and Europe. In the United States, many factories couldn't compete with low-cost Chinese textiles, furniture, electronics and other manufactured goods.

Economists David Autor of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, David Dorn of the University

of Zurich and Gordon Hanson, now at Harvard, found that competition from China had led to the loss of 2.4 million American jobs.

China Shock 2.0, as it's come to be known, is playing out differently.

The first time around China was still emerging as a major player in global commerce. Now it dominates world trade and manufacturing.

China accounted for just 4% of global goods exports in 2000. Now its share is 16% - the highest in the world - making Beijing's trade policies far more consequential.

China has also upped its game, exporting sophisticated products like EVs and batteries, advanced machinery, software, scientific instruments and putting it in direct competition with the richest countries in the world. For example, Chinese exports now compete with nearly 58% of the exports from the 21 European countries that share the euro currency, up from 46% in 2000, according to a paper last month by researchers at the Federal Reserve and the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis.

"The second China shock is characterized by its companies running the board on manufacturing exports -- from low-tech, low-wage to high-tech high value-added industries," said economist Eswar Prasad of Cornell University. "This is directly hitting advanced economies where it now hurts the most -- high tech industries such as EVs and high-end robotics that many countries 'had been counting on for a manufacturing revival.'"

What's On

SPOTLIGHT

Got a birthday or event?

Share your story and snapshots with Arab Times!
Email your write-up and photos to
arabtimes@arabtimesonline.com
We'll feature it on our What's On page!

Blood drive reflects strong Italy-Kuwait relations

Italian Embassy leads blood drive to mark World Donor Day

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 16: On the occasion of World Blood Donor Day, the Italian Embassy organized a blood donation campaign on Monday, as an expression of solidarity and support, highlighting the importance of community contributions during the challenging period.

Italian Ambassador to Kuwait Lorenzo Morini said the initiative reflects the strength of the close relationship between Italy and Kuwait, as well as the continuous presence of his country and active engagement within Kuwait. He affirmed that Italian support remains steadfast, whether through direct cooperation or ongoing coordination with local authorities.

Morini revealed that regular technical exchanges take place between institutions in both countries, particularly in the security and defense sectors, in addition to broader cooperation in supply chains and essential services, which he described as key elements in maintaining stability and ensuring safe living conditions.

He added that discussions are con-



Ambassador Morini, Dr. Reem Al-Radwan, and Fawaz Al-Mazrouei



Italian Ambassador Lorenzo Morini donates blood

tinuing on expanding cooperation in the healthcare sector, pointing out that Italian doctors and specialists are already working in Kuwait, while opportunities to strengthen institutional cooperation between the two countries in this field are being explored.

He emphasized that the defense sector remains the top priority in bilateral cooperation, followed by the supply

chain sector, while stressing the importance of other areas that contribute to strengthening relations between the two countries.

Regarding the Italian community in Kuwait, he said it numbers around 800 people, although the current figure is lower due to some members traveling during summer.

He said members of the community are employed in different sectors, in-

cluding healthcare, defense, information technology, construction, electronics, and the oil and gas industry.

On the other hand, Dr. Reem Al-Radwan, Director of the Central Department of Blood and Cellular Therapy at the Ministry of Health, confirmed the commitment of the department to continue cooperating with embassies and various organizations in holding blood donation

campaigns.

She stated that the Italian campaign is part of the events launched by the ministry to mark World Blood Donor Day. She explained that these campaigns are intended to reinforce blood reserves as a precautionary measure, asserting that Kuwait's blood supply remains secure and capable of meeting hospital requirements.

She added that community participation exceeded expectations in recent months, with the number of donors rising from around 8,000 per month to more than 10,000 per month, with the aim of surpassing 100,000 donations annually.

Meanwhile, Fawaz Al-Mazrouei, Director General of Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS), said the humanitarian initiatives of Kuwait have strengthened its relations with the accredited diplomatic missions.

He stressed that the participation of embassies in blood donation campaigns reflects the cooperation and mutual understanding among different communities and Kuwaiti society, reinforcing human solidarity and helping ensure continuous support for patients in need of blood transfusion.

Securing top 3 spot in Kuwait recognition

PAK Donors ranked among top blood donation groups



PAK Donors ranks third in Kuwait Blood Donation Awards.

KUWAIT CITY, June 16: PAK Donors has proudly secured 3rd position among the Top 10 organizations recognized by the Kuwait Central Blood Bank, under the Ministry of Health, Kuwait, for its outstanding contribution to voluntary blood donation.

The recognition was presented during the World Blood Donor Day 2026 ceremony organized by the Central Administration for Blood and Cellular Therapy.

The award acknowledges PAK Donors' continued commitment to supporting Kuwait's blood supply and promoting the life-saving importance of voluntary blood donation.

This remarkable achievement reflects the dedication and collective efforts of PAK Donors' blood donors, volunteers, supporters,

coordinators, advisors, and team members who have consistently served humanity through blood donation campaigns.

PAK Donors extends its heartfelt appreciation to all blood donors – the true heroes behind this achievement – whose generous contributions have helped save thousands of lives.

The organization also expresses its sincere gratitude to the Kuwait Central Blood Bank and the Ministry of Health, Kuwait, for recognizing and encouraging the efforts of voluntary blood donation organizations.

PAK Donors remains committed to promoting blood donation awareness and serving humanity without discrimination based on nationality, religion, or background.

Community leaders attend event

ONCP marks '27th Foundation Day'



Photo during the event.

KUWAIT CITY, June 16: The ONCP Kuwait Committee celebrated "27th Foundation Day". NCP Overseas Cell National Convener and LKS Representative Babu Francis Olakkankal inaugurated the event.

The event was presided over by ONCP Kuwait President Jeeves Erinjeri. ONCP Kuwait General Secretary Arulraj K.V delivered

the welcome address. ONCP Kuwait Vice President Sunny Miranda (Karnataka), Joint Secretaries Ashokan Thiruvananthapuram, Mrs Susan Jose, Women's Forum Convener Mrs Divya, and Executive Members Sunny K. Al-lese, Abdul Aziz Kozhikode, and Pradeep led the various programs. ONCP Kuwait Secretary Ratheesh Varkala gave the vote of thanks.

AI can't replace empathy and critical thinking

Human skills gain value in AI-driven workplace

NEW YORK, June 16, (AP) — Many workers fear machines will supplant them as adoption of artificial intelligence accelerates.

But what if people have qualities both unmistakably human and essential to career success that AI could not easily replace them?

Some workplace experts argue that with more businesses adopting AI tools, soft skills such as empathy, critical thinking and ethical decision-making are worth cultivating to help employees become indispensable.

Across industries and occupations, "the skills that are most resistant to displacement by AI are the ones that are the most distinctly human," Maria Flynn, president and CEO of Jobs for the Future, a nonprofit focused on workforce development, said. "Some of those things are relationship building, conflict resolution, the ability to guide and motivate other people and ethical judgment."

Even in job listings for technical roles such as IT support, organizations say they're looking for candidates who communicate well and take leadership initiative, Flynn said.

"We started to use the term 'durable skills' and think about them as capabilities that really are durable, in that they hold their value across economic shifts and technological change and labor market disruption," she said. "And we think, especially now, in this time of AI advancement, that it's the durable skills that really make a worker genuinely valuable at work, regardless of what tools and technology are available."

Here are five skills to cultivate based on the areas where experts say humans still hold an edge over artificial intelligence.

Interpreting body language and reading between the lines to decipher what wasn't explicitly communicated are skills that many people find are best performed by humans. They also inform the ability to show empathy, and being sensitive to the feelings of others is a sought-after trait in workers.

Marco Iansiti, a professor of business administration at Harvard Business School, said he saw that firsthand during a hospital stay.

"A nurse has incredibly human impacts. Feeling, relating to the patient, the type of care that is so important," Iansiti said. "I remember times when I was sick in the hospital and the nurse was like the godsend. Would I have let a robot do the same thing? No. There was a human connection there that I found very valuable."

Where AI could be helpful in a hospital setting is by taking on mundane tasks such as paperwork, freeing up time for nurses to provide compassionate patient care, he said.

"There's a lot of systems that are being deployed now that I think are very effective in doing this and essentially release healthcare workers to do the things that they should be doing and do best."

Building strong personal ties with colleagues, clients and stakeholders remains a prized skill that experts say artificial intelligence models have difficulty replicating. Salespeople, for example, have files or databases with information they've learned about their clients from interacting face-to-face.

"You have people that have trusted you and have bought products from you for the last 10 years. That has value and that's hard to transfer to artificial intelligence," Iansiti said.

Interpersonal skills also are invaluable when conflicts arise. "Having that human in the loop to manage those expectations, to ease any ruffled feathers, to build the type of relationships that are needed, to expedite good work, is still going to be critical," Flynn said.

Conflict resolution is a must-have quality for managers, said Colleen Adler, director analyst in the human resources practice at the Gartner consulting firm.

"People do still have managers, and managers and leaders impact the way they feel, and co-workers impact the ways we feel as well," Adler said. "There is still a tone to AI that does not yet mimic human connection. That could change; I don't think we're there yet."

Work environments are rapidly changing and many employees feel like they're lurching from one difficult dynamic to another, Adler said. While AI agents can't help workers feel better about that uncertainty, strong leaders can help their teams, she added.

Artificial intelligence models collect information and produce responses but can generate inaccuracies, so it's important to second-guess its output. Developing deep knowledge about your field can help you notice when the AI-generated results on topics from your industry are incorrect, said Amalia Kaufman, course developer and instructor at the University of California, Irvine Division of Continuing Education.

"You have to have the cognition and the critical thinking and the subject matter expertise to make sense of it, and to know when it's wrong," Kaufman said. "You have to check your facts."

In a study published in the journal Science, researchers at Stanford tested 11 popular AI systems and found that artificial intelligence chatbots were prone to flattering and validating the feelings of users, affirming a user's actions 49% more often than humans did. Taking a step back and applying critical thinking skills when reading results gener-

ated by AI can help combat the tendency for it to be overly agreeable with its users.

The ability to distinguish right from wrong, or listen to one's inner conscience, is a skill that is innately human, experts said.

Sometimes, people rely on sensations in their bodies to help guide their decision-making. "Gut feelings are something you feel in your gut," Iansiti said. "It's not just a pattern of information that's going through your brain. It is actually an emotional reaction that is intrinsically different from the way that AI operates. At least this generation of AI."

When life-or-death decisions have to be made, such as when to use lethal military force, "do you want something that does not have human emotion, it does not have a body attached with the intelligence?" Iansiti asked. "AI can fake having a conscience because it's read about what a conscience is, but it doesn't have a conscience."

People can build parameters, or guardrails, into artificial intelligence models to help AI agents make ethical decisions, he said. But human input is still required.

"It's very hard to design a model that's ethical for everything. It's much better to build it around a specific use case. Say hiring," Iansiti said.

Ethical questions aren't the only ones that AI is less equipped to handle for now. The capacity to come up with creative ideas and make decisions in ambiguous situations - while mapping out strategies or developing a brand identity, for example - is another important human skill, experts said.

"We don't believe that something that's going to be replicated by artificial intelligence," said Heather Stefanski, chief learning and development officer at management consulting firm McKinsey. "If we're all just using the AI answer to problem-solve, how are you really going to be distinctive?"

Humans make judgment calls based on a constellation of knowledge and lived experiences, Flynn said. Artificial intelligence draws from a lot of data but doesn't necessarily work well in gray areas, Flynn said. For now, the ability to see all angles of an issue and add context remains a form of intelligence that people possess to a greater extent than AI, she said.

