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KUWAIT CRACKS DOWN ON MISMATCHED EXPAT PROFESSIONS



Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

Iranian regime's tactics: buying time, no decision

NOBODY wants war in the region. No one wants to continue the tension that has been emerging every two or three years since 1979.

Consequently, any step toward stability and peace is a Gulf demand, both officially and publicly. Gulf officials welcome any progress in that direction.

The signing of the memorandum of understanding between the United States and the Iranian regime was welcomed as a glimmer of hope for regional stability.

However, as they say, the devil is in the details.

Since the memorandum is not an agreement, but rather a general framework upon which nothing can be built, we must examine the structure of the Iranian delegation in Switzerland and their conduct during the discussions with the American delegation. This will reveal the intentions of Tehran in the negotiations.

In this sense, the background of the Iranian delegation members and what they represent in the regime matter. The delegation has 45 members and each is headed by an authoritative figure within the system. It reveals the fundamental goal of Iran -- to take without giving.

Tehran bases its strategy on the lessons learned in 2015. However, all these still depend on the actions of the Iranian regime, demanded by the United States, the international community and the Gulf states. Neither the US nor the regional powers desire war for their own sake. Everyone is aware that no one gains from such a conflict, particularly the Iranian people, who have been enduring hardships as a result of the actions of the regime.

As a result, the new American tenet is: "Acquire what can revitalize your people through peace, because war is not in your interest."

On the contrary, the image of victory that the regime leaders are trying to project is about their survival and continuous control over the government and national resources. Nothing else matters. We previously detailed how the regime reacted to public uprisings throughout its 47 years of rule.

Therefore, the negotiations witnessed by the whole world two days

ago were, in substance, merely a formality for the regime, while the Americans who want to escape internal and international pressures and prevent the return to war because of its enormous economic cost, are placing their bets on them.

This political realism is not in the minds of the Iranians, meaning, they will pursue their course until the end, but it will be very costly for them.

Thus, when US President Donald Trump threatens Tehran against reverting to its past behavior, he understands that the game is nearing its end. When he tells them explicitly to cut off funding to their proxies, especially in Lebanon, he knows well that Hezbollah is the last card Iran uses to pressure several Arab states allied with the United States.

The session held two days ago yielded meager results, as each member of the Iranian team sought to secure personal gains and maintain control over the levers of power within the regime, fearing internal political dismantling.

Basically, we will witness many more rounds of negotiations if the American side does not make a decisive move. Given President Trump's personality, the Iranian regime may not have significant opportunities.

Inflation has reached about 77 percent, over 2.5 million people have lost their livelihoods, and the poverty rate has exceeded 40 percent.

So, this beleaguered nation has no option but to capitulate, as it cannot afford to engage in stalling tactics and war awaits it.

In any event, the statements made by US Vice President JD Vance after the initial round of talks were comforting for the Iranian and American populations, as well as the regional nations. This can be expanded, if everything goes according to plan.

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PAM aligns jobs with credentials

Kuwait opens door to work reclassification

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 22: The Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) announced the issuance of Ministerial Circular No. 1/2026, introducing new regulations on the qualifications and professions

of expatriate workers, which took effect on June 2.

The circular is part of the ongoing efforts of PAM to develop the labor market and guarantee the alignment between academic qualifications, professional classifications and actual duties performed in the workplace.

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Motorists drive along the Gulf Road under a blazing sun on Monday as extreme summer heat continues to sweep across Kuwait. Photo by Rezk Tawfiq

Khaitan blaze kills 1, injures two residents

KUWAIT CITY, June 22: One person died and two others sustained injuries in a fire that broke out inside an apartment in Khaitan on Sunday afternoon, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) stated that firefighters from the Farwaniya and Subhan fire stations rushed to the location after receiving information about the house on fire. They extinguished the

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Executions carried out after full legal process

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 22: The Public Prosecution announced that it supervised the execution of five convicts on Saturday evening inside the Central Prison, after the completion of all legal and judicial procedures and the exhaustion of all avenues of

Continued on Page 5

Amir expresses sympathy

Kuwait voices solidarity as Qatar LNG blast claims 13

KUWAIT CITY, June 22, (Agencies): His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, sent a cable of condolences on Monday to Qatar's Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, expressing his sincere sympathies over the victims of the explosion that oc-

curred at a factory in the Ras Laffan Industrial City.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir conveyed his heartfelt condolences and solidarity following the incident, which resulted in several

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Rubio's tour includes key Kuwait stop

WASHINGTON, June 22, (KUNA): US Secretary of State Marco Rubio will begin a Gulf tour tomorrow, which will include the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, and Bahrain, to discuss regional issues and topics of mutual interest.

