



Amir condolences with Saudi King over Princess demise

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KUWAIT'S INTENSIVE ROAD CHECKS LEAD TO MULTIPLE ARRESTS

Deportation route for expat speeders

Authorities reaffirm equal enforcement of traffic rules

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: The General Department of Traffic is continuing its extensive campaigns to arrest those driving beyond the speed limit.

Traffic patrols are deployed on major roads and highways as part of ongoing

measures to reduce traffic accidents and protect lives and properties.

Sources confirmed to the newspaper that traffic officers have intensified road monitoring operations after the discovery of many serious traffic violations, including speeding.

Sources said the objective of these campaigns goes beyond the issuance of traffic violation citations, as it includes ensuring compliance with traffic safety regulations and deterring reckless drivers whose behavior poses a threat to other road users.

Sources also affirmed that traffic regulations are enforced equally on all individuals, and that legal action is taken against violators. Sources stated that the legal measures include detention at the traffic police station for citizens and deportation for expatriates.

Sources explained that speeding is one of the most dangerous traffic violations, because it increases the risk of losing control of a vehicle and the likelihood of serious accidents that may cause serious injuries or fatalities.

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Hormuz crossing resumes

Kuwait stresses post-deal stability in call with Iran

KUWAIT CITY, June 18, (Agencies): Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received a phone call on Thursday from Iranian counterpart Abbas Araghchi to discuss recent regional developments.

In a statement, the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs said Sheikh Jarrah expressed Kuwait's hope that the memorandum of understanding concluded between the United States and Iran would contribute to strengthening regional stability, ensuring security and freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz, and addressing outstanding issues through sustainable solutions.



In this photo released by Iran Presidency Office, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian signs a memorandum of understanding already signed by U.S. President Donald Trump aimed at ending the war and launching negotiations on a broader agreement, in Tehran, Iran, early Thursday, June 18, 2026. (AP)

The minister stressed the importance of basing relations among states on the principles of international law and the objectives enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

He also underscored the need to adhere to the principles of good neighborliness, respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of states, non-interference in internal affairs, refraining from the use or threat of force, and resolving disputes through peaceful means.

Sheikh Jarrah further emphasized the importance of ending support for proxy actors, noting that such steps would help reinforce regional security and stability and advance the common interests of the countries and peoples of the region.

US President Donald Trump signed an agreement with Iran on Wednesday that calls for Tehran to dilute its stockpile of highly enriched uranium and waives U.S.-backed sanctions on the country, immediately allowing Iran to sell its oil freely in a major concession from Washington, according to details released by both countries.

The initial deal to end the war takes "immediate effect" after leaders from both countries signed it, Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, who helped mediate the agreement, said online.

The agreement calls for a permanent end to hostilities and starts a 60-day negotiating clock to reach a final deal on the future of Iran's nuclear program, though Trump left the door open to resume attacks. It appears to offer Iran several benefits up front while extracting little in return.

The deal has been shrouded in secrecy and confusion for days. U.S. officials refused to disclose the terms even after saying Trump

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Photo by Samer Shiqr

A worker presses on with outdoor tasks before the daily midday work stoppage begins under Kuwait's summer labor regulations.

Weekend heat to peak at 45°C across Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, June 18, (KUNA): The Meteorological Department forecasts that the country will be affected by hot and relatively humid weather during the day, especially over coastal areas, and warm and relatively humid conditions at night over the weekend.

Acting Director of the department, Abdulaziz Al Qarawi, explained to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that weather maps and numerical models indicate that the country is affected by the extension of a surface low-pressure system

accompanied by a hot and relatively humid air mass, with southeast to variable light to moderate winds.

Friday's daytime weather will be hot and relatively humid, especially over coastal areas, with southeast to variable light to moderate winds ranging from 8 to 32 km/h, and expected maximum temperatures between 43 and 45°C. Sea

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KUNA photo
Minister of State for Development and Sustainability Affairs Dr. Reem Al-Fulaij with Australian Ambassador to Kuwait Melissa Kelly.

Kuwait, Australia strengthen green development relations

KUWAIT CITY, June 18, (KUNA): Minister of State for Development and Sustainability Affairs Dr. Reem Al-Fulaij discussed with Australian Ambassador to Kuwait Melissa Kelly ways to enhance bilateral cooperation in environmental and development fields.

Al-Fulaij told KUNA on Thursday the talks addressed a number of environmental issues of mutual interest and reviewed initiatives and projects aimed at protecting the environment and improving quality of life.

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Other Voices

Why do we reject hard truths on Iran?

By Abdulaziz Al-Anjeri

People rarely reject analysis because it is wrong. They reject it because it forces them to confront possibilities they would rather avoid.

The phenomenon is familiar in sports. A football fan does not want to hear about his team's weaknesses or his opponent's strengths. He wants reassurance that victory is coming. But politics is not football. The story does not end with the final whistle. It begins after the fighting stops and the agreements are signed.

The debate surrounding Iran illustrates the point. Many expected conflict to weaken, isolate, or even remove the Iranian regime from the regional equation. Instead, attention shifted to U.S.-Iran understandings,



Abdulaziz Al-Anjeri

possible economic rehabilitation, and the uncomfortable prospect that Gulf states could end up footing part of the bill for a stronger Iran they had little or no role in shaping.

Yet this is precisely where serious analysis becomes necessary. Asking uncomfortable questions is not an act of sympathy for Iran, nor a sign of pessimism. It is the minimum requirement of strategic thinking.

Too often, uncomfortable analysis is dismissed as bias, while warnings are ignored until events make them impossible to deny. But explaining possible risks before they materialize is far more valuable than explaining actual failures after they occur. In a burdened Middle East, this habit has become especially costly.

International politics does not reward wishful thinking. National interests are protected not by denying unpleasant scenarios or sugarcoating the truth, but by preparing for them before they arrive. That can only happen when dialogue is welcomed and different views are respected.

Education minister tours Grade 12 testing centers

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: Minister of Education Eng. Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei inspected several Grade 12 examination centers for both the Science and Arts streams this morning to observe the examination process firsthand and monitor the level of preparedness and organizational procedures, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

He reviewed the organizational and technical procedures implemented by school administrations and supervisory teams to ensure adherence to approved regulations and instructions, guaranteeing fairness and equal opportunities for all students.

Al-Tabtabaei listened to explanations from the heads of exam centers regarding the workflow, mechanisms for handling various situations, and the precautionary and organizational measures in place.

He commended the efforts of the educational and administrative staff in ensuring the success of the examination season.

Al-Tabtabaei affirmed that the ministry has dedicated all its human, technical, and administrative resources

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MoE photos
Education minister interacts with students during his field visit to exam centers.

Day by Day

EVERYTHING in this world has its explanation and analysis.

It is said that dictatorship means that people are silenced, their mouths are shut, and they are allowed only to care about themselves.

It is said that democracy means that people are free to speak, yield, and complain.

As long as every phenomenon has an explanation, everything becomes easier to understand. Nothing in this life is perfect.

Socrates wrote a lot about what he called "utopia". Socrates' writings were buried with him, and every mind went its own way. That is how life is. Nothing can be perfect. Only God is perfect.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar



14 Amir congratulates Burgan on historic victory

NewsWatch

BRUSSELS: European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy **Kaja Kallas** affirmed that the two-state solution remains "the only viable path" to achieving peace in the Middle East.

Kallas wrote on X that "to bring peace to the Middle East, the Two-State Solution remains the only viable path." She added that the European Union has condemned the illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank, saying they make it increasingly difficult to achieve that goal.

"This is the EU position," she said, reaffirming the bloc's commitment to

the two-state solution as the basis for peace in the region.

Kallas' remarks came in response to Israeli occupation Foreign Minister **Gideon Sa'ar's** announcement that he had "no choice but to sever all contact" with her following media reports claiming that she had compared Israel to South Africa's former apartheid regime.

According to the reports, Kallas made the remarks during a visit to Mexico in May, where she met senior Mexican government officials as part of the European Union's efforts to strengthen cooperation with Latin American countries. (KUNA)



Prayer Timings			
Fajr	03:13	Asr	15:23
Sunrise ..	04:48	Maghrib ..	18:50
Zohr	11:49	Isha	20:22



HH Amir Sheikh Meshal



King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud

Amir condoles with Saudi King over Princess demise

KUWAIT CITY, June 18, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of condolences to Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud over the passing of Princess Sara bint Ahmed Al-Abdulrahman Al-Saud.

In the cable, His Highness expressed his sincere condolences and heartfelt sympathy to King Salman and the Saudi royal family on the death of the late princess.

His Highness the Amir prayed to Almighty Allah to bestow His mercy upon the deceased and provide patience and solace to the royal family and her relatives during this difficult time.

Crown Prince condoles

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent a cable of condolences to Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud over the passing of Princess Sara bint Ahmed Al-Abdulrahman Al-Saud.

Prime Minister condoles

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent a cable of condolences to Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud over the passing of Princess Sara bint Ahmed Al-Abdulrahman Al-Saud.

IICO pledges \$10 mln in support of IsDB resilience facility

KUALA LUMPUR, June 18, (KUNA): The International Islamic Charitable Organization (IICO) announced on Thursday a contribution of USD 10 million over five years in support of the Islamic Development Bank's (IsDB) Response, Recovery and Resilience (3R) Facility.

In a press statement, the organization said the announcement was made during its participation in the (Facility Partners Session) held on the sidelines of the IsDB Annual Meetings in the Azerbaijani capital, Baku.

The contribution, it added, aims to support communities affected by crises and conflicts in their recovery efforts and help build a more stable and sustainable future.

The statement said that IICO Director General Eng. Bader Al-Sumait also announced, during his speech at the session, attended by IsDB leaders and representatives of donor international and development institutions, the organization's official accession as a founding partner of the facility in support of its humanitarian and development programs and projects.

Al-Sumait affirmed that IICO believes complex humanitarian challenges require long-term strategic partnerships that bridge humanitarian and development efforts.

He also noted that joining the facility reflects



KUNA photo

IICO Director General Eng. Bader Al-Sumait attends the meeting.

the organization's commitment to contributing to sustainable solutions for crises and enhancing the resilience and recovery capacity of affected communities.

Furthermore, Al-Sumait said that IICO has an extensive track record in implementing humanitarian and development programs across dozens of countries worldwide and seeks through this partnership to expand the impact of its interventions and benefit from shared international expertise to achieve more sustainable outcomes for beneficiaries.

According to the statement, the move comes

within IICO's strategy to strengthen its international presence and build effective institutional partnerships with international organizations and agencies, thereby expanding the scope of humanitarian and development work and maximizing its impact on the world's most vulnerable populations.

IICO was represented at the IsDB Annual Meetings by a high-level delegation headed by Chairman Eng. Jamal Al-Nouri, accompanied by Director General Eng. Bader Al-Sumait, Deputy Director General for Projects Ibrahim Al-Bader, and Partnerships Officer Eng. Khalil Al-Hamad.

'Kuwait-Gulf railway link vital to sustain supplies'

Need to prevent future oil export disruptions: expert

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: Despite the cessation of the US-Israeli war against Iran, the global economy continues to suffer its repercussions, including persistently high inflation and rising energy and food prices resulting from supply chain disruptions.

Economic expert Qais Al-Ghanim outlined three main paths to avoid any future economic crises should the US-Israeli war against Iran recur.

In the first path, Al-Ghanim called for activating all means to facilitate transportation between Kuwait and other Gulf states through railway connections.

He affirmed that this step would inevitably revitalize the economic and commercial situation among Gulf countries, especially as Saudi Arabia is moving towards linking its railway network with Turkiye, passing through Dammam,

Riyadh, Makkah, and Madinah, then through Jordan and Syria, until it reaches Istanbul.

Al-Ghanim indicated that the railway project currently underway will significantly boost trade among these countries, particularly as the closure of the Strait of Hormuz has sharply increased the cost of transporting goods, which has ultimately affected consumers.

In the second path, Al-Ghanim emphasized the need to increase the number of ports in Kuwait and the Gulf states to mitigate the effects of a future closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

He said the solution lies in relying on other Gulf ports, especially since the region overlooks the Arabian Gulf, the Arabian Sea, and the Red Sea, and can reach the Mediterranean Sea via Egypt.

Al-Ghanim stressed that the third path focuses on connecting Kuwaiti oil pipelines to Saudi oil pipelines, bypassing the Strait of Hormuz, which is affected by geopolitical crises.

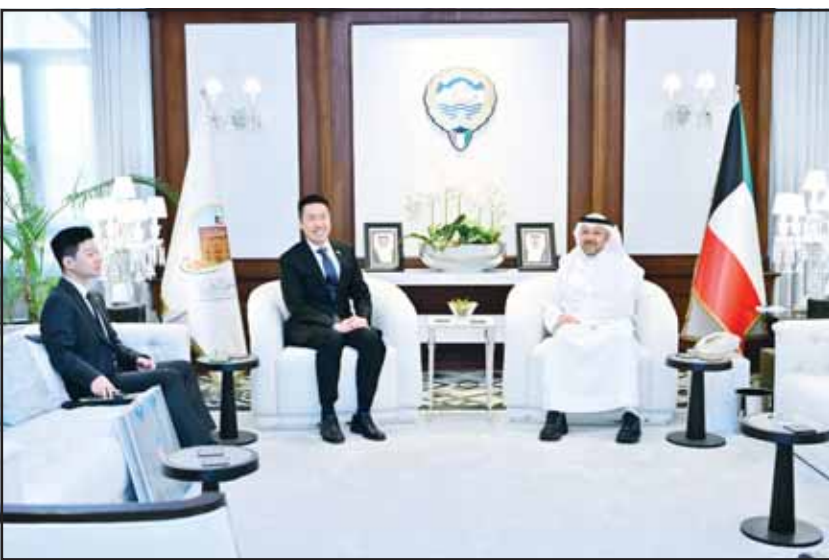
He pointed to the efforts of the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) in establishing several Kuwaiti oil storage facilities in Asian countries that import Kuwaiti oil.

He indicated that while the idea is sound, it is a temporary, not a permanent, solution, emphasizing the need to take all measures to prevent any future disruptions to Kuwaiti oil exports.

Meanwhile, the UN Assistant Secretary-General told international newspapers that the economic losses for Middle Eastern countries due to the war between the US, Israel, and Iran amount to approximately \$186 billion per month.

He added that the Gulf states alone lose about \$168 billion per month as a result of the closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

According to a World Bank Group report, rising inflationary pressures, higher energy prices, and tighter monetary policies resulting from a potential war between the US, Israel, and Iran are pushing global growth to low levels and are expected to reduce the global growth rate in 2026 to 2.5 percent, compared to approximately 2.9 percent in 2025. A partial recovery to 2.8 percent is projected for 2027, but this would still be below the average of the previous decade.



Farwaniya Governorate photo
Governor of Farwaniya Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi met with Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to the State of Kuwait Yang Xin at his office in the Farwaniya Governorate headquarters on Thursday.

Kuwait, China to upgrade strong bilateral relations

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: Governor of Farwaniya Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah met with Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to the State of Kuwait Yang Xin at his office in the Farwaniya Governorate headquarters on Thursday.

The meeting focused on strengthening cooperation and bilateral relations between the two friendly nations.

Both sides discussed many issues of mutual interest and opportunities for stronger coordination aimed at reinforcing the distinguished relationship between Kuwait and China.

During the meeting, the Governor high-

lighted the deep-rooted historical relations between the two countries, while commending the continuous progress of cooperation in various sectors. He wished the Ambassador success in carrying out his responsibilities.

On the other hand, Ambassador Yang Xin praised the strong ties between Kuwait and China, reaffirming his country's commitment to expand cooperation and solidify bilateral relations in a manner that serves the interests of both nations.

He also expressed his appreciation to the Governor for the warm reception and hospitality extended to him.

Kuwait 31st in IMD world ranking

KUWAIT CITY, June 18, (KUNA): Kuwait advanced to 31st place among 70 countries in the 2026 World Competitiveness Ranking issued by the International Institute for Management Development (IMD), climbing from the 36th place among 69 countries in 2025.

Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) said Thursday that Kuwait's overall score increased to 70.13/100 in 2026 from 68.69 in 2025, reflecting improved competitiveness at the international level.

Nazaha said the improvement was driven

by positive performance across several pillars of the index, particularly economic performance and business efficiency, strengthening Kuwait's competitive standing globally.

The IMD World Competitiveness Benchmarking is a leading international benchmark that assesses economies' ability to provide a favorable environment for business and investment and to achieve sustainable growth. It also serves as a reference source for measuring corruption perceptions.



KUNA photo

Minister of State for Development and Sustainability Affairs Dr. Reem Al-Fulajj receives Head of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) Mission to Kuwait and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries Dr. Amira Al-Hassan.

Kuwait and UN-Habitat boost in cooperation, strategic ties

KUWAIT CITY, June 18, (KUNA): Minister of State for Development and Sustainability Affairs Dr. Reem Al-Fulajj discussed with Head of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) Mission to Kuwait and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries Dr. Amira Al-Hassan ways to enhance cooperation and strategic partnership.

The discussions focused on environmental sustainability, greening initiatives and sustainable urban development projects in Kuwait and beyond, according to a statement by

the minister to KUNA on Thursday.

Al-Fulajj told KUNA that during her meeting with Al-Hassan at the Environment Public Authority (EPA), they reviewed the current and future activities of the regional office and the Kuwait office.

She added that the meeting explored opportunities to develop joint initiatives and projects, strengthen expertise exchange and build institutional capacities in support of Kuwait's efforts to adopt best environmental practices and achieve sustainable development goals.

MEWRE tells public how to conserve water, electricity

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy continues to raise public awareness on the importance of conserving electricity and water, through its 'Save' campaign pavilion at The Avenues Mall from June 18-23.

This is one of the activities of the ministry aimed at instilling the concepts of sustainability and resource conservation.

In a press statement, official spokesperson of the ministry Eng. Fatima Hayat disclosed that the 'Save' campaign pavilion offers a comprehensive interactive experience under the slogan "Save and Make a Difference." She said the goal is to illustrate the impact of daily practices on reduc-

ing consumption and preserving resources and public funds through simplified educational content and activities for all family members.

She added that the pavilion is designed to provide visitors with an interactive journey, allowing them to learn about conservation methods from the initial home construction phase to the daily practices that increase electricity and water efficiency.

She indicated that the ministry is showing visitors the basic elements of an energy-efficient home, such as thermal insulation, choosing appropriate building materials and high-efficiency appliances, and their role in reducing electricity and water consumption. She stressed that building an energy-efficient home is a long-term investment in resource conservation.

Other Voices

Where is the KRCS?

By Ahmad alsarraf

AL-QABAS newspaper preceded me in its main article recently, expressing sincere gratitude to the heroes of Kuwait in the National Guard, the Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), Kuwait International Airport, the police, and the army, who were at the forefront of defending the homeland during the most severe crisis Kuwait has witnessed since liberation.

This article is a message of gratitude to the heroes of the armed forces, the National Guard, the Ministry of Interior, KFF, and all security and military agencies in confronting the aggression we faced as a result of the attacks launched by the brutal and extremist Iranian regime.

The attacks included approximately 900 drones and more than 394 ballistic missiles, with no regard for the fact that Kuwait is a peaceful country. These missiles and drones, which injured both military personnel and civilians, should never have been launched at Kuwait and its people. The attacks targeted and sabotaged vital civilian infrastructure that is not part of military objectives, such as Kuwait International Airport, which is still out of service for a long time.

We must remember, as mentioned in the Al-Qabas article, that the security and peace we enjoy today are thanks to the sacrifices of Kuwait's righteous martyrs - Sergeant Waleed Majeed Suleiman, Sergeant Abdulaziz Abdulmoheem Dakhel, Lieutenant Colonel Abdullah Emad Al-Sharrah, and Major Fahad Abdulaziz Al-Mujammad, who sacrificed their lives for their nation.

These heroes will remain immortal in Kuwait's memory and in the hearts of its people, a symbol of sacrifice and devotion for generations to come.

On June 9, in a personal initiative, I sent a letter to Khaled Al-Mughamis, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS), and proposed launching a fundraising campaign for the victims of the Iranian aggression.

I announced my donation of KD 2,000 through KRCS to support one of the injured, and expressed hope that readers and followers on the X platform would participate in the campaign through KRCS.

I sent another letter to Al-Mughamis requesting a discussion on the method of collecting donations and thanking him for his efforts. When I received no response to my messages, I tried calling him, but he did not answer.

After waiting for nearly two weeks, I contacted two senior staff members at KRCS, who are supposed to be compassionate and helpful. They told me that it was difficult to contact Al-Mughamis. I then wondered where the KRCS was.

☐ ☐ ☐

email: a.alsarraf@alqabas.com.kw



KUNA photo
Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan receives Ambassador of Kuwait to Turkiye and the accompanying delegation during a ceremony held at the Presidential Palace in the capital Ankara.

Kuwait envoy to Turkiye takes post

ISTANBUL, June 18, (KUNA): Ambassador Mohammad Marzouq Al-Shabu on Wednesday presented his credentials to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan as Ambassador of Kuwait to Turkiye during a ceremony held at the Presidential Palace in the capital Ankara.

In a press release, the Kuwaiti Embassy in Ankara said that Ambassador Al-Shabu conveyed to President Erdogan the greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

The statement added that Al-Shabu dis-

cussed with President Erdogan ways of further developing bilateral relations and enhancing cooperation in the economic, health and security fields, in addition to education and defense industries.

The meeting also reviewed the keenness of both sides to exchange visits between their leaderships and reaffirmed the deeply rooted fraternal ties linking the leaders and peoples of the two countries.

Al-Shabu praised the depth of relations spanning more than 60 years between Kuwait and Turkey, describing them as "solid and exemplary," and highlighting the potential for broader cooperation across various fields.

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

First aid culture can help save lives on roads & sea

"I WOULD like to send a message to His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad, the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef, the Minister of Education Dr. Jalal Al-Tabtabaei, the Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi, and the rest of the esteemed ministers," columnist **Bassam Fahad Thunayan Al-Ghanim** wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.



Al-Ghanim

"Advanced countries are not measured by the number of modern hospitals and advanced equipment they possess, but rather by their ability to save lives in the critical first minutes before medical teams arrive. These few minutes are often the true difference between life and death.

"Hence, a crucial practical principle emerges - 'The first to arrive must be the first capable of saving lives.'"

"Quick arrival alone is not enough unless it is accompanied by knowledge, skill, and the ability to intervene correctly in critical moments.

"In most traffic accidents, drownings, fires, and sudden health crises, security personnel are the first to arrive at the scene, whether they are police officers, traffic officers, Coast Guard personnel, members of the National Guard, members of the army, or firefighters.

"Therefore, a crucial question we ask is - How can we expect first responders to provide quick assistance at an accident scene if they are not adequately trained to save lives and manage injuries and critical situations?"

"The presence of traffic officers at the scene should not be limited to managing the situation or requesting backup, but it must extend to the actual ability to assist when every second counts.

"A recent drowning incident that captured public attention brought this question back to the forefront. This news deeply affected the entire community and demonstrated that the sea, roads, and public facilities can transform in an instant into accident scenes requiring immediate intervention.

"The most important message is that saving lives depends not only on speed of arrival but also on possessing the right skills at the right moment.

"We hope the government will make a strategic decision to make First Aid and basic rescue a mandatory component of all training courses for personnel of the Ministry of Interior, the Armed Forces, the National Guard, the Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), and the Coast Guard.