"The things that make us uniquely human to me are going to continue to be the things that help our society thrive in productive ways," Flynn said. "And making sure that we are calling those things out, paying attention to them, making sure those are attributes that folks can name and articulate and feel good about, is going to be key as we all navigate a rapidly changing future."

IMA Kuwait launches Summer Islamic Classes 2026

KUWAIT CITY, June 16: The Indian Muslim Association (IMA) Kuwait is pleased to announce the launch of its Summer Islamic Classes 2026, a specially designed educational and recreational program that combines Islamic learning, character building, creativity, and fun-filled activities in a safe and nurturing environment.

Open to boys and girls aged 4 to 14 years, the program aims to help children strengthen their connection with the Qur'an and Islamic values while developing confidence, teamwork, leadership skills, and positive character traits through interactive learning experiences.

Program Highlights

- Participants will benefit from a comprehensive curriculum featuring:
 - Qur'an Learning and Memorization
 - Seerah (Life of Prophet Muhammad PBUH)
 - Aqeedah (Islamic Beliefs)
 - Islamic Manners and Etiquettes
 - Islamic History
 - Duas and Daily Sunnah Practices
 - Character Building Sessions
 - Leadership and Personality Development Activities
 - Educational Workshops
 - Creative Arts and Crafts
 - Interactive Games and Sports Activities
 - Team-Building Exercises
 - Fun Learning Sessions and Much More

The classes are carefully designed to provide a balanced blend of spiritual enrichment, knowledge acquisition, creativity, and wholesome recreation, ensuring that children spend their summer in a meaningful and rewarding manner.

Event Details

Duration: 20 June – 15 August 2026
Days: Saturday, Monday & Wednesday
Time: 4:00 PM – 6:30 PM

Venue: ICSK Junior School, Block 10, Salmiya

Eligibility: Boys & Girls (4-14 Years)

Transportation Facility: Available

Why Join?

The Summer Islamic Classes provide an excellent opportunity for children to:

- Develop a stronger relationship with the Qur'an
- Learn essential Islamic teachings in an engaging manner
- Build good manners and moral values
- Make new friends in a positive Islamic environment
- Participate in creative and recreational activities
- Spend their summer vacation productively while having fun

Registration

Parents are encouraged to register early as seats are limited.

Register Online: www.imakuwait.org

Contact Information

General Enquiries: 9963 2314 / 50908108

Sisters' Enquiries: 60072726

IMA Kuwait warmly invites parents to enroll their children in this enriching summer program that combines Islamic education with creativity, friendship, personal development, and enjoyable activities. The initiative seeks to nurture young Muslims who are spiritually grounded, morally upright, and socially responsible while creating lasting memories during the summer break.

Wuthering windfall

Auction storm for Brontë gem

LONDON, June 16, (AP) — A rare first-edition copy of “Wuthering Heights,” complete with spelling mistakes, is up for auction for the first time in more than a century, as Emily Brontë’s tragic, tempestuous romance gains new fans through a big-screen adaptation.

Christie’s auction house said Monday that it’s the first copy of the novel in the publisher’s original cloth binding to be auctioned since 1908. Only about 250 copies of the first edition were printed, and this one has been in a private library since shortly after its publication in 1847.

“The vast majority of surviving copies were rebound for collectors or libraries, meaning original cloth examples are now extremely scarce,” said Christie’s books and manuscripts specialist Mark Wiltshire.

Being sold along with a copy of sister Anne Brontë’s “Agnes Grey,” it’s expected to sell for between 400,000 pounds and 600,000 pounds

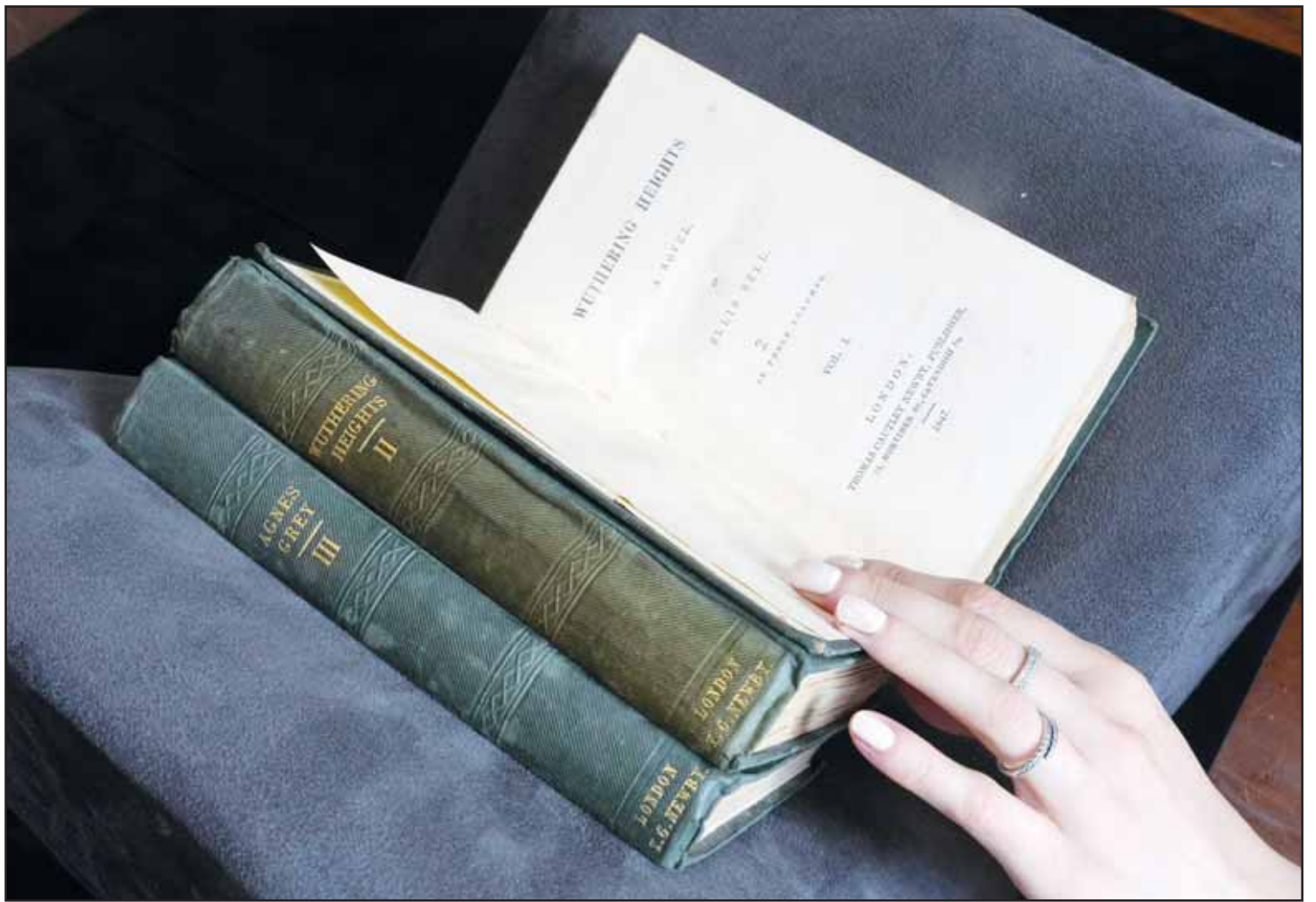
(\$540,000 and \$800,000) at a June 30 auction in London. Both books carry the male pen names the sisters adopted to get published: Ellis Bell for Emily and Acton Bell for Anne.

“Wuthering Heights” was rushed to publication after the success of Charlotte Brontë’s “Jane Eyre,” and the first edition is notorious for its typographical errors including, Wiltshire noted, the occasional misspelling of the word “heights.”

Emerald Fennell’s recent movie with Margot Robbie and Jacob Elordi as mismatched pair Cathy and Heathcliff is the latest work to be inspired by — and take liberties with — Brontë’s brooding, Gothic tale.

The novel shocked some critics when it was published, with one in 1848 decrying its “vulgar depravity and unnatural horrors.”

Since then, Wiltshire said, it has “moved beyond literature to become a cultural touchstone,” inspiring art, music — notably Kate Bush’s pop-opera 1978 song — and multiple film adaptations.



A first edition of Emily Brontë’s Wuthering Heights, is on display for sale at Christie’s auction house, with copies estimated at 400,000-600,000 GBP (\$400,000-810,000 USD) in London, Monday, June 15, 2026. (AP)

Beneath Philadelphia, a time capsule holds America’s hopes

Dear 2276: A message buried for 250 years

CONCORD, N.H., June 16, (AP) — Paper, the traditional gift for marking a couple’s first year of marriage, also is a great choice for 250th anniversaries — especially when filling a time capsule celebrating American independence.

The 2016 law creating the non-partisan America250 commission mandated that a time capsule be buried in Philadelphia on July 4, 2026, and dug up 250 years later in 2276. Last week, the resulting 900-pound cylinder was sealed shut, capping years of technical design and construction, collaboration with states and meticulous review of collected items.

“Once it was closed, it was a little bit anti-climactic, and then it was kind of really emotional,” said Michael Berilla, who directs the fabrication technology office at the National Institute of Standards and Technology and led the team that designed and built the capsule.

Berilla’s office, part of the Department of Commerce, has built encasements to protect historical documents in the past, but those tend to be stored indoors under carefully controlled conditions. With time capsules, the number one enemy is water, so much of the design work focused on how to keep it out.

The stainless steel capsule is shaped like a cylinder, not the typical box, because square edges tend to crack and break. It will be covered with a secondary cylinder that will trap air and push out any approaching water, and the capsule itself is rimmed with a soft metal that compresses under pressure.

“When you smash it shut with the lid, that metal goes into all the cracks and spaces and makes an airtight, watertight seal,” Berilla said.

The items inside were at 35% relative humidity. That’s moist enough to ensure they won’t dry out and disintegrate, but dry enough that they won’t create moisture problems. The capsule will be buried 10 feet below ground, safe from tempera-



People move past Independence Hall at the Independence National Historical Park in Philadelphia, Aug. 25, 2016. (AP)

ture fluctuations or storm damage, Berilla said.

“Philadelphia would have to be six feet underwater in order for this time capsule to even possibly take on water,” he said. “And if Philly is six feet underwater, you’ve got way bigger problems in the world.”

Inside the capsule are contributions from the three branches of the federal government, many of the ongoing America 250 events and programs, and all 50 states, the five U.S. territories and the District of Columbia. Most contents are in small archival boxes, while paper documents are in a separate compartment. According to a list posted on the America250 website Monday, archival quality paper was a particularly popular choice, with states submitting hundreds of let-

ters, postcards, posters, poems and other printed material.

In a nod to its past, New Hampshire submitted a brochure featuring a timeline of major events in the state’s Revolutionary War history. California looked to the future, including the answer it got when it asked an AI ChatBot, “Write me a prediction of what California will be like 250 years from July 4, 2026.” Highways will be gone, grizzly bears will be back, and the entire state will secede and join Oregon, Washington and British Columbia to form the “Pacific Federation.”

Some states went all out. Utah sent 100 cards featuring historical citizens, 13 coins, eight documents, eight pins, two granite disks and a booklet. Arizona used nano-etching technology to put the full text of the

Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution on a stainless steel coin. Other submissions were more bare bones, literally. Maine’s submission included a bone from the endangered North Atlantic right whale. Arkansas sent a diamond.

The variety was fascinating, said Tom Medema, a retired National Park Service official and project manager for the time capsule.

“I’m glad there wasn’t really a prescription for it,” he said. “I know that was hard for them, but in the end, it was just up to them to represent themselves.”

