



KUWAIT GAINS BROAD I.C.A.O. SUPPORT AFTER AIRPORT THREATS

More carriers tapping into T4

Flight resumptions signal growing stability in regional air travel

KUWAIT CITY, June 20, (Agencies): Regional air traffic is steadily returning to normal at Terminal 4 (T4) of Kuwait International Airport, with several airlines announcing the resumption of services following recent disruptions.

Qatar Airways confirmed it will resume its daily Doha-Kuwait City service starting June 21, operating from Terminal 4. Other carriers are also restoring routes, with Gulf Air, Nesma Airlines and Nile Airways resuming services from June 20, followed by Etihad Airways on June 23 and Oman Air on June 25.

Qatar Airways said it has reinstated 85 percent of its pre-crisis operational capacity as part of efforts to enhance efficiency and improve passenger experience. The airline also announced organizational changes, including the

creation of two new roles aimed at strengthening operational oversight and integrating customer engagement under a unified strategy.

Kuwait International Airport said normal operations have resumed, with flight schedules returning to regular timings after a period of suspensions and delays. Authorities advised passengers to verify flight updates through airlines and official channels before heading to the airport.

The resumption of services marks a further step toward restoring regional connectivity and stabilizing travel operations.

Meanwhile, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Council reiterated its support for Kuwait during its 238th session, following discussions on recent developments. The Public Authority for Civil Aviation (PACA) said Kuwait's letter of protest regarding Iranian attacks targeting Kuwait International Airport and civil aviation infrastructure was circulated among member states.

The session, attended by 93 representatives, also reviewed a working paper submitted by Iran. Kuwait's delegation, led by PACA Chairman Sheikh Eng. Humoud Mubarak Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, expressed appreciation for the support of ICAO, its council members and the Arab group, underscoring international commitment to protecting civil aviation.

Separately, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior, Major General Abdulwahab Al-Wuhaib, inspected security operations at Terminal 4, reviewing procedures for arriving and departing passengers, including identity verification and baggage screening.

Al-Wuhaib stressed the importance of maintaining high standards of accuracy, vigilance and professionalism, noting that airport security personnel represent the country's first point of contact for visitors. He also praised staff for their preparedness, discipline and dedication in carrying out their duties.



Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

Is Trump reviving the Jeffersonian era?

BREAKING a geopolitical narrative that has persisted since the conclusion of the Second World War and the founding of the State of Israel, President Donald Trump has asserted American decision-making dominance.

This development challenges the long-standing assumption that Tel Aviv controlled the policies of Washington, effectively dictating to the preeminent global superpower.

The traditional power dynamic shifted in recent weeks, with Trump appearing to set the terms for Benjamin Netanyahu rather than being guided by them.

A clear consequence of this change was seen when the Israeli administration first saw the details of the Iranian memorandum of understanding through media reports. The official text was only shared with them 36 hours before the formal signing.

This transformation in American foreign policy has profound implications, manifesting what Trump describes as the relationship between 'the big one' and 'the small one' – referring to Washington and Tel Aviv.

While Israel maintains its status as a premier strategic partner and relations remain strong, this new approach sent shockwaves through the Israeli political landscape. Israeli political factions have responded vigorously to the maneuvers of a prime minister focused on his political survival to escape potential prosecution and jail time.

Furthermore, this evolving dynamic extends beyond the president. Vice President JD Vance also frequently voiced sharp criticisms of the Israeli leader.

Consequently, the changing perception of Netanyahu is not limited to President Trump. Vice President JD Vance repeatedly criticized the prime minister of Israel and even resorted to insults. This suggests that the radical pillars of the government like Ben-Gvir and Smotrich have lost hope in the electoral calculations of Tel Aviv.

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@Ahmedaljarallah

Ahmed aljarallah

ahmed@aljarallah.com



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Domestic violence cases drop 33 pct after new law, says Justice Minister

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

KUWAIT CITY, June 20: Minister of Justice Judge Nasser Al-Sumait revealed that the number of domestic violence cases registered at the Public Prosecution decreased by 33 percent during the first three months of implementing the new Domestic Violence Protection Law.

In a statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), Al-Sumait said the Ministry of Justice statistics on cases registered in the prosecution showed a decrease of 158, dropping from 486 cases within the same period last year to 328 in the first three months of the implementation of the new law.

He indicated that the decrease in the number of registered cases is a vital indicator of the impact of the law in regulating case handling and balancing the protection of the family and prevention of the misuse of procedures.

He added that the new law does not only regulate complaint

procedures, but also opens the door to reconciliation in certain cases, taking into account the nature of family disputes, without compromising protection for the most serious cases. He affirmed that the new law provides enhanced protection in several cases, in which waiving a complaint or reconciliation is not permitted. He disclosed that these cases include sexual abuse, violence committed by children against their parents, and violence against children or those lacking legal capacity. He pointed out that this underscores the seriousness of such acts and the necessity of addressing them legally.

He then clarified that the decrease in the number of cases does not entail leniency in protecting victims, as it rather reflects the refinement of legal texts and procedures, directing legal protection to serious cases, while maintaining the highest level of protection for groups whose rights should not be compromised or waived.

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Nasser Al-Sumait, Minister of Justice



Ministry of Defense photo
Kuwaiti delegation led by Defense Ministry Undersecretary Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Meshal Al-Sabah, representing Defense Minister Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, during a visit to Eurosatory 2026 in Paris.

Hospitals get 'quiet hours'

KUWAIT CITY, June 20: Undersecretary of the Ministry of Health Sheikh Dr. Salman Al-Khalifa recently issued a decision to regulate visiting and accompanying patients and the implementation of 'quiet hours' in hospitals and specialized centers, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This decision is part of the efforts of the ministry to improve services for patients and to provide a more supportive therapeutic environment for speedy recovery.

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Kuwait stresses compliance with maritime law at forum

NEW YORK, June 20, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait on Friday underlined the significance of the full implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) as a comprehensive legal framework for regulating the use of seas and oceans and states' rights and obligations.

The statement was made by Second Secretary of Kuwait's Permanent Mission to the United Nations Jassem

Al-Ameri during the 36th Debate of States Parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Al-Ameri said that the UNCLOS, which entered into force 32 years ago, marks a significant source of international law of the sea and earns the approval of the international community, with 174 States Parties out of the 193 UN member states.

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NBK Wealth bolsters its local and regional leadership with Euromoney's 2026 Best Fixed Income Provider Awards in Kuwait and the Middle East

EU, Kuwait explore energy collaboration opportunities

By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 20: The European Union (EU) delegation in Kuwait organized a seminar on the role of EU experts in developing the energy sector in the country and ways to strengthen cooperation between the two sides in this vital sector.

The seminar, which coincided with the 40th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the EU and Kuwait this year, was held at the residence of the EU ambassador, with the participation of European speakers and representatives of the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR), Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) and Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC). Attendees included diplomats, energy sector executives in the public and private sectors, and technical experts.

Speaking at the event, EU Ambassador to Kuwait Anne Koistinen indicated that "European experts have been working alongside their Kuwaiti counterparts for decades in various sectors like oil and gas operations, renewable energy projects, engineering consulting, technical standardization bodies

and policy advisory roles. This seminar builds on the success of the EU-Kuwait Green Transition Forum that was held in Kuwait last February under the patronage of Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Dr. Subaih Al-Mukhaizeem. The forum brought together senior government officials, research institutions and the private sector to solidify cooperation in clean energy, climate change mitigation and skills development."

She expects the commencement of negotiations on the EU-Kuwait Strategic Partnership Agreement soon, stressing that the agreement will provide a formal and institutional framework for existing cooperation between the two sides, focusing on the energy sector.

Meanwhile, Director of Research and Technology Activation at KFAS Eng. Dina Al-Naqeeb, who moderated the discussions, revealed that the participants affirmed the importance of operational excellence, infrastructure readiness, technology activation, regulatory and investment frameworks, capacity building, institutional knowledge transfer, and strengthening partnerships between government, industry and research institutions.



Koistinen

Kuwait, France forge 'closer' defense links

PARIS, June 20, (KUNA): Kuwait's Defense Ministry Undersecretary Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Meshal Al-Sabah, representing Defense Minister Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, discussed mutual topics with senior French military officials.

The Ministry of Defense said Saturday that Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Al-Sabah met on the sidelines of Eurosatory 2026 exhibition in Paris, with Minister Delegate Alice Rufo and Presidential Military Advisor General Vincent Guiraud.

The Undersecretary conveyed greetings from Defense Minister Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah to French Armed Forces officials, expressing appreciation for their warm hospitality during the official visit.

Both sides reviewed the distinguished bilateral relations between Kuwait and France, exploring ways to enhance joint defense cooperation and exchanging views on various common issues to strengthen their strategic partnership.

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Iran shuts Hormuz again over attacks in Lebanon

TYRE, Lebanon, June 20, (AP): Iran dealt two quick blows to the interim agreement with the United States on Saturday, angered by Israel's continued attacks in Lebanon, saying it had closed the Strait of Hormuz again and announcing that while its negotiators are going to Switzerland for talks, not much is likely to happen there.

First, Iran's joint military command said the strait had been closed, citing the Israeli attacks and U.S. "bad faith" and "clear breach of its commitments" by failing to end the war. Its statement on state television warned that "if the aggression continues, subsequent steps have been planned."

Shortly after that, the state broadcaster announced that Iran's negotiating team was heading to Switzerland "in the coming minutes," a trip that was originally planned for Friday.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Bagahei, however, signaled that little might happen until Iran feels the U.S. is living up to the deal.

"This trip is therefore about demanding that the other side fulfill its obligations," he said, adding that negotiations toward a final agreement will begin only once key commitments are upheld. If they are not, he said, "then the memorandum of understanding as a whole will be jeopardized."

Ships had begun transiting the strait after the interim U.S.-Iran agreement was signed earlier in the week, a milestone that has left plenty of questions unanswered.

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Buildings damaged by Israeli strikes are seen through shattered glass from the Jabal Amel Hospital in the southern port city of Tyre, Lebanon, Thursday, June 18, 2026. (AP)

Newswatch

Run ends for 4 embezzlers

KUWAIT CITY, June 20, (KUNA): The Ministry of Interior announced the arrest of four individuals convicted in court cases for embezzling public funds and causing substantial damage to these funds, amounting to USD 180 million after attempting to evade capture and avoid execution.

In a press statement on Saturday, the Ministry said that the Criminal Enforcement Department will not tolerate any attempts to evade capture or avoid the execution of judgments issued against them.



Fajr	03:13	Asr	15:24
Sunrise	04:49	Maghrib ..	18:50
Zohr	11:50	Isha	20:23

Hot & cold beverages in Ministries Complex

KUWAIT CITY, June 20: Undersecretary of the Ministry of Finance Asil Sulaiman Al-Saad Al-Munaifi finalized an auction contract recently , granting Al-Ghunaim Trading Company Limited the right to operate The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf brand in the Ministries Complex.

Sabah Khalid Saleh Al-Ghunaim represented the company.

The contact is for the supply of premium hot and cold beverages in accordance with international standards, with a projected revenue of KD1,254,000 for the ministry.



The contract being signed.

Charities go hi-tech, streamline function

Kuwait humanitarian stature to dig in

KUWAIT CITY, June 20, (KUNA): Kuwaiti charitable work continues to re-define humanitarian giving by combining advanced technology with sustainable community development amid growing global humanitarian and development challenges.

This integration between smart digital management and effective development initiatives reinforces Kuwait’s position as a global humanitarian center that not only provides relief assistance but also contributes to creating better and more sustainable futures for vulnerable communities.



Foundation stone-laying ceremony of a village in progress in Hodeidah, Yemen. KUNA photo

Kuwait’s pioneering vision in charitable work was reflected in the integration of a forward-looking technological track focused on digital governance and a development-oriented track aimed at rebuilding communities and restoring stability for displaced families.

Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) announced the completion of an advanced scientific and technological project in cooperation with Direct Aid Society, reflecting Kuwait’s commitment to employing innovation and research in humanitarian service.

KISR said the project, titled “Development of a Smart Web-Based Decision Support System for Charitable Organizations in Kuwait,” seeks to establish a comprehensive digital platform utilizing geographic information systems, web applications and artificial intelligence technologies.

According to the institute, the platform will significantly support decision-makers within charitable organizations by enhancing planning efficiency and improving humanitarian resource management through scientific methodologies and accurate data-driven approaches.

The project included the develop-

ment of a spatial decision-support system capable of integrating and managing project and facility information through a linked geographical database that provides updated and comprehensive operational insights.

The institute added that smart field data collection tools were developed for mobile devices, enabling field teams to document locations and projects while directly uploading information from operational sites in real time.

Officials explained that the system creates an integrated information environment connecting field operations with decision-making centers, improving speed, accuracy and efficiency while strengthening transparency and accountability across humanitarian programs and activities.

The project also incorporated an advanced electronic dashboard for project management and monitoring, allowing users to visualize and analyze data while integrating machine-learning models to predict projects with the greatest community impact.

Project supervisors described the achievement as an important milestone in Kuwait’s charitable digital transformation journey, emphasizing

PADA decision overruled

Court absolves married man of harassing woman in his vehicle

KUWAIT CITY, June 20: The Court of Cassation upheld the ruling of the Court of Appeals, which refrained from sentencing a married man convicted of harassing a woman and pursuing her in his vehicle in a manner that endangered other road users, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

According to the case file, the woman was on her way to pick up her son from school when the defendant approached her and made advances, touching her lower back without her consent. When she left in her vehicle, the defendant followed her, attempting to stop her and obtain her phone number. He drove recklessly, mounting the sidewalk and driving against traffic flow, causing traffic disruption and an accident that caused property damage.

The Public Prosecution charged the defendant with molestation and committing an indecent act in public, in addition to several traffic violations, including reckless driving, endangering others, causing a traffic accident, ob-

structing traffic, driving with only one license plate, driving on the sidewalk, and driving against the flow of traffic.

The Court of First Instance sentenced the defendant to five years in prison with hard labor for the rape and indecent act charges, in addition to fining him for the traffic violations and suspending his driving license for one year, which will start after serving his prison sentence.

However, the Court of Appeals amended the ruling and suspended the implementation of the sentence for the first two charges in exchange for KD2,000 fine and a pledge to maintain good conduct for two years.

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PADA order overruled: The Court of First Instance overturned the decision of the Public Authority for Disability Affairs (PADA) to refrain from appointing a citizen as the caregiver for his sister, who has a hearing impairment, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This decision was taken after the

revocation of Kuwaiti citizenship of the previous caregiver. The court also ruled on the consequences of the decision and ordered the authority to pay the legal costs.

Attorney Ayed Al-Rashidi, lawyer for the plaintiff, said his client asked the authority to appoint him as his sister’s caregiver, replacing her husband, whose Kuwaiti citizenship was revoked. However, the authority refused to take the necessary steps or decide on the request, prompting him to resort to the administrative court.

Al-Rashidi revealed that the court, in its reasoning, affirmed that PADA is the entity in charge of protecting the rights of persons with disabilities. “It was obligated to assess the request and verify the legal conditions and regulations for appointing the plaintiff as a caregiver, instead of refraining from taking any action. The court concluded that the failure of PADA to study the request and issue a decision is contrary to the law, hence, the need to annul its decision,” he added.

Police detain Kuwaiti driving at 186 kph

By Munif Naif
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 20: Jahra traffic officers arrested a citizen for driving at 186 kilometers per hour on Jahra Road.

A security official stated that this is part of the ongoing campaign of the General Traffic Department to nab those violating traffic regulations. He said the citizen was referred to the traffic police station and his car was impounded.

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Juveniles targeted: Despite assurances that the intensified traffic campaigns reduced the number of juveniles arrested for driving without a license, the General Traffic Department arrested one juvenile committing the

same violation in its recent 24-hour campaign.

According to a security source, the intensive campaigns targeting juveniles driving without a license reduced the number of violators to just one in the latest campaign – a citizen who was referred to the juvenile detention center.

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Rules for tow-trucks: The General Traffic Department issued a directive for motorists to fully comply with towing regulations, such as maintaining maximum speed of 80 kilometers per hour, staying on the right side of the road, equipping vehicles with safety gear and reflective tape, and ensuring that all lights are operational.

The department also stressed that

towing multiple marine vessels using a single vehicle is strictly prohibited.

Article 207 of the executive regulations stipulates that violating this rule will lead to impoundment of both the vehicle and the towing trailer for 60 days.

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12 wanted men caught: The General Traffic Department continues its nationwide law enforcement campaigns, the most recent of which led to the arrest of 12 individuals wanted by law and were reported absconding.

A security official disclosed that during the campaign, the traffic officers arrested these 12 individuals in various areas. He added all those arrested were referred to the concerned authorities for legal action.

Indonesia, Kuwait to enhance energy ties amid uncertainties

KUALA LUMPUR, June 20, (KUNA): Indonesian Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs Airlangga Hartarto and Kuwait’s Ambassador to Indonesia Khaled Al-Yassin affirmed their countries’ commitment to enhancing cooperation in energy security to address global economic and geopolitical uncertainties.

Hartarto said in a statement that the affirmation came during his meeting on Saturday with Al-Yassin in Jakarta, noting that diplomatic relations between Indonesia and Kuwait are built on a solid foundation that serves as an important catalyst for expanding bilateral cooperation, particularly in the field of energy security.

He explained that energy cooperation between the two countries encompasses several strategic projects, including the participation of Kuwait Foreign Petroleum Exploration Company (KUFPEC) in eight oil and gas exploration projects across Indonesia.

The minister then added that the exploration projects are located on Buton Island in Southeast Sulawesi, the Natuna Sea and eastern Kalimantan.

He noted that a consortium led by KUFPEC Indonesia B.V. is also conducting oil and gas exploration activities in the Anambas Islands of the Riau Islands province.



Khaled Al-Yassin

Hartarto said the two countries had formalized their energy cooperation through a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on oil, gas and petrochemicals signed in 2019.

Beyond the energy sector, Indonesia and Kuwait are linked by several MoUs, including an agreement on the establishment of a joint committee, as well as economic, technical and trade cooperation agreements signed in 2007, he added.

The statement quoted Kuwaiti Ambassador Al-Yassin as saying that the various agreements signed between Kuwait and Indonesia reflect the strategic importance Indonesia holds for Kuwait, particularly in the economic sphere.

According to the statement, both countries agreed to accelerate negotiations on a free trade agreement between Indonesia and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), with the aim of concluding talks by the end of 2026.

Bilateral economic relations recorded notable growth in 2025, with total trade increasing by 10.69 percent to USD 606 million, compared with USD 547.5 million in 2024.

Kuwaiti investments in Indonesia also rose from USD 290,000 in 2024 to USD 1.2 million in 2025, driven primarily by the oil and gas sector.

Kuwait slams settlers’ attacks in W. Bank

KUWAIT CITY, June 20, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry recently vehemently condemned increasing attacks by extremist settlers against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank, including recent attacks on the Grand Mosque in Jiljilya and Al-Farouq Mosque in Mazari’ Al-Nubani, north of Ramallah.

In a press statement, the ministry underlined the State of Kuwait’s emphatic rejection of these attacks and repeated violations of places of worship, holding Israeli occupation authorities

responsible for these continued practices, the consequent undermining of peace prospects and destabilization of security and stability.

The ministry called on the international community to take on its due responsibilities by halting such violations, bringing the perpetrators to accountability and protecting the Palestinian people.

It also restated Kuwait’s unwavering support for the Palestinian people’s legitimate rights, mainly an independent state on the June 1967

border with East Jerusalem being its capital.

Meanwhile , the State of Kuwait on Saturday condemned the terrorist attack that targeted Niamey International Airport in Niger, which resulted in several deaths and injuries.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs reaffirmed in a statement Kuwait’s firm rejection of all forms of violence and terrorism, and expressed its sincere condolences to Niger’s government and people, wishing a speedy recovery for the injured.

Other Voices

The most famous secret societies

By Ahmad alsarraaf

PEACE Lovejoy published a serious study focusing on the role of secret societies in shaping history. Some protected certain beliefs, others challenged political authority, and all shared rituals of initiation and secrecy.

1. The Eleusinian Mysteries - The most famous secret society in ancient Greece, founded 3,600 years ago. Its rituals included training members to overcome the fear of death through profound spiritual experiences. Among its prominent figures were Plato, Socrates, and Cicero.

2. The Pythagorean Brotherhood - Founded 2,600 years ago by the scholar Pythagoras, it was a philosophical school and a secret society whose members lived communally, shared property, and adhered to strict rules such as prolonged silence. Its core belief was that numbers are the foundation of everything and that mathematics is not merely a tool but a key to understanding the universe. This idea was linked to beliefs in the immortality and reincarnation of the soul. However, its pursuit of influence provoked reactions and had a lasting impact on Western thought.