State Department spokesperson Tommy Pigott said in a statement that the US secretary of state will address a range of regional issues during the tour, which runs from June 23 to 25, including the memorandum of understanding signed with Iran and efforts aimed at ensuring freedom and security of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz.

Pigott added that Rubio will emphasize during his visits the importance of peace and stability in the region, noting that during his visit to Bahrain, he will meet with

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8 ABK launches 2025 Sustainability Report highlighting its ESG achievements



10 NBK achieves a pioneering milestone as the first GCC bank to obtain 4 ISO certifications across human resources functions



KUNA photo Chief of the Saudi Army General Staff Lieut.-Gen. Fayyad Al-Ruwaili with visiting Kuwaiti counterpart Lieut.-Gen. Khaled Al-Shuraian.

Saudi, Kuwait bolster defense links

Chief of the Saudi Army General Staff Lieut.-Gen. Fayyad Al-Ruwaili and his visiting Kuwaiti counterpart Lieut.-Gen. Khaled Al-Shuraian discussed on Sunday means to strengthen bilateral military and defensive cooperation. During the meeting, both gener-

als reviewed bilateral relations between the State of Kuwait and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, said the general staff in a press release.

Several high-ranking Kuwaiti army officers accompanied the Kuwaiti army chief during his visit to Saudi Arabia. (KUNA)

News watch

KUWAIT CITY: Kuwait Army's Directorate of Moral Guidance and Public Relations announced on Monday that the Naval Force will conduct live-fire exercises on Tuesday and Wednesday from 5:00 a.m. until 8:30 p.m.

The directorate said in a press statement that the exercises will take place in the designated maritime firing range located 16.5 nautical miles east of Ras Al-Julaia, extending toward Qaruh Island, and six nautical miles east of Ras Al-Zour, extending toward Umm Al-Maradim Island. (KUNA)

PACA, KDIPA boost growth

Kuwait airport rebounds as repair works continue

KUWAIT CITY, June 22, (Agencies): President of the Public Authority for Civil Aviation (PACA) Sheikh Humoud Mubarak Al-Humoud Al-Sabah discussed on Monday with Director General of Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) Sheikh Dr. Meshal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah ways to enhance cooperation in the civil aviation sector.

In a press statement, PACA said that the meeting addressed a number of issues of mutual interest and reviewed opportunities for cooperation in areas related to improving the investment environment and development projects linked to the civil aviation sector.

The two sides also discussed ways to support the state's development plans and promote projects related to



PACA photo PACA Chief Sheikh Humoud Mubarak Al-Humoud Al-Sabah with KDIPA Director General Sheikh Dr. Meshal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

the air transport sector, contributing to strengthening Kuwait's position as a regional hub for air transport and logistics services.

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Kuwait family business footprint narrows in Forbes list

Analysts warn of succession fault lines in family firms

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 22: The number of major family businesses in Kuwait declined from seven in 2025 to six in 2026, according to Forbes Middle East's list of the 100 strongest Arab companies

for the current and previous years.

This raises questions about the reasons for this decline, especially considering that the number of family businesses in Saudi Arabia reached 32, in the UAE 10, in Qatar 21, and others are distributed across several Arab coun-

tries, including Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Lebanon, and Algeria.

Speaking to the daily, Head of the Accounting Department at Kuwait University Dr. Sadiq Al-Basam stated that the presence of only six Kuwaiti

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Dr. Al-Bassam



Ramadan



Dr. Boursli



Prayer Timings

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



Sheikh Jarrah Jaber



Dr. Badr Abdelatty

Kuwait & Egypt to enhance fraternal ties in all spheres

KUWAIT CITY, June 22, (KUNA): Kuwait Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on Monday phone called his Egyptian counterpart Dr. Badr Abdelatty.

During the phone call, both sides reviewed the strong fraternal relations between the two brotherly countries and discussed ways to further enhance cooperation across various fields, said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in a statement.

They also discussed the latest developments in the region and efforts being exerted in this regard, it added.



FM takes part in GCC meeting: Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah chaired on Monday Kuwait's delegation participating in the ministerial coordination meeting of the foreign ministers of the GCC states, held on the sidelines of the Arab League Council meeting at the ministerial level in its resumed ordinary session (165) in Amman.

In a statement, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the meeting discussed the latest regional developments and international and regional efforts aimed at de-escalation and enhancing security and stability in the region.

Minister issues decree to form new Board of Trustees for arts academy

KUWAIT CITY, June 22, (KUNA): Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Dr. Nader Al-Jallal, issued a crucial ministerial decree on Monday officially forming the new Board of Trustees for Kuwait Academy of Arts.