Anything that might degrade or metals that would rust over time was forbidden: Maryland’s submission of Old Bay seasoning was rejected, while Native American beaded artwork backed by elk hide was resub-

mitted on a fabric background.

Some of the items reflect dark historical times, Medema said, as well as the nation’s current challenges. But an air of optimism still surrounded the project.

“There’s great hope in what this capsule represents and the messages that are put in it,” he said. “Something about this capsule has been truly uplifting for everyone who’s been involved in it.”

This isn’t the first national time capsule tied to the anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

A “Century Safe” filled in 1876 was opened by President Gerald Ford in 1976. That year in turn saw the creation of an official Bicentennial time capsule, which is stored at the National Archives and will be opened in 2076. And there’s another time capsule in the works that will be housed at the U.S. Capitol Visitor Center.

To ensure the America 250 capsule is found in 2276, the National Park Service has included details about it in its succession plans to be passed down through time. A capstone with information about it will cover the spot where it’s buried.

Berilla, who helped build the capsule, said when he thinks back to what America was like 250 years ago, he thinks about resilience.

“And when I think forward to the future, I hope that’s what they see from us,” he said. “That, yes, we had it hard compared to them, but more importantly, we were diverse. We were interesting. We were creative. We worked together.”

The capsule contains a photo of his team and a letter he wrote on their behalf.

“Greetings from the living, breathing hearts and hands of 2026,” Berilla wrote. “We will have long since returned to dust, but our devotion, pride, and unwavering hope for what our world could become are alive right here inside this steel. We built this for you.”

Variety

SPRINGVILLE, Utah: Paris Hilton returned Monday to the Utah boarding school where she said she was abused as a teenager, the latest stop in her yearslong campaign calling for reforms to what is commonly known as the troubled teen industry.



Hilton

This time Hilton was speaking in support of two families who filed lawsuits Monday alleging that their children were mistreated at Provo Canyon School, the same facility where Hilton spent almost a year in the late 1990s. The hotel heiress and media personality alleges staff members beat her, watched her shower, fed her unknown pills and locked her in solitary confinement without clothing.

“I dreamed of becoming strong enough, successful enough and powerful enough to come back and be the hero that I needed when I was a little girl locked inside,” Hilton said. “Today is that day, and I am not backing down.”

The school is now under new ownership, and the administration has said it can’t comment on anything that came before the change, including Hilton’s time there.

Hilton, 45, called on Utah licensers to shut down the school. She has testified about her experiences there in Congress and state legislatures around the U.S., helping pass laws to protect teens in Utah and 15 other states.

Utah has long played an outsized role in the troubled teen industry, a network of private, for-profit residential centers for children with behavioral issues. (AP)

Nithe Station exposure offers rare opportunity for field documentation

Thailand reservoir recedes, and a WWII relic rewrites memory

KANCHANABURI, Thailand, June 16, (AP) — A depot on World War II’s infamous “Death Railway” has resurfaced from beneath a reservoir where the site has remained underwater for decades, prompting researchers to race to western Thailand to survey the remnants of Nithe Station.

Thousands of Allied prisoners of war and Asian laborers toiled and died building the railway, a supply route through mainland Southeast Asia for the occupying Japanese forces.

The Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand recently drained the reservoir at Vajiralongkorn Dam for maintenance, revealing the station. Historians are seizing the uncommon opportunity to further study the site in Kanchanaburi province for artifacts and to verify details.

But time is limited, as the completion of the dam’s maintenance in August and Southeast Asia’s rainy season may begin refilling the reservoir.

Nithe was a major station along the 415-kilometer (257-mile) railway that connected Thailand, known at the time as Siam, with Myanmar, known then as Burma.

The railway was built by about



Left: A family of Russian tourists pose for photos as a train approaches Thamkra Sae Station, one of the still active sections of the infamous World War II ‘Death Railway,’ in Sai Yok, Thailand, Thursday, May 28, 2026. Right: Andrew Snow, a researcher with the Thailand-Burma Railway Centre, uses historic aerial photographs from The National Archives in London to map out the layout of Nithe Station, a part of the infamous World War II ‘Death Railway,’ in Sangkhlaburi, Thailand on Saturday, May 30, 2026. (AP)

60,000 Allied POWs mainly from Australia, the United Kingdom, the United States and Indonesia, known then as the Dutch East Indies, as well as hundreds of thousands of Asian laborers, whom the Japanese called rōmusha.

More than 12,500 of the POWs and 75,000 laborers died during con-

struction, which inspired the widely used nickname “The Death Railway.”

The railway was featured in the classic 1957 film “The Bridge on the River Kwai” and the 2013 movie “The Railway Man.” It also was the focus of the award-winning novel “The Narrow Road to the Deep

North,” which became a 2025 miniseries starring Australian actor Jacob Elordi.

Independent Australian researcher Martyn Fryer flew from Perth to see the site. His grandfather died as a POW working on the railway after his 1942 capture in Singapore.

He stomped through muddy bogs

in sweltering 38 Celsius (100 Fahrenheit) heat to “understand what those lads went through and to appreciate the country and the terrain that they endured.”

Fryer, who wrote a book about his grandfather’s regiment, titled “From the Woodlands to the Jungle,” scanned historic railway em-

bankments with a metal detector. He found iron dog spikes, bridge staples and other war artifacts.

“I’ve been to Nithe Station three times in the past, but the water level has always been too high to actually really appreciate the fantastic offerings that it has with the remaining infrastructure and the layout of the railway itself,” Fryer said.

To locate POW camps in the area, Fryer compared wartime aerial photographs of Nithe from the National Archives in London with hand-charted maps brought by Andrew Snow, a researcher with the Thailand-Burma Railway Centre.

Like Fryer’s grandfather, Snow’s father was captured in Singapore and forced to work on the railway.

Southeast Asia’s dry season often exposes bits of the station. But the water levels hit a new low this year and drained so quickly that vegetation has not yet regrown, making Nithe easier to study, Snow explained.

“It is a good opportunity for us to do some surveying,” he said. “When you’re dealing with relatives of people that worked on the railway, it’s always nice to be able to show them the areas that maybe their relative worked on.”

A beloved dish shaped by centuries of cultural exchange

Dumplings reveal Silk Road links between China & Türkiye

ANKARA, June 16, (Xinhua): On a busy afternoon in central Ankara, capital of Türkiye, steaming plates of manti, a kind of dumpling in Turkish cuisine, arrive one after another at Maharet Manti, a restaurant devoted to the beloved dumpling dish that generations of Turks have grown up eating.

At one table, customers savor tiny Kayseri-style manti drenched in garlic yogurt and butter sauce. For restaurant owner Nurcan Sertakan, manti tells a story far bigger than food.

"When we researched its history, we found different accounts, but the most common one points to China and its spread through the Silk Road," Sertakan told Xinhua.

She gestures toward plates featuring dumplings from various countries, part of the restaurant's effort to introduce customers to the global family of dishes connected by a shared culinary heritage.

"What fascinates us is that the essence never really changes," she said. "You take dough and fill it with meat, vegetables, or other ingredients. The form changes, the size changes, but the idea remains the same."

Food historians say Turkish manti belongs to a vast network of dumpling



A customer eats Turkish-style dumplings, widely known as manti, in Ankara, Türkiye. (Xinhua)

traditions stretching from East Asia to Anatolia. Along the ancient Silk Road, merchants, travelers and nomadic peoples carried not only goods but also recipes and cooking techniques across thousands of kilometers, she said.

"The connection between Turkish manti and Chinese dumplings is striking," Turkish gastronomy expert Aylin

Oney Tan told Xinhua.

"One of the most significant foods shared across the Silk Road is the dumpling. These dishes reveal a common culinary past and demonstrate remarkable similarities despite the distances separating them," she said.

Tan said many etymological studies trace the word "manti" to the Chinese



Chefs prepare Turkish-style dumplings, widely known as manti, in Ankara, Türkiye. (Xinhua)

term "mantou," often referred to as a Chinese steamed bun, while others point to Mongol influences that helped spread dumpling traditions westward.

At Maharet Manti, Sertakan sees those connections come alive every day. The restaurant regularly welcomes visitors from China and other East Asian countries, many of whom are intrigued by

Türkiye's version of a familiar dish.

"Our Chinese guests are very curious about Turkish manti," she said.

"During its Silk Road journey westward, the dumpling changed shape," Sertakan said. "The larger dumplings common in parts of East Asia gradually became smaller in Anatolia. The appearance changed according to local tastes,

but the essence remained the same."

For Sertakan, the story of manti also illustrates the broader cultural significance of the Silk Road. "It didn't just transport goods. It carried cultures. Food is culture, and it travels together with people," she said.

Among the customers enjoying that heritage is 25-year-old Irem Aydın, who tried Uzbek-style manti during a recent visit.

Like many Turks, Aydın associates manti with childhood memories and family traditions.

"It has always been one of our favorite foods," she told Xinhua. "It's a dish our grandmothers used to make, so it has a special place in our culture."

Sampling different varieties has made her appreciate how a single concept can take many forms across countries.

"When you look closely, it's often the same ingredients presented differently. There is craftsmanship involved," she said.

For Turkish gastronomy expert Tan, the enduring popularity of dumplings across Asia highlights a deeper historical connection between cultures often viewed as distant from one another.

Ancient city surges

Cultural heritage boosts East China tourism boom



Tourists watch a fish-shaped lantern parade at Huizhou Ancient City in Huangshan, east China's Anhui Province. (Xinhua)

HEFEI, June 16, (Xinhua): As dusk settles over Huizhou Ancient City in Huangshan, east China's Anhui Province, processions carrying fish-shaped lanterns wind their way through stone-paved streets.

Vendors at an intangible cultural heritage night market call out to passersby, while visitors sip tea and enjoy the scenery at nearby teahouses. The atmosphere seems to take tourists back to a townscape from a century ago.

The spectacle is part of a heritage-driven tourism development that has helped draw huge numbers of visitors to Shexian County, with a 2,200-year-old history and located at the foot of Mount Huangshan, a natural and cultural World Heritage site.

In 2025, the county received over 15 million visitors, with total tourism revenue exceeding 15.7 billion yuan (about 2.3 billion U.S. dollars), up 12 percent and 15 percent, respectively, local data showed.

Facing intense competition among tourist destinations across the Yangtze River Delta, Shexian County has pursued differentiated tourism development by focusing more on its rich cultural heritage, rather than relying solely on natural scenery.

"Only by better protecting cultural relics can we better develop cultural and tourism resources," said Jiang Wenchao, an official with the county culture, tourism and sport bureau.

Home to 22 major state-protected cultural heritage sites, five national historical and cultural villages and 167 traditional villages, the county has the largest number of traditional

villages and immovable cultural relics among all county-level regions nationwide.

In 2009, local authorities launched a two-year project to restore the Huizhou Ancient City. Guided by descriptions recorded in local chronicles from the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), workers rebuilt parts of the former Huizhou prefectural government complex and restored landmarks such as ancient city walls and bell and drum towers.

Local tourism operators have rolled out immersive performances in the small historical town to attract visitors. A popular one is a nighttime performance staged within the ancient Huizhou prefectural government compound.

Drawing on local history and folklore, the performance allows audiences to move through the venue alongside performers to offer an immersive cultural experience.

Fish lanterns, a long-standing local tradition, have become both a cultural icon and a commercial success. Fish lantern-themed parades are now regular features at scenic sites, and souvenir shops report strong sales of fish lanterns.

