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Kuwait lifts curbs on 'recreational' sailing

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 21: The Ministry of Interior announced that recreational fishing and leisure boats are now permitted to sail round the clock, without restrictions, effective Sunday.

The ministry confirmed that this decision was taken after a thorough assessment of the current situation and aims to allow sea enthusiasts to pursue their activities day and night, while ensuring maritime navigation safety and security in the country.

It urged sea users to strictly adhere to the designated areas indicated on the approved map and to avoid approaching or sailing near oil installations and vital sites, as well as the area between the North and Northeast Failaka Island and the South Bubiyan Island, to maintain public safety and security.

It emphasized the necessity of keeping the Automatic Identification System (AIS) activated at all times at sea, as it plays a vital role in enhancing maritime surveillance and facilitating monitoring and rapid intervention when needed.

It added that recreational boaters and owners of fishing boats at Kuwait Bay should obtain a QR code from the Environment Public Authority (EPA) through the 'Sahel' application.



Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

Train united the United States, the train will unite the Gulf

IN his book, "The Men Who United the States," American historian Simon Winchester stated that the railway unified the United States.

Former President Abraham Lincoln shared this perspective, viewing the rail network as a vital tool for preserving national unity and cohesion amidst the fragmentation of the Civil War.

These historical precedents offer valuable lessons to the modern era.

Beyond moving passengers and freight, railways serve as catalysts for social and cultural integration. By bridging the gap between countries and societies, they promote international ties that contribute to long-term peace.

With this perception, the regional political and economic sectors enthusiastically welcomed the recent cooperation between Saudi Arabia and Turkiye. The two nations signed memoranda of understanding on logistics and railway development, specifically the revitalization of the historic Hejaz Railway.

In an age often defined by the fallout of prolonged conflicts, this initiative is seen as a positive step.

The revival of this project promises extensive advantages that reach far beyond the Arab nations and Gulf states along its route. By linking Europe with the Gulf and the East Arab, the railway will expand cultural exchange, trade and political discourse.

This is an acknowledgement that the foundations of modern states and societies are rooted in shared strategic interests rather than rhetoric or sentiment.

It is imperative that Kuwait and the neighboring Gulf nations participate as major investors in this huge project. Considering the substantial financial reserves of these states, there is an opportunity to form Gulf joint-stock corporations for funding both this initiative and the Gulf Railway project.

The advantages of such investment are two-fold: it will drive deeper integration within the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and remarkably reduce the costs of maritime imports. The vulnerabilities of reliance on one trade route were made clear to everyone during the recent conflict, which proved that such a model is not sustainable.

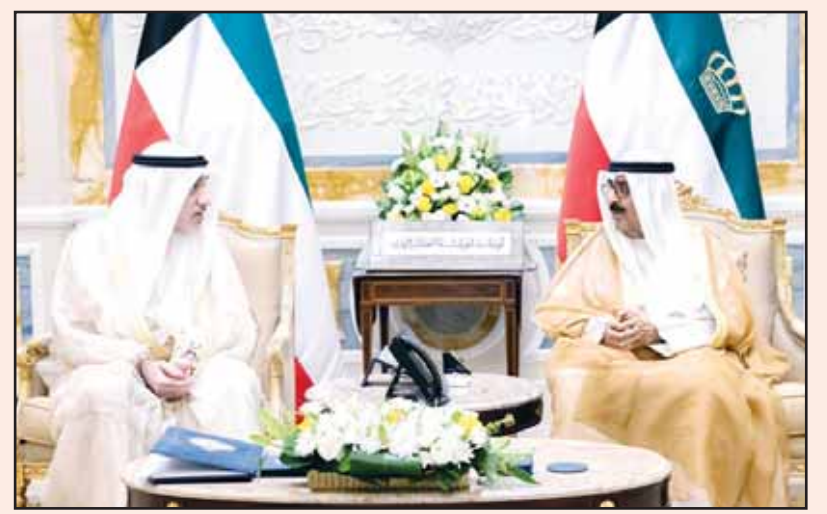
Substantial economic gains from metro and rail infrastructure have already been proven by regional examples in Riyadh and Dubai, where these networks mitigated traffic congestion, while saving time and financial resources.

Similar successes in Europe validate this, as regional trains ensure seamless travel, with rail freight volume exceeding 385 billion ton-kilometers.

When paired with supporting tourism and transport



His Highness the Amir receives HH the Crown Prince (left) and Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Interior (right).



Amiri Diwan photos

Amir receives Crown Prince, Acting PM, ministers

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Sunday His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Amir also received Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, Min-

ister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Separately, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received on Sunday Acting Prime Minister and

Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Crown Prince also received Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. (KUNA)

Court axes pay appeal

'No constitutional breach'

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 21: The Appeals Review Committee in the Constitutional Court rejected the appeal against the decision of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) to apply the general salary scale to employees at the Secretariat General of

the National Assembly.

The committee affirmed the constitutionality of the decision, stressing that it does not infringe upon acquired legal rights and does not violate the constitutional principles of equality or separation of powers.

The decision of the committee was published in the official gazette, 'Kuwait Al-Youm', on Sunday.

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Six Kuwaiti family businesses in Forbes Mideast Top 100 ranking

KUWAIT CITY, June 21: Forbes Middle East has revealed its list of the "Top 100 Arab Family Businesses for 2026," highlighting companies that drive growth and innovation and contribute to business sustainability across generations. The list includes six Kuwaiti family businesses, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a recent press statement, Forbes explained that the ranking of family-owned and operated companies is based on several criteria, including asset size and value, business performance over the past year, investments made, company history, and the level of business diversification in various sectors and geographic regions.

Abdul Latif Jameel, led by Chairman Mohammed Abdul Latif Jameel, topped this year's list. Al-Futaim Group, led by Vice Chairman and CEO Omar Abdullah Al Futaim, came in second.

The Egyptian Mansour Group ranked third, making it the only family business from outside the Gulf region to appear in the top ten.

1. Alghanim Industries: Rank - 15th in the Arab world Executive Chairman - Qutaiba Yousef Ahmed Alghanim Year founded - 1932

Alghanim Industries was established by Yousef Al-Ghanim and employs over 15,000 people across 30 companies operating in 40 countries throughout the Middle East, North Africa, Turkiye, and Asian markets.



Qutaiba Yousef Ahmed Alghanim



Mohammed Abdulaziz Alshaya



Faisal Bader Al-Sayer



Talal Anwar Al-Mulla



Bader Al-Kulaib



Adel Alghanim

The group's portfolio includes partnerships with global brands such as American Express, British Airways, and Cadillac. It has launched Barq, a high-speed electric vehicle charging operator in Kuwait. In March 2026, the company also launched Starlink satellite internet services.

2. Alshaya Group: Rank - 20th in the Arab world Executive Chairman - Mohammed Abdulaziz Alshaya Year founded - 1890

Alshaya Group represents more than 50 international brands

across the Middle East, North Africa, Turkiye, and Europe. The company operates over 3,500 stores, cafes, restaurants, and entertainment venues, in addition to businesses in logistics and food production, as well as more than 125 digital projects.

The company's portfolio includes brands such as Starbucks, H&M, and Debenhams.

In April 2026, the company opened its first global talent acquisition center in Egypt.

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NewsWatch

BEIRUT: Lebanon's Ministry of Public Health announced on Sunday that the death toll from Israeli occupation attacks on Lebanon has risen to 4,106 people since March 2.

In its daily report, the Emergency Operations Center at the ministry said the total number of people injured during the same period reached 12,153.

Meanwhile, Lebanon's National News Agency reported continued Israeli military activity in southern Lebanon, including machine-gun fire from an Israeli tank targeting the outskirts of the town of Hadatha.

The agency also said an Israeli drone dropped two stun grenades, one near the Kfarteibnit roundabout and another in the vicinity of Farah amusement park in Nabatieh Al-Fawqa. (KUNA)

Driving tests get a morning makeover

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 21: Assistant Director of the Traffic Awareness Unit at the General Traffic Department Lieutenant Colonel Abdullah Bu Hassan announced that "all those with appointments for evening driving tests can now visit the testing centers on the specified day from 8:00 am to 2:30 pm to complete their procedures without obstacles."

In a statement to Kuwait TV, Bu Hassan explained that

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Moody's maintains Gulf Bank's Long-Term Deposit Rating at 'A3' with Stable Outlook



stc persists to evolve its partnerships with entrepreneurs through 'weyakh'

Swiss summit opens as US and Iran test fragile 'truce'

OBBERGEN, Switzerland, June 21, (AP): U.S. Vice President JD Vance said Sunday there was an opportunity to "turn over a new leaf" with Iran as the sides launched talks aimed at building out the interim deal

to end the war in Iran reached by the two sides last week.

Vance is holding talks with Iran's parliamentary speaker, Mohammad

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Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, center, speaks between US Vice President JD Vance, left, and Qatar's Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani prior to a quadrilateral meeting between the United States, Iran, Pakistan and Qatar at the Burgenstock luxury hotel complex overlooking Lake Lucerne, Switzerland, Sunday June 21, 2026. (AP)



Prayer Timings

Fajr	03:14	Asr	15:24
Sunrise	04:49	Maghrib	18:51
Zohr	11:50	Isha	20:23



Sheikh Jarrah Jaber



Iruthisham Adam

Kuwait, Maldives find ways to up ties, discuss scenario

KUWAIT CITY, June 21, (KUNA): Kuwait Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received a phone call on Sunday from Maldivian counterpart Iruthisham Adam.

Sheikh Jarrah congratulated Adam at the outset of the call on her appointment as Minister of Foreign Affairs of the friendly Republic of Mal-

dives, wishing her success in her new duties, said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in a statement.

The two sides reviewed bilateral relations between the friendly countries and ways to enhance and develop them across various fields, in addition to discussing the latest regional and international developments.

'Smart meters to control water use in residences'

Move to cut tampering, prevent waste

By **Mohammad Ghanem**
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 21: The Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) announced that the deadline for submitting bids for the tender to supply, install, operate and maintain smart water meters for the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy was extended from June 21 to June 23.

The ministry requested the agency to issue the tender on May 24 to companies wishing to compete for the contract, in accordance with the technical specifications and requirements.

The tender is for the supply of about 300,000 smart water meters in the first phase to replace old mechanical meters in the residential areas.

According to the decision, the agency will open the bids on the previously announced date and refer them to the ministry for review and preparation of a technical recommendation within 30 days.

Based on this recommendation, the contract will be awarded to the company with the best bid that meets the specifications.

The smart water meter tender is an advanced strategic project that the ministry relies on to achieve full digital transformation, a governmental direction in all ministries and government institutions, especially the service-oriented ones.

These meters will enable the ministry to automatically read consumption without human intervention, as well as reduce water waste and

detect water leaks early.

It is worth noting that the ministry formed a specialized committee to study the specifications and technical requirements that the new smart meters must meet to withstand high temperatures, along with advanced capabilities and technologies to achieve the objectives.

The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy has started to extend fiber optic cables connecting existing major substations.

This project includes excavation and back-filling works in various residential areas from Monday until Saturday.

These areas include Ahmadi Block One, Hawally Block One, Yarmouk Block Two, and Salwa Blocks Four and Five.

The ministry thanked the public for their patience and cooperation while these works are being carried out.

France and Kuwait: A renewed strategic partnership in challenging times

By **Bassam Al-Qassas**
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 21: The French Republic celebrates its National Day every July 14, an occasion to honor the core principles of liberty, equality and fraternity that established the modern state.

Simultaneously, the nation reaffirms its dedication to global collaboration, security and peace.

Against this backdrop, the connection between Kuwait and France is remarkably stable while it maintains prominent alliance within the Arab Gulf.

For many decades, the two nations have cultivated a strong bond spanning political, economic, military and cultural sectors. This lasting friendship dates back several decades and has grown significantly since Kuwait gained independence in 1961. Strengthened by high-level visits and numerous bilateral treaties, the partnership is defined by mutual respect and a shared perspective on various international and regional issues.



Al-Qassas

France's support during pivotal moments in Kuwaiti history illustrates the strength of these ties. A notable example was the role it played in the 1991 International Coalition to Liberate Kuwait -- a contribution that the Kuwaiti people deeply appreciate till date.

In recent years, Kuwaiti-French relations witnessed renewed momentum at various levels, through economic, investment, political and diplomatic coordination.

Today, France is considered one of the most prominent European partners of the State of Kuwait. French companies have an active presence in many major development projects in Kuwait, especially in the infrastructure, energy, transportation, technology and defense sectors.

French companies maintain a significant and active role in several of Kuwait's major development projects, particularly within the energy, infrastructure, defense, technology and transportation sectors.

On a regional scale, France is a leading European advocate for Gulf stability and security. Recent high-level diplomatic engagements highlighted this commitment, specifically the G7 summit, when President Emmanuel Macron met with prominent Arab leaders, including President of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi.

During these meetings, France underscored the necessity of maintaining Gulf

security, ensuring the freedom of international maritime routes, and upholding the sovereignty of regional nations against any external threats.

Kuwait highly values these French initiatives, recognizing their importance amidst rapid regional shifts that demand unwavering commitment to abide by the international law, national sovereignty and constructive dialogue.

Both nations share a common vision that prioritizes diplomatic and political strategies for crisis resolution, emphasizing communication over escalation. The bilateral partnership extends beyond traditional political and economic ties to include education and culture.

French cultural influence and language are known in Kuwait, while a growing number of Kuwaiti students are keen on developing their academic foundations in the prestigious educational institutions of France.

As France marks its National Day, there is a renewed aspiration to expand these mutual successes. This milestone further solidifies a partnership that benefits both nations and provides a successful framework for international relations based on mutual trust and cooperation.

Over the years, the Kuwaiti-French alliance has evolved from a standard diplomatic connection into a deep-rooted strategic partnership that continues to strengthen with every historical turning point.

Forum leading event brings together France, Gulf states

PARIS, June 21, (KUNA): The first day of the "Gulf Vision 2026" Forum, hosted in Paris, under the patronage of French President Emmanuel Macron, witnessed prominent Kuwaiti participation alongside government officials, business leaders, and investors from France and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

The forum is one of the most leading economic events bringing together France and the Gulf countries.

During the inspection tour, the Governor assessed the organizational efficiency and overall preparedness of the centers. He evaluated the initiatives aimed at establishing an optimal testing atmosphere to help students complete their examinations with confidence and tranquility.

He lauded the contributions of the educational personnel, supervisors and school administrations, and their dedication to manage the operations efficiently and ensure a seamless examination process within a supportive and structured environment.

At the end of his visit, the Governor expressed his wish for the students to perform well in their exams. He asserted that the high school stage is a vital academic milestone that prepares a capable and conscious generation to contribute to the ongoing development of the nation.



Kuwaiti figures take part in 'Gulf Vision 2026' Paris forum.

Yaqoub, Managing Partner at Al-Yaqoub and Al-Fawzan Law Group.

Kuwaiti entities also participated in the forum, including Sadita Holding Company, and the law firm of Dr. Yaqoub Al-Sane and Partners, as part of efforts to strengthen economic cooperation and develop investment partnerships between France and the Gulf countries.

The first day's sessions addressed a number of issues related to trade, investment, and the legal and regulatory environment for business, in addition to ways to enhance economic partnerships and keep pace with rapid economic and technological transformations at both the regional and international levels.

Various participants highlighted investment opportunities available in Kuwait and the importance of the legal and regulatory frameworks that support investment, within the context of efforts to enhance the attractiveness of the Kuwaiti economy and expand cooperation with international partners.



KUNA photo Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs, Dr. Amthal Al-Huwaila during her visit to the Care and Rehabilitation Center for Persons with Disabilities in Sabahiyah to review workflow and the level of services provided.

'Do more to eradicate problems faced by handicapped persons'

KUWAIT CITY, June 21, (KUNA): Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs, Dr. Amthal Al-Huwaila stressed on Sunday the importance of improving services and streamlining procedures to meet the needs of persons with disabilities and their families.

The remarks came in a press statement following an inspection tour by the minister to the Care and Rehabilitation Center for Persons with Disabilities in Sabahiyah to review workflow and the level of services provided.

Al-Huwaila said she toured the center's facilities, including the hall designated

for visitors, and listened to suggestions and observations from citizens and employees as part of efforts to enhance the quality of work.

She added that she reviewed monitoring systems and surveillance cameras and inspected the readiness of the building and its facilities to ensure the provision of the best services in line with approved plans.

The minister noted that she had directed officials to address observations and raise the level of preparedness to ensure a safe environment and integrated services for beneficiaries.

Jahra Governor visits test centers

KUWAIT CITY, June 21: Governor of Jahra Hamad Al-Habashi recently inspected high school examination centers throughout the Jahra Governorate.

During the inspection tour, the Governor assessed the organizational efficiency and overall preparedness of the centers. He evaluated the initiatives aimed at establishing an optimal testing atmosphere to help students complete their examinations with confidence and tranquility.

He lauded the contributions of the edu-

ational personnel, supervisors and school administrations, and their dedication to manage the operations efficiently and ensure a seamless examination process within a supportive and structured environment.

At the end of his visit, the Governor expressed his wish for the students to perform well in their exams. He asserted that the high school stage is a vital academic milestone that prepares a capable and conscious generation to contribute to the ongoing development of the nation.

PAI shuts 13 various industrial plots

By **Mohammad Ghanem**
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 21: The director general of the Public Authority for Industry (PAI) issued a decree on the closure of 13 industrial plots in different areas.

Article One of the decree, published Sunday in the official gazette, "Kuwait Al-Youm", mandates the immediate rectification of all existing violations and their repercussions.

Article Two stipulates that harsher action will be taken if these violations are not rectified within one month from the date of

the closure order.

The affected sites are within the industrial areas in Amghara, Mina Abdullah, Shuwaikh, Fahahel, Al-Rai, Sulabiya Kabad and East Ahmadi.

The reported violations include unauthorized industrial or craft operations, encroachment on state-owned land, negligence in equipment maintenance leading to pollution, non-renewal of plot contracts, defiance of closure orders, illegal disposal of hazardous materials into open ground or drainage systems, use of banned equipment or materials, and expired fire safety certification.

Minister moves to introduce new educational regulations

KUWAIT CITY, June 21: Minister of Education Eng. Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei announced the completion of the initial draft of the new education regulations, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Al-Tabtabaei explained that the new regulations represent a development project aimed at modernizing the legislative and regulatory framework. This will contribute to improving the quality of educational outcomes, enhancing school discipline, developing the educational environment, and raising the efficiency of both educational and administrative practices.

The ministry will present the initial draft of the regulations to those working in the educational field to gather their opinions, observations, and suggestions

before final adoption.

The minister stressed that teachers, school administrations, and technical supervisors are key partners in developing the educational system.

He indicated that the electronic feedback mechanism took into account the specialization and nature of work at each educational stage.

Al-Tabtabaei explained that the draft regulations aim to eliminate separate documents for different educational stages by adopting a unified education system that places the learner at the center of the development process. The draft regulations are part of a comprehensive review of educational rules and documents, including the educational vision and mission, study plans, student assessment and attendance regulations, summer course exam procedures, examination violations, and the school system.

The ministry revealed that a survey of specialists' opinions will be conducted through its website from June 20 to July 4.



Al-Tabtabaei

Other Voices

Is there democracy without secularism?

By **Ahmad alsarraf**

THE title of this article is a question posed by Dr. Khaled Montasser, who answered it in the negative. How can one imagine a true democracy without secularism that represents all segments of a society with diverse sects, ethnicities, and orientations?

For example, if an Islamic state were to have a constitution stipulating that its president must belong to a specific sect rather than simply being Muslim, its democracy would be flawed. It would fear the election of a candidate from a different sect to the presidency, even if the majority supported them and even if they possessed competence and experience.

Democracy, generally speaking, needs a secular heart that beats with justice to be truly effective and capable of separating religion from the state.

Logically, the state has no religion, does not judge, and does not determine who goes to heaven or hell. Its role is to provide healthcare, deliver electricity to homes and facilities, nurture people's minds with logic, and provide schools, hospitals, and security.

Senegal has a Muslim-majority population of about 96 percent, yet it has been led by a Catholic president, Léopold Senghor, who held considerable influence despite Catholics making up only five percent of the population. He was chosen for his competence, and he achieved many accomplishments for Senegal. Syria, Egypt, and Iraq were among the first countries where Christians, and even Jews, held high positions before 1948, before regional ideologies shifted towards greater extremism.

One of the most important guarantees of democracy is that the state, represented by the government, maintains impartiality towards all groups and has no right to favor any religion, sect, or denomination, even if it represents the majority. This is essential for ensuring justice and equality and for providing opportunities for qualified individuals to reach the highest positions.

We have seen this in Europe, the United States, Canada, and South America, with Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs reaching the highest political and administrative positions. The election of Mamdani as mayor of New York would not have attracted such coverage and controversy had it not occurred under a US president with anti-Muslim sentiments. Therefore, the opportunity for the most qualified individuals to reach high positions cannot be ensured without secularism. People do not need to be governed by the most religiously devout official, but rather by the most capable, efficient, and honest one.

Discriminating against citizens based on creed or sect violates this principle and creates hatred and a sense of injustice in any society as a result of the religious majority's domination of decision-making. This relegates the rest to second-class citizenship, and the pronouncements of religious figures become more powerful than the law.

Thus, some societies, and their religious or sectarian minorities, live under the constant threat of exclusion and marginalization. This is enough to paralyze large segments of the population and instill a sense of inferiority.

Secularism is not a luxury but a necessity; it means that the state belongs to everyone, not only a select group.



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diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

God is our guide ... may youth adopt clear path

"I AM writing about certain artists whom some people consider role models, while others view them as the complete opposite," columnist **Sheikh Ali Al-Jaber** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"Some artists have adopted Western styles and appear on stage dancing in revealing clothing. In pursuit of money and fame, they disregard Arab values, principles, and customs, presenting an image that many find inappropriate. By appearing in outfits that many would consider unsuitable, they risk negatively influencing younger generations, whose proper Islamic upbringing is a responsibility shared by society.