3. The Assassins were a secretive Shiite sect active in the 12th and 13th centuries CE. They were known for political assassinations and their strong loyalty to their leader, Hassan-i Sabbah, based in his mountain stronghold in Iran. It is said that the English word “assassin,” meaning “political killer,” originates from “Hashashin.” Various stories circulate about their methods, objectives, and alleged connections between religious devotion and drug use. However, many of these claims are difficult to verify.

4. The Knights Templar were a Christian military order founded in 1118 CE, tasked with protecting Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land. While not a secret society in the strict sense, they maintained a hierarchical structure and internal rituals, and membership requirements were strict. Over time, they gained control of vast territories, lent money to kings, and were accountable only to the Pope. The secrecy surrounding their activities and growing influence led the King of France to suppress them in 1312 CE.

5. Freemasonry - Founded in 1717 in London, it became one of the most widespread and influential secret societies in history. It had a lodge structure connecting members worldwide and spread to



alsarraaf

America. It attracted prominent political leaders and influential figures.

6. The Sons of Liberty - Founded in 1765 in response to British taxation, it was a secret political organization that contributed to pushing the American colonies toward revolution. Originating in Boston, it quickly spread throughout the colonies. Operating through local cells, it organized protests, intimidation campaigns, and acts of resistance against the British. Its most famous act was the 1773 Boston Tea Party, during which 342 chests of British tea were dumped in defiance of taxation. They opposed the Stamp Act and other legislation, sometimes using violence to enforce boycotts and punish loyalists. Membership was selective.

7. The Bavarian Illuminati was founded in 1776 as a secret society but did not last long. However, it was highly influential, rooted in Enlightenment ideals and opposed to the oppression of the Church and the State. It sought to promote rationality, moral reform, and political change through a tightly organized hierarchical network. The great philosopher Goethe was among its members. The Bavarian government later banned it, and its leaders were arrested.

8. The Carbonari were active in early 19th-century Italy. They were a network of secret societies that advocated liberal reform and national independence. Their name, meaning “coal burners,” refers to members’ use of coded language and ritual symbols. They organized revolutions, most notably the Naples uprising of 1820, and helped lay the groundwork for the Italian unification movement.

9. The Skull and Bones Society was founded at Yale University in 1832. It is one of the most famous and exclusive university secret societies in America. Each year, a small group of outstanding new graduates is selected to join its network. Its rituals and practices are still kept as a secret from outsiders. Its influence was exemplified by its prominent members, such as Taft, Bush Sr., Bush Jr., as well as members of Congress, judges, financiers, and intelligence officials. It has sometimes served as a pathway to high political office.

10. The Bohemian Club was founded in San Francisco in 1872 as a gathering place for writers, artists, and journalists. It later evolved into a meeting place for wealthy and influential figures who convene at its annual summer retreat in Bohemian Grove, California. The club states that its activities are largely for entertainment, but the secrecy surrounding them has long fueled suspicion.

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email: a.alsarraaf@alqabas.com.kw

Reverse osmosis project to cost KD114 mln

MEWRE gets SAB nod for desalination plant

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 20: The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy has obtained conditional approval from the State Audit Bureau (SAB) for the contract to supply, install, operate and maintain the Doha seawater desalination plant using reverse osmosis to increase the alkalinity of the produced water (Phase Two) at a cost of KD114.28 million.

The ministry referred the contract to SAB on May 12 for review, pre-audit and audit procedures, and to obtain its opinion on the project.

The bureau was expected to approve the contract, provided no objections are raised that require the response of the ministry.

The ministry also obtained approval from the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) to award the contract to the lowest bidder that met the technical requirements and specifications.

Based on this, the ministry referred the contract to SAB to ensure the integrity of the procedures before contracting. This underscores the commitment of the ministry to fully comply with the procedures and regulations governing government tenders --

from the initial tendering process to contracting and implementation commencement.

This is one of development projects included in the plan of the ministry to increase freshwater production in order to meet the rising water demand due to population growth and the expansion of new residential and industrial cities.

Through this project, potable water will be produced for all customers, especially in the areas surrounding the station, thereby, increasing the potable water supply by an average of 60 million imperial gallons per day without the need to mix it with groundwater.

When tension becomes vital for regime survival

“IN politics, as in history, wars and conflicts are not always the result of miscalculations or misjudgments of interests,” former Bahraini Minister of Labour and Social Development **Abdulnabi Al-Shoula** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“There are regimes that make perpetual tension part of their survival mechanism and treat external crises as a means of postponing internal challenges. Anyone observing the behavior of the Iranian regime over the past decades, as well as what is being witnessed today in renewed military confrontations, will notice its stalling tactics in negotiations with the United States and its continued policies of aggression, escalation, and blackmail against neighboring countries.

“The observer knows that the issue goes beyond mere political differences or temporary regional disputes.

“The image has become clear - the Iranian regime has no intention or desire of ending the state of tension in the region, a state that it created since coming to power in Iran in 1979.

“This regime finds itself today facing internal and external challenges. It is grappling with an economy burdened by sanctions, declining living standards, inflation, and growing popular demands for improved economic conditions.

“A general sense of exhaustion pervades Iran, affecting wide segments of society after years of wars, confrontations, and international isolation.

“In such circumstances, the continuation of external tensions becomes a useful political tool for any regime facing increasing internal pressures. Creating an external enemy, or invoking the prospect of imminent threats, helps to unify the domestic front behind the ruling power and shifts national priorities towards confronting external challenges rather than focusing on holding the government accountable or demanding reform and change.

“This is not a new phenomenon in political history. The world has witnessed several instances of regimes that have exploited external conflicts to justify internal restrictions and postpone national demands.

“In the Arab world, we have seen for decades regimes that adopted the slogan “No voice should be raised above the voice of the battle,” using the continuation of the Arab-Israeli conflict as a justification for suspending political reforms, restricting freedoms, and postponing popular demands related to development and justice.

“If this occurred in previous Arab experiences, what we are witnessing today in Iran appears closer to a contemporary version of the same logic.

“The greater the pressure, the more intense the rhetoric becomes. Mobilization intensifies, regional confrontations escalate, and the chances of reaching stable and lasting settlements diminish.

“The 40-day war revealed the magnitude of the challenges facing the Iranian regime. Its effects were not limited to the military sphere but extended to various aspects of life - economic, political, and social. The war exposed the limits of the power the regime had sought to build over decades and revealed the fragility of many of the assumptions on which its regional strategy was based.

“More importantly, the war, and the events preceding it, led to a reduction in Iran’s regional influence and weakened several of the tools and proxies that Tehran had relied on for years to expand its influence beyond its borders.

“The economic and human cost of these policies has become increasingly clear to Iranians, who see their country’s resources and wealth squandered and depleted on foreign projects that have not improved their standard of living or secured their future.

“The final outcome of the “export of the revolution” project appears entirely different from what its architects envisioned decades ago. Instead of achieving prosperity and development and enhancing the state’s standing, Iran has found itself facing prolonged sanctions. The regime faces ongoing tensions, strained relations with its neighbors and other influential countries, huge economic and political burdens, and a decline in trust between the government and society.

“Perhaps what concerns the regime most today is its realization that Iranian citizens have become more aware of the cost and consequences of these policies.

“People may endure hardship for extended periods when they are convinced of its purpose, but they begin to ask difficult questions when losses accumulate and tangible gains fail to materialize.

“For the regime, the continuation of tension appears to be a more convenient option than genuine peace, which would open the door to long-



Al-Shoula

postponed questions and refocus attention on issues of the economy, development, unemployment, and governance.

“The continuation of crises provides the regime with additional time and postpones the need to address local demands.

“For the Arabian Gulf states, the most important lesson is the necessity of dealing realistically with these realities. A sincere desire for peace and stability must be a constant and unwavering objective.

“However, this desire must be accompanied by vigilance, caution, and constant readiness.

“Past experiences have proven that some regimes do not view de-escalation as a viable option. It is not seen as an opportunity to build trust, but rather as a temporary respite during which they regroup in preparation for a new round of escalation.

“The people of the Gulf, like the people of the entire region, deserve to live in an environment of security, stability, development, and cooperation. Achieving this goal remains contingent upon genuine political will that abandons the logic of expansion, blackmail, and perpetual conflict, and recognizes that the future of nations is not built on open-ended crises, but on peace, development, and good neighborliness.

“Until this is achieved, it will be wise to hold on to the hope of peace and to prepare to deal with a regional reality still governed by complex calculations that, for some regimes, make tension a necessity for survival.”

Also:

“Most people follow social media, focusing on food and funny videos, while neglecting serious news and events that affect their lives, livelihoods, and the fate of their countries,” columnist **Ahmad Al-Dawas** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“If you ask someone, they will tell you, “I don’t like politics.” The common understanding of the word “politics” is the state of the country and its relations with other nations.

“The Houthis in Yemen are a rebel group that gained strength during the so-called Arab Spring and overthrew the legitimate government. The Houthis were based in northern Yemen and felt marginalized and neglected by the government. As Yemen’s situation deteriorated, Iran provided the Houthis with weapons.

“Wouldn’t it have been better for this group to negotiate peacefully with the government and avoid bloodshed? The Houthis harmed their country, and even more so by attacking ships in the Red Sea, disrupting their passage through the Suez Canal and costing Egypt approximately \$800 million per month.

“Insurance costs for goods increased, leading to higher prices, and people everywhere suffered. Months ago, a Houthi drone struck Israel, prompting Israel to retaliate by bombing oil storage tanks at the port of Hodeidah, causing immense losses for Yemen. People should have followed these events closely, as they directly affected their fate and the future of their children.

“Russian President Vladimir Putin ignited a war by invading eastern Ukraine. The Ukrainian people had been living in peace and security, but Putin became concerned about NATO’s influence because of its proximity to Russia’s western borders. He launched the war against Ukraine to prevent NATO forces from moving closer to Russia and to use Ukraine as a buffer zone between Russia and the West. This resulted in casualties and destruction on both sides, while other European countries joined NATO, making the alliance even stronger. Both Ukrainians and Russians continue to suffer the consequences of this war.

“Taiwan, a stable and economically advanced island, is constantly threatened by China with invasion, leaving its inhabitants feeling insecure.

“The Iranian people struggle with their living conditions because of Tehran’s extensive spending on its interventions in Syria and Yemen, as well as its support for Hezbollah and Hamas. Iran would have been better served by focusing on its internal affairs.

“The agreement between the United States and Iran is not a peace treaty but a memorandum of understanding that remains valid for 60 days. It extends the ceasefire and allows shipping to pass through the Strait of Hormuz.

“The memorandum of understanding did not address Iran’s highly enriched uranium, its missile program, or its regional proxies.

“Iran did not publicly commit to abandoning its enriched uranium program. Israel was excluded from the negotiations and launched strikes on Beirut’s southern suburbs on the same day the negotiations were nearing their conclusion.”

— **Compiled by Simi K.Kutty**

Response to mis-characterizations concerning Mustafa Kemal Atatürk

KUWAIT CITY, June 20: The piece published in both Arab Times & Al Seyassah on June 18, 2026, by Editor in Chief Ahmed Al Jarallah, under the title “The cunning Al-Mughira Ibn Shu’ba and the Bahraini people’s plot against him” contains delusional accusations against Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish Republic.

The legacy of Atatürk stands firmly on its own historical merits. He is a universally respected statesman whose 100th birthday in 1981 was designated by the United Nations and UNESCO as the Atatürk Centennial worldwide, officially recognizing him as a pioneer in fostering peace, international understanding, and human rights. Any objective reader of history is well-acquainted with his profound contributions to his nation and international peace and diplomacy.

Characterizing Atatürk as a ruler defined by animosity toward Islam contradicts the factual reality of his reforms. Far from marginalizing faith, his administration structured and supported it.

In 1924, Atatürk established the Presidency of Religious Affairs (Diyanet). Rather than forcing Islam into the shadows, the



Tuba Nur Sonmez

state took on the responsibility of funding mosques, paying the salaries of imams, and ensuring that religious services were accessible across the nation.

Atatürk did not close mosques. He dismantled institutions that he viewed as obstacles to the intellectual and social liberation of the Turkish people. He envisioned a society that looked forward to scientific advancement rather than backward toward fatalism. Atatürk himself addressed this directly in his famous 1923 Balıkesir speech, stating: “Our religion is the most reasonable and natural religion ... For a religion to be natural, it must agree with reason, science, knowledge, and logic.” He did not see Islam as inherently backward; he saw the stagnation of religious thought as the enemy.

Atatürk commissioned and funded the first comprehensive Turkish translation and commentary of the Holy Qur’an, alongside translations of the Hadiths. He wanted an enlightened populace that could read their holy text in their native tongue, comprehend their worship intellectually, and practice their faith out of genuine conviction rather than blind obedience.

Atatürk’s reforms did not destroy Islam; they modernized its place within a contemporary society. He left behind a republic where citizens could be fiercely patriotic, intellectually free, scientifically advanced, and securely grounded in their faith – all at the same time.

Objective documentation of Atatürk’s

life, his visionary reforms, and the global accolades he received are extensively preserved in historical archives. Presenting a historical narrative so detached from these documented realities misleads the public.

It is also necessary to note certain factual inaccuracies. Mehmet I (Çelebi Mehmet) is widely regarded as the second founder of the Ottoman State, rather than Murat IV. Murad IV’s reign represented a deliberate moment of state re-consolidation, through which the Ottoman polity regained internal coherence and a stabilizing presence in its surrounding environment. A departure from clichés and the mumpsimus of rigid in favor of sound scholarship may prove instructive.

On the other hand, a brief review of the archives has revealed that, in an article published some six years ago, the author advanced views that stand in direct contradiction to those expressed in the present piece. In this regard, the author is invited to adopt a more consistent approach, rather than relying on arguments that appear detached from factual and historical foundations and conveyed in a confrontational tone.

In the spirit of journalistic objectivity and accurate reporting, I kindly request the publication of this letter to ensure your readers are presented with a balanced and factually accurate perspective.

Yours sincerely,
Tuba Nur Sönmez
Ambassador of the Republic of Türkiye

Jail, fine upheld for cheats

Kuwaitis, Bedoun brothers in exam paper leakage

KUWAIT CITY, June 20: The Court of Cassation, presided over by Judge Saleh Al-Murshid, upheld a five-year prison sentence with hard labor for two Bedoun brothers, along with a Kuwaiti citizen and a Kuwaiti woman, and imposed a fine of KD 42,000, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The sentences were issued on charges of selling and leaking the 2024 high school graduation exams through online groups for KD 50 per student.

The investigation led to the arrest of the defendants in a sting operation conducted by the General Directorate of Criminal Investigation.

The court also upheld a one-year suspended prison sentence for a female teacher, requiring her to maintain good conduct for three years.

□ □ □

17 held in drug cases: The Drug Control General Department (DCGD) apprehended 17 individuals in separate cases, including

citizens and individuals of various nationalities, for possession of different quantities of drugs, intoxicants, and alcohol for trafficking and personal use, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In an official statement, the Ministry of Interior explained that the operations also led to the discovery of equipment used for preparing and packaging narcotics, in addition to sums of money suspected to be proceeds from drug trafficking.

The seized items included the following:

- Approximately 1.5 kilograms of synthetic cannabinoids “Chemical”, and five sheets of the same substance
- 250 grams of Lyrica powder
- 465 grams of methamphetamine (crystal meth)
- 430 grams of hashish
- 253 grams of cocaine
- 30 grams of marijuana
- 20 grams of psychedelic mushrooms
- 4,860 Lyrica capsules
- 83 tablets and pills of various psychotropic substances
- 152 bottles of liquor
- 50 milliliters of narcotic oil

- 8 precision scales
- 7 rounds of ammunition
- KD 950 in cash suspected to be proceeds from drug trafficking.

The ministry revealed that the suspects were referred with the seized items to the relevant authorities for necessary legal action.

□ □ □

Drug trafficker arrested: The Morality Police referred a Bedoun resident to the Drug Control General Department (DCGD) on charges of drug trafficking, and possession of a pistol, flashlight, sword, and dagger, along with quantities of hashish and Lyrica pills, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to a security source, the case began with the arrest of a woman in possession of narcotics. During questioning, she confessed that the individual had supplied her with the drugs. The suspect’s location was identified in Abu Futaira, where he was apprehended as he left his home. A search of his vehicle yielded the aforementioned items.

The suspect will be re-interrogated by DCGD officers to determine how he obtained the drugs.

‘Bedoun’ commits 10 robberies in cop guise

KUWAIT CITY, June 20: Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh Criminal Investigation Department closed 10 robbery cases involving an individual impersonating police officers following the arrest of a Bedoun resident, reports Al-Anba daily.

It was revealed that the vehicle used by the suspect in his crimes had been reported stolen.

According to a security source, the cases closed recently included seven committed in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh and three in Khaitan . Several victims identified the suspect in a legal lineup . The suspect likely committed a larger number of these crimes, as not all victims reported him for various reasons.

Two residents had filed reports against a man wearing traditional Kuwaiti dress and driving a black SUV. He impersonated a police officer, stopped them, and stole their money and mobile phones. The suspect was found in possession of drugs and drug paraphernalia.

11 citations issued in advt permit violation

KUWAIT CITY, June 20: The Public Relations Department at Kuwait Municipality announced the continuation of field campaigns by inspection teams affiliated with the Audit and Municipal Services Follow-up Departments in various governorates, aimed at ensuring compliance with health licenses for commercial shops and advertising permits, and taking legal action against violators , reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The department explained that the fourth field campaign carried out by the inspection team in Hawally Governorate included inspection tours of several locations and areas where violations were recorded . It resulted in the issuance of 11 citations in Jabriya and Salmiya for violations ranging from placing advertisements without a permit, using unlicensed advertisements, and failing to renew advertisement licenses.

It confirmed that these campaigns are part of an ongoing inspection plan aimed at strengthening compliance with municipal regulations and requirements and maintaining the civilized appearance of various areas.

The department added that field campaigns will continue in the coming weeks in all governorates according to a time schedule prepared by the Public Relations Department in coordination with relevant departments, to ensure follow-up on violations and take necessary action against offenders.

134 real estate contracts worth KD106 mn in week

KUWAIT CITY, June 20: Statistics released by the Real Estate Registration and Documentation Department at the Ministry of Justice recently showed that 134 real estate contracts were traded during the week of June 7–11, with a total value of approximately KD 106 million (around US\$439.8 million), reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The statistics, which was published on the ministry’s website, highlighted that private property contracts topped the list with 97 contracts valued at KD 80 million, followed by investment property contracts with 31 contracts valued at KD 16.5 million. Commercial property contracts numbered three, valued at KD 7 million, in addition to one contract for a coastal strip valued at KD 1.6 million.

The statistics further showed that nine private property contracts and one investment contract were registered in the Capital Governorate, while 13 private and 12 investment contracts were registered in Hawally Governorate.

Eight private property contracts, one investment contract, and two commercial contracts were registered in Farwaniya Governorate.

Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate saw 12 private property contracts and two investment contracts traded.

Ahmadi Governorate recorded 45 private property contracts and 15 investment contracts, in addition to one commercial and one craft contract.

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National songs ... living legacy linking generations to Kuwait's identity

KUWAIT CITY, June 20, (KUNA): Kuwaiti national songs preserve history and unity across generations, their powerful words and melodies inspire patriotism, collective pride, and belonging, making them an enduring form of cultural expression.

Whether played during official ceremonies or national celebrations, they deepen citizens' loyalty while anchoring Kuwait's youth to their cultural heritage.

Interviews by KUNA with media, academic, and artistic figures underscore the cultural weight of Kuwaiti national songs, beyond their musical value, these songs serve as historical archives that safeguard the symbols and traditions of national identity.

Through digital platforms, these national songs now reach vastly wider audiences, expanding their influence while keeping their profound emotional impact alive.

Director General of the Joint Program Production Institution for the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCCJPPI) Sheikh Mubarak Fahad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah highlighted national songs as vital cultural means that boost loyalty and shared Gulf identity.

He said the GCCJPPI has produced songs for GCC summits and national events, using creative storytelling



Sheikh Mubarak

to promote regional unity and cultural heritage.

The institution's songs have gained millions of views digitally, proving their ability to connect with all areas of society, he added.

Assistant Secretary-General for Arts at the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) Musaad Al-Zamel described national art as a vital medium for raising awareness and strengthening ties to the country.

He noted that NCCAL in the recent years produced national works inspired by Kuwaiti heritage, citing the operetta House and Sea (Bait Wa Bahr), written by poet Dr. Khalaf Al-Khaldi, debuted at the 25th Kuwait Theatre Festival.

To engage digital audiences, Al-Zamel noted that NCCAL produced short social media works, such as adaptations of the traditional Kuwaiti Ardha, blending heritage lyrics with a contemporary style.

Director General of Radio at the Ministry of Information, Dr. Yousef Al-Surai'a highlighted national songs as one of the station's most significant cultural legacies since its inception.

He emphasized radio's historical role in fostering talent and delivering timeless national songs that live on across generations.

Al-Surai'a highlighted the 1958 creation of Kuwait Radio's orchestra as a historic turning point that transformed the station into a hub for both artistic creativity and local awareness.