"It is inconceivable that a security officer, field officer, or any other field officer would graduate without being able to perform CPR, stop bleeding, and manage cases of suffocation, drowning, fractures, and critical injuries until specialists arrive.

"Training should not be limited to security personnel, but it should also include employees of the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Health.

"Accidents and emergencies do not discriminate between security personnel and employees, or between doctors and administrators.

"The Ministry of Education plays a major role. Schools house hundreds of thousands of students, teachers, and administrators, and cases of fainting, suffocation, injuries, or sudden health crises can occur. Therefore, it is essential to require all teachers and school administrations to regularly complete First Aid courses, making these courses a requirement for employment in educational institutions.

"The ambition should extend beyond this to include First Aid as an official course in secondary school, so that every student in Kuwait graduates with the minimum skills necessary to save a life. What is the value of dozens of academic subjects if a student does not know how to react when they witness someone injured?"

"This responsibility should not be limited to governmental, military, and educational institutions, but it should also extend to those applying for a driver's license. Drivers are often among the first witnesses to traffic accidents, as is the practice in several developed countries, including Germany, which has helped spread a culture of First Aid.

"Countries that have advanced in this field have not confined First Aid to doctors and nurses, but have transformed it into a general societal culture and an essential life skill.

"As a result, mortality rates due to delays in providing First Aid have decreased, and the chances of survival have increased significantly.

"First Aid education is not a luxury training program, nor an optional course. It is a direct investment in human resources and in the safety of society.

"Perhaps the most appropriate tribute we can pay to the victims of tragic accidents is to transform pain into reform, experience into decisions, and tragedy into a comprehensive national project that makes First Aid a com-

mon practice.

"Saving a single life can mean the world to a family. We need tens of thousands of citizens and residents capable of saving lives in critical moments. Only then can we say that we have learned from experience and transformed tragedies into practical steps that preserve lives and build a safer and more humane future for Kuwait."

Also:

"When Iraq seeks loans from the Gulf states out of concern over a financial crisis, many ask - how can it request support from countries that were subjected for years to political, media, security, and military attacks?" Kuwaiti journalist **Salem Al-Wawan** wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

"Relations between states are built on interests, and trust is built on positions that serve those interests. Therefore, any Gulf response would not be emotional, but based on careful calculations and clear guarantees.

"The rush for assistance after years of contradictions is seen by observers as evidence of policy failure more than an emergency situation.

"For this reason, when Baghdad requests funds from Gulf capitals, the question is - how can the Iraqi government do so while many thieves within state institutions receive money from those loans and then invest it inside Iraq and abroad for their own private interests?"

"Land prices in Sabah Al-Ahmad Marine City recorded a noticeable decline during the second quarter of 2026 compared with the levels seen in 2025 and previous years, following a period of continuous price growth driven by increased demand for waterfront land and heightened investment activity in the area," real estate activist **Jihan Abduljader Marafie** wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

"Over recent years, many plots in Sabah Al-Ahmad Marine City achieved significant price gains, particularly in prime locations and waterfront sites, leading prices in some areas to reach elevated levels relative to the market's normal growth rates.

"With the start of 2026, the market began entering a phase of rebalancing, reflected in the decline of prices for a number of plots, especially those facing greater competition due to higher supply.

"Observers believe that what the area is experiencing does not represent a decline in its investment appeal as much as it reflects a natural correction following several years of price increases.

"The growing number of properties offered for sale, combined with buyers waiting for further price declines, has also contributed to increased pressure on prices in recent months.

"Despite this decline, Sabah Al-Ahmad Marine City continues to maintain strong investment opportunities, most notably the limited availability of waterfront land, the area's prime location, and continued demand for marine-style real estate.

"As a result, the market is expected to experience a period of relative stability in the coming months, with performance varying across different locations. Prime plots are likely to retain their value better than less sought-after properties.

"Overall, the price decline recorded in the second quarter of 2026 can be viewed as a natural correction following years of consecutive increases, potentially creating new investment opportunities at more realistic and balanced price levels."

□ □ □

"It is said that a Bedouin man married his cousin, and she gave birth to nine sons. On the tenth occasion, she gave birth to a daughter," Imam and preacher **Muhammad Al-Fawzan** wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

"When the man was told of his daughter's birth, he was deeply saddened and felt humiliated. He cried out, 'What a dark day!' He quarrelled with his wife and became pessimistic toward her.

"As days and years passed, the father grew old, and his strength weakened. He fell ill. One day, he awoke to discover that he had gone blind. All his sons had married and become absorbed in their own lives and daily affairs, forgetting their blind father. His daughter had also married, but when she heard what had happened to her father, she rushed to him, helping him clean his body and his tent, and preparing his food.

"The man felt a peace he had never known before. When his daughter approached to give him the medicine and he did not recognize her, he asked who she was. With tears in her eyes, she replied that she was the one he had once described as his darkest day. At that moment, the man burst into tears and begged her for forgiveness."

- Compiled by Simi K. Kutty

Three dormant, violating charities dissolved

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: Minister of Social, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthar Al-Huwailah issued a decision to dissolve three charitable societies after finding out that they were inactive and failed to fulfill the objectives for which they were established.

Al-Huwailah stressed that the ministry remains committed to intensifying oversight

of charitable societies and regulating charitable activities to ensure full compliance with laws and regulations. She explained these efforts are aimed at protecting donations and ensuring that they reach the rightful beneficiaries.

She warned that the ministry does not tolerate violations, emphasizing that all charitable societies are required to apply the transparency and governance standards and to comply with the rules and regulations.

She added these measures are in line

with the commitment of the ministry to maintain the integrity of charitable work, boost public confidence in charitable organizations, and preserve the distinguished humanitarian standing and leadership of Kuwait in charitable and humanitarian activities.



Dr Al-Huwailah

Expats obtaining ID cards by illegal ways face deportation

Duo jailed for facilitating forgery at KD 100-150 per case

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: The Criminal Security Sector, represented by the General Department of Criminal Investigations, has arrested two individuals on charges of tampering and forgery, and of recording false residential addresses for expatriates of various nationalities. They then issued civil ID cards in which the registered addresses did not match the individuals' actual places of residence, reports Al-Anba daily.

Investigations revealed that the first suspect, born in 1973, exploited his position to alter expatriates' residen-

tial addresses in the records of the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) in exchange for amounts ranging between KD 100 and KD 120 per transaction.

A security source explained that the first suspect was referred to the Capital Public Prosecution, which charged him with forgery and bribery before ordering his detention at the Central Prison. His accomplice, who acted as a link between the expatriates and the main suspect, was also referred to the competent authorities. He admitted to receiving KD 150 per transaction, with his commission ranging between KD 30 and KD 50.

Information was received by the Criminal Security Sector indicating that expatriates were changing their residential addresses for amounts of up to KD 150 per transaction, prompting authorities to place the case under

investigation. Follow-up revealed that the expatriates were dealing with an intermediary who was arrested and interrogated, and who disclosed his connection to a complicit employee, leading to the later arrest of the first suspect.

The source stressed that expatriates who obtain civil ID cards through illegal means may face penalties, including administrative deportation, calling for full compliance with the law.

He also noted that the relevant authorities are continuing to review all transactions carried out by the suspects.

It is worth noting that the latest network involved in such cases was dismantled in December last year, when the Ministry of Interior announced that the Financial Crimes Combating Department had arrested a network facilitating illegal residential address changes in exchange for money.

No casualties as blaze erupts in co-op shops

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: Fire broke out in several shops at the Wafra Agricultural Cooperative Society on Wednesday evening, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In an official statement, the Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) explained that firefighters from the Al-Wafra and Al-Nuwiseeb fire stations rushed to the location and extinguished the fire before it spread further. No casualties were reported.

Investigations have been launched to determine the cause of the fire.

Jail, huge fines for riding ATV on public road: Mol

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: Traffic officers arrested a citizen for driving an all-terrain vehicle (ATV) on a public road and referred him to the traffic police station.

This is part of the ongoing efforts of the General Traffic Department to apprehend drivers of ATVs on public roads and outside the specified areas.

A security source informed the newspaper that traffic officers carry out their duties 24/7 to arrest reckless drivers and traffic law violators. In the most recent campaign, the officers tracked down a citizen driving an ATV on a public road, arrested him and referred him to the traffic police station, while the vehicle was impounded.

The source indicated that the fine for driving ATVs and motorcycles outside the designated areas is KD150. He added that if the case is referred to court, the penalty is imprisonment for one to three years and a fine of KD600 to KD1,000, or one of these penalties.

Asians caught for illegally transporting passengers

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: Highway patrol officers arrested two Asian men for illegally transporting passengers.

According to a security source, the two men were arrested during routine patrol operations, as the highway patrol officers noticed these men transporting passengers in exchange for a fee.

The two men were taken into custody, their vehicles were impounded, and they were transferred to the traffic police station pending the completion of legal procedures.

The source stated that the fine for using a motor vehicle to transport passengers for a fee without obtaining a permit is KD150, if settled amicably.

The source added that if the case is referred to the court, the offender may face a prison sentence ranging from one to three years and/or a fine ranging from KD600 to KD1,000.

Mol's safe travel campaign

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: The Ministry of Interior launched an awareness campaign on safe travel, urging citizens to check the validity of their passports and those of their children way ahead of the travel date.

It called for prompt passport renewal before the date of expiry in order to avoid travel obstacles. It indicated that online passport renewal service is available through the 'Sahel' application for citizens aged 21 and above.

It added that passport renewal can also be processed at the national identity centers in all governorates.

Lower court ruling overturned

Court asks businessman to pay company cost of meat

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: The Commercial Court of Appeals overturned a lower court ruling that had dismissed a lawsuit filed by a company specializing in the supply of meat and food items, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The court ordered an expatriate businessman to pay the company KD 39,788.273 for goods supplied to him, in addition to court costs and KD 200 in legal fees.

The company's lawyer, Ali Matar Al-Wawan, filed the lawsuit, requesting that the defendant be compelled to pay the outstanding debt resulting from the supply of meat and food items between 2016 and the end of 2023.

The case was based on invoices and account statements proving the com-

mercial transactions between the two parties.

The court relied on the report of the appointed expert, which confirmed the debt of KD 39,788.273 owed by the defendant to the company.

The court rejected the company's request to impose legal interest on the defendant, explaining that, following the invalidation of the agreement between the two parties, the claim was based on the principle of unjust enrichment, a civil obligation for which late payment interest is not permissible.

Lawyer Ali Matar Al-Wawan relied on the documents, invoices, and account statements that proved the amount of the debt owed to the company.



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Court details misappropriation of thousands of dinars in case against 'royal'

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: The Second Criminal Circuit of the Court of Cassation has issued a final ruling in the cases known in the media as the "Ministry of Defense Expenses" and "Ministry of Interior Expenses", and sentenced former Minister of Defense and Interior Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled to three-year imprisonment with hard labor, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Given that the sentences are to run concurrently, the applicable sentence is three-year imprisonment.

The court also sentenced the second defendant to three-year imprisonment with hard labor and ordered his deportation from Kuwait after serving his sentence.

It affirmed the established facts in the Ministry of Defense case based on evidence, testimonies, investigations, and expenditure receipts.

The court explained that Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled, in his capacity as Minister of Defense, issued orders to disburse KD589,500 from the special expenses budget and deliver it to the second defendant, despite the latter not holding any official position authorizing him to receive such funds.

The amount was delivered through 32 documented disbursement transactions and then deposited into the second defendant's bank account through hundreds of separate deposits, which the court considered intended to conceal the source of the funds and disguise their true nature.

A total of 277 ATM deposits and 118 cash deposits were made before

the funds were transferred to members of the first defendant's family and others.

The court affirmed that public funds allocated for special expenses must be spent for legally defined purposes and may not be given to anyone with no official or professional relationship to the ministry.

It rejected the defense's claims that the deposited funds originated from investments and real estate owned by Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled, stating that the defendants failed to provide any evidence to support this.

The court indicated that it based its decision on Article 20, Paragraph 2 of the Public Funds Protection Law, which allows for a reduction in punishment if the damage is minor.

It noted that Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled returned the full amount of KD 589,000 before the verdict, as shown by an official receipt dated June 4, 2026. As a result, the court limited the sentence to three-year imprisonment and annulled the original penalties related to dismissal from office and proportional fines.

Regarding the case of the Ministry of Interior's secret expenditures, the court rejected the findings of the investigation committee concerning the alleged embezzlement of KD 9,572,339, stating that the evidence did not meet the level of conclusive proof required for conviction.

It explained that the nature of secret expenditures and the associated security and sovereignty considerations exempt the minister from disclosing

details of how the funds were spent. The relevant laws prohibit the disclosure of classified operations related to national security.

Despite dismissing the embezzlement charge, the court convicted Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled of facilitating the misappropriation of public funds by issuing an order to disburse KD 20,000 from secret expenditure funds to a newspaper owner without justification. The court considered this a separate offense.

The court also convicted Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled of submitting two incomplete financial disclosure statements, both during his tenure as minister and after leaving office, for failing to disclose several vehicles he owned. It fined Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled KD 3,000 for this charge.

It acquitted Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled of charges of illicit enrichment and money laundering, confirming that the case file lacked conclusive evidence of an unjustified increase in his wealth or that the funds in question were proceeds of crime.

The court emphasized that criminal judgments must be based on certainty and conviction, not on conjecture and probability.

It noted that the evidence in the Ministry of Defense case reached the level of judicial certainty, while the evidence presented in the Ministry of Interior case did not reach the same level, requiring acquittal on some charges and modification of the legal characterization of others.

Jail in 'Amiri plane' case

3 years for mocking Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: The Court of Appeals upheld the verdict of a lower court that sentenced a former undersecretary and three former advisors at the Amiri Diwan to three years in prison with hard labor, fined them KD10,000 each and ordered their removal from office for professional negligence and abuse of official authority in the litigation of the 'Amiri Plane' case, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The legal proceedings focused on the alleged dereliction of duty in the supervision and finalization of an agreement to furnish an aircraft for the Amiri Diwan.

According to official court findings, these

actions caused a substantial drain on public resources, as financial damages are estimated at \$180 million.

The Public Prosecution contended that the defendants intentionally concealed vital records and data from Kuwait Airways Corporation regarding a contract with an American firm, thereby, causing immense fiscal harm on the national treasury.

The Appeals Court affirmed that all legal components of the charges were satisfied.

Furthermore, the court suspended the legal action regarding Abdulaziz Ishaq, as he was convicted in absentia.

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Making fun of country: The Court of Appeals overturned the ruling of a lower court, which refrained from sentencing two citizens and instead sentenced them to three years in prison with hard labor in a case related to a

video posted on social media that mocked the current situation in the country, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The case is based on the statement issued by the Ministry of Interior regarding the arrest of two Kuwaitis and a Colombian after a video went viral on social media, showing them uttering offensive statements.

The ministry pointed out that the contents of the video entail the commission of certain crimes, such as disseminating false news, harming national interests, and misusing a telephone. It confirmed that legal measures were against the defendants and they were referred to the concerned authorities.

It warned that the law is strictly applied on anyone who publishes or circulates content deemed harmful to the interests of the country or affects national security.



KUNA photo
Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs, Dr. Amthar Al-Huwaila in talks with Turkish Ambassador to the country Tuba Nur Sonmez.

Kuwait and Turkiye seek to activate cooperation memo

KUWAIT CITY, June 18, (KUNA): Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs, Dr. Amthar Al-Huwaila met on Thursday with Turkish Ambassador to the country Tuba Nur Sonmez, discussing ways to activate the memorandum of cooperation between the two countries and enhance partnership in areas of mutual interest.

In a press statement, the Ministry of Social Affairs said that both sides emphasized during the meeting the importance of expanding cooperation to support family stability and strengthen its role as the cornerstone of society, in addition to exchanging expertise and successful experiences in policies and programs aimed at families and children.

The statement added that the meeting addressed the importance of strengthening joint efforts to protect children from the dangers of technology and the digi-

tal world by adopting awareness initiatives and programs that contribute to raising awareness among families and children and advocating for a safer digital environment.

The statement also noted that the meeting discussed ways to support and encourage young people to plan their academic, professional, and family futures through the exchange of experiences and expertise that promote family stability and reinforce societal values.

Minister Al-Huwaila welcomed the Turkish plans and initiatives within the framework of the memorandum of cooperation and its competencies, stressing the Ministry's keenness to strengthen international partnerships and benefit from leading experiences in a way that serves the issues of family, child, youth and women and achieves the common goals between the two friendly countries.



KUNA photo
Kuwait's Chief of the General Staff of the Army, Lt. Gen. Khaled Al-Shuraiaan receives Director of Operations of the Pakistani Army, Brig. Gen. Naveed Qalb-i-Abbas on his visit to Kuwait.

Kuwait, Pakistan on road to bolster military cooperation

KUWAIT CITY, June 18, (KUNA): Chief of the General Staff of the Army, Lieut. Gen. Khaled Al-Shuraiaan, received on Thursday the Director of Operations of the Pakistani Army, Brig. Gen. Naveed Qalb-i-Abbas, and his accompanying delegation, on the occa-

sion of their visit to the country.

An army statement said that bilateral relations and aspects of military cooperation and ways to develop them in a manner that serves the common interests of both friendly countries, were discussed.

Lower court reprimanded

Warning to oil sector staff rejected

By Jaber Al-Hamoud
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: The Court of Appeals overturned the final written warning issued to a female employee of an oil company, along with its legal consequences.

The court pointed out that non-adherence to the legal procedures and protections for employees renders the disciplinary action invalid.

Attorney Mohammad Al-Ansari stated that the ruling is a landmark in labor disputes, as the court considered the final written warning among the most severe disciplinary penalties stipulated in the regulations of the company.

This necessitates full compliance with the legal procedures and protections before its issuance.

Al-Ansari explained that the court rejected the request of the company to appoint an expert, as the case file and documents contained sufficient evidence to resolve the dispute without the input of an expert.

The Appeals Court accepted the appeal and overturned the ruling of the lower court that dismissed the case.

The Appeals Court then ruled to rescind the final written warning issued to the employee, along with its legal consequences, and ordered the company to pay the court costs and KD200 in actual legal fees.

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Al-Budaiwi backs new steps to strengthen logistics, safeguard supply chain

GCC chief hails Gulf coordination to counter security threats

RIYADH, June 18, (KUNA): Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Jassem Al-Budaiwi praised on Wednesday the joint efforts of the relevant authorities at the Interior Ministries of GCC member states in maintaining high-level coordination.

Al-Budaiwi made the remarks during a visit to the venue of the 18th meeting of the GCC Unified Terrorist List Committee, attended by a number of senior officials from the GCC member states' Interior Ministries and relevant authorities.

He referred to the directives of GCC Interior Ministers issued during their recent meeting in Riyadh, stressing the importance of strengthening and intensifying joint Gulf

security efforts, particularly in light of the unprecedented security developments witnessed in the region.

Al-Budaiwi expressed appreciation for the valuable and swift cooperation among the relevant authorities of the Interior Ministries, which has significantly contributed to addressing all security risks facing GCC countries.

During the meeting, he was briefed on the committee's efforts to enhance cooperation and coordination among the relevant Gulf agencies.

In addition, Al-Budaiwi said Wednesday GCC transport ministers discussed implementing directives issued by leaders at their

19th consultative meeting regarding joint transport projects.

The remarks came during an extraordinary virtual meeting of the GCC transport ministers committee, chaired by Bahrain's Minister of Transportation and Telecommunications Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Al-Khalifa.

Al-Budaiwi said the ministers reviewed steps taken by the General Secretariat to implement the directives, as well as efforts by its higher committee and the future action plan with member states.

The plan aims to strengthen supply chains among GCC countries and mitigate any potential impact on trade and logistics.

The ministers stressed the importance of

enhancing joint GCC efforts and adopting additional proactive measures to maintain the smooth flow of land, maritime and air transport, ensuring sustainable cargo movement and uninterrupted operation of vital sectors.

Al-Budaiwi expressed appreciation for the support provided by GCC transport ministers to the General Secretariat's higher committee.

Al-Budaiwi confirmed on Tuesday that the 19th consultative meeting of GCC Supreme Council Leaders will contribute to strengthening member states' economies and their ability to face challenges.

This came during Al-Budaiwi's speech at

the 4th Higher Committee to follow up on the outcomes of the consultative meeting, which was held in Jeddah on April 28.

He added that the meeting reviewed the progress of studies for the joint Gulf projects as well as the steps taken to implement the outcomes of the consultative meeting.

Al-Budaiwi pointed out that over the next two weeks, several ministerial meetings will be held with the participation of ministers from joint Gulf projects, attended by representatives from multiple GCC institutions.

He emphasized the importance of doubling efforts and staying in contact with the ministries and relevant agencies to complete all set goals during the current phase.

Continued from Page 1

Kuwait stresses

and Vice President JD Vance digitally signed it over the weekend. Trump signed a physical copy Wednesday while dining with French President Emmanuel Macron at Versailles, the palace where many historic agreements have been signed over the centuries, ending wars or territorial disputes. The White House had planned a signing ceremony on Friday in Switzerland, but its fate is now uncertain, with conflicting information from the U.S., Iran and Pakistan.

"It's signed," Trump said as he left the dinner at Versailles, which followed his trip to the Group of Seven summit in France.

In a video posted online by a White House aide, Trump was seen seated at a table next to Macron signing a paper copy of the agreement. Trump then handed the document and pen to Secretary of State Marco Rubio as people in the room applauded.

"This was not easy," Trump said right before he signed it, according to a video posted to social media by Macron. In Tehran, a stone-faced President Masoud Pezeshkian signed the deal on behalf of Iran, according to the state-run IRNA news agency, which posted an image of him holding up the deal with his signature and Trump's.

Text of the agreement still has not been formally released by the Americans. U.S. officials dictated draft language to journalists after days of secrecy, speaking on condition of anonymity. Iranian state media has released text that largely tracked what the U.S. put out.

Much of the agreement would restore the status quo before the war, including ending hostilities, restarting talks between the U.S. and Iran over Tehran's nuclear program, and reopening

the Strait of Hormuz, the crucial passage for the world's oil and natural gas whose closure created a historic energy crisis.

The agreement opens the strait without tolls for two months, but does not preclude fees in the future, according to the drafts from both countries.

In return, the U.S. will move to waive, but not eliminate, some wide-ranging sanctions against Iran.

The deal also affirms a commitment to Lebanon's territorial integrity in the face of Israel's invasion against the Hezbollah militant group. That is one of the most delicate parts of the agreement because Israel has maintained it will continue to defend itself and to occupy vast swaths of Lebanon. Iran has said Israel must withdraw under the deal, a condition Israel has already rejected.

The U.S. and Israel went to war Feb. 28 in part to prevent Iran from ever getting a nuclear weapon. Trump has cited various goals for the war, including at times vowing it would end Iran's nuclear and missile programs and its support for Hezbollah and other proxy groups. He also suggested it could lead to toppling the Iranian government.

The interim deal falls short of all those goals, but Trump hailed it as "very strong."

He also opened the door to abandoning it: "It's a memorandum of understanding, and if I don't like it, we'll go back to shooting at them, dropping bombs."

In latest development, major ship-owners have begun moving vessels through the Strait of Hormuz since the U.S. and Iran signed an interim agreement to end their war, maritime data company Lloyd's List Intelligence said Thursday.

In a media briefing, Richard Meade, editor in chief of Lloyd's List, said for

the first time in 110 days, ships owned by major companies were crossing the strait after effectively being marooned there since February.