In a press release, Dr. Al-Jallal emphasized that forming this board reflects the ministry's commitment to strengthening governance frameworks, supporting the academy's progress, and enhancing its vital role in developing national artistic education programs.

He added that developing artistic education will elevate academy outcomes, support its cultural mission, and prepare qualified national cadres, pointing out that the board wisely comprises a select group of specialized academic and cultural leaders.

Dr. Al-Jallal stated that the Kuwait Academy of Arts

represents an exceptional educational project reflecting the state's great interest in promoting cultural sectors and supporting local creative industries for future generations.

He affirmed the ministry's continued support for excellent initiatives that contribute to nurturing national talent and strongly cementing Kuwait's historical position as a leading cultural and artistic hub in the region.



Dr. Nader Al-Jallal

to nurturing national talent and strongly cementing Kuwait's historical position as a leading cultural and artistic hub in the region. Chaired by Dr. Nader Al-Jallal, the Board of Trustees will officially serve a long four-year term in accordance with this newly issued ministerial decree.

The board includes the Academy Director-General, the Secretary-General of Culture, Arts and Letters, and the deans governing both the Higher Institute of Dramatic Arts and the Higher Institute of Musical Arts, as well as prominent specialized academic and cultural figures.

KFAED grants KD1m to back vocational Yemen projects

KUWAIT CITY, June 22, (KUNA): The Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) signed a USD one million grant agreement on Monday with the Islamic Development Bank to support the establishment, equipping and operation of a technical and vocational education institute in the city of Turbah in Yemen.

In a statement to KUNA, the fund said the agreement was signed on the sidelines of the Arab Coordination Group heads meeting held in Vienna. The project will be co-financed by the Islamic Development Bank and the International Islamic Charitable Organization and

aims to improve the livelihoods of displaced families, refugees and low-income groups in Turbah by enhancing their vocational and technical skills and increasing their employment opportunities. According to the statement, the project includes the construction, furnishing and operation of a technical and vocational training institute covering a built-up area of approximately 3,350 square meters.

The facility will consist of three floors in addition to service buildings, supporting facilities and green spaces.

The fund noted that the project is expected to reach full operational capacity within 21

months. Around 13,280 male and female students from displaced and refugee families, as well as beneficiaries from various regions of Yemen, are expected to benefit from the institute's educational and training services. The project forms part of KFAED's ongoing efforts to support key development sectors in Yemen, strengthen local community capacities and improve living conditions for the most vulnerable groups.

The grant agreement was signed by Acting Director General of KFAED Waleed Al-Bahar and President of the Islamic Development Bank Group Mohammad Al Jasser.

'Educational reform national priority'

3,600 qualify for supervisory posts: Minister Al-Tabtabaei



Minister of Education Eng. Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei distributes the certificates.



Minister of Education Eng. Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei with the graduates at the ceremony.

Photos by Samer Shaqir

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 22: Minister of Education Eng. Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei said educational reform is a long-term institutional project led by the Ministry of Education with the objective of advancing the education system, empowering educators, and preparing future generations of learners.

In his speech during his patronage and attendance at the graduation ceremony of the Kuwait Teachers Association academies for the 2025/2026 academic year, Al-Tabtabaei stated that the achievements in the previous period were part of a comprehensive reform plan based on pillars -- educational development, human resource development, digital transformation, governance, infrastructure, and administrative and financial reform.

Present at the event were President of the association Hamad Al-Holi, members of the Board of Directors of the association, Ministry of Education Undersecretary Dr. Khaled Al-Rashid, Assistant Undersecretary for Administrative,

Technical and Financial Affairs Eng. Mohammed Al-Khaldi, educators and graduates.

Al-Tabtabaei announced the completion of the first draft of the unified educational regulations, describing it as the first comprehensive set of regulations in the history of the ministry. He said the regulations cover all educational levels -- kindergarten, primary, intermediate, secondary and religious education -- within a unified and comprehensive organizational framework.

He called on education professionals and stakeholders to contribute to the development of the regulations by presenting suggestions and sharing their professional expertise.

He affirmed that the ministry continues to implement its curriculum development initiative, with revised curricula being introduced from kindergarten through Grade Nine in the 2025/2026 academic year. He explained that the updated curricula are based on contemporary educational principles that take into account national identity and future educational requirements. He revealed that the ministry received more than 194,000 responses through its curriculum evaluation survey and incorporated the resulting feedback and recommendations into the review and development process.

He also announced the upcoming launch of the 'Taa' platform for professional training and development, which will provide teachers and educational

officials with high-quality training opportunities tailored to the needs of the education sector.