Local authorities have partnered with leading internet companies to develop digital intellectual properties based on the fish lantern and have also introduced more than 100 cultural and creative products in recent years.

"Revitalizing cultural heritage is key to continuously attracting visitors and integrating cultural and tourism resources with the tourism economy," said Wu Jiong, head of the county culture, tourism and sport bureau.

Arts & Culture

New instrument marks Czech kings milestone

700-year-old St. Vitus Cathedral in Prague inaugurates new pipe organ

PRAGUE, June 16, (AP): Prague's St. Vitus Cathedral had its new organ inaugurated on Monday, giving the 700-year-old building, the largest in the Czech Republic, a proper instrument to accompany religious services and concerts.

Prague archbishop Stanislav Pribyl was set to bless the organ at a ceremony as part of a mass, with music played by the Czech Philharmonic and featuring "The Lužany Mass" by Antonín Dvořák and works by Georg Friedrich Händel, Camille Saint-Saëns and Joseph Haydn.

"St. Vitus Cathedral has gained a new voice," Pribyl said in a statement. "A voice that will not speak with words but will still speak to the heart."

A series of eight concerts to present the new instrument will follow in the days to come.

The instrument with four keyboards was built in the workshop of Gerhard Grenzing in El Papiol near the Spanish city of Barcelona.

The renowned German organ builder has constructed almost 140 organs and reconstructed more than 90 historical instruments in many countries.

Once completed in Spain, the new organ was disassembled and its parts were gradually transported to Prague on trucks.

It was reassembled at the cathedral a year ago, followed by the monthslong voicing and tuning of the pipes.

The organ contains some 6,000 pipes, ranging in length from 7 millimeters (0.28 inches) to over 7 meters (23 feet).



In this file photo, a worker adjusts cables during the installation of a new organ at Prague's St. Vitus Cathedral that is coming to its final stages in Prague, Czech Republic. (AP)

The previous organ was completed in the early 1930s, but turned out to be too small for its monumental space and frequently broke down. There was no interest in fixing the organ during World War II and more than 40 years of communist rule.

Efforts to build a new organ started some 14 years ago. A crowdfunding campaign launched in 2017 collected more than 135 million Czech koruna, or crowns, (\$6.5 million) from thousands of donors.

The cathedral, a major tourist attraction, is linked to Czech statehood. It's

a place where the Czech kings were coronated and buried, and the Czech crown jewels are stored inside.

The funeral Mass for Václav Havel, the Czech Republic's first president, was celebrated in the cathedral on Dec. 23, 2011.

China expects travel surge during Dragon Boat Festival

BEIJING, June 16, (Xinhua): China's National Immigration Administration (NIA) projected on Tuesday an 11.7-percent year-on-year increase in border entries and exits during the upcoming Dragon Boat Festival break, with a daily average of 2.2 million crossings nationwide.

The peak daily passenger throughput is expected to reach 2.35 million trips, according to NIA figures.

The country's major international airports, including those in Shanghai, Beijing and Guangzhou, are expected to see a modest rise in passenger traffic during the holiday, while crossings at some land border ports in southern China are likely to experience a much sharper

increase, driven by a combination of cross-border tourism, family visits and a packed schedule of dragon boat races and large-scale events across Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao, the administration said.

Among the busiest crossings, Shenzhen's Luohu checkpoint is expected to handle an average of 260,000 cross-border passenger trips per day, while the Gongbei port in Zhuhai is projected to process about 370,000 cross-border movements per day.

The Dragon Boat Festival, also called Duanwu Festival, is traditionally celebrated on the fifth day of the fifth month of the Chinese lunar calendar to

commemorate Qu Yuan, a renowned patriotic poet and minister of the State of Chu during the Warring States Period (475-221 BC). Qu drowned himself in the Miluo River after he was banished and accused of treason for his well-intended advice to the king.

Legend has it that upon learning of his death, local residents took to boats on the river in search of his body, dropping rice into the water in an effort to prevent the fish from eating him.

Activities such as dragon boat races and eating Zongzi (sticky rice dumplings) have been passed down as traditional customs during the festival.

The Conversation

As renaissance fairs become big business, can they retain their counterculture roots?

The Conversation is an independent and nonprofit source of news, analysis and commentary from academic experts.

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By Katrina Stack

University of Tennessee and Reagan Yessler Pellissippi State Community College

Within moments of entering the Newport Renaissance Faire, you are ushered to a group of fairies. They pass you a scroll and say, "You must seek out the Bone Man for the first hurdle in your quest." As you navigate the fair, you find many men dressed in bones, both vendors and fellow attendees. When you find the correct Bone Man - an actor wearing what appears to be a mask made of human skull along with a crown constructed from deer antlers - he stamps your scroll. He then sends you to your next target: the Drunk Viking.

Following the directions of actors in the fair, you meet a variety of performers from many historical eras and fantastic realms, and stumble upon both merchants and merrymakers in your journey. It's all part of the immersive experience that connects you with the other guests and staff, though many of the costumed staff members,

speaking in faux Middle English, are also trying to sell you something.

Renaissance fairs were originally conceived as a creative refuge for artists sidelined by political repression during the Red Scare. Now, they sit at an uneasy crossroads between countercultural expression and commercial spectacle. Having grown into a nationwide industry with tiered tickets, branded merchandise and multimillion-dollar valuations, the fairs can easily be seen as an offshoot of a corporate theme park.

As cultural geographers, we wanted to learn more about whether the spirit of the fairs has been changing. So for our recent study, we visited the Tennessee Renaissance Festival, Newport Renaissance Faire, Tennessee Medieval Faire and Tennessee Pirate Fest.

Although renaissance fairs and festivals recreate the atmosphere of centuries past, the first formally recognized fair took place in May 1963 in Irwindale, California. A public school English and history teacher named Phyllis Patterson was the brains behind the event, which she dubbed the Renaissance Pleasure Faire.

For Patterson, the fair was a chance to celebrate the era's countercultural values like free expression, experimentation with identity and creative play. It also served as a source of employment for those who had

been pushed out of their careers in the film and entertainment industries after being blacklisted or graylisted as suspected communists.

Patterson herself had refused to sign a Cold War-era loyalty oath required to work in California public schools. At the Renaissance Pleasure Faire, actors, educators and set designers could continue their craft, whether that meant designing costumes, creating characters, performing or writing.

Since those first events in Southern California, renaissance fairs have spread across the U.S., with some constructing permanent structures even though they're only open seasonally, in the spring or fall. Built to resemble small villages, fair operators create towns-within-towns, fantasy lands where visitors can briefly step away from their routines and obligations.

Their popularity continues to grow, and what began partly as a creative refuge has grown into a thriving entertainment business.

The East Tennessee Renaissance Faire recently announced that it would be relocating after deciding that its original venue in Newport could no longer accommodate the swelling crowds: Within three years, the fair had grown from 600 to 6,000 attendees, spurring a move to a larger site

in neighboring Sevierville. New fairs are sprouting up as well: The Chattanooga Renaissance Faire will host its inaugural season in spring 2026.

There are almost always entry fees - US\$38 at the Tennessee Renaissance Festival and \$53 at the Renaissance Pleasure Faire, for example - and many offer season passes.

Attendees often arrive in costume, but strict rules about adhering to a specific time period or setting rarely apply.

Some visitors dress as Tolkien-style elves, while others show up as Tudor nobles. Viking-clad participants walk alongside fairies and swashbuckling pirates. Some fairs have also developed their own themed weekends - with names like "Viking Victory," "Fantasy and Folklore," "Pirate Plunder" and "Celtic Celebration" - that weave history and fiction with few constraints. And those committed to their role will often address each other in playful faux-medieval speech, with greetings like "my lady" or "my lord."

Vendors, often dressed in costume themselves, sell everything from cloaks, swords and crowns to contemporary jewelry and shampoos. Booths sell era-adjacent fare like Scotch eggs, ciders, mead and turkey legs, while modern cocktails like "The Shipwreck" and "The Blueberry Faerie" can also be had,

with visitors paying the equivalent of stadium and arena concession prices.

Renaissance fairs have even spread to countries like Germany and France, reconnecting with their roots. The expansion into new venues - along with the development of offshoots such as pirate- and steampunk-themed festivals - point to profit margins that would have been unthinkable in the early days of the Renaissance Pleasure Faire.

But as with many ventures, the prospect of cashing in comes with complications.

The 2024 HBO Max series "Ren Faire" introduced viewers to the eccentric and costume-clad vendors involved in the nation's largest fair, the Texas Renaissance Festival in Todd Mission. The fight over its future involved lawsuits and, eventually, the court-ordered \$60 million sale of the event's property and assets.

King Richard's Faire, which takes place in Carver, Massachusetts, and is the largest fair in New England, reportedly generates massive daily revenue while allegedly relying on widespread worker misclassification, leaving many performers earning below minimum wage without benefits. Even volunteer "villagers" work only for free admission, and both workers and attendees receive no compensation or refunds when the fair closes due to rain. (AP)

Many countries, communities committed to marine protection

World agreed to protect 30% of ocean by '30 – but marine protection can't be judged by area alone

The Conversation is an independent and nonprofit source of news, analysis and commentary from academic experts.

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By **Kirsten Grorud-Colvert**, Oregon State University and **Ana K. Spalding**, Smithsonian Institution

The ocean is home to some of the richest biodiversity on Earth. From coral reefs and mangrove forests to the deep sea, marine ecosystems sustain countless species, support coastal communities, regulate the climate and underpin global food security.

But these systems face growing pressure from overfishing, habitat loss, pollution and climate change.

In response, nations have adopted an ambitious global goal to conserve at least 30% of the world's ocean by 2030 - known as 30x30. This target has expanded marine protection worldwide, particularly through marine protected areas.

But what happens after protection is announced?

Decades of experience have shown that effective marine protection requires consistent rules, regulations and oversight, along with financing and meaningful collaboration with local governments, industries and communities. Without it, these areas risk becoming paper parks: lines on a map without real-world impact, where marine life may continue to face overfishing and other threats.

Two new reports we led, one from Oregon State University and the other from the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, offer an important reality check on where marine conservation stands today and what must be done to achieve the goal of protecting 30% of the ocean.

Together they argue that the primary barrier to realizing the 30x30 ocean conservation goal is no longer ambition to protect the ocean, but effective action that can make it real.

The 30x30 goal is often promoted at global ocean meetings, including the 11th Our Ocean Conference, being held in Kenya on June 16-18, 2026.

According to the Oregon State analysis, the conservation commitments announced at past Our Ocean Conferences have helped establish more than 3.88 million square miles (10 million square kilometers) of marine protected areas,

or about 2.8% of the global ocean.

In all, marine protected areas now cover nearly 10% of the global ocean. But only about 3.5% of that is fully or highly protected.

The reach of protected areas shows that voluntary pledges can translate into tangible conservation gains when progress is consistently tracked and publicly reported. However, the findings also point to a key challenge: the growing divergence between the extent of protection and its effectiveness.

In other words, ocean protection cannot be judged by area alone.

The Smithsonian report takes a closer look at what is needed to turn such commitments into effective conservation.

Since the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework was approved in 2022, with almost every country agreeing to protect at least 30% of Earth's land and waters, marine protection has expanded considerably. However, global numbers show that at least half of existing marine protected areas remain unimplemented or inoperable, with rules and regulations not in place or even allowing destructive activities like bottom trawling.

Achieving the 30x30 goal still requires protecting an additional 20% of the ocean over the next four years. The challenge is twofold: expanding coverage, while also ensuring that the areas are actually benefiting marine life and people.