The strait is a critical passageway for the world's oil and natural gas. Before the war, the waterway off Iran's coast carried a fifth of the world's crude oil. Its closure during the war has created a historic energy crisis.

Lloyd's List did not say how many ships were transiting through or had passed through the strait as of Thursday. It said tankers controlled by major ship owners Grimaldi Group, Cosco, Knutsen and NYK had passed through the strait. Two Iran-flagged, National Iranian Tanker Company-owned, sanctioned crude oil tankers entered the strait, according to Lloyd's List.

Meanwhile, U.S. Vice President JD Vance said Thursday that the U.S. Navy lifted its blockade of the strait to allow some ships through Iranian ports.

Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani wrote on X that a Italian merchant ship owned by the Grimaldi Group was among the first vessels to transit the strait after the agreement's signing.

Maritime data and tracking company Kpler said it observed six verified ship crossings on Wednesday and another 11 on Thursday.

Phillip Belcher, marine director of Intertanko, a trade group for global independent tanker owners, said the main central route of the Strait of Hormuz was still closed and has an estimated 80 mines that need to be cleared. But ships have been passing through the smaller northern route, which goes through Iranian waters, and the southern route, which goes through Omani waters.

"Those two routes now seem to be fully open," Belcher said.

However, it will take weeks or months to fully reopen the strait, and the two alternative routes don't have a much capacity as the central passage in the Strait of Hormuz.

Deportation route

They added that traffic officers are keen on applying the law firmly against anyone whose actions endanger the lives and safety of other road users.

In a related development, traffic officers apprehended three Kuwaitis and one Gulf national who were driving at 170 kilometers per hour, in addition to an Asian who was driving at more than 153 kilometers per hour.

According to security sources, traffic officers from Jahra and highway patrol units arrested these individuals after documenting the violations, while their vehicles were impounded.

Sources urged motorists to refrain from exceeding speed limits under any circumstances in order to avoid legal problems and to guarantee the safety of everyone.

Education minister

to ensure the smooth conduct of examinations with the highest levels of organization and discipline, serving students' best interests and providing them with a suitable environment to take their exams in comfort and peace of mind.

He explained that these field visits are part of the ministry's direct monitoring of the examination process and its immediate assessment of the

committees' needs. Initial indicators reflect a good level of commitment and discipline within the examination committees. Cooperation between school administrations, educational authorities, and supporting bodies has contributed to creating a positive environment that helps students focus and perform at their best.

The minister emphasized that Grade 12 examinations represent a pivotal moment in students' lives, as they are the culmination of years of hard work and an important gateway to their academic and professional futures.

He urged students to remain focused, have confidence in their abilities, and make use of the knowledge and skills they have acquired to achieve their future aspirations and ambitions.

Al-Tabtabaei commended the support provided by parents to their children throughout their academic journey, stressing that this stage reflects the outcome of a true partnership between family and school.

On Wednesday, the Ministry of Education announced the attendance, absence, and disqualification statistics for the Grade 12 exams for the second semester of the 2025/2026 academic year.

The ministry explained that 11,553 students registered for the French language exam in the Arts stream, of whom 10,747 were present, while 806 were absent, in addition to 10 students being disqualified.

In the Science stream, a total of 30,047 students registered for the mathematics exam, of whom 29,158 were present, while 889 were absent, in addition to 13 students being disqualified.

Kuwait, Australia

The minister discussed ways to benefit from international expertise and experiences in support of environmental and sustainable development objectives.

She praised the strong relations between Kuwait and Australia, stressing the importance of continued coordination and expanding cooperation to support environmental and development goals and advance environmental action in Kuwait.

Weekend heat

conditions will be light to moderate, with waves of one to four feet.

Friday night will be warm and relatively humid, especially over coastal areas, with southeast to variable light to moderate winds ranging from 6 to 28 km/h, while minimum temperatures will range between 24 and 26°C, and sea conditions will be light to moderate, with waves of one to three feet.

Saturday daytime weather will be hot and relatively humid over coastal areas, with variable to southeasterly light to moderate winds ranging from 6 to 26 km/h. Maximum temperatures will range between 43 and 45°C, and sea conditions will be light to moderate with waves of one to three feet.

Saturday night will be warm, with variable to northwesterly light to moderate winds ranging from 6 to 26 km/h, while minimum temperatures will be between 30 and 32°C, and sea conditions will remain light to moderate, with waves of one to three feet.



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Hegseth announces review of US forces in Europe

Pentagon chief lashes out at NATO allies

BRUSSELS, June 18, (AP): US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth lashed out at NATO allies on Thursday, announcing a six-month Pentagon review of American forces in Europe that will depend on how fast they take responsibility for their own security.

"This will be a real review. It will be designed to ensure that NATO is moving fast and irreversibly toward Europe leading, stepping up to take primary responsibility for the defense of Europe," he told his NATO counterparts in Brussels.

Hegseth lambasted European allies for failing to provide U.S. forces access to bases in Europe to launch attacks on Iran, calling it "shameful."

"These allies, they put America's sons and daughters, our sons and daughters, at risk by denying them the predictable access, basing and overflight that never should have been in question at all," he said.

Hegseth said earlier Thursday that America's allies in Europe must take the lead on the defense of their own continent and help turn NATO into "a read hard-line military alliance."

At the meeting of NATO defense ministers, Hegseth called for a re-



United States Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, (center right), speaks during a meeting of the North Atlantic Council in defense ministers format at NATO headquarters in Brussels on June 18. (AP)

boot of the 32-nation organization to turn it into a "NATO 3.0" capable of deterring any threat.

His remarks came a few weeks after the United States told its allies that it would no longer supply certain warships and aircraft if one of them comes under attack. European allies and Canada are trying to work

out how to plug the gaps.

"NATO 3.0 is post-Cold War recognition that (NATO) needs to go back to a real hard-line military alliance that has real military capabilities capable of deterring right here on the continent and taking the lead for the conventional defense of Europe," Hegseth said.

Mayor looks to reshape Democratic party

Mamdani tests political clout in NY primary

NEW YORK, June 18, (AP): Not long ago, New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani was demonized by leaders of both political parties. Today, just six months after taking office, the 34-year-old democratic socialist's political strength is surging.

Always a darling of the far left, he has earned praise from both President Donald Trump and former Democratic critics like New York Gov Kathy Hochul. He has emerged as the face of the region's sports renaissance. And days before New York's primary elections, Mamdani is testing the limits of his newfound political muscle in a bid to reshape the Democratic Party - in his state capital and in Washington - even if it means challenging his own party's leadership.

Mamdani will join Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt. at a get-out-the-vote rally in Brooklyn on Thursday. The event is designed to elevate a slate of candidates aligned with Mamdani's values, including two running against Democratic incumbents in Tuesday's primary.

"He's seeing that opportunity - that we can radically change the Democratic Party," said Faiz Shakir,



New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani arrives to take part in the National Puerto Rican Day Parade on June 14, in New York. (AP)

a senior adviser to Sanders and a friend of Mamdani's. "Like Bernie, he's not saying I'm doing this out of spite against you, dear leadership. He's saying, I am supporting these candidates who have a better vision, and I am prepared to lose if it has to be the case."

Establishment Democrats are

not pleased with the mayor's decisions.

Mamdani endorsed political organizer Darializa Avila Chevalier over Rep. Adriano Espaillat, the chairman of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, in New York's 13th District, which includes parts of upper Manhattan and the Bronx.

America

Storm Arthur weakens: Tropical Storm Arthur was downgraded to a low pressure area along the upper Texas coast Wednesday night but forecasters expected its remnants to bring life-threatening flooding and days of heavy rains to parts of the southeastern United States, according to the National Hurricane Center in Miami.

Arthur was the first tropical storm of the season in the Atlantic basin and it's expected to keep weakening as it moves inland over southeastern Texas and western Louisiana, then cross the southeast Thursday through Friday. Maximum sustained winds were around 35 mph (55 kph). (AP)



Wildfire destroys homes: High winds drove a wildfire into an eastern Washington neighborhood, forcing the evacuation of about 1,500 people and destroying at least 15 homes, officials said Wednesday.

The Spokane County Sheriff's Office announced Wednesday that its forensic unit found what appeared to be human remains inside a home destroyed in the fire. A family member had requested a wellness check at the home because one of the residents had refused to evacuate and could not be reached, officials said in a news release. They were working to confirm whether authorities found human remains, and if so, identify who they were and how they died. (AP)

Moscow oil refinery hit

KYIV, June 18, (AP): Ukraine hit a major Moscow oil refinery for a second time in a week and disrupted commercial flights at Moscow airports in one of its biggest drone attacks since Russia's all-out invasion of its neighbor more than four years ago, Russian officials said Thursday.

The attack came hours after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said he had held "an important coordination call" with U.S. President Donald Trump and French President Emmanuel Macron that may "bring about significant change."

Zelenskyy said Wednesday his country had won key pledges of further support from world leaders attending the G7 summit in France, including the United States.

Images and video released by the Russian media showed massive fires raging at the Moscow Oil Refinery, located about 15 kilometers (9 miles) from the Kremlin. Thick black clouds of smoke rose over the city.

The Moscow Oil Refinery is one of Russia's biggest refineries, according to its official website, and accounts for more than a third of the fuel market of the capital region. It was last attacked by Ukrainian drones on June 16, catching fire, but officials said the blaze was swiftly put out.

Ukraine has repeatedly targeted Russia's oil facilities, aiming to cut Moscow's revenue for the war and make Russians feel the consequences of the invasion.

Flights from four Moscow airports were temporarily halted, transport and aviation authorities said.

In the surrounding Moscow region, a drone hit a residential building in the town of Zhukovsky, and the building was being evacuated, according to Gov. Andrei Vorobyov.

Elsewhere in the region, drone debris hit private houses, a car, a fitness center, an unspecified industrial facility and a large mall, whose roof caught fire, Vorobyov said. One woman was injured, he said.

The Russian Defense Ministry said that its air defenses overnight shot down 555 Ukrainian drones over multiple regions, with almost 200 intercepted as they were approaching the Russian capital.



US President Donald Trump is greeted by French President Emmanuel Macron and first lady Brigitte Macron at the Palace of Versailles on June 17, in Versailles, France. (AP)

I'm a fan of beautiful places: US president

Macron deploys Versailles' gold, history in high-stakes courtship of Trump

PARIS, June 18, (AP): Donald Trump explained the appeal in one sentence: "Versailles is not gold leaf - Versailles is the real deal."

For Emmanuel Macron, that was precisely the point.

On Wednesday night, the French president threw open Louis XIV's palace to his US counterpart for a private reception, show and dinner marking America's 250th birthday. At a turbulent moment for the transatlantic alliance, it could help Macron keep a personal channel open as the two navigate differences over Iran, Ukraine and tariffs.

It already kept Trump from leaving a Group of Seven summit early, as he did last year in Canada.

"I'm a fan of beautiful places," he told reporters, saying he had planned to leave earlier until "a very nice man" invited him to dinner.

After posing in front of Versailles' golden doors, Trump enjoyed a private tour of the chateau's glittering interior. And in a surprise move over a dinner of lobster, caviar and vanilla ice cream, he signed a memorandum on ending the war in

Iran at a venue steeped in historical symbolism.

Versailles is perhaps the biggest soft-power flex available to a French president: the Hall of Mirrors, the gardens of the Sun King and several centuries of carefully polished national grandeur.

"Versailles is a diplomatic tool and an instrument of influence," Macron said Wednesday, likening diplomacy to soccer. "Whether I'm playing at home or away, my goal is to score goals. And when I host other teams, I try to give them a nice welcome."

France holds little economic or military sway over Washington, so pageantry is one of its few levers - even as its use elsewhere has brought mixed results at best.

Macron and Trump have often clashed over policy.

Their relationship has endured partly because Macron understands the power of personal attention, dramatic settings and a well-timed invitation.

Their first meeting in 2017 produced a white-knuckled handshake

that instantly became a symbol of their competitive rapport.

Months later came dinner inside the Eiffel Tower and a place of honor at France's Bastille Day parade.

Versailles raises the stakes, allowing a French president to wrap a modern political encounter in the scale and authority of national history.

"It is soft-power flex based on hard buildings," said Denis Lacorne, professor of American studies at Sciences Po.

Macron has used the palace before, receiving Russian President Vladimir Putin there in 2017 and later hosting King Charles III and Queen Camilla for a state dinner.

Versailles has been a favored setting for French leaders to honor foreign guests for over three centuries, the palace told The Associated Press. It remains "a place in the service of French diplomacy."

With Trump, the setting carries added resonance.

The former real estate developer has long treated architecture as a statement of status, success and

power. In his second term, he has sought to erect a legacy in stone - with plans for a new White House ballroom and a 250-foot (76-meter) triumphal arch resembling Paris' Arc de Triomphe.

The evening included a Hall of Mirrors visit and fountain display.

The Hall of Mirrors was once a feat of technology: 357 mirrors set in 17 arches along a 73-meter (240-foot) gallery, showing French manufacturers could rival Venice's celebrated glassmakers.

They were also built to multiply a king. Every royal entrance ricocheted across the glass, and a modern guest gets the same treatment.

"You will be reflected many, many times, from one mirror to another," Lacorne said.

For a president who has spent his second term turning the Oval Office gold, the appeal is clear, he added.

Trump arrives, in a sense, at a building he has quoted for years: He has said he modeled Mar-a-Lago's ballroom after Versailles.

Trump remembers spectacle, and often brings it home.

Special election in UK could hasten rise of Burnham and end for PM Starmer

LONDON, June 18, (AP): Keir Starmer isn't on the ballot, but the UK prime minister's future is on the line in a special election on Thursday.

Voters in the Makerfield district of northwest England are electing a new lawmaker, and the leading contender is Andy Burnham of the governing Labour Party, the current mayor of Greater Manchester and oddsmakers' favorite to be the next prime minister.

If Burnham defeats a candidate from the anti-immigration party Reform UK and wins the seat for Labour, he's almost certain to challenge the embattled Starmer for leadership of the party, and the country.

Burnham has pledged that "if people put their trust in me, I will change politics" - a

big promise for a politician who, if he wins, will be just one of 650 lawmakers in the House of Commons.

But the scores of journalists from around the world who have flocked to Makerfield during the campaign are evidence that this is no normal by-election, the results of which are due early Friday.

About 75,000 people are eligible to vote in Makerfield, a constituency that encompasses several towns and villages on the edge of Greater Manchester, 200 miles (320 kilometers) northwest of London.

They hold in their hands the fate of Starmer, whose popularity has cratered since he led the center-left Labour Party to a landslide election victory in July 2024.

Starmer's government has struggled to

deliver promised economic growth, repair tattered public services and ease the cost of living, and been hamstrung by repeated missteps, including his decision to appoint Peter Mandelson, a scandal-tarnished friend of Jeffrey Epstein, as the U.K. ambassador to the United States.

A dismal performance in May's local elections spurred scores of Labour lawmakers to demand Starmer's resignation. He has refused to budge, but senior colleagues are trying to force a change. Wes Streeting resigned as health secretary in May, saying that "where we need vision, we have a vacuum."

Then Josh Simons, the Labour lawmaker for Makerfield, stepped down to trigger a special election and give Burnham the chance to return to Parliament.



Andy Burnham delivers a speech at St Jude's ARLFC, in Wigan, England on June 13, as he campaigns ahead of the Makerfield by-election. (AP)



US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, (left), and Jamaica's Prime Minister Andrew Holness speak after giving a joint news conference at the office of the prime minister in Kingston, Jamaica on March 26. (AP)

United States in talks with Jamaica to send 3rd-country migrants as rift widens in Caribbean

KINGSTON, Jamaica, June 18, (AP): Jamaica is in discussions with the United States to accept third-country deportees, a move that would add the island nation to a growing number of Caribbean countries working with the Trump administration on its immigration agenda.

Jamaica's National Security Minister Dr Horace Chang confirmed Tuesday that the country has signed a memorandum of understanding with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to accept up to 25 people from countries other than Jamaica every two weeks.

The deportees, said Chang, will not be placed in detention, though details of where they would be housed have yet to be determined. Compensation for accepting them is still being hashed out.

If the agreement is finalized, Jamaica would join Mexico, El Salvador, Uganda and a number of other countries that have agreed to accept third-country migrants deported from the US.

The move is already getting push-back from the Opposition People's

National Party, or PNP, which accused the Jamaican government of keeping the negotiations from the public.

The PNP argued that accepting the migrants places Jamaica's internal security, international standing, and fragile social infrastructure at severe risk.

"Jamaicans deserve to know whether discussions have taken place and whether any commitments or understandings have been reached," Donna Scott Mottley, a spokesperson for the opposition, said in a statement.

"Jamaica, like other sovereign nations, is obligated under international laws to accept the return of its own citizens," Chang stated. "However, this new arrangement does not mean third-country nationals are being dumped on our shores. This is a structured, managed process to transit individuals through Jamaica to their final destination," he added, drawing a hard line between repatriating Jamaican nationals and processing foreign citizens.

A US Department of Homeland

Security spokesperson said that the administration is "utilizing all lawful options" to carry out deportations.

While a US federal district court ultimately struck down the third-country removal policy as unlawful in February 2026 - ruling that the US cannot dump migrants in undesignated nations without proper notice - the policy is still being enforced pending appellate action.

As part of its immigration crackdown, the Trump administration has used a series of secretive agreements to deport more than 19,000 people to third countries, according to the group Third Country Deportation Watch, with some ending up in nations they had never even heard of.

Most deportees have been sent to Mexico, the group says, but over 1,500 have been scattered to more than 20 other nations, many of them poorer countries in Latin America and Africa looking for ways to curry favor with the US.

The diplomatic rift in Kingston mirrors a broader fragmentation across the Caribbean, where several

governments have quietly entered into varying agreements with the U.S. to avoid crippling travel restrictions or economic penalties.

The Dominican Republic signed a non-binding agreement to temporarily hold a limited number of non-criminal third-country nationals, while explicitly barring unaccompanied minors and nationals from neighboring Haiti, a deal that also met with heavy criticism.

Dominica's Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerit defended a similar agreement as a "pragmatic step" to preserve vital bilateral relations with Washington, though stipulating violent offenders would be rejected.

Antigua and Barbuda adopted a highly restrictive case-by-case posture. Prime Minister Gaston Browne confirmed a framework capping total acceptances at a maximum of 10 non-criminal individuals.

Guyana is leveraging negotiations to solve its massive oil-boom labor deficit, exploring a U.S.-bankrolled framework to accept skilled, non-criminal migrants to fill an estimated 80,000-worker shortage.

Marcos thanks Russian president for organizing the meeting

Putin, Southeast Asia leaders agree to bolster ties at summit in Russia

MOSCOW, June 18, (AP): Russian President Vladimir Putin on Thursday hailed Russia's ties with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations as he hosted a summit intended to strengthen economic and political ties with the bloc.

The leaders who took part in the meeting in Kazan agreed to further expand "strategic partnership" between Russia and ASEAN nations that include Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, East Timor and Vietnam.

"It is a strategic partnership that serves as an essential stabilizing factor in the Asia-Pacific amidst geopolitical turbulence, contributing to the formation of a balanced security architecture and equitable mutually beneficial cooperation," Putin said at the summit, which marked the 35th anniversary of Russia-ASEAN relations.

The summit's agenda included exchanging views on global and regional issues, reviewing efforts to develop Russia-ASEAN ties and discussing areas and tasks for future cooperation.

Putin noted that Russia and ASE-



From left: ASEAN Secretary-General Kao Kim Hourn, Sultan of Brunei Hassanal Bolkiah, Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet, Lao Prime Minister Sonexay Siphandone, Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., Russian President Vladimir Putin, Singaporean Prime Minister Lawrence Wong, Thai Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul, Prime Minister of East Timor Kay Rala Xanana Gusmao, Vietnamese Prime Minister Le Minh Hung, Indonesian Foreign Minister Sugiono and Permanent Secretary of the Myanmar Foreign Ministry, Senior Official for ASEAN Hau Khan Sum pose for a photo on the sidelines of the Russia-ASEAN summit in Kazan, Russia on June 18. (AP)

AN have "expanded the scope of practical cooperation in such areas as combating new security challenges and threats, as well as trade and

investment, energy, agriculture, digitalization, science and technology, tourism, and humanitarian contacts."

In a declaration signed at the sum-

mit, its participants reaffirmed their shared aspiration toward a "just multipolar world as guided by international law and the principles of the

UN Charter to promote mutual benefit and respect for all states."

They noted that the Kazan summit marked a "significant milestone"

in Russia-ASEAN relations and pledged to maintain top-level contacts between Russia and the bloc to advance their "strategic partnership."

Putin also held a series of bilateral meetings with ASEAN leaders during the summit, which he co-chaired with Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., whose country holds the association's rotating presidency.

Some of ASEAN's diverse member countries, including the Philippines, are seen to be aligned with the United States, while others have heavy trade and security engagements with China and Russia.

Several ASEAN members, including the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam, have either imported Russian crude oil or expressed interest in purchasing it after global fuel prices soared in the wake of the war in Iran.

Marcos thanked Putin for organizing the Russia-ASEAN meeting in Kazan and invited him to the ASEAN summit in Manila in November.

Putin also met with Brunei's Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah and Malaysia's Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim.

Brazil's president warns Trump not to meddle in Brazilian elections

RIO DE JANEIRO, June 18, (AP): Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva warned US President Donald Trump on Wednesday not to meddle in Brazil's October presidential election after Trump made his latest criticism of Brazil over judicial moves against Lula's political rivals.

The remarks show the escalating tensions between Brazil and the US after the Trump administration proposed further tariffs against the South American country and recently classified two drug-trafficking groups as foreign terrorist organizations - moves that Lula opposes.

Lula has frequently defended Brazil's sovereignty since Trump imposed tariffs on the country last year citing a "witch-hunt trial" against his ally, former President Jair Bolsonaro. Lula also has complained about US sanctions imposed on Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes over what the Trump administration called his politically motivated role in prosecuting Bolsonaro, who was convicted of attempting a coup to try to stay in power after losing the 2022



Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, (center), gestures as he speaks with Germany's Chancellor Friedrich Merz and IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva, ahead of a working session at the G7 summit, in Evian-les-Bains, France on June 17. (AP)

election to Lula.

Trump said Wednesday that Brazil had become "dangerous politically" and that the government wanted to arrest "Bolsonaro junior," who was "doing well in the polls."

Brazil's Supreme Court on Tuesday convicted one of Bolsonaro's sons, former lawmaker Eduardo Bolsonaro, of coercion related to his father's coup trial and sentenced him to four years and two months in prison.

Equatorial Guinea government resigns after missing targets, says vice president

DAKAR, Senegal, June 18, (AP): The entire Cabinet in Equatorial Guinea has resigned after failing to achieve the vast majority of the government's goals, Vice President Teodoro Nguema Obiang Mangué said.

Obiang, who is also the son of President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, said Tuesday that Prime Minister Manuel Osa Nsue Nsuga had submitted the Cabinet's resignation after falling far short of government targets. He said the government had achieved only 10% of its targets, but did not say how those targets were measured.

"The degree of execution achieved is clearly insufficient in relation to the expectations and commitments undertaken," the vice president said in a statement posted on X.

The ruling Democratic Party of Equatorial Guinea, or PDGE, said the president was dissatisfied with the government's performance, citing corruption, delays in development projects and a failure to diversify the economy.