He praised Kuwait's pioneering role in producing operettas that resonated across the Gulf and Arab worlds, pointing to the celebrated work Memoirs of a Sailor (Muthakarat Bahar) as a landmark in the history of Arab patriotic music.

Director General of Television at the Ministry of Information Bader Al-Dai said the ministry continues to support poets, composers and performers as part of ongoing efforts to strengthen the presence of national songs on the cultural scene.

He reaffirmed the ministry's commitment to patriotic music, commissioning new operettas for major occasions and inspiring local talent to honor the country's progress.

Professor of Anthropology at Kuwait University Dr. Maha Al-Sijari emphasized that these songs build social solidarity and bring all parts of society together in times of celebration or crisis.

She added that national songs bridge generational gaps, passing down Kuwait's historic way of life through authentic cultural symbols and traditional lyrics.

Poet Bader Bourseli remarked that while a love song speaks for the individual, a national song carries the heartbeat of an entire country, transforming personal emotion into a collective voice of hope and pride.

He stressed that authenticity remains the most important factor in ensuring a patriotic song resonates with audiences and endures in public memory.

For Bourseli, Kuwait's history, heritage, and sacrifices of its people form the heartbeat of its national music, a truth embodied in his legendary anthems (Watan Al-Nahar), (Habibi Ya Watan), and (Jar Al-Nujoom).

In a related context, Poet Ahmad Al-Sharqawi noted that national songs are not tied to specific events but are timeless expressions of genuine patriotism.

He stressed that his work centers on national unity, political loyalty, and the country's security, adding that these songs often become enduring slogans repeated during defining moments in Kuwaiti history.

Composer Abdullah Al-Qaoud believes that a true national melody begins with a sincere emotional bond to the country, it can begin with either a powerful poem or a fleeting musical concept that grows into a finished composition.

He blends traditional Kuwaiti rhythms with orchestral arrangements to create modern, powerful anthems that foster national pride and resonate deeply with the public.

Reflecting on his most celebrated patriotic songs, he emphasized that the profound emotional feedback proves these anthems live on deeply within the nation's soul.

More than just melodies, national songs are a vital form of soft power, preserving collective memories and honor identity, passing a profound sense of pride from one generation to the next.

KNG seeks to hire Kuwaiti military musicians

KUWAIT CITY, June 20: The General Directorate of the Kuwait National Guard (KNG) announced the opening of applications for a new intake of volunteers in the field of military musicians, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

It specified several general application requirements, most notably that applicants must be Kuwaiti citizens, have completed at least grade 5, be at least 158 centimeters tall, and be between 18 and 26 years old. Applicants must also have good conduct and behavior and pass a personal interview and medical examination.

The requirements further state that applicants must not have been previously dismissed from any government entity by a final disciplinary ruling or decision, and must not have been convicted of a felony or a crime involving moral turpitude or dishonesty, unless they have been legally rehabilitated.

Those with an eleventh-grade education or lower will be granted the rank of National Guard after completing a one-month military course and a two-month specialized music

course. Those holding a music diploma from the Higher Institute of Musical Arts will be granted the rank of Sergeant after completing a one-month military course and a four-month specialized music course.

High school diploma holders will be granted the rank of Sergeant under the same conditions.

Required documents include the original Kuwaiti citizenship certificate, original birth certificate, original valid civil ID card, original academic certificate authenticated and certified by the relevant authorities, original transcript, and several other official documents related to marital and employment status.

Applications will be accepted from June 21 to July 2 at the Brigadier General Faisal Al-Juraid Building for Volunteer Reception in Rig-gae from 2:30 pm to 6:30 pm.

The Association of Alumni of American Cultural Exchange Programs in Kuwait announced the formation of its Board of Directors for the

2026-2028 term , reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The newly elected board is headed by Nadera Al-Ahmad, while Hamad Al-Saad serves as vice president and Dr. Mariam Al-Azmi as secretary. Hamad Al-Kulaib was appointed operations manager and Ali Al-Sultan as media manager.

The association was established in December 2019 with the support and under supervision of the American Embassy in Kuwait.

The association aims to empower its members, expand communication and cooperation among alumni, and create opportunities for professional development and community service. Through these efforts, it intends to strengthen cultural ties and mutual understanding between Kuwait and the United States.

It brings together a renowned network of participants in American cultural and educational exchange programs. Many of its members currently occupy influential leadership positions in the public and private sectors, enabling them to actively contribute to community development and international cooperation.



KUNA photo
Kuwait's Ambassador to Austria Talal Al-Fassam meets Austrian Minister for Innovation, Mobility and Infrastructure Peter Hanke.

Kuwait, Austria seek to boost trade, development relations

KUWAIT CITY, June 20, (KUNA): Kuwait's Ambassador to Austria Talal Al-Fassam met Austrian Minister for Innovation, Mobility and Infrastructure Peter Hanke on Friday to discuss ways of enhancing bilateral relations, particularly in economic and development fields.

In a statement received by KUNA, Kuwait's Embassy in Austria said Al-Fassam highlighted the deep-rooted ties between the two countries and their shared

commitment to expanding cooperation.

He also reviewed major development projects under Kuwait Vision 2035 and opportunities for cooperation with Austria in innovation, infrastructure, sustainable mobility and smart cities.

For his part, Hanke expressed his aspiration to strengthen cooperation with Kuwait, praising the distinguished bilateral relations and stressing the importance of continued engagement in areas of mutual interest.

Women's key role in 'peace building'

'Protection in wars vital'

NEW YORK, June 20, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait underlined Friday that protecting women against all forms of violence, including those linked to conflicts, ensuring accountability and respecting international law and international humanitarian law, mark a core pillar of peace and stability.

The remarks were made by Second Secretary of Kuwait's Permanent Mission to the UN Wafeeqa Al-Mulla during a UN Security Council (UNSC) debate on women, peace and security.

She underlined that sustainable peace could not be achieved or maintained unless women completely participate in all phases of conflict resolution, peace-building, recovery and reconstruction.

Al-Mulla considered that women are a key partner of finding solutions, making peace and promoting social stability.

She added that this debate came at a time when the world is witnessing a worrying surge in armed conflicts and humanitarian crises as well as their serious reflections on civilians, especially women, calling for abidance by principles enshrined in UNSC Resolution No. 1325 and resolutions pertinent to women, peace and security.

She noted that experience has shown that women's involvement directly



KUNA photo
Wafeeqa Al-Mulla

contributes to consolidating the prospects for the success and sustainability of peace efforts, warning that women's poor representation in peace processes and decision-making remains a challenge that necessitates serious international attention.

Regarding the occupied Palestinian territory, the Kuwaiti diplomat voiced the country's deep concern over women's catastrophic humanitarian conditions due to ongoing military operations, which have caused heavy casualties, widespread displacement, and the collapse of essential services.

She underlined Kuwait's belief that the most sustainable peace is the one in which rights are safeguarded, international law is respected, and women are granted the full opportunity to contribute to shaping the future of their societies.

New date later: official

UCCS meet put off ... no quorum

KUWAIT CITY, June 20: Director of the Union of Consumer Cooperative Societies (UCCS), Mariam Al-Awad, announced the postponement of the union's General Assembly, in line with instructions from the Ministry of Social Affairs, due to the lack of a quorum requiring the attendance of a majority of members, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Al-Awad confirmed UCCS' full commitment to all regulations and procedures governing the convening of general assemblies, indicating that a new meeting date will be set and announced later in accordance with ministry's instructions and applicable legal procedures.

She expressed her gratitude and appreciation to all members who were keen to attend and participate, praising their cooperation and interest in supporting the union's progress and cooperative work, and affirming that this engagement reflects a sense of responsibility and commitment to strengthening the role of the cooperative movement.

Al-Awad stressed that the union will continue to perform its duties and serve cooperative societies with full transparency and responsibility, while working to achieve broader participation in the next meeting to help complete the general assembly's work and achieve its objectives.



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Williams and 31St. in Kenner is flooded during Tropical Storm Arthur in New Orleans on June 18. (AP)

Tropical storm remnants drench Gulf states

The remnants of Tropical Storm Arthur battered parts of the southeastern United States with drenching rains and strong wind on Thursday, tearing through buildings, flooding homes and launching water rescues along the Gulf Coast.

Severe weather also pummeled parts of the Midwest, where a separate line of strong storms knocked down structures and left tens of thousands of residents without power.

Arthur was the first tropical storm of the season in the Atlantic basin, and although it quickly downgraded within a day of forming, the

lingering system created dangerous conditions in Louisiana and Mississippi. In one rural Louisiana parish, more than 2 feet of rain fell in 48 hours and most of that soaking came Thursday, said Donald Jones, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Lake Charles.

It flooded at least 200 homes in Avoyelles Parish, about 70 miles (113 kilometers) northwest of the state capital, Louisiana state Rep. Daryl Deshotel said.

"Even by this region's standards, that's catastrophic rain," Jones said.

Mississippi Gov. Tate Reeves said in a social media post Thursday night that a worker on a county road crew in the southwestern part of the state had been killed while helping with storm cleanup operations. The cause of the death was not disclosed.

Thirty homes below the Anchor Lake dam in southern Mississippi were being evacuated as a precaution due to concerns that rising waters could overwhelm the spillways and compromise the structure, Reeves said. Residents in the area were being encouraged to seek higher ground. (AP)

Republicans trying to defend their majorities

Friction between Trump, GOP senators growing before midterm elections

WASHINGTON, June 20, (AP): The relationship between President Donald Trump and Senate Republicans neared a breaking point this week as he upended their efforts to speedily confirm one of his own nominees and said he would not sign the renewal of a key surveillance law unless they agree to new terms.

Trump's overnight social media post Wednesday that he was delaying Jay Clayton's nomination to become national intelligence director, just hours before the US attorney's confirmation hearing, further strained relations between the Senate and White House that have been worsening for weeks. Later that day, some Republican senators who have been hesitant to challenge the president directly on the Iran war were blunt in their criticism of his deal to end it.

"This is the worst foreign policy blunder in decades," Sen. Bill Cassidy, R-La., said in a post on X.

The open tensions are an almost complete reversal from a year ago when Senate Republicans worked closely with Trump on a complicated effort to push through his massive package of spending and tax cuts.

At the time, criticism of the president was almost nonexistent among

Republicans on Capitol Hill, and they planned to highlight passage of that bill in the midterms. But as the November election draws closer and Republicans are trying to defend their majorities, Trump is instead needling Congress with his demands and reversals, driving several Republican senators to disparage his actions publicly for the first time.

"I think somebody's not dialing the president into the complexities of what he's done here," Sen. Thom Tillis, R-N.C., said Wednesday after Clayton's confirmation was postponed. "I mean, my God."

The slow unraveling of what once seemed like an airtight alliance between the executive and legislative branches in a Republican-led Washington extends to their policy priorities.

Trump appears to have lost interest in most of the GOP agenda and has become almost singularly focused on his voting legislation to require proof of citizenship, which has almost no chance of passing. At the same time, he has asked members of Congress to fund parts of his White House ballroom project, allow a temporary intelligence director that none of them like and cede their powers



US Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., leaves the chamber, at the Capitol in Washington on June 18. (AP)

on the Iran war.

The growing rift has brought much of the Senate's business to a halt and put Republicans who are up for reelection this year on the defensive. It has also put pressure on Senate Majority Leader John Thune, who has been up-front with Trump about what he can and cannot do in the Senate.

Trump has pressured Thune re-

US president unveils new Air Force One, a converted Qatari jet

JOINT BASE ANDREWS, Md., June 20, (AP): US President Donald Trump on Friday showed off the new Air Force One, a formerly Qatari-owned jumbo jet that has been converted into the official US presidential aircraft.

The new aircraft eschews the Kennedy-era robin's egg blue exterior of the old plane for a bolder look, with the underbelly of the plane painted navy blue with a red stripe above it. The plane's left side, where the president boards, features the presidential seal, while the tail of the aircraft has a massive American flag on it.

"This plane was transformed into a flying White House at a level of luxury that nobody has ever seen before," Trump said from inside the massive Joint Base Andrews hangar, as a couple hundred assembled Air Force personnel looked on. He spoke after stepping off the new plane in a dramatic flourish, as his signature tune "God Bless the USA" played.

He confirmed that he would be taking the new jet to the NATO summit in Ankara, Turkey, next month and indicated he would be returning to China "at some point," presum-



US President Donald Trump speaks after touring the newly designated Air Force One presidential aircraft at Joint Base Andrews, Md on June 19. (AP)

ably a reference to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit that China is hosting in November. His return from the Group of 7 summit in France this week was the last planned trip aboard the old Air Force One, he said.

"Now, when we land at airports in London and in Germany and different places, nobody tops this one, and that's the way we have to have it

for our country," Trump said, noting that the colors and the design were to "my taste, I will say."

He added that the new Air Force One will do a flyover during the July 4 celebrations next month.

The gift from Qatar is serving as a "bridge" aircraft to carry the president until the new planes ordered directly from Boeing arrive. That is currently slated for 2028.

Italy's top diplomat cancels US trip

Meloni slams Trump over photo claims

ROME, June 20, (AP): The Italian government closed ranks on Friday to slam US President Donald Trump over his claim that Premier Giorgia Meloni had "begged" for a photo with him during the recent G7 summit, a pushback that suggested America's longtime European ally had had enough of Trump's boasting and criticism.

Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani abruptly cancelled a planned trip to the United States this weekend, calling Trump's claims "serious and offensive" toward Meloni and all of Italy. The Foreign Ministry later announced that the business and scientific forum Tajani was to attend in Miami had also been called off.

Meloni for her part posted a video calling Trump's claims "completely fabricated" and expressing astonishment that he would invent such things about an ally.

"Italy and I do not beg," she said pointedly.

Trump had made the comments in an interview broadcast Friday on the La7 network. The La7 correspondent had asked Trump about Ukraine, but Trump raised Meloni and the conversation turned to their meeting during the just-concluded G7 meet-



US President Donald Trump, (left), speaks with French President Emmanuel Macron, (center), and Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni after a group photo of G7 leaders and invited nations during the G7 summit in Evian-les-Bains, France on June 16. (AP)

ing in Evian-les-Bains, France. Meloni and Trump were filmed speaking at several moments, including alone

on a small sofa.

According to La7, Trump said Meloni had "begged" him for a photo-op. Trump said he wasn't obliged to do it but that he felt sorry for her and agreed, La7 said. The broadcaster put a dubbed version of the conversation online, not the original English audio.

Trump's posturing underscored how his alliance with Meloni - long seen as one of his closest friends in Europe - has frayed over his war in Iran, his tariffs against Europe and his complaints when anyone disagrees with him.

He turned on Meloni in April after she refused to support his war in Iran and stood up for Pope Leo XIV when Trump lashed out at the pontiff.

But Meloni's strong response on Friday suggested she no longer fears Trump's verbal attacks - attacks that could actually play in her favor in a country where public opinion of the American president has chilled, said Lorenzo Castellani, a political scientist at Rome's Luiss Guido Carli University.

"In some ways this was a favor to Giorgia Meloni, in the sense that she was accused until a few months ago of being a sort of Trump's vassal in Europe," he said.



Emergency personnel work on a train on the tracks outside Bedford, England, after a train from Corby to London St. Pancras and another from Nottingham to London St. Pancras, collided on June 19. (AP)

1 killed, dozens injured in London train collision

Two trains collided north of London on Friday, killing a driver and seriously injuring dozens of people on board. A passenger described being thrown forward by the impact then seeing fellow travelers with broken bones and bloody injuries.

Both trains were traveling south to London St. Pancras station when they collided outside the town of Bedford around 5:15 p.m., according to information on rail tracking

websites. Emergency services deployed a number of resources to the scene including an air ambulance and hazardous incident team from the East of England Ambulance Service.

"We know that a number of people have been injured and one person has very sadly died," police said in a statement. "A major incident has been declared, and officers are continuing to respond at the scene along-

side colleagues from Bedfordshire Police and the local Fire and Rescue and Ambulance Services."

The East of England Ambulance Service later said that 11 people had very serious injuries, 22 were seriously injured and 56 had minor injuries. Eddie Dempsey, the general secretary of the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers, said the fatality was a train driver. (AP)

PM vows to fight as Burnham election win fuels Labour leadership showdown

ASHTON-IN-MAKERFIELD, England, June 20, (AP): Labour's Andy Burnham, the popular mayor of Greater Manchester, won a special election for a seat in Parliament and signaled Friday that he will use it to challenge embattled Prime Minister Keir Starmer for leadership of the country.

Starmer said he planned to fight for his job, but a growing number of colleagues urged him to make a dignified exit.

"There is this sense of collective movement," former Labour Deputy Leader Harriet Harman told the "Electoral Dysfunction" podcast. "Andy Burnham is going to become prime minister. Keir Starmer is going to be leaving office."



Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer speaks with from left, Morwenna Hall Chief Operating Officer of Related Argent, apprentice Elida, Deputy Prime Minister David Lammy, and apprentice Klajdi as he visits a housing development in north London on June 19. (AP)

Europe

Ukrainians slam Polish prez decision: A decision by Polish President Karol Nawrocki to strip Ukrainian



Nawrocki

leader Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Poland's highest state honor was beneficial to Moscow, which has an interest in seeing Kyiv in conflict with its allies, Ukrainian officials said.

Nawrocki announced on Friday that he will strip Zelenskyy of the Order of the White Eagle over the Ukrainian leader's decision to name a military unit after a Ukrainian paramilitary organization accused of massacring Poles during World War II. Former Polish President Andrzej Duda bestowed the award on Zelenskyy in 2023 for services to security, resilience and the defense of human rights.

Zelenskyy issued a decree on May 26 naming a

military unit of Ukraine's Special Operations Forces after the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, or UPA, which operated during the 1940s and 1950s and has been accused in Poland of mass killings. (AP)

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Slovakia govt wins confidence vote: The Slovak government won a parliamentary confidence vote Thursday that was triggered by the country's debt surpassing fiscal limits set by the Constitution.

All the 78 lawmakers loyal to the three-party coalition government led by Prime Minister Robert Fico voted in support of his Cabinet. Fifty-four in the 150-seat Parliament known as the National Council voted against.

The opposition filed a complaint with the court in November after the European Union statistics body, Eurostat, said Slovak debt reached 59.7% of gross domestic product the previous month. It has risen to 61.4% since, according to the Slovak Statistics Office, although it is still below the average among European Union countries. (AP)

Jihadis expanding to cities in Africa's Sahel

Gunmen attack Niger airport, killing 11 soldiers and 2 civilians: officials

DAKAR, Senegal, June 20, (AP): The gunfire and explosions that ripped through Niger's main international airport are the latest sign of armed groups increasingly targeting cities and urban centers in Africa's Sahel region, where they are competing for influence and territories, analysts say.

The al-Qaeda-linked JNIM jihadi group, the most potent in the Sahel region south of the Sahara desert, claimed responsibility for Thursday's attack at Diori Hamani International Airport in Niamey that killed 11 soldiers and two civilians.

It was the second attack this year at the airport, a strategic hub that serves as the ruling military's command, hosting its air force base and most of its drones and aircraft. It's also the headquarters of the regional alliance that brings together troops from Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso.

A similar attack in January, which was claimed by the Islamic State group's Sahel Province (ISSP), also saw motorcycle-riding gunmen storm the airport facility as they targeted expensive drones. The attacks in Niger, unseen at this scale in recent years, follow a major raid and continuing fuel blockade by al-Qaeda inside and around Mali's capital of Bamako.

Both al-Qaeda and Islamic State group-backed militants, rivals for control of the territory in the Sahel with competing goals and strategic aspirations, started escalating their attacks last year as they seek for more influence in what is known to be global hot spot for terrorism.

The recent attacks reflect a changing militant strategy that increasingly includes urban centers alongside remote, poorly policed communities where insurgent groups traditionally operate, said Ibrahim Yahaya Ibrahim, deputy



A tricycle rides along a street in Niamey, Niger on June 18. (AP)

project director for the International Crisis Group, a think tank. At the heart of the militant activity are the three neighboring Sahel states of Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali. They are governed by military juntas that

staged coups fueled by resentment toward old Western partners and democratic governments.

The three governments have turned to Russia as a major security ally after turning back from Western allies. French and American forces withdrew, while Russian military personnel moved in.

The attack on Thursday had less significance than the one in January but was important for JNIM and its operations, Ibrahim said. "JNIM in Niger is trying to mark its territory. This is a message to the government but also to IS (Islamic State group)," he added.

Niger's presence at the intersection of several major conflict zones is also seen as strategic for the groups. It borders Mali and Burkina Faso to the west, where JNIM is strongest, and Nigeria and Chad to the south and east, where Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) operate. To the north, it stretches into the Sahara toward Libya and Algeria.

Analysts warn that ISSP and ISWAP are attempting to use the Niger-Nigeria border as a bridge between the two groups, connecting two of Africa's most powerful and violent extremist groups across a wide swath of territory, a move JNIM opposes.