He confirmed that the ministry has accelerated its digital transformation efforts through the operation of 27 electronic platforms and services, which enhanced educational and administrative processes, while improving operational efficiency.

On supervisory positions, he affirmed the continuation of the initiative to empower national talent and prepare the next generation of educational leaders. He disclosed that the fourth phase of nominations for supervisory positions guarantees equal opportunities and structured career progression for education professionals, with around 3,600 out of more than 8,200 applicants qualifying based on merit and competency standards.

He stressed that the partnership between the ministry and the association serves as a successful national model for promoting the professional growth of educators and supporting the educational sector. He reiterated that the ministry's vision is to provide an educational system, which meets future demands, strengthens national identity, and improves the quality of educational outcomes.

In conclusion, the minister congratulated the graduates and praised the efforts of the association and its training teams for their contributions to professional development and their support for the educational process.



KUNA photo

Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Shereeda Al-Mousherji welcomes the Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait Yang Xin in his office at Al-Seif Palace.

'Kuwait-Sino ties deep-rooted'

KUWAIT CITY, June 22, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Shereeda Al-Mousherji underlined Sunday deep relations between Kuwait and China, affirming Kuwait's commitment to maintaining bilateral coordination and cooperation.

The Kuwaiti minister made the remarks while welcoming Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait Yang Xin in his office at Al-Seif

Palace in the presence of Deputy Head of the Chinese Embassy's Diplomatic Mission Liu Xiang and several other Chinese diplomats.

During the meeting, they discussed means to promote Kuwaiti-Sino relations across various fields, together with issues of mutual interest in a way that contributes to bolstering bilateral friendship and cooperation, according to a press release of the minister's office.



KUNA photo

Chief of the General Staff of the Kuwaiti Army Lieutenant General Khaled Al-Shuraian welcomes Pakistan's Ambassador to Kuwait Dr. Zafar Iqbal.

Kuwait, Pakistan up defense ties

KUWAIT CITY, June 22, (KUNA): Chief of the General Staff of the Kuwaiti Army Lieutenant General Khaled Al-Shuraian discussed on Monday with Pakistan's Ambassador to Kuwait Dr. Zafar Iqbal a number of issues of mutual interest.

The General Staff said in a press statement that the meeting reviewed ways to develop and enhance military cooperation between the two friendly countries. Pakistan's military attache to Kuwait attended

the meeting.



Kuwait Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received on Sunday a phone call from United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Barham Salih.

During the call, both sides discussed the strong relations between Kuwait and the UNHCR, and ways to boost those ties.

Gang jailed 10 yrs, fined KD199 mln in cash fraud

KUWAIT CITY, June 22: The State Security Criminal Court on Monday issued 46 rulings in various cases, including money laundering, terrorism financing, sympathy for terrorism and incitement of sedition, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The most prominent rulings sentenced 13 defendants to varying prison terms and fined them, along with commercial entities, an estimated total of KD310 million.

According to the case files, the court sentenced four defendants to 10 years in prison and fined them about KD199 million in one money laundering case.

It also fined commercial entities linked to the case about KD99 million -- the value of the laundered funds, and permanently banned them from engaging in commercial activity.

A summary of the ruling will be published in the official gazette and on relevant websites.

The court also sentenced four defendants, including three Kuwaiti citizens and a Lebanese, to 10 years in prison and fined them KD6 million for financing and joining the Lebanese Hezbollah.

It sentenced a Kuwaiti citizen to 10 years in prison and fined him KD6.07 million in a money laundering case, while it sentenced 'X' platform user Fawaz Al-Kathiri to five years in prison in a state security case.

It sentenced two Kuwaiti citizens to three years in prison for sympathizing with and inciting sedition, and sentenced a non-Kuwaiti to two years in prison followed by deportation.

On the other hand, the court acquitted 33 Kuwaiti citizens in several cases and overturned in absentia sentences against many other Kuwaiti citizens, acquitting them of inciting sedition.

Ronaldo ... when time is unable to defeat legend

"HOW can Cristiano Ronaldo be considered a burden on Portugal, despite the fact that he is the player who put the country on the global football map?" columnist **Sheikh Eng. Fahad Da-wood Al-Sabah** wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

Before Ronaldo, Portugal had a golden generation of footballers but had not won a major international title. With his arrival, Portugal became European champions, won the UEFA Nations League, and established itself as a consistent contender for major trophies.

"Ronaldo is not just a goalscorer; he is an extraordinary sporting phenomenon who has completely changed the history of his national team. He is the all-time top scorer in international football, the most capped player in history, and the scorer of hundreds of decisive goals in major competitions. For more than twenty years, Ronaldo has maintained the highest possible level. Therefore, when people focus on one or two matches or tournaments, they overlook more than two decades of dedication and achievement.