A new government was expected to be appointed in the coming days.



Equatorial Guinea Vice President, Teodoro Nguema Obiang Mangué, (second right), arrives to attend the Holy Mass with Pope Leo XIV at the Malabo Stadium in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea on April 23. (AP)

The move is unlikely to alter the balance of power in Equatorial Guinea. President Obiang, who has been in power since 1979 as Africa's longest-serving president, dominates the political system and appoints the government.

There are virtually no critical voices in the oil-rich Central African country, where the authorities have been accused by rights groups and the US State Department of detaining, torturing and even killing those that dare to speak out.

Subcontinent

India, Netherlands discuss deeper cooperation: India and the Netherlands concluded on Wednesday the fourth Cyber Dialogue in New Delhi, focusing on deepening bilateral cooperation, securing digital infrastructure and fighting cybercrime.

A statement from the Indian Ministry of External Affairs said that the two sides exchanged views on evolving cyber threat landscape, national strategies and policies, digital public infrastructure, data protection, transnational cybercrime and law enforcement.

The discussions also deliberated on cooperation in multilateral fora, including the latest developments on these issues at the UN including the UN Convention against Cybercrime, AI Governance and the ongoing processes related to ICTs in the context of international security. (KUNA)

Afghanistan vehicle accident kills 4: Four travelers including a child were killed and four others sustained injuries as a mini-bus turned turtle in eastern Afghanistan's Wardak province on Monday, Provincial Police Spokesman Mohammad Yusuf Israr said Tuesday.

The deadly mishap took place in Saydabad district yesterday afternoon, leaving four dead, including a mother, her child and two more women at the scene, and injuring four others, some in critical condition, the official said. (Xinhua)

Africa

Uganda court charges lawyer: A court in Uganda on Wednesday charged an attorney for a jailed opposition leader with concealing treason, escalating a dispute with the country's army chief whom the lawyer sought to hold accountable for alleged abuses.

Erias Lukwago was charged before a magistrate's court in Kampala, the Ugandan capital, days after he was seized and taken into custody on the orders of army chief Gen. Muhoozi Kainerugaba.

Lukwago was charged with "misprision of treason," a crime that the presiding magistrate said stems from his alleged failure to report acts of treason by others. He has denied the charges. (AP)

Cote d'Ivoire to adopt protection law: Cote d'Ivoire is set to adopt a law on the protection of whistleblowers in a bid to strengthen its national framework for preventing and combating corruption, the High Authority for Good Governance (HABG), the state institution responsible for coordinating anti-corruption efforts, announced.

According to an official information note obtained by Xinhua, representatives of state institutions, the public administration, the private sector, civil society organizations, as well as technical and financial partners, have been participating since Monday in a three-day workshop in Grand-Bassam dedicated to validating the draft law. (AP)

Authorities say migrants clash with police at deportation site in S.Africa

JOHANNESBURG, June 18, (AP): Police fired rubber bullets and used stun grenades against migrants protesting Wednesday near a community hall in South Africa where thousands are being processed for deportation by authorities.

The clashes came as tensions over immigration surge in Africa's richest country following a series of anti-migrant marches and reports of attacks on some foreign nationals.

The migrants who gathered near the hall in the eastern city of Durban are mainly Malawians who initially turned up there more than a week ago to be voluntarily repatriated to their home country on buses provided by their government, authorities said.

The premier of KwaZulu-Natal Province, where Durban is, has said nearly 10,000 Malawians have been camping in a park near the hall waiting to go home.

But delays in that process have led South African authorities to establish an immigration court at the hall and implement "formal deportation processes," according to the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Video broadcast by South African television stations showed groups of protesters throwing rocks, sticks and logs at police in the streets near the hall, and police officers responding



Displaced migrants queue at a deportation site, in Durban, South Africa on June 17. (AP)

with stun grenades and rubber bullets.

Local media reported the clashes involving small groups of migrants erupted because of frustrations at the delays in them returning home.

The Home Affairs Ministry said at least 1,876 people among those gathered have been identified as being in South Africa without proper documents and would be deported. Efforts to verify the immigration status of others were ongoing, and

the mayor of Durban said more than 6,000 Malawians could ultimately be deported.

Malawi is one of at least five African countries to repatriate some of their citizens from South Africa, citing threats and violent attacks on them. Malawi has already repatriated hundreds of people on buses.

Nigeria, Ghana, Mozambique and Zimbabwe have also provided flights or buses for some of their citizens to leave South Africa.

Kuwait oil surges to \$86.47 pb

KUWAIT CITY, June 18, (KUNA): Kuwait crude oil gained 63 cents during Wednesday's trading to reach USD 86.47 per barrel compared with USD 85.84 pb the previous day, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC)

said Thursday.

In global markets, Brent crude rose by 59 cents to reach USD 79.55 pb and West Texas Intermediate rose by 74 cents to USD 76.79 pb.

Gulf producers confront market share risks

Iran's oil return reshapes global market outlook

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: In an atmosphere of de-escalation following the US-Iran agreement, the region has started emerging from the cycle of armed conflict.

Maritime navigation has resumed through the Strait of Hormuz, coinciding with the lifting of the blockade imposed on Tehran and the return of Iranian oil production.

In view of the above, the newspaper asked the opinion of oil experts on the next phase of the global energy sector in general, and the oil market in particular, as well as the implications of Iranian oil returning to international markets and its impact on prices.

The main question raised was whether or not the OPEC+ member states can absorb this return through production cuts.

Oil expert and analyst Kamel Al-Harmi stated that the end of the US-Iran conflict and the resulting agreement to lift economic sanctions, including restrictions on oil exports, will influence oil prices within the OPEC+.

He predicted that oil prices could increase to around \$90 per barrel when global storage facilities are replenished after the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, especially since global demand for oil remains strong. He was quick to add though that once the storage tanks reach capacity, prices are expected to decline to about \$75 to \$80 per barrel.

He pointed out that prices could regain momentum with the onset of the US summer season and an improvement in global aviation fuel demand. He added that prices could rise again after August

with the start of winter, when heating fuel consumption typically increases.

He revealed that Iran currently produces about four million barrels of oil per day and around two million barrels of which are consumed domestically while the other two million barrels are exported. "As a result, this production volume is expected to affect the global oil market and OPEC+ may ask member countries to reduce their production quotas in order to maintain price stability, as the case in recent years," he explained.

He also expressed regret that Kuwaiti oil did not benefit from the temporary price gains during the conflict, as Kuwaiti oil exports were suspended.

He said oil prices resumed their downward trend once political relations between Washington and Tehran improved, falling below \$90 per barrel recently.

Economist Ahmed Al-Sadhan thinks that the return of Iran to the oil market is a challenge not only because it could increase global supply, but also because it could alter the balance of power within the international energy market, considering it owns one of the largest oil reserves in the world.

He clarified that if sanctions are lifted or eased, Tehran could increase production by hundreds of thousands of barrels per day – and even by more than one million barrels per day within a short period – by relying on its existing oil infrastructure and its ability to quickly regain lost market share.

Asked about the impact on Gulf countries, he stated that the consequences could extend beyond lower oil prices to include the reduced ability to influence market conditions through production alliances, such as OPEC+.

He pointed out that the influx of significant vol-

umes of Iranian oil could force Gulf producers to reduce their own production levels in order to maintain price stability, resulting in the loss of part of their market share.

He added the international companies that withdrew from Iran due to sanctions may return and invest in the country once restrictions are eased, thus, creating opportunities for Tehran to modernize its oil and gas fields and expand production in the long term.

He said such developments could position Iran as a stronger competitor in Asian markets, which are the primary destinations for most Gulf oil exports.

"Accordingly, the return of Iranian oil to the international market should not be viewed merely as an economic issue related to supply and demand. Rather, it is a strategic shift that could influence the economic and political balance of power in the Gulf and the Middle East for years to come," he elaborated.

Hajjaj Boukhadour, former official at the Arab Shipping Company and an oil expert, stated that the restoration of Iran's quota within OPEC+ could have repercussions on the quotas of other member countries, particularly those that absorbed the share of Iran during the sanctions period.

He said oil prices could decline by about 50 percent once the quota of Iran is fully restored and the Strait of Hormuz is completely reopened. He indicated that such a decline in oil prices will affect countries with high production costs, including US oil producers, where the cost of extracting a barrel can reach around \$30. "Consequently, the Gulf oil-producing countries could benefit from the pressure that lower prices will put on higher-cost producers," he added.

'Oil to remain largest energy source'

OPEC: Global energy demand to rise 23% by 2050

KUWAIT CITY, June 18, (KUNA): The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) launched the 20th edition of its "World Oil Outlook (WOO) 2026" report on Thursday via a virtual event from its headquarters in Vienna, Austria.

In the report's foreword, OPEC Secretary General Haitham Al-Ghais said that global oil demand will continue to grow, reaching 124.1 million barrels per day by 2050, with no peak in sight during the forecast period.

Global primary energy demand is expected to rise by 23 percent between 2025-2050, reaching about 383 million bpd, driven by economic growth, population increase, urbanization, and rising energy needs in developing countries, he noted.

The world population is projected to grow from 8.2 billion in 2025 to 9.7 billion by 2050, while the global economy is expected to more than double from USD 177 trillion to USD 359 trillion, he explained.

Oil will maintain the largest share in the global energy mix until 2050, with demand forecast to reach 113.3 million bpd by 2030 and still account for 30 percent of the energy mix in 2050, Al-Ghais said.

Non-Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries will drive this growth, led by India, other parts of Asia, the Middle East, and Africa, he pointed out.

Demand for all energy sources will continue rising until 2050 (except coal), with renewables recording the highest growth rates, he mentioned.

The oil sector will require total investments of USD 17.7 trillion from 2026

to 2050 across upstream, downstream, transportation, and storage activities, the report explained.

Al-Ghais emphasized that the report provides a comprehensive view of the challenges, opportunities, and uncertainties facing the global energy sector.

He highlighted the need to balance energy security, affordability, and emissions reduction while considering the diverse needs of different countries.

The report also underscores the importance of carbon capture, utilization and storage (CCUS), direct air capture, and circular carbon economy approaches to reduce emissions.

Al-Ghais affirmed that meeting future energy needs requires utilizing all available energy sources while striking a balance between energy security, affordability, and emissions reduction, taking into account the varying needs of different countries.

He described the "OPEC WOO" as the organization's primary reference for forecasting the future of global energy markets.

Published annually since 2007, it provides medium and long-term analyses and forecasts for oil and energy markets, including demand, supply, refining, trade, and investments.

The report also examines economic and demographic changes and the evolution of energy policies and technologies.

The 2026 edition particularly focuses on the key challenges and opportunities facing the global energy sector, with strong emphasis on achieving balance between energy security, affordability, and emissions reduction.

Umm Al-Aish solar plant reduces emissions, energy costs

KNPC expands solar project with battery storage

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: After the successful conversion of Umm Al-Aish LPG bottling plant to operate entirely on solar energy – with a daily generation capacity of around four megawatts, enough to meet the full electricity needs of the plant – and in line with the environmental strategy of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, the Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) intends to extend the operations of the plant into nighttime hours through the use of battery storage systems.

This will enable the facility to operate round the clock without relying on the power grid of the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy. Besides saving 10,000 barrels of oil that were previously burned to generate conventional electricity, the project will also lead to substantial reductions in electricity costs.

Sources told the newspaper that KNPC is working toward the transition to clean-energy operations during nighttime hours through battery-powered storage systems.

The company stated that it faced several chal-

lenges during the implementation of the project, including difficult soil conditions during installation, high temperatures, dust, sand accumulation in Umm Al-Aish, and stringent safety requirements associated with the gas industry.

It addressed these challenges through the selection of technologies suited to the local environment, the use of drilling equipment compatible with the soil conditions, and full integration with approved safety systems.

It stressed that this is a significant national accomplishment led by Kuwaiti engineers, consultants and contractors, affirming the capability of national talent to execute strategic projects in accordance with international standards.

It is worth noting that the conversion of the Umm Al-Aish plant to full solar operation remarkably reduced dependence on the electrical grid, thereby, improving operational efficiency and enhancing energy reliability.

The company revealed that the Umm Al-Aish plant is equipped with 7,000 solar panels and that the project has generated substantial environmental and economic benefits, such as reducing carbon emissions by about 5,000 tons annually and lowering demand on the national power grid by around

11 gigawatt-hours per year.

One of the other initiatives of KNPC to protect the environment and improve air quality is its reliance on an advanced irrigation network equipped with modern technologies designed to conserve water. These systems include the use of electric timers that help reduce water waste, while saving time and efforts.

This is important considering the hot climate of Kuwait, which requires regular and continuous irrigation to maintain vegetation and crops, especially during the summer months.

Moreover, KNPC uses treated wastewater generated from the cooling cycles of certain refinery units to irrigate green spaces in and outside refinery facilities. This practice helps conserve freshwater, reduce operating costs, and support the commitment of the company to sustainable development, hence, contributing to its carbon-neutrality objectives.

The Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) Department at KNPC organizes a variety of training programs and awareness campaigns covering different topics, such as pre-shutdown planning, safe stormwater drainage practices, oil spill prevention, improving operational efficiency, and ensuring environmental compliance.

Oil exports resume

What do Iran & US stand to benefit from their deal?

CAIRO, June 18, (AP): The interim deal reached by the United States and Iran to end their war will reopen the Strait of Hormuz and bring the two adversaries back to the negotiating table over Tehran's nuclear program, according to details released by both countries. It will also give Iran an immediate benefit, allowing it to sell its oil freely again.

Besides the new oil revenue for Iran, the two sides are more or less back where they were 3½ months ago - before Israel and the U.S. launched their war, which has left thousands dead across the region, triggered a global energy crisis and shaken the American economy.

Iran and the U.S. will enter a 60-day period of negotiations, and hanging over them will be the question of whether U.S. President Donald Trump can wrest a better deal than the 2015 nuclear accord he scuttled eight years ago.

Here's what to know based on details released by U.S. officials and Iranian state media:

Trump signed a physical copy of the deal Wednesday while dining with French President Emmanuel Macron at the Palace of Versailles.

In Tehran, President Masoud Pezeshkian signed the document, according to the state-run IRNA news agency, which posted an image of him holding up the deal with his signature and Trump's.

Under the agreement, the Strait of Hormuz will reopen, and the U.S. will lift its blockade of Iranian ports - both of which should push gas prices down. Passage through the waterway will be toll-free for 60 days, and the deal doesn't preclude fees after that, according to U.S. officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity to read details of the draft, which has not yet been officially released by Washington.

Iran's closure of the strait, through which around a fifth of the world's traded oil supplies passed before the war, proved perhaps its strongest weapon. It drove up global fuel prices, made food and other products like fertilizer more expensive, and helped push U.S. inflation to 4% ahead of this fall's midterm congressional elections.

With the deal in place, the Islamic Republic has survived the most serious attempt ever by Israel and the United States to topple its government, despite the thundering opening volleys of the war that killed Iran's supreme leader and other top officials.

The deal immediately waives, but doesn't eliminate, sanctions that Trump imposed on Iran's oil exports, allowing it once again to sell its crude on the world market and restoring a revenue stream worth billions.

Last year, Iran earned an estimated \$45 billion from oil sales. But it had only one major buyer, China, and had to ship its crude through a shadow fleet of tankers to elude sanctions, eating into its profits. Under the blockade since April, its exports have nearly ground to a halt.

With the waiver, Iran will likely be able to find more customers and sell its oil for higher prices.

The draft agreement calls for Iran's highly enriched uranium to be "downblended" - or diluted - under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency. The two sides will work out the details during their negotiations as well as generally discuss Iran's enrichment program, which it says it has a right to continue.

Iran developed the material in response to Trump's scuttling of Tehran's 2015 nuclear accord with world powers that prevented it from enriching uranium to high levels. He criticized the deal for giving Iran a huge windfall. But the interim deal outlines even more lucrative incentives if Iran reaches a new nuclear agreement.

One is the eventual lifting of all international sanctions, which would seem to go further than the 2015 ac-

cord. That agreement lifted sanctions related to Iran's nuclear program but kept others in place over what the U.S. alleged were Tehran's support for terrorism and rights abuses.

The interim pact also promises a \$300 billion fund for postwar reconstruction. It's not clear where that money will come from - but Trump said the U.S. would not contribute.

To give a sense of the extraordinary scale of the fund, the World Bank estimates that Syria, after 13 years of civil war, needs \$215 billion for reconstruction; the Gaza Strip, largely flattened in two years of war between Israel and Hamas, needs \$53 billion.

The deal also promises to unfreeze billions of dollars worth of Iranian assets held abroad under a procedure the two sides will work out, according to the text provided by U.S. officials.

The Trump administration said its war aims were to "obliterate" Iran's missile arsenal, "sever its support for armed proxies in the region," "annihilate its navy," and ensure it never acquires a nuclear weapon.

The seven weeks of U.S.-Israeli bombardment are believed to have heavily damaged Iran's missile arsenal and production facilities as well as other parts of its military. How heavily isn't known, though, and Iran continued to fire on Israel as recently as last week. Meanwhile, Iran's ties with its militant proxies - Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Houthis in Yemen and Shiite militias in Iraq - appear as strong as ever.

Neither the missile arsenal nor Iran's support for its allies appears to be on the table in the upcoming negotiations.

The deal calls for an end to the war in Lebanon, where Israel has been fighting Hezbollah.

However, Israel and Hezbollah aren't parties to the agreement. Iran insists Israel must withdraw from the large swath of southern Lebanon it is occupying, but the interim deal doesn't explicitly require that and only ensures Lebanon's "territorial integrity."

Israel has vowed to keep troops in Lebanon, while Hezbollah says it is committed to resisting Israel "until full withdrawal is achieved." Fighting between the two could derail the deal unless the U.S. and Iran can rein in their respective allies.

Israel was squeezed out of the negotiations with Iran, and Israelis from across the political spectrum have called the deal a disaster, directing their fury at Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Tensions between Trump and Netanyahu, meanwhile, have occasionally spilled into the open, including when the American president described the Israeli leader as "crazy."

At the G7 summit in France this week, Trump said that Netanyahu "has to be more responsible with respect to Lebanon."

Netanyahu is left in a precarious situation ahead of national elections later this year. His relationship with Trump may require downscaling a military campaign in Lebanon that is broadly popular in Israel.

The 2015 agreement negotiated by the Obama administration severely limited Iran's nuclear program for 15 years. During that period, Iran could only enrich uranium to a low level, far below what's needed for a weapon. It could only stockpile 300 kilograms (660 pounds) of the material and had to sharply reduce its centrifuges carrying out enrichment. It was also put under stricter inspections by the IAEA.

One main criticism was the 15-year time limit, after which opponents said Iran would be able to quickly ramp up its ability to produce a bomb. Iran insists its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes.

A key question now will be whether the U.S. can win stricter limits for a longer term.

Rising energy costs leave millions struggling to pay utility bills

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

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By Sanya Carley
University of Pennsylvania

For many Americans, energy bills are becoming increasingly unaffordable. Energy prices increased approximately 30% on average from 2021 to 2026. In some places, the rates of increase have been much steeper. In the Mid-Atlantic and eastern Midwest region where several of us live, the regional electricity grid is run by PJM Interconnection, and power prices in the first quarter of 2026 were 76% higher than the same period in 2025.

These rising utility costs are a shock to many people, including those already having a hard time paying for the energy they need. In 2024, 1 in 3 American households reported struggling to pay their energy bills, and 15.1 million homes were disconnected from their electricity or gas services because the residents couldn't pay their bill. Energy insecurity is a pervasive and potentially dangerous predicament for these millions of households, and a growing challenge for America as energy bills rise.

Energy markets, which we study, are famously complex. But many parties in these marketplaces, from the federal government to individual consumers, have opportunities to help provide Americans with affordable energy. Some may not be obvious to the casual observer, or even to savvy energy wonks.

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program helps households with lower incomes afford energy, particularly for heating in the winter and cooling in the summer. Historically, the funds provided by Congress - totaling about US\$4 billion in 2025 - have not been enough to help everyone in need. Yet in his last two budget proposals, President Donald Trump has proposed eliminating all of the program's funding, though Congress has so far preserved the funding.

Another federal effort, the Weatherization Assistance Program, provides around \$370 million a year to help people conserve energy by sealing gaps

around windows and doors and increasing insulation in their homes. This program serves approximately 32,000 homes, saving each household an average of \$372 in direct energy expenses each year.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and state public utility commissions jointly regulate the nation's electricity grid. Federal law requires them to ensure that electricity prices and practices are "just and reasonable." They can use their authority to ensure that the grid is built and run efficiently, that utilities do not earn outsized profits, and that electricity markets are producing fair electricity prices for consumers.

In most U.S. regions, nonprofit organizations collectively called "regional transmission organizations" are the front-line managers of the nation's electricity grid. Under federal supervision, these utilities make rules for how to connect new power plants or other electricity generation equipment to the grid, how electricity markets run, and how transmission lines are planned and paid for.

These rules directly affect how much customers pay for power. Their implications have become clearer, as data center electricity demand has caused regional wholesale electricity market prices to soar. Research suggests that better regional planning, accelerated permission for connecting new-generation sources, and updated market design could save consumers billions of dollars.

Many states prevent utilities from disconnecting residential customers' electricity, even if the bills aren't paid. In Virginia, for example, utilities can't cut power during periods of extreme hot or cold weather. In Montana, the restrictions cover specific months when cold weather is common. Pennsylvania prevents power cuts if someone in the home has a certified medical condition that makes them dependent on electricity - such as needing an oxygen tank, which can increase electricity bills by hundreds of dollars per year.

Many states, such as Maine, also run programs to weatherize homes and improve home efficiency. Illinois helps pay to install solar panels or battery storage systems in homes. These efforts lower energy bills either by directly reducing a home's energy use or by offsetting some of that use.

These services and technologies lower energy bills by either reducing the

total energy that a household needs to consume or offsetting their energy with a zero-fuel cost option. Some of us were a part of a team that in 2025 found low-income households across the United States that recently installed residential solar were 44% more likely to report being able to pay their energy bills relative to similar households that did not have solar.

Other states more directly supervise utility bills to ensure they remain within the household's budget. For instance, Illinois offers bill discounts for many low-income households that range from 5% to 84% savings on a customer's gas bill. And other states, like Massachusetts, require utilities to partially forgive consumers' debt after they make some number of on-time payments that also include some repayments of what is owed.

Utility companies can adopt billing and repayment policies that accommodate customers' household budgets. They can also provide detailed, public information about these programs to their customers. Often, states place specific requirements on utilities' policies, but companies can also choose to set their own billing practices.

Utilities can identify their customers most at risk of disconnection by analyzing customers' payment data and consumption patterns, and offer to switch them to these plans, while also steering them toward bill and weatherization assistance. Some states, like New Jersey, automatically enroll customers who are either past-due or have been disconnected into utility payment plans.

County and municipal governments can help their residents by spreading the word about federal, state and utility assistance programs and by identifying specific people or families who may be most in need. As two examples, they can use information about households' use of other aid programs or examine data on who is calling 311 for local nonemergency assistance.

Many communities also operate warming or cooling centers for people who cannot afford to turn on their air conditioning or heating during times of extreme temperatures. These spaces can also be safe locations for people during power outages.