Effective, long-lasting conservation depends on management plans, trained personnel, monitoring systems, enforcement capacity, sustainable financing and community participation. Without these elements, legal designation alone does not lead to biodiversity protection, thriving ecosystems and benefits to people.

Yet, across regions, the Smithsonian report found a troubling pattern: Countries' ambition to create protected areas is outpacing their capacity to help those areas succeed.

We found two key constraints: lack of coordination around capacity development - the strengthening of skills and tools needed to effectively achieve a goal - and applying a one-size-fits-all approach to distinctly different regional contexts.

Many countries and communities are committed to marine protection, but they

often need better continuous governance and policy, stakeholder engagement and inclusion, data and technology, socio-ecological integration, and communication for effective implementation of marine protected areas over time.

Similarly, securing funding for marine conservation remains a persistent challenge. When we spoke with groups and communities involved in marine conservation, they often cited complex application processes and funding structures that often do not match their local realities or priorities. This creates a mismatch between how conservation is funded and how it is implemented.

There are efforts to close this gap. The Bali-based Coral Triangle Center's Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security Capacity Building Roadmap works to conserve ocean areas in a region that harbors the richest marine biodiversity on the planet. Through regional training hubs, leadership programs, internships and digital platforms, it has trained over 8,200 government officials, community leaders and private-sector representatives in science-based marine conservation practices.

The Sustainable Finance Coalition, a group of nonprofits and international organizations, is using its expertise in another way: finding creative ways to secure money for projects in Africa and the South West Indian Ocean to protect key habitats on land and sea. To date, the coalition has tapped into more than US\$43 million to protect nature and support the effective management of 170,500 acres (69,000 hectares).

The two reports found that political momentum for ocean protection is strong. Governments, Indigenous peoples, local communities, scientists and conservation organizations have rallied around the 30x30 target, creating a global movement of support.

The challenge now is delivering on this momentum.

Achieving the conservation goals behind the 30x30 plan will depend less on announcing new protected areas and more on investing in the capacity, finance, enforcement and long-term institutional support needed to help these protected areas function as planned.

As 2030 approaches, the central question is becoming sharper. It is no longer simply how much of the ocean can be protected - but whether that protection can be made real, durable and effective. (AP)

Regional dengue groups team up to strengthen Asia cooperation

SINGAPORE, June 16, (Agencies): Six regional groups have signed a new memorandum of understanding (MoU) in Singapore to deepen cooperation on dengue prevention and control, amid rising cases linked to climate change and rapid urbanization.

The Asia Dengue Voice and Action Group (ADVA) said in a statement on Monday that the signatories include ADVA, the Philippines Empowering Networks to Defeat Dengue Coalition, Dengue Prevention Advocacy Malaysia, Indonesia's Kobar Lawan Dengue, the Singapore Dengue Alliance and the International Society for Neglected Tropical Diseases.

The agreement establishes a regional framework for ongoing collaboration among advocacy groups, community organizations and public health stakeholders, the statement said.

Under the MoU, participating organizations will explore joint publications, policy recommendations, regional awareness campaigns, educational resources and digital platforms to improve knowledge sharing and response coordination.

Also:

SINGAPORE: Singapore reported 119 dengue cases in the week ended June 13, up 39 cases from the previous week, according to data released by the National Environment Agency (NEA) on Tuesday.

The increase comes as the city-state enters its traditional peak dengue season, which typically runs from May to October, the NEA said.

As of Monday, there were 12 active dengue clusters across Singapore, four of which were classified as red-alert clusters, indicating 10 or more reported cases.

Local media outlets reported that the latest figure marks the highest weekly dengue case count in 2026.

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WASHINGTON: US Agriculture Secretary **Brooke Rollins** watched sterile flies being released to fight the New World screwworm and visited the Texas ranch where one of the first cases of the pest was detected. The screwworm could devastate the nation's cattle industry.

Later, she repeated her assertion that former President **Joe Biden's** administration is responsible for the parasite's return to the US six decades after it was eradicated. Democratic leaders say cuts to the nation's agriculture agency under President **Donald Trump** are to blame.

Screwworms are on their way to becoming a billion-dollar international problem, but can be contained if ranchers are vigilant, watch their herds and other wildlife, and quickly treat any infestations, Rollins said. She pointed to the calf where screwworms were found six days earlier in a wound where its umbilical cord had been attached.



Village chief Carlito Cernal, (center), pours a container with mosquito larvae that was captured by a resident in Mandaluyong City, Philippines as their village started offering bounty for captured mosquitos, dead or alive, as part of an anti-dengue campaign on Feb 19, 2025. (AP)

WHO Europe releases updated heat-health action plans guidance

BERLIN, June 16, (Xinhua): The World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe (WHO Europe) on released its updated Heat-Health Action Plans Guidance, providing a scientific framework for governments worldwide to organize heat protection measures effectively.

In a press release, WHO Europe said the new guidance provides evidence-based recommendations around eight core elements, including improving local heat-warming systems and strengthening risk communication with vulnerable groups.

Compared with the first WHO guidance published in 2008, the new version incorporates the latest findings from research and practice, it said.

According to the press release, extreme heat is contributing to a rising number of heat-related health problems and premature deaths worldwide each year. Cardiovascular diseases, in particular, occur more frequently or worsen under the influence of heat. Meanwhile, urbanization and the growing proportion of people at increased risk, including older people and those with pre-existing health conditions, are making prolonged heatwaves a growing



Director General of the World Health Organisation (WHO), Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, center, arrives in Bunia, Congo on May 30. (AP)

threat to public health.

"Europe is warming faster than any other continent ... More than 200,000 people across Europe have died from heat in just the last four years," said WHO Regional Director for Europe Hans Henri P. Kluge.

Also:

BEIJING: Chinese Vice Premier **Liu**

Guozhong will attend the High-Level Meeting of African Heads of State and Government and Partners on the Ebola Disease Outbreak on June 16 via video link, a Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson announced on Tuesday.

Liu, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, is invited by the African Union.



A Zhuque-2E Y6 carrier rocket carrying two satellites named Spacesail DTC 01 and China Mobile 02 blasts off from the Dongfeng commercial space innovation pilot zone in northwest China, June 9. (Xinhua)

Beijing eyes global commercial spaceflight hub amid booming private sector successes

BEIJING, June 16, (Xinhua): China successfully deployed two new satellites into orbit last week aboard the Zhuque-2E Y6 rocket, developed by LandSpace, a private aerospace firm headquartered in Beijing.

The launch marks the latest in a series of successes for commercial space companies based in the capital, highlighting how Beijing's rapidly expanding commercial aerospace sector has become a powerful magnet for innovative enterprises.

Once known primarily as China's political and cultural heart, Beijing is now charting a new course into orbit. The city is actively positioning itself as a premier global hub for commercial spaceflight, with its northern Haidian District serving as the epicenter of this transformation.

A 100-billion-yuan (about 14.7 billion US dollars) aerospace cluster is taking shape in Haidian, covering the entire value chain from satellite design and payload development to constellation operations and data applications.

In a key regulatory milestone, Guodian Gaoke, a local commercial sci-tech firm, recently became the first company nationwide to receive a trial license for satellite Internet of Things (IoT) services. This approval enables the firm to pilot satellite internet operations over the next two years, further cementing Beijing's leadership in this emerging sector.

Guodian Gaoke has already completed Phase I of its Tianqi low-orbit IoT constellation. "Building on Phase I, we are rapidly expanding IoT application scenarios and exploring the consumer market," said Lyu Qiang, chairman of the company. He announced that Phase II construction will begin in the second half of this year, with plans to launch additional satellites to achieve full global coverage by 2028.

The company reflects the broader strength of Beijing's aerospace ecosystem. Today, Haidian alone hosts more than 200 commercial spaceflight enterprises and institutions. Roughly one in every three commercially operating satellites in China originates from the district, and more

than 60 percent of the nation's chief satellite designers and system engineers are based there.

Recognizing its strategic importance, Haidian has designated commercial spaceflight as one of its five pillar emerging industries.

Over the next five years, the district aims to secure early advantages in frontier fields such as integrated space-air-ground communications, space-based computing infrastructure, real-time remote sensing constellations, and space tourism. To support these ambitions, it will establish public technology platforms, build space computing networks, and accelerate the development of a dedicated satellite town.

Spanning approximately 540,000 square meters in northern Haidian, the satellite town is slated for completion in the second half of 2026. Its core zone will feature four major functional areas -- satellite R&D, operations, spatial data applications, and a talent community -- alongside three supporting centers for exhibition, exchange, and incubation. The pilot zone has already attracted nearly 50 leading commercial spaceflight companies.

"Haidian is becoming a pivotal landmark on the global commercial spaceflight map," said Zhang Guangming, deputy head of the district. To support this ambition, the district has established a 30-billion-yuan fund for technological growth and commercialization, alongside a public testing service platform for the industry.

Zhang noted that the district has set an ambitious target: achieving over 100 billion yuan in annual revenue from the commercial spaceflight sector by 2030, thereby establishing a world-leading aerospace industry cluster.

According to industry insiders, alongside its southern Yizhuang area -- which anchors the launch vehicle sector with "Rocket Street" and hosts dozens of upstream and downstream firms -- Beijing has strategically shaped a complementary "South Rockets, North Satellites" landscape to sustain momentum and ensure a complete supply chain. These actions are laying the groundwork for a premier global spaceflight hub.

Thailand developing climate database to brace for prolonged El Nino

BANGKOK, June 16, (Xinhua): Thailand is developing high-resolution climate data and risk-mapping tools to prepare for the El Nino weather pattern that global agencies expect to persist through early 2027, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment said on Tuesday.

Citing data from international climate organizations, the ministry stated that the world is almost certain to enter El Nino conditions in June-July, with intensity peaking between November 2026 and January 2027.

Phirun Saiyaisitpanich, director-general of the Department of Climate Change and Environment, said rainfall across many parts of Thailand would be below normal from June 2026 to January 2027 and that the wet season could see less rain if the phenomenon strengthens.

The southern region is expected to face reduced rainfall in December and January, while average temperatures nationwide would run slightly above normal, likely making the coming winter milder than usual, Phirun said in a statement.

In response, the department said



A waste picker drinks water while working during a heat wave at a garbage dump on the outskirts of Jammu, India on June 19, 2024. (AP)

it has developed climate projections through the year 2100, covering rainfall, temperatures and humidity, with the Climate Change Information Center sharing the data with agencies for long-term flood and drought planning.

The department is also working on a high-resolution river flood-risk dataset and a sub-district-level climate risk map covering floods, droughts, landslides, sea-level rise and rising temperatures, the official noted.

SPORTS

Burgan chases historic Asian Club Handball Championship title

Al-Khaleej awaits in final

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 16: Kuwaiti club Burgan will look to make history when it faces Saudi Arabia's Al-Khaleej in the final of the 28th Asian Men's Club League Handball Championship at Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex today.

The highly anticipated final, scheduled for 6 p.m., pits Burgan's ambition against Al-Khaleej's experience, with both teams aiming to lift the continental trophy and secure qualification for the IHF Men's Club World Championship. Earlier in the day, Kuwait Club and Qatar's Al-Duhail will contest the third-place match.

Burgan has emerged as one of the tournament's biggest success stories, reaching the Asian final for the first time in club history. The Kuwaiti side booked its place in the title match after edging Al-Duhail 32-31 in a thrilling semifinal, capping a remarkable debut appearance on the continental stage.

The club's international journey began in 2019 when it finished fourth in the Arab Clubs Championship in Jordan. Burgan later competed in the 2024 Gulf Clubs Championship in Doha before making its first appearance in the Asian championship this year, where it has

exceeded expectations and established itself as a genuine title contender.