"Niger is a territory of competition between them," Wassim Nasr, a senior research fellow at the Soufan Center, said.

"If JNIM loses the upper hand in Niger against the Islamic State, it will jeopardize its upper hand in Mali and Burkina Faso. ... You have an open space like the Wild West, where each is looking to mark its territory," he added.

Boat with migrants capsized north off Libya, leaving 51 dead or missing: group

CAIRO, June 20, (AP): A boat carrying dozens of migrants bound for European shores capsized off the coast of Libya last week, leaving 51 people dead or missing, a monitoring group said on Friday.

Ten migrants survived the shipwreck, which occurred on June 12 in the Mediterranean Sea, off the eastern part of the North African nation, according to the Abreen group, which tracks movements of migrants in eastern Libya.

Eleven bodies were retrieved while 40 others remain missing, the group said.

It was the latest tragedy in this part of the Mediterranean Sea. The Libyan coast is one of the main departure points for migrants from North Africa trying to reach European shores for a better life there. They are packed by smugglers into small and unsafe boats, with thousands dying during the perilous sea journey.

The Libyan coast guard and the Red Crescent in the eastern city of Tobruk reported retrieving bodies that started to wash ashore over the past 24 hours. The coast guard posted footage showing rescue teams carrying bodies in white body bags onto the shore.

More than 800 migrants were reported dead or missing in the central Mediterranean route between January 1 and May 16 this year, according



This is a locator map for Libya with its capital, Tripoli. (AP)

to the International Organization for Migration. Last year saw more than 1,300 migrants perish or go missing on that route, it said.

Libya has in recent years emerged as the dominant transit point for migrants fleeing war and poverty in Africa and the Middle East, even though the country was plunged into chaos following a NATO-backed uprising that toppled and killed its longtime autocrat Moammar Gadhafi in 2011.

Human traffickers in recent years have benefited from the chaos in Lib-

ya, smuggling in migrants across the country's lengthy borders, which it shares with six nations. The migrants are usually forced to sail on crowded, ill-equipped vessels, including rubber boats.

Those who are intercepted and returned to Libya are held in government-run detention centers rife with abuses, including forced labor, beatings, rapes and torture - practices that amount to crimes against humanity, according to UN-commissioned investigators.

Cambodia court upholds incitement conviction of opposition politician

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia, June 20, (AP): Cambodia's Supreme Court on Friday upheld the incitement conviction of a prominent opposition politician while suspending the remainder of his sentence, keeping him out of prison but unable to practice politics for years and renewing questions about the government's efforts to quash criticism.

The decision against Rong Chhun, a top adviser to the Nation Power Party, was met with anger by some 300 supporters from around the country who had gathered outside the Supreme Court complex in Phnom Penh.

"Even though he is not in prison, I'm saddened that his freedom has been restricted and he has become a sub-citizen, meaning he has no right to vote or participate in politics," said Nek Rath, a 55-year-old from the capital.

"The verdict is hard for us to accept because he is not free, and he has done nothing wrong."

The 56-year-old had been found guilty last year of inciting social unrest after meeting with villagers displaced by government construction projects, in what was widely seen as one of many legal moves taken by the government of Prime Minister Hun Manet to stifle criticism.

Rong Chhun told his supporters the verdict was "completely unfair" and accused the court of following orders of the government rather than



Rong Chhun, a top adviser to the Nation Power Party and a prominent opposition politician, stands with supporters outside Cambodia's Supreme Court in Phnom Penh, on June 19. (AP)

the rule of law.

"If the powerful leader wants black, the court will paint it black for them," he said. "And if the powerful wants white, the court will paint it white for them."

Bryony Lau, deputy Asia director for Human Rights Watch, said the ruling demonstrates Cambodia's courts "lack of independence from the ruling party."

"Hun Manet's government should stop using the courts to silence the political opposition and instead re-open space for parties and civil society groups to operate freely ahead of

next year's election," she said.

Cambodia's Minister of Information Neth Phaeakra told The Associated Press that it was "not appropriate to characterize a judicial decision as an executive decision."

"The Royal Government respects the separation of powers, the independence of the courts, and the rule of law," he said in a written response to a query. "Any party who disagrees with a court ruling should address the matter through the legal remedies available under Cambodian law, rather than through political assumptions."

Peru's president announces Pope Leo XIV to visit in early November

LIMA, Peru, June 20, (AP): Peruvian President José María Balcázar announced that Pope Leo XIV will visit Peru in the first half of November.

Balcázar said after meeting with the pontiff at the Vatican that Leo will travel to Puno, Iquitos, Cusco, Pucallpa, Piura and Chiclayo, where the Pope carried out his pastoral work for nearly a decade. The Chicago-born pope previously lived in Trujillo, on the northwestern coast, and became a Peruvian citizen in 2015.

The president told local radio station RPP that details of the itinerary will be released later due to "religious policy and security reasons."

The Vatican has not confirmed any upcoming trip, but a visit to Peru with possible stops in other South American countries is widely rumored. Leo himself has expressed his desire to make such a trip.

"Argentina and Uruguay are awaiting the Pope's visit. I believe Peru would also welcome me with open arms, and if I go to Peru, I would also visit many neighboring countries, but the plan is not yet finalized," the pontiff told the



Pope Leo XIV celebrates the funeral service for late Cardinal Camillo Ruini, in St Peter's Basilica at Vatican on June 18. (AP)

press in December upon his return from Lebanon.

Chiclayo, 14 kilometers (9 miles) from the Pacific Ocean, is a city with more than 800,000 inhabitants and plays a vital role as a commercial hub on Peru's northern coast. However, it also faces social problems, and around 20% of its population lives in poverty.

Leo lived there for almost a decade before he left for Rome

in 2023 when then-Pope Francis asked him to assume the presidency of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America.

The residents of Chiclayo celebrated with excitement when, in his first words as pontiff, Leo XIV addressed the cheering crowds in St. Peter's Square in Spanish: "My beloved diocese of Chiclayo, in Peru, where a faithful people have accompanied their bishop and shared their faith."



Firefighters and rescuers work at the site of a fire at an elementary school in Tokyo on June 19. (AP)

Tokyo school fire evacuates 300 children, teachers

A fire broke out at an elementary school in downtown Tokyo Friday, but all of about 300 students and teachers were evacuated or rescued, officials said.

They said several people were injured while fleeing, mostly from inhaling smoke, and that the exact number of injured is being finalized.

The Tokyo Fire Department said the fire at the Takinogawa No. 3 Elementary School broke out near a music room on the top floor of the four-story building late morning Friday.

Firefighters rescued one teacher and three schoolchildren out of the building with non-life-threatening injuries, the department said.

All others inside the building when the fire broke out had evacuated to a nearby park on their own and no one was left behind, officials said.

The Kyodo News Agency said a total of 11 people were injured, including a teacher with a broken hip and two children with broken arms.

Television footage showed black smoke billowing out of windows on the fourth floor, as firefighters combated the fire at the scene. Dozens of fire engines were deployed. The fire was extinguished later in the afternoon.

A 11-year-old boy told Kyodo News that he heard people shouting "Run!" when he was in an English class. He said that, even though he was frightened, he repeated his teacher's call for students to stay calm.

The cause of the fire is still under investigation. (AP)

Two roadside bombs in Pakistan kill seven

PESHAWAR, Pakistan, June 20, (Agencies): Two roadside bombs in restive northwestern Pakistan killed at least seven people on Saturday, authorities said.

The first targeted a vehicle, while the second went off as rescuers responded to the blast in Bannu, a district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province bordering Afghanistan, senior police official Yasir Afridi said, adding both were controlled remotely.

Afridi said five people were killed in the first blast and two in the second. Three people were also wounded, he said. A search operation to find those responsible is underway.

No group immediately claimed responsibility, but suspicion is likely to fall on the Pakistani Taliban, who have been blamed for similar attacks in the past.

President Asif Ali Zardari strongly condemned the bombings. In a statement, he conveyed condolences to the families of those killed and prayed for the speedy recovery of the wounded.



Zardari

Without naming any group, Zardari issued a warning to "internal and external handlers of terrorism" who provide safe havens, logistical support and financial assistance to militant networks.

Pakistan has experienced a surge in militant violence in recent years, much of it claimed by the Pakistani Taliban, known as Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, or TTP. The group is separate from, but allied with, Afghanistan's Taliban, who seized power in Kabul in 2021. Pakistani officials say many TTP leaders and fighters have found sanctuary across the border in Afghanistan.

Also:

KUWAIT CITY: Chief of the General Staff of the Army, Lieu. 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 occasion 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.

Lat/Am

4 bodies found outside Mexico City: Mexican authorities were working Friday to identify four bodies found on the outskirts of Mexico City as part of the search efforts to locate a married couple who disappeared in May while living in Chicago and Mexico.

An official from the State of Mexico prosecutor's office, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to make public statements, said his department located the bodies in response to a request for assistance from investigators in the capital.

The Mexico City prosecutors were investigating the May disappearance of the couple, Zafar Padamese Mawani and Guillermo Jafet Hidalgo Ortiz, in the southern part of the capital and had made arrests related to the case.

More than 135,000 people are missing in Mexico as a product of criminal violence, according to the most recent federal data. The number missing continues to climb even as homicide figures have



Sheinbaum

sharply dropped since President Claudia Sheinbaum took office in 2024. (AP)

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Massive fire destroys resort in DomRep: A large fire almost completely destroyed a luxury resort in the Dominican Republic on Friday, forcing the evacuation of almost 1,700 tourists, authorities said.

Local media reported an Italian tourist died in the fire and several other tourists required medical assistance.

The Viva Dominicus Beach by Wyndham resort is located in Bayahibe, a popular destination for US and international tourists on the Dominican Republic's southeastern coast.

Authorities reported about 1,690 tourists had to be evacuated from the resort to other hotels and nearby housing facilities because of the massive blaze.

The cause of the blaze was under investigation and the country's Emergency Operations Center said it appeared the "fire spread rapidly" due to wind and because part of the resort's roof was made of thatch.

Viva Wyndham's other nearby resort, the Dominicus Palace, was not damaged by the fire and was operating as normal, the center said. (AP)

Kuwait oil price falls to \$85.66 pb

KUWAIT CITY, June 20, (KUNA): The price of Kuwaiti oil fell by 24 cents to USD 85.66 per barrel (pb) in trading on Friday, compared with USD 85.9 pb in the previous session, according to the price announced by

Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC). In global markets, Brent crude rose by 66 cents to settle at USD 80.38 pb, while US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) gained 94 cents to reach USD 77.54 pb.

Other Voices

Oil is sinking ... OPEC to intervene

By Kamel Al-Harami
Independent Oil Analyst

OIL prices are suddenly moving closer to the high seventies, down from a peak above \$100 per barrel, following news of the opening of the Strait of Hormuz. Ships and tankers are beginning to sail freely again, and oil tankers are loading crude from Arabian Gulf ports and transporting it to global markets. This is leading to a cooling in prices and a return toward more stable or acceptable levels, in support of higher demand and growth.



Al-Harami

Of course, the reopening of the strait means more than 33 million barrels per day moving globally, mainly to Asia, which is now eagerly preparing to consume and store more oil in its strategic reserves. Some consuming countries may also begin expanding their storage capacity.

At the same time, oil-exporting countries are eager to resume production after three months of zero cash flow.

It is time to move oil in large quantities for countries that have excess storage capacity, with oil prices in the low \$80s and possibly declining further.

This creates opportunities for OPEC+ to increase production, as it looks to recover the lost revenue from the past three months. It is time to act and move towards full production,

with some relaxation of OPEC+ quotas, provided oil prices stay within an acceptable market range for customers.

Global oil demand is also increasing with the driving season, as consumers in the United States travel across the country for family visits and tourism. The current average price for regular gasoline in the US is \$3.95 per gallon. US consumers are concerned that prices may rise due to political tensions in the Middle East, although price increases typically take about a week to materialize. As a result, some consumers may rush purchases or hope that prices remain stable until the Fourth of July holiday season.

There are about 500 tankers waiting to enter the Gulf to load crude oil, refined products, and gas. The concern is the availability of oil from producing countries to rebuild stocks and inventories, in addition to clearing the Gulf of mines. This will take time, but there is urgency to load, as producing countries are in need of cash and revenue.

Importantly, the opening of the Strait of Hormuz comes at a time when the world is in need of oil. Tanker owners are desperate to get their ships moving again for carrying oil and restoring normal freight rates, while also covering crew salaries and operational costs.

As oil begins to flow again, the question is how low prices will fall. Will they return to the \$70 range, unless OPEC+ maintains control through production quotas? This is the challenge, as every oil producer is in need of cash.

Email: naftikuwaiti@yahoo.com

KPC restores output capacity

Kuwait targets 2 mln bpd output as Hormuz reopens

KUWAIT CITY, June 20, (KUNA): Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) plans to raise the country's oil production to two million barrels per day (bpd) within a week, amid the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz under a US-Iran peace agreement, said KPC's Deputy Chairman and CEO Sheikh Nawaf Saud Al-Sabah.

In a press statement, Sheikh Nawaf elaborated that pre-war production levels could be restored within weeks once regular international commercial shipping to Kuwaiti ports has resumed.

waiti ports has resumed.

He underlined that the Kuwaiti oil sector has carried out essential repairs to damaged energy infrastructure, thus contributing to regaining production capacities at a faster pace than previously estimated.

The KPC official added that the Corporation would immediately lift all force majeure notices issued during the war in a move that reflects the sector's readiness for a phased-out resumption of normal operations and supplies.

Boursa Kuwait ready to launch exchange-traded funds (ETFs)

KUWAIT CITY, June 20: Boursa Kuwait welcomed the issuance of Capital Markets Authority Resolution 80 of 2026, which approved the comprehensive regulatory and legislative framework for exchange-traded funds (ETFs), including amendments to the Executive Bylaws of Law 7 of 2010. The CMA also approved the related amendments to the Boursa Kuwait Rulebook.

Accordingly, Boursa Kuwait will introduce dedicated provisions governing ETFs into its Rulebook, which represents a significant addition to the Kuwaiti capital market and a pivotal step in advancing the country's investment environment, diversifying available investment instruments and aligning the market with international best practices.

The launch of ETFs completes the second part of Phase Three of the Market Development Program (MD 3.2), a key milestone in the development of the capital market that focused on modernizing its regulatory and operational infrastructure, enhancing the clearing and settlement framework and broadening the range of available investment products.

MD 3.2 included a series of core initiatives aimed at strengthening the operational and regulatory infrastructure as well as expanding the range of products and services in the Kuwaiti capital market, including the introduction of the Central Counterparty (CCP) framework, cash settlements through local banks and the Central Bank of Kuwait's KASSIP system; the upgrade of brokerage firms' operating models to 'Qualified Broker' status, marking a significant step forward in market structure; and the introduction of sub-account numbers under omnibus accounts, which strengthened transparency and oversight. Finally, MD 3.2 saw the launch of bonds and sukuk on April 5, 2026, and culminated in the introduction of ETFs as two of its prominent investment offerings.

The Market Development program reflects the high level of coordination and close integration across the Kuwaiti capital market apparatus, led by the Capital Markets Authority and in collaboration with Boursa Kuwait, Kuwait Clearing Company and other key market participants. Their collective efforts have supported the development of the market's technical infrastructure and the completion of the necessary testing to ensure market readiness in line with leading international financial markets, further strengthening Kuwait as an attractive financial hub for high-quality investments.

Commenting on the launch of ETFs, Boursa Kuwait's Chief Executive Officer Mr. Mohammad Saud Al-Osaimi, said:

"We are pleased to announce the completion of all operational and technical preparations required to enable the launch of exchange-traded funds. The comprehensive testing conducted by Boursa Kuwait in collaboration with the capital market apparatus has yielded positive and



Mohammad Al-Osaimi

AlOsaimi:

■ We extend our sincere appreciation to the CMA and its valuable efforts in approving the legislative and regulatory environment for ETFs

tangible results, confirming the efficiency and readiness of the trading infrastructure. Boursa Kuwait is now fully prepared to receive listing applications and enable the trading of ETFs, ensuring a strong and stable launch of this instrument in the market.

Boursa Kuwait had a pivotal role in developing and modernizing the Kuwaiti capital market's technical and operational infrastructure to ensure it can efficiently and effectively accommodate advanced investment instruments and make them accessible to issuers and investors alike.

The exchange takes pride in serving as an active operational partner, translating the Capital Markets Authority's regulatory and legislative directives into tangible outcomes that support the shared objectives of market development and competitiveness, which are closely aligned with Kuwait's broader national objectives and directly support Kuwait Vision 2035.

Through its efforts to foster a transparent, diversified, and attractive investment environment, Boursa Kuwait contributes to attracting foreign capital and empowering the private sector as a central driver of the national economy's growth, playing a key role in Kuwait's transformation into a leading financial and commercial hub in the region.

Investor confidence remains central to this journey, the Boursa Kuwait CEO emphasized, stating that "the launch of these instruments amid current geopolitical challenges reflects the resilience of the national economy and the depth of confidence in Kuwait's financial ecosystem. These successive achievements embody a well-established institutional approach to continuous development, aimed at creating an attractive and transparent investment environment that further strengthens

the private sector's role in the national development of the State of Kuwait."

Al-Osaimi concluded his remarks by expressing his sincere appreciation to the Capital Markets Authority for its efforts in approving the regulatory and legislative framework for the launch of the ETF platform.

He also commended the close cooperation among the capital market apparatus, which has played a significant role in advancing the development of the Kuwaiti capital market and establishing an institutional trading environment governed by the highest standards of efficiency and transparency that meets issuers' aspirations and provides investors with innovative investment instruments that enhance the market's competitiveness.

An integrated mechanism covering the full ETF lifecycle

Boursa Kuwait developed a comprehensive operating framework that covers the full lifecycle of ETFs in the Kuwaiti capital market, from listing through to daily trading. The framework regulates the listing of both local and international funds and sets out the ongoing disclosure obligations of fund managers throughout the listing period. Additionally, the exchange has allocated a dedicated trading board for ETFs and structured their trading sessions in a manner that reflects the unique nature of these instruments.

A clear vision and strategic objectives

The comprehensive regulatory amendments reflect the long-term strategy for the development of the Kuwaiti capital market, built around five core pillars aimed at shaping a more sustainable investment future:

■ **International alignment:** Aligning local laws and regulations with global standards adopted in advanced capital markets

Minister affirms support for AMF

Kuwait pursues stronger role in IsDB, boosts ties with Arab Monetary Fund

KUWAIT CITY, June 20: Minister of Finance and Governor of the State of Kuwait to the Islamic Development Bank Group Dr. Yaqoub Al-Sayed Yousef Al-Rifai met with Director General and Chairman of the Board of the Arab Monetary Fund Dr. Fahad Al-Turki on the sidelines of the meeting of the Board of Governors of the Islamic Development Bank Group being held in Baku, Azerbaijan from June 16-19.

During the meeting, Al-Turki invited the minister to the 50th anniversary celebration of the Arab Monetary Fund on Sept 28-29. The minister welcomed the invitation and expressed his willingness to attend the event.

Al-Turki also emphasized his desire to strengthen and expand the participation of Kuwaiti professionals in the training programs and employment opportunities at the fund, highlighting the importance of benefiting from Kuwaiti expertise and competencies in supporting its activities and objectives.

Meanwhile, Al-Rifai reaffirmed the commitment of Kuwait to provide the fund with qualified and highly capable young Kuwaiti professionals.

Moreover, Al-Rifai also met with President of the Islamic Development Bank Group Dr. Mohammad Al-Jasser. They discussed the activities of the Concessional Financing Fund and its role in supporting member countries and financing development projects that generate economic and social benefits.

Al-Jasser expressed his hope that Kuwait will contribute to the fund, indicating that such support will



Kuwait Finance Minister meets AMF chief in Baku.

boost its financial resources, expand its development operations and enhance its ability to serve beneficiary countries.

Al-Rifai stated that, in light of Kuwait's longstanding contributions to and position within the Islamic Development Bank Group, the country is seeking appropriate representation within the bank and its affiliated institutions.

He then expressed his aspiration to create more opportunities for the recruitment and advancement of Kuwaiti professionals in various levels, particularly in senior and middle management positions.

Also present at the meetings were Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to the Republic of Azerbaijan Mohammad Al-Mutairi, Assistant Undersecretary for Technical Services Affairs Saad Al-Alati, Director of the Department of International Economic Cooperation and acting Director General of Economic Affairs Saad Al-Rashidi, and Director of the Technical Office and acting Director of the Office of the Minister of Finance Yousef Al-Fayyad.

Kuwait participates in 51st IsDB governors meeting



IsDB governors convene in Baku with Kuwait delegation.

KUWAIT CITY, June 20: The State of Kuwait on Thursday participated in the 51st Annual Ministerial Meeting of the Board of Governors of the Islamic Development Bank Group, which is being held in Baku in the Republic of Azerbaijan, from June 16 to 19, with the theme, "Regional Integration: A Pillar of Sustainable Prosperity."