And local nonprofits can support people who need help with energy costs find other support, such as food banks and low-cost transportation, which can help relieve other sources of financial stress. (AP)

Politics, oil & identity: climate debate intensifies

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

By Joe Arvai

USC Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences

After four years of U.S. progress on efforts to deal with climate change under Joe Biden, Donald Trump's return to the White House is swiftly swinging the pendulum in the opposite direction.

On his first day back, Trump declared a national energy emergency, directing agencies to use any emergency powers available to boost oil and gas production, despite U.S. oil and gas production already being near record highs and leading the world. He revoked Biden's orders that had withdrawn large areas of the Arctic and the U.S. coasts from oil and natural gas leasing. Among several other executive orders targeting Biden's pro-climate policies, Trump also began the process of pulling the U.S. out of the international Paris climate agreement - a repeat of a move he made in 2017, which Biden reversed.

None of Trump's moves to sideline climate change as an important domestic and foreign policy issue should come as a surprise.

During his first term as president, 2017-2021, Trump repealed the Obama-era Clean Power Plan for reducing power plant emissions, falsely claimed that wind turbines cause cancer, and promised to "end the war on coal" and boost the highly polluting energy source. He once declared that climate change was a hoax perpetuated by China.

After being elected a second time, in 2024, Trump again chose Cabinet members who support the fossil fuel industry.

But it's important to recognize that Donald Trump is singing from the Republican Party songbook when it comes to climate change, and the music was written long before he came along.

In 1979, the scientific consensus that climate change posed a significant threat to the environment, the economy and society as we had come to appreciate them began to emerge.

The Ad Hoc Study Group on Carbon Dioxide and Climate, commissioned by the U.S. National Research Council's climate research board, concluded then that if carbon dioxide continued to accumulate in the atmosphere, there was "no reason to doubt that climate changes will result." Since then, the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has risen by about 25%, and temperatures have risen with it.

The report also concluded that land use changes and the burning of fossil fuels, both of which could be subject to regulation, were behind climate change and that a "wait-and-see policy may mean waiting until it is too late."

But none of this came as a surprise to the oil industry. Working behind the scenes since the 1950s, researchers working for companies such as Exxon, Shell and Chevron had made their leaders well aware that the widespread use of their product was already causing climate change. And coinciding with the Ad Hoc Study Group's work in the late 1970s, oil companies started making large donations to national and state-level candidates and politicians they viewed as friendly to the interests of the industry.

The oil industry also implemented a disinformation campaign designed to cast doubt about climate science and, in many cases, about their own internal research. The strategy, ripped from the pages of the tobacco industry playbook, involved "emphasizing uncertainty" to cast doubt on the science and calling for "balanced" science to sow confusion.

This strategy was helped by the creation and financial backing of lobbying organizations such as the Competitive Enterprise Institute and the Global Climate Coalition, both of which played central roles in spreading falsehoods and casting doubt on the scientific consensus about climate change.

By 1997, when 84 countries signed the Kyoto Protocol to curb global greenhouse gas emissions, the oil industry had built an effective apparatus for actively discrediting climate science and opposing policies and actions that could help slow climate change. So even though President Bill Clinton signed the treaty in 1998, the United States Congress refused to ratify it.

The Kyoto Protocol experience demonstrated that the lobbying and disinformation tactics used by oil companies to discredit climate science could, on their own, be highly effective. But they alone didn't shift

climate change from a scientific question to an issue of partisan politics. Two additional ingredients for completing the transition were still absent.

The first of these came during the election campaign of 2000. At the time, the coverage of the major news networks converged on dividing the country into red states, which lean right, and blue states, which lean left.

This shift, though seemingly innocuous at the time, made politics even less about individual issues and more like a team sport.

Rather than asking people to construct their voting preferences based on a wide range of issues - from abortion and gun rights to immigration and climate change - votes could be earned by reminding and reinforcing for voters which team they should be cheering for: Republicans or Democrats.

This shift also made it easier for the fossil fuel industry to keep climate change off state and federal policy agendas. Oil companies could focus their money, lobbying and disinformation on Republican-controlled states and swing states where it would make the biggest difference. It shouldn't surprise anyone, for example, that it was a red state senator, James Inhofe of Oklahoma, who brought a snowball to the Senate floor in February 2015 to "prove" that the planet was not warming.

The final ingredient had everything to do with human nature. Building on the analogy of a rivalry in sports, the red vs. blue state dynamic tapped into the psychological and social forces that shape our sense of belonging and identity.

Subtle but powerful social pressures within groups can make it harder for people to accept ideas, evidence and arguments from those outside the group. Likewise, these within-group pressures lead to preferential treatment for members who are in alignment with the group's perspectives, up to and including placing greater trust in those who appear to represent the group's collective interests.

Within-group pressures also create stronger feelings of belonging among those who conform to the group's internal norms, such as which political positions to support. In turn, stronger feelings of belonging serve to further reinforce the norms.

Opposing or supporting action on climate change has become part of millions of Americans' cultural identity.

However, doubling down on climate policies that are in lock-step with our own political leanings will serve only to strengthen the divide.

A more effective solution would be to set aside political differences and invest in building coalitions across the political spectrum. That starts by focusing on shared values, such as keeping children healthy and communities safe. In the wake of devastating fires in my own city, Los Angeles, these shared values have risen to the top of the local political agenda regardless of who my neighbors and I voted for. It's clear to all of us that the consequences of climate change are very much in the here and now.

Natural disasters across the U.S. have also brought the risks of climate change home for many people across the country. This, in turn, has led to bipartisan action on climate change at the local and regional levels, and between government and the private sector.

The U.S. Climate Alliance, a coalition of 24 governors from both parties who are working to advance efforts to slow climate change, is one such example. Another example is the many U.S. companies with ties to government that participate in the First Movers Coalition, which aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from industries that have proven difficult to decarbonize, such as steel, transportation and shipping.

But, unfortunately for the climate as we know it, examples like these are still an exception rather than the norm. And this is a problem because the current climate challenge is much bigger than a single city, state or even country. The past year, 2024, was the hottest on record. Many parts of the world experienced extreme heat waves and storms.

However, every movement has to start somewhere. Continuing to chip away at the partisan barriers that separate Americans on climate change will require even more coalition building that sets an example by being ambitious, productive and visible.

Highlighting strength in global banking partnerships

Global Finance names Kuwait Finance House Best Bank for Financial Institutions in MENA

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) won Global Finance magazine's 2026 Best Bank for Financial Institutions in the Middle East award at the 26th annual Treasury and Cash Management Awards. The award recognizes KFH's excellence in providing specialized banking services and its success in building strategic partnerships with regional and international financial institutions.

Group General Manager Financial Institutions at KFH, Abdullah AlMarzouq, praised the award, noting it underscores the bank's leading role in delivering genuine value to global financial partners.

He added that the accolade highlights achievements in innovation and digital transformation, providing incentives to keep delivering services that align with regional and international market demands.

AlMarzouq explained that this award expands the bank's record of international accolades, reflecting its Islamic banking leadership and ongoing commitment to providing the highest standards of quality, innovation, and excellence to global customers and partners.

AlMarzouq emphasized that winning Best Bank for Financial Institutions in the Middle East reflects KFH's strategy to strengthen its regional and global presence and develop specialized banking services.



Abdullah AlMarzouq: The award reflects bank's position as leading partner for financial institutions in the region



Award criteria

The Global Finance Awards are highly prestigious accolades recognizing banks with outstanding performance in treasury and cash management. The publication evaluates recipients based on criteria such as market share, customer service, product innovation, and the ability to meet evolving customer needs.

The magazine used a multi-tiered assessment process, which included entries from banks and providers and

input from industry analysts, corporate executives, technology experts and independent research, to select the best providers of treasury and cash management services.

Evaluation combined subjective and objective criteria including profitability, market share, reach, customer service, competitive pricing, and product innovation. The process also weighed how successfully treasury and cash management providers differentiated themselves from competitors regarding core service provision.

Global Finance

Global Finance, founded in 1987, has a circulation of 50,000 and readers in 193 countries, territories and districts. Global Finance's audience includes senior corporate and financial officers responsible for making investment and strategic decisions at multinational companies and financial institutions. Its website - GF-Mag.com - offers analysis and articles that are the legacy of 39 years of experience in international financial markets. Global Finance continues to select the best candidates from banks and financial service providers, making its awards a trusted benchmark of excellence for the global financial community.

Personalized loyalty program rewarding every order with premium benefits

Snoonu debuts Royal Club with exclusive member perks

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: Snoonu has launched Royal Club, the first built-in loyalty program by a super-app in Kuwait, designed around how members actually live and order.

Members earn one coin for every Kuwaiti Dinar spent, with bonus coins available by completing simple quests like ordering on certain days or trying a new service for the first time. As coins accumulate, members progress through five tiers, Ruby, Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum, where loyalty becomes luxury with exclusive access to the best Snoonu has to offer, including free delivery, automotive discounts, hotel stays, dining offers, wellness perks and a birthday gift.



"Royal Club is our way of recognizing the people who make Snoonu part of their daily lives," said Bader Al-Ajeel, CEO of Snoonu - Kuwait. "Loyalty deserves real value in return. That's what this program delivers."

Tier progress is cumulative. Spending coins on rewards does not affect a member's tier standing.

Founded in 2019, Snoonu has grown into one of the GCC's leading technology companies. Royal Club is part of the company's broader strategy to deepen customer loyalty across its multi-service platform, backed by Jahez International.

Royal Club is free to join. Sign up now in the Snoonu app.

Labor market holds firm

US unemployment claims dip slightly

WASHINGTON, June 18, (AP): The number of Americans applying for jobless aid fell modestly last week as layoffs remained in the same historically low range of recent years.

U.S. applications for unemployment benefits in the week ending June 13 dropped by 4,000 to 226,000, the Labor Department reported Thursday. That's in line with the 225,000 new applications forecast by analysts surveyed by the data firm FactSet.

Weekly filings for unemployment benefits are considered representative of U.S. layoffs and are close to a real-time indicator of the health of the job market.

Despite concerns that the conflict in the Middle East would further squeeze a flagging labor market, hiring has picked up in recent months following a miserable 2025 that saw fewer than 200,000 job gains. For comparison, about 1.5 million jobs were added in 2024.

U.S. employers delivered a surprising 172,000 new jobs in May and the economy is averaging 188,000 job gains in the three months since the Iran war began in late February. That's the best three months of hiring since early 2024. The unemployment rate remains historically low at 4.3%.

Job openings also rose in April as employers posted 7.6 million vacancies, up from 6.9 million in March and the most since May 2024.

The government reported last week that rising gas prices - triggered by the closure of the Strait of Hormuz off Iran's southern border - pushed U.S. consumer inflation in May to 4.2%, its highest level in three years. Despite recent declines, prices for oil and gas remain elevated, which can squeeze consumers' budgets and make businesses think twice about hiring.

Earlier this week, Iran and the U.S. agreed to a deal to end the war and allow Iran to reopen the Strait of Hormuz and sell its oil without restrictions.

With inflation still well above the Federal Reserve's 2% target, officials at the U.S. central bank left the benchmark interest rate where it was on Wednesday. It was the first meeting with new Fed Chair Kevin Warsh, who replaced Jerome Powell after his eight-year run as the U.S. central bank's leader.

Lower interest rates can boost the economy and hiring, but also tend to stoke inflation, leading a number of Fed policymakers to say they are actually willing to consider at least one interest rate hike this year. That could potentially help bring in-

flation down, but higher borrowing costs generally make businesses more reluctant to hire.

Optimism over artificial intelligence has also injected a degree of uncertainty about the job market due to the investment required to develop it and because the powerful technology could alter or even replace some jobs.

Among the companies that have cut jobs recently are Verizon, UPS, Amazon, Disney, Starbucks and Walmart.

Weekly jobless aid applications have stabilized in a range mostly between 200,000 and 250,000 since the U.S. economy emerged from the pandemic recession. However, hiring began slowing about two years ago and tapered further in 2025 due to President Donald Trump's tariffs, his purge of the federal workforce and the lingering effects of high interest rates meant to control inflation.

The Labor Department's report Thursday showed that the four-week moving average of jobless claims, which even out some of the weekly volatility, rose by 4,000 to 223,250.

The total number of Americans filing for unemployment benefits for the previous week ending June 6 rose by 24,000 to 1.81 million, slightly more than analysts predicted.

Bank of England holds main interest rate at 3.75% as Iran war inflation pressures ease

LONDON, June 18, (AP): The Bank of England has held its main interest rate at 3.75% as the inflation pressures on the British economy have become more benign after the U.S. and Iran signed a deal to sign deal to end their war.

Thursday's decision was widely anticipated after figures showed inflation did not rise as had been expected in May, holding steady instead at 2.8%.

Though that remains above the bank's target of 2%, it raised hopes that the upward pressure on prices emanating from the spike in oil and gas prices after the start of the Iran war on Feb. 28 may have been less than anticipated.

Economists think rate-setters will opt against hiking rates over coming months, but only if the recent fall in energy prices is sus-

tained. The pressure on central banks since the outbreak of hostilities in the Persian Gulf has been to raise rates. The European Central Bank hiked last week while on Wednesday, half of the policymakers at the U.S. Federal Reserve said that they could support a rate hike later this year.

Andrew Bailey, the Bank of England governor, said the recent decline in oil prices has been "encouraging" while noting they are still higher than before the war, a steer to markets that higher U.K. borrowing costs are possible.

"Whatever happens in the future, the higher energy prices of the past four months mean there's already some inflationary pressure in the pipeline," he said. "The Bank's job is to make sure that doesn't turn into sustained inflation above our 2% target."

Two of the nine members of the Monetary Policy Committee remain concerned enough about those pipeline pressures that they voted for a quarter-point increase.

Because of the recent pullback in oil and gas prices, the bank has trimmed its forecast for inflation in the final quarter of the year to 3.25%. The hope is that inflation then starts to drop next year, freeing up the bank to cut rates, allowing mortgage lenders to offer cheaper home loans.

"If energy prices continue to moderate then the debate could once again turn again to rate cuts, but that might have to wait until next year," said Luke Bartholomew, deputy chief economist at asset management firm Aberdeen.

AI boom drives 31.5% spike in tech imports

Japan records first trade deficit in four months

TOKYO, June 18, (AP): Japan recorded a trade deficit in May, the first in four months, as imports of electrical machinery surged, helping to offset a jump in exports, the Finance Ministry reported Wednesday.

Preliminary data showed Japan's exports rose 17% in May from the same month last year to 9.51 trillion yen (\$59.4 billion), while imports rose 12.5% to 9.89 trillion yen (\$61.8 billion).

That left a deficit of 378.6 billion yen (\$2.4 billion), down from a surplus of 301.9 billion yen (\$1.9 billion) in April.

Oil and gas imports fell 1.8% year-on-year

due to the Iran war and blockade of the Strait of Hormuz.

A fifth of the world's oil passed through strait until Feb. 28, when the U.S. and Israel began attacking Iran. Japan has sought to diversify its suppliers.

Imports of electrical machinery jumped 31.5% as the boom in artificial intelligence generated strong demand for computer chips and other components.

Higher prices also have pushed the value of both exports and imports higher. Japan exported fewer vehicles in May but the value of those

shipments rose more than 13%. While imports of oil fell 28.5% in value, they plunged 57.3% in volume.

The weak yen was also a factor in boosting imports. The U.S. dollar has been trading at about 160 Japanese yen lately. A year ago, it was at 140 yen levels.

The Bank of Japan raised its benchmark interest rate to 1.0% on Tuesday, the first time since 1995 that the rate has been at that level. It cited inflation as a key concern.

The rate hike has so far not had a noticeable effect on the yen's value.

For the fourth consecutive year

NBK recognized as Kuwait's Best Cash Management Bank by Global Finance

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: For the fourth consecutive year, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) has been recognized by Global Finance magazine as the "Best Bank for Cash Management in Kuwait for 2026," as part of its 26th Annual World's Best Treasury & Cash Management Banks.

NBK's recognition came as part of the list of winners announced by the magazine, which included financial institutions from more than 75 countries and territories worldwide. The award serves as a further testament to the Bank's leadership in the local banking sector and its excellence in delivering advanced and specialized cash management and treasury solutions. It also highlights NBK's ability to adapt to the rapidly evolving global market landscape, enabling it to effectively meet the needs of its corporate and institutional clients while enhancing the efficiency of their liquidity management.

Global Finance used a multi-tiered assessment process, which included entries from banks and service providers, as well as input from industry analysts, corporate executives, technology experts, and independent research, to select the winning institutions. A variety of objective criteria were considered, including profitability, market share and reach, customer service, competitive pricing, product innovation, and the extent to which treasury and cash management providers have successfully differentiated themselves from their competitors around core services. The winners were determined through a multi-tiered evaluation process that incorporated submissions from banks and service providers, input from analysts, corporate executives, and technology experts, in addition to independent research.

This award reflects the global recognition of the Treasury Group's relentless efforts to enhance operational efficiency and elevate the customer experience through the implementation of strategic initiatives and innovative solutions that reinforce excellence in banking services. It also underscores the Group's vital role in managing financial resources with a high



- The award underscores global recognition of the Bank's unwavering commitment to delivering advanced cash management and treasury solutions that drive value for its clients and support their evolving business needs
- NBK has once again reaffirmed its leadership and excellence in delivering innovative, market-leading solutions that keep pace with the rapid evolution of global financial markets

degree of efficiency, supporting sustainable growth, strengthening resilience against risks, and maintaining long-term profitability.

NBK's regional and international presence further enhances its ability to serve key clients across regional and global markets, while supporting the Treasury Group's strategic objec-

tive of diversifying the Group's funding base.

The Treasury Group remains firmly committed to expanding its global client franchise while continuously enhancing its digital foreign exchange trading platforms to meet the evolving needs of its clientele. The Group also delivers bespoke hedging solutions and tailored investment products designed to address clients' specific requirements, while continuously broadening its investment product offering.

Moreover, the Treasury Group continues to advance its technology platforms and infrastructure, enhancing operational efficiency and further elevating service quality and customer satisfaction. Significant investments in the Group's digital infrastructure over recent years have strengthened the Bank's ability to manage liquidity with greater precision and efficiency, while enhancing its capacity to mitigate interest rate and foreign exchange risks. These advancements have enabled more informed cash management decisions and a more effective allocation of resources, ultimately supporting stronger financial performance and sustainable profitability.

Founded in 1987 and headquartered in New York with an international network of offices, Global Finance is widely recognized as one of the world's leading financial publications. The magazine reaches approximately 50,000 readers across 193 countries and territories, including senior executives at multinational corporations and financial institutions responsible for key investment and strategic decision-making. Through its website, GFMag.com, the publication provides in-depth analysis and insights backed by nearly four decades of expertise in global financial markets. Global Finance is also renowned for its rigorous and consistent evaluation of financial institutions worldwide, with its awards programs having become a trusted benchmark for excellence and achievement across the global financial industry.

For more information about Global Finance's 2026 Best Treasury & Cash Management Banks Awards, please visit: <https://www.gfmag.com/>

AI-driven data center surge sparks concerns

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

By Rachel Mural
Harvard Kennedy School

As the race to build data centers across the United States accelerates, local governments worry that the tech industry mantra of "move fast and break things" means their communities are at risk of being broken.

I'm a Harvard researcher studying the relationship between data centers and energy. I've closely monitored how local governments respond to proposals or even just concerns about the potential for data centers in their communities. What I've found is a complex story of community needs, political tensions and corporate power - all interacting with local, state and national democratic processes.

Technology companies stay competitive by being ready to provide data and communications services even before customer demand rises. Data centers already power online communications, shopping and banking systems. Now, expanding demand for artificial intelligence has led to over 1,000 pending data center proposals across the country.

Federal actions also drive development. The Trump administration has identified data center build-out as a strategic priority. The administration has promoted data center capacity as a measure of American strength and signaled that federal regulations on data centers may be eased.

At the community level, technology companies claim that data centers bring jobs, economic revitalization, digital connectivity and economic growth to local communities.

So far, however, data centers' benefits are overshadowed by more visible harms.

Nearby residents experience higher air pollution and excess noise. Data processing also uses a lot of water to cool the buildings and their equipment.

Simultaneously, electricity prices continue to outpace inflation, burdening families across the country. These trends reflect, in part, the costly infrastructure investments needed to power data centers.

My research has found that local governments across the U.S. are trying to avoid or reduce these harms.

Some counties and cities that don't have specific zoning rules and regulations for data center development are using short-term moratoriums. These pauses in data center permitting and construction give communities time to consider how to define new laws and regulations about the facilities' location, electricity use, water conservation and noise buffering.

Speaking about his town's decision to impose a one-year data center moratorium, Rick Bella, the town council president in Merrillville, Indiana, about 40 miles southeast of Chicago, stressed a desire to "evaluate real-world impacts and learn from a project developing right next door before determining what may or may not be appropriate for Merrillville."

Other places want to block data centers altogether. In April 2026, for example, the Ypsilanti Community Utilities Authority near Detroit, Michigan, passed a yearlong halt to the "delivery, commitment, reservation, exten-

sion, or approval of water and sewer services" for data centers. The move blocks data centers, including one under development by the University of Michigan and Los Alamos National Laboratory, from getting the water they need to operate.

Separately, towns across Ohio, Wisconsin, Maryland, Nevada and California have put questions related to data centers on their local ballots. Through these referendums, voters can weigh in on construction bans, tax incentives and zoning ordinances.

While public attitudes around data centers have remained largely nonpartisan, local and state officials don't always see eye to eye.

Officials in Hood County, Texas, for example, rejected a proposal for a six-month moratorium after a state senator urged the Texas attorney general to intervene and prevent the measure.

In 2025, West Virginia passed a bill that reduces local governments' zoning and regulatory powers in relation to data centers and microgrids. A similar bill in New Hampshire's legislature was defeated in May 2026.

Tech companies are also flexing their legal and financial muscles. For example, data center developers sued Saline Township, Michigan, and Chatham County, North Carolina, seeking to overturn their local zoning decisions, to be able to proceed with data center construction.

Local pushback comes at a pivotal moment for artificial intelligence technology itself.

As seen in objections to the internet's expanding AI "slop," backlash over AI-generated Super Bowl ads, worries about an AI-related financial bubble and complaints about Google's pivot to AI-directed search, Americans are reckoning with AI's role in society.

Further, many people are questioning the role of technology broadly. Increasing numbers of teens and adults are addicted to their smartphones, emotionally and psychologically dependent on their availability. Parents and teachers are questioning the usefulness of various types of digital technologies in classrooms. Even the pope has warned that technology must serve humanity - and not the other way around.

Americans are responding to this moment through the power of their voices and votes.

Technology companies may view moratoriums and new regulations as delays in project development. But the town hall discussions, community coalitions, public petitions and even farmers' unions reflect American democracy at work.

In Sunbury, Ohio, local officials considered a moratorium only after witnessing the scope of public protest over a proposed data center.

In April 2026, voters in Festus, Missouri, removed several City Council members after they supported a new data center despite resident pushback.

The question of whether a community wants or should have a data center does not have a universal answer. I believe it's a question that deserves deliberate processes, transparency and consideration.

To me, these local-level actions reflect a desire to slow down. There is little question that data centers and AI will be part of our collective future. Today, communities are asking for a fair say in what their futures will be. (AP)

Anthropic complies with export ban under protest

Cybersecurity executives urge Trump admin to ease restrictions on Anthropic AI models

SAN FRANCISCO, June 18, (AP): A group of cybersecurity executives and experts is asking the Trump administration to lift its directive preventing the use of Anthropic's latest artificial intelligence models by foreign nationals, saying the move could help U.S. adversaries more than it hurts them.