Sheikh Ali Al-Jaber

"In the past, artists would appear with elegance, dignity, and respectability when performing behind the microphone. Today, some artists have strayed significantly from those standards at a time when there is a pressing need to promote good morals and positive values.

"I do not absolve concert organizers of responsibility for this artistic decline. Artists should be required to appear on stage in proper attire and maintain a respectable public image.

"The behavior of these artists has influenced the way many young people in Kuwait dress. Increasingly, some have replaced the national attire with shorts and caps and have become less respectful toward their elders, whether in seating arrangements at gatherings or in the manner in which they address them.

"In addition, foreign expressions and terms have entered our society and become common among the younger generation. I pray that God guides our youth to the straight path and leads them toward goodness and righteousness.

"For more than three months, we have been occupied with social visits on special occasions, playing cards in diwanis, and spending time in cafes, restaurants, and shopping malls, while the guardians of our nation have been carrying out their duty of protecting the homeland. They have been quietly making sacrifices and risking their lives in the face of Iranian aggression, which has exceeded 900 drones and 400 missiles.

"The protectors of our nation in the military institutions, alongside the Kuwait Fire Force and personnel from various state ministries, stood united in confronting this brutal aggression. Day and night, they remained vigilant, closely monitoring Kuwait's skies from the east and the north. Through their dedication, sacrifice, and steadfast commitment, and with God's grace and the guidance of their leadership, they succeeded in carrying out their mission.

"I ask God to have mercy on our martyrs, forgive them, and grant them the highest ranks and spacious gardens in Paradise."

Also:

"The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia holds a special place in the hearts of the Gulf people, not only as a sister nation, but also as a country bound to us by shared borders, common interests, and a long history of unwavering stances that embody the true meaning of brotherhood in times of both prosperity and adversity," Kuwaiti writer **Saleh Abdulaziz Al-Janfawi** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"Regarding Kuwaiti-Saudi relations, history records many unforgettable moments. Saudi Arabia stood by Kuwait during its most difficult times, providing a practical model of genuine brotherhood that transcends narrow calculations and reflects a sense of loyalty and shared responsibility.

"At every historical juncture, Kuwaiti-Saudi relations have been a model of cooperation, integration, and coordination that serves the interests of both countries and their brotherly peoples. Over the past decades, this fraternal spirit has not been limited to bilateral relations alone but has also been reflected in Saudi Arabia's broader Gulf and Arab role.

"The Saudi Arabia we love is not merely a major political or economic power in the region, but a nation that has shouldered its Gulf and Arab responsibilities with wisdom and commitment. It has consistently been a pillar of support for the Gulf states and a pillar of stability in an environment marked by numerous challenges and changes.

"In this context, Saudi Arabia has been present in the various crises that have affected the region, supporting security and stability, and firmly believing that the strength of the Gulf lies in its unity and cohesion. Saudi Arabia's support for the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states has not been a fleeting stance dictated by

circumstances, but rather a consistent approach reflecting a deep-seated belief in a shared destiny.

"Saudi Arabia's role has not been limited to political and security aspects, but has extended to supporting economic development, enhancing opportunities for Gulf cooperation, and advancing integration projects that have contributed to strengthening the position of the Gulf states at both regional and international levels. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia has played a pivotal role in bridging differences and promoting dialogue, recognizing that the stability of the region is a collective responsibility that requires wisdom and long-term vision.

"Building on this historical legacy and influential regional role, Saudi Arabia continues its journey today with confidence and ambition through Vision 2030, which has established an ambitious model for development, modernization, and economic diversification. This vision has succeeded in enhancing its global standing while preserving its core principles and values. It has earned Saudi Arabia a special place in the hearts of the people of the Gulf states, who see its success as their own, and its strength as a source of strength for the entire Gulf Cooperation Council.

"The Saudi Arabia we love is one that stands with its brothers, supports the stability of its region, and believes that cooperation is the path to the future. Throughout history, Saudi Arabia has proven that relations between nations are not measured by words alone, but by actions that remain etched in memory, testifying to the depth of brotherhood and the sincerity of belonging.

"In a time when alliances shift and positions change, Saudi Arabia remains a fundamental pillar of Gulf unity and stability, and a partner in shaping its future. The destiny of the Gulf states is one, and their strength lies in their cohesion.

"Saudi Arabia, with its vision, weight, and responsibility, will remain at the forefront of the journey towards a more secure and prosperous tomorrow for all."

□ □ □

"June 5 brought with it an annual reminder of the importance of reconciling with nature, as the world celebrates World Environment Day 2026 under slogans focused on restoring ecosystems, combating desertification, and enhancing resilience to drought," Kuwaiti writer **Dr. Nasser Hussein Abbas** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"These challenges are not merely headings for international summits or recommendations in UN reports. They are a tangible reality that we experience daily in the Gulf region, which faces exceptional climatic and geographical conditions.

"This reality places upon us a historical and educational responsibility to transform environmental awareness from a seasonal occasion into a sustainable way of life and societal behavior.

"Confronting global climate change and protecting biodiversity in arid and semi-arid environments require far more than just strict legal regulations and temporary engineering or technical solutions. They demand a radical reshaping of humanity's relationship with the natural environment and the development of a value system that views the Earth as a trust to be preserved for future generations.

"Here lies the true and central role of educational institutions. They serve as the driving force and primary engine for achieving the desired behavioral and intellectual transformation. Environmental education today is no longer merely a long-term strategic investment in human capital. When scientific curricula succeed in linking academic concepts such as ecological balance, local geological characteristics, and the management of scarce water resources to everyday reality, the educational process shifts from rote learning and memorization toward active environmental citizenship.

"Integrating modern scientific standards, digital technologies, and artificial intelligence into classrooms and laboratories for monitoring environmental phenomena and analyzing climate data contributes to a qualitative transformation in education. It helps develop critical thinking, analytical abilities, and problem-solving skills.

"Project-based learning and applied activities transform schools into living environmental laboratories through initiatives such as waste recycling, energy and water conservation, and the expansion of smart green spaces."

— Compiled by Simi K. Kutty

Kuwait, Bangladesh discuss bilateral issues



Undersecretary of Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Lieutenant General Hamad Al-Barjas, Bangladesh's Ambassador to Kuwait Major General Syed Tariq Hussain and senior officials.

KUWAIT CITY, June 21, (KUNA): Undersecretary of Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Lieutenant General Hamad Al-Barjas on Sunday discussed with Bangladesh's Ambassador to Kuwait Major General Syed Tariq Hussain a number of issues of mutual interest.

In a statement, Kuwait National Guard said that the discussions took place during Al-Barjas' reception of Ambassador Hussain in the

presence of Assistant for Financial Affairs and Resource Management Major General Riyadh Tuwari and Commander of Military and Security Affairs Brigadier General Abdullah Saleh.

The statement added that Al-Barjas conveyed to the ambassador the greetings of the KNG leadership, represented by KNG Chief Sheikh Mubarak Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Deputy Chief Sheikh Faisal Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Cash stolen from accounts

Kuwaiti, Syrian hackers rob citizens, expatriates

KUWAIT CITY, June 21: Hawally Criminal Investigation Department referred a Kuwaiti citizen and a Syrian expatriate to the Public Prosecution for allegedly hacking into and remotely controlling the phones of citizens and residents, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

Investigations revealed that the accused used the proceeds from their fraudulent activities to purchase electronic devices, which they then resold at discounted prices to conceal the source of the funds.

It was found that the accused targeted and hacked dozens of phones on behalf of a specialized network operating in an Arab country, in exchange for a percentage of the stolen money.

According to a security source, the Cybercrime Department and Hawally Criminal Investigation Department received several reports from citizens and residents who received notifications and messages from local numbers.

Upon opening these messages, money was stolen from their bank accounts.

The complainants confirmed that they had not purchased the devices listed on their accounts, nor had they received the verification codes required to complete those transactions.



Damage caused by the fire at Al-Naem scrapyard yesterday.

Expat held with drugs

Worker dead after falling from height into lift shaft

KUWAIT CITY, June 21: A worker died after falling from a height into an elevator shaft at a building under construction in Al-Mutlaa on Sunday morning, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

In an official statement, the Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) explained that firefighting teams from the Al-Mutlaa and Search and Rescue stations rushed to the location after receiving information about the worker's fall in Al-Mutlaa. They discovered that the worker had died in the incident. The corpse was referred to the Forensics Medicine Department, and the site was handed over to the relevant authorities.

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Expat held with drugs: An expatriate has been arrested in Farwaniya for driving under influence and possessing a quantity of methamphetamine and drug paraphernalia, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

According to security sources, Farwaniya officers were patrolling the area when they noticed a vehicle being driven erratically, and stopped the driver. Noticing his disoriented state, they searched him and found a quantity of methamphetamine and drug paraphernalia.

When they tried to arrest the suspect, he attempted to flee and violently resisted the officers. He was referred with the seized items to the Drug Control General Department for further investigation and legal proceedings.

Arab expat perishes in Al-Artal Road accident

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 21: An Arab, born in 1972, died when his vehicle overturned on Al-Artal Road.

According to a security source, the Operations Unit at the Ministry of Interior received a report about the accident. Police and ambulance personnel rushed to the scene, where they discovered that the victim already succumbed to his injuries.

The body of the victim was referred to the Forensics Department and a case was registered.

Deportation for brawl in public

Court jails ex-MP Ashour 3 years

KUWAIT CITY, June 21: Two Asian expatriates, one born in 1996 and the other in 1994, were arrested based on a report of a fight in Farwaniya, Block 5, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to security sources, they were detained at the Farwaniya Police Station and transferred recently to the Deportation Department for deportation proceedings. Their names have been added to the list of individuals banned from entering Kuwait or any of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

Ex-MP jailed 3 years: The Court of Cassation, presided over by Judge Sultan Boursli, sentenced former MP Saleh Ashour and another individual to three-year imprisonment with hard labor for embezzling KD 151,000 and acquitted them of money laundering charges, reports **Al-Rai** daily.

The Court of Appeals had previously upheld the lower court's ruling acquitting former MP Saleh Ashour and another citizen of charges of embezzling and laundering funds belonging to the Al-Thaqalayn Charitable Society.

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Bangladeshi robbed: An unknown individual, impersonating a detective, robbed a Bangladeshi expatriate of his wallet, which contained his ID card, bank cards and KD 390 cash, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

According to security sources, the victim filed a report at Al-Dhafer Police Station, stating that the man was driving an SUV when he stopped him, identified himself as a detective, and asked him to show his identification card. While the victim was taking out his wallet, the man snatched it and fled.

The victim stated that he did not know the suspect and was unable to record the vehicle's plate number.

A case was registered regarding the incident and referred to the relevant authorities to identify and apprehend the perpetrator.



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The Dasman Diabetes Institute (DDI) group of doctors and officials who took part in the Annual Meeting of the American Diabetes Association (ADA) in the United States.

DDI presents 12 papers at annual ADA meeting

KUWAIT CITY, June 21, (KUNA): The Dasman Diabetes Institute (DDI), part of the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS), announced its participation with 12 scientific papers at the 86th Annual Meeting of the American Diabetes Association (ADA), recently held in the United States.

In a press statement on Saturday, Dr. Jassem Al-Abbad, Director General of the Institute, said that participation in the conference, held in New Orleans, reflects the advanced

research standing the Institute enjoys both regionally and internationally.

Dr. Al-Abbad added that the ADA invited Dr. Ebaa Al-Aziri to speak at a specialized scientific session on diabetes in the Middle East, which underscores the Institute's scientific standing and advanced expertise.

He explained that this distinguished representation reflects the quality of research conducted by the Institute's specialists on diabetes and its complications, highlighting

the Institute's commitment to its mission of supporting scientific research and innovation to reduce the spread of the disease and improve public health.

He emphasized the Institute's keenness to enhance Kuwait's presence in the global research arena and to open avenues for co-operation and exchange of expertise with leading academic institutions to support strategic goals in the fields of research, training, awareness, and healthcare.

KUNA photo

association (ADA) in the United States.

CAPT gives go ahead for roads in agricultural areas

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 21: The Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) has approved the awarding of two Ministry of Public Works tenders for the construction of roads in agricultural areas in the northern and southern regions.

The total value of the two projects reached KD12.452 million, with an implementation period of 730 days. Around KD6.320 million of the total value was allocated for roads in the northern agricultural areas and about KD6.133 million for

roads in the southern agricultural areas.

The ministry is expected to refer the tenders to the State Audit Bureau (SAB) for pre-audit and review procedures. Approval is anticipated provided no objections are raised during the review process.

The tendering and execution of these projects are part of the ongoing efforts of the ministry to develop and modernize the road network in internal and external areas, particularly in the agricultural regions.

The projects will support agricultural development by providing farmers and visitors with a road network that meets safety requirements, pro-

jects lives and properties, and guarantees smooth and efficient traffic movement.

In another development, the ministry announced that the service entrance to Al-Siddiq was opened at dawn on Tuesday for motorists arriving from the airport through King Faisal Bin Abdulaziz Road (Route 50), leading to the service road parallel to the Fifth Ring Road toward Salmiya and Damascus Street in the northbound and southbound directions.

The opening was carried out in coordination with the General Traffic Department to ensure that all safety and security standards were met.

Road repairs circle nation

PAAET grants students rare bonus

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, June 21: The Ministry of Public Works (MPW) announced the implementation of major road maintenance works under the new contracts from June 20-25, covering 34 areas in the governorates and eight road locations distributed as follows: eight in the Capital Governorate, nine in Hawally, six in Farwaniya, one in Jahra, four in Ahmadi and six in Mubarak Al-Kabeer.

The roadwork locations include Abdally Road, intersection of the Fourth Ring Road with Maghreb Road, Fahaeel Road opposite Mishref, - overpass at the Fourth Ring Road intersection towards Salmiya, Subiya Road, Fourth Ring Road from the Maghreb Road intersection to the Damascus Street intersection, Salmi Road, and Seventh Ring Road from Kilometer 24 to Kilometer 27 in both directions.

In another development, the newspaper obtained information that the ministry referred tender number HT/328 for the construction of entrances and exits in Jaber Al-Ahmad City to the State Audit Bureau (SAB) last Thursday for pre-audit, audit and review procedures, culminating in the bureau's approval of the contract.

It is worth noting that this is one of the important projects of the ministry as it includes the construction of entrances and exits at sites one and two to protect the facilities of the oil sector and some ministries in the city, and other services such as storm water drainage, lighting, ground traffic control, traffic signs, and safety and collision barriers.

PAAET grants rare bonus: The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) announced the disbursement of the rare specialization allowance to college students enrolled in the first semester of the 2025/2026 academic year, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

PAAET urged students who have not yet received the allowance to contact the Deanship of Student Affairs' Grants and Rewards Department from June 21 to July 2.

The authority confirmed that the allowance will not be paid retroactively after the end of this period.

MEWRE reshuffle to enhance operational output: minister

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 21: Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Dr. Subaih Al-Mukhaizeem issued decisions on the transfer of some supervisors in the electricity distribution networks, technical services and main workshops sectors.

These decisions are aimed at raising operational efficiency, and making optimal use of available technical and administrative expertise.

The decisions include the transfer of Eng. Khaled Mounes Al-Enezi, who served as electricity distribution networks supervisor in Farwaniya Governorate, under the Electricity Distribution Networks Department in the Distribution Networks Sector, to the position of Technical Monitoring Su-

pervisor in the Traffic Department of the Technical Services and Main Workshops Sector.

Eng. Nawaf Al-Fadhli, Head of the Operations Section in the Electricity Distribution Networks Monitoring Department in Farwaniya Governorate, was transferred to the position of Head of the Emergency Section in the Electricity Distribution Networks Monitoring Department in Ahmadi Governorate.

Eng. Abdullah Shah, who served as Head of the Emergency Section in the Electricity Distribution Networks Monitoring Department in Ahmadi Governorate, was transferred to the position of Head of the Emergency Section in the Electricity Distribution Networks Monitoring Department in Farwaniya Governorate.

Badah Al-Mutlaqam, Contracts Monitoring Supervisor in the Contracts Follow-up and Maintenance Department of the Customer Services Sector, was transferred to the position of Financial Monitoring Supervisor in the Traffic Department of the Technical Services and Main Workshops Sector.



Al-Mukhaizeem

Non-resident foreigners can register at KU, PAAET: MoIA

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 20: The Ministry of Islamic Affairs (MoIA) on Saturday announced the opening of registration for non-resident foreigners who intend to study at Kuwait University and the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) under the cultural scholarship program for the 2026/2027 academic year.

Acting Undersecretary of the ministry Dr. Eng. Suleiman Al-Suwailem told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that "registration will continue until July 11 through the website of the ministry and priority will be given to applicants from countries

with Muslim minorities. The cultural scholarships offered by Kuwait are part of its humanitarian and civilization mission to support education, disseminate knowledge, and build scientific expertise in friendly countries."

Al-Suwailem affirmed the commitment of the ministry to provide opportunities for outstanding students to complete their university studies at Kuwaiti educational institutions and benefit from their academic environment.

He urged those wishing to apply to review the terms and registration procedures on the website and complete the required documents within the specified period to benefit from the scholarships.

Juvenile Court experts must be Kuwaitis, well-educated

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 21: The Minister of Social, Family and Childhood Affairs, Dr. Amthal Al-Huwaila, issued Ministerial Decree No. 154/2026 regarding the conditions and regulations for appointing experts to the Juvenile Court.

The conditions stipulate that the candidate must be a Kuwaiti citizen, hold a suitable high qualification in social work, psychology, or sociology, and be employed by the Juvenile Welfare Department with at least six years of experience in the department's technical sections.

Applicants will be ranked based on seniority, followed by higher qualifications, with a requirement of good conduct and character. Applicants must not have been convicted of a crime involving moral turpitude or dishonesty, nor have received any administrative penalties within the past five years.

The decree emphasizes the importance of candidates' familiarity with the Juvenile Law and its applicable provisions and measures. They must also have received an "Excellent" performance rating for the past two years and pass the approved specialized training course.

The Juvenile Welfare Department is responsible for nominating experts, conducting personal interviews, and making the selection through a specialized technical committee chaired by the Undersecretary of the ministry.

The selected names are then submitted to the Minister of Justice for the issuance of the ministerial decree appointing them. The expert's assignment ends immediately upon their transfer outside the Juvenile Welfare Department. They may be relieved of their duties for breach of obligation based on a justified memorandum approved by the Undersecretary.

The expert has the right to appeal within ten working days of the decision's issuance. Experts appointed under previous decisions shall continue to perform their duties until those decisions expire.

The aforementioned decision supersedes Ministerial Decrees No. 94/2016 and No. 198/2024 concerning the regulation of expert appointments at the Juvenile Court.



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Services top 42,000 in May; South Sabah Al-Ahmad roads 78% complete

Major housing cities near key milestones, says PAHW

KUWAIT CITY, June 21, (KUNA): The Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) affirmed on Sunday that implementation of its major housing projects is continuing according to approved timelines, alongside expanded digital and in-person services aimed at accelerating housing delivery and the completion of new residential cities.

PAHW Deputy Director General for Public Relations and Development and official spokesperson Omar Al-Ruwaih said in a press



PAHW photo
Omar Al-Ruwaih, PAHW Deputy Director General for Public Relations and Development and official spokesperson

statement that a total of 42,553 housing services were provided to citizens through the Customer Service Department in May.

He said the services included 25,548 electronic transactions through the government's Sahel application and PAHW's website, 1,888 services through reception centers at the authority's headquarters, 418 services through external service centers, and 14,699 services through the call center, telephone service and automated response system.

Al-Ruwaih pointed out that completion of main roads in South Sabah Al-Ahmad City reached 78.23 percent, while infrastructure contracts recorded completion rates of 52.58 percent for the first contract, 54.74 percent for the second and 46.25 percent for the third.

He said completion of the main roads contract in South Saad Al-Abdullah City reached 65.10 percent, while the three infrastructure contracts achieved completion rates of 15.13 percent, 14.19 percent and

14.63 percent respectively.

The affordable housing project is also progressing, with completion rates reaching 43.03 percent for the first contract, 49.50 percent for the second, 48.02 percent for the third, 10.22 percent for the fourth, 10.02 percent for the fifth and 11.02 percent for the sixth, he added.

Al-Ruwaih noted that PAHW is currently implementing 276 public buildings across various housing projects, including 170 buildings in Al-Mutlaa, 74 in the affordable hous-

ing project, 17 in Sabah Al-Ahmad, 13 in South Abdullah Al-Mubarak and two in Saad Al-Abdullah.

He noted that plots handed over for building permits totaled 1,423 in Khaitan, 27,812 in Al-Mutlaa City and 3,249 in South Abdullah Al-Mubarak.

PAHW will continue efforts to accelerate project implementation and closely monitor progress rates to ensure completion of infrastructure and public facilities and delivery of projects according to schedule to meet citizens' housing needs, Al-Ruwaih added.

Continued from Page 1

Court axes

The committee, headed by Judge Adel Al-Bahao, accepted the appeal procedurally, but rejected it on substantive grounds, thereby, upholding the appealed judgment and ordering the appellant to bear the legal costs.

The appellant, who served as department head in the Priorities Committee Office at the Secretariat General of the National Assembly with a total monthly salary of KD4,944, requested the annulment of the decision and continuation of his full salary, allowances and bonuses. He argued that the decision violated his acquired legal rights by reducing his salary and depriving him of certain financial benefits, as well as breaching the principle of equality, because the nature of the work performed by employees of the Secretariat differs from that of other state employees.