The meeting is under the patronage and in the presence of President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev who highlighted in his opening remarks the efforts and contributions of the Islamic Development Bank and its affiliated institutions in supporting development in Islamic countries.

The Kuwaiti delegation was led by Minister of Finance and Governor of Kuwait to the Islamic Development Bank Group Dr. Yaqoub Al-Sayed Yousef Al-Rifai. The delegation includes Ambassador of Kuwait to Azerbaijan Mohammad Al-Mutairi.

The participants discussed a number of agenda items, including the re-election of Dr. Mohammad bin Sulaiman Al-Jasser as President of the Islamic Development Bank Group for the 2026-2031 term, election of the executive directors of the bank for the 18th term (2027-2029), and election of the Board of Directors of the International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation for its seventh term (2027-2029).

They also approved the 50th Annual Report of the bank for the 2025 fiscal year, ratified the audited financial statements of the bank and its affiliated institutions for the same period, elected the chairman and two vice chairmen of the Board of Governors for the 2027 term, appointed the Procedures Committee for the 52nd Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors, and agreed to hold a governors roundtable discussion on concessional finance.

The annual meetings of the Islamic Development Bank Group serve as a key international and regional platform bringing together finance and economy ministers from the 57 member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, as well as representatives of national, regional and international financing institutions, to exchange views, expertise and experience on emerging global economic issues.

■ **Legal certainty:** Regulating listing and trading activities through a clear legislative framework that safeguards the rights of all parties and provides a reliable operating environment

■ **Enhanced liquidity:** Attracting new capital flows through the listing of advanced financial instruments that appeal to a broader investor base

■ **Greater transparency:** Improving disclosure and transparency standards to strengthen the confidence of local and international investors

■ **Diversification of investment instruments:** Expanding the range of options available to market participants and reducing reliance on equities as the primary investment instrument, providing greater flexibility for investment portfolios

Empowering investment companies and enhancing regional competitiveness

The improved regulatory framework opens unprecedented opportunities for local and international investment companies to launch and list ETFs on Boursa Kuwait and enables fund managers to access a broader and more diversified investor base while offering a financial instrument that enhances the competitiveness of listed funds locally and in the region.

To ensure the highest standards of protection and efficiency, investment companies seeking to list ETFs must meet a set of regulatory and institutional criteria, including:

■ **Benchmark index:** Identifying a clear and transparent index that the fund accurately tracks

■ **Liquidity enhancement:** Appointing a market maker to support the continuity and efficiency of daily trading

■ **Operational transparency:** Providing regular disclosures on the fund's components and net asset value

New investment opportunities and added value for investors

The strategic importance of this platform extends to investors in Kuwait's capital market, providing them with innovative and highly flexible investment opportunities. Because ETFs are traded during regular market sessions, investors can implement entry and exit strategies with greater ease and efficiency. In addition, ETFs offer three key advantages as a complementary investment instrument, including:

■ **Immediate diversification:** Investors can gain exposure to a basket of assets or sectors through a single instrument, helping distribute risk more effectively compared to direct investment in individual stocks.

■ **Cost efficiency:** ETFs typically offer lower management and operating costs than traditional investment funds, enhancing investors' net returns.

■ **Full transparency:** ETFs provide a real-time mechanism for disclosing the indicative net asset value on an ongoing basis, enhancing confidence and clarity in investment decision-making.

In recognition of its excellence in innovative investment solutions

NBK Wealth bolsters its local and regional leadership with Euromoney’s 2026 Best Fixed Income Provider Awards in Kuwait and the Middle East

KUWAIT CITY, June 20: NBK Wealth, the region’s leading wealth management group, has been awarded Euromoney’s 2026 Best Fixed Income Provider Awards for Kuwait and the Middle East, as part of the magazine’s 2026 Private Banking Awards. This recognition acknowledges the Group’s excellence in wealth management and its provision of personalized banking services and investment products that enrich the client experience with innovative solutions.

The Group was awarded in the following categories at a ceremony held in London:

- Middle East’s Best for Fixed Income
- Kuwait’s Best for Fixed Income

Winning the “Middle East’s Best for Fixed Income” and “Kuwait’s Best for Fixed Income” awards underscores NBK Wealth’s advanced capabilities in designing and managing fixed income portfolios. Its reliance on well-considered strategies that combine in-depth analysis of global markets with highly efficient risk management has enabled it to provide reliable investment instruments suited to diverse economic conditions.

The awards were based on a number of criteria, including the delivery of exceptional cash bond investment opportunities through outstanding research capabilities, actionable investment ideas, and superior trade execution. The recognition also reflects NBK Wealth’s success in demonstrating how timely market insights, competitive pricing, and robust liquidity provision have contributed to seeking to deliver superior outcomes for clients, while maintaining a strong focus on risk management and ensuring investment solutions remain aligned with clients’ objectives and suitability requirements.

Furthermore, these awards demonstrate the strength of the NBK Wealth Group brand, which is the largest wealth management group locally and one of the largest regionally, whose strength stems from the regionally and internationally leading NBK Group, as the latter maintains a long history of achievements and international awards in recognition of its efforts in the banking sector.



Euromoney crowns NBK Wealth best for fixed income in 2026.

- The recognition reflects the Group’s ability to seek to deliver exceptional outcomes for its clients while offering resilient investment solutions tailored to diverse market and economic conditions
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tion of its efforts in the banking sector.

This recognition also reflects the Group’s exceptional performance and its firm commitment to providing innovative personal banking services and advanced investment solutions that seek to meet customer expectations as per the highest international

standards, in addition to the efficiency of the team and the strength of the investment strategies.

NBK Wealth distinguishes itself by understanding its clients’ diverse needs and developing tailored strategies to meet each client’s specific needs. The group also offers a range of products, including pri-

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About NBK Wealth

NBK Wealth is a locally leading wealth management institution, one of the largest in the region, and a cornerstone of NBK Group, one of the largest financial institutions in the Middle East. This provides it with a strong foundation and extensive experience in local, regional, and global markets. It also has a broad geographic presence across nine cities in five countries, offering a comprehensive range of services.

The Group follows an approach focused on providing customized solutions tailored to each client’s needs, meeting the unique financial objectives of Ultra-High-Net-Worth individuals and institutions. It also offers a comprehensive suite of private banking and wealth management services, including wealth planning, portfolio management, and specialized advisory services in areas such as family offices, real estate, cash and credit management, offshore trusts, and wills.

NBK Wealth is distinguished by its focus on understanding each client’s unique financial goals and designing customized strategies that aim to maximize returns while effectively managing risk.

It is worth noting that NBK Wealth is a brand registered under the name of National Bank of Kuwait S.A.K.P (“NBK”), for use by the Asset Management business of, among other NBK group entities, Watani Investment Company K.S.C.C. , a leading investment firm and its affiliates worldwide, combined with the Private Banking services of NBK worldwide.

For more information about the Euromoney Private Banking Awards 2026, please visit:
<https://www.euromoney.com/awards/private-banking-awards/>

‘Seamless savings feature’

Weyay launches automatic ‘Round-up’ savings feature

KUWAIT CITY, June 20: Weyay Bank has introduced a new automatic saving feature, “Round-up,” as part of its latest app update. This feature allows customers to effortlessly set aside amounts with every purchase made using their Weyay debit card. Each transaction is rounded up to the nearest whole amount, and the difference is automatically transferred into a savings pot. Designed to be simple and seamless, the feature helps users grow their savings gradually over time without requiring any extra effort, making it easier to build up a balance little by little.

The feature can be easily activated through the saving pot settings within the app, making saving a natural part of everyday transactions, without the need for advance planning or setting fixed amounts. It is designed to help users, particularly younger customers, build their savings gradually in a way that fits their fast-paced digital lifestyles.

This launch reflects Weyay Bank’s ongoing strategy to develop smart financial tools that empower customers to manage their finances with greater ease and awareness, while promoting a stronger savings mindset through practical, integrated

solutions. The new feature builds on a growing suite of smart saving tools within the app, including the “Lock Pot” feature, which restricts withdrawals until a set savings goal is reached, with the option to unlock through the Bank’s Solutions Center, and the “Hide Balance” feature, which keeps users focused on their savings goals rather than their available balance, helping reduce impulse spending and encouraging consistency.

In addition to savings pots, Weyay Bank supports better financial habits through a range of digital tools such as “Budgeting and Tracking”, which enables customers to better understand their financial behavior, monitor daily spending, and manage their income within a clear budget, supporting more informed financial decisions and consistent saving.

Weyay Bank enhances the overall digital banking experience by simplifying the concept of saving and turning its in-app tools into practical enablers of long-term financial goals, without disrupting customers’ spending habits.

Commenting on the new launch, Naser Al-Duwaisan, Assistant Vice President, Products Department at Weyay Bank, said: “We are committed to developing smart digital solutions that align with our customers’ lifestyles and help them build positive financial habits with ease. The launch of the new ‘Round-up’ feature reflects our dedication to enabling effortless saving by embedding it into everyday transactions, as part of a fully integrated ecosystem of smart financial tools designed to support long-term financial goals.”

Weyay Bank reaffirmed its commitment to continuously enhancing its digital services and introducing innovative solutions that place customer needs at the forefront, while delivering a banking experience that is simple, flexible, and secure.



Oman records \$3.9bn trade balance surplus in Q1 2026

MUSCAT, June 20, (KUNA): Official data released on Saturday showed that the Sultanate of Oman recorded a trade balance surplus of OMR 1.54 billion (around USD 3.99 billion) during the first quarter of this year.

This surplus reflects a slight increase compared to the OMR 1.53 billion (approximately USD 3.97 billion) surplus registered during the exact same period of the previous year, according to official reports.

Statistics issued by the Omani National Center for Statistics and Information indicated that the total value of commodity exports reached OMR 5.3 billion (around USD 13.8 billion) by the end of March.

This export figure represents a decrease of 8.5 percent compared to the same period last year, despite the Sultanate maintaining a positive and substantial overall trade balance surplus throughout the first quarter.

The data further revealed that total commodity imports into Oman de-

creased by 11.7 percent to reach OMR 3.8 billion (around USD 9.8 billion) compared to OMR 4.3 billion last year.

The center attributed the decline in commodity exports mainly to lower oil and gas export values, which fell 13 percent to reach OMR 3.4 billion (about USD 8.8 billion) by March.

Meanwhile, non-oil exports decreased slightly by 0.6 percent to reach OMR 1.61 billion (around USD 4.18 billion) by the end of March, reflecting stable performance across other various non-oil economic sectors.

According to the official figures, re-exports from the Sultanate rose to OMR 367 million (around USD 953 million) by the end of March, marking a growth of 4.6 percent year-on-year.

The UAE topped the list for non-oil exports at OMR 382 million (USD 992 million) and re-exports at OMR 102 million, while leading importing countries at OMR 1.1 billion.

At a gathering to strengthen strategic partnerships and investments

Yousef Al-Sanea participates in Vision Golfe 2026 Forum

PARIS, June 20: Paris hosted the Vision Golfe 2026 Forum on June 18–19, 2026, under the patronage of French President Emmanuel Macron, with broad participation from government officials, business leaders, and investors from France and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

The forum aims to strengthen French-Gulf economic partnerships and advance supply chains and strategic industries, with a particular focus on clean energy, food and water security, desalination technologies, defense and aerospace industries, as well as artificial intelligence, smart mobility, and healthcare.

Representing the State of Kuwait, Yousef Al-Sanea, Managing Partner at Dr. YaqoubAbdulmohsen Al-Sanea & Partners Law Firm, participated in the forum. During the forum sessions, he highlighted key economic laws and regulations, while showcasing Kuwait’s business environment and the investment

opportunities available to foreign investors in the Kuwaiti market.

The forum serves as a high-level platform for accelerating trade and investment exchanges between both sides, amid growing interest from French companies in exploring promising investment opportunities across the Gulf region, particularly in the State of Kuwait.

The organization of Vision Golfe 2026 comes at a time of rapid economic and geopolitical transformations worldwide, underscoring the importance of building strategic partnerships based on practical integration and mutual benefit between France and the GCC countries.

Vision Golfe 2026 in Paris brings together business leaders and decision-makers from France and the Gulf Cooperation Council countries to discuss the future of investment and economic cooperation between the two regions.



Kuwait takes part in Paris forum on French-Gulf cooperation.



Warsh’s gamble: Quieter Federal Reserve could mean volatile markets, higher rates

WASHINGTON, June 20, (AP): The Federal Reserve has for decades moved steadily from a remote, opaque government agency that shared little about what it did or why to a more transparent institution willing to explain how it makes decisions and what it thinks about the economy.

But in his first press conference Wednesday, new chair Kevin Warsh began to reverse some of those steps. Warsh, like many economists, thinks the financial markets have become too dependent on Fed guidance, and that such direction is more effective in financial crises or economic downturns.

Warsh quickly made changes: The Fed’s statement on its interest-rate decision was slashed to 132 words, from 341 in April. And Warsh pointedly noted that the statement excluded any hints, or “forward guidance,” about what the Fed’s next moves might be.

In short, Warsh rapidly delivered on a promise to slash the Fed’s communications, particularly the guidance it gives to financial markets about its next interest-rate moves. Yet such an approach carries the risk of more violent swings in stock and bond prices, analysts say, and ultimately could lead to higher interest rates for consumers and businesses.

“Forward guidance in general has served to suppress volatility and anchor market expectations,” said George Pearkes, global macro strategist at Bespoke Investment Group. “And that has led to lower borrowing rates, relative to alternatives.”

Still, the impact on consumers is likely to be modest, Pearkes added, with mortgage rates perhaps a quarter-point higher than they would be otherwise.

Financial markets see-sawed, then fell Wednesday after the statement and news conference. The yield on the 10-year Treasury, which strongly in-

fluences mortgage rates, jumped Wednesday to 4.49% from 4.43%, though it fell back in Thursday trading. The yield on the 2-year Treasury, which closely tracks expectations for Fed action, was 4.16% Thursday, up sharply from 4.05% before the Fed’s meeting. The broad S&P 500 stock index dropped 1.2% Wednesday.

Such swings could be a sign of things to come. Previous chairs have signaled the Fed’s next moves clearly enough that financial markets have largely anticipated the central bank’s actions. But Warsh has frequently cited as a model former chair Alan Greenspan, whose circumspect comments often kept investors guessing.

Greenspan, who served as chair from 1987 to 2005, did usher in the statement the Fed now issues after each meeting announcing its decision. The first statement was issued Feb. 4, 1994, and said the Fed would increase its key rate for the first time in five years. The move caught investors off-guard and the Dow Jones Industrial Average plunged 2.4% that day.

The paring back of Fed communications is part of a larger package of potential reforms to the central bank’s operations that Warsh signaled Wednesday. He announced that the Fed will set up five task forces to examine the Fed’s communications, its balance sheet, how it analyzes and gathers economic data, the impact of AI on productivity and jobs, and the frameworks it uses to analyze inflation.

Warsh said the communications task force would consider changes to the quarterly economic projections the Fed issues as well as look at other recent innovations, including press conferences. Former chair Ben Bernanke was the first to hold them, though he did so only after every other Fed meeting. Warsh’s predecessor, Jerome Powell, shifted to holding them after every meeting.

Such steps are a sharp contrast with the 1990s, when Greenspan never explained a Fed decision, on the record, to reporters. Warsh could ultimately dial back some of the Fed’s increased transparency.

“This is a big change in how the Fed has conducted itself since the (2008-2009) global financial crisis,” Matthew Luzzetti, chief U.S. economist at Deutsche Bank, said. “Since then there has been a one-way train to greater communication, more transparency, and more forward guidance. Warsh has now put that train in reverse.”

Previous Fed chairs, starting with Bernanke, have seen a clear benefit to more communication: It helps guide the markets in the direction the Fed wants. Fed officials control a short-term interest rate, but the rates that affect the economy - such as the yield on the 10-year Treasury - are heavily influenced by investors’ expectations for inflation and economic growth. By telegraphing their next moves, policymakers can cause those longer-term rates to change even before the Fed adjusts its own benchmark rate.

Yet Warsh’s view is that financial markets have become too dependent on Fed guidance. Instead, he wants investors to gauge where the Fed may move next by examining economic data and making their own judgments, which the Fed can then consider as part of their assessments of where the economy is headed.

“Financial market prices are probably the most important source of information to guide central bankers,” Warsh said at Wednesday’s news conference.

David Andolfatto, an economics professor at the University of Miami and former economist at the St. Louis Fed, said he agreed with Warsh that forward guidance has flaws. It can be easily upended by unexpected events, he said, such as Russia’s invasion of Ukraine or the Iran war.

What's On

SPOTLIGHT



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Volunteers organize recreational activities and present gifts to children and their families

Gulf Bank brings joy to children at Bayt Abdullah Children's Hospice on Father's Day



A group photo of the Gulf Bank team.



Gulf Bank team engages children in numerous activities.



Part of the events.

KUWAIT CITY, June 20: In celebration of Father's Day, and as part of its ongoing commitment to humanitarian initiatives and community engagement, Gulf Bank organized a special visit to Bayt Abdullah Children's Hospice, bringing together children, families, and members of the Gulf Bank Volunteers team for a day filled with joy, interaction, and meaningful moments.

The visit featured a variety of recreational and engaging activities designed to entertain the children, uplift their spirits, and create a warm and positive atmosphere for them and their families. Members of the Gulf Bank Volunteers

team actively participated throughout the visit, spending quality time with the children and helping create memorable experiences on this special occasion.

As part of the initiative, Gulf Bank Volunteers presented the children with toys and gifts, encouraging them to take part in the activities and enjoy moments of happiness and connection. The initiative reflects Gulf Bank's commitment to supporting children facing health challenges and contributing to initiatives that enhance their emotional well-being.

This visit further reinforces Gulf Bank's dedication to corporate social re-

sponsibility and its role in supporting different segments of society through impactful community initiatives. It also highlights the importance of continued collaboration between the private sector and humanitarian organizations to create a positive and lasting impact.

Representatives from Bayt Abdullah Children's Hospice expressed their appreciation to Gulf Bank and the Gulf Bank Volunteers team for the thoughtful visit, noting that such initiatives help boost children's morale, support their families, and bring comfort and positivity during their treatment journey.

New office bearers elected at Ranni Pravasi Sangham

KUWAIT CITY, June 20: The Annual General Body Meeting of Ranni Pravasi Sangham Kuwait was held at Nayanam Auditorium, Abbasiya, with the participation of members from across Kuwait.

During the meeting, General Secretary Pradeep Manimalathu presented the annual report, while Treasurer Philip Varghese presented the audited financial report for the year. The reports were discussed and approved by the General Body.

Subsequently, elections were conducted to select the new leadership team for the organization. The election proceedings were led by the outgoing President, Anil Chacko.

The newly elected office bearers are:

Patron: Adv. Pazhakulam Madhu MLA

Vice Patron: Ani Stephen

Executive Vice Patron: Joel Jacob

President: Rony Varghese

Vice President: John Xavier

General Secretary: Shijo Thomas

Joint Secretary: Majo Mathew

Treasurer: Tony Pothen

Joint Treasurer: Jojo Mangalaveetil

Lady Secretary: Sneha Philip

General Convener: Rinu Kanadikkal

Joint Convener: Mathew Jais

Ex-Officio: Pradeep Manimalathu

Media Coordinator: Monu Velameppurath

Auditors: Aby Athikkayam and Tiby Mathew

The General Body congratulated all the newly elected office bearers and extended its best wishes for a successful tenure in leading the organization and strengthening its activities in the coming years.



Almosafer offers 50% discounts and bonus rewards abroad

ABK launches summer campaign for Visa credit cardholders

KUWAIT CITY, June 20: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) has launched its new summer campaign running from 21 June 2026 until 31 August 2026, reaffirming its ongoing commitment to rewarding customers and enhancing their banking experience by adding greater value to their travel and shopping activities during the summer season.

The campaign offers an exceptional range of benefits to all ABK Visa credit cardholders, transforming everyday spending and travel into opportunities to earn rewards points and miles while enjoying exclusive discounts.

As part of its commitment to providing a convenient and affordable travel experience, ABK is offering discounts of up to 50% (capped at USD \$300) on flight and hotel bookings through its partnership with Almosafer and Visa.

The campaign also includes bonus rewards on international spending. Customers whose total local and international spending reaches a minimum of KD 750 throughout the campaign period can benefit from: 50% bonus rewards points or miles on all transactions made within European Union countries; and 100% bonus rewards points or miles on all transactions made outside the European Union.

Commenting on the launch, **Johair Marafi**, General Manager of Retail Banking at ABK, said, "As the travel season begins, we wanted to provide smart options that help customers save money while earning valuable rewards through our partnerships with Visa and Almosafer."

Marafi added that the campaign was developed following a thorough review of customer feedback and preferences gathered over previous travel seasons. This year's benefits have been carefully designed to align with the highest standards of security and flexibility offered by ABK's credit cards, providing travelers with complete confidence and peace of mind when making payments worldwide.