Anthropic said Friday it has taken its latest artificial intelligence models, known as Fable 5 and Mythos 5, offline to comply with the directive. The AI giant said it did not believe the steps taken by the government were warranted by the concern it flagged about a potential security issue.

Anthropic has said it was limiting use of some its latest technology to select customers because of its ability to surpass human cybersecurity experts in finding and exploiting computer vulnerabilities. The San Francisco-based company has had discussions with the White House previously about the latest models' capabilities.

In the letter Sunday, more than 100 cybersecurity experts and leaders from companies including Adobe and Nvidia asked the U.S. government to lift the export control directives on the Anthropic models and "commit to



Dario Amodei, CEO & Co-Founder of Anthropic, speaks on a panel at the convening of the International Network of AI Safety Institutes at the Golden Gate Club at the Presidio in San Francisco, Nov. 20, 2024. (AP)

an open, scientific and transparent process of handling AI risk assessments in the future."

The letter said that while Anthropic's Mythos models are "quite good" at finding flaws in software and weaponizing exploits, they are "not uniquely good at these tasks" and many of the letter's signatories regularly use other foundation and open-source models for security audits and training.

The letter said it is dangerous to take away the best cyber defense capabilities "without a good rea-

son" when America's adversaries are rapidly advancing.

China's models, the letter said, are "only months behind the best American models," and it is even likely that China's government has access to private capabilities beyond what's been made public.

The export controls marked the U.S. government's most significant step yet to restrict access to the most advanced AI models. Anthropic released Fable widely last week. That model is a limited version of the more advanced Mythos, to which the company

has tightly limited access due to cybersecurity fears.

The Commerce Department did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Monday.

Friday's directive came 10 days after President Donald Trump signed an executive order to establish a framework for the federal government to vet the national security risks of the most advanced AI systems for up to a month before their public release. Participation by AI developers would be voluntary, the order said.

Tensions have been running high between the Trump administration and the safety-conscious Anthropic, which has sought to put guardrails on the development of AI to minimize any potential risks and maximize its economic and national security benefits for the U.S.

After a contract dispute with the Pentagon, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth sought to declare Anthropic a supply chain risk, an unprecedented move against a U.S. company that Anthropic has challenged in two federal courts. The company said it wanted assurance the Pentagon would not use its technology in fully autonomous weapons and the surveillance of Americans. Hegseth said the company must allow for any uses the Pentagon deemed lawful.

50% AI stock tax could create \$7 trillion public fund

Bernie Sanders unveils plan to give the public direct ownership of AI companies

WASHINGTON, June 18, (AP): As artificial intelligence companies reshape the economy and race toward trillion-dollar valuations, Sen. Bernie Sanders is proposing a sweeping transfer of wealth and power from the industry to the American public.

The legislation, shown first to The Associated Press, would create a sovereign wealth fund overseen by an independent commission and financed through a one-time 50% tax on the stock of the largest AI companies. Sanders estimates that the tax would create a nearly \$7 trillion fund that would generate hundreds of billions of dollars annually in direct payments to Americans and programs such as health care, education and housing.

"The benefits cannot simply go to the handful of wealthy corporations. They will be shared by the American people," the independent Vermont senator said in an interview Wednesday.

The idea of giving the public a stake in AI has recently drawn interest from figures as ideologically diverse as President Donald Trump and OpenAI CEO Sam Altman. But Sanders' proposal goes much further, calling for public ownership of half of the largest AI companies and direct influence over corporate decision-making.

"The public has got to have a significant seat at the table to make sure that terrible things do not happen to ordinary people, and that in fact, AI benefits ordinary people, not hurts them," Sanders said.

Sanders has previously proposed the sovereign wealth fund, but the bill summary obtained by the AP is the first legislative attempt to make it a reality. The 50% tax would apply to AI companies that reach \$200 million in annual AI sales. Any new AI company that reaches that benchmark would also be subject to the tax.

It would create a sovereign wealth fund - similar to those used by countries around the world and some U.S. states - that Sanders estimates would be worth around \$7 trillion.

Unlike a traditional tax, the proposal would require companies to transfer stock rather than cash, effectively making the American public a major shareholder in the country's largest AI firms.

A seven-person independent commission - nominated by the president and confirmed by the Senate - would manage the fund and use its voting shares "to block decisions that hurt the American people and to push for policies that help them," the bill summary says.

Sanders proposes that a 5% annual dividend from the fund would provide direct payments of more than \$1,000 to every American. If companies grow, the gains would be used for public goods such as education, housing and health care.

Sanders argues taxpayers would not bear the losses if AI company valuations decline.

"We're not going to lose any money, even if there is a bust in the bubble," Sanders said.

The commission would be directed to "to block decisions that hurt the American people and to push for policies that help them," according to the summary.

Sanders emphasized that the proposal is just a start. "We think this is the best that we could do at the moment, and it's certainly a major, major, major step forward from giving unilateral and total power to a handful of multi-billionaires," Sanders said.

Sanders is not alone in pushing for a public stake in the companies that develop AI.

Trump, who recently signed an order to have new AI models voluntarily vetted by the government, has also mused about the government owning a stake in the companies that develop AI, saying "there's something very interesting about it, where it almost becomes a partnership with the American public."

OpenAI - led by Altman - in April proposed to "create a public wealth fund that provides every citizen - including those not invested in financial markets - with a stake in AI-driven economic growth."

Anthropic, one of OpenAI's top competitors and recently valued at \$965 billion, has been open to similar ideas, with CEO Dario Amodei writing recently that "universal basic income could be financed through taxes on relevant companies."

Trump on Wednesday attended a session focused on AI at the G7 summit in France with top industry leaders, including Altman and Amodei.

Still, Sanders' push is much more aggressive than any of these. In Sanders' meeting with Altman, they remained far apart on how large of a stake the public would get, according to those in the room.

"I think people like Sam Altman and Trump (who) may be sympathetic to this as saying: 'Okay, look, we're making zillions of dollars so we're going to be nice guys and maybe we'll buy off the public. We will give 5% of our profits back into the government,'" said Sanders.

"That's not what we're talking about. What we're talking about are two very different things."

Sanders' "Fighting Oligarchy" tour drew massive crowds across the country last year as he appeared with high-profile lawmakers such as Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y. Asked whether he plans to make AI ownership and wealth inequality part of that message on the campaign trail, Sanders responded, "Absolutely."

It's a message other candidates are using ahead of the midterms as they tap into voters' angst about the technology. Michigan Democratic Senate candidate Mallory McMorrow unveiled a plan to "protect workers in the age of AI," while New York Democratic House candidate Alex Bores has also made AI regulation a campaign issue.

Data center projects across the country have drawn opposition from residents concerned about electricity demand, water consumption and environmental impacts. Some states once eager to attract the facilities, including Ohio and Virginia, have moved to reconsider tax incentives.

On college campuses, commencement speakers have been interrupted by boos when discussing artificial intelligence. About 70% of college students see AI as a threat to their job prospects, according to a 2025 poll by the Institute of Politics at the Harvard Kennedy School.

"Workers will be thrown out of their jobs while billionaires, multi-billionaires become even richer," Sanders said. "The American people are aware of that and don't want to see it happen."

Angela Mrad casts stylish spell in Monte-Carlo, unveils 'Celestia'

Award-winning Lebanese filmmaker, writer, and director Angela Mrad drew widespread attention during her participation in the Festival de Télévision de Monte-Carlo, where she was honored with the title of Best Film Director.

Mrad made a striking impression with two elegant ensembles by Lebanese designer Nadwa El Awar, embodying a seamless blend of sophistication, grace, and femininity. Her appearances quickly became a focal point for media coverage and photographers, generating notable buzz throughout the event.

This milestone adds to a growing list of achievements in Mrad's career, following a series of acclaimed cinematic and creative works that have garnered international recognition and multiple awards, firmly establishing her among the leading Arab female voices in global cinema.

Her presence at the prestigious festival – an international gathering of prominent figures in television, film, and entertainment – further underscored her role as a compelling Lebanese and Arab cinematic voice, proudly representing both Arab women and Lebanese creativity on the world stage.

Continuing her artistic trajectory, Mrad is now preparing for her upcoming film, "Celestia," which she announced alongside her birthday celebration. The occasion marked not only a personal milestone but also the beginning of a new creative chapter, signaling the launch of a promising cinematic journey that reflects her distinct vision and enduring ambition to craft original, signature works.



Heritage

Threads of tradition unite at 'Kuwaiti Art Night'

By Fahle Al-Anezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: The Kuwaiti Artists Association concluded its cultural and artistic season of the year with a heritage and folk celebration titled "Kuwaiti Art Night."

The event was held at the association's headquarters in Shadi Al-Khaleej Hall, attended by a distinguished group of social, cultural, artistic, and media figures, including the association's honorary president, renowned artist Abdulaziz Al-Mufarraj, Dr Khalifa Al-Waqyan, Yusef Al-Jassem, Jassem Al-Nabhan, members of the board of directors, and a number of individuals interested in Kuwaiti heritage and folk arts.

The Kuwaiti Art Troupe, led by Fahad Al-Haqan, presented a performance showcasing a variety of Kuwaiti folk and heritage arts.

The event included several folk art segments that reflected the Kuwaiti environment and its rich heritage, embodying the spirit of the authentic past with its social, cultural, and artistic values. The artistic performances presented Kuwaiti folk heritage in a contemporary way that preserves its authenticity and affirms its continuity in the collective consciousness of society.

"Kuwaiti Art Night" was characterized by an atmosphere of camaraderie and cultural exchange, contributing to the strengthening of national identity and introducing new generations to the authentic components of Kuwaiti culture.

The show received strong audience appreciation and interaction for its portrayal of Kuwait's history and cultural identity.

The audience enthusiastically responded to the folk and traditional performances by the troupe, which included "Ya Kuwait Ya Al-Habiba" (O beloved Kuwait) (from the Al-Redha style), "Ala Yodan" (from the Al-Khamari style), "Nada Al-Munadi" (from the Al-Qadri style), "Ya Hawa Al Bal" (from the Al-Dazza style), "Ya Layl Dana," and other traditional pieces.

In this context, Zubair Khalifa Al-Omairi, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Kuwaiti Artists Association, emphasized that holding the "Kuwaiti Art Night" event is part of the association's cultural and national mission to preserve Kuwaiti heritage in all its forms and enhance its presence in society.

He affirmed the Kuwaiti Artists Association's commitment, since its inception, to being an active national platform for safeguarding Kuwaiti heritage, preserving popular, cultural, and artistic traditions, and working to pass them on to successive generations in a manner befitting their historical and cultural value.

Al-Omairi said folk arts are not merely theatrical performances, but a living record that preserves the



Vibrant scenes from 'Kuwaiti Art Night,' where traditional performances captivated audiences and celebrated Kuwait's rich cultural legacy.

Photos by Rezk Tawfiq

memory of society, its values, customs, and traditions, reflecting the journey of forefathers and their con-

tributions to building the nation. He stated, "We are continuously working to develop our cultural,

artistic, and heritage programs to achieve the association's goals of raising awareness about the impor-

tance of national heritage." Al-Omairi emphasized that the association is committed to strengthen-

ing its partnerships and cooperation with relevant entities, institutions, and artistic and heritage groups.

Food

'The meal is simply a reason to gather'

Chef dads describe their dream meals for Father's Day

NEW YORK, June 18, (AP): Father's Day is just around the bend, and there are decisions to be made. Some dads want to eat out, some want to eat in. Some want a big old meat-and-potatoes meal, some dream of a sushi omakase extravaganza.

But what do the dads who cook and feed people for a living want? The dad chefs and cooks who spend their working hours behind a stove (or a griddle or a hibachi) - what is their dream Father's Day meal?

Three of them answer here. (Spoiler: All agree that being together is more important than the food.)

Tom Colicchio, chef and owner of the New York-based Crafted Hospitality, has three kids, ages 14, 15 and 33.

"The teenagers? They're not cooking anything," he says. "But my oldest might - he dabbles in barbecue, so I'd put him to work on smoked short ribs, bone-in, low and slow. I'd be nearby to step in if things went sideways."

Colicchio, a longtime head judge on "Top Chef," envisions the Father's Day meal enjoyed outside at his place on the North Fork of Long Island, New York, surrounded by family.

Cesar Zapata, chef and owner of the Vietnamese-Colombian fusion restaurant Phuc Yea in Miami, also has his sights on the outdoors.

"Since (my stepson) Eli loves to fish, we'll probably spend the day out on the water trying to catch our own meal," he says. "Being in Florida, hopefully we'll catch some snapper or grouper, bring it home, clean it together, and roast the whole fish over the grill."

And nobody should worry about impressing the chef. "We spend so much of our lives cooking for others that the meals that mean the most are usually the ones that feel effortless and shared," Zapata says. "I love keeping really



Roy Yamaguchi, founder of Roy's Restaurants, center, appears with his son, Roy Jr., right, and Denise Yamaguchi at a restaurant in Venice on June 22, 2023. (AP)

fresh fish simple, especially when it's something you caught that same day."

He pictures serving it with a Vietnamese-style salsa verde, grilled asparagus and mushrooms, accompanied by good music and cold drinks.

"For me, Father's Day is less about the 'perfect' meal and more about slowing down, being present, and creating memories together around food and conversation," he says.

Roy Yamaguchi is on the same page. He's the founder of Roy's Restaurants, a Hawaiian fusion restaurant with locations in various cities, and is one of the pioneers of the cooking style Hawaii Regional Cuisine.

"For Father's Day, I don't need a fancy restaurant or an elaborate dinner," he says. "What I really want is to have all of my kids home. My ideal meal would be shabu shabu or chankonabe because they're the kinds of dishes that bring everyone together."

Both shabu shabu and chankonabe are Japanese hot-pot-style meals, where everybody eats from a common pot on the table.

"At the end of the day, Father's Day isn't really about the food," he says. "The meal simply gives us a reason to gather."

At his ideal meal, Yamaguchi says, nobody just sits and waits to be served - everyone cooks, shares, laughs and contributes.

And he does have one request: For someone else to do all the prep work.

"Anyone who has made shabu shabu knows that slicing the vegetables, preparing the sauces, and arranging everything takes time. Having the family take care of that would be the greatest gift," he says.

Then he would sit back, enjoy a simple glass of Japanese shochu over ice, enjoy the conversation and watch everyone have fun around the table.

Michael Mina puts a unique spin on the classic El Fallah

Alexandria street sandwich inspires steak twist

ALEXANDRIA, Egypt, June 18, (AP): Not far from the Corniche along the Eastern Harbor in Alexandria, Egypt, there's El Fallah, a tiny place that only makes one thing: liver sandwiches.

You say liver sandwich in Alexandria and people know you're talking about this spot - it's so famous that the owner has dozens of pictures of himself posing with Egyptian celebrities.

The reason the sandwich works is the meat is cut paper-thin and is generously seasoned with spices. That liver sandwich inspired this recipe in my book "My Egypt," made with rib-eye, which applies similar flavors to steak sliced super-thin (as in, Philly cheesesteak thin).

If you'd rather make the sandwich with beef liver instead of steak, slice the liver in half horizontally, season generously with salt and pepper, and brush with the garlic butter used in this recipe. Broil the liver for 1 to 2 minutes or until brown on the outside and slightly pink in the center. Let it cool for a couple of minutes, then slice it crosswise and add it to the bowl with the cooked shallots and other fixings.

You can make the garlic butter ahead and refrigerate it with the garlic cloves inside. This recipe makes more garlic butter than you need, but the extra keeps, sealed in an airtight container, for a month, ready to be pulled out and used to make many other things, like garlic bread or scampi.

Serves 4

GARLIC BUTTER:
¼ pound (113g) unsalted butter
5 garlic cloves, peeled and smashed

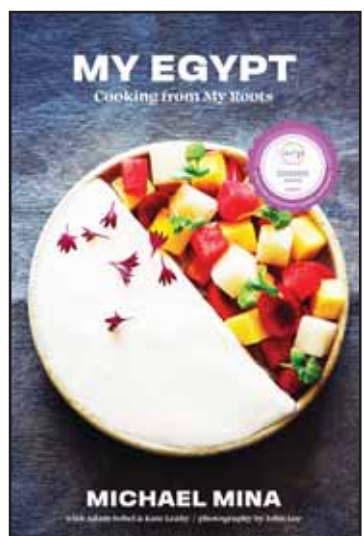
¼ teaspoon fine sea salt
Freshly ground black pepper

SANDWICH:
4 soft French sandwich rolls, cut in half and toasted cut side up
2 boneless rib-eye or New York strip steaks (about 12 ounces / 340 g each)
1 teaspoon vegetable oil



This image released by Voracious shows a recipe for Alexandria steak sandwiches from the cookbook "My Egypt: Cooking from My Roots" by Michael Mina. (AP)

Fine sea salt
Freshly ground black pepper
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
3 shallots, thinly sliced
1 small hot pepper (Anaheim or jalapeño), thinly sliced crosswise
½ teaspoon ground cumin
½ teaspoon ground turmeric
½ teaspoon paprika
1 lime, halved
1 handful cilantro sprigs



This image released by Voracious shows cover art for "My Egypt: Cooking from My Roots" by Michael Mina. (AP)

1. To make the garlic butter, in a small saucepan, melt the butter with the garlic over medium heat, about 2 minutes. Season with salt and a few pinches of pepper and let cool to a warm room temperature, about 10 minutes.

2. Using a pastry brush, lightly coat the cut side of the sandwich rolls with the garlic butter, about 1 tablespoon per roll.

3. Trim some of the fat from the steak and save to render in the pan. Cut away any gristle. Slice each steak in half crosswise, then slice thinly across the grain into 3- to 4-inch- (7.5 to 10 cm) long pieces (try to get as close as you can to Philly cheesesteak thinness with the slices).

4. In a large skillet over medium-high heat, render the saved beef fat for 1 minute, then remove (it's OK if not much fat comes out). Add the oil and heat for a few seconds, then add the sliced steak and sear briefly, turning the pieces once or twice and seasoning with a few pinches of salt and a generous pinch of pepper, until the beef is cooked through, about 2 minutes. Transfer the beef and any juices to a heatproof bowl and keep warm.

5. In the same skillet, melt the



This image released by Voracious shows a recipe for Alexandria steak sandwiches from the cookbook "My Egypt: Cooking from My Roots" by Michael Mina. (AP)

butter over medium heat. Add the shallots, hot pepper, cumin, turmeric, and paprika and cook until the shallots have softened slightly, about 2 minutes. Add to the bowl with the steak and stir together well. Squeeze the lime over the bowl, then mix again, adding more salt if needed.

6. Divide the steak and shallots among the sandwich rolls and finish with cilantro sprigs. Slice the sandwiches in half before serving.

Michael Mina (born Ashraf Mina) is the author of "My Egypt: Cooking from My Roots." Originally from Cairo, Mina is founder of the MINA Group, which owns and operates more than 30 restaurants worldwide. He has received a Michelin star, and has cooked for three U.S. presidents: Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Obama.

Excerpted from "My Egypt" by Michael Mina. Copyright (copyright) 2024 by Michael Mina. Used with permission of Voracious, an imprint of Little, Brown and Company, New York, NY. All rights reserved.

Pre-dates monument by 500 years

Archaeologists unearth Stonehenge predecessor

LONDON, June 18, (AP): Archaeologists revealed Thursday that they have discovered a structure near the prehistoric stone circle of Stonehenge in southern England that may have served as a "prototype" for the 5,000-year-old Neolithic monument.

A team from the British firm Wessex Archaeology said the structure would have consisted of two wooden poles 120 meters (394 feet) apart and aligned to point directly at the rising sun during the summer solstice and the setting sun at the winter solstice.

Researchers said the discovery predated Stonehenge by around 500 years.

The team was led by archaeologist Phil Harding, who is well known in the U.K. through his many years of excavations for Channel 4 TV series "Time Team."

Harding, 76, said the site, which also turned up a treasure trove of finds including pottery, animal bones and a rare disc-shaped knife, was likely to have been a focus for major religious gatherings.

"Opportunities like this probably only come once in a career, in a lifetime," Harding said. "I'm probably towards the end of my career now, but thank God I'm still in archaeology long enough to be part of this discovery, because it's certainly the highlight

of my career."

The findings were released ahead of the summer solstice, which falls this year on Sunday, when thousands head to Stonehenge each year to celebrate the longest day of the year in the Northern Hemisphere.

Stonehenge is a symbol of British culture and history and remains one of the country's biggest tourist draws. The World Heritage Site was built on the flat lands of Salisbury Plain in stages starting 5,000 years ago, with the unique stone circle erected in the late Neolithic period about 2,500 B.C.

The site's meaning has been the subject of vigorous debate. The most generally accepted interpretation is that it was a temple aligned with movements of the sun - lining up perfectly with the summer and winter solstices.

Researchers who found the structure near Stonehenge carried out the dig at Bulford, 5 kilometers (3.1 miles) from the main stone circle, as part of archaeological work to support the British defense ministry's program to accommodate troops who have been withdrawn in recent years from Germany, where the army had a big footprint for decades. The area around Stonehenge is one of the largest military training grounds and in the U.K. and Bulford is home to a barracks.



This photo provided by Wessex Archaeology shows archaeologist Phil Harding standing at Stonehenge in May 2026, near Salisbury, England. (AP)

The Conversation

Bonfires, maypoles and a saint's day: How Europe celebrates the longest day of the year

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

By Thomas A. DuBois
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Whether cities or villages, many communities across Europe spend the day and night of June 24 celebrating Midsummer. Congregating around bonfires, or sometimes maypoles, sporting handwoven wreaths of wildflowers or oak leaves, they'll sing, jump, dance, eat, drink, catch up and celebrate the arrival of the longest day of the year. As a scholar of folklore, I have been to Midsummer celebrations in Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Estonia and Lithuania, and I am endlessly in awe of people's fervent commitment to the holiday and evident enjoyment of it.

From the Mediterranean to Scandinavia and from France to Poland and beyond, Midsummer

goes by many names, including the Italian "Festa di San Giovanni Battista" and the Swedish "Midsommar." It's "Leedopäev" in Estonia, "Juhannus" in Finland, and "Mihcamárat" for the Sami, the Indigenous people of Scandinavia. Celebrations mark the summer solstice, which takes place in the Northern Hemisphere around June 21.

Each morning from the time of the winter solstice to the summer solstice, the sun rises a little farther to the north. As the sun climbs higher in the sky, shadows grow shorter and days grow longer. At the summer solstice, the Sun "stands still" - the meaning of the Latin solstice - and begins its progression back toward the south. Days shorten, shadows lengthen, and the cold and dreariness of winter return.

Europeans across the entire continent have noted this simple and inexorable cycle for millennia. Neolithic monuments such as Ireland's Newgrange and England's Stonehenge, both of which date from around 5,000 years ago, were built to mark solstices.

From the Mediterranean



Ukrainians jump over fire during a celebration of Kupala Night, a Slavic Midsummer festival, in Warsaw, Poland, on June 21, 2025. (AP)

to the northern peripheries of Europe, the summer solstice has long been greeted as a time for rituals to gather luck, tell the future and ward off evil.

In Germany, northeastern France and many parts of Scandinavia and the Baltic, people still build elaborate bonfire pyres to light in the evening and tend long into the night. According to folk belief,

stepping or leaping over the flames brings love and fertility, while the height of the flames predicts the coming year's harvest.