Al-Khaleej, meanwhile, enters the final seeking a second Asian crown. The Saudi side advanced after defeating Kuwait Club in the semifinals and will rely on its wealth of experience in high-pressure matches. Al-Khaleej previously captured the Asian title in Kuwait in 2023 and hopes to repeat that success on the same court.

The two finalists met during the preliminary stage, with Al-Khaleej narrowly claiming a 26-25 victory, setting the stage for another closely contested encounter.

Burgan will once again depend on the tactical guidance of coach Hussein Zaki, the fighting spirit of its players, and strong support from home fans. Al-Khaleej, on the other hand, will count on its experienced roster and the backing of supporters traveling from Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province.

The final is expected to provide another showcase for Gulf handball, which has continued to strengthen its presence on the Asian stage in recent years.

Burgan secretary-general Nawaf Al-Adwani praised the team's achievement in reaching the final, describing it as the result of hard work and dedication throughout the season.

"We congratulate the club's board, technical and administrative staff, players and supporters on this deserved accomplishment," Al-Adwani said. "The team demonstrated strong character and fighting spirit throughout the tournament and rose to the challenge in a difficult semifinal

against a quality side like Al-Duhail."

He added that the achievement reflected the planning and commitment of the club's management and coaching staff, who worked tirelessly to prepare the team for the competition.

"Reaching the final is an important milestone, but it is not the end of our ambitions," he said. "The players are determined to continue making history and compete for the club's first Asian title, despite the challenge posed by a strong and experienced Al-Khaleej team."

Burgan finished second in the preliminary round after victories over Al-Duhail, Sharjah, Kuwait Club, and Bahrain's Al-Najma, while drawing with Al-Arabi of Qatar and losing narrowly to Al-Khaleej.

Al-Khaleej topped the standings after defeating Sharjah, Kuwait Club, Burgan, and Al-Duhail, drawing with Al-Arabi, and suffering its only defeat against Al-Najma.

The semifinals saw Burgan eliminate Al-Duhail and Al-Khaleej overcome Kuwait Club, setting up today's Gulf showdown for the Asian title.

Qatar's Al-Sadd remains the competition's most successful club with six titles.

Kuwait's Kazma and Al-Qadsia, Qatar's Al-Jaish and Al-Duhail, and Bahrain's Al-Najma have each won the championship twice.

One title each has been claimed by Kuwait's Al-Fahaheel, Al-Sulaibikhat and Kuwait Club; Saudi Arabia's Al-Ahli, Mudhar, Al-Noor and Al-Khaleej; Qatar's Al-Rayyan, Lekhwiya and Al-Arabi; and the UAE's Sharjah.



Burgan's defenders hold the Al-Khaleej player from finding the back of the net during the match.

Expectations exceeded: Infantino

World Cup newcomers justify expanded format

MIAMI, United States, June 16, (Xinhua): Dick Advocaat wept as Curacao's anthem echoed around Houston Stadium before the island team's first World Cup match.

The veteran Dutch coach later spoke of the "joy of the people" on the island of around 150,000 at seeing their team make history.

Barely 24 hours later in Atlanta, Cabo Verde's players and supporters were singing and dancing after holding European champion Spain to a goalless draw.

Five days into the tournament, the World Cup's newest arrivals are proving difficult to ignore.

The opening week has provided FIFA with early evidence that the expanded 48-team format has enriched rather than diluted the tournament.

Average crowds exceeded 63,000 across the opening eight matches, according to FIFA, while early television ratings have been encouraging. The tournament's attendance record of 3.5 million, set at the 1994 World Cup in the United States, is already under threat.

The matches have helped support that view.

Sunday alone produced 19 goals, the highest single-day tally at the World Cup since 1962. Germany beat Curacao 7-1 in Houston, Sweden defeated Tunisia 5-1 in Monterrey, Japan drew 2-2 with the Netherlands in Dallas, and Cote d'Ivoire edged Ecuador 1-0 in Philadelphia.

FIFA President Gianni Infantino said the tournament had exceeded expectations after drawing large crowds and producing competitive matches across the three host countries.

He pointed to Qatar's 1-1 draw with Switzerland in San Francisco as a sign of football's growing competitiveness.

"Because we know that football today has become very, very competitive everywhere in the world," Infantino said.

"Everyone can play football, and this is thanks to the work that you are all doing in your respective countries [and regions]." That has been clear in the opening week.

Morocco held Brazil to a draw,



FIFA President Gianni Infantino attends the World Cup Group D soccer match between the United States and Paraguay in Inglewood, Calif., near Los Angeles. (AP)

Canada drew with Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Japan twice came from behind to claim a point against the Netherlands.

Yet no result has so far captured the tournament's mood quite like Cabo Verde's draw with Spain. A country of just over half a million people, Cabo Verde arrived at its first World Cup as one of four debutants in football's showpiece.

It left Atlanta Stadium with a result that will be remembered long after the competition ends.

Spain's wealth of attacking talent could not find a way past 40-year-old goalkeeper Vozinha and a defense that remained organized from the first whistle to the last.

Vozinha, who plays for Portuguese second-tier club Chaves, made several key saves before halftime, denying Ferran Torres and Aymeric Laporte. Teenage star Lamine Yamal came on in the second half, but Cabo Verde refused to yield.

When the match ended, the African team's players embraced on the field while supporters celebrated in the stands.

"This means everything for our country," head coach Bubiasta said.

"We have always said that we wanted everybody to see our country, our team, and we have shown

organization and braveness and this is proof of what our country is about - resilience and to try to overcome hardships." Defender Steven Moreira called the result "a dream" while Vozinha, named player of the match, said it showed his team deserved to be playing on football's biggest stage.

Spain head coach Luis de la Fuente offered the simplest summary. "Football is like that - there are no small opponents here," he said.

Curacao's story unfolded differently, but carried a similar message. Right-back Livano Comenencia delivered another landmark moment when his 21st-minute equalizer against Germany marked the team's first goal at a World Cup finals.

The four-time world champion's quality eventually told, but the achievement was not lost on Curacao's passionate fans, or Advocaat.

"We need to turn this into a beautiful tournament," he said. "We can have a surprise in the second and third match. In the end we will be glad we were part of the biggest football tournament in the world." The 78-year-old, who became the oldest coach in a World Cup fixture, said pride mattered more than the scoreline.

"It was fantastic to see the joy of

the people," he said. "The result was not a disgrace. I think we can still be proud." Germany coach Julian Nagelsmann praised Curacao's approach.

"The opponent played better than many had expected in Germany," he said. "They played with a lot of courage." Australia's opening victory over Türkiye provided another reminder of the tournament's depth.

Manager Tony Popovic put his trust in youth and was rewarded with a 2-0 win. Twenty-year-old Nestory Irankunda opened the scoring, while 22-year-old goalkeeper Patrick Beach justified his selection ahead of captain Mathew Ryan with a clean sheet.

"They may be shocks for a lot of people, but not shocks within our playing group or staff because we're all working together every day and we can see the quality of these young boys," Popovic said.

Sweden also made an early statement with its 5-1 victory over Tunisia, while Cote d'Ivoire ended Ecuador's 19-match unbeaten run and Japan showed resilience in its draw with the Netherlands.

The 2026 tournament has brought four new teams to the World Cup. Alongside Curacao and Cabo Verde, Jordan and Uzbekistan qualified for the finals for the first time.

Uzbekistan became the first Central Asian team to reach the tournament, while Jordan continued a rise that began with its run to the 2023 Asian Cup final.

The opening week has also shown they are adding more than numbers.

Fan festivals and watch parties have drawn large crowds, filling public spaces from Zocalo square in Mexico City to New York's Times Square.

Infantino said one aspect had stood out in particular.

"What I was positively surprised with was the atmosphere - you see so many children, so many families coming to watch these games," he said.

Five days into the first 48-team edition of the 96-year-old tournament, FIFA has the attendance figures, the goals and the atmosphere it hoped for.

Serena & Venus reunite for Wimbledon doubles

NEW YORK, June 16, (AP): Even at a combined age of 90, opponents should still be wary of facing the Williams sisters at Wimbledon.

Serena and Venus Williams won a combined 21 titles on the storied grass of the All England Club in their singles and doubles careers and now they're going for one more.

A doubles wild card invitation for the sisters was announced on Tuesday by organizers of Wimbledon, which starts in less than two weeks.

The move comes after 44-year-old Serena recently returned to competition after nearly four years away from professional tennis.

Venus, who has still been competing sporadically, turns 46 on Wednesday.

The sisters have won 14 Grand Slam titles together in doubles, including six at Wimbledon - the first of them in 2000 and the last in 2016. Their first two doubles titles at Wimbledon, in 2000 and 2002, came as wild cards.

In all, their records at the All England Club look like this: Seven singles titles for Serena and five singles titles for Venus at Wimbledon; those six Wimbledon doubles titles together; a mixed doubles title for Serena with Max Mirnyi at Wimbledon in 1998; plus a singles gold medal for Serena at the 2012 London Olympics and a doubles gold for the sisters at the same Games. Count 'em up and it makes

for 21 trophies and medals - because their powerful serves always did more damage on grass than any other surface.

With their six titles, the Williams sisters share the record for most trophies as a pair in women's doubles at Wimbledon with Suzanne Lenglen and Elizabeth Ryan, who won their titles consecutively from 1919-25.

The Williams sisters last played doubles together at the 2022 U.S. Open, where they lost their opening match. That was the first time they played doubles together in 4 1/2 years.

In her first competition since 2022, Serena won her doubles match with partner Victoria Mboko at Queen's Club in London last week and then the pair had to withdraw after Mboko injured her knee in a singles match.

Serena was slated to play doubles with Karolina Muchova at the Berlin Open later Tuesday.

Serena has not ruled out a return in singles, too, and one of the eight wild card spots for women's singles was left as "to be announced."

Recent French Open finalist Maja Chwalinska received a singles wild card, as did six British women: Harriet Dart, Alicia Dudeney, Hannah Klugman, Mika Stojsavljevic, Katie Swan, and Mimi Xu.

Men's singles wild cards went to Stan Wawrinka and Grigor Dimitrov and four British players: Jacob Fearnley, Arthur Fery, Jack Pinnington Jones and Toby Samuel.



In this file photo, Serena Williams, left, and Venus Williams of the U.S. hold their trophies after winning the women's doubles final against Yaroslava Shvedova of Kazakhstan and Tímea Babos of Hungary on day thirteen of the Wimbledon Tennis Championships in London. (AP)

Lynx cruise past Portland with 7 in double figures

Wings extend home streak with rout of Aces

ARLINGTON, Texas, June 16, (AP): Arike Ogunbowale scored 22 points and made five 3-pointers, Jessica Shepard had 15 points, 15 rebounds and nine assists, and the Dallas Wings beat the Las Vegas Aces 96-66 on Monday night for their fifth straight win at home.

Dallas scored 29 points in the first quarter and had a 28-point lead with 3:13 remaining in the first half before Las Vegas closed on a 9-0 run to get within 56-37 at the break. Shepard had 13 points, eight rebounds and five assists by halftime, and Ogunbowale and Azzi Fudd each scored 11.

Paige Bueckers ended Dallas' six-minute field-goal drought, spanning halftime, on a 3-pointer early in the third for a 59-39 lead. The Wing led by double figures the entire second half.

Fudd finished with 19 points and Bueckers had 10 points and seven assists for Dallas (9-5). Awak Kuier, who made her first start for the Wings since Sept. 5, 2023, scored seven points in 27 minutes.