She noted that as the banking sector continues to evolve toward meeting customer expectations and delivering sustainable added value on everyday transactions, ABK believes that its diverse strategic partnerships are a cornerstone in building a comprehensive rewards ecosystem that attracts customers and reinforces their trust in the Bank as a preferred banking partner.



Johair Marafi, General Manager - Retail Banking



Marafi further stated, "Our commitment to customers extends beyond providing financing solutions. We strive to support them in every aspect of their daily lives and summer plans. We believe that continuous innovation in designing exclusive benefits is key to maintaining our leadership in delivering an exceptional banking experience that exceeds expectations and meets the aspirations of all customer segments in Kuwait."

She also highlighted that ABK has simplified the process of earning and redeeming rewards through its digital channels, ensuring a seamless, convenient, and instant user experience. She affirmed that the Bank will continue enhancing its portfolio of banking products and solutions to reward customer loyalty.

In closing, Marafi invited customers to visit any ABK branch, as well as the Bank's website and mobile application, to learn more about the various offers, products, and banking solutions introduced throughout the year.

Honoring quiz winners at Kuwait gathering

KMWA organizes community family program at Masjid Al-Kabir

KUWAIT CITY, June 20: Karnataka Muslim Welfare Association (KMWA) successfully organized its Family Get-Together Program at Masjid Al-Kabir, Kuwait, bringing together a large number of Families, Members, and well-wishers from the Community.

The highlight of the Event was an inspiring talk by renowned speaker Mr B.S. Sharafuddin, who addressed the gathering on the Topic "Modern Challenges of Family Life & Islamic Solutions".

His insightful presentation emphasized the importance of strengthening family bonds, nurturing Islamic values, and addressing contemporary challenges faced by families in today's rapidly changing world.

The session was highly appreciated by the audience.

The program was attended by several dignitaries, including Mr Umar Falahi, President of IMA Kuwait; Mr Mohammed Salar, CEO of BITCO; and KKMA representatives Mr B M Iqbal, Mr Yusuf Rasheed, and Mr Yusuf Muniyam.

Their presence added significance to the occasion and reflected the spirit of unity and cooperation among community organizations in Kuwait.

Mr Umar Falahi also addressed the gathering, appreciating the efforts of KMWA in fostering community unity and family values.

He warmly welcomed the new members who had recently joined the association and encouraged them to actively participate in community initiatives and welfare activities.

As part of the event, prizes, gifts, and certificates were distributed to the winners and participants of the KMWA Ramadan Online Quiz Competition 2026.

KMWA President Mr Jameel Ahamed expressed his sincere gratitude to the IMA Markaz leadership, especially Mr Rafath, Mr Waleed Umri, and Mr Jafar Sadiq, for extending their wholehearted support towards the successful conduct of the program.

He also thanked the distinguished Guests, Members, Volunteers, and attendees for their valuable contribution and participation.

The association further acknowledged the efforts of the organizing committee and volunteers, including Program Convener Mr Abdulnaser Khan (Former President, KMWA), Program Coordinator Mr Irshad Kudroli, Mr Atheeq Bayazeed, Mr Mohammed Rameez, Mr Mohammed Waseem (General Secretary), Mr Adnan Tonse, Mr. Amerruddin and Media Team members Mr. Tanveer and Mr. Imam Baksh, whose dedication and teamwork ensured the smooth and successful execution of

the event.

The program concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by KMWA President Mr. Jameel Ahamed, followed by dinner and fellowship.

The event left participants with valuable lessons on family life, a stronger sense of community bonding, and a renewed commitment to upholding Islamic values in their daily lives.

IMA Kuwait is an Indian socio-religious organization that operates under the patronage of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Kuwait.

IMA always focusses to provide platform for enhancement of expatriates living in Kuwait for their spiritual & social aspect through various programs & social gatherings.

It looks forward to organizing various beneficial programs in future, considering the occasions and requirements of expatriates in general and specifically Indian community.

For updates and upcoming programs, follow IMA Kuwait on social media or visit:

www.imakuwait.org
Instagram: @ima.kuwait | YouTube: IMA Kuwait TV
pr@imakuwait.org



Photos during the event.



This image released by A24 shows Hugh Jackman in a scene from 'The Death of Robin Hood.'

Sarnoski's latest film re-examines cost of mythmaking

'The Death of Robin Hood' strips legend to its core

In the opening moments of Michael Sarnoski's "The Death of Robin Hood," Hugh Jackman's Robin shelters on a cold and desolate peatland. A young attacker (Jade Croot) emerges from the dark emptiness beyond his campfire. He grabs her, tells her it was a mistake to bathe. He could smell her downwind. Then he puts a knife through her skull.

Oo-de-lally, oo-de-lally, golly what a day. Whichever version of Robin Hood is your favorite - three cheers for the 1973 animated Disney one - the story takes a beating in "The Death of Robin Hood." There are no knights in shining armor. There are no merry men. There is absolutely no swashbuckling.

Sarnoski, the director of the excellent Nicolas Cage thriller "Pig" and sci-fi sequel "A Quiet Place: Day One," has sapped every bit of derring-do from the folk hero. It's a thoughtful inversion of myth with some compelling ideas about the nature of storytelling. But it's a total slog.

"The Death of Robin Hood" drains the blood, and life, out of an old English legend. So forget about robbing from the rich and stealing from the poor. This Robin is a

grizzled marauder who can't even remember how many people he's killed. We are, to say the least, very, very far from men in tights.

This is to a purpose in Sarnoski's film, which, like Robert Eggers' "The Northman" and David Lowery's "The Green Knight," brings a primal realism to an old legend. As much as we might think of Errol Flynn or Kevin Costner, the origins of the story of Robin Hood weren't so cheery.

Robin Hood began as an oral tale dating back to the 12th century. A few hundred years later, the first written accounts were ballads. Sarnoski's film takes its title from one of those ballads, in which Robin Hood - long before there was any Maid Marian to speak of - was a mere yeoman. Only as the centuries wore on did Robin Hood gradually accrue the trappings of Sir Robin of Locksley.

There might have been a compelling movie to be made from those early, fragmented origins. But "The Death of Robin Hood" instead expends too much of its energy rubbing our face in the muck. Mud cakes the movie's first

half, which so strenuously insists on its revisionist approach that it quickly turns tiresome.

Jackman - weathered and bearded - looks amazing, like a medieval Santa Claus. And so does the movie, shot across rugged, wind-swept Northern Ireland vistas by cinematographer Patrick Scola. Robin, himself, appears weighed down by the mythology around him. He doesn't use the name and calls the rumors about him "lies upon lies." But others are buoyed by it.

Little John (Bill Skarsgård) is no great friend but a reluctant companion for Robin. He listens to Little John talk up a new scheme as "a good adventure" shortly before Little John beats a man to death for bread. The battle that follows - a muddy and mean scrum - is even more ghastly, partly for its utter pointlessness.

This great disparity between reality and story, truth and history, takes on new dimensions when Robin clandestinely takes refuge at an island priory where Sister Brigid (Jodie Comer) tends to his wounds. He is sheltering Little John's daughter, Margaret (Faith Delaney), but their secret past is quietly threatened with the arrival of a young

man (Noah Jupe) whose maimed, bandaged face evidences a recent run-in with Robin and Little John.

Robin's coldness and cruelty begins to melt away thanks to Sister Brigid and the peaceful life he finds there. If story had previously been a yoke around his neck, Robin realizes another purpose when he considers Margaret's future.

In a way, "The Death of Robin Hood" is an appropriately contemporary version of a much-retold story, suited to a time when lies and denial of history rule the day. But the oppressive dourness and forced cynicism of the film suffocate the characters in a way that feels no more realistic than Mel Brooks' 1993 parody. The result, while admirably considered, is almost comically misjudged - like insisting Paddington the bear sits on a throne of lies. In the end, "The Death of Robin Hood" ironically supports an old movie axiom: Print the legend.

"The Death of Robin Hood," an A24 release in theaters Friday, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for strong bloody violence. Run time: 123 minutes. Two stars out of four. (AP)

Variety

NEW YORK: Anne Hathaway is pregnant with her third child.

On Friday, the Oscar-winning actor posted an Instagram video in which she grins as she reveals a baby bump and hurries off camera. The 43-year-old Hathaway captioned the video "Baby, I'm yours" and for the soundtrack used the Barbara Lewis hit of the same name.

When asked for confirmation, a Hathaway spokesman responded, "I think the video is pretty obvious." (AP)

LOS ANGELES: Comedian Carlos Mencia was arrested Thursday and charged with 12 felony charges for failing to report or pay taxes on more than \$8 million in earnings, prosecutors said. Los Angeles County District Attorney Nathan Hochman announced the charges at a news conference where he called Mencia "one of California's biggest tax scofflaws."

The 58-year-old stand-up comic was charged with six felony counts of failure to file personal income tax with the intent to evade taxes - one each for the years 2019 to 2024 - and six similar counts for corporate taxes.

Mencia owes more than \$300,000 in state taxes on income totaling \$8.7 million, Hochman said.

He has not entered a plea, and emails sent to his attorney seeking comment was not immediately answered. (AP)

Low-cost horror film registers high-impact box office performance

'Obsession' grows from sleeper hit to industry shockwave

LOS ANGELES, June 20, (AP): Days before "Obsession" opened in theaters, its 26-year-old director, Curry Barker, made a bet with his manager and agent. They said if the movie opened above \$20 million, they would all get tattoos.

"Obsession" fell just short. It debuted with \$17 million. They were still thrilled. Barker made the horror film with just \$750,000. It was enormously successful. But then something unexpected happened. The following weekend, "Obsession" easily cleared \$20 million. And then it did again and again and almost a fourth time - an almost unheard-of staying power.

"It was just like: Holy cow, I didn't think that was an option," Barker says. "Now we've said if it hits \$300 million, we'll all get the tattoo. We had to make a new milestone. And I think we'll reach it."

Over the last month, "Obsession" has sent shock waves through Hollywood. Barker's microbudget thriller has grossed \$286 million worldwide, and it's still going. On its fifth weekend in theaters, it was second only to Steven Spielberg's "Disclosure Day," with \$19 million. In North America, it has outgrossed "Star Wars: The Mandalorian and Grogu." It's the biggest hit in the 24-year existence of Focus Features, which has had to postpone the video-on-demand release. It ranks among the most profitable movies ever made.

Barker, who built a following making sketches and short films on YouTube, is living out the dream of every aspiring filmmaker. Life, he granted in a recent interview, is different now.

"My day to day is pretty much the same. It's just that when I go out in public, it's a lot different," he says, laughing. "I actually feel a little unsafe sometimes."

That's an ironic development for someone whose twist on an old Monkey Paw story has frightened moviegoers. In "Obsession," Bear Bailey (Michael Johnston) wishes on an antique toy called a One Wish Willow that his crush, Nikki (Inde Navarrette), loved him. The spell - loosely inspired by an old "Simpsons" Halloween episode - works disturbingly well.



This image released by Focus Features shows director Curry Barker on the set of "Obsession." (AP)

The astonishing success of "Obsession" has been hotly debated throughout the industry. Coupled with the A24 hit "Backrooms," by 20-year-old Kane Parsons, it's been a coming-out party for YouTube as a breeding ground for the next generation of filmmakers.

It's also brought waves of Gen Z moviegoers - who already make up a promisingly robust percentage of frequent ticket buyers - into theaters. Summer has historically been dominated by legacy franchises, but "Obsession" may represent a sea change.

"If there's a lesson from 'Obsession,' I think it's about audiences," says Peter Kujawski, chairman of Focus Features. "We have a generation that grew up online, approaches culture with enormous curiosity and playfulness, and is far less concerned with where a filmmaker comes from than whether the story connects. They're engaged, incredibly film-literate and eager to champion new voices and

original stories."

Barker, who grew up in Mobile, Alabama, before moving to Los Angeles at 18, says he feels as though he's writing for his generation. The response to "Obsession," he says, taps into a collective need.

"I get it because I think we're a little tired of being at home. Our generation is the COVID generation," says Barker. "I was fortunate enough to have all four years of high school experience. My brother, Riley, lost two years of that. We're sick of the phones."

Barker wanted to be an actor before he wanted to be a filmmaker. And while his early exposure to "The Texas Chainsaw Massacre," at age 11, helped set him on a horror path, he didn't begin that way.

"I was a huge Harry Potter fan growing up. Huge. I was obsessed," Barker says, smiling. "I had all the wands. I would dress up."

Barker attended film school in Los Angeles

for a year, where he met Cooper Tomlinson, a co-star and producer on "Obsession." The two soon forged their own path, though, on YouTube and TikTok. Their comedy sketch series, "That's a Bad Idea," found a footing online.

Barker wrote and directed the 2023 short "The Chair," which attracted the interest of Tea Shop Productions. Producer James Harris approached Barker about a feature of "The Chair," but he instead wanted to make a film - "Obsession" - that drew on many of the same ideas. Meanwhile, Barker also made an \$800 found-footage horror film, "Milk & Serial." After failing to secure distribution, he simply uploaded to YouTube. It went viral and landed him an agent.

"Obsession" was selected to premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival last year, giving it an enviable platform. After a bidding war, Kujawski and Focus acquired it for \$15 million.

"What stands out about Curry is that he isn't working from an inherited playbook," says Kujawski. "Whether you look at his earlier work or 'Obsession,' there's a consistency of vision and a confidence in his storytelling that immediately sets him apart. He knows exactly what he wants to say while being absolutely committed to making every minute of his work as entertaining as possible, and he's willing to take real risks in service of that vision."

Barker's swift but hard-earned rise has made him the poster boy for a new brand of filmmaker, one who has honed his craft as a digital creator and arrives with an established fan base. Jason Blum, the chief executive of Blumhouse Productions, has compared Barker and company to the 1970s wave of American auteurs, "making edgy movies that are connecting in theaters in a crazy way."

"When you really step back, my journey is not really that different than Christopher Nolan or David Fincher or Steven Spielberg," Barker says. "You can watch their early short films and see their work before they were given a chance. I think YouTube is just a path, a platform we can use now to show the industry what we've got."

Photography

'Wiki Loves Earth' preserves Kuwait's natural heritage digitally

Wikipedia launches 2nd photography contest in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, June 20, (KUNA): The free international digital encyclopedia Wikipedia launched the second edition of its photography contest “Wiki Loves Earth in Kuwait” aiming to document Kuwait’s natural heritage and preserve it digitally.

Organized by Wikimedia Kuwait Group for 2026, the contest encourages citizens and residents to upload high-quality photographs to Wikimedia Commons under a free license, creating an accessible visual record of protected areas.

Participants will contribute to highlighting Kuwait’s unique landscapes and biodiversity to a global audience, supporting efforts to document the country’s natural heritage and enhancing public awareness through free knowledge available to everyone.

The competition was launched for the first time in 2025, where two photos from Kuwait won international awards, successfully highlighting the unique and diverse natural landscapes that the country heavily enjoys.

Amateurs and professional photographers can participate in this environmental competition by visiting the official campaign link: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Commons:Wiki_Loves_Earth_2026_in_Kuwait

“Wiki Loves Earth” is an international photography competition organized annually on Wikimedia Commons, inviting photographers worldwide to document natural protected areas, including national parks, reserves, and wetlands under a free public



A solitary flamingo stands in still, dark water, its reflection glowing softly beneath it – like a quiet moment suspended between light and shadow.



A close-up of a fennec fox stalking forward, its golden eyes locked intently on something ahead, ears sharply alert against a soft desert-like blur in the background.



Two lizards locked in a fierce battle on the sand.



A small herd of camels stands together on a grassy shoreline, with birds perched on their backs as they look out toward a calm, misty sea.

license. The Kuwaiti edition focuses specifically on the unique environmental diversity within the country’s protected areas, in addition to the various living species that permanently inhabit these fragile desert and marine ecosystems.

Fashion

Hamilton & Domingo bring the glam to Milan

Ralph Lauren’s menswear swings from classic to casual cool



A model wears a creation as part of the Ralph Lauren Spring/Summer 2027 men's collection presented in Milan, Italy. (AP)



A model wears a creation as part of the Ralph Lauren Spring/Summer 2027 men's collection presented in Milan, Italy. (AP)



A model wears a creation as part of the Ralph Lauren Spring/Summer 2027 men's collection presented in Milan, Italy, Friday, June 19, 2026. (AP)



A model wears a creation as part of the Ralph Lauren Spring/Summer 2027 men's collection presented in Milan, Italy. (AP)



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MILAN, June 20, (AP): Lewis Hamilton hobnobbed with Colman Domingo in the front row of Ralph Lauren’s Milan Fashion Week show, trading notes on a menswear collection that ran the gamut from bankerly pinstripes to layered festival wear.

The fashion powerhouse has shown menswear in its stately Milan palazzo the last two seasons, drawing an A-list crowd Friday evening that also included “Crazy Rich Asians” star Henry Golding, “Avengers” actor Tom Hiddleston, U.S. actor Scott Eastwood.

Outside, eager fans braved a heatwave to glimpse of arriving celebrities and were rewarded as Thai actor Nichakoon Khajornborirak, nicknamed Meen, and Korean actor Kim Woo-bin each took a moment to turn and wave as the crowd snapped photos. Domingo took a slide on his way inside, as he circled back to his car to grab his hand fan.

“I was not going to leave that fan in that car. Then my heel just slid, and I was safe. But I got the fan, which was the most important thing,” Domingo said after the evening show, which followed a very hot and humid early summer day in Milan.

Daytime suits from Ralph Lauren’s luxury Purple line quickly morphed into tuxedo shirts and stiff bow ties under trailing patchwork denim coats that showed signs of distress. Looks were finished with berets worn askew, aviator glasses



A model wears a creation as part of the Ralph Lauren Spring/Summer 2027 men's collection presented in Milan, Italy. (AP)

and pocket watch chains. “Today I saw it felt like 1920s-inspired,” Domingo said, stopping to listen to Nat King Cole play in



A model wears a creation as part of the Ralph Lauren Spring/Summer 2027 men's collection presented in Milan, Italy. (AP)

the background. “It’s evocative of what we saw today. A mixture of old and new.”

On the more casual side, colorful madras plaids held together the sportier Polo collection of layered knitwear, rugby shirts and light puffers more adapted to a mountain festival or night-time beach party than a Milan heatwave. Some looks were straight out of the “Preppy Handbook,” with pink and green happily

colliding. Cheekily, the coveted Polo Bear motif on knitwear wore outfits matching the runway.

“I saw beautiful cravats and vests mixed in with like workwear, all the things I love about Ralph, bringing things from day to night, from the street, from urban communities to East Hampton,” Domingo added. “It was a great mix. Getting a car from Brooklyn and going to East Hampton, you feel like you fit right in.”

Formal and casual looks gradually converged throughout the collection, without regard for occasion. Runway casting was similarly age- and race-inclusive.

Silk scarves accenting suits became colorful bandanas on casual looks. Ties became belts and were sewn together to make bags, suggesting a reusability on trend with up-cycling. Footwear ranged from leather fisherman’s sandals to velvet slippers and espadrilles to rain-resistant duck boots. For bags, men can choose from Ralph Lauren-branded canvas totes or luxury snakeskin portfolios and bags.

Eastwood said he had his eye on a snakeskin bag. “This is just a classy brand that’s timeless,” said Eastwood, adding that his father, actor and director Clint Eastwood, and brand founder Ralph Lauren go way back.

Golding said Ralph Lauren had long supported him in his career, and that “the Purple label is just my go-to for anything refined.”

Indian Embassy marks 12th International Day of Yoga with over 2,200 participants in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, June 20: More than 2,200 yoga enthusiasts gathered at Boulevard Stadium on Saturday to mark the 12th International Day of Yoga (IDY) 2026, in a vibrant display of Kuwait's growing embrace of wellness practices and cross-cultural engagement.

The event, organised by the Embassy of India in Kuwait, brought together diplomats, government officials, members of the Indian community, yoga practitioners and wellness advocates, underscoring strong people-to-people ties between India and Kuwait.

Addressing the gathering, Indian Ambassador to Kuwait, Her Excellency Paramita Tripathi, highlighted this year's theme, "Yoga for Healthy Ageing," noting its relevance in promoting physical health, mental well-being and emotional balance across all age groups.

Tripathi said the large turnout reflected the rising popularity of yoga in Kuwait, praising the role of Her Excellency Sheikha Sheikha Ali Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, President of the Kuwait Yoga Committee, in advancing yoga in the country. She noted that Sheikha Sheikha, founder of Dar Atma – Kuwait's first licensed yoga studio established in 2014 – received India's Padma Shri award in 2025, and was recently appointed President of the World Yoga Federation.

The ambassador emphasised that yoga, rooted in ancient Indian traditions, transcends cultural, religious and linguistic boundaries, pointing to the global support for the United Nations resolution that established the International Day of Yoga in 2014.