Traditionally, many Europeans gathered dew, herbs or leaves on Midsummer eve, which was reputed to ensure health, beauty and good fortune. Some brought their cattle close to bonfires to breathe in the smoke, or scattered fields with

ashes the next day. Although people today generally regard these beliefs as quaint reminders of the past, often they avidly participate, just in case - tying them to forebears centuries or even millennia ago.

Many of the names for the holiday, such as the Danish "Sankt Hans Aften" or Icelandic "Jónsmessunótt," are connected with John the Baptist, the Christian saint whose birthday is celebrated June 24. Where Jesus' birth is commemorated around the time of the winter solstice, the Bible describes his cousin St. John being born precisely six months earlier, at the height of summer. The interest in this connection between Jesus and John explains why the holiday takes place on June 24 - or in some countries, on the nearest Saturday - rather than on the actual solstice.

Medieval Christian authorities did not always relish the "pagan" celebrations of the day and occasionally decried peasants' dancing, singing and other customs. During the 16th century's Protestant Reformation, celebrations of Catholic

saints' feast days were suppressed, but Midsummer lived on as a secular holiday.

In places where Protestants and Catholics overlapped, such as the Netherlands, celebrating St. John's eve became an emblem of Catholic identity. The Feast of St. John is celebrated as the "fête nationale" of the Canadian province of Québec in part to differentiate the province from the culture of its English Protestant neighbors.

One of the most iconic images of Swedish celebrations of the day, Anders Zorn's 1897 painting "Midsommardans," or "Midsummer Dance," reflects 19th-century anxiety that beloved traditions would disappear. Zorn himself paid for the erection of the maypole depicted in his painting, seeking to preserve the picturesque custom in the region of rural Sweden where he lived.

Yet Zorn's fears were unfounded. Much has changed, but Europeans remain appreciative of the simple and unchanging rhythms of the natural world, including the coming and passing of the season's longest day. (AP)

'Your Skin is Your Health, Take Care of It'

Cancer Aware Nation (CAN) launches annual skin cancer awareness campaign

By Marwa Al-Bahravi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: The Cancer Aware Nation (CAN) campaign launched its annual skin cancer awareness campaign under the slogan, "Your Skin is Your Health, Take Care of It," in order to raise public awareness on the risk factors and promote prevention.

Chairman of CAN Board of Directors Dr. Khaled Al-Saleh disclosed that skin cancer is one of the most preventable types of cancer through simple and effective preventive measures. He cited excessive sun exposure, especially during peak hours, the use of tanning beds, and repeated sunburn as among the most common risk factors.

Al-Saleh explained that health awareness is the first line of defense against skin cancer, indicating that using appropriate sunscreen, wear-



Part of the annual skin cancer awareness campaign launched by the National Cancer Awareness Campaign (CAN).

ing protective clothing, hats and sunglasses, and avoiding direct and

prolonged sun exposure will reduce the risk of developing the disease.

He added that CAN continues its year-round efforts by organizing

awareness campaigns, lectures and events in health centers and hospi-

tals, in addition to disseminating awareness messages through mainstream media and social media platforms to raise awareness on the signs and symptoms of skin cancer and the importance of early detection.

He pointed out that early detection of abnormal skin changes like the appearance of new moles or changes in the size, color or shape of existing moles improves treatment outcomes and increases the chance of recovery, while emphasizing the importance of consulting a doctor upon noticing abnormal changes.

He affirmed that CAN remains committed to its educational and humanitarian role by providing reliable health information based on scientific evidence, building a more informed and capable society for cancer prevention, and promoting the importance of adopting healthy behaviors that reduce the risk of developing skin cancer.



KUNA photos

Al-Dabbous Cardiac Center's Echocardiography Department earns European accreditation

KUWAIT CITY, June 18, (KUNA): Al-Dabbous Cardiac Center announced on Wednesday that its Echocardiography Department has obtained official European accreditation from the European Society of Cardiology through the European Association of Cardiovascular Imaging.

The center said in a press statement that the accreditation is granted to centers and departments that adhere to the highest European standards in cardiovascular imaging and reflects years of continuous development efforts and commitment to quality standards and institutional excellence.

Head of the Cardiology Department at the center Dr. Bader Al-Ayyad said the achievement reflects the high level of professional and technical competence of the medical and technical staff and confirms the ability of Kuwaiti healthcare institutions to compete and secure prestigious international accreditations.

He pointed out that the accreditation journey began in 2022, during which the department underwent a series of

comprehensive assessments and audits covering quality of healthcare services, diagnostic accuracy, efficiency of medical reporting, and the number of examinations and cases completed, in addition to fulfilling precise professional and technical requirements in line with approved European standards.

He added that the international recognition is the result of the collective efforts of all members of the Echocardiography Department and supporting administrative teams. It also reinforces Al-Dabbous Cardiac Center's position as a leading center for advanced cardiac services in accordance with the highest international standards.

The recognition is regarded as an international testament to the quality of services provided and the competence of medical and technical personnel, while reflecting the center's commitment to implementing global best practices in healthcare, accurate diagnosis and patient safety.

MoH inaugurates specialized treatment clinic for lung cancer skin complications

KUWAIT, June 18, (KUNA): The Ministry of Health inaugurated Wednesday the first specialized joint clinic for monitoring skin complications associated with lung cancer treatments, in collaboration between the Kuwait Cancer Control Center (KCCC) and Asa'ad Al-Hamad Dermatology Center.

This initiative aims to enhance integrated care and support the quality of life and continuity of treatment for cancer patients.

In a press statement, Dr. Atfal Al-Lafi, Head of the Dermatology Departments Council at the Ministry and Head of the Dermatology Department at the Asa'ad Al-Hamad Dermatology Center, explained that the clinic specializes in monitoring, diagnosing, and treating skin side effects associated with both traditional and modern cancer treatments.

Al-Lafi added that this ensures the early detection of skin complications and their management according to the latest medical protocols, positively impacting the patient's treatment journey and maximizing the benefits of treatment.



KUNA photo

Ministry of Health inaugurates specialized treatment clinic for lung cancer skin complications.

She noted that this clinic represents an advanced model of integration between oncology and dermatology specialties and is the first of its kind in Kuwait for specialized skin follow-up for lung cancer patients.

Famine risks rise

UN food agencies warn acute hunger will worsen in thirteen hot spots

ROME, June 18, (Agencies): The United Nations' food agencies warned Wednesday that acute hunger is set to worsen across 13 global hot spots in the coming months, with conflict, funding shortages and climate shocks pushing millions closer to famine.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Food Program (WFP) said in a new joint report that conditions are expected to deteriorate between June and November 2026, with around 266 million people already facing high levels of acute food insecurity, and called for urgent action.

"The warnings in this report cannot be ignored," said WFP Acting Executive Director Carl Skau. "Without action now, millions more are expected to face worsening levels of hunger in the months ahead, pushing some closer to famine."

Sudan, South Sudan, Yemen and the Gaza Strip remain the hot spots of greatest concern, the report said, while Nigeria and Somalia have been newly added to that category as conditions worsen and famine risks rise. Seven other countries are also on the hotspot list - Afghanistan, Congo, Myanmar, Haiti, Mali and new additions Lebanon and Madagascar.

The agencies said conflict and violence are the main drivers of hunger in nearly all the hotspots, compounded by economic shocks, deep

cuts to humanitarian funding and the expected impact of an El Niño weather pattern, which could bring droughts and floods to vulnerable regions. They warned that additional pressures, including spillover effects from the Middle East conflict and an Ebola outbreak in eastern Congo, are worsening the outlook by disrupting markets, livelihoods and aid access.

Funding for food assistance and related programs has dropped sharply - by about 59% since 2022 - even as needs have surged, the report said.

There was a piece of good news on funding Tuesday: The United States pledged \$800 million to WFP which the agency said will help more than 38 million people in at least 37 countries at "a moment of unprecedented global need driving hunger to record levels."

But WFP's more than \$10 billion appeal for 2026 still remains severely underfunded.

For years, the US Agency for International Development had been the backbone of humanitarian aid around the globe. But last year, the Trump administration abolished the agency, cutting \$60 billion in overall assistance. Under a reset in December, the US has restored funding to WFP and just announced \$218 million in assistance to the UN children's agency, UNICEF.

WFP's Skau called the new US donation "a lifeline to reach people



People fill water containers at a free distribution point amid water outages in Khartoum, Sudan on May 18. (AP)

on the brink of famine, provide nutritional support to mothers and children and position food to prevent millions from slipping further into extreme hunger."

Assessing the global hotspots, the report said that conditions in the Gaza Strip have improved since an October 2025 ceasefire but remain fragile. About 1.6 million people - roughly 77% of the population analyzed - were acutely food insecure earlier this year and in need of urgent assistance, including more than half a million in emergency levels and a smaller number facing catastrophic

conditions.

Yemen remains "one of the world's worst food security crises," hosting the largest population facing emergency or catastrophic levels of food insecurity, it said.

And the threat of famine between now and November looms over people in Nigeria's Borno state and Somalia's Burhakaba district as well as in South Sudan's Jonglei and Upper Nile states, and in Sudan's North Darfur, South Darfur and South Kordofan regions.

The FAO and the WFP called for swift, coordinated international

action to scale up aid, protect livelihoods and prevent further deterioration, warning that without swift intervention, millions more could face catastrophic hunger in the months ahead.

Also:

BEIRUT: The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) renewed its urgent call for a sustained cessation of hostilities in Lebanon to protect children from further harm and ensure access to essential services.

In a statement on Wednesday, UNICEF Representative in Lebanon **Marcello Luigi Corsi** said that a lasting halt to hostilities would help protect children from additional suffering and safeguard schools, hospitals, water networks and other civilian infrastructure.

He stressed that with renewed hopes for an end to the fighting, children need more than a temporary pause in violence, noting that they require protection, support, recovery and the prospect of a safer future.

For more than three months, children in Lebanon have endured experiences that no child should face, including repeated displacement, exposure to violence, the loss of loved ones and the destruction of schools, communities and their sense of security, he added.

According to UNICEF, 247 children have been killed and 992 others injured in Lebanon since March 2,

leaving many with life-altering consequences.

The statement noted that destruction remains widespread across the country, affecting homes, schools and essential services, including water, sanitation and hygiene systems, further aggravating already severe humanitarian needs.

Corsi added that more than 770,000 children are suffering from increasing psychological distress due to repeated exposure to violence, loss and displacement, while many remain unable to return home because of ongoing hostilities and the threat posed by unexploded ordnance.

He emphasized that ending the violence is critical to restoring access to education and other essential services and providing children with an opportunity to recover and rebuild their lives.

Despite the recent **US-Iran** understanding, which included commitments to reduce military escalation in the region, including Lebanon, hostilities continue in southern Lebanon, albeit at a lower intensity than previously recorded.

Meanwhile, The Palestinian Center for Human Rights warned of a worsening environmental and public health crisis threatening more than two million Palestinians in the Gaza Strip due to the accumulation of hundreds of thousands of tons of solid waste and sewage leaks.



Kahindo Mireille Pierrette, an Ebola survivor poses with her 16-month old baby, after they were declared to have survived Ebola and discharged from the Rwampara treatment Center in Ituri Congo on June 16. (AP)

16-month-old baby, mother recover from Ebola in Congo

BUNIA, Congo, June 18, (AP): A 16-month-old baby and his mother have recovered from ebola in eastern Congo, a rare positive development as Africa's top health body warned the outbreak of the deadly virus could become the worst on record if it continues to spread.

The two left the Rwampara Treatment Center on Tuesday, near Bunia, in Ituri province, the epicenter of the outbreak, along with five other people who also recovered from ebola.

"The joy is immense given the state he was in at first," Kahindo Mireille Pierrette of her infant. "If you had seen him before, you wouldn't believe he could have this strength now," she added.

Pierrette said she brought her child to the treatment center at the end of May, after he started bleeding from the mouth and nose and could barely move.

Modet Camara, a doctor at the center, said the baby was treated with antibiotics after a PCR test came back positive for ebola on his second day at the hospital.

Congo's Ministry of Health said Tuesday that 837 cases of the virus have been confirmed so far, including 196 confirmed deaths. However, the number of cases is believed to be higher because the outbreak was confirmed on May 15, weeks after it is suspected to have begun.

Renewable energy overtaking traditional power projects across Africa, say industry leaders

NAIROBI, Kenya, June 18, (AP): Africa's next generation of power projects is increasingly being built around solar and wind power and battery storage, as governments and investors shift away from coal and large hydropower dams in search of cheaper, faster and more reliable electricity.

The shift is visible in a \$1.5 billion energy agreement between China and Zambia announced in early May that includes three separate 300-megawatt projects spanning solar, wind and coal-fired power.

While the inclusion of coal underscores the continent's continuing need for stable baseload electricity, African countries facing rising fuel import bills as a result of the Iran war, unreliable grids and growing industrial demand are increasingly turning to renewable energy projects that can be deployed faster and more cheaply than traditional plants.

Of the 322 energy projects announced across Africa in 2025, 173 were solar projects, followed by hydropower at 46, wind at 34, gas at 22 and hybrid energy projects at 14, according to the energy research firm Africa Intelligence.

"Africa is not on the periphery of the global energy transition, it is sitting at its center," said Mugwe Manga, climate finance lead at FSD Kenya. "The continent holds the world's best renewable resources,



A shepherd watches livestock near Khi Solar One, a solar thermal plant that converts the sun's light energy into electricity, outside Upington, South Africa, in the Northern Cape province on Aug 29, 2025. (AP)

and the economics have now decisively turned in favor of clean energy."

According to Olamide Niyi-Afuye, CEO of the Africa Minigrid Developers Association (AMDA), the continent is undergoing a broader strategic shift in how energy infrastructure is being developed, with an emphasis on systems that can be deployed faster and expanded gradually with flexible financing.

Niyi-Afuye pointed to the growing role of solar within mini-grid systems.

According to the International Renewable Energy Agency, Africa added a record 11.3 gigawatts of renewable energy capacity in 2025, triple the previous year. South Africa, Egypt and Ethiopia accounted for much of the growth.

Increasingly affordable technology is helping. Utility-scale solar power costs have dropped by nearly 90% globally since 2010, while onshore wind costs have fallen around 70%, making renewables the cheapest source of new electricity generation in many African markets.

"Renewable energy is now unequivocally the fastest, cheapest, and most bankable way to connect people, companies and economies to the megawatts they need to grow," said Matt Tilleard, CEO of Cross-Boundary Energy, which invests in renewable energy in Africa.

Much of the growth is through distributed solar and battery systems installed directly in mines, factories, telecom towers and homes. "Most official statistics still measure the energy transition the old way, by counting megawatts connected to national grids," he said. "But solar and batteries don't need central utilities."

Data from the Africa Solar Industry Association shows 23.4 gigawatts of operational solar projects had been tracked across Africa by the end of 2025. But Chinese export figures indicate 58.1 gigawatts of solar panels have been shipped to African countries since 2017, suggesting solar adoption may be growing far faster than official figures capture.

Investors increasingly favor renewable projects because they can generate returns faster and with less exposure to global fuel price shocks. "Solar and wind projects are especially attractive at this moment because they combine strong commercial fundamentals with relatively lower investment risk," Niyi-Afuye said.

Series wrapped up after 9 tournaments with 580 participants across all tiers

Zain marks successful conclusion of The Padel League

KUWAIT CITY June 18: Zain Kuwait marked the successful conclusion of the first season of The Padel League (TPL), one of the GCC's premier private padel leagues, organized by Tour Events. Zain was the main sponsor and a key success partner of the series that lasted for 9 months, featuring players from across Kuwait, the GCC, and the wider region.

At the closing ceremony of the series' 9th and final tournament, Zain, represented by Waleed Al-Khashti, Chief Corporate Affairs and Relations Officer, honored the winners alongside Abdulrahman Al-Musbahi, Director General of Tour Events, the tournament organizer.

The series brought together 580 participants across all tiers and categories, including Men's, Women's, 40+, and Under-16 competitions. Held over nine months, the league featured nine tournaments across four tiers, creating a structured and



Waleed Al-Khashti honors the winners of one of the tiers.

competitive platform that reflected the rapid growth of padel in Kuwait and the increasing demand for professionally organized sporting experiences.

The Padel League is a fully independent private padel series designed around competitive integrity, with

a tiered format that allows players to compete within structured levels while building consistency, ranking, and progression throughout the season. The model contributed to elevating the standard of competition and helped position TPL as one of Kuwait's biggest padel platforms.

Zain's support of The Padel League comes as part of the company's continued commitment to supporting Kuwait's local sports scene and empowering athletic platforms that engage the community, encourage active lifestyles, and provide opportunities for athletes of different age groups and skill levels. The company has consistently supported major sporting events and emerging sports, with padel becoming one of the fastest-growing and most popular activities among youth in Kuwait.

Zain's partnership with The Padel League reflects its belief in the importance of private-sector participation in developing sustainable sports platforms that create long-term value for athletes, fans, organizers, and the wider community. The company continues to support initiatives that promote healthy competition, youth engagement, and community development, while contributing to the growth of Kuwait's sports ecosystem.



The tournament reflected the rapid growth of padel in the region.

Amir congratulates Burgan on historic victory

Burgan players clean up individual awards

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agenceis

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Club Chairman Anwar Al-Otaibi on the team's victory in the 28th Asian Men's Club Handball Championship, after defeating Saudi Arabia's Al-Khaleej 34-32 in the final.

His Highness the Amir praised the outstanding sporting achievement and the high technical level displayed by Burgan's players, commending the efforts of the club's management, technical staff, and all officials who contributed to securing the continental title.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also extended his congratulations to Al-Otaibi, praising the club's remarkable accomplishment and strong performance in the final. He wished the team continued success in future regional and international competitions.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ah-



Burgan players celebrate with the Asian Club Handball Championship trophy.

mad Al-Sabah likewise congratulated Burgan SC on their historic achievement, marking their first Asian title in club history.

Meanwhile, Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports Dr. Tareq Al-Jalaha offered his warm congratulations, describing Burgan's triumph as a historic milestone for Kuwaiti sport.

Al-Jalaha praised the high

technical level of the final, noting that the match reflected true sportsmanship and the strong competitive spirit of Gulf handball. He also highlighted the passionate crowd at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Complex, saying it demonstrated the sport's popularity in Kuwait.

He added that Burgan's victory secured qualification for the IHF

Men's Super Globe 2026 in Egypt, and commended the club's board, Kuwait SC as tournament organizer, and all supporting authorities for their successful efforts in hosting the event.

Burgan SC Chairman Anwar Al-Otaibi said the achievement represents a major milestone for Kuwaiti sport and the result of collective teamwork. He expressed grati-



Burgan players celebrate with fans after securing the Asian Club Handball Championship.

champions concluded on Monday at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Indoor Sports Complex, with the Asian Handball Federation announcing the tournament's "Best Players" after a highly competitive edition that featured strong technical levels from all participating teams.

Burgan players dominated the individual awards, claiming four major honors, reflecting their impressive performances in their first-ever appearance in the continental competition. Al-Khaleej (Saudi Arabia) and Al-Duhail (Qatar) shared the remaining awards after also delivering standout displays throughout the tournament.

Burgan goalkeeper Egyptian Abdelrahman Hamid was named Best Goalkeeper, while Japan's Kosuke Yasuhira won Best Player of the Tournament. Hussein Al-Mutawa was selected Best Right Wing, and Egyptian Mohsen Ramadan took the Best Left Back award.

From Al-Khaleej, Saudi player Mohammed Habib won Best Right Back, Abdullah Al-Hilali Best Left Wing, and Sayed Ali Best Pivot. Al-Duhail's Mostafa Heiba earned the Best Playmaker award.

With this achievement, Burgan became the sixth Kuwaiti club to win an Asian title, joining Kazma and Qadsia (two titles each), along with Al-Fahaheel, Al-Sulaibikhat, and Kuwait SC (one title each).

Preparation going as planned

First friendly test for Kuwait U19 handball team in Croatia

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

ZAGREB, June 18: Kuwait's national youth handball team has begun its daily training sessions at its current training camp in Croatia as part of preparations for the Asian Championship, scheduled to be held in China next month.

The team continues its intensive buildup at the overseas camp in Croatia before moving to Slovenia to complete its preparation program. The camp has so far been marked by a positive atmosphere and strong focus from players and technical staff. Training includes daily sessions and friendly matches aimed at improving physical and technical readiness, while also enhancing cohesion among the squad ahead of the continental challenge.

The youth side will play its first friendly match today against Slovenia. In the final training session,

head coach Danish Heine Jensen and assistant coach Musaed Mufreh concentrated on physical preparation, with players undergoing strength training exercises to improve muscle fitness at the camp facility. The technical staff is also working to restore match rhythm and sharpness after a recent break in activity.

Team manager Yousef Shaheen said the preparation process is proceeding according to the plan set by the Handball Federation's board, along with the administrative and technical staff.

"We have a promising group of young players capable of meeting our ambitions despite the challenges facing sports in general," Shaheen said.

He added: "We will play five friendly matches over a preparation period of no more than two weeks. Despite the short timeframe, we are determined to represent Kuwaiti handball well at the upcoming Asian championship."



The coach gives instructions to the youth handball team during an indoor training session in Croatia.

IBAK holds Summer Smash tournament



Top & above: Photos from the event

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: In line with its vision to promote and develop badminton in Kuwait, The Indian Badminton Association - Kuwait (IBAK) conducted its Summer Smash tournament on 11 June and 12 June 2026 which attracted badminton players from various clubs in Kuwait.

The IBAK Summer Smash Badminton Tournament 2026 concluded on a high note, bringing together

citing competitive play. Hosted at the IBAK Gym in Salwa, the tournament saw remarkable participation and sporting spirit, firmly establishing itself as a flagship event in the local badminton calendar. The IBAK Smash 2026 drew an impressive 177 players who competed across 7 categories, spanning all age groups and skill levels. Over the two-day event, a total of 198 matches were contested, ensuring a packed schedule of high-quality badminton from the opening rally to the final shuttle.

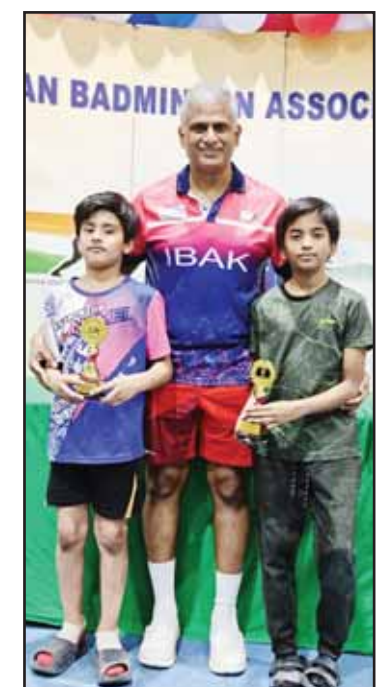
A defining feature of this year's tournament was its strong focus on youth development. Three of the seven categories were dedicated exclusively to junior players - Under 13 Doubles, Under 15 Doubles, and Under 17 Mixed Doubles - providing a competitive platform for the next generation of badminton talent in Kuwait.

IBAK Chairman, Dr. Manimara Chozhan expressed his gratitude, saying, "The IBAK Summer Smash Tournament has been a wonderful celebration of badminton in our community. Seeing players compete with such passion and dedication across all age groups - especially our young players - has been truly inspiring. We are proud of the organization, the level of competition, and the community spirit that made this event a

resounding success."