He also claimed that the decision violated the principle of separation of powers, arguing that the CSC exercised legislative authority beyond its jurisdiction. He asserted that the decision was applied retroactively, thus, undermining his rights to job security and social protection and constituting an abuse of authority.

In its reasoning, the court stated that for a constitutional challenge to be considered serious, a ruling on the constitutional issue is necessary for resolving the underlying dispute and there must be genuine indication that the challenged provision conflicts with the Constitution. The court found that neither of these requirements was satisfied.

The court explained that Decree-Law No. 63/2025 stipulated the suspension of the internal regulations of the National Assembly, while maintaining the application of Article 178, which provides for the affiliation of the Secretariat with the Office of the Prime Minister upon the dissolution of the Assembly.

The decree also suspended all decisions and regulations issued pursuant to the internal regulations, particularly those governing the affairs of employees of the Secretariat, until the expiration of the period specified in the Amiri decree or until the election of the first National Assembly, whichever occurs first.

The court pointed out that Article Two of the decree stipulates that the Civil Service Law and its executive regulations shall apply to employees of the Secretariat from the date the decree took effect.

It added that, pursuant to the decree, the CSC, during its Meeting No. 10/2025, decided to permanently apply the general salary scale to employees of the Secretariat and to grant them a monthly personal allowance equal to 30 percent of their total monthly salary under the general salary scale before social security deductions, for a period of one year.

It stated that the explanatory memorandum accompanying the decree clarified that the dissolution of the Assembly and the suspension of the constitutional provisions related to it resulted in the suspension of the internal regulations and rendered them inapplicable.

The memorandum explained as well that the employees of the Secretariat were transferred to the Office of the Prime Minister and no longer perform the duties that justified the special benefits previously granted to them.

The memorandum added that it was necessary to unify the employment systems applicable to employees working within the same entity, whether appointed directly or seconded, in order to achieve equality among employees and ensure consistency between applicable laws and the prevailing constitutional situation.

The court stressed that the decision of the CSC is in line with Article Two of Decree-Law No. 63/2025, which subjects employees of the Secretariat to the Civil Service Law and its regulations as the general legal framework governing state employees.

It continued that the CSC did not exercise legislative authority beyond its powers and therefore did not violate the principle of separation of powers.

It also clarified that the decision did not infringe upon the acquired legal rights, since a public employee can

neither claim rights or benefits exceeding those provided under the applicable employment regulations, nor continue receiving benefits linked to a previous employer when the legal basis for those benefits no longer exists.

It added that the decision was not applied retroactively, as it rather took immediate effect upon the transfer of Secretariat employees to the Office of the Prime Minister following the issuance of the decree-law, with the objective of unifying their financial benefits with that of other employees within the same entity.

It concluded that the appellant's allegations of constitutional violations lacked legal or constitutional foundation. It affirmed that the appealed judgment was correct in determining that the constitutional challenge was not serious and therefore ruled to reject the appeal, uphold the appealed judgment, and require the appellant to pay the associated legal expenses.

Six Kuwaiti

3. Al-Sayer Group:
Rank - 41st in the Arab world
Chairman - **Faisal Bader Al-Sayer**
Year founded - 1954

Al-Sayer Group operates in the automotive, trading, education, healthcare, investment, real estate, industrial, and animal feed sectors. The company's activities also support a range of social and empowerment initiatives, including partnerships with the International Conference on Artificial Intelligence in Public Relations and Customer Service, the Kuwait Paralympic Committee, and the New English School (NES).

4. Al-Mulla Group:
Rank - 51st in the Arab world
Group CEO - **Talal Anwar Al-Mulla**
Year founded - 1938 by the late Abdullah Al-Mulla.

The group operates in eight countries with a workforce of 15,000 employees. Its portfolio includes more than 40 companies and over 200 global brands across sectors including automotive, engineering, financial services, leasing, and others.

The company is a distributor for brands such as Mercedes-Benz, Mitsubishi Motors, and Stellantis.

The group expanded its portfolio in Kuwait by adding Shakamoto Trucks and Soueast Motors. It also partnered with Rolls-Royce Power Systems.

5. Al-Mudhaf & Al-Kulaib Group:
Rank - 87th in the Arab world
Vice Chairman of the Board - **Bader Al-Kulaib**
Year founded - 2012 by Abdullah Al-Mudhaf and Bader Al-Kulaib.

This Kuwaiti group operates across diverse sectors including digital media and live streaming technologies, food and beverage, real estate, and media production. It employs more than 800 people in the Gulf and London.

Between 2025 and 2026, the number of users of the group's streaming platform, Shasha, exceeded 3 million worldwide. The company has acquired near-exclusive broadcasting rights for Italian Serie A matches in 16 countries in the Middle East and North Africa region.

6. Alghanim Sons Group:
Rank - 88th in the Arab world
Board Chairman - **Adel Alghanim**
Year founded - 1999

Based in Kuwait, the group is active in the hypermarket, automotive, retail, real estate, investment, contracting, and fresh produce sectors. It employs more than 5,000 people across four countries.

In December 2025, the company launched a 180,000-square-meter waterfront development project in Al-Khafji, Saudi Arabia, marking its first project in

Saudi Arabia. The company also plans to open a state-of-the-art automotive facility with an investment of \$40 million.

Driving tests

work in driving education departments in various governorates is currently limited to the morning period. He added that those unable to attend or missed their appointments can easily reschedule the driving test date through the 'Sahel' application.

He said the Ministry of Interior sends notifications and alerts to those with evening appointments, informing them about the need to visit the centers in the morning period.

He called on the applicants to follow the notifications issued through the official applications and confirm the dates before heading to the testing centers in order to facilitate procedures and save time and effort.

Swiss summit

Bagher Qalibaf, and Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, at a Swiss mountainside resort near Lake Lucerne. Mediators from Pakistan and Qatar were also in the room for the direct engagement.

The U.S. is looking to get Iran locked into negotiations over its nuclear program amid concerns it may be used for military purposes, which Iran denies. Vance also wants to push Tehran to commit to keeping open the Strait of Hormuz, the critical waterway through which about a fifth of world traded oil passes.

But the on-again, off-again conflict in Lebanon, between Israel and Iranian-backed Hezbollah militants, continues to threaten to derail the effort for the U.S. to win concessions from Tehran on its nuclear program and keep the Strait of Hormuz open.

"The question before us now is how much more can we accomplish together? Can we turn over a new leaf?" Vance said in brief comments as the talks, dubbed the "Lake Lucerne Summit," got underway.

"Can we change relations in the Middle East permanently, or do we go back to doing things the old way, which is not our preference, but is certainly very much something that can happen."

Iran's main focus during negotiations on Sunday would be the ongoing war between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei told Iran's state news agency ahead of the meeting with Vance.

The interim agreement was signed last week, and now top American and Iranian negotiators are in a 60-day sprint to reach an agreement on the technical details that hold massive implications for the world economy and global security.

Yet only days after signing the agreement, it is being stress-tested after fighting escalated in Lebanon between Israel and the Iranian-backed militant group Hezbollah - and by the subsequent announcement by Iran's military that it had again closed the vital waterway that transits one-fifth of the world's traded oil and natural gas. A renewed ceasefire in Lebanon, brokered on Saturday, appeared to be holding.

Vance stressed that "great progress" had been made on Lebanon. But minutes after he was finished speaking, President Donald Trump took to social media to threaten Iran if it didn't rein in Hezbollah.

"If they don't, we'll hit Iran very hard again, just like we did last week, only harder!!!" Trump wrote.

Iran is cautiously approaching the talks given its previous experience with the U.S. negotiations on

the nuclear issue, which twice in the past year have been interrupted by massive military strikes against the country. "The implementation of any document is more important than its signing," Baghaei said Sunday.

Iran's president added that Iran will maintain its right to a nuclear program.

"What is certain is that we will never back down from the right to enrich uranium, and the other side is also forced to accept it," Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said Sunday, according to Iran's state media.

Vance had originally been slated to be on the ground at the Bürgenstock resort near Lucerne on Friday, but his departure from the United States was delayed after fighting escalated in Lebanon and Iranian officials canceled plans to attend the talks.

U.S. Central Command disputed Iran's claim that it had once again shuttered the strait and said U.S. forces continued to monitor the situation to ensure traffic continues to flow through the waterway. Vance has said that millions of barrels of oil have moved through the strait in recent days.

Vance departed the U.S. just after Iranian state TV said Iran's negotiators had arrived in Switzerland.

The vice president was joined by special envoy Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, Trump's son-in-law, for Sunday's talks. Witkoff and Kushner were on the ground in Switzerland ahead of Vance to begin sifting through the technical details of the nuclear talks.

Vance and his wife, second lady Usha Vance, arrived at Emmen Air Base outside Lucerne just before 6 a.m. local time, according to his office.

While Vance said he planned to be in Switzerland for just "a day or two," leaving much of the detailed negotiations to be spearheaded by Witkoff and Kushner, his role in the talks has heightened scrutiny of the vice president at a time when he's actively considering a 2028 presidential campaign.

Trump and Vance have come under searing criticism from parts of their own party for the deal, with Republican hard-liners unfavorably likening it to a nuclear agreement signed by the Obama administration that Trump and the GOP have insisted did nothing to actually terminate Iran's nuclear program.

The agreement signed by Trump and Iranian President Pezeshkian immediately allows Tehran to sell its oil freely and paves the way for Iran to tap into billions of dollars in assets that are currently frozen. It also calls for Iran to dilute its stockpile of highly enriched uranium, believed to be buried under nuclear sites that were targeted in U.S. strikes last summer.

The agreement says commercial vessels can pass through the Strait of Hormuz for 60 days without a charge, but does not preclude future fees imposed by Iran. Trump made his own threat on Saturday to levy U.S. tolls on the strait if there is no deal with Iran in 60 days, insisting in a social media post that the money would be for "services rendered as the Guardian Angel to the countries of the Middle East."

The Trump administration has been working to reassure global markets that the Iran war has been merely a blip on oil prices, as Americans complain the conflict resulted in hiking gasoline prices ahead of peak summer travel months. After the White House announced the deal a week ago, oil futures dropped almost 8% - and markets are expected to closely track the progress of talks when they open for trading on Sunday evening.

Further complicating matters, neither Israel nor Hezbollah is a signatory to the deal between the U.S. and Iran, and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed to keep his forces in southern Lebanon until any threat to Israel is eliminated. Hezbollah has refused to halt its attacks unless Israel commits to withdrawing from Lebanon.

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Country must be clear-eyed about what has come about: Shaheen

US Congress wonders as Iran war draws to a close: Was it worth it?

WASHINGTON, June 21, (AP) — The question hangs in the halls at the Capitol: Was it worth it?

Congress, which never authorized the war against Iran yet never fully objected to it, now must grapple with the consequences of US President Donald Trump's nearly four-month conflict: the lives lost, the billions spent and the national security fallout that has reordered the political dynamics in the Middle East.

Ask senators what they think about the deal Trump struck to end the war, and they do not search too far for words.

"Pathetic. Failure. Inevitable conclusion of a combination of never making the case to the American people, flawed strategic vision, lack of grasp of the regional dynamics," said Delaware Sen Chris Coons, a Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

"How many ways, can I say, bad, bad, bad?"

Yet Republican Sen Ron Johnson of Wisconsin, a past chairman of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, said that because of the president's actions, "We are safer today."

"You can criticize - Oh, he didn't totally win," Johnson said. "Well, that was always going to be very difficult."

As Trump moves on to the next phase, it is left to the Congress to pick up the pieces: explaining the war to voters back home, restocking the military arsenal that has run low from bombing runs and trying to ensure the fragile ceasefire holds as the United States seeks to halt Iran's nuclear ambitions and work toward an uneasy peace.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth made the rounds on Capitol Hill this past week as lawmakers consider Defense Department funding as part of the Republican majority's next big budget package.

The White House has asked for a remarkable \$1.5 trillion for the Pentagon this year, on top of the extra money that Republicans delivered as part of the Trump's tax cuts package last year.

Republicans are mulling a sizable \$350 billion plus-up for Hegseth on par with the White House's budget request that the GOP could pass on its own,



US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth talks before a Medal of Honor ceremony in the East Room of the White House in Washington on June 18, in Washington. (AP)

through the reconciliation process that allows majority rule over potential objections from Democrats.

Senators, meanwhile, are seeking to set some guardrails on Hegseth with a provision to block a portion of his travel fund until the Pentagon delivers various reports. One such report is on an investigation into the strike on an elementary school in Iran that killed more than 165 people, a flashpoint at the start of the war.

Officials have said they believe the US was responsible for the strike and

that it was based on faulty intelligence.

Lawmakers are still processing what just happened after Trump swiftly signed a memorandum of understanding with Iran and opened a window of 60-day talks toward ending Tehran's nuclear program.

"I understand the president's trying to find a peaceful solution to this," said Sen. Mike Rounds, R-S.D., who serves on the Senate Armed Services and Intelligence committees. "I commend him for that. But we've got a lot of questions." Senators are particularly concerned about the tentative deal's provision for a potential \$300 billion fund for the "reconstruction and economic development" of Iran.

To many skeptical Republicans, that money sounds similar to the plane-loads-of-cash narrative they used against the Obama-era Iran nuclear deal, which offered a slim fraction of that amount, some \$1.7 billion overall. To this day, Trump tells an exaggerated story of how that payment to Iran, for US military equipment it never received, was made.

"The only concerns I have are the money and the conditions," said Sen. Thom Tillis, R-N.C.

"If we send a trainload, a shipload, it's gonna age as well as that," he said. Over and over Congress tried and failed to exert its authority under the war powers act to halt the US military action in Iran.

The House ultimately passed a war powers resolution that sought to force an end to the war after a small number of Republicans joined the Democratic measure last month. The Senate has voted nine times, including this past week, but failed to reach the majority needed.

At the same time, Congress did not affirmatively authorize the war with a use of force resolution, as has been done in certain other conflicts, including the Iraq War.

"I'm glad that the conflict has finally ended and hope the ceasefire holds," said a statement from Sen Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire, the top Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

But Shaheen said the country must be clear-eyed about what has come about.

America

Judge denies Biden's request: A federal judge on Friday rejected former president Joe Biden's attempt to block the Trump administration from releasing to a conservative group the recordings that Biden made with a ghostwriter.

US District Judge Dabney Friedrich found that the public interest in the material outweighed whatever privacy rights Biden had, but she effectively put her ruling on hold for up to three weeks so Biden could appeal.

The recordings were obtained by special counsel Robert Hur in the course of his investigation into whether Biden improperly retained classified documents while a senator and vice president. Republicans in Congress demanded them after Hur declined to file charges against the then-president.

Biden's Democratic administration refused to turn over the recordings and transcripts from 2016 and 2017, leading congressional Republicans to hold his attorney general, Merrick Garland, in contempt. (AP)

12 injured in Chicago shooting: At least 12 people in a crowd on a Chicago street suffered gunshot wounds after an SUV pulled up and two people inside started shooting, police said.

The SUV drove away from the South Side neighborhood, leaving two people, both male, in critical condition following the shooting late Friday, police said in a news release. One suffered a gunshot wound to the thigh.

The eight men and four women in the group ranged in age from 17 to 47. They were being treated at four hospitals. (AP)



From left to right: Former US president Joe Biden, former first lady Jill Biden, former first lady Laura Bush and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on stage during the dedication ceremony for the Obama Presidential Center on June 18, in Chicago. (AP)

FAA investigates incident: The Federal Aviation Administration is investigating a close call between two commercial flights that were in danger of colliding Saturday morning at Boston Logan International Airport.

A Delta Air Lines flight from Dallas had to execute a go-around, or aborted landing, to avoid an American Airlines plane departing from an intersecting runway, according to the FAA and flight logs.

The crew of Delta flight 2351 coordinated with air traffic control to perform the go-around, an airline spokesperson said. The plane, which had 129 passengers and six crew members on board, landed safely and departed normally, according to the spokesperson. (AP)

Dunlap gets Democratic nod for US House

Pingree, Charles to compete for Maine gov

PORTLAND, Maine, June 21, (AP) — US Democrat Hannah Pingree and Republican Bobby Charles will compete this fall to become Maine's next governor. Pingree and Charles won their primaries Friday, after the June 9 contests advanced to ranked choice voting.

In another ranked runoff in Maine, Democrat Matt Dunlap won the nomination in the 2nd Congressional District. Dunlap will face the state's former Gov Paul LePage, a Republican, for a seat Democrats are trying to hold in the fight for control of the US House of Representatives.

The ranked counts conclude a busy primary season in Maine in which Democratic voters also chose oyster farmer Graham Plater to run against longtime Republican Sen. Susan Collins. Plater won that primary by a wide margin and it did not need to proceed to ranked choice.

Democratic Gov Janet Mills, who has served since 2018, is termed out of office, creating an open field for governor in both parties. Five Democratic candidates and seven Republicans actively campaigned in the June 9 primary.



Maine House majority leader Hannah Pingree, D-North Haven, speaks at a rally for health care reform July 18, 2009, in Portland, Maine. (AP)

That created a scenario in which no candidate in either party broke 50% of the popular vote, leading to the ranked choice runoff, which began shortly after the election. The Democratic race was especially close, with the top four challengers within a few percentage points of each other.

Democrats chose between Pingree, the former speaker of the Maine House of Representatives; Maine Secretary of State Shenna Bellows; former Maine Senate President Troy Jackson; energy executive Angus King III; and former director of the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention Nirav Shah.



European Council President Antonio Costa, right, talks to French President Emmanuel Macron during a round table meeting at the EU summit in Brussels on June 19. (AP)

European Union leaders squabble over outreach to Moscow as Ukraine war rages on

BRUSSELS, June 21, (AP) — European Union leaders have been unable to agree on setting up a back-channel with Moscow to ensure that the bloc's interests are protected should progress be made in negotiations to end Russia's war on Ukraine, some of them said on Friday.

European Council President Antonio Costa, who chaired their two-day summit in Brussels this week, had directed his office to reach out to the Kremlin and proposed a senior official to make contact. Costa said his aim was not to mediate or set up a parallel negotiating track to the one led by the United States, which is making little progress.

"We needed to immediately establish this direct contact," Costa said, clarifying that Brussels would not seek to mediate in negotiations but rather open communications.

"We cannot depend only on others to interpret Russian messages and we must be able to convey directly to Russia our own messages," he added.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said she supported Costa's approach because "our entire continent is at risk, and this is why Europe must be one of the architects of a just and lasting peace."

Debate has been swirling around Europe in recent months about whether to appoint a mediator for talks with Russia to help get things moving again, but this has been largely rejected as many believe that Russian President Vladimir Putin would be unlikely to negotiate anyway.

Instead, the 27 EU countries have focused on concessions that Russia should make to secure peace.

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz stressed that peace negotiations must ultimately be conducted by Ukraine, Russia, Europe and the US.

"Who speaks for the European Union is something we don't need to decide on today," he said. "We will decide on that when talks come about."

He added that Costa has "an important role to play" as

president of the European Council, representing the EU, preparing and organizing summits, and "we don't need to make decisions going beyond that at the moment."

Merz highlighted efforts to coordinate diplomacy by the so-called E3 group of countries - Germany, France and Britain - a format that he said came about "at the explicit wish of Ukraine."

French President Emmanuel Macron said "Europeans are not mediators" in the negotiations but that "Costa, when the competencies are defined, will have a place."

Margus Tsahkna, foreign minister of Estonia - a nation on the EU's eastern flank that has faced drone incursions and was once occupied by the Soviet Union - said that "Europe must not assume the role of a neutral mediator" but instead buttress Ukraine's position to "force the Kremlin into serious negotiations."

As European leaders left overnight after the summit wrapped up, Belgian Prime Minister Bart De Wever joked that Costa would be the envoy to Moscow.

"I was just talking about you, Antonio," De Wever said while laughing and shaking Costa's hand. "I was full of praise, saying you are the only one who can represent us and that we will send you to Moscow."

Irish Prime Minister Micheál Martin said that "opening up a channel is not a mistake in our view, and I trust Antonio Costa."

"What was very clear last evening is that any negotiations would have to be first and foremost between Ukraine and Russia, but there are no indications that Russia is coming to the table at all," he said.

Speaking to reporters, Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babiš said the leaders had failed at the summit to resolve their differences over the approach overnight. "Europe is unable to agree even on whether there will be negotiations or who will lead them," he said.

Europe

Germany train collision kills 1: Two freight trains collided on a railway bridge in Germany overnight, officials said Saturday, the crash sending two wagons plunging off the bridge and onto the street below. One person was killed.

The German news agency dpa did not identify the victim in the crash, which occurred in the city of Munich. The cause of the collision was not immediately known.

The wagons fell about 5 meters (16 feet) from the bridge, dpa said. Munich police said the street beneath the bridge has been closed and urged drivers to avoid the area while recovery and clearing operations were underway. (AP)

Spain's PM wife to face trial: A judge on Saturday ordered the wife of Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez to face trial on charges of influence peddling and corruption, and to surrender her passport.

Investigative judge Juan Carlos Peinado issued the ruling, arguing that Begoña Gómez represented a flight risk. In addition to surrendering her passport, she must also appear before a court every two weeks. A trial date hasn't been set.

The decision touched off a heated political confrontation, with calls from the opposition for Sánchez's Socialist government to resign. (AP)



A man gestures speaking to demonstrators of opposition parties, in protest of the results of the parliamentary elections in Yerevan, Armenia on June 14. (AP)

Armenia opp'n faces arrests

Several members of Armenia's opposition were arrested Friday while a major pro-Russia party asked the top court to annul this month's election win by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's ruling party, alleging electoral violations and suppression of the opposition.

The opposition Strong Armenia party appealed to the Constitutional Court to invalidate election results or call a second round of voting, and denounced the arrests of opposition politicians as an assault on democracy. Several other opposition parties followed suit, similarly accusing the ruling party of forcing public sectors workers to vote for it and bribing other voters.