Shepard moved into a tie with Angel Reese for the most double-doubles in the WNBA this season with nine. She was subbed out with 4:41 remaining in the fourth.

Lynx 107, Fire 74

In Minneapolis, Natasha Howard



Golden State Valkyries' Janelle Salaün (13) battles for a rebound against Los Angeles Sparks' Cameron Brink, left, in the first half of a WNBA basketball game Monday in San Francisco. (AP)

had 18 points to lead seven players in double-figure scoring for Minnesota in a victory over Portland, fueled by 26 points off 22 turnovers.

Nia Coffey contributed 15 points, five rebounds, three steals and three blocks in her best all-around performance of her debut season with her hometown team as the Lynx (11-3) roared back from their loss at Las Vegas on Saturday.

Coffey sank all three of her 3-point tries in a 35-point first quarter that matched the team's season high in any frame, and the Lynx built a 27-point lead by the middle of the third quarter.

Minnesota improved to 5-1 in the round-robin schedule for the WNBA Commissioner's Cup, but Las Vegas needed only to beat Dallas on Monday or Phoenix on Wednesday

to secure the Western Conference spot. New York clinched the Eastern Conference's berth on June 14, with the championship game set for June 30.

Valkyries 78, Sparks 58

In San Francisco, Gabby Williams scored 16 points, Kaila Charles came off the bench to finish with 13 points, eight rebounds and five assists, and Golden State beat Los Angeles for their third straight win.

Rae Burrell scored 13 points for the Sparks while Kelsey Plum and Nneka Ogwumike were held to nine points apiece in an off night shooting for Los Angeles, which had a three-game winning streak snapped.

Forward Cameron Brink went down hard in the closing minutes and was helped to the bench with an apparent ankle injury, though coach Lynne Roberts didn't have immediate details other than, "she's getting evaluated right now." Brink walked out of the locker room postgame on her own.

Charles scored the final seven points of the first half and went 5 of 7 from the floor overall with two 3-pointers for Golden State, helping the Valkyries build a 45-26 lead at the break. Veronica Burton scored 12 points and Cecilia Zandalasini contributed 10 for the Valkyries.

Best of the Rest

Rüdiger extends stay at the Bernabéu: Antonio Rüdiger is staying at Real Madrid for another season after the German defender signed a one-year contract extension while at the World Cup.

Rüdiger was at the end of the four-year contract he signed when he joined Madrid from Chelsea in 2022 and reportedly had rival offers from Saudi Arabia.

The 33-year-old German won the Spanish league and Champions League at Madrid in 2024. Back-to-back seasons without a trophy mean Madrid is under pressure to improve next season as Jose Mourinho returns as coach. (AP)

□ □ □

Lens hires Toppmöller as coach: French club Lens hired Dino Toppmöller as its new coach on Tuesday following Pierre Sage's departure to Crystal Palace.

Lens said in a statement that the 45-year-old German signed a two-year contract. He previously coached Eintracht Frankfurt in the Bundesliga.

Toppmöller, who spoke in fluent French at his presentation, was fired by Eintracht in January following a lean spell of results. He led the team into the Champions League after finishing third in the Bundesliga during the 2024-25 season. (AP)

□ □ □

Czech Cup winners Karviná relegated: Czech Cup winner Karviná was expelled from the top division as punishment by the Czech Football Association for its involvement in a major match-fixing scandal.

The association's ethics committee also fined Karviná 10 million Czech koruna (\$480,000) for offering bribes to two referees and two players to influence a league match and two relegation playoff games involving the club in 2024. (AP)



Fan Zone



Fans of Egypt wait for the beginning of the World Cup Group G soccer match between Belgium and Egypt in Seattle. (AP)



Belgian fans in fancy dress ahead of the World Cup Group G soccer match between Belgium and Egypt in Seattle. (AP)



A fan of New Zealand performs a haka ahead of the World Cup Group G soccer match between Iran and New Zealand in Inglewood, Calif., near Los Angeles. (AP)



Fans of Iran smile for a photo prior to the World Cup Group G soccer match between Iran and New Zealand in Inglewood, Calif., near Los Angeles. (AP)

'FIFA should reflect on high World Cup ticket prices'

MEXICO CITY, June 16, (AP) — Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum on Monday said FIFA should reflect on the high cost of tickets for the 2026 World Cup as many have called the price far out of reach for the vast majority of Mexicans.

Sheinbaum told journalists that soccer should be much more than a business.

"Soccer has to be something else," she said. "All of this should prompt reflection, even within FIFA."

There was no immediate public reaction from FIFA. Its president, Gianni Infantino, last week defended high ticket prices as fitting in the North American market.

Earlier this year, tickets for matches in the three host countries including Mexico went on sale at prices ranging from \$140 to \$8,680. While some prices have fallen, others have soared. Tickets for the final are priced at \$32,970. Resale prices are higher. In April, FIFA's own resale platform listed four tickets for the final at around \$2.3 million each.

Although Mexico's president acknowledged that it is "fine" for the World Cup to be run as a business, she said soccer also should be "a space for bringing people together, like all sports."

Sheinbaum's government has come under criticism by a range of social movements protesting in Mexico City, which say the government is prioritizing the tournament over

pressing social needs.

Meanwhile, parts of stadiums in places like Guadalajara have had visibly empty seats. FIFA last week blamed some empty seats in Guadalajara on fans who watched from the concourses.

Since the prices were announced for the 104 World Cup matches to be played in Mexico, the United States and Canada, Sheinbaum has spoken out and promoted a government-backed "Social World Cup" initiative.

The program aims to set up street festivals in Mexico City and other cities across the country where Mexicans and foreign tourists can watch matches free of charge on giant screens.

According to local authorities, half a million people attended the 18 street festivals across Mexico City on June 11 to watch the opening match in which Mexico defeated South Africa.

Sheinbaum also broke with a longstanding World Cup tradition under which the host country's president attends the opening match. Instead, she gave her ticket to a 21-year-old Indigenous female soccer player who had no financial means of purchasing one.

The federal government also decided that public officials would give up about 500 tickets to people who participated in "Social World Cup" activities, and that 88 tickets would be distributed through schools.

Portugal fans mixed on whether Ronaldo will help or hurt team's World Cup chances

PALM BEACH GARDENS, Fla., June 16, (AP): It would have been unthinkable at the start of the 2022 World Cup to suggest Cristiano Ronaldo was anything other than the undisputed leader of the Portugal team.

But the Qatar edition went poorly for Portugal's all-time leading goal scorer. After scoring just once, from the penalty spot, in the group stage, he reacted angrily to being subbed off against South Korea and was promptly dropped to the bench for his team's first knockout-stage match against Switzerland.

Then, he didn't score at all in the 2024 European Championship. It was the first time he had failed to find the net at a major international tournament.

Now, in the buildup to what may be Ronaldo's World Cup swan song, concerns over what the 41-year-old can still bring to the national team are at the forefront of many fans' minds. Portugal opens play Wednesday against Congo DR in Houston.

"I think in some instances they play better without him," fan Zach Mallias said at the team's first open World Cup practice at its Florida base camp. "There are other players that fit the system better."

Other fans are worried about the superstar's ego and whether he would accept relinquishing the spotlight for the good of the team.



Left: Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo warms up during the men's national soccer team training session ahead of their FIFA World Cup soccer tournament, in Palm Beach Gardens, Fla. Right: Portugal's goalkeeper Diogo Costa runs drills during the men's national soccer team training session ahead of their FIFA World Cup soccer tournament in Palm Beach Gardens, Fla. (AP)

"He's a very big player, he's very loved by a lot of his fans," Beatrice Mitankin said. "It might get to his head."

There is some recent evidence, however, of Ronaldo still being able to positively influence games. During Portugal's 2025 UEFA Nations League run, its second title triumph in that competition, he scored eight goals,



including an equalizer in the final against Spain.

Ronaldo also recently won his first Saudi Pro League title with Al-Nassr, leading his club with 28 goals on the season.

His abundant experience and leadership are qualities some supporters say cannot be replicated.

"He's not going to shy away from those moments when it's the World Cup on the line," Rob Stickle said. "He's one of those guys you want kicking the penalty kicks for you, being on the pitch at the end of the game."

Ronaldo, playing in a record-extending sixth World Cup, is the oldest outfield player

in the tournament but still projects as Portugal's starting striker.

Although his age has repeatedly been called into question, fan Ernesto Vilar pointed to other examples of older players, like Argentina's Lionel Messi and Croatia's Luka Modrić, as veterans who still play significant roles for their team.

"Age is just a number," Vilar said. "He's still in very peak physical condition."

His teammates and manager would concur. Midfielder Vitinha is still in awe over Ronaldo's physique.

"He's 41, I'm 26, and I'm not like that," the Paris Saint-Germain player said through a translator. "It's something incredible."

Team manager Roberto Martínez has suggested Ronaldo could even appear at the 2030 World Cup, when he would be 45.

Removed from the conversation about Ronaldo's production and effectiveness, however, are a group of fans that will always idolize him: young children. Many showed up to watch Portugal practice.

Elizabeth Stiebel, 10, says she admires how Ronaldo has always been there when his team needs a big moment.

And 13-year-old Christian Loureiro, whose favorite Ronaldo moment is his overhead-kick goal against Juventus in 2018 while playing for Real Madrid, agrees the superstar forward is still a steady voice.

"A lot of young players on this team need an older figure to help guide them," Loureiro said.

Lamouchi pays price for humbling

Tunisia turns to Renard

MONTERREY, Mexico, June 16, (AP) — Tunisia has fired coach Sabri Lamouchi after being thrashed 5-1 by Sweden in its first match at the World Cup and appointed French coach Hervé Renard.

The 54-year-old Lamouchi had been in charge only since January.

Renard's deal covers only the World Cup and a longer-term agreement will be discussed after that, the Tunisian soccer federation said on Tuesday.

Tunisia's heavy loss on Sunday left the North African nation with a tough task to reach the last 32. The

team's remaining group games are against Japan on Saturday and the Netherlands on June 25.

Renard is an experienced coach who specializes in leading national teams across Africa and the Arabic-speaking world. He's won the Africa Cup of Nations with Zambia and the Ivory Coast.

He coached Morocco at the 2018 World Cup and Saudi Arabia in 2022 - earning a notable upset win over eventual champion Argentina - and the French team at the following year's Women's World Cup.

His most recent job was another stint with Saudi Arabia's men, which ended in April when he was replaced by Georgios Donis following two friendly losses ahead of the World Cup.

It's not the first time Tunisia has made a mid-tournament coaching change at a World Cup. In 1998, Henryk Kasprczak was fired after group-stage losses to England and Colombia, which ruled the team out of contention for the knockout stage before its closing match against Romania.

Spain went even earlier at the 2018 World Cup, firing Julen Lopetegui two days before its first group game - against Portugal - after he was announced as the next Real Madrid coach for the following season.

Tunisia is making its seventh appearance at the World Cup and has never advanced from the group stage.



Saudi Arabia's head coach Herve Renard reacts during the World Cup group C soccer match between Argentina and Saudi Arabia in Lusail, Qatar. (AP)

Captain still limited in practice

Canada awaits Davies fitness boost ahead of key Qatar test

VANCOUVER, British Columbia, June 16, (AP) — Canada captain Alphonso Davies remained limited in the team's World Cup training session as he recovers from a hamstring injury.

Davies warmed up with the team at Canada's training base but remained in return to play protocol ahead of the co-host's second group match on Thursday against Qatar at BC Place in Vancouver.

The left back injured a hamstring last month while playing for Bayern Munich in 1-1 draw with Paris Saint-Germain that knocked the German club out of the Champions League semifinals.