IBAK can be reached on www.ibakwt.org or ibakcommittee@gmail.com

Following are the results of various categories.



Some of the winners

UNDER -15 DOUBLES Winner: Kamal Fadel+Antony Iobo Runner-up: Derish Daniel+Premasekhar Rahul Semi-Finalist 1: Stalin FRANK Aiden+Sajid Shuaib Semi-Finalist 2: Muthukrishnan Aklesh+Amitkumar MOTAVAL Aksh	UNDER -13 DOUBLES Winner: Muhammed MANOLI Ayaan+Muhammed Manoli Nahyan Runner-up: Santhosh Divine+Manesh Marlino Semi-Finalist 1: Santhosh Aaron+Musa Ismail Semi-Finalist 2: Ruble Divinshiya+Kaur Keerat
MIXED DOUBLES (BELOW U 17) Winner: Kaur Avneet+Sreejith Sidharth Runner-up: Ann Kenil Saira+Rajmohan Parthiv	LOWER INTERMEDIATE DOUBLES (OPEN TO ALL) Winner: Dipin Dipin+Js Jayan Runner-up: Abesams Mercado Erwin+Kutubuddin Chowdhury Mohammed Semi-Finalist 1: Mohammed Sharif Ahmed+Singh Rajpaul Semi-Finalist 2: Vijayan Goutham+Jamal Jabbar
INTERMEDIATE DOUBLES (OPEN TO ALL) Winner: Jidheesh Jidheesh+Xavier Sijo Runner-up: Rajendra PATEL Ayush+Antony Iobo Ranston Semi-Finalist 1: Pv Naji+Thammaiah Sanu Semi-Finalist 2: Kaur Avneet+Vagvala Shruti	PRO - ADVANCE DOUBLES (OPEN TO ALL) Winner: Suresh Aravind+Veerapathapan Avaneewhar Runner-up: Dware Farhan+Surya Kant Semi-Finalist 1: V Dheeraj+Kadar Usen Harshath Semi-Finalist 2: Ezzi Hisham+Kumar Pratap
ADVANCE DOUBLES (OPEN TO ALL) Winner: Veerapathapan Avaneewhar+Md Parvesh Runner-up: Benson VICTOR Navil+Allen Roland Semi-Finalist 1: Mc Arun+Jose Lijo Semi-Finalist 2: Firoz Khan+Sureshkumar Kiran	



badminton enthusiasts from across the community for two days of ex-



Colombia marks World Cup return with statement win

Díaz sparks Cafeteros past Uzbekistan

MEXICO CITY, June 18, (AP): Colombia arrived at the World Cup with dreams of redemption after missing out on Qatar in 2022. Although it was tense at times, the Cafeteros got off to a strong start.

Luis Díaz had a goal and an assist in his debut on soccer's biggest stage, sparking Colombia to a 3-1 win over Uzbekistan.

"That's what we came here to do. It's very important to win this first game. We controlled the first half, but they played better in the second," said Díaz, who plays for Bayern Munich. "We must improve."

Daniel Muñoz, also playing in his first World Cup, opened the scoring in the 40th minute after a pass from Díaz, who scored the tie-breaking goal in the 65th when his strike from close range deflected off the hands of diving goalkeeper Utkir Yusupov and trickled across the line.

"We knew that it was going to be a tough match," Colombia coach Nestor Lorenzo said.

Fayzullaev Abbosbek scored in the 60th minute for Uzbekistan, which made its World Cup debut in front of a heavily pro-Colombia crowd of 80,824 at Estadio Azteca.

"It is a wonderful joy, but emotionally, I think it weighed on some of the players who suffered physically," Lorenzo said. "It has to do

with the emotional burden generated by the opening match and the setting in which we played - especially since we were expected to take the initiative and were under pressure to win."

With the White Wolves' defeat, three of the four debuting teams at this year's World Cup lost their first match. Cape Verde played Spain to a draw, while Curaçao and Jordan lost.

"For a small team like ours, to lose 3-1 is too much," said Uzbekistan coach Fabio Cannavaro, an Italian who took over the team in October 2025. "We have good quality for an Asian team, but we need to grow. It was a good experience."

Jaminton Campaz added a goal in second-half stoppage time for the Colombians, who are ranked 13th in the world and were heavy favorites over 50th-ranked Uzbekistan. Colombia's best World Cup finish was a run to the quarterfinals in Brazil in 2014.

"We needed to hit the ground running. Now we can enjoy the rest of the night," midfielder Gustavo Puerata said.

Colombia moved atop Group K, ahead of Portugal and Congo, who played to a surprising 1-1 draw earlier Wednesday.

The Colombians will face Congo next Thursday in Guadalajara, Mexico, while Uzbekistan will take on Cristiano Ronaldo and Portugal in Houston.

"We are going to play against a



Uzbekistan's Rostam Ashurmatov and Colombia's Luis Suarez, right, battle for the ball during the World Cup Group K soccer match between Uzbekistan and Colombia in Mexico City. (AP)

tough team that played great against one of the best teams in the world. It

is going to be hard," Lorenzo said. Colombia finished third in South

American qualifying behind Argentina and Ecuador. Uzbekistan was

second in its Asian qualifying group behind Iran.

Fan Zone



A fan celebrates after Ghana defeated Panama in a World Cup Group L soccer match, in Toronto. (AP)



Uzbekistan supporters cheer ahead the World Cup Group K soccer match between Uzbekistan and Colombia in Mexico City. (AP)



Croatian's fans smile outside the stadium before the start of the World Cup Group L soccer match between England and Croatia in Arlington, Texas, near Dallas. (AP)

Ivory Coast striker Wahi barred from WC match in Canada amid match-fixing probe

TORONTO, June 18, (AP): Ivory Coast striker Elye Wahi, who is being investigated into suspected match-fixing, has not been authorized to travel to Canada for his team's next World Cup match against Germany, the Ivorian soccer federation said on Thursday.

Ivory Coast faces Germany on Saturday in Toronto.

The federation said Wahi will not be able to travel with the squad because "the necessary administrative authorizations for his entry into Canadian territory could not be obtained at this stage." Wahi started in attack for Ivory Coast when it beat Ecuador 1-0 in

its opening game in Philadelphia on Monday. He will remain in the United States pending the team's return, the federation said.

The French soccer league said on Wednesday that an "unusual amount of bets" were placed internationally on Wahi receiving a yellow card during a Ligue 1 game with Nice in May.

The French league was alerted by partners monitoring betting markets about suspicious betting activity at international level concerning Nice's home game against Metz on May 17, which ended 0-0, and in which Wahi was shown a yellow card.

Americans eye 2nd straight win against Australia

Pulisic still training separately, increasing concern for US

IRVINE, Calif., June 18, (AP): Christian Pulisic trained apart from his U.S. teammates for the third straight day because of his calf injury, increasing concerns about his availability to face Australia on Friday in the Americans' second game of the World Cup.

Pulisic played a dynamic first half in the Americans' 4-1 victory over Paraguay last week, but came off at halftime after feeling stiffness from a calf injury incurred in training. He hasn't worked out with his teammates this week at their training base in Orange County, instead doing individual work largely in the gym.

Pulisic didn't work out on the grass at all Tuesday, but the AC Milan attacker took the field at Great Park with trainers and did ball drills on Wednesday. He tested out his left leg while wearing a compression sleeve on his calf during the 15 minutes of practice open to media.

"We're really hoping that Christian is going to be back for the game, of course," said Brenden Aaronson, one of Pulisic's potential replacements. "I don't really know what's going on in particular, but we know that he's going to give us his all to get back in the team and be there for the game, so we'll see. We're really excited to see what the deal is."

Pulisic is the U.S. team's most accomplished player and the lynchpin of their offensive attack. His playmaking and ball skills down the left



United States' Christian Pulisic (10) controls the ball as Paraguay's Andres Cubas (14) defends during the World Cup Group D soccer match in Inglewood, Calif., near Los Angeles. (AP)

side led directly to Paraguay's own-goal in the opening minutes last Friday, and he added an assist on Folarin Balogun's first goal.

His absence could hinder a team coming off its nation's highest-scoring World Cup performance with a wave of momentum early in its home World Cup. But Pulisic's teammates are confident he'll do everything possible to play - and they also feel the team's depth could sustain them in this potentially physical matchup with the Socceroos in Seattle.

"We've still got a couple of days to see where he's at," U.S. left back Antonee Robinson said. "Thankfully we've got a lot of boys on the

bench who are eager to get involved with helping the team with a lot of quality. It's a long tournament. If we don't have (Pulisic) for the game, then we need to make sure we have him for the rest of the way, because we're going to need him. We're going to need everyone. But hopefully we have him (Friday)."

U.S. coach Mauricio Pochettino would have several capable options as a replacement for Pulisic, although none has the star's resume. Starting midfielder Weston McKennie, who had an outstanding game against Paraguay, could ramp up his responsibility as well.

The top two options appear to be

Aaronson, a solid Premier League winger who had four goals and five assists for Leeds last season, and Marseille forward Tim Weah, who can impact a game with his speed on either wing.

Both players are hoping Pulisic will be healthy enough to keep his place in the lineup, however.

"Christian, for me, is one of the top five wingers in the world," Weah said. "He's one of my favorite players to watch. Being able to play alongside him for a long time has been amazing. Just the little things that he does, he's such a humble player. I think you get caught up in a lot of the noise, but Christian is amazing. He showed it against Paraguay. His ability when he's able to be on the ball is amazing. It helps the team. I'm super proud of him. Hopefully he'll be ready for Friday."

Pochettino's other options for offense include Gio Reyna, who scored the Americans' final goal against Paraguay and has provided moments of dynamic playmaking from the wing for the U.S.

Sebastian Berhalter came on at halftime for Pulisic in the opener, while starting midfielder Malik Tillman raised his already impressive game in Pulisic's absence.

"I felt like we were still threatening, still creating chances (in the second half)," Robinson said. "We just didn't convert them going forward in the game until Gio scored at the end. Like I said, a lot of people are ready to step in."

4-3-3 and 4-2-3-1 lead the way in opening matches

4-4-2 struggles as new systems deliver success

GUADALAJARA, Mexico, June 18, (AP): It's number-crunching time when it comes to formations at the World Cup.

Every team starts with a goalkeeper in front of the net, but then it's up to the 48 coaches to try to arrange their lineups to optimize their players and match up effectively with opponents.

On paper, the lists may look more like area codes, phone numbers or lottery combinations: 4-4-2, 5-3-2, 4-2-3-1 and so on.

But it's all about how coaches set up their 10 field players, with some of them focusing more on attacking, others on containing a tough opponent or maybe trying to capitalize on the talent of a star player.

Coaches tend to have preferred formations, but it's not unusual for them to change them depending on opponents or even during matches to secure a lead or reverse a deficit. Coaches frequently start a match with one scheme and finish it with another.

Here's a look at the nine formations used in the opening matches of World Cup group play, according to FIFA's match reports, and what they mean:

Four defenders, four midfielders and two forwards.

es at the World Cup. But it produced only two wins - by Scotland over Haiti and Ivory Coast over Ecuador. It also matched the 3-4-3 scheme with the most losses, four.

Brazil, Uruguay and co-host Canada were among the teams using the formation that theoretically promotes a balanced squad with a focus on solid defending by keeping the lines compact.

It was a traditional formation in recent decades, along with the 4-3-3 and 5-3-2, until coaches began experimenting with more daring alternatives.

Four defenders, two defensive midfielders, three attacking midfielders and one striker.

The formation has become common in modern soccer, with two holding midfielders protecting the back line and three more offensive players taking care of the transition toward the central striker.

Ten teams used the design so far, with the United States, England, France and Austria winning their matches.

Four defenders, one defensive midfielder, two midfielders and three forwards.

This formation and the 4-2-3-1 had the most wins, with four each.

It's a slight change from the above, with an extra player in the offensive phase. Mexico, Norway,

Ghana and Colombia used it to win their openers.

Eight teams used the scheme, which has two wingers and a central striker up front ahead of the three-piece midfield. It's a more offensive formation, with only one defensive midfielder.

Title favorites Spain and the Netherlands also used the formation.

Three central defenders, four midfielders and three forwards.

Seven teams used the formation that promotes a balance between defense and offense around a solid midfielder.

Only two teams won - South Korea and Germany, which scored the most goals so far with a 7-1 rout of Curaçao.

Four defenders, three midfielders and three forwards.

Among the five teams using the formation was Lionel Messi's Argentina, and it helped him score three goals in a 3-0 win over Algeria.

It was the only team that won with the traditional formation, with three midfielders feeding the two side forwards and the striker up front.

It was used by one of the World Cup's most famous squads - Brazil's 1970 team led by Pelé.

Argentina won the 2022 World Cup with that formation.

Five defenders, three midfielders and two forwards.

There were no winners among the three teams that used the formation, which puts emphasis on the back line but has the two fullbacks changing into wingers in the offensive phase.

South Africa and Tunisia lost, but it was good enough for Congo to manage a surprising 1-1 draw against Cristiano Ronaldo and Portugal.

It was also a traditional scheme for decades.

Five defenders, two midfielders and three forwards.

Only the Czech Republic, which lost to South Korea, used the formation in which the two fullbacks also work up toward the midfield, depending on the phase of the game.

Five defenders, four midfielders and one striker.

Australia picked up a win against Turkey with the formation that focuses on defense first, with nine players between the back line and the midfield.

Three central defenders, four midfielders, one attacking midfielder and two forwards.

Sweden used the formation in its 5-1 win over Tunisia. The design has an attacking midfielder playing in between the midfield and the forwards to try to promote an easier transition from defense to offense.



England's Harry Kane (9) celebrates after scoring a goal during the World Cup Group L soccer match between England and Croatia in Arlington, Texas, near Dallas. (AP)

Sports

England survives Croatia test as Kane hits landmark

Three Lions roar in opener

ARLINGTON, Texas, June 18, (AP): Hey, Jude, you and Harry didn't let England down.

Harry Kane scored twice to equal the English record for World Cup goals, and Jude Bellingham put England in front for good two minutes into the second half of a 4-2 victory over Croatia.

Martin Baturina and Petar Musa answered each of Kane's first-half goals in a rematch of a 2018 semifinal won by Croatia. Musa's goal came on the final play before the whistle ending the first half.

The even score didn't last long once play resumed.

Bellingham took a long pass from Elliot Anderson and stayed clear of the defender the rest of the way, sending a shot past Dominik Livakovic and in off the far post. Marcus Rashford padded the lead in the 85th minute.

"He just told us to let the shackles off," Kane said of coach Thomas Tuchel's halftime message after Croatia pulled even so late before the break. "The way we conceded that second goal is not the team we want to be. He finally just said, 'What's the worst that can happen? We lose the match, first group game, we get on with it.' We move on. Just go and kind of show the world who we can be."

Kane, who won the Golden Boot at the 2018 World Cup in Russia by scoring six times, is up to 10 World Cup goals, tying Gary Lineker's mark from the 1986 and 1990 tournaments.

The 32-year-old's first goal came on his second chance on a penalty kick after Livakovic's save on the first try was nullified by a video review that showed both his feet off the goal line as Kane was striking the ball.

Kane went the same way toward the right post with the second attempt, while Livakovic lunged the other direction, to his right.

The penalty was called when Luka Modric, the 40-year-old midfielder who extended his Croatian record by appearing in his fifth World Cup, kicked Noni Madueke in the thigh.

Kane matched Lineker's mark when the Bayern Munich striker easily beat Livakovic with a powerful header off a corner kick from Declan Rice. Kane has 81 international goals.

"We scored two goals that were good actions and good situations, but they were too little," Croatia coach Zlatko Dalic said through an interpreter. "England was very difficult, (we) also have to be strong on the defensive side."

Bellingham almost immediately had another great scoring chance after the Real Madrid player's seventh international goal. Livakovic made that save and about a half-dozen more in a matter of minutes during a frenetic English attack.

"We could have scored probably three goals in that 20-minute spell coming out (after halftime)," Kane said. "In the end, we just had too much for a great team that will probably go far in the tournament themselves."

Musa scored the first World Cup goal for an active player from Dallas of Major League Soccer, which plays its home games about 40 miles from AT&T Stadium.



England's Jude Bellingham (10) and Croatia's Josip Stanisic (2) battle for the ball during the World Cup Group L soccer match between England and Croatia in Arlington, Texas, near Dallas. (AP)

The retractable-roof venue that is home to the NFL's Dallas Cowboys is giving World Cup fans an air-conditioned reprieve from the muggy Texas heat, this time for white-clad English fans and Croatian supporters who were mostly wearing their country's familiar red-and-white checkered uniforms, not the blue kits the players had on.

Musa tracked a header from Ivan Perisic and put a one-timer past Jordan Pickford, who was also beaten in the 36th minute by Baturina. That shot into

the left corner ticked off Pickford's hand.

Bukayo Saka's pass left plenty of room for Rashford as the Barcelona player entered the penalty area, faked a shot with his left foot and scored his 19th international goal with his right.

"I loved the second half, all of it," Tuchel said. "I encouraged them to go for it. To play with more courage, to be brave, to be ourselves. And like I said, I loved their reaction."

Yirenkyi the hero as Ghana breaks Panama resistance



Panama's Jiovany Ramos, left, jumps for the ball past Ghana's Brandon Thomas-Asante during the World Cup Group L soccer match between Ghana and Panama in Toronto. (AP)

TORONTO, June 18, (AP): It was a play Ghana has been practicing throughout its World Cup preparation.

And after a night of missed chances, it worked.

Caleb Yirenkyi tapped in a cross from Brandon Thomas-Asante in the fifth minute of second-half stoppage time, and Ghana beat Panama 1-0 on Wednesday night in the teams' World Cup opener.

Thomas-Asante got loose on the left side and fired the ball across the goal mouth. Yirenkyi knocked it in, sending his teammates streaming onto the field to embrace both players.

"Get the ball to the wings, and then put it in the box, and we get runs - people in the box to finish," said the 20-year-old Yirenkyi, who scored his first international goal earlier this month in a friendly against Wales. "I tried (to) just play forward and run forward, and then hope to see what comes in, and yeah, I got the ball in the box and finished."

Ghana played without midfielder Thomas Partey, who was denied entry into Canada while he awaits trial on rape charges in England.

The late goal denied Panama its first World Cup point.

The only shot on goal in the first half came two minutes in, when Panama forward Cecilio Waterman latched onto a low cross from Amir Murillo and clipped a ball from the center of the box toward the net. Lawrence Atzig-Zigi dove to his right and palmed the ball away.

The goalkeeper left the game at halftime after a couple of hard collisions. He was replaced by Benjamin Asare. Ghana coach Carlos Queiroz said Atzig-Zigi would be evaluated further on Thursday.

The result puts Ghana at the top of Group L with England, which beat Croatia 4-2 earlier in the day.

After the first hour, when chances came at a premium at rainy BMO Field, the match opened up and both teams started smashing shots toward the net.

In the 65th minute, Thomas-Asante broke through Panama's back line and played a ball along the 6-yard box toward Jordan Ayew, but Jiovany Ramos ran up from behind with a tackle to prevent the tap-in.

Defense did a great job: Mukau

Ronaldo draws blank as Portugal stumbles against Congo

HOUSTON, June 18, (AP): Cristiano Ronaldo delivered a pretty forgettable performance in the first match of his sixth World Cup.

After Lionel Messi, Kylian Mbappé and Erling Haaland all scored in their opening matches, the 41-year-old Ronaldo couldn't find the net Wednesday in Portugal's 1-1 draw with Congo.

With players like Vinícius Júnior, Christian Pulisic, Viktor Gyökeres and Harry Kane also all scoring early in this year's World Cup, Ronaldo being held scoreless stands out even more.

However, the Portugal great did join Messi as the only players to appear in six World Cups. But a day after the Argentina captain had a hat trick, Ronaldo missed a few chances to become the first player to score in a sixth tournament.

His shots in the 68th and 73rd minutes went wide right, and he didn't look happy after either of them.

Ronaldo didn't speak to reporters after the game but he posted about the match on X.

"It wasn't the start we wanted, but this is far from over," he wrote. "Head up and focus on the next game."

Portugal coach Roberto Martínez was asked if he considered taking out Ronaldo on Wednesday.

"It makes no sense to get the best world scorer to be out when you need goals," Martínez said. "The experience of Cristiano in the box is important. The way that he attracts defenders is important."

Congo midfielder Ngal'ayel Mukau, who is 20 years younger than Ronaldo, addressed the challenge of facing one of the greatest to



Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo, right, and Congo's Chancel Mbemba jump for the ball during the World Cup Group K soccer match between Portugal and Congo in Houston. (AP)

ever play the game.

"We know that Ronaldo isn't the same as before," Mukau said. "So we know that he runs less, less efforts. So yeah, it was up to our defense to stop him, and they did a great job."

Wednesday's game was the 229th of Ronaldo's international career, the most for a man in history. He won the European Championship with Portugal in 2016, but his best finish at the World Cup came in his first tour-

namment in 2006 when his team reached the semifinals.

Martínez was asked if Ronaldo will start Portugal's upcoming matches against Uzbekistan and Colombia considering his age.

"We treat every player in the same way. We take it step by step," Martínez said. "We'll assess every player. It's not a special issue. We don't treat Cristiano with age ... we treat him how he feels."

Ronaldo did, however, become the oldest outfield player to start a

World Cup match, taking the record set four years ago by Canada midfielder Atiba Hutchinson. Cameroon great Roger Milla is the oldest outfield player to appear in a World Cup match, coming on as a substitute at 42 years old during the 1994 World Cup.

This is likely to be the final World Cup for Ronaldo, who won the Champions League five times with Manchester United and Real Madrid and currently plays for Saudi club Al-Nassr.

World Cup Diary

Madrid signs France defender Konaté: Real Madrid says it has reached a deal with Ibrahima Konaté to sign the France defender to a four-year contract.

The Spanish powerhouse announced the deal on Thursday while the central defender is with his national team at the World Cup.

Konaté was a free agent after his deal with Liverpool expired. The 27-year-old Konaté joined Liverpool in 2021 from Leipzig. He helped it win the Premier League in 2025 and the FA Cup in 2022.

His contract was a campaign promise of Florentino Pérez before he was re-elected as Madrid club president this month.

Konaté did not leave the bench in France's 3-1 win over Senegal to open their World Cup campaign on Tuesday. (AP)

Parreira hospitalized amid cancer treatment: World Cup-winning coach Carlos Alberto Parreira has been hospitalized in his fight against cancer, hospital Samaritano Barra said.

The 83-year-old Parreira, who oversaw Brazil's run to the 1994 World Cup title, was diagnosed with Hodgkin's lymphoma in 2023.

The hospital said in a statement it won't provide details about Parreira's health or when the former Brazil coach arrived for treatment.

Parreira also coached Brazil in the 2006 World Cup and won the 2004 Copa America and the 2005 Confederations' Cup with the team. Brazil's soccer federation says he coached Brazil for 177 matches, with 124 wins, 39 draws and 14 losses. (AP)

Vozinha's mother gets visa to attend next match: The mother of Cape Verde star goalkeeper Vozinha has been granted a visa to enter the United States in time for her 40-year-old son's next World Cup match, House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries announced Wednesday.

Vozinha became an early sensation of the World Cup after making key saves in a 0-0 draw with Spain, one of the tournament favorites that was expected to rout tiny Cape Verde. (AP)