The Armenian authorities have denied any electoral violations and have accused the opposition of bribing voters. (AP)

Starmer on precipice as pressure builds for UK's leader to resign

LONDON, June 21, (AP) — British Prime Minister Keir Starmer is facing a career-defining decision: step down or fight a challenge from Labour Party rival Andy Burnham.

Starmer has publicly vowed to stay in post, but pressure is building as more and more Labour Party colleagues conclude his time is up. Expectation is growing that he will announce a timetable for his resignation as soon as Monday. That's the day Burnham will be sworn in as a lawmaker in the House of Commons after winning a special election last week.

Business Secretary Peter Kyle said Sunday that Starmer is "making time to reflect on the political realities, challenges and opportunities that he finds himself in."

"I know he is a prime minister who always puts his country first," Kyle told the BBC, though he said reports that Starmer will resign are "speculation."

Starmer is spending the weekend at Chequers, the country mansion used by British prime ministers, with his family. He gave no public hint about his decision, but sent a Father's Day message on social media.



Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer speaks during an interview with ITV News Political Editor Robert Peston, on the sidelines of the G7 summit in Evian-les-Bains, France, on June 16. (AP)

"Being a dad is my greatest joy. Today, I'm thinking about my dad, and the father I am to my children because of him," he wrote on X.

If Starmer quits, he will be the sixth prime minister to leave office in the past 10 years, an extraordinary rate of churn for the United King-

dom. Discontent with the prime minister has been building for months, with Labour lawmakers desperate to reverse the government's decline in popularity since Starmer led the center-left party to a landslide election victory in July 2024.

India's Cockroach Party supporters bang plates to call for education minister's resignation

NEW DELHI, June 21, (AP) — Supporters of India's viral Cockroach Janta Party banged steel plates with spoons in a protest Saturday to demand the resignation of the education minister over allegations of examination irregularities and repeated paper leaks.

The protest near Parliament in New Delhi by hundreds of students and young supporters of the nascent movement added to the pressure on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government while also seeking wider support among Indians.

Authorities deployed heavy security and police used cameras and drones to monitor the protest.

Some carried placards and others banged plates, their noise cutting through the crowd protesting and demanding the resignation of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

The banging of plates appeared to satirize Modi's call for Indians to step onto balconies and rooftops and bang utensils in solidarity with front-line health workers during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic in



Abhijeet Dipke, (center), founder of the Cockroach Janta Party addresses supporters during a protest demanding the resignation of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over alleged examination irregularities and repeated paper leaks in New Delhi, India on June 20. (AP)

2020.

CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke, a political communications strategist and Boston University student, urged supporters on social media to bring plates and spoons on Saturday.

"There is a virus called Dharmendra Pradhan that has to be removed," he told the crowd, adding that the CJP was open to talks with the government if Pradhan stepped down.

"This is just the beginning. If

Dharmendra Pradhan doesn't resign or if no action is taken regarding this issue, this protest will not end here," said a CJP supporter, Deepak Kumar.

The exam paper for a nationwide medical program was leaked last month through social media app Telegram. Authorities subsequently postponed the exam and also temporarily banned Telegram in India. The exam is scheduled to be held on Sunday. The government says the leak is under investigation.

"We study in poverty, live in poverty for 24 hours everyday, for years at length, and after that our (exam) papers get leaked. Will I not get angry at this?" said student Vicky Kumar.

The movement emerged in May, after Supreme Court Judge Surya Kant's remarks comparing some unemployed youth to "cockroaches" triggered outrage. Supporters embraced the term as a symbol of resilience, helping the group amass more than 22 million followers on Instagram.

Marcos, Putin talks lead to release of 24 Filipinos

MANILA, Philippines, June 21, (AP) — Russia has freed 24 Filipinos who were detained for months without charges in a Siberian city, after Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. raised concern for them in a meeting with President Vladimir Putin, Philippine officials said Saturday.



Marcos

The 24 arrived in Manila aboard two flights early Sunday, and the first batch was welcomed by Philippine Foreign Secretary Theresa Lazaro, who accompanied Marcos in his talks with Putin on Wednesday in the Russian city of Kazan, the Department of Foreign Affairs in Manila said.

Migrant Workers Secretary Hans Cadac welcomed the final batch of freed workers before dawn. His agency provided unspecified aid to the workers, who were detained in a Russian region known for its extreme

winter temperatures.

Marcos, who currently holds the rotating presidency of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, led leaders of the 11-nation bloc in commemorating the 35th anniversary of ASEAN's diplomatic relations with Russia. Marcos held a bilateral meeting with Putin on the sidelines of the summit in Kazan.

The release of the Filipinos was relatively swift after Marcos raised his concern on Wednesday. The Philippines is a key treaty ally of the United States in Asia and was among the majority of ASEAN members who voted for a U.N. General Assembly resolution condemning Russia's 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Singapore was the only ASEAN member to impose sanctions on Russia. Singapore Prime Minister Lawrence Wong joined the Kazan summit.

After his bilateral meeting with Putin, Marcos told reporters that he raised his concern over the Filipinos who were detained for about nine months in the city of Yakutsk in eastern Siberia without charges. He said the Philippines has no other information about their condition.

Paz promises to resolve chronic fuel shortages

Bolivia president declares state of emergency as road blockades choke supplies

LA PAZ, Bolivia, June 21, (AP) — Bolivian President Rodrigo Paz on Saturday declared a state of emergency that gives the military broad power to remove road blockades that have put a stranglehold on fuel and food supplies in Bolivia's seat of government and other major cities.

A wave of protests over the last five weeks has called for Paz to step down over austerity measures imposed by the government, including the cancellation of fuel subsidies, and other issues. The demonstrations have unleashed violent confrontations between dynamite-wielding demonstrators and riot police, leading to at least 365 arrests and 37 injuries, according to authorities.

At least 17 people have died, most of them linked to a lack of medical care caused by transportation disruptions, according to Bolivia's ombudsman's office and human rights organizations.

Barricades erected on key roads have effectively isolated the city of La Paz, triggering fuel and food shortages, paralyzing transportation and preventing patients from reaching hospitals - causing at least seven deaths for lack of medical attention, the government says.

"This is not a state of emergency to restrict people's lives. It is a state of emergency to give people back their freedom," the president said in a televised address to the nation.

As businesses closed over the course of the protests, supermarket shelves emptied and hospitals ran out of oxygen, calls from some sectors of society escalated for Paz to restore order through force.

On Friday night, Paz signed an agreement with one of the labor unions, whose leaders called for the blockades to be lifted. But other protesters have demanded that Paz resign and refused to negotiate.

Paz said that the state of emergency is intended to guarantee fuel supplies, which have become increasingly scarce as roadblocks have left tanker trucks stranded.

The decree prohibits "blocking streets, avenues, roads and highways in



Police fire tear gas at anti-government protesters blocking a highway in Vinto, Bolivia on June 8. (AP)

ways that affect transportation and supplies," and orders the armed forces to temporarily support the police "in restoring order, reopening roads and protecting the population." The state of emergency doesn't limit due process rights or constitutional guarantees and allows people to continue their daily activities, according to the decree.

The state of emergency will last 90 days, but could be lifted earlier if "violence and threats against the population come to an end," the government said

in a statement.

Paz came to power in November, ending almost 20 years of uninterrupted rule by Bolivia's Movement Toward Socialism party, or MAS, which delivered the country's worst economic crisis in a generation. A centrist who triumphed over more conservative candidates, Paz promised to resolve chronic fuel shortages and replenish the central bank's almost-empty coffers, while protecting the social welfare that represented a pillar of MAS' popularity.

But his austerity measures, most significantly the elimination of long-standing fuel subsidies, have exacerbated biting inflation. His government fixed fuel shortages, but with poor-quality gasoline that damaged thousands of vehicles. Reforms to encourage foreign investment and stimulate economic growth have stalled in Congress.

The highland Indigenous and rural workers' groups - who long supported MAS but helped vault Paz to power last year - have led the protests, accusing his government of neglecting their needs since entering office.

He faces rising pressure from both Bolivia's hard-right, which dominates Congress, and long-ruling left. Former President Evo Morales has supported the protests and demanded a new election from his hideout in the coca-growing tropics, where he is evading an arrest warrant on charges related to statutory rape.

The Trump administration has backed Paz, who repaired relations with the U.S. after years of anti-Western hostility in Bolivia under Morales.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio called Paz to inform him last week that Washington was "ramping up emergency assistance and logistics operations support" to help alleviate shortages caused by the blockades.

US Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth denounced the protests as "attempts to overthrow the legitimate government," and issued a stark warning to those who he said were "profiting on death and destruction in our hemisphere."

"The United States is watching," he wrote on X.

Africa

EU calls on RSF to halt assault: The European Union (EU) on Friday called on the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) to immediately halt their assault on Al-Obeid City in Sudan, warning that the city "must not become another Al-Fasher".

EU Spokesperson **Anouar El-Anouni** said in a statement that the European Union is calling on the Rapid Support Forces to immediately end their assault on Al-Obeid.

The statement stressed that "the killing of civilians, the violence against ethnic groups, and targeting of civilian infrastructure must stop."

The European Union also underscored the importance of allowing civilians to leave conflict areas freely and safely, and enabling humanitarian actors to have rapid, safe and unhindered access to people in need of assistance. (KUNA)



El-Anouni

'Issue apologies and reparations': African and Caribbean leaders in Ghana on Friday urged former slave-trading nations to issue apologies and reparations over the trafficking of enslaved Africans after a landmark UN resolution in March declaring it "the gravest crime against humanity."

The "Next Steps" conference in the Ghanaian capi-

tal of Accra issued a declaration calling on countries involved in the Atlantic slave trade to "offer full, formal and unconditional apologies as a foundational step towards reconciliation, trust-building and reparatory justice."

The UN resolution is non-binding but carries moral authority. Organizers said the Ghana conference was aimed at moving the reparations debate from recognition to concrete measures, including moves to require compensation under international law.

About 12 million Africans were forcefully taken by traders from European nations from the 16th to the 19th century and enslaved on plantations that built wealth at the price of misery.

Ghana President John Dramani Mahama said the UN resolution had created a new opportunity for meaningful engagement on reparations. He said the effects of slavery continue to be felt across Africa, the Caribbean, and the wider African diaspora.

"We're here because recognition creates responsibility, and because the enduring consequences of this history continue to demand thoughtful, coordinated, and sustained international engagement," Mahama told delegates from more than 80 countries.

At a reparations summit in Ghana in 2023, participants proposed establishing a Global Reparation Fund, though they did not clarify how it would operate.

Positions on reparations are mixed in countries that would contribute. (AP)



Malawian migrants stand in a queue for their deportation at a temporary centre, in Durban, South Africa on June 18. (AP)

South Africa builds another site to speed up deportation of Malawian nationals

JOHANNESBURG, June 21, (AP) — South Africa started building a second temporary deportation center on Thursday to process the repatriation of Malawians after thousands protested earlier this year in Johannesburg and other parts of the country against illegal immigration that has fueled tensions between locals and foreign nationals.

Meanwhile, thousands more Malawian nationals arrived at the first deportation center, also in the city of Durban, in an area known as Sherwood, where an estimated 10,000 have been camping for more than a week, waiting to be sent home.

On Wednesday, police fired rubber bullets and used stun grenades against migrants protesting in Sherwood, who were throwing rocks, sticks and logs at police. Local media reported the clashes erupted because of frustrations over the delays in the migrants returning home.

The new site is meant to alleviate the unfolding crisis that has seen women and young children packed in the overcrowded site with thousands of men.

According to South African officials, at least 12 women had given birth at the site since Malawians started gathering there.

South African and Malawian authorities have been coordinating in recent weeks to facilitate the repatriation of thousands of Malawian citizens gathered at the site in Durban, claiming to flee anti-migrant tensions and fears of violence.

However, South African officials said the deportation process required the Malawians to appear in court as they were in the country illegally. The process has also been slow due to insufficient number of buses sent by the Malawian government, which has also asked for donations to help bus the returnees home, the officials said.

"None of these people are legal, all of them are undocumented and illegal in this country," South African home affairs official Cyril Mncwabe said.

He said it could take several more weeks for the 60

immigration officials at the site to process all the people there, with their numbers increasing daily.

He said 10 buses sent by the Malawi government had left Durban for Malawi since the process started.

According to Cyril Xaba, the mayor of Durban, the new facility is being set up in response to a sharp rise in arrivals at the Sherwood site - and would serve as an overflow site to reduce overcrowding.

Also:

FREETOWN, Sierra Leone: Asylum seekers deported by the US to Sierra Leone risk being sent back to their home countries where they face persecution, according to one of their lawyers and documents seen by The Associated Press, despite prior US court orders barring their deportation to those countries.

About a dozen people deported from the US arrived in Sierra Leone Thursday, the second deportation flight to the country after nine West African migrants landed there last month, Erica Reilly, an attorney representing one of the migrants, said Friday.

Sierra Leone is one of at least nine other African nations that the US has struck third-country deportation deals with. Authorities have said they are only taking in citizens of West African countries. Several countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have also reached similar agreements with the US.

A briefing pamphlet that lawyers said was distributed to the migrants upon their arrival in the capital, Freetown, reads that the government and contractors are working to "return you home as quickly and safely as possible."

The pamphlet, a copy of which was seen by the AP, was distributed by Kenvah Solutions, a private contractor that the Sierra Leone government said it hired to handle the deportees' accommodation, food, health-care and transfer.

Deeply divided electorate

Colombians vote in presidential runoff

BOGOTA, Colombia, June 21, (AP) — A deeply divided electorate will choose Colombia's next president in a runoff on Sunday that pits a progressive against a conservative outsider, with both candidates tapping into fears of a renewed internal conflict in the country.

Voters will choose between businessman and lawyer Abelardo de la Espriella and Iván Cepeda, a lawmaker and heir to the political movement of outgoing President Gustavo Petro, the nation's first leftist leader. The two defeated nine other contenders in a May 31 vote.

Both are pitching strategies that they say will prevent the South American country from experiencing the nonstop merciless violence, such as car bombs, kidnappings, disappearances and forced displacements that Colombians lived with in previous decades.

De la Espriella is proposing a heavy-handed approach that has earned him the endorsement of US President Donald Trump.

Cepeda is promising to continue Petro's efforts, including attempts at establishing dialogue with multiple illegal armed groups even though those efforts have largely failed.



Electoral workers set up a voting center in preparation for Sunday's presidential runoff election in Barranquilla, Colombia on June 20. (AP)

The two candidates also are offering differing solutions for the country's struggling health system, ballooning public debt and entrenched corruption.

"Right now, what worries me is the polarization that exists between us: there are two very extreme sides, and the violence is concerning," John Manrique, a lawyer in the capital, Bogota, said as he walked his dog.

"What I hope is that people ac-

cept who won," he added. "Let's accept it, regardless of the side, and try to reach a social consensus. ... Let's not go out and fight."

In the first round, Cepeda earned 41% of the vote, while de la Espriella garnered 44%, according to official results. Petro, without evidence, sowed doubts in the results after Cepeda, who had consistently led polls ahead of the May vote, did not win outright and even finished behind de la Espriella.

Through partnership with CVC Capital Partners

InvestGB expands access to private equity opportunities

KUWAIT CITY, June 21: Gulf Capital Investment Company KSCC – “InvestGB”, the investment arm of Gulf Bank, announced the expansion of its private equity investment offering through its strategic partnership with CVC, structured under CVC-PE Fund, a private equity fund managed by CVC and distributed through InvestGB to eligible investors.

This offering reflects the strategic partnership announced earlier this year with CVC, one of the world's leading private markets managers. This announcement marks the latest expansion of InvestGB's growing private markets platform; deepening the investment solutions available to clients seeking to build diversified, long-term portfolios.

CVC-PE provides eligible investors with ongoing access to a diversified portfolio of private equity strategies managed by CVC. Designed for investors seeking an actively managed allocation to the asset class, the fund offers immediate exposure to an established portfolio, diversification across vintages and strategies.

By combining institutional-quality deal sourcing, active ownership, and long-term value creation, the strategy is particularly well-suited to private wealth investors seeking sustained capital appreciation and portfolio diversification beyond traditional public markets, without the complexity typically associated with direct private equity investing.

Private market valuations have reset meaningfully from their 2020-2021 peaks, improving entry points for investors committing capital today. CVC-PE is designed to capture opportunities in this environment through CVC's established investment platform, with a focus on active ownership and operational value creation rather than relying on financial engineering or elevated leverage.

The fund carries a significant allocation to European markets, where fragmented industries and a broad universe of high-quality businesses continue to offer compelling opportunities. The fund's evergreen structure re-



Hani Mohammad AlAwadhi



Nick Clarry



Ragheb El Rami



moves the traditional barriers of capital calls and finite fund lives, giving investors a practical, flexible route into an asset class that has become a core component of sophisticated portfolios on the global level.

High-Quality Investments

Commenting on the partnership, Mr. Hani Mohammad AlAwadhi, Vice Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of InvestGB, said: “Our partnership with CVC represents an important step in InvestGB's broader strategy to provide our clients with access to institutional grade investment opportunities across global private markets. This collaboration reinforces our commitment to broadening our product offering by providing access to high-quality private equity opportunities focused on sustainable, long-term value creation, with

greater capital accessibility relative to traditional illiquid private equity structures. enhanced capital accessibility compared to traditional illiquid private equity investments. We are proud to partner with a global leader of CVC's caliber and look forward to delivering long-term value to our clients.”

Wealth Management

Mr. Nick Clarry, Chair of Private Wealth and Head of Sports, Media & Entertainment at CVC, commented: “CVC Private Wealth was established to provide individual investors with access to the scale, discipline, and investment expertise of CVC's global private equity platform. Through our partnership with InvestGB, eligible investors in Kuwait can access a diversified private equity strategy designed specifically for private wealth portfolios, with exposure to high-quality companies across CVC's core markets and a strong weighting towards Europe. We are pleased to work with InvestGB to broaden access to private equity in a thoughtful and institutionally grounded way.”

Mr. Ragheb El Rami, Partner at CVC, added: “We are pleased to partner with InvestGB in advancing its long-term investment strategy. This collaboration allows CVC's global platform and investment expertise to support InvestGB's ambition to broaden client access to high-quality private markets solutions. We look forward to working together to deliver strong and sustainable outcomes for investors.”

CVC currently manages approximately €209 billion across private equity, secondaries, credit, and infrastructure strategies. The platform is supported by a global network of 29 offices and more than 550 investment professionals. CVC's private equity platform combines global scale with deep local expertise across Europe, North America, and Asia. Since inception, the firm has completed more than 350 private equity investments globally. Its current private equity portfolio companies employ over 660,000 people worldwide and have combined annual sales of over €240 billion.

Gulf Bank earns Moody's vote of confidence

Moody's maintains Gulf Bank's Long-Term Deposit Rating at 'A3' with Stable Outlook

KUWAIT CITY, June 21: Moody's Investors Service (Moody's) has affirmed Gulf Bank's Long-Term Issuer Deposit Rating at 'A3' with a Stable Outlook. Moody's has also affirmed Baseline Credit Assessment (BCA) and adjusted (BCA) at 'ba1'.

According to the recently published Moody's Investors Service commentary, Moody's stated that: “The affirmation of the bank's ratings reflects its resilient credit profile, supported by solid capital and liquidity buffers, alongside strong provisioning reserves.” Moody's also added in their commentary: “The bank rating affirmations are also underpinned by the Government of Kuwait's (A1 stable) sovereign rating and exceptionally strong balance sheet, which provides a very high level of systemic support.”

Moody's further noted: “The stable outlook on Gulf Bank's long-term deposit ratings reflects the unchanged capacity of the Government of Kuwait to extend support to banks in case of need, as well as our



Dalal Al-Dousari

expectation that the bank will maintain solid capital and sound liquidity buffers alongside high provisioning coverage, with profitability expected to recover after near-term pressure from higher cost of risk linked to the regional conflict.”

Commenting on Moody's credit rating announcement, Ms. Dalal Al-Dousari, Deputy General Manager of Investor Relations at Gulf Bank, said: “We are pleased with Moody's affirmation of our Long-Term Deposit Rating at 'A3' with a Stable Outlook. The affirmation reflects Gulf Bank's prudent risk

management framework, disciplined underwriting and conservative provisioning levels. Collectively, these elements support the Bank's credit resilience and its capacity to withstand adverse conditions while preserving balance sheet strength. This is further supported by the strength of Kuwait's sovereign credit profile and the favorable domestic operating environment, which continue to support stability across the local banking sector.”

Gulf Bank continues to be well recognized internationally for its creditworthiness and financial strength, with “A” ratings from all three major credit rating agencies. In addition to Moody's affirmation of Gulf Bank's Long-Term Deposit Rating at 'A3' with a Stable Outlook, the Bank holds a Long-Term Issuer Default Rating of 'A' with a 'Stable' Outlook and a Viability Rating of 'bbb-' by Fitch Ratings in addition to a Long-Term Foreign Currency Rating of 'A+' with a 'Stable' Outlook from Capital Intelligence Ratings.

In commemoration of World Refugee Day

Boursa Kuwait aligns CSR with UN SDGs through refugee aid initiative

KUWAIT CITY, June 21: Boursa Kuwait lit its building in blue for the sixth consecutive year in solidarity with refugees and forcibly displaced people around the world in commemoration of World Refugee Day, which is observed annually on June 20. This initiative reaffirms the exchange's continued contribution to raising awareness of humanitarian crises and supporting the most vulnerable communities.

The initiative is also aligned with Boursa Kuwait's approach to corporate social responsibility and its commitment to supporting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and comes at a time of heightened geopolitical tensions across the region and the world, underscoring that community stability is the cornerstone of any sustainable economic and investment environment.