Davies has not played for Canada since March 2025, when he tore an ACL in the CONCACAF Nations League finals. He has 15 goals in 58 games for Canada.

Canada opened the World Cup with a 1-1 draw against Bosnia-Herzegovina on Friday in Toronto.



Davies

Late substitute Cyle Larin scored an equalizer for the Canadians in the 78th minute.

Qatar pulled off an unexpected 1-1 draw with Switzerland on Saturday in Santa Clara, California. Boualem Khoukhi scored for Qatar in stoppage time for the nation's first-ever World Cup point.

The results in the opening games kept Group B tight with each team having one point heading into their second matches.

"We know the group is wide open," defender Joel Waterman said after practice. "Obviously we're looking at the standings, the top two teams make it through, we want to be one of those top two teams, right? So the group is still wide open. Every game is going to be difficult. Qatar is going to be very difficult and obviously Switzerland to finish the group out, so we're looking for two wins."

Canada is training at the National Soccer Development Centre at the University of British Columbia. The facility is the training home of Major League Soccer's Vancouver Whitecaps.

At the session on Monday, all players apart from Davies appeared to participate in full training.

Forward has new tests on injured calf

Neymar's World Cup doubts continue

EAST RUTHERFORD, New Jersey, June 16, (AP) — Doubts over Neymar's debut at the World Cup continued Monday after the Brazil forward underwent new tests on his injured right leg.

There had been hope that Neymar could return to training on Monday, but the Santos player did not join his teammates and instead went to a clinic for the tests on his right calf. The Brazilian soccer confederation did not immediately reveal the results of the tests.

The 34-year-old Neymar, in his fourth World Cup, has been sidelined since getting injured with Santos in Brazil on May 17.

Brazil plays Haiti on Friday at Philadelphia. Neymar has yet to participate in any full training session since the five-time world champions began their World Cup preparations in Morristown, New Jersey.

Brazilian media said Brazil's medical staff was hoping to have him back fully fit for the knockout stages. Neymar's potential return gained more significance after Brazil's disappointing 1-1 draw against Morocco in the teams' World Cup opener on Saturday.

Neymar still brought some star power to the game at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey. He was seen on the sidelines before kickoff saluting celebrities such as rapper Travis Scott and seven-time Super Bowl champion Tom Brady.



Brazil's Neymar (10) looks on before the World Cup Group C soccer match between Brazil and Morocco in East Rutherford, N.J., near New York. (AP)

Brazil's struggles in attack against Morocco immediately prompted calls for a more experienced playmaker like Neymar on the field.

There was widespread debate in Brazil over whether Neymar, whose first World Cup was in 2014 on home soil, should have been called up for the World Cup by new coach Carlo Ancelotti. Some believe the veteran could still help Brazil, but others say Neymar is past his prime and took a spot away from a younger player.

Three other players did not join the group and trained separately Monday to improve their fitness: Gabriel Magalhães, Bruno Guimarães and Raphinha.



A fan of Egypt waits for the beginning of the World Cup Group G soccer match between Egypt and Belgium in Seattle. (AP)

Sports

Lukaku makes immediate impact

Egypt pushes Belgium to the limit in gritty draw

SEATTLE, June 16, (AP): Romelu Lukaku's entrance as a second-half substitute drew a standing ovation from the smattering of Belgium supporters.

It took only 23 seconds to turn those hopeful cheers into raptures of euphoria.

Lukaku's presence sparked an immediate attack that led to Belgium's lone goal against Egypt on Monday, helping to earn a 1-1 draw in the team's opening World Cup match.

"He's a target man," Belgium captain Youri Tielemans said. "He needs to build up his fitness, which is understandable after being out for the season. But he helps us in this way."

Lukaku, a Napoli striker who leads his nation in goals scored, withdrew from Belgium's friendlies in the United States in the spring to get fitter as he continues to recover from a hamstring injury. That injury didn't look too bothersome in the 66th minute when he ran down the middle of the field moments after entering the game and lunched to tap a cross from the right into the net. Egypt defender Mohamed Hany got there first, however, and scored an own-goal to even the score.

With 66,775 spectators watching, the Egyptians took the lead early in the Group G match. Emam Ashour scored his first international goal in the 19th minute.

If not for Lukaku's impact in the second half, Belgium easily could have dug itself into quite a hole in a group it is heavily favored to win, much as it did when failing to advance past the group stage at the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.

Despite out-possessing Egypt, the Red Devils struggled to score all afternoon.

Midfielder Kevin De Bruyne came the closest for Belgium, pushing a shot wide left in the seventh minute before clanking another off the left post in the 53rd. Lukaku

could have put Belgium in front late, too, but his header sailed far above the goal.

Belgium coach Rudi Garcia said that because only 20% of his team's shots were on target, netting one goal was a fair representation of their efforts. Still, Garcia would have preferred a faster start.

"We weren't really in the groove," Garcia said in French. "Technically, we left a lot to be desired."

Egypt, meanwhile, were the more aggressive side in the first 45 minutes. Ashour, a midfielder who was playing in his 30th game for his country, took advantage of a defensive breakdown to give his team only its second lead in a World Cup match.

The Egyptians, who are playing in their fourth World Cup, have still never won a game at the tournament.

"The match shows we were closer to earning the win," Egypt coach Hossam Hassan said in Arabic.

Belgium demonstrated it is still quite reliant on national team stalwarts like De Bruyne, Lukaku, and goalkeeper Thibault Courtois, each of whom is playing in their fourth World Cup.

Winger Jérémy Doku, 24, kept his squad competitive in the first half, but the Red Devils were fortunate to only trail by one entering halftime.

"Our biggest challenge was about us. We lost too many balls, we weren't quick enough in transition, and when we had the ball, we didn't find the solutions," Tielemans said. "We were too static, especially in the first half. In the second half, we created some chances, which we could have won the game, but they had some chances as well." In Garcia's opinion, Egypt and Belgium are the two best teams in Group G, which also features New Zealand and Iran.

"We have to win against Iran," Garcia said of his team's next match on Sunday. "There's no two ways around it."



Egypt's Mohanad Lashin, left, tackles Belgium's Leandro Trossard during the World Cup Group G soccer match between Belgium and Egypt in Seattle. (AP)

Saudi Arabia stands tall in draw against Uruguay



Saudi Arabia goalkeeper Mohammed Alowais makes a save during the World Cup Group H soccer match against Uruguay in Miami Gardens, Fla. (AP)

Surprising day for Group H

MIAMI GARDENS, Fla., June 16, (AP): Abdulelah Al-Amri scored on a rebound in the 41st minute for Saudi Arabia, and Uruguay's Maxi Araujo responded with an equalizer in the 80th as the teams played to a 1-1 draw in their World Cup opener.

Uruguay controlled most of the second half but didn't break through until Araujo fired a rebound past goalkeeper Mohammed Al-Owais from close range. La Celeste dominated possession and had 28 attempts on goal to Saudi Arabia's seven but trailed until late in the second half.

It was the fourth international goal for Araujo and second at Hard Rock Stadium, home to the NFL's Miami Dolphins.

Al-Amri, who had a shot denied by Uruguay's Fernando Muslera earlier in the first half, put his squad ahead with a quick tap-in after Muslera palmed away a header.

Al-Amri fell to his knees after the

goal and placed his head down on the pitch as he was showered with cheers from Saudi Arabia fans, who were greatly outnumbered in South Florida but loud enough to make up the difference.

Four years ago, they watched their team deliver one of the most memora-



Saudi Arabia's Feras Albrikan head the ball during a World Cup Group H soccer match against Uruguay in Miami Gardens, Fla. (AP)

ble moments of the 2022 World Cup, coming back to stun Lionel Messi and eventual champion Argentina 2-1 in Saudi Arabia's opening match.

Monday's result was much less dramatic, but Saudi Arabia - behind a mostly solid performance by Al-Owais - was able to shut out Uru-

guay, a two-time World Cup champion, until late.

La Celeste had plenty of chances. Al-Owais denied a point-blank header from Federico Vinas in the first half, then got his fingertips on an attempt by Manuel Ugarte in the 61st. He also denied Federico Valverde's attempt a couple of minutes into stoppage time.

The result capped a surprising day for Group H - made up of Saudi Arabia, Uruguay, Spain and Cape Verde.

Cape Verde, making its World Cup debut, held heavily favored Spain to a scoreless draw in Atlanta. It was also a matchup of the past, present and future in World Cup history. Uruguay hosted the first World Cup in 1930 and will host a match commemorating the tournament's centennial in 2030, and Saudi Arabia will host the World Cup in 2034.

Among those at the match: FIFA President Gianni Infantino, Miami Heat star Bam Adebayo, former NFL star Chad Ochocinco and longtime Uruguay standout Luis Suarez -- Messi's teammate with Inter Miami who was not picked to represent his country at this tournament.

Iran and New Zealand share spoils as Just makes history

INGLEWOOD, Calif., June 16, (AP): Elijah Just made history as the first New Zealand player to score two goals in the World Cup. It wasn't quite enough for the team from the bottom of the world to pull off its first-ever win.

The All Whites held Iran to 2-2 on Monday night in the Los Angeles area, the fourth consecutive draw in World Cup play for New Zealand, which was unbeaten in the 2010 edition with three draws.

"That may be our best performance ever," coach Darren Bazeley said. "We came here to win, and we were so close to making history."

The All Whites led 1-0 and 2-1 thanks to Just, who blew kisses to a crowd that included FIFA President Gianni Infantino after his second goal. Chris Wood, the Kiwis' best-known player, assisted on both goals.

"We showed today that we're a dangerous team," Just said. "You can't be disappointed. A point in the World Cup is always tough to get."

The 26-year-old winger came into the World Cup off a strong season with Motherwell in the Scottish Premiership, where he was a contender for player of the year.

"It doesn't surprise me. I've known him a really long time," Bazeley said of Just. "He showed the world how dangerous he can be. He's of slight build, but he gets into pockets, turns and reacts quick. A lot of people are probably watching that today and saying, 'He's a good player.' This is going to help him a lot."

Just had his parents, brother, uncle, and girlfriend in the crowd, which was dominated by Iranian fans, which was to be expected given that Los Angeles is home to the largest population of Iranians outside of their home country.

"Walking out, the adrenaline was really high," Just said. "Once the game started, you kind of calm down a little bit. We were quite good with the ball. We dealt with the occasion really well. The players were really brave. Overall, it's the performance we needed."

Before the World Cup expanded to 48 teams for this edition, the All Whites had qualified only twice in 1982 and 2010.

They have never advanced past the group stages. The team spent the day watching other World Cup matches, including underdog Cape Verde drawing against Spain. That left Bazeley thinking it could be his team's day.

New Zealand, which entered the tournament as the lowest-ranked qualifier at 85th, is better known as a rugby union powerhouse.

Just's performance in challenging Iran, which was heavily favored, gave the All Whites a jolt of confidence.

"He's an amazing player, and he's so dangerous when we get him going forward," defender Finn Surman said.

The All Whites' next chance to notch their first World Cup victory comes Sunday, when they play Egypt in Vancouver, British Columbia.



Iran's Ramin Rezaeian (23) celebrates with his teammate Iran's Saeid Ezaatollahi (6) after scoring a goal during the World Cup Group G soccer match between Iran and New Zealand in Inglewood, Calif., near Los Angeles. (AP)

World Cup Fixtures

Jordan vs Austria 07:00

Portugal vs DR Congo 20:00

England vs Croatia 23:00

Thursday

Ghana vs Panama 02:00

Uzbekistan vs Colombia 05:00