Highlighting the scale of this year's celebrations, Tripathi said more than 40 curtain-raiser events were held across Kuwait in recent weeks, spanning schools, community centres, workplaces and public spaces. Activities also included an all-women wellness gathering at India House, alongside ongoing weekly yoga sessions hosted by the embassy in collaboration with the Centre of India Studies.

She commended the efforts of community organisations, volunteers, sponsors and wellness advocates for ensuring the success of the celebrations, and congratulated participants of yoga posture and painting competitions held as part of the programme.

During her address, the ambassador also announced several new initiatives, including the launch of an



Photos by Rezk Tawfiq

Photos from the event

AYUSH Forum to bring together experts in yoga, Ayurveda and traditional medicine, and the introduction of "Indian Film Thursdays" at the em-

bassy starting June 25.

Tripathi expressed appreciation to the Government of Kuwait, the Kuwait Yoga Committee, sponsors and

partners for their continued support, noting that yoga continues to serve as a bridge strengthening cultural and bilateral ties between India and Ku-

wait.

Concluding her remarks, she said the strong turnout at the iconic venue reflected Kuwait's growing commit-

ment to healthy living, and extended greetings to all participants on the occasion of the International Day of Yoga.



Revelers gather at the ancient stone circle Stonehenge to celebrate the Summer Solstice, the longest day of the year, near Salisbury, England on June 21, 2023.(AP)

Sunday is the longest day of the year in Northern Hemisphere

WASHINGTON, June 20, (AP): This is the sun's time to shine: Sunday is the longest day of the year in the Northern Hemisphere.

Sunday is the solstice, marking the start of astronomical summer north of the equator. It's the opposite in the Southern Hemisphere, where it is the shortest day of the year and winter will start.

The word "solstice" comes from the Latin words "sol," for sun, and "stitium," which can mean "pause" or "stop." The summer solstice is the end of the sun's annual march higher in the sky, when it makes its longest, highest arc. The bad news for sun lovers: It then starts retreating and days will get a little shorter every day until late December.

People have marked solstices for eons with festivals and monuments, including Sweden's midsummer eve celebrations and Stonehenge, which was designed to align with the sun's paths at the solstices.

Here's what to know about the Earth's orbit.

As the Earth travels around the sun, it does so at an angle, making the sun's warmth and light fall unequally on the northern and southern halves of the planet for most of the year.

The solstices mark the times when the Earth is tipped most extremely either toward or away from the sun. This means the hemispheres are getting very different amounts of sunlight, and days and nights are at their most unequal.

At the Northern Hemisphere's summer solstice, the Earth's upper half is leaning toward the sun, creating the

longest day and shortest night of the year. The summer solstice falls between June 20 and 22. This year it's June 21.

The opposite happens at the Northern Hemisphere winter solstice: the Earth's upper half leans the furthest away from the sun, leading to the shortest day and longest night of the year. The winter solstice falls between Dec. 20 and 23.

During the equinox, the Earth's tilt is neither toward the sun nor away from the sun, so both the northern and southern hemispheres get an equal amount of sunlight. The sun rises almost exactly due east and it sets almost exactly due west.

The word equinox comes from two Latin words meaning equal and night. That's because on the equinox, day and night last almost the same amount of time - though one may get a few extra minutes, depending on where you are on the planet.

The Northern Hemisphere's fall - or autumnal - equinox can land between Sept. 21 and 24, depending on the year. Its spring - or vernal - equinox can land between March 19 and 21. The exact time of the equinox is the moment the sun is directly overhead at the equator.

These are just two different ways to carve up the year.

While astronomical seasons depend on how the Earth moves around the sun, meteorological seasons are defined by the weather. Meteorologists break down the year into three-month seasons based on annual temperature cycles. By that calendar, spring starts on March 1, summer on June 1, fall on Sept. 1 and winter on Dec. 1.

Ebola cases increase almost 40% in week as death toll passes 200, says Africa CDC

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia, June 20, (AP): African officials must step up financing to respond and develop vaccines for the Ebola outbreak in Congo and Uganda, the continent's top health agency said on Friday, warning that the continent cannot continue to rely on foreign partners for its health needs.

The outbreak has claimed more than 200 lives out of 894 confirmed cases since May 15, with up to 35,000 contacts, the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said. The number of cases is believed to be higher because the outbreak was confirmed weeks late.

With 894 confirmed cases so far, the current outbreak is three times worse than a previous outbreak in Uganda in 2000, which had 281 cases at the same point, said Dr. Wessam Mankoula, a medical epidemiologist at Africa CDC.

The latest number of cases is believed to be higher because the outbreak was confirmed on May 15, weeks after it was suspected to have begun. The number of cases has increased 38% since last week and is now in 32 health zones across eastern Congo, said Mankoula.

The outbreak is caused by the rare Bundibugyo virus, which has no approved vaccines or treatments and was not tested for in the early days. The more common Zaire virus, for which there is a vaccine, was responsible for most of Congo's past 16 outbreaks of the disease.

Africa CDC Director-General Dr. Jean Kaseya told The Associated Press in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's capital, that the current outbreak - the worst ever at this stage - is yet another reminder for Africa to invest more in its health sector to reduce its reliance on foreign partners.

"If this outbreak was in Europe, the United States or other continents, they would already have developed a vaccine and medicine," Kaseya said.

"We don't want to be a continent begging every day. We want to be a continent of people who know what they are doing and who are respected because they are doing the right thing," he added.

Response efforts have been challenged by the lack of approved vaccines or treatments for the Bundibugyo virus. The more common Zaire virus, for which there is a vaccine, was responsible for most of Congo's past 16 outbreaks of the disease.

At the epicenter in Congo's eastern Ituri province where burials



Health workers tend to an Ebola patient at the Rwampara Treatment Center in Ituri, Congo on June 18. (AP)

have become routine, including of babies. Health workers labor with little rest as they battle attacks from angry residents and widespread skepticism.

Consecutive health shocks, including COVID-19, have triggered efforts to boost local vaccine manufacturing in Africa, although not much has been achieved yet.

The continent, whose population is projected to reach 2.5 billion by 2050, produces less than 1% of its vaccine needs and 3% of medicine that is brought in from abroad, making millions of people vulnerable to epidemics.

While efforts are in place to speed up the development of vaccines and diagnostics, Kaseya said he is unsure a vaccine will be available by the end of the year.

The Africa CDC head added that the peak of the Ebola outbreak is still to come because of slow progress in identifying and monitoring contacts.

Officials are yet to identify the outbreak's patient zero and still need to trace more than 35,000 people who have come in contact with infected individuals, he added.

"This is why we are accelerating our fundraising to put on the ground so many teams to look for any contact, direct or indirect, and to start following them," Kaseya said.

As part of the plan to push African states to financially support the agency's efforts, Kaseya said South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa is due to fly to Ituri Province in Congo and to Uganda next week in support of the mobilization of funds.

A newly established African Epidemic Fund has received pledges totaling about \$80 million from African governments, while a broader donor conference held this week generated pledges of about \$910 million, he said.

"We need to take care of ourselves," Kaseya said. "We need to say, 'It's time for us to really think strongly about how we can manufacture medicines and vaccines to meet our own needs.'"

Meanwhile, mourners gathered Friday to bury a 6-month-old girl who died from Ebola earlier this week, the third child to die at an orphanage in eastern Congo as authorities have struggled to contain the latest outbreak.

People stood at a distance as the small coffin was lowered into the ground by masked and gloved health workers, and a Catholic priest prayed over her body.

"It's a feeling of sadness because we have lost one of our own, a daughter of the church," said Father Innocent Ndogo.

"As we have always said, the Lord gives, and the Lord takes away."

Ituri, the region at the center of the current outbreak, has reported more than 90% of the cases. The response has been complicated by residents clashing with healthcare professionals over disrupted burials and the response to the outbreak, which has been militarized at times.

The impersonal nature of safe burial practices and the severity of the epidemic were evident on Friday as only healthcare workers in protective gear were allowed to handle the coffin and the burial.

Fineanganofu’s 17th try caps breakout season

Hurricanes overpower Chiefs in one-sided Super Rugby final

WELLINGTON, New Zealand, June 20, (AP): The Hurricanes beat the Chiefs 60-5 to win their second Super Rugby title a decade after the first, leaving no doubt Saturday they are the best attacking team in the competition’s history.

The Wellington-based team played with a northerly gale at their back in the first half and had four tries and a 29-0 lead by halftime. They added five more into the wind in the second half including doubles

to winger Josh Moorby and flyhalf Ruben Love.

The Hurricanes scored 113 tries in 17 matches in 2026 and finished as the first team in Super Rugby’s 30-year history to score more than 100 tries in a season.

Fehi Fineanganofu’s first-half try was his 17th of the season and gave him the individual record for most tries in a season until his teammate Moorby scored a try in each half to join him on that number.

When the first All Blacks squad of the season is named on Monday, it’s expected to be dominated by Hurricanes.

The front row of props Xavier Numia, Pasilio Tosi and hooker Asafo Aumua are set to be selected after the Hurricanes again overwhelmed an opposing scrum on Saturday, as they have done all season. The backrow, the combination of scrumhalf Cam Roigard and flyhalf Love, midfield of Jordie Barrett and Billy Proctor and Fenian-

ganofu likely will be chosen.

Fineanganofu was due to join the Newcastle Red Bulls in England, but it seems likely New Zealand will hold him back.

The final was seen as a contest between Love and the Chiefs’ Damian McKenzie for the All Blacks’ starting flyhalf role and Love thoroughly outplayed his rival, conducting the Hurricanes’ attack adding to his double by kicking seven goals from 10 attempts for an individual tally of

25 points.

The Hurricanes played with ball in hand when the wind was at their back and used the wind in the second half by kicking to recover the ball. The pace and quality of their attacking play left the Chiefs’ defense grabbing at air.

The Chiefs scored their only try six minutes from fulltime to avoid becoming the first team to be held scoreless in a Super Rugby final.

Moorby scored his first in the sev-

enth minute and Love, Fineanganofu and fullback Callum Harkin all had scored by halftime.

Moorby opened the scoring in the second half and tries followed to Devan Flanders, Jordie Barrett and Love, who scored an acrobatic second.

The Hurricanes beat the ACT Brumbies 66-12 in the quarterfinals, the Blues 57-21 in the semifinals and with Saturday’s win can make a case for being the best Super Rugby team of all time.

Australia routs Netherlands for third consecutive victory



Beth Mooney of Australia bats during the Women’s T20 World Cup match between Australia and Netherlands in Southampton, England. (AP)

Mooney’s 74 sets Aussies up past 200

SOUTHAMPTON, England, June 20, (AP): Australia earned a third convincing win at the Women’s Twenty20 World Cup when it beat the by 98 runs Saturday.

Australia reached 200 in the World Cup for the first time and equaled the highest-ever tournament total, 219-6. The Netherlands was kept to 121-3 at the Rose Bowl.

Opening batter Beth Mooney gave Australia a scare when she retired on 74 off 42 balls with a stiff back. But she said afterward she was fine.

“I’m all good, just precautionary,” Mooney said. “Probably just not used to all the bus travel we’ve been doing.”

Mooney shared 50 runs off 28 balls for the opening wicket with Georgia Voll (17) and 101 off 55 with Ash Gardner (58), who returned from an ankle sprain.

Georgia Wareham swept Australia past 200 with 41 off 18 including 32 runs from boundaries.

With Mooney sidelined, Australia didn’t have a backup wicketkeeper. The usual alternative, Phoebe Litchfield, was out with a quad issue. The gloves were given to Voll and she was tidy, taking a catch in the second over as pacer Kim Garth took 2-10 in her first two overs.

The Netherlands, appearing in its first World Cup, was never going to chase down 220 but captain Babette de Leede and Sterre Kalis combined for 96 from 91 balls from the fourth over to the 19th.

Kalis, dropped on 21 and 40, was bowled for 44 and captain de Leede, 56 not out off 57 balls, finished the match with Robine Rijke, both of whom were playing their 100th T20s.

“This is a massive moment for us,” de Leede said. “Australia are a quality team (so) to learn from them, see how they go about their innings, it’s just incredible.”

Later Saturday was Pakistan vs. Bangladesh and England vs. Scotland.

‘It’s the team that needs to score, not you’

Portugal faces Ronaldo dilemma after disappointing DR Congo draw

NEW YORK, June 20, (Xinhua): As the saying goes, all good things must come to an end, and judging by Cristiano Ronaldo’s performance in Portugal’s 1-1 draw with DR Congo on Wednesday, the curtain could be coming down on one of football’s greatest careers.

Ronaldo set another record by becoming the oldest outfield player to start a World Cup match at 41 years, 132 days. If he scores during this tournament, he would become the second-oldest player to score at a World Cup, behind Cameroon forward Roger Milla.

However, his display against DR Congo raised questions over whether that goal will arrive and whether he should remain in the starting lineup of a Portugal side considered one of the tournament favorites.

Ronaldo played the full 90 minutes but had little impact. He touched the ball just 25 times, failed to register a shot on target, created no chances for teammates and did not complete a single successful dribble. He completed 19 of his 21 passes.

The performance extended Ronaldo’s goal drought in World Cup and



Portugal’s Cristiano Ronaldo leaves the pitch after the end of the first half during the World Cup Group K soccer match between Portugal and Congo in Houston. (AP)

European Championship matches to 10 games and 801 minutes. Britain’s Independent newspaper summed up the display with the headline “10 men and a statue,” with little doubt over who the statue referred to.

Portugal coach Roberto Martinez

defended his captain after the match.

“We didn’t get to the final third at the level we needed to give service to the striker or to use his movements,” Martinez said.

Pundits, however, were less forgiving.

Former France forward Thierry Henry criticized Ronaldo after he failed to capitalize on an opportunity in the second half when Bruno Fernandes was better positioned.

“It’s the team that needs to score, not you,” Henry said.

“Because he wants to score, he goes into the path of the pass.” Former striker Chris Sutton said Martinez should have been braver and substituted Ronaldo.

“He’s scared to take him off. Ronaldo may end up scoring the winner, but the game passed him by today,” Sutton said.

Ronaldo’s former Manchester United teammate Louis Saha argued that Portugal must prioritize the team over its star player.

“Cristiano is always going to be in competition with Erling Haaland, Kylian Mbappe and Lionel Messi. He wants to play every minute to break records. That’s his mentality, and we understand that,” Saha said.

“But I think he also understands that Portugal needs a high tempo. They want to press and have energy levels at the very top, and that will involve making changes.”

Boyaabs dismisses rumors

Al-Qadsia handball team to compete in Premier Division

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 20: Al-Qadsia Club handball team manager Sami Boyaabs confirmed that the club’s technical staff has prepared a comprehensive three-year development plan covering all team levels, stressing that it will be presented to the board of directors for approval in the coming period.

Boyaabs dismissed reports circulating on social media about the cancellation of the first handball team, describing them as baseless. He affirmed that the team will take part in the upcoming league season, as part of a broader strategy aimed at rebuilding the squad and renewing its roster, while placing greater focus on youth teams as the foundation for the club’s future.

He also announced the appointment of local coach Walid Salmeen to lead the team’s technical staff next season, noting that decisions regarding foreign player signings will be made in coordination with the coaching staff after the club’s plan is approved, in line with long-term sporting goals.

Boyaabs added that the department is working to build a competitive team through structured technical and administrative planning that



Al-Qadsia Club player shoots at goal during a match.

ensures stability, continuity, and improved results in the coming years.

He noted that several first-team players recently saw their contracts expire, including Nawaf Al-Shamari and goalkeeper Fahd Karam, while Abdulaziz Salmeen renewed his contract for four years and was loaned to Kazma for two seasons. These developments have fueled speculation among fans about the future of the first team and a possible shift toward promoting youth players.

Mystics stun Liberty

Coffey scores 22 as Lynx snaps Valkyries’ win streak

SAN FRANCISCO, June 20, (AP): Nia Coffey scored 22 points, Courtney Williams had 21 points, a season-best 12 rebounds and five assists, and the WNBA-leading Minnesota Lynx snapped Golden State’s four-game winning streak with an 81-75 victory over the Valkyries on Friday night.

After Cecilia Zandalasini made a 3-pointer following a Golden State timeout, Olivia Miles made two free throws for the Lynx (13-3), then blocked Zandalasini’s 3-point attempt moments later.

Zandalasini scored a career-high 23 points and Gabby Williams had 15 points and eight rebounds for Golden State (10-6).

Miles’ three-point play with 6:56 left put Minnesota ahead 71-64 then Gabby Williams made a 3-pointer with 6:06 to go as the teams traded baskets down the stretch.

The Lynx were outrebounded 50-47 but scored 12 points off Golden State’s 14 turnovers.

Coffey shot 7 for 11 with three 3s and also grabbed five rebounds to lead the Lynx, who also beat the Valkyries by single digits 87-84 on June 4 in Minneapolis.

Kayla McBride added 17 points while Natasha Howard had 10 points, eight rebounds and four assists for Minnesota before fouling out late.



Nia Coffey

Mystics 86, Liberty 83

In New York, the Washington Mystics are the youngest team in WNBA history, but are growing up fast.

Washington snapped New York’s eight-game winning streak, stunning the Liberty 86-83 on Friday night. It ended a 10-game regular-season losing streak to New York dating to 2023.

It was the second time in the past few games that Washington was able to close out a team in the final seconds, thanks in huge part to the play of second-year players Sonia Citron and Kiki Iriafen. Iriafen returned to the lineup after missing the last few games with a sprained ankle.

“Huge signs of growth,” coach Sydney Johnson said. “We lost a heartbreaker against Indiana. (Caitlin) Clark made a huge shot - big time play there. We are trying to find ways where we can get better. ... Part

of this journey we’re on together. I’m proud of them. We applied some of the things we learned.”

New York went up eight in the fourth quarter before Iriafen led the comeback, scoring nine points in the final four minutes, including the go-ahead basket with 27 seconds left.

“I think this one was huge for us,” Iriafen said. “Given we played the Liberty last week and we didn’t play up to our standards. We know they are a great team, but again we have so much fight and we think we can beat anyone, regardless of who they have.”

Washington is slightly younger than the 2020 New York team that had an average age of just over 24 years old according to the website “Across the Timeline.”

The Mystics are back to .500. They haven’t finished above that mark since Elena Delle Donne led the team to a championship in 2019.

Citron feels the Mystics are close to being one of the top teams in the league, but need to do it on a nightly basis. “I think right now we’re just trying to prove that we can be consistent and deliver this kind of game on a consistent basis,” she said. “We’re just trying to take it game-by-game and get better.”

Tempo 101, Sun 97

In Uncasville, Conn., Marina Mabrey scored a career-high 37 points and tied the WNBA single-game record with nine 3-pointers and the expansion Toronto Tempo overcame a 16-point deficit in the second half to beat the Connecticut Sun 101-97 on Friday night.

Mabrey scored 21 of her points in the fourth quarter as the Tempo made their big comeback. She was 9 of 12 overall from 3-point range and had four rebounds and four assists.

Temí Fagbenle shot 8 for 9 from the floor and finished with 19 points and had nine rebounds. Maria Conde also scored 19 points and had six rebounds off the bench.

Change Name

Old Name Mangesh Ramchandhar Chafikar.
A holder of Indian passport no R 8276849 .permanent Address Lata kunj nivas Jai Prakash Road Tinbungala Nirmal Nagar Khar East. Mumbai .India New Name Mangesh Ramchandhar Chafikar. do here by Correct my Name

Arsenal opens season against newly promoted Coventry

LONDON, June 20, (AP): Arsenal will begin its Premier League title defense at home against newly promoted Coventry, kicking off the league’s 2026-27 season on Aug. 21.

Manchester City, in its first season in 10 years without Pep Guardiola as manager, will host Bournemouth in its opener, and Manchester United will visit promoted Hull. Liverpool plays at Newcastle.

The season’s fixtures were released by the league on Friday.

Chelsea and new coach Xabi Alonso visit Fulham in a west London derby on Aug. 24 that concludes the opening round of fixtures.

After facing Coventry, Mikel Arteta’s team visits Aston Villa and then hosts Chelsea as it looks to repeat as champion after winning its first league title in 22 years last season.

Andoni Iraola, Liverpool’s new manager, will get his first taste of the Merseyside derby on Nov. 28 at Everton’s Hill Dickinson Stadium.

Man United’s second game of the season is also against a promoted team - Ipswich - this one at Old Trafford with coach Michael Carrick starting a two-year contract.

The first Manchester derby is scheduled for Sept. 12 at Old Trafford. United visits Anfield on Nov. 21.

The season starts one week later than the 2025-26 campaign, to allow for player recovery following the World Cup.

The final round will be played on Sunday, May 30 - six days before the Champions League final on June 5 in Madrid.

Frank Lampard, the Chelsea great who coaches Coventry, welcomes his old team to Coventry Building Society Arena on Boxing Day, Dec. 26.

Ipswich opens its campaign at home against Sunderland. Ipswich is looking for a new coach after Kieran McKenna stepped down just over a week ago despite leading the club to promotion.