A shared responsibility towards refugees and displaced people

This year's World Refugee Day comes during an unprecedented humanitarian crisis and is held under the theme “Until Everyone is Safe.” It calls on the international community, Kuwait's private sector and listed companies to support refugees through tangible initiatives that strengthen their ability to rebuild their lives, which carries even greater importance in light of escalating challenges, from the rise in forced displacement due to regional instability to the sharp decline in global humanitarian funding.

To mark this occasion, Boursa Kuwait renewed its support for the United Nations High Commission for Refugees' cash assistance and protection program, which directly contributes to enabling refugees and forcibly displaced people to meet their basic living needs with dignity, representing an extension of Boursa Kuwait's commitment to its humanitarian role and social responsibility in supporting the most vulnerable groups. It also reinforces the values of solidarity, compassion and responsible giving within Kuwait's institutional and investment culture.

Investment that leaves a tangible impact

“Boursa Kuwait believes that a real investment is one that leaves a sustainable impact on people's lives. Amid escalating wars and humanitarian crises that have displaced more than 120 million refugees and forcibly displaced people around the world, humanitarian solidarity is no longer merely an act of giving. It has become an investment in a shared human future built on safety, dignity and hope,” said Mr. Naser Meshari Al-Sanousi, Boursa Kuwait's Senior Director of Marketing and Corporate Communications.

“Through its strategic partnership with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, Boursa Kuwait continues to support programs that empower refugees and displaced people, helping them meet their basic needs, including cash assistance, education and healthcare,” he added.

“This stems from our belief that social responsibility is an integral part of our institutional and developmental role. Boursa Kuwait remains committed to raising community awareness and promoting a culture of solidarity, compassion and responsible giving. These efforts contribute to building more inclusive and equitable communities and support the wider goal of enabling safer and more dignified lives for the most vulnerable groups,” concluded Al-Sanousi.

A strategic partnership starting in 2020

Boursa Kuwait is one of the first private sector entities in Kuwait to extend support to the UNHCR, as part of a strategic partnership that has continued since 2020 and has contributed to delivering support to more than 2,100 refugee and forcibly displaced families through various relief programmes, including winter assistance, education and emergency response.

The partnership forms part of Boursa Kuwait's efforts to create tangible social and humanitarian impact and is aligned with several SDGs, including:

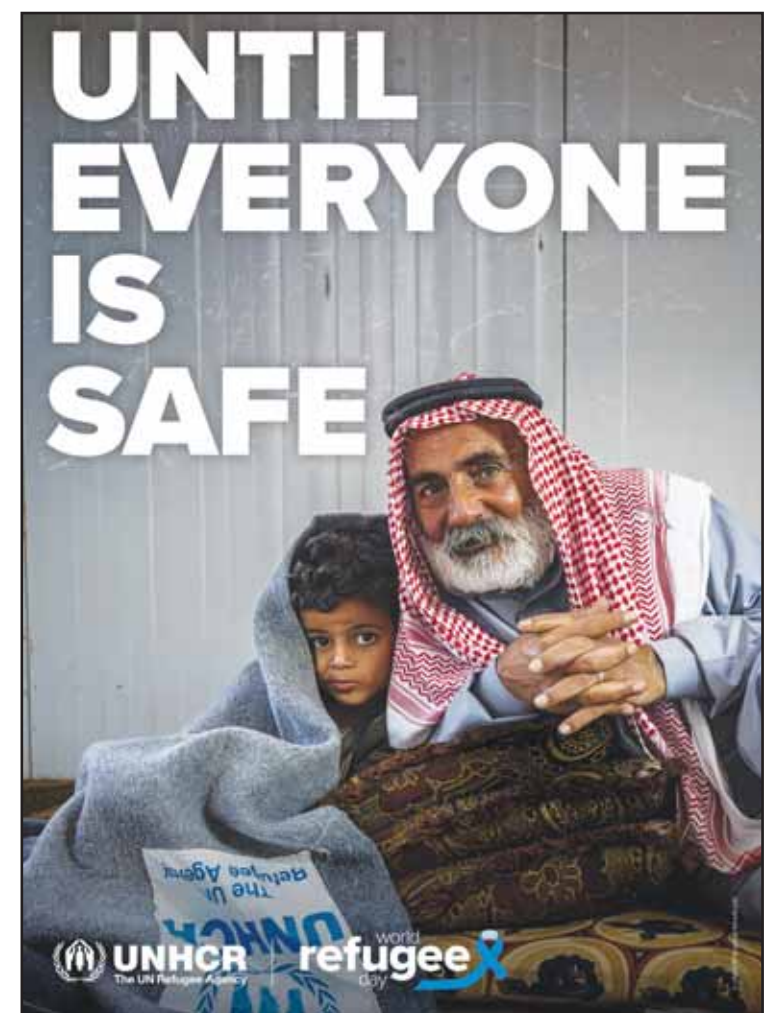
- Goal 1 No Poverty, which aims to end poverty in all forms
- Goal 2 Zero Hunger, which seeks to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition as well as promote sustainable agriculture
- Goal 3 Good Health and Well-being, ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-



Mr. Naser Meshari Al-Sanousi, Boursa Kuwait's Senior Director of Marketing and Corporate Communications.



Mr. Rami Shishan, Head of Partnerships at UNHCR Kuwait and UAE.



The Campaign's slogan

being for all ages

■ Goal 4 Quality Education, aiming to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities

■ Goal 6 Clean Water and Sanitation, which ensures the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation

■ Goal 10 Reduced Inequalities within and among countries

■ Goal 17 Partnerships for the Goals, which seeks to strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

The UN Refugee Agency commends Boursa Kuwait's partnership and humanitarian role

“World Refugee Day is an opportunity to highlight the strength and resilience of refugees and the forcibly displaced around the world, and to reaffirm that safety and dignity are a shared humanitarian responsibility, said Mr. Rami Shishan, Head of Partnerships at UNHCR Kuwait and UAE. “This year's theme, ‘Until Everyone is Safe,’ carries a message that calls for greater solidarity and effective partnerships to support refugees and empower them to rebuild their lives.”

“It has been seventy-five years since the establishment of UNHCR, and strategic partnerships with the private sector have become more important than ever in supporting humanitarian efforts and creating sustainable impact. We extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to Boursa Kuwait, one of the first private sector institutions to

support UNHCR's efforts in the State of Kuwait, for its humanitarian commitment, continued partnership and steadfast support for refugees and forcibly displaced people,” added Shishan.

Leading the global efforts to protect refugees and forcibly displaced communities, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees is a global organization dedicated to saving lives, protecting rights and building a better future for people forced to flee their homes due to conflict and persecution.

A social responsibility strategy rooted at the core of Boursa Kuwait's operations

Boursa Kuwait implements an integrated social responsibility strategy built around the pillars of community and environment. This strategy translates the company's institutional commitment through impactful initiatives and sustainable partnerships with leading local and international organizations, enhancing its social and humanitarian impact and supporting the most vulnerable groups.

These partnerships include collaborations with several United Nations agencies such as UNHCR, UNDP, UNEP and UN Women. In addition, the exchange maintains a humanitarian partnership with the Kuwait Red Crescent Society and continues to support the Kuwait Association for the Care of Children in Hospital (KACCH) and Bayt Abdullah, alongside its collaborations with several national institutions and associations.

KPC launches Q8 brand at Kuwait fuel stations

KUWAIT CITY, June 21, (KUNA): Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said it has successfully transformed a number of gas stations bearing KNPC logo to (Q8) with objective uniting brand identity of the marketing and retail sector, reflecting Q8 status globally.

This transformation is a strategic step that unites commercial identity of KPC across different markets and affirms deep-rooted legacy of the brand, KPC CEO Sheikh Nawaf Saud Al-Sabah told KUNA Saturday.

This transformation, he said, “reflects our continuous commitment in operation excellence, providing best solutions to our customers and supporting strategic objectives that aim at achieving sustainable growth while boosting our domestic and in-

ternational presence up until 2040.”

The first gas station with the Q8 logo was meeting international standards, said Sheikh Nawaf, and would offer an integrated experience for customers beyond refueling to include retail outlets, car care products and smart payments methods.

Wadha Al-Khateeb, Kuwait National Petroleum Company's CEO, said the first Q8 gas station reflected successful collaboration among KPC, KNPC and Kuwait Petroleum International (KPI) to gradually transform KNPC gas stations to be under full KPI management.

She said the first phase included eight gas stations and the rest of KNPC stations would follow.

KNPC has some 65 years of experience, said Al-Khateeb, during

which it managed gas stations nationwide but would be responsible now for supplying Q8 stations with fuel.

KPI CEO Shafi Al-Ajmi said the new station “is a new beginning of Q8 in local market with a vision beyond the reintroduction of a successful brand to transforming gas station into an integrated service destination that honor different needs of customers.”

The new Q8 stations, said Al-Ajmi, would include Electric Vehicles Charging stations, car wash service, strategic partnerships with major food and beverage companies.

“The objective is diversify income, promote customer experience and boosting loyalty for the brand by transforming our stations into vibrant social hubs,” he said.

For Baiti customers and in collaboration with Hzaya

KFH promotes awareness to build a generation capable of planning

KUWAIT CITY, June 21: Kuwait Finance House (KFH), in collaboration with Hzaya, organized a summer break workshop for Baiti customers, aiming to guide them to benefit from the time during summer in a meaningful way.

The workshop focused on enhancing children's time organization skills, exploring new hobbies and interests, in addition to providing them with new skills to develop their personal and social abilities. Other activities involved interactive practices to stimulate creativity and learning.

The initiative reflects KFH's commitment to support social programs and strengthening partnership that focuses on youth development, aiming to build an aware generation capable of future planning.

KFH is keen to sponsor such initiatives, due to the bank's strong belief in community development and promoting positive values among future generations.

KFH's Baiti program, for children up to 14, instills saving habits through a Sharia-compliant investment savings account. It offers educational and recreational activities to boost children's financial and social awareness, while providing parents with an ATM card and e-services for easy account management.

Hzaya Bookstore specializes in books for children and young adults,



Workshop participants.



Part of the workshop activities.

with a mission to promote a love of reading. The bookstore aims to enrich young minds with meaningful

concepts through carefully selected stories that meet high educational standards for parents.

CENTREPOINT UNVEILS REVAMPED SALMIYA STORE IN KUWAIT WITH A NEW ELEVATED SHOPPING EXPERIENCE



To celebrate the reopening of its revamped Salmiya store, Centrepoint hosted a special launch event welcoming customers, partners, media, influencers, and members of the management team to experience the transformed retail destination firsthand. Spanning three floors in a standalone location with convenient parking access, the newly refreshed store introduces an elevated shopping experience designed to be more seamless, enjoyable, and inspiring for families, bringing together fashion, beauty, footwear, kidswear, and home essentials under one roof while reflecting Centrepoint's continued commitment to enhancing family shopping in Kuwait.

Designed around comfort, accessibility, and ease, the revamped store features a more open and modern layout, enhanced fitting rooms across every floor, fast checkout

experiences, and convenient Click & Collect services that support a smoother customer journey from start to finish. Every detail of the new space has been thoughtfully considered to create a relaxed and enjoyable shopping atmosphere where customers can comfortably explore the latest collections and seasonal finds at their own pace.

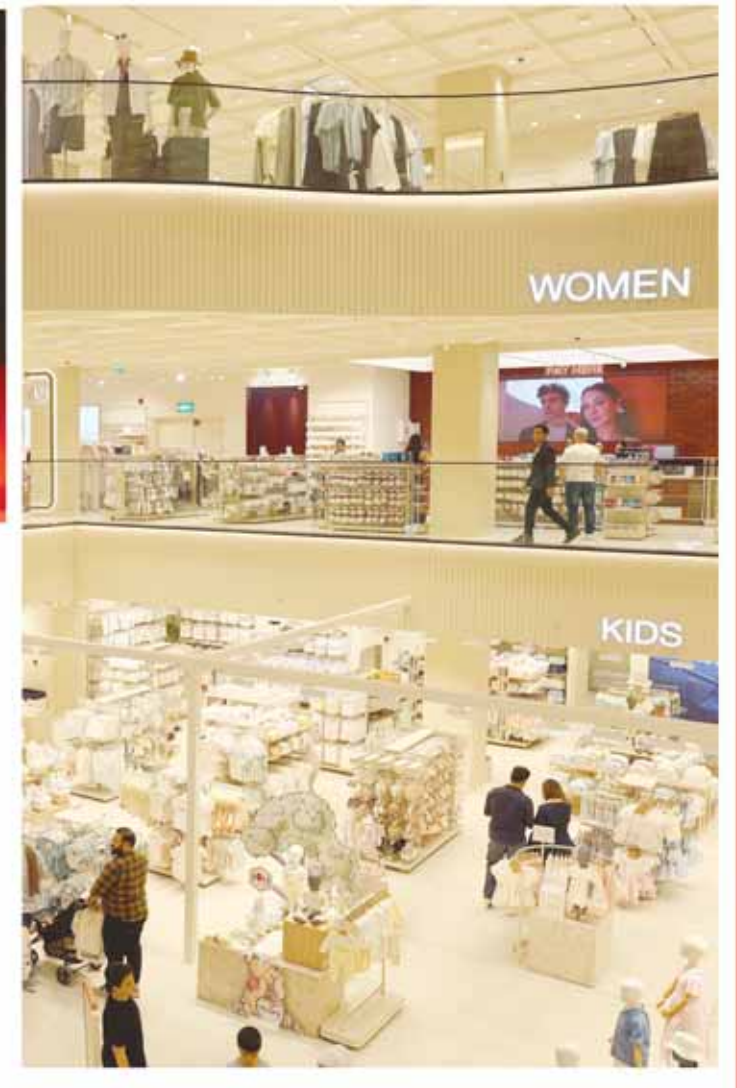
Speaking at the launch event, **Rohit Nanda, Executive Vice President & Country Head**, highlighted the significance of the Salmiya store in Centrepoint's journey, noting that the renovation reflects the brand's commitment to evolving with customer needs. He emphasized that the refreshed store has been designed to offer a more modern, seamless, and enjoyable shopping experience while reaffirming Centrepoint's long-term commitment to delivering greater convenience, value, and innovation to



families across Kuwait. From fashion-forward styles and everyday essentials to beauty, kidswear, footwear, and accessories, the store brings together Centrepoint's much-loved brands — Splash, Babyshop, Lifestyle, and Shoemart — in one vibrant destination tailored for modern family shopping. The refreshed store experience reflects Centrepoint's continued commitment to evolving alongside customer needs while offering variety, convenience,

style, and value in a contemporary retail environment.

With its updated design, customer-focused services, and easy-to-shop layout, the new Salmiya store marks the next chapter of Centrepoint's retail experience in Kuwait — bringing customers a destination that feels welcoming, effortless, and made for every family moment.



stc persists to evolve its partnerships with entrepreneurs through 'weyak'

KUWAIT CITY, June 21: Kuwait Telecommunications Company – stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, announced that it hosted workshops and launched a podcast series under its "weyak" initiative to empower entrepreneurs. The activities were organized as part of stc's ongoing efforts to support the entrepreneurial community and SMEs by creating opportunities to exchange experiences, gain practical business insights, and engage directly with founders who have successfully built and scaled their ventures.

Hosted at stc's headquarters in Assima Tower, the activities included a series of entrepreneurship workshops as well as a dedicated podcast series featuring successful founders and business leaders from across different sectors. Together, these engagements provide entrepreneurs, business owners, and stc employees with opportunities to gain practical insights, exchange experiences, and learn from the journeys of individuals who have successfully established and grown their businesses. Through 'weyak', stc continues to support Kuwait's entrepreneurial community by creating opportunities for meaningful discussions that address the realities of the sector and the evolving needs of SMEs.

As part of the initiative, stc hosted a workshop in collaboration with V-Thru, a Kuwaiti startup specializing in technology solutions for the restaurant sector. During the session, Abdullah Alshalabi, Founder and CEO of V-Thru, shared the company's journey from inception to growth and highlighted a range of solutions designed to help restaurant operators streamline their operations and enhance customer experiences. The discussion also explored how technology is transforming the sector and creating new opportunities for business expansion.

In a separate workshop, Najeeb Al-Mutawa, CEO and Co-Founder of Empower, shared his experience in establishing and growing a company focused on logistics services and business support solutions. The session provided attendees with valuable perspectives on overcoming operational challenges, adapting to changing market conditions, and identifying opportunities that contribute to long-term business success. Participants also engaged in discussions centered on business development and the practical lessons learned throughout the entrepreneurial journey.

The initiative also included a podcast series under 'weyak' featuring several successful founders and business leaders. The series included Sulaiman Al-Tunaib, Co-Founder and CFO of Waves App, Najeeb Al-Mutawa, CEO and Co-Founder of Empower, and Athbi Alenezi, Co-Founder and CEO of JustClean, who each shared their entrepreneurial journeys and reflected on the experiences that shaped the growth of their businesses.

Guests discussed the challenges they encountered while establishing and scaling their ventures, the decisions that influenced their growth trajectories, and the lessons learned along the way. The conversations offered listeners practical insights drawn



The weyak podcast series from stc.



During the hosting of a workshop in collaboration with V-Thru.

from real-world experiences while highlighting the importance of adaptability, innovation, and long-term vision in today's business environment.

On International Women's Day, stc affirmed its continued commitment to supporting and empowering women and enhancing their role in various fields, believing in their pivotal role in innovation, development, and creating the future. stc continues its efforts to provide a supportive environment that contributes to empowering female competencies and enhancing opportunities for growth and development, which reflects positively on society and the labor market.

stc also organized a dialogue session that brought together several female entrepreneurs to discuss challenges and opportunities and exchange experiences and ideas that contribute to supporting women and enhancing their role in entrepreneurship. On this occasion, stc expressed its pride in women's achievements and their active role in society, stressing the importance of supporting and empowering women's competencies.

Commenting on the initiative, Ahmed

AlNowaibet, Director of Public Relations and social media at stc, said, "At stc, we recognize the value of creating opportunities that allow entrepreneurs to learn directly from the experiences of those who have successfully navigated the challenges of building and growing a business. Our focus is to create an educational and supportive platform that offers learning experience and shares dialogue around topics that matter most to business owners. We believe that sharing real-world experiences and success stories can play an important role in helping entrepreneurs make informed decisions and identify new opportunities for growth."

AlNowaibet added, "The workshops and podcast series are part of the various initiatives that we have launched to support aspiring entrepreneurs and SMEs that have just started their unique business ventures. Through the 'weyak' initiative, stc continues to create opportunities that connect entrepreneurs with experienced business leaders and industry experts, supporting its commitment to the SME sector and contributing to the continued development of Kuwait's entrepreneurial ecosystem."

Secondaries: Redefining the future of liquidity

By NBK Wealth

The traditional divide between public liquidity and private illiquidity premium is gradually breaking down. Driven by the rapid expansion of alternatives, modern portfolio construction now demands that capital, risk, and cash flow be managed holistically rather than in structural silos. For retail investors, investment structure such as evergreen vehicles are providing a cleaner entry point to private markets with more predictable cash flows. For advisors and institutions, the secondary market has evolved from a legacy exit option into an active tool for portfolio optimization. Ultimately, liquidity is no longer a static constraint but a dynamic portfolio tool, proving that secondaries are actively redefining the future of liquidity.

The Role of Secondaries
The secondary market allows allocators (advisors) to trade existing commitments in private funds or portfolios, transforming historically rigid fund terms into flexible allocations. Trading these stakes provides a dynamic framework to rebalance exposures, manage cash requirements, and lower concentration risk. This structural flexibility grants access to seasoned assets with greater visibility, broader diversification, and accelerated distributions compared to traditional primary commitments, fundamentally redefining the future of liquidity in private markets.

Bridging Returns and Liquidity
Secondaries solve the traditional trade-off between alpha generation and liquidity constraints. They provide structured exit routes without forcing investors to give up private market exposure, in turn accelerating capital recycling and allowing for active asset allocation across market cycles.

Role in a Holistic Portfolio
Under a Total Portfolio Approach, capital, risk, and cash flows are managed across the full portfolio rather than in structural silos. Within this framework, secondaries serve as a key portfolio tool for rebalancing, funding commitments, and adjusting exposures to ensure that advisors can optimize liquidity without disrupting long-term strategic targets.

Expansion Across Alternative Asset Classes
The secondary market now extends far beyond traditional private equity, including private credit, infrastructure, real estate, venture debt, NAV loans, and co-investments. This expanding footprint gives advisors a broader toolkit to rotate capital between different strategy types based on real-time value, risk, and cash flow requirements.

Increasing Accessibility for Retail Investors
Growing access to semi-liquid struc-



Table 1: The Secondaries Liquidity Framework			
Asset class	Baseline Liquidity	How secondaries change access	The secondaries market impact
Cash	High	Immediate (No direct impact)	Mechanics are unchanged, but private secondaries reduce the cash drag previously required to fund private market calls
Public Equities	High	Daily trading (No direct impact)	Remains the primary daily trading anchor; no longer the only option for dynamic portfolio rebalancing
Traditional Fixed Income	High	Daily trading (No direct impact)	Trading is unaffected, but private credit secondaries now compete directly with bonds by offering similar or higher yield with improving liquidity
Private Credit	Medium	Periodic / secondary transactions	Yield structures remain unchanged, but secondary markets provide an active exit track for managers trading positions prior to fund maturity
Infrastructure	Low to medium	Secondary fund transfers	Underlying asset operations are unaffected, but secondary fund transfers reduce the effective investment horizon for long-duration stakes
Private Equity	Low	Secondary market trading	Core long-term structures persist, but secondary trading overcomes multi-year lock-ups to convert static commitments into active positions
Real Estate	Low	Secondary LP interest transfers	Direct property sales remain illiquid, but secondary transactions clear this hurdle by allowing quick transfers of fund stakes

tures and evergreen funds, which pool capital continuously but offer periodic redemptions, brings secondary market liquidity into traditionally illiquid retail spaces. These vehicles mitigate multi-year capital calls by deploying retail capital into mature asset pools from inception, offering smaller investors immediate diversification and predictable cash flows. Expanding access to retail wealth drives the democratization of private capital, though structural layers like fee expenses, redemption terms, and liquidity gates still require careful review.