"Sporting legends are not judged by a single match, but by a lifetime of history.

"Ronaldo is one of the greatest footballers of all time and continues to compete at the highest level despite being over forty years old.

"Therefore, he can be considered a historical exception after Pelé, whom FIFA dubbed "the greatest of all time."

"Ronaldo's presence on the pitch instills confidence in his teammates, compels opponents to respect him, and creates opportunities that may not always be reflected in statistics. He creates chances for his teammates and provides his team with leadership qualities and invaluable experience in crucial matches.

"If Ronaldo is subject to criticism today, it is because he has raised expectations to an unprecedented level. Scoring a single goal has become routine for him, while for any other player it would be considered exceptional.

"The day will come when Ronaldo retires. At that point, it will become clear that what people witnessed was not just a great player, but one of the greatest athletes in human history, an icon of commitment, discipline, and boundless ambition. It is premature to question Ronaldo's influence based on a temporary dip in form or a single tournament."

Also:

"Digital privacy is no longer merely a technical or procedural concern. It has emerged as one of the most significant legal issues closely tied to individual rights and freedoms in the modern state," Professor of Law and Digital Transformation at Kuwait University **Dr. Ahmad Matar Al-Awshah** wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

"The rapid pace of digital development has not only transformed the way people communicate but has also reshaped the relationship between individuals and their personal data. Personal data is regarded as an extension of an individual's legal identity rather than simply information generated through their use of technology.

"It is no longer sufficient to view privacy solely as a right that protects individuals from intrusion into their private lives. Legal protection now extends to empowering individuals to exercise control over their personal data and to understand how that data is collected, used, and processed.

"This development is reflected in contemporary legal thought, which has evolved from a concept of passive protection focused on preventing intrusion to one of active protection that emphasizes individual control and management of personal data.

"In Kuwait, significant regulatory efforts have been undertaken by the competent authorities, most notably the Communications and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA), through the issuance of regulations and rules governing information confidentiality, data security, and the protection of user rights.

"The current legal framework also contains a number of provisions relating to digital privacy protection, dispersed across various legislative instruments, including the Electronic Transactions Law, the Cybercrime Law, and other laws regulating aspects of the digital environment.

"However, while these efforts are important, they remain fragmented and do not amount to a comprehensive legislative framework for the protection of personal data. The issue is not the absence of regulation, but rather the lack of a unified legislative approach that clearly defines the rights of individuals, establishes the obligations of entities that collect or process personal data, and creates a coherent legal system capable of responding to rapid digital developments.

"This deficiency becomes particularly evident when examining the position of individuals within the digital environment. Contemporary legislation no longer limits privacy protection to safeguarding against direct intrusion. Instead, it recognizes a range of rights relating to personal data, including the right to access, rectify, and erase data, as well as the right to object to certain

forms of data processing.

"There is a clear need to develop oversight and enforcement mechanisms in this area. Protecting personal data is no longer a purely technical matter; it has become a legal and economic issue affecting both individuals and institutions. This requires a clearer and more effective legal framework to address the challenges posed by artificial intelligence applications, digital services, and the data-driven economy.

"In comparison, contemporary legislative trends are moving towards the adoption of independent and comprehensive personal data protection laws. The European Union has established an advanced model based on the principles of transparency and accountability, which empowers individuals to exercise control over their personal data.

"Several Gulf countries have witnessed significant legislative developments in this area. Saudi Arabia has adopted a comprehensive system for personal data protection. The United Arab Emirates has approved a modern legal framework inspired by international best practices. Qatar has moved towards regulating this field through a specific law.

"These experiences show that personal data protection has become an essential component of the legislative infrastructure required to support the digital economy and strengthen trust in electronic services.

"The development of legal protections for digital privacy in Kuwait requires more than updating existing regulations. It necessitates a more mature legislative framework through the enactment of a comprehensive Personal Data Protection Law. This law should clearly define individuals' rights, set out the obligations of data processors, and establish mechanisms for oversight, enforcement, and penalties for violations.

"Building a trust-based digital economy requires more than technological advancement alone. It also requires a clear and stable legal environment that provides adequate protection for personal data and balances the demands of digital innovation with the protection of rights and freedoms. The enactment of a comprehensive Personal Data Protection Law is no longer merely a legislative option; it has become a legal necessity dictated by the nature of digital transformation.

"Such a law would align with contemporary regional and international legislative trends, while enhancing trust in Kuwait's digital environment and