10-man Paraguay keeps World Cup hopes alive

Winless Turkiye sent packing

SANTA CLARA, Calif., June 20, (AP): Matias Galarza scored 65 seconds into the game for the fastest goal at this year’s World Cup, and Paraguay held on for a 1-0 win over Turkiye after playing a man down for more than half the match.

The win assured the United States would win Group D and eliminated Turkiye from any chance of advancing to the knock-out round with its second straight loss. Paraguay will face Australia in the final match of the group stage next Thursday, with second place in the group on the line. Paraguay will need to win to finish second.

“It’s unforgettable,” Galarza said. “This is the most beautiful stage in the world, playing amongst the best. I’m so proud. I hope that Paraguay is happy.”

Paraguay was short-handed after Miguel Almiron was issued a red card late in the first half for violating a new rule banning players from covering their mouths during a confrontation.

But goalkeeper Orlando Gill made several key saves to preserve the lead in a game when Turkiye held a 32-7 edge in shot attempts at goal.

“It was very hard,” midfielder Andres Cubas said. “These games are very tough, especially one man down. We have to highlight the great group effort and commitment we showed as a team to keep fighting and do this until the end.”

Paraguay bounced back from a 4-1 loss in the opener against the U.S. team, thanks in part to a lineup



Paraguay’s Juan Jose Caceres, left, head a ball next to Turkey’s Merih Demiral during the World Cup Group D soccer match in Santa Clara, Calif., near San Francisco. (AP)

change made by Gustavo Alfaro. Galarza, who plays for Atlanta United of the MLS, was put into the starting lineup after sitting out the opener and rewarded his coach when he sent a left-footed shot from about

25 yards into the net just 1:05 into the game.

Turkiye nearly got the equalizer later in the first half, but Mert Muldur’s header off a free kick hit the crossbar and the goalpost.

Muldur was in the middle of the confrontation in stoppage time in the first half that led to Galarza’s ejection.

Almiron and Mulder exchanged words following a foul near mid-

field. Almiron covered his mouth while saying something to Mulder, who immediately appealed to referee Ivan Barton for a penalty.

Barton went to video review and quickly ruled that Almiron would be

given a red card and ejected under a new rule put in place for this year’s World Cup.

Turkiye dominated possession for a second straight match, but once again it wasn’t enough as the Turks followed up the 2-0 loss to Australia with another defeat that assures they will have a short stay in their first World Cup appearance in 24 years.

Turkey qualified for the tournament for the first time since 2002 and had high hopes after reaching the quarterfinals of the European championships two years ago, but was unable to advance despite entering the tournament as a favorite to advance from the group.

Turkish midfielder Arda Guler called his team’s performance at the World Cup “embarrassing.” The 62 shots in two games for the Turks are the most in any two-game span without scoring, as far as records go back to 1966, according to Opta Stats.

“We should have scored some goals,” Guler said. “We should have won these games, so apologies to the Turkish people.”

Orlando Gill made a save on a tricky deflection on a shot by Merih Demiral early in the second half and again on a long-range attempt from Abdulkirim Bardakci midway through the half to preserve the lead. Gill then stopped Can Uzun from in close late in the half, and Deniz Gul sent the rebound wide.

Merih Demiral’s header late in stoppage time went wide, ending Turkiye’s last hope.

“I’m sad,” Turkey coach Vincenzo Montella. “I’m sad, but I’m also very proud of my players. They gave absolutely everything right up until the final whistle. That’s what football is like.... We came very close to equalizing, but you also need to accept situations like this.”

Fan Zone



Erin Moreno and her son Dio, 5, of Salt Lake City, watch at a fan festival in Kansas City, Mo., a televised World Cup Group D soccer match between the United States and Australia. (AP)



US fans react after the World Cup Group D soccer match between the United States and Australia in Seattle (AP)



Left: Turkish fans gather outside the stadium before the World Cup Group D soccer match between Turkey and Paraguay in Santa Clara, California, near San Francisco. Right: A Brazil fan cheers prior to the World Cup Group C soccer match between Brazil and Haiti in Philadelphia (AP)



Moroccan fans cheer on their team during the World Cup Group C soccer match between Scotland and Morocco in Foxborough, Mass., near Boston. (AP)



Brazil fans react as they wait for the start of the World Cup Group C soccer match between Brazil and Haiti in Philadelphia. (AP)

Tunisia fights for survival

Big test for Saudi Arabia against Spain

ATLANTA, June 20, (Agencies): Saudi Arabia face one of its toughest tests of the World Cup when it takes on European champion Spain today in Group H, hoping to build on the encouraging display that earned them a 1-1 draw against Uruguay in their opening match.

The Green Falcons impressed in their tournament opener and came close to claiming all three points before conceding a late equalizer. Now, in their seventh World Cup appearance, they are targeting another positive result that could significantly enhance their chances of reaching the Round of 32 for the first time since the 1994 edition in the United States.

Saudi Arabia can take confidence from its famous victory over Argentina at the 2022 World Cup, proving it is capable of upsetting one of the game’s traditional powers. Goalkeeper Mohammed Al-Owais, who produced a series of outstanding saves against Uruguay, is expected to play a key role again as he prepares to face a Spanish attack.

Spain, however, enters the match determined to respond after being held to a surprising goalless draw by tournament debutant Cape Verde. Considered among the leading contenders for the title, La Roja knows another slip-up could complicate its path to the knockout stage.

Lamine Yamal is not feeling 100% fit and is not likely to start for Spain in the match against Saudi Arabia on Sunday at the World Cup.

Yamal came into the tournament nursing a left hamstring injury and was only a substitute in the team’s opener on Monday - a disappointing 0-0 draw against Cape Verde.

“I’m fine, I feel good, but it’s still too soon,” Yamal told Spanish network RTVE. “It’s unnecessary (to take risks). I’m going through an adaptation process, it’s not the time to play a full match yet. But I can play as many



Saudi Arabia’s Abdulrahman Al-Faraj (4) celebrates after scoring their opening goal during the World Cup Group H soccer match between Saudi Arabia and Uruguay in Miami Gardens, Fla. (AP)

minutes as the coach wants.”

The 18-year-old Yamal came off the bench in the 71st minute against Cape Verde but was not able to spark La Roja to victory against the nation of about half-million people that was making its debut at soccer’s showcase event.

After facing Saudi Arabia on Sunday in Atlanta, Spain goes to Guadalajara to play Uruguay in the high-light match of Group H. The match may be decisive and having Yamal fully fit could be crucial for Spain.

Yamal said teammate Nico Williams, who also arrived nursing an injury, was ahead of him in the recovery process.

“Physically he’s even better than me,” Yamal said. “We’re not in a rush. We have a great team with top-level players and we have to go step by step.”

Yamal arrived at the World Cup as one of the tournament’s biggest stars despite his young age. He has been thriving with Barcelona and Spain’s national team for a while, having

helped La Roja win the European Championship in 2024. He led Barcelona to the Spanish league title this past season.

His popularity in the United States has been evident at the World Cup. An advertisement with his image towers over Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta, where Spain kicked off its campaign.

“I’m taking it naturally, it’s something I’m used to,” Yamal said about his popularity. “I know what I represent both outside of Spain and in Spain. I try to always give my best, that’s what the fans want. If you have your image on that building, it’s because you can do things on the field that people like, things that excite them when they see you play.”

In another Group F encounter, Tunisia will seek to recover from a heavy 5-1 defeat to Sweden when it meets Japan at Monterrey Stadium in Mexico. The Carthage Eagles, under new coach Hervé Renard, need a positive result to revive their hopes of advancing.

World Cup ticket buyers are left stranded as resale purchases fall through

ATLANTA, June 20, (AP): Bina Ramroop broke down in tears when she realized she wasn’t going to get the World Cup tickets she had bought for her grandson’s 13th birthday.

As thousands poured into Atlanta Stadium on Monday to see Spain face Cape Verde in what turned out to be a remarkable scoreless draw, Ramroop stood outside, increasingly stressed as she went back and forth for hours between StubHub representatives on the phone and FIFA representatives in the ticket booth. Each blamed the other.

No one could figure out why the tickets Ramroop bought months ago on StubHub for \$485 apiece couldn’t be transferred from the original seller to the FIFA ticketing app. StubHub offered her a refund and, as Ramroop heard the crowd roar for the start of the match, she knew she had no choice but to give up and take the offer.

“I didn’t want a refund, I didn’t want my money back,” Ramroop said. “I wanted to go to the game.”

The World Cup has delivered thrills on the pitch, but

fans have flooded social media with complaints about tickets that never arrived, orders that were canceled at the last minute and hours they spent trying to sort out problems between FIFA’s ticketing system and outside resale platforms. The vast majority seem to be about industry titan StubHub, but people who bought through competitors such as SeatGeek and Vivid Seats have also reported issues. Interviews with fans and industry experts show that some cases stem from technical glitches in the transfer process, while others could involve sellers who never had tickets to deliver in the first place, though StubHub denies such sales happen on its platform.

FIFA has urged fans to buy resale tickets through its own marketplace, where it slaps a 30% surcharge on every resold ticket - 15% each from the buyer and seller. But many fans bought through other resale sites, either out of habit or because those sites have lower prices or are easier to navigate.

Ramroop didn’t realize she was taking a risk when she bought through StubHub, which she had used in the past

without issues.

As she and her grandson Elijah Gomes took the long, lonely train ride back to the Atlanta suburbs, Elijah followed the score on his phone. The match had ended scoreless, and he tried to cheer up his devastated grandmother by telling her they hadn’t missed much after all (Cape Verdeans would beg to differ).

“He’s telling me, ‘Grandma, it’s OK, Grandma.’ And he’s trying to console me,” Ramroop said the next day.

She was hardly alone. An Associated Press journalist witnessed more than a dozen frustrated fans at the match who said they were stuck in similar situations.

StubHub blamed FIFA for the transfer problems that buyers like Ramroop have experienced. In a statement, it said FIFA has “poor technology infrastructure,” enacted last-minute transfer restrictions and didn’t launch its new ticketing app until a few weeks before the tournament. The company also called out organizers that “take anti-competitive actions” that limit where fans can buy and

sell tickets.

Asked about the technical issues, FIFA on Wednesday reiterated that sales through its official site are guaranteed to go through.

Industry observers say the problems appear to stem from more than one cause. For some, it may indeed be technical glitches - an issue that StubHub says is “very, very rare” and one that it is hard at work to solve. For others, they say it’s likely a more longstanding scourge: speculative sellers.

Scott Friedman, an industry veteran and co-founder of a consultancy called the Ticket Talk Network, said some sellers list tickets before they actually have them, betting that prices will fall closer to the event so they can buy the tickets at a better price later. But because World Cup ticket prices have surged since the tournament began, those sellers have been forced to either buy expensive tickets to fulfill their orders or cancel and accept penalties from resale platforms. StubHub’s penalties are typically 200% of the ticket price, Friedman said.



Netherlands fans take part in an 'Orange Walk' to Houston Stadium before a FIFA World Cup Group F soccer match between Netherlands and Sweden in Houston. (AP)

Sports

Unbeaten US powers into knockout stage



Australia's Jordan Bos shields the ball from United States' Sergino Dest, left, during the World Cup Group D soccer match between the United States and Australia in Seattle. (AP)

No Pulisic, no problem

SEATTLE, June 20, (AP): Christian Pulisic's injury absence didn't hurt the United States one bit.

The Americans advanced to the knockout round of the World Cup without their injured star forward, beating Australia 2-0 on Friday for their second straight victory in the expanded 48-team tournament. The U.S. then won Group D when Paraguay beat Turkey 1-0 early Saturday morning.

"C.P. is a fantastic player - the quality and the leadership that he gives us," said Folarin Balogun, who scored two goals in the 4-1 victory over Paraguay on June 12. "We didn't have him today, but I think you saw we're still capable of going out there and getting a result and putting up a performance."

As the Group D winner, the U.S. will play a round-of-32 match on July 1 in Santa Clara, California, against a third-place group finisher.

Pulisic, who plays for AC Milan and has 33 goals in 87 international appearances, missed Friday's match because of a calf injury.

Playing without a talent like Pulisic could have derailed previous American World Cup teams. But much has changed since the last time the U.S. hosted the World Cup in 1994, when it advanced by being one of the best third-place teams. The Americans lost to eventual champion Brazil in the round of 16.

The U.S. has won consecutive games at a World Cup for the first time since 1930. The Americans have scored six goals, one off their World Cup record, and received contributions from across their roster.

Alex Freeman, the youngest player on the team at 21 and the son of former NFL wide receiver and Super Bowl champion Antonio Freeman, made it 2-0 in the 43rd minute off a set piece. Freeman headed in a deflected shot by Sergiño Dest for his first career World Cup goal. The goal was confirmed after a video review.

"(He) is doing a fantastic job," coach Mauricio Pochettino said of Freeman. "The evolution is massive. He's so humble. He wants to learn. He always listens. He's a player that you really enjoy being with. Not only coaching, but being with him."

The U.S. took a 1-0 lead in the 11th minute after a run down the left sideline by Balogun.

He directed a centering pass toward striker Ricardo Pepi, who started in place of Pulisic. The ball never reached Pepi, deflecting off Australia defender Cameron Burgess and into the Socceroos' net for an own-goal.

"I want to be dangerous, I want to create opportunities," Balogun said. "It might not always be myself that scores, but if I can force an error that gives us the lead, then for me it's like a goal as well. It was a special start to the game to give us the momentum."

The Americans did not score after halftime, but the way they so thoroughly dominated Australia in the opening 45 minutes left an impression on Socceroos coach Tony Popovic.

"It did not surprise us because their quality is clear," Popovic said. "Their power is clear. Their athleticism is clear. They are not surprising in what they did."

Expectations will only increase for the U.S. as momentum builds around the team. The Americans' start to the tournament has not changed Pochettino's perception of his squad and its potential.

"I think it's much better when you show good performances and win the games," Pochettino said. "I think that makes it easier, everything. But, at the same time, it's (important) to keep believing."

The U.S. learned it can advance from the group stage without Pulisic. And it has the roster to make a deep run.

"We know how vital Christian is to the team and how much he can contribute in the game," Freeman said. "For us, it was that we have Ricardo Pepi, who came in and had an amazing game. I think that just shows how (good) our roster is."

Saibari scores in second minute

Morocco edges Scotland to boost qualification chances



Scotland's Lewis Ferguson, left, tackles Morocco's Ismael Saibari, during the World Cup Group C soccer match between Scotland and Morocco in Foxborough, Mass., near Boston. (AP)

FOXBOROUGH, Mass., June 20, (AP): It took Ismael Saibari only 21 minutes to score a goal for Morocco in his World Cup debut.

Barely a minute was enough time for him to get on the scoreboard in his second outing.

Saibari drilled a shot into the top corner of the net a mere 72 seconds into 1-0 win over Scotland at Gillette Stadium, keeping alive Morocco's chances of advancing to its second straight World Cup knockout round.

"We wanted three points, and we got them," Morocco coach Mohamed Ouahbi said.

Morocco's ball movement caught Scotland on its heels at the very start.

Saibari slipped behind two Scotland defenders, and Brahim Diaz dropped the ball over the top to him. The 25-year-old forward gathered and blasted it into the top left corner, well outside the reach of goalkeeper Angus Gunn.

Morocco, which reached the semifinals at the last World Cup in Qatar, drew 1-1 with Brazil in its Group C opener, with Saibari scoring the lone goal. Scotland, which hasn't gotten out of the group stage in its eight previous World Cup appearances, beat Haiti 1-0 in its

first match.

Scotland was outshot 12-6 on Friday, struggling to get clear looks against Morocco's defense.

The negative result didn't affect Scotland coach Steve Clarke's confidence in his team.

"We gave them a game," Clarke said. "We're sure we can compete at this level."

Morocco nearly scored another in the 52nd minute when a header by Bilal El Khannouss off Achraf Hakimi's corner kick was battled down by Gunn.

Scotland had a chance in first-half stoppage time when Andy Robertson sent a cross to John McGinn, who couldn't get a foot on it near the back post.

As Scotland pressed for an equalizing goal in the closing minutes, Morocco had a pair of good chances to add to their lead, but both missed the target.

"I thought the performance didn't match the result, if I'm honest," Scotland midfielder Lewis Ferguson said. "We took the game to them. So there are positives from both games that we can certainly take into this last game."

Scotland will face Brazil in its final Group C match on Wednesday in Miami Gardens, Florida. Morocco will take on Haiti at the same time in Atlanta.

World Cup Diary

Neuer to retire after World Cup: Manuel Neuer announced ahead of Germany's second group match against Cote d'Ivoire that the World Cup in the United States, Mexico and Canada will be his last major tournament.

The 40-year-old, who's playing in his fifth World Cup, made the statement before making his 126th appearance for the German national team.

"I can't see myself playing in two years at the 2028 EURO," the Bayern Munich goalkeeper said. "It's a gift to be here. I desperately wanted to be part of the team." Neuer outlined his ambitions to make his last tournament a success, saying that he wouldn't be here "if I didn't see the chance to win the title." The German goalkeeper explained his return after a two-year break, citing the burden of many club games. "I couldn't have done all of it, the club and the national team," he said. (Xinhua)

Opening matches draw strong TV audiences: FIFA has released audience figures for the opening matches of the 2026 World Cup, showing strong television

viewership across the three host countries of Canada, Mexico and the United States.

According to FIFA, more than one million spectators have attended matches at stadiums since the start of the tournament. Television audiences for the opening matches involving the three host nations exceeded 54 million viewers across North America. (Xinhua)

Achraf to face trial for 2023 allegation: Morocco captain Achraf Hakimi will stand trial on a rape charge after French prosecutors on Friday rejected the Paris Saint-Germain defender's appeal to have the case dismissed.

The news comes in the run-up to Morocco's vital World Cup Group C match against Scotland.

Hakimi is accused of raping a 24-year-old woman at his home in Paris in 2023, with the initial investigation opening in March of that year.

The judge overseeing the case sent Hakimi to trial in February this year, although the 27-year-old, who has consistently denied the charges, had sought to have the case thrown out. (Xinhua)

Neymar expected to return

Brazil eliminates Haiti from World Cup as Cunha scores 2 goals

PHILADELPHIA, June 20, (AP): Matheus Cunha struck the back of the net and struck a pose, bringing scoring - and a dash of surfing - to the World Cup stage for Brazil.

Vinicius Junior scored and assisted on one of Cunha's two goals as five-time champion Brazil eliminated Haiti from the World Cup with a 3-0 victory.

"To be at a World Cup, to imagine that, it can be so wonderful," Cunha said. "It's a dream fulfilled."

Haiti, the Western Hemisphere's poorest nation that qualified for the World Cup for the first time since 1974, became the first team guaranteed not to reach the knockout round of the expanded 48-team tournament. Meanwhile, the Seleção got the deci-



Brazil's Matheus Cunha (9) celebrates after scoring his side's second goal with Brazil's Vinicius Junior (7) and Lucas Paqueta (20) during the World Cup Group C soccer match between Brazil and Haiti in Philadelphia. (AP)

sive performance they needed.

"It was what I expected from this match," coach Carlo Ancelotti said. Ancelotti also said Neymar is

expected to return from a right calf injury and play for Brazil next week against Scotland in its final group match. Neymar, Brazil's career scor-

ing leader with 79 goals, missed the first two games.

Brazil got plenty of scoring punch from Cunha on Friday.

The Manchester United standout got the start and showed with every surf-and-slide goal celebration why he should have been in the starting lineup in Brazil's listless 1-1 draw against Morocco. Ancelotti made the surprising decision in the opener to instead insert Cunha as a late substitute.

Cunha thrilled the Brazilian fans who made up the bulk of the 68,324 spectators at Lincoln Financial Field when he tapped in a rebound for his first career World Cup goal. He then sent a left-footed strike into the upper left corner for a 2-0 lead in the first half against the overmatched Haitians.

Brazil forward Raphinha, who was subbed out with an injury in the first half, had an early goal disallowed on an offside call that only temporarily muted the yellow-clad Seleção fans in an otherwise festive atmosphere at the home of the two-time Super

Bowl champion Philadelphia Eagles - whose cheerleaders did their part to rally the crowd.

Haitian fans danced and sang "Grenadye Alaso" ("Grenadiers to the Attack"), the traditional battle cry of the national team. Brazilians chanted back with reminders that their country is a five-time World Cup champion and the home of the king of soccer: "A thousand goals, a thousand goals, a thousand goals, a thousand goals, a thousand goals! Only Pelé, only Pelé!"

Cunha added to the frivolity in Philadelphia, home to nearly 6,000 Brazilian immigrants, when he flashed his familiar surfing celebration.

Vinicius, whose 32nd-minute goal helped Brazil earn the draw against Morocco, helped Brazil get on the board when his shot was stopped by goalkeeper Johny Placide and Cunha was there to slam home the rebound to make it 1-0. Cunha extended both arms as if trying to catch some tasty waves and was mobbed by teammates.