Implications for Investment Professionals

For advisors, secondaries have become standard tools for building portfolios, managing risk, and making tactical shifts. Trading existing commitments to rebalance active holdings gives managers precise control over duration, cash flows, and vintage-year exposure. Ultimately, buying into these seasoned funds softens the J-curve effect, allows advisors to acquire assets at a discount, and accelerates distributions to boost overall portfolio efficiency, proving that secondaries are actively redefin-

ing the future of liquidity.

Outlook for Private Market Liquidity

The growth of secondaries turns private market liquidity into an active, manageable portfolio tool. As the market deepens, these transactions will play an increasingly vital role in how allocators structure portfolios, rebalance exposures, and democratize access to alternative assets.

Key Takeaways

- Secondaries are steadily transitioning into an active liquidity tool rather than a niche trading channel.
- Trading existing commitments gives advisors a tool to rebalance, recycle capital, and manage risk without fully exiting private assets.
- The secondary marketplace is progressively extending beyond private equity into private credit, infrastructure, and real estate.
- Evergreen vehicles and semi-liquid structures are expanding retail access over time, delivering flexible exposure with predictable cash flows.
- Investment professionals are increasingly treating secondaries as a foundational tool for building portfolios.

What's On

SPOTLIGHT

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

Combining CSR and wellness on Yoga Day

LuLu Hypermarket celebrates International Yoga Day with employee wellness initiative

KUWAIT CITY, June 21: In celebration of International Yoga Day, LuLu Hypermarket Kuwait organized a special yoga session for its employees, at its Dajej outlet. Reaffirming its commitment to employee well-being and community development through meaningful Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives.

The event brought together more than 50 employees from various departments, fostering an atmosphere of positivity, relaxation, and togetherness. Led by experienced yoga instructors, the session focused on promoting physical fitness, mental well-being, stress management, and mindfulness among participants.

Designed to encourage healthier lifestyle choices, the initiative emphasized the importance of maintaining a balanced mind and body. Through guided breathing techniques, stretching exercises, and meditation practices, employees experienced firsthand the benefits of yoga in improving concentration, reducing stress, and enhancing overall wellness.

Recognizing that a healthy and motivated workforce plays a vital role in organizational success, LuLu Hypermarket Kuwait continues to invest in programs that support employee engagement, wellness, and personal growth. The successful yoga session reflected the company's ongoing efforts to create a positive work-



Photos during the event.

place culture while inspiring employees to adopt healthier habits. As part of its broader CSR

commitment, LuLu also used the occasion to raise awareness about the significance of yoga among

employees and the wider community. The company believes that yoga is a universal practice

that transcends cultural and geographical boundaries, promoting harmony, health, and inner peace.

Through initiatives such as this, LuLu aims to contribute to the global movement of making yoga accessible and beneficial to all.

Participants expressed their appreciation for the program, describing the experience as refreshing, energizing, and highly rewarding. Many noted that the session helped them feel more relaxed, focused, and motivated, highlighting the positive impact workplace wellness programs can have on both personal and professional well-being.

To further promote healthy living and encourage customers to embrace yoga as part of their daily routines, LuLu Hypermarket Kuwait has introduced special promotional offers on a variety of yoga and wellness products. These include yoga mats, fitness essentials, healthy diet products, and lifestyle accessories that support a holistic approach to health and well-being.

The successful observance of International Yoga Day underscores LuLu Hypermarket Kuwait's continued dedication to employee welfare, community engagement, and sustainable CSR initiatives. By promoting awareness of physical and mental wellness, the lulu remains committed to inspiring positive lifestyle choices and contributing to a healthier, happier society.

In collaboration with Rotana

Zain celebrates Rashed Al-Majid's highly anticipated return to Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, June 21: Zain brought its Wonderful World to The Arena for Rashed Al-Majid's highly anticipated return to Kuwait, turning the concerts into a celebration of music, nostalgia, and shared joy. Held in partnership with Rotana, the evenings marked the iconic artist's return to the Kuwaiti stage after six years, drawing audiences eager to reconnect with the voice, songs, and memories that have shaped generations of Gulf music fans.

As part of the occasion, Waleed Al-Khashti, Chief Corporate Affairs and Relations Officer, presented Rashed Al-Majid with a special memento on behalf of Zain, reflecting the company's appreciation for the artist's distinguished career and lasting contribution to Gulf and Arab music, as well as its pride in supporting events that bring people together through art, music, and shared moments of joy.

At the event, Zain had a dedicated interactive booth inspired by Rashed Al-Majid's music and artistic journey, giving concertgoers an additional fan experience before and during the event. The booth offered visitors the opportunity to take commemorative photos and capture special memories from the evening, adding a personal and engaging touch to the overall concert experience.

Zain's support to the event comes in line with its ongoing efforts to enrich



Waleed Al-Khashti presents a special memento from Zain to Rashed Al-Majid.

the local arts scene and support high-quality entertainment experiences in Kuwait. Through its participation in events of this scale, the company continues to contribute to a more vibrant cultural landscape while helping bring audiences closer to the artists and experiences they love.

Zain recognizes the arts as a powerful part of Kuwait's cultural landscape,

with a unique ability to bring people together, create lasting memories, and share joy with the wider public. This belief continues to guide the company's support for cultural and entertainment initiatives that contribute meaningfully to society and strengthen Kuwait's position as a destination for leading local, regional, and international artistic events.

Warba Bank expands digital ecosystem with 'Wajeez' audio-visual summaries

KUWAIT CITY, June 21: Warba Bank has announced a strategic partnership with "Wajeez," a digital platform specializing in Arabic audio and visual book summaries. This initiative expands the bank's digital ecosystem by introducing lifestyle-focused digital services that support continuous learning.

Through this collaboration, Warba Bank is expanding its digital offering beyond traditional banking services to integrate knowledge and cultural content into its digital framework, catering to the daily routines of its customers.

Access to Thousands of Book Summaries via the Warba App:

Naser Maher Al-Mutawa, Chief Digital Officer at Warba Bank, stated: "Through this new service, Warba Bank customers can easily subscribe to the Wajeez platform directly via the Warba application. This provides them with access to thousands of summaries of both Arabic and international books across various fields, including personal development, management, entrepreneurship, science, and general culture."

Al-Mutawa added that each professional summary is presented in a concise audio or visual format lasting no more than 15 minutes, allowing users to acquire key insights efficiently. "The service offers our customers an exclusive, discounted annual subscription rate to support continuous learning," he noted.



Naser Al-Mutawa

■ **Naser Al-Mutawa:** The collaboration introduces one of the first integrated Arabic audiobook services within Kuwait's banking sector

ing," he noted.

Expanding Digital Lifestyle Services:

This partnership represents a significant step in Kuwait's banking sector, establishing one of the first integrated Arabic audiobook and summary services within a financial application. The initiative reflects Warba Bank's broader strategy to build a comprehensive digital lifestyle ecosystem that delivers practical, non-banking benefits alongside financial solutions.

"Partnering with Wajeez supports a culture of reading and personal development by offering flexible, high-quality knowledge content that fits busy schedules," Al-Mutawa explained. "The platform distills major global bestsellers and expert insights into concise professional summaries, supporting personal and professional

development."

Collaboration with Faylasof:

The partnership was developed in collaboration with Faylasof, the developer of the Wajeez application. This collaboration reflects the bank's commitment to forming alliances with leading digital platforms to meet diverse customer needs and invest in long-term digital solutions that merge financial services with digital knowledge.

About Warba Bank:

Warba Bank is a leading Islamic bank in Kuwait with a strong focus on Sharia-compliant digital banking. With one of the largest shareholder bases in the country, the bank continues to deliver innovative financial products and services, reinforcing its position as a digital-focused institution.

The Conversation

Fatherhood matters more than ever before

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

By Darby Saxbe

USC Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences

Long gone are the days of the distant dad. According to some estimates, the average time dads spend caring for their kids each day has quadrupled over the past 50 years. Their attitudes about parenting are also changing. Today, men are about as likely as mothers to say parenting is a key source of meaning and a central priority in their lives. Roughly 85% of fathers identify parenthood as one of the most important aspects of their identity.

As a parenting researcher who focuses on fathers, I'm pleased to see that dads are so invested in their kids. It correlates with better outcomes for kids, and it reduces pressure on moms.

But there's a less encouraging trend tucked into these gains. More is being asked of dads - and moms, for that matter - because the extended family and community networks that once supported childrearing have shrunk or deteriorated.

In researching my new book, "Dad Brain: The New Science of Fatherhood and How it Shapes Men's Lives," I talked to an anthropologist named Barry Hewlett, who has spent his career studying hunter-gatherer fathers.

One society he studies, the Aka Pygmies of the Central Congo, have been called "the best fathers in the world" for their dedication to childcare. Aka men are frequently observed within arms reach of their infants and take a lead role in raising them. Children are seen as central to men's lives.

However, if you compare the time Aka dads spent on childcare with recent data on American parents, as parenting writer Tomo Kumaki recently did, you might be surprised.

According to 2024 American Time Use Survey data - considered the gold standard of evidence on how Americans are spending their time - American dads of infants are devoting about 125 minutes a day to what's called "primary child care," in which their main activity is tending to the child. They're spending another 394 minutes on what's known as "secondary child care," which involves watching a child while doing something else, such as cooking dinner or straightening up the house.

In contrast, according to Hewlett's research from the field, Aka fathers of infants spend about 57 minutes a day on primary and 96 minutes a day on secondary childcare.

The minutes American dads relayed should be taken with a grain of salt; it's a stretch to compare an anthropologist's direct observations with self-reported time diary data, which can often be subject to bias. Still, it's striking to see how - based on these calculations, at least - today's new dads are devoting far more time to parenting than a society described as having the best dads in the world.

When I spoke with him about how fatherhood has changed, Hewlett told me he thinks the role of fathers has taken on more importance today than ever before - not just because mothers are more likely to have jobs outside the home, but because there are simply fewer childcare helpers around.

When you're surrounded by your kin and

neighbors in a communal setting like the Aka, it's easy to get assistance with kids. Fathers care for children, but so do lots of other people.

A 2021 study of another hunter-gatherer society, the Agta, which lives in the mountains of the Philippines, found that fathers provided only about 7% of child care. Mothers, however, provided only about 25%. The rest came from siblings, grandparents, extended family, peers and other community members, who all pitch in.

In much of the industrialized world, daily life is organized around the nuclear family, with relatives and neighbors playing a less central role than they once did.

Today's fathers contribute more to childcare than even the most hands-on hunter-gatherer dad, because there's simply less of a village to support shared care.

Even as men are being asked to take on a bigger role in childcare, it's become harder for some men to do so. That's because - in the U.S., at least - the time men are able to spend on childcare has become increasingly stratified by class.

Journalists Derek Thompson and Aziz Sunderji analyzed multiple waves of U.S. data collected by the Multinational Time Use Study and were able to show that the significant rise in the time dads spend parenting over the past 60 years has primarily been driven by college-educated fathers.

When the Multinational Time Use Study started in the 1960s, fathers with a college degree were devoting only a few extra minutes per day to childcare compared with noncollege-educated dads. But the gap has quintupled over that time span, such that college-educated dads are now spending 46 more minutes with their kids each day compared with noncollege-educated dads.

So why the growing divide? In part, it's because benefits such as universal paid paternity leave and stable, flexible work options are available only to dads with good jobs.

Only about half of U.S. fathers take any paid paternity leave following the birth of a new baby, because many employers don't offer it. In theory, most dads who can't access paid leave should be eligible for unpaid leave through the 1993 Family and Medical Leave Act. However, since that legislation doesn't apply to small businesses or many part-time or gig work situations, about 44% of workers are ineligible for it. Low-wage dads are also often reluctant to take leave because they can't afford to lose income.

The rise of what sociologists call intensive parenting among the most educated, affluent parents also helps account for some of the class divide in parenting time. As the wealth gap between the richest and poorest Americans has widened over the past 60 years, many parents have been eager to optimize their children's success. Devoting extra time to children, including monitoring their schoolwork and enrolling them in enrichment activities that require time and money, has become one way for parents with privilege to give their children a leg up.

In my view, hands-on parenting should not be a luxury good. Americans should be fighting for policies that empower all dads, no matter their income, to enjoy time with their children. The village could use some rehabilitation, too, since parents fare best when they have access to community support and stronger connections with their neighbors, friends and family. (AP)

MILAN

MEN'S FASHION



Models wear creations from the Dolce & Gabbana Spring/Summer 2027 Men's collection presented in Milan, Italy, Saturday, June 20, 2026. (AP)

Dolce vita, Dolce style

MILAN, June 21, (AP): Dolce & Gabbana pitched a menswear wardrobe built for both Milan's punishing heat wave and a Sicilian beach escape, sending models down a seaside-inspired runway in laser-cut suits, short shorts and breezy knitwear during Milan Fashion Week on Saturday.

Designers Domenico Dolce and Stefano Gabbana created the backdrop with a video image of a rocky coastline at sunset, as models walked among columns evoking a Mediterranean terrace in swimwear and silk pajamas.

The collection kicked into high gear as the sun rose, with laser-cut suits, tunics and loose trousers designed to stay cool in the heat while transitioning from the work-week city to a weekend seaside getaway. The standout accessory was an oversized travel bag in leather, suede and raffia.

Short shorts showed off muscular legs, while loose-knit

tops did the same for torsos. Suit jackets featured unusual upright lapels and unexpected details on the back, including back panels that could unbutton for added ventilation.

The brand's craftsmanship was most evident in woven leather jackets, echoed in woven footwear.

The design duo incorporated its signature embellishments, including rhinestones on denim and more delicate coral beading on suits, shirts and trousers. The collection also featured religious-inspired motifs, including cross necklaces resembling rosaries and icon-style prints on T-shirts.

To close, the runway teemed with models in a sea of all-white looks, crisp and distinctly summer.

Front-row guests included Polish soccer great Robert Lewandowski, two-time NBA champion Kawhi Leonard, Italian actor Michele Morrone of Netflix's "365 Days" and K-pop singer Soobin.



Every beat carries peace

International festival for drums & traditional arts opens in Cairo



Artists perform at the opening ceremony of the 12th International Festival for Drums and Traditional Arts in Cairo, Egypt, June 19, 2026. (Xinhua)



Artists perform at the opening ceremony of the 12th International Festival for Drums and Traditional Arts in Cairo, Egypt, June 19, 2026. (Xinhua)

CAIRO, June 21, (Xinhua): The 12th annual International Festival for Drums and Traditional Arts kicked off Friday evening at the Cairo Opera House under the theme "Drums Dialogue for Peace," featuring folklore troupes from several countries. Running until June 23, the event is organized under the Egyptian Ministry of Culture, in cooperation with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and the Dialogue Foundation for the Arts of Peoples' Cultures. Held for the first time at the open-air courtyard of the Cairo Opera House, the opening ceremony showcased traditional Egyptian songs and rhythmic performances. Musical troupes came from Egypt, Palestine, Yemen, Sudan, South Sudan, China, India, Greece, and Indonesia. The event aims to promote peace and dialogue among people through

the universal language of rhythm and heritage arts, the festival's founder and president, Intesar Abdel-Fattah, told Xinhua. "The festival enjoys genuine public popularity and serves as a cultural occasion that strengthens belonging and restores appreciation for Egyptian identity," Abdel-Fattah said. He noted that the performances are open to the public free of charge at multiple open-air venues. The theme resonated with attendees. Egyptian visitor Osama Gamil, who attended the opening ceremony with his family, said, "As the world witnesses so many devastating wars and conflicts today, the peoples of the world are in desperate need of peace." Gamil added that music and drums bridge cultural divides and remind people of their shared humanity and the urgent need for harmony.

Art

Ashkanani unveils new works at symposium

Kuwaiti artist makes mark in Hungary

KUWAIT CITY, June 21 (KUNA): Prominent Kuwaiti artist Mahmoud Ashkanani has concluded his participation in the 34th Ludvig International Art Symposium held in the cultural hub of Kendlimajor, south of the popular Hungarian city of Keszthely. The two-week cultural event, which commenced on June 7, brought together an elite group of contemporary visual artists from various European, Asian, and Middle Eastern nations. Speaking to the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), Ashkanani revealed that he showcased seven newly completed artworks at the symposium's closing exhibition. On the sidelines of the event, he presented the organizers with a copy of his newly published 400-page autobiography, issued recently under the patronage of Kuwait's National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL). The publication serves as a comprehensive retrospective,



A painting by visual artist Mahmoud Ashkanani.

documenting Ashkanani's decades-long career, featuring high-resolution plates of his paintings, and chronicling his extensive participation in local and international exhibitions. Marking his 11th appearance at the prestigious gathering, Ashkanani underscored the vital role of such international platforms in fostering cross-cultural dialogue, stimulating artistic exchange, and building bridges of communication between global creative communities. Spanning over three decades, the annual event remains a premier fixture on the international art calendar. It offers immersive, specialized workshops in painting, wood carving, and ceramics. This year's edition also featured curated field visits to prominent museums and galleries in neighboring European countries, alongside cultural symposia where artists engaged in critical discourse and peer reviews to enrich their creative practices.

Educational spaces debut with guest interactions

Barack and Michelle surprise first visitors at new presidential center



Former President Barack Obama and former first lady Michelle Obama pose for a photo with students from William H. Ray Elementary School after a surprise reading of 'Where the Wild Things Are' at the Obama Presidential Center's Chicago Public Library branch on the South Side. (AP)



Former President Barack Obama and former first lady Michelle Obama read 'Where the Wild Things Are' to students from William H. Ray Elementary School at the Obama Presidential Center's Chicago Public Library branch. (AP)



Former President Barack Obama and former first lady Michelle Obama read 'Where the Wild Things Are' to students from William H. Ray Elementary School at the Obama Presidential Center's Chicago Public Library branch. (AP)

CHICAGO, June 21, (AP): Former President Barack Obama and former First Lady Michelle Obama surprised the first 100 visitors to walk through the doors of the new Obama Presidential Center, personally greeting them Friday.

The Obamas, joined by former "Reading Rainbow" host LeVar Burton, also read "Where the Wild Things Are" to 25 school children at the Chicago Public Library branch inside the center. When the former president read Maurice Sendak's line about being "king of all the wild things," Michelle Obama interjected with, "Although there were no kings," to applause. Later, awed guests shook hands with the Obamas against the backdrop of a colorful, 38-foot-tall painting depicting a map of Chicago stretching to the ceiling, inspired by Carl Sandburg's 1914 poem about the city: "stormy, husky, brawling, City of the Big Shoulders."

"It was perfect. It was great," said 18-year-old Houefa Agassoun from Chicago after the surprise visit from the Obamas. "I was literally crying. I asked for a hug and everything." She wrote a letter to the Obama Foundation last year, asking if she could be there when it opened. She said meeting the Obamas was a bonus. "This is just the greatest thing of my



Former President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama greet community members in the Hope and Change lobby before they walk through the museum at the Obama Presidential Center in Chicago on Friday, June 19, 2026. (AP)



Former President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama greet community members in the Hope and Change lobby before they walk through the museum at the Obama Presidential Center in Chicago on Friday, June 19, 2026. (AP)

18 years of life," she said. The Juneteenth opening followed a star-studded dedication ceremony where the Obamas gave rousing speeches to an audience including three former presidents, their former first ladies, and a host

of politicians, A-list celebrities, musicians, athletes and others. Thousands more joined the livestream from a nearby park.

A weekend of events is planned for the sprawling campus on Chicago's South Side near where the Obamas lived and began his political career. It is adjacent to the Griffin Museum of Science and Industry in the lakefront park, and not far from the University of Chicago.

Tickets for the general public are sold out through the end of November. But those lucky enough to score them for the first day got the unexpected thrill of meeting the Obamas themselves.

The campus includes a towering museum that covers the political and personal realms of the nation's first Black president and first lady, while public spaces include a branch of the Chicago Public Library, a playground and athletic center, basketball courts and a picnic area with grills.

The tower's design is meant to depict four hands coming together in solidarity. Wrapped around one side are 5-foot tall concrete capital letters, an excerpt of Obama's 2015 speech commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Selma-to-Montgomery march. It begins, "You are America."

2.5K-year temple unearthed in Egyptian oasis



View of the excavation site: Courtesy of the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities.

CAIRO, June 21, (Xinhua): Egypt announced on Friday a major archaeological discovery at the Al-Qasr Al-Qadim (Old Palace) Temple in Bahariya Oasis in the country's Western Desert, which uncovers significant architectural elements dating back around 2,500 years to the 26th Dynasty (664-525 B.C.).

The Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities said in a statement that the Egyptian archaeological mission from the Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA) uncovered the remains of a sandstone room, inscribed stone blocks bearing the names and titles of King Psamtik I, and various artifacts.

The findings provide new evidence of the site's historical and religious significance, confirming its role as a key administrative center across successive eras, SCA Secretary-General Hisham



Stone stela dating to the reign of Pharaoh Amenhotep II. Courtesy of the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities.

Elleithy noted. Mohamed Abdel-Badie, head of the



Another view of the uncovered structures: Courtesy of the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities.

Egyptian Antiquities Sector at the SCA, said that the mission also revealed the temple's main hypostyle hall with 16 sandstone columns, adjacent rooms and shrines, and hieroglyphic texts bearing the names of deities such as Amun-Ra, Amunet, and Khonsu.

Construction of the hall began under King Psamtik I and was completed under Kings Wahibre (Apries) and Ahmose II (Amasis), Abdel-Badie said.

He added that the mission also found a stone stela dating back to the reign of King Amenhotep II of the 18th Dynasty, which confirms the Oasis's ties to the Egyptian state since the New Kingdom era, alongside artifacts from King Ramesses II's era, which suggest religious and urban activity predating the 26th Dynasty.

وزارة التجارة والصناعة
Ministry of Commerce & Industry
دولة الكويت | State of Kuwait



RECALL INFORMATION



Lexus RC-F
Model Year: 2015/2016 & 2020



Lexus GS-F
Model Year: 2016 & 2019

VIN: JTHHP5BC0F5000156 TO JTHHP5BC0L5007622

RECALL REASON

The subject vehicles are equipped with a low pressure fuel pump located inside the fuel tank. Due to a manufacturing defect, the fuel pump may become inoperative. As a result, the Check Engine warning lamp may illuminate, potentially causing an engine no start condition or vehicle stalling.

REMEDY

Owners of the affected vehicles will be contacted by Mohamed Naser Al Sayer & Sons Est. Co. W.L.L. and will be asked to schedule an appointment once the repair parts become available. The repair will be carried out at no cost to the customer.

CONTACT

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This Recall is run pursuant to articles (42,43,44,45,46,47 and48)of no.(27/2015) issuing the executive by laws no.(39/2014)on Consumer Protection

HEALTH/SCIENCE

National Science Foundation reverses decision to dismantle oceans-monitoring network after outcry

WASHINGTON, June 21, (AP) — The National Science Foundation reversed a decision to dismantle a sprawling ocean monitoring network after vigorous objections from Democratic lawmakers and scientists who rely on it to track everything from ocean circulation to extreme weather.

The NSF issued a statement saying that it “appreciates the concerns raised by the range of stakeholders” and would halt efforts to remove or disable equipment. It also said it will redeploy equipment that already was removed from the water and convene an expert panel to determine the future of the network.

The Ocean Observatories Initiative is a network of more than 900 ocean sensors built at a cost of \$386 million. Over the last decade it has tracked ocean circulation, marine ecosystems, climate change and extreme weather, producing data freely available to the public and informing more than 500 scientific publications. The project was slated to run another 15 to 20 years.

The National Science Foundation had directed the removal of most of the system’s instruments from waters off Oregon, Washington, Alaska, North Carolina and Greenland by 2027 — a decision scientists said came with no warning and no scientific review.

The independent federal agency, established by Congress, described the move not as a cancellation but as a “descoping” aligned with a strategy to prioritize “evolving scientific priorities and emerging technologies.” The Trump administration’s proposed 2026 budget had included a 55% cut to the agency.

On Monday, a group of Democratic senators and one Republican, as well as two Democratic House committees, sent letters to the NSF asking it to reverse course on its plan. House lawmakers accused the agency of acting illegally.

“Dismantling the OOI was supreme stupidity, and we’ll keep fighting to ensure scientists, fishermen, and coastal communities can continue to utilize

the critical data the OOI provides,” Democratic Sen. Jeff Merkley of Oregon said in a statement Thursday.

The ocean observatory cuts were seen as part of a broader retreat from environmental and climate-related science under the Republican administration, which has moved to scale back research programs, reduce staffing at agencies including the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Environmental Protection Agency, and ease emissions regulations.

Also:

BUJUMBURA: Burundi has officially launched a 90-million-US-dollar water and sanitation project, co-financed by the World Bank and the Burundian government.

The launch took place on Wednesday at **Ruziba**, near Lake Tanganyika, in **Mugere** district of Bujumbura Province, and was attended by Burundian President **Evariste Ndayishimiye** and World Bank Regional Vice President for Eastern and Southern Africa **Ndiame Diop**.

The project is expected to benefit about 615,000 people, particularly residents of Bujumbura, through improved water services from 2028, with planned activities including the construction of a water pumping and treatment plant with a capacity of 60,000 cubic meters per day.

Ndayishimiye welcomed the launch of the project, saying that “ensuring access to clean drinking water contributes to the fight against certain diseases.” He called for the protection of Lake Tanganyika and all the rivers that flow into it to prevent pollution of the lake’s waters, which are vital to the population.

“This event is a very important step for the water supply sector in Burundi and for the sustainable improvement of living conditions for the population,” Diop said.



In this 2021 image provided by Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, workers walk near buoys used to gather data at Pioneer New England shelf off the coast of Martha's Vineyard, Mass. (AP)

Tens of thousands of Americans die from influenza every year

US FDA panel backs first-of-its-kind flu vaccine using mRNA technology

WASHINGTON, June 21, (AP) — A new kind of flu vaccine moved a step closer to the US market as federal health advisers recommended approval of the first made with the same mRNA technology that was key to ending the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Food and Drug Administration is evaluating Moderna’s new shot, dubbed mFlusiva, for older Americans ahead of the winter flu season. Moderna is seeking full approval for the vaccine’s use in people ages 50 to 64 — along with authorization for use in those 65 and older while it conducts additional testing.

The FDA’s independent advisory committee evaluated Moderna’s studies of the vaccine and voted unanimously that its benefits appear to outweigh any risks for both age groups. The FDA will consider that recommendation in making a final decision by early August.

Tens of thousands of Americans die from influenza every year, and older adults are among the most vulnerable. There are various types of flu vaccines already available in the US, including three specifically recommended for people 65 and older. But vaccines made with the Nobel Prize-winning mRNA technology are faster to manufacture than other types — something experts say might help if the shape-shifting flu virus mutates in a way that requires suddenly brewing new doses to match.

“Having this technology available puts us in a better position to be prepared for emerging strains in the future,” said Dr. Flor Munoz-Rivas of Texas Children’s Hospital, one of FDA’s advisers.

In a study of 40,000 people age 50 and older, Moderna’s mRNA vaccine reduced flu cases by about 27% compared with those given another routinely used vaccine brand. In a smaller study of people 65 and older, Moderna’s shot also generated a strong protective immune response compared with a high-dose flu vaccine already recommended for that age group.

Data showing strong immune reactions “were very compelling,” said FDA



A sign marks an entrance to a Moderna building in Cambridge, Mass., May 18, 2020. (AP)

adviser Dr. Anna Durbin of Johns Hopkins University, adding that “the vaccine looks very promising.”

Moderna’s Dr. Ritupama Das told panelists that the company’s ability to quickly manufacture mRNA vaccines that closely match the latest flu strains could prevent thousands of hospitalizations in older Americans.

Severe flu cases in the US generally rise in years when the flu shot doesn’t closely match the circulating virus. Moderna officials noted that flu strains for each fall’s vaccines now are chosen several months earlier than the yearly recipe update for COVID-19 shots that mostly are mRNA-based — and there can be a mismatch if the flu virus mutates after the recipe is made.

At the meeting, FDA vaccine reviewer Dr. Timothy Brennan suggested the agency was open to approving the vaccine for older adults ahead of the coming flu season, despite the need for more information about its use in frail seniors or people with weak immune systems.

If it’s approved, Moderna is planning its required next-step study to include 400,000 people 65 and older, half given the mRNA vaccine and the rest given one of today’s special-for-seniors shots. It’s supposed to repeat that study for two flu seasons.

Moderna’s data showed no major safety issues although the shot did cause some temporary reactions including injection-site pain, fever, headache, tiredness and aches. The latter reactions are common in a variety of vaccines, but occurred somewhat more often than with today’s flu shots. The FDA said that’s typical of mRNA vaccines.

Those temporary reactions can be a signal that “your immune system is responding,” said Dr. Hayley Gans, a Stanford Medicine pediatrician and FDA adviser who stressed it will be important to explain that to vaccine recipients.

Earlier this year, Moderna’s data was at the center of a highly unusual public dispute as a then-top FDA official blocked the company’s application for its first-of-its-kind shot.

The embattled vaccine chief at the time, Dr. Vinay Prasad, said the company should have compared its shot to a high-dose flu vaccine recommended for seniors rather than a standard-dose brand. It was a sign of FDA’s heightened vaccine scrutiny under Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

Moderna challenged that decision, noting that FDA staff had approved that main study’s design and citing a separate, smaller study comparing the mRNA shot with a high-dose vaccine for seniors. Days after the spat, the FDA accepted Moderna’s application.

Moderna also is studying the vaccine in younger adults and plans a separate study in 9- to 17-year-olds this fall.

Why so many of us can’t let go of our old electronics, and what we can do about it

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

□ □ □

By Eric Williams,

Rochester Institute of Technology; Payam Saeedi,
Rochester Institute of Technology, and

Stacey Watson

University of Waterloo

Think about the last smartphone, tablet or smartwatch you stopped using. Odds are it is not in a recycling bin or a new owner’s hands; it is sitting in a drawer.

From our survey of 4,000 American consumers, we found the single most common thing people did with a device they were finished with was nothing at all: 39% simply stored it. Recycling and reselling, outcomes better for the environment, each accounted for only about 1 in 10 devices. Throwing devices in the trash claimed another 9%.

Funded by the National Science Foundation, our multidisciplinary team blended our expertise in causal inference, sustainability and cybersecurity, to work on the tangled question of what people do with their consumer electronics when they’re done using them. We used statistical models to connect what people say — that is, their stated knowledge and attitudes — to what they actually did.

Two main forces keep devices in the drawer. The first is anxiety about data. People who worried that recycling or reselling a device would compromise their data were 14% and 9% more likely to store it instead.

The second force is simply not knowing how to. People who did not know where to recycle were 10% more likely to hold onto a device, and many also kept old gadgets as a perceived data backup.

Recycling and reselling electronics are a lot easier than a lot of people think. In the US, the national chain Best

Buy accepts devices for recycling; reselling online is convenient with vendors such as Back Market and Gazelle.

Just be sure to wipe data before parting with a phone or computer. Also, remove the device from your account, for instance with Apple or Android. Unless you do, the device stays locked to you, and no one else can use it.

We also compared what people intended to do with what they had actually done. This led to a telling detail: Data security worries led to people storing devices at a greater rate than they said they intended to.

In other words, the fear of leaking personal data kicks in only when someone is facing the real decision of whether to hand off their device to a recycler or second-hand buyer.

Researchers have long studied why people do or don’t recycle electronics: Convenience, awareness and incentives showed up as affecting the decision. But prior work examined recycling as the only option.

Instead of considering the issue as a yes-or-no vote on recycling, we treat it as a comparison between different options: Storing, reselling, donating, trading in, recycling and throwing away the device in the trash. When modeling this way, trade-offs became visible.

Knowing where to recycle, for instance, made recycling 47% more likely, but it also pulled people away from reselling, which is often the more environmentally friendly choice. You can explore the survey results in our interactive dashboards.

Storage is the worst of both worlds: A device sitting unused for years loses its resale value, and erasing its data only gets harder over time. The good news is that the main barriers — data concerns and not knowing where to turn — can be addressed with better information.

We are experimenting with information interventions that walk people through their options, including how to securely wipe their data. We are testing nudges with randomized, controlled trials to test what leads people to give their old electronics a second life. (AP)



A thunderstorm moves over the beach of the Baltic Sea in Travemuende, Germany, late Saturday, June 20, 2026. (AP)

France cancels some outdoor sports as heat wave bakes parts of Europe

PARIS, June 21, (AP) — France put emergency services and military forces on wildfire alert and canceled some outdoor sports events to cope with a heat wave unfurling across parts of Europe. Multiple drowning deaths have been reported.

About a third of France is under the heat red alert Sunday and temperatures are expected to reach 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit) on Sunday in some areas, in a country where air-conditioning isn’t widespread. The forecast for Monday is even hotter.

The Eiffel Tower and other Paris venues set up misting stations to cool crowds, among a raft of measures announced by national and local authorities to minimize risks. Tourists in Rome sought relief in fountains. Spain’s Basque Country canceled some sports and cultural events.

More than 200,000 people across Europe died from heat-related causes over the last four years, and most of the fatalities were preventable, the World Health Organization’s Europe office said this month. More above-average temperatures are expected this summer, which can cause heat exhaustion and life-threatening heat stroke.

Human-caused climate change is tied to increasing extreme weather events and UN climate agency projections say the next five years should shatter more heat records. A rapid study found that human-caused climate change was responsible for killing about 1,500 people in an un-

usually early European heat wave last month.

In this latest European hot spell, French media reported that four children drowned Saturday.

France’s annual Music Day on Sunday is of particular concern. The nationwide summer solstice celebration involves thousands of concerts in village squares, rave venues and Paris clubs, bringing communities together and increasingly drawing British and other international visitors.

Some French trains were canceled, and the national rail authority dispatched thousands of extra staff to deal with potential problems as the heat threatened rails and electrical cables.

Authorities are notably worried about people living in the baking streets, and elderly people in nursing homes or isolated in their homes. About 15,000 older people died in France in a 2003 heat wave that became a national reckoning.

The government announced reinforced wildfire readiness and ordered tightened surveillance of water supplies to France’s many nuclear reactors, and ordered 845 schools to close Monday.

Spain kicked off the summer with large parts of the country on alert due to temperatures expected to hover around 40 C (104 F) — even in the interior of Basque Country, a northern region that typically experiences cooler temperatures.

Authorities have suspended out-

door sports and cultural activities in the region. The heat wave is expected to scorch Spain at least through Wednesday.

Also:

GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK, Ariz: Visitors to Grand Canyon National Park are being warned about extreme temperatures that will hit the popular destination early next week after a recent increase in heat-related incidents in the inner canyon, including the deaths of three hikers.

The National Weather Service issued an extreme heat watch at the Grand Canyon for midday Monday through Tuesday, forecasting temperatures that could reach or exceed 110 degrees Fahrenheit (43 degrees Celsius) at the low-elevation Phantom Ranch.

People are “strongly advised” to avoid hiking in the middle of the day, the National Park Service said this week in a statement following a “recent influx of heat-related incidents.”

An extreme heat watch was in effect June 16 when two hikers, ages 67 and 68, were found dead on the North Kaibab Trail, which the NPS describes as the most difficult of the major inner canyon trails. The service said they appeared to have succumbed to symptoms of heat-related illness.

A third person, 72, died June 12 along the South Kaibab Trail after becoming ill from the heat, NPS said.

China donates meteorological equipment to Madagascar

ANTANANARIVO, June 21, (Xinhua) — A handover ceremony marking China’s donation of meteorological and information technology equipment to Madagascar was held here on Thursday, aimed at strengthening the country’s capacities in weather forecasting, climate monitoring, and early warning to better respond to natural disasters.

The ceremony was held in the presence of representatives of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and relevant Malagasy institutions. The donation includes a set of meteorological and information technology equipment.

Madagascar’s Minister of Transport and Meteorology Herizo Andrianavalona Ramanambola expressed gratitude to China for its support in modernizing the country’s meteorological and climate services.

“These (donated equipment) will improve data processing, bulletin production, meteorological information communication and operational continuity,” he said, adding that they would also help make meteorological services “faster, more reliable and more useful” for public decision-making.

Chinese Ambassador to Madagascar Ji Ping said that the project aims to strengthen the capacity of Malagasy institutions in meteorological data collection, information processing, early warning dissemination, and disaster



This photo taken on June 18, 2026 shows a handover ceremony marking China’s donation of meteorological and information technology equipment to Madagascar in Antananarivo, Madagascar. (Xinhua)

risk management, as well as to provide stronger technical support for disaster prevention and reduction efforts and the protection of lives and property in Madagascar.

Hosting Ice Hockey World Championship boosts Kuwait's sporting status: Al-Ajmi

Preparations underway for global sporting event

KUWAIT CITY, June 21: Chairman of the Kuwait Winter Games Club, Fahid Al-Ajmi, has said that the International Ice Hockey Federation's (IIHF) approval for Kuwait to host the 2027 Ice Hockey World Championship (Division IV) reflects the country's strong international standing in sport.

Al-Ajmi explained that the tournament, which was previously postponed this year due to regional conditions, marks an important opportunity for Kuwait to reaffirm its ability to organize major global sporting events.

Speaking to reporters after the club's general assembly meeting, he said preparations will begin early to ensure the successful delivery of the championship scheduled for next March, adding that the aim is to present the event in a way that highlights Kuwait's positive image



KUNA photo
The Kuwaiti Winter Sports Club General Assembly addressed the media.

internationally.

He expressed pride in the confidence shown by the international federation and leading hockey nations in granting Kuwait hosting rights, noting that such events also contribute to the development of the sport locally. He stressed that this achievement reflects the continued support of the state for Kuwaiti sports.

Al-Ajmi also highlighted the club's ongoing development plans across its five winter sports: ice hockey, figure skating, curling, speed skating, and skating.

He said the club is working on organizing domestic competitions and specialized training camps for each discipline.

He added that the upcoming season will begin in September with the launch of the national ice hockey league, alongside other local tournaments, with a focus on raising the technical level of athletes across all winter sports.

The general assembly concluded by approving the administrative and technical reports for the past fiscal year.

Credits coach for success

Al-Mansouri secures gold medal at Istanbul Jiu-Jitsu Grand Slam

ISTANBUL, June 21: Kuwait's Abdullah Al-Mansouri captured gold at the prestigious Jiu-Jitsu Grand Slam in Istanbul, Turkey, adding another international achievement to his growing list of accomplishments.

Al-Mansouri topped the podium in one of the sport's leading globally recognized tournaments, a result that has elevated him into the international rankings among Kuwaiti jiu-jitsu athletes.

Speaking after his triumph, Al-Mansouri described the victory as a proud achievement for Kuwait on the world stage. He credited much of his success to the efforts of his coach, Abdullah Daghash Al-Hajri, and the management team of GFT KWT Samurai Club for their dedication and support in preparing him for the competition.

The gold medal continues a remarkable run of success for the Kuwaiti athlete. Earlier this year, he emerged victorious in the Teen Super Fight event held in Kuwait, further showcasing his potential and consistency.



Kuwait's Abdullah Al-Mansouri celebrates after claiming gold at the Istanbul Jiu-Jitsu Grand Slam.

Al-Mansouri had also previously won two gold medals for Kuwait at the AJP International Championship in Jordan, adding to an impressive

medal collection earned while representing GFT KWT Samurai Club under the guidance of coach Abdullah Daghash Al-Hajri.

Mercury ends 4-game skid with win over Storm

Dream sets team mark in rout of Fever

ATLANTA, June 21, (AP): Rhyne Howard scored 24 points, Alisha Gray added 22, and the Atlanta Dream set a franchise record for points in a game with a 113-96 victory against Caitlin Clark and the Indiana Fever.

Angel Reese became the fastest player in WNBA history to reach 1,000 career rebounds, reaching the milestone in her 79th game. Reese finished with 18 points and eight rebounds.

The Dream earned their third straight win in front of a sold-out crowd of 17,044 at State Farm Arena, home of the NBA's Hawks. Saturday's game is one of five the Dream are playing at State Farm this season. The Dream usually play at the Gateway Center Arena in College Park which has a capacity of 5,000 fans.

The win for the Dream (11-4) was the second in three days against the Fever after a 108-101 road victory on Thursday.

Saturday's game featured South Carolina women's basketball coach Dawn Staley, the Hawks' Jalen Johnson and C.J. McCollum, the Falcons' Avieon Terrell and Grammy nominated singer Latto.

Staley was welcomed with a standing ovation as she watched seven of her former players between the two teams.

Clark scored a team-high 26 points for the Fever (9-7). Kelsey Mitchell had 16 points and Aliyah Boston and Sophie Cunningham each had 13 points.

Trailing 59-56 at the half, Atlanta outscored Indiana 28-15 in the third quarter to hold an 84-74 edge heading into the fourth. Jordin Canada scored eight of her 12 in the quarter. Naz Hillmon added 19 points for the Dream.

Mitchell contributed to Indiana's strong start with 16 points in the first half, helping the Fever to a 59-56 lead at halftime.

Mercury 93, Storm 73
In Phoenix, Valeriane Ayayi had 18 points and 10 rebounds and the Phoenix Mercury snapped a four-game losing streak by ex-



Phoenix Mercury forward Noemie Brochant (1) drives against Dallas Wings guard Azzi Fudd (35) during the second half of a WNBA basketball game in Arlington, Texas. (AP)

tending the Seattle Storm's skid to 10 straight.

Kahleah Copper added 17 points for the Mercury (5-12), who pulled away with a 14-0 run to start the third quarter.

Phoenix got double-doubles from Noemie Brochant with 16 points and 10 assists, and Natasha Mack - 10 points and 10 rebounds. Lexi Held scored 11 in her first career start, while DeWanna Bonner added 10 points.

Natasha Hiedeman led the Storm (3-14) with 20 points and rookie Flau'jae Johnson scored 13. Dominique Malonga and reserve Zia Cooke added 10 points each.

Seattle led 24-19 after one quarter on 48% shooting, but finished at 36%.

Ayayi hit a 3-pointer and Copper added two free throws to finish off a 13-0 run in the second quarter for a 43-29 lead. Seattle went on a 12-5 run behind seven points from Malonga to cut it to 48-41 at halftime.

Wings 93, Sky 92

In Arlington, Li Yueru made two free throws with 12.5 seconds left to give Dallas its first lead as the Wings scored a season high 36 fourth-quarter points to rally from a 14-point deficit to beat the Chicago Sky.

Jessica Shepard scored 17 of her 21 points in the second half, adding eight rebounds as Dallas (10-6) won its sixth straight home game.

Paige Bueckers added 19 points, scoring 10 of 11 points for the Wings during one stretch of

PARIS, June 21: Egypt's Hania El Hammamy ended the 2025-26 squash season on a high note, capturing the PSA World Tour Finals title for the second time in her career after defeating Malaysia's Sivasangari Subramaniam in the final in Paris.

The world No. 1 overcame a spirited challenge to secure a 11-6, 10-11, 11-8, 11-8 victory, reinforcing her status as the sport's leading player and finishing the season atop the world rankings.

El Hammamy had already guaranteed the year-end No. 1 spot following the semifinal exit of fellow Egyptian Amina Orfi, who is ranked second in the world.

Reflecting on her triumph, El Hammamy said: "When I won my first Tour Finals title in 2020, I was the underdog. This time, I came in as the world No. 1 and had the pressure of defending that position, which makes this achievement even more special."

She added that she plans to take a short break from squash before turning her attention to prepara-



Egypt's Hania El Hammamy poses with the trophy.

tions for the upcoming season.

In the men's competition, Peru's Diego Elias claimed the Tour Finals crown for the first time in his

career. Elias rallied from a game down to defeat New Zealand's Paul Coll 7-11, 11-4, 11-6, 11-9 in the championship match.

Club is considering signing Bryan

Amer and Marzou depart Kuwait Club handball team

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 21: Kuwait Club has confirmed the departure of two players from its first handball team at the end of the season, following the expiry of contracts for Qatari professional Frankis Marzou and Kuwaiti player Mohammed Amer.

Marzou was among the most influential foreign players to feature for "Al-Abyad" in recent seasons, playing a key role with his international experience and attacking strength in securing several domestic and external titles. He had joined Kuwait Club's preparations for the recent Asian Club Handball Championship held in Kuwait after finishing his duty with the Qatar national team at the Gulf Games.

Mohammed Amer, meanwhile, spent five seasons with the team and previously represented several local clubs. He has recently attracted interest from Al-Arabi Club.

Kuwait Club is expected to finalize its renewal and signing decisions in the coming period as it looks to maintain squad stability and continue competing strongly for both domestic and continental honours, following a successful run of titles in



Bryan Monte cheered after scoring during a match.

recent years.

Fans are now awaiting the official announcement of the retained and departing players, along with new signings expected to strengthen the squad ahead of upcoming competitions.

Reports also suggest that Kuwait Club is considering signing Montpellier and Brazil national team player Bryan Monte, who recently represented "Al-Abyad" in the Asian Club Championship, while retaining Vladen and searching for a third foreign professional.

Al Ahly begins financial overhaul

CAIRO, June 21: Al Ahly SC's board has begun revisiting its financial policies as part of a broader plan to regulate spending and reorganize the football department's wage structure, including the introduction of a salary cap for players.

The shift comes at a time when several stars are attracting lucrative offers from clubs in the Gulf and abroad, creating a challenge for the club to balance sporting ambitions with financial discipline.

According to sports journalist Amir Hisham, the club's football decision-makers - Yassin Mansour, Sayed Abdel Hafeez, and Wael Gomaa - have agreed on a strict wage framework after identifying a number of highly valued contracts within the squad.

The new policy sets player salaries between 20 and 25 million Egyptian pounds per year, with

performance-related bonuses potentially adding up to 8 million pounds. This means a player's maximum annual earnings could reach 32 million pounds, provided all major titles are achieved. The management has reportedly made it clear that the policy will be enforced without exception.

The financial restructuring is already influencing transfer activity, with reports indicating that Al Ahly has received a serious offer from a Gulf club for star winger Mahmoud Hassan Trezeguet.



Al Ahly SC players warming up ahead of a match.



Room stars as Curaçao earns famous draw against Ecuador

Draw doesn't eliminate either team from knockout play

KANSAS CITY, Mo., June 21, (AP): Curaçao better make some room for a new national hero.

Eloy Room delivered for his tiny Caribbean nation one of the finest performances in World Cup history, making 15 saves against a relentless Ecuador attack and helping The Blue Wave earn its first-ever point with a 0-0 draw against La Tri.

The outcome also allowed Germany, which beat Ivory Coast earlier in the day, to clinch Group E.

"It's going to be an insane memory," said Room, who plays for USL Championship club Miami FC. "You don't think about it when you do it but of course it's going to be something you look back to. For me as a goalkeeper, this is almost a perfect game."

The 37-year-old Room, whose shutout of Jamaica last November sent Curaçao to its first World Cup, bounced back in historic fashion from a 7-1 loss to Germany. His save total was one shy of the record - since saves became an official stat in 1966 - of 16 set by Tim Howard of the U.S. against Belgium on July 1, 2014, in a game that Room remembers watching.

Howard needed 120 minutes for his total, though. Nobody has made more saves than Room without extra time.

"I think I need a statue in Curaçao now," he said with a smile.

The draw doesn't eliminate either team from knockout play, but it put Ecuador in dire shape going into its group finale. Those matches take place Thursday with Curaçao facing Ivory Coast in Philadelphia and Ecuador playing Germany in New York.

"Well, there are things you cannot explain in football," Ecuador coach Sebastian Beccacece said. "We wanted to win. We didn't do it. I am the one who bears responsibility, and I told my team, 'If you're giving it all, competing,



Ecuador's Gonzalo Plata, right, Curaçao's Armando Obispo battle for the ball during the World Cup Group E soccer match in Kansas City, Mo. (AP)

I have no complaints."

"As long as we are alive, we will continue to give it our all. We are very united. We are like a family. No one said

it would be easy."

Ecuador certainly had a home-field advantage Saturday night at the home of the Kansas City Chiefs. Its fan-

base, dressed like its players in bright yellow shirts, filled the stadium to the brim, making it look like a convention of Minions. There was only a couple of small pockets of blue-clad Curaçao fans in a stadium whose capacity could house half of its island citizenry.

Among those in the crowd were Kansas City Royals players Bobby Witt Jr., Salvador Perez and Starling Marte.

And King Willem-Alexander and Queen Maxima of the Netherlands, who began a memorable day in Houston cheering the Dutch past Sweden, then flew to Kansas City to watch a constituent country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands make history.

"They were even dancing in the locker room to our music," Room said. "That's unreal that they witnessed this game."

The pressure mounted on Ecuador earlier Saturday, when Deniz Undav's goal in stoppage time lifted Germany to a 2-1 win over Ivory Coast. The outcome of that match in Toronto meant that La Tri faced World Cup elimination with a loss to The Blue Wave.

Curaçao made sure the pressure continued once play began.

Throughout the first half, 78-year-old coach Dick Advocaat's team kept finding seams through the middle of Ecuador's defense, and that created open looks at the goal. But each time, Curaçao would end the runs with a sloppy pass or a shot wide of net.

Ecuador wasted its best scoring chance in the opening minutes, when World Cup veteran Enner Valencia found nothing between him and the goalkeeper. But Room guessed right, dove to his left and deflected the shot to keep the game scoreless.

"For us it's no shock," Curaçao midfielder Tahith Chong said. "We've gotten used to Eloy doing these unbelievable saves."

Fan

Zone



Fans react during World Cup group stage matches across venues in Mexico and the United States, as supporters follow their respective national teams and experience the emotion and intensity of the tournament from the stands. (AP)

Cape Verde pulled off one of the biggest surprises

Forecasted blowouts missing as World Cup delivers balanced battles

GUADALAJARA, Mexico, June 21, (AP): Not long after FIFA announced an expanded 48-team World Cup, criticism began to pour in about how the quality of the tournament would likely be worsened.

The critics argued that by allowing smaller teams to the expanded field, the number of weak matchups would increase, as would the chances of lopsided results.

But as the biggest World Cup ever progresses, those fears have not fully materialized.

Through the first 24 games, the goal differential was unchanged compared to the tournament in Qatar in 2022, suggesting the larger field did not create more one-sided competition.

Germany did rout newcomer Curaçao 7-1, Qatar was trounced 6-0 by Canada, and Haiti was eliminated after two matches. But some of the less-traditional nations were able to hold their ground early on.

Cape Verde, the fifth-lowest ranked team entering the World Cup and one of the smallest nations to ever make it to the tournament, pulled off one of the biggest surprises in World Cup history by holding European champions Spain to a 0-0 draw.

Congo, whose only other World Cup participation was in 1974 as Zaire, was unfazed while facing Cristiano Ronaldo's Portugal, holding one of the tournament favorites to a 1-1



Qatar goalkeeper Mahmoud Abu-nada fails to save a goal by Canada's Jonathan David during the World Cup Group B soccer match in Vancouver, British Columbia. (AP)

draw.

What are the reasons for the overall competitiveness?

Coaches, players and analysts say global soccer has become increasingly competitive, with more players joining the top leagues and more top coaches being hired by smaller nations. There is also wider availability of tactical knowledge and physical

conditioning methods, allowing less-traditional teams to better compete against the traditional powerhouses.

"It's very tough to win. It surprised me how even things are. They had talked about having 48 teams, but not counting Germany, which did have a big gap with many goals scored, all other matches were very complicated," Mexico coach Javier Aguirre said. "It's not easy to win. Really, believe me. The teams have been improving, until recently we didn't know much about Cape Verde, and there it is. Morocco played a tremendous match against Brazil."

While the number of goals scored after the first 24 matches increased from 57 in Qatar four years ago to 75 now, the goal differential this year was 35, exactly the same after the same number of games in Qatar.

Cape Verde was ranked 67th when it came up with the upset by playing second-ranked Spain to a draw.

"This game showed us that the World Cup is a tournament with a lot of equality. It's very complicated," Spain coach Luis de la Fuente said. "These teams have their limitations, but they do what they do well. The team we faced was clearly inferior to ours, but it did what it had to do very well and defended very well. In every match you have to be fully focused and extremely precise to be able to overcome your rivals."

'We want to win it'

Flurry of goals, convincing wins raising US World Cup hopes and expectations

WASHINGTON, June 21, (AP): The early results are in: This U.S. men's national team is for real in this World Cup.

With a quick and creative offensive attack producing goals in front of stadium-shaking home crowds, the Americans have already won their group and booked their place in the knockout round. A final group stage match against Turkey in Los Angeles awaits before the pressure ramps up again.

The question now is just how far can they go? The optimism and expectations of a deep run in the tournament are rising quickly.

The American players seem eager to embrace what might have seemed inconceivable for a big nation with a relatively shallow pedigree in international soccer.

"I don't think it's ridiculous to say that we want to win it," U.S. defender Chris Richards said after Friday's 2-0 win over Australia. "We want to lift a trophy by the end of this."

Few would have predicted this kind of quick success, said striker Folarin Balogun, who scored twice in the opener against Paraguay.

"You know, (if) someone said before the tournament 'Two games and you're through to the knockouts,' I think we all would have took it," Balogun said. "We're delighted."

The first two matches saw the U.S. attack Paraguay and Australia with an energy, skill and creativity on offense rarely seen by the Americans in the World Cup.

The U.S. has won consecutive World Cup matches for the first time since 1930. And the six goals in the first two matches are one short of the team record for a World Cup.

The architect is coach Mauricio Pochettino, an Argentine who was best known for his European club stints with Tottenham, Chelsea and Paris Saint-Germain. He had never coached a national team until he was hired by the U.S. in 2024 with an eye on this year's World Cup.



United States' Folarin Balogun (20) and Antonee Robinson (5) celebrate after scoring during the World Cup Group D soccer match between the United States and Australia in Seattle. (AP)

As a co-host, the U.S. was an automatic qualifier for the tournament, allowing Pochettino more time to experiment and craft the lineup he wanted. He was blunt earlier this month when he said the U.S. does not have any players that rank among the top 100 in the world.

But the lineup he has put on the field the first two matches has been rock solid and maybe even better than expected. The players credit him with instilling a tougher, more resilient mindset.

Pochettino said after the win over Australia, he could feel the fan support reverberating throughout the stadium in Seattle.

"Today, even if I'm not American, after the game I was emotional," Pochettino said. "It was an amazing and perfect connection between the energy from the stands and the team. This makes us feel very proud."



Fans hold balloons marking the 1,000th World Cup match prior to the Group F soccer match between Tunisia and Japan in Guadalupe, near Monterrey, Mexico. (AP)

Sports

Germany survives Ivory Coast scare to reach knockout phase



Ivory Coast's Wilfried Singo (5) and Germany's Jamal Musiala (10) vie for the ball during the World Cup Group E soccer match between Germany and Ivory Coast in Toronto. (AP)

Undav at the double

TORONTO, June 21, (AP): An hour into the game, Germany was getting outplayed by Ivory Coast and trailed by a goal.

Coach Julian Nagelsmann needed a spark and substituted in three fresh players, one of whom was Deniz Undav. That decision paid off big time.

Undav scored twice as Germany defeated Ivory Coast 2-1 on Saturday and clinched a spot in the knockout phase at the World Cup.

"It's important that everyone sees that even the players from the bench can decide games," said Undav, who also scored in Germany's 7-1 opening match rout of Curacao. "Now we have a really important signal to the team. I think that's very important in a game like this."

Four minutes into stoppage time, Undav re-

ceived a pass from Felix Nmecha in front of the net and rifled it past Ivory Coast goalkeeper Yahia Fofana to give the Germans a comeback win. It was the German national team's 11th straight win, a streak dating to September 2025.

Undav's first goal of the match came after Nadiem Amiri sent in a long ball - that striker Kai Havertz let pass him by - onto the boot of Undav, who slammed it into the back of the net in the 68th minute. Both Amiri and Undav had subbed on eight minutes earlier.

"Deniz is nobody who needs to be prepared," Nagelsmann said. "He can jump in right away."

Four-time champion Germany has come back from disappointing group stage exits in 2018 and 2022, while Ivory Coast is still searching for its first knockout stage appearance and could still qualify. The last time Germany got past the group stage it won the tournament in 2014.

"Think we showed great character today," Un-

dav said. "We want to achieve the most."

Ivory Coast captain Franck Kessie opened the scoring in the 30th minute after midfielder Yan Diomande sent in a cross to forward Amad Diallo. His shot was blocked by Germany's Nathaniel Brown, but the ball bounced back to Kessie, who slotted it in the wide-open left corner of the net.

Germany had two goals waved off in a frustrating first half. The first was in the 21st minute when Fofana batted the ball into his own net, but Germany midfielder Aleksander Pavlovic made illegal contact with Fofana on the play.

The second came in the 38th minute on a foul, as Jamal Musiala was called for contact on the build-up to what would've been a Havertz goal.

After a court fight to get into Canada, Elye Wahi, the Ivory Coast striker under investigation for alleged betting-related offenses while playing in France for Nice, did not play.

Netherlands moves atop Group F

Brobbey, Gakpo double up as Dutch rout Sweden

HOUSTON, June 21, (AP): Under intense pressure after an opening-game draw, the Netherlands delivered a dominant performance against Sweden in the World Cup to move atop the Group F standings.

Brian Brobbey and Cody Gakpo scored two goals apiece to power Netherlands to the 5-1 win.

Brobbey's goals came in the first half, helping the Netherlands get off to a great start and roll to the big win after playing Japan to a 2-2 draw Sunday.

The victory gives Netherlands a group-leading four points. Sweden has three points, with Japan and Tunisia scheduled to play later Saturday.

"It could be that the way we played builds confidence," Netherlands coach Ronald Koeman said. "Now we've got a slightly better piece of mind with the four points. You can build on what happened now and that's really good."

Gakpo, who also had an assist, extended the lead to 3-0 just after half-time, scoring in the 47th minute off a cross from Denzel Dumfries. He matched Brobbey when he scored on a right-footed shot from the left box in the 54th minute.

"Today there was more variation in attacking play, more players in different positions, movement and all those things," Gakpo said. "So it was maybe more difficult for the defenders to really mark us and we became free in the box. I think that was the little thing maybe we missed in the last game."

Sweden couldn't build on its strong performance in a 5-1 walloping of Tunisia in its first match. The loss to the Dutch was its biggest World Cup defeat since losing 7-1 to Brazil in 1950.

Sweden coach Graham Potter said the defeat was less about what his team did and more about just how good Netherlands played Saturday. He then named a laundry list of all the stars on the Dutch squad before continuing.

"So it's not that we're gonna expect that everything's going to be easy for us," he said. "It's not that, of course. They're a top team and they were better than us today. We have to congratulate them, but I think we'll learn a lot from the game."

The Dutch gameplan to play out

wide to open up Sweden and cross to Brobbey worked perfectly early. He put the Netherlands on top in the fifth minute when Gakpo crossed into the middle of the box and Brobbey one-timed it with his right foot before tumbling forward to the grass.

His second goal came when he took a cross from Dumfries while sliding and just got his right foot on the ball, scoring inside the far post in the 17th minute.

Koeman credited Brobbey's success with getting in better shape after he had struggled in the past with the rigors of playing a full game.

"He's fitter, he's sharper and he's developing really well," he said.

Anthony Elanga's left-footed goal cut the lead to 4-1 in the 59th minute and allowed Sweden to avoid the shutout.

Sweden had plenty of chances to score before that, but Netherlands' goalkeeper Bart Verbruggen was brilliant in the first half with four saves.

Sweden appeared to have cut the lead to 2-1 on a header by Gustaf Lagerbielke in the 44th minute, but he was ruled offside. Lagerbielke is a baron from a noble family in Sweden. His father and grandfather are counts.

But he wasn't the only royalty in the stadium Saturday as the Netherlands had two very special guests cheering them on with King Willem-Alexander and Queen Máxima watching from a luxury suite.

"The King was very happy," Koeman said.

The crowd of 68,777 was largely made up of fans of the Netherlands, many of whom made their Oranje Fanwalk 2 1/2 miles from Rice University to Houston Stadium on Saturday morning.

Crysencio Summerville, who assisted on Gakpo's second goal, tacked on a goal for Netherlands in the 89th minute and celebrated with NBA star Steph Curry's "night night" gesture.

Summerville was kicked in the head late in the match and had received stitches, but Koeman said he should be ready for the next match.

"I think things are OK-ish," he said. "He's got a bit of a headache."

Sweden finishes group play Thursday night against Japan at Dallas Stadium, and Netherlands meets Tunisia that night in Kansas City.

Samurai Blue on brink of advancing

Japan turns historic fixture into 4-0 masterclass over Tunisia

MONTERREY, Mexico, June 21, (AP): Japan moved one step closer to reaching the knockout stages of the World Cup for the fourth consecutive time after pummeling Tunisia 4-0 in Group F, securing a milestone victory in the tournament's 1,000th men's match.

Japan's four goals were the most the Samurai Blue have ever scored in a World Cup game, as it comfortably dismantled a Tunisia side that became the first to ever fire its coach after the opening match.

Ayase Ueda scored twice, along with Daichi Kamada and Junya Ito to put Japan level with the Netherlands on four points. The Dutch are currently on top of the group due to having scored one more goal than Japan across its two matches.

Even after leading 2-0 just over half an hour into the match, Japan continued to apply pressure to a disjointed Tunisian defense.

"If we are able to get as many goals as possible, that would give the team confidence," said Hajime Moriyasu, the first head coach to lead Japan at consecutive World Cups. "That is something we would definitely want to repeat against Sweden."

The loss for Tunisia means it is eliminated from the tournament. Japan is guaranteed at least third in the group, which could be enough to advance to the knockout stages.

Tunisia appointed two-time Africa Cup of Nations winner Hervé Renard to try and rescue the Eagles of Carthage after its humiliating 5-1 loss to Sweden, but the North African nation could not contain Japan's speedy attack nor create any clear chances of their own.

"It is important to get ready to fight for this third game against the



Tunisia goalkeeper Aymen Dahmen makes a save as Japan's Takehiro Tomiyasu (22) charges during a World Cup Group F soccer match in Guadalupe, near Monterrey, Mexico. (AP)

Netherlands," Renard said. "It's never easy after two losses in two games, but we must take our responsibilities and be professionals to the very end."

Kamada opened the scoring in the fourth minute, the fastest in Japan's World Cup history. The Crystal Palace midfielder, who acted as a "shadow striker", was perfectly positioned for Keito Nakamura's cross and barely had to move to tap in his second goal of the tournament.

"I was thinking more about getting in front of the goal than actually creating, so I'm glad I was able to do what I was aiming for," Kamada said.

In the 31st minute, Ueda received the ball in the midfield and drove toward the Tunisia box. When he opted not to pass to a few advancing runners, any chance of a goal seemed lost - but the 27-year-old fired an angled shot from outside the box which flew into the left corner of the goal to make it 2-0.

The Feyenoord striker had an impressive club season in the Netherlands, scoring 24 goals in the Eredivisie to earn the league's top scorer award.

In the 69th minute, Ueda's flick put Junya Ito into a one-on-one with Tunisia's goalkeeper Aymen Dahmen, which he slotted calmly for Japan's third goal.

Ueda's second of the night came in the 83rd minute, when his masterful looping header floated into the net to cap off an impressive showing for the Samurai Blue.

Japan, which has not lost to a European opponent in 90 minutes since 2019, will play against Sweden in Dallas on Thursday. Tunisia will play the Netherlands in Kansas City at the same time.



Netherlands' Ryan Gravenberch, left, controls the ball next to Sweden's Jesper Karlstrom during the World Cup Group F soccer match between the Netherlands and Sweden in Houston. (AP)

World Cup Diary

Raphinha has a hamstring injury: Brazil forward Raphinha will undergo treatment on a hamstring injury with the hope of him returning to the World Cup, the country's national team said.

Raphinha left late in the first half of the team's win over Haiti on Friday night in Philadelphia after receiving medical attention. The Brazilian soccer confederation said afterward that the 29-year-old felt something in his right hamstring and would undergo further tests. (AP)

Ghana hopeful ahead of clash with England: Football fans in Ghana have urged the Black Stars to maintain their unbeaten record in second group matches at previous FIFA World Cups when they face England on Tuesday.

Supporters said Ghana could draw confidence from its strong record in second group games, having never lost such a match in its four previous World Cup appearances. (Xinhua)

World Cup Fixtures

Argentina vs Austria 20:00

Tuesday

France vs Iraq 00:00

Senegal vs Norway 03:00

Jordan vs Algeria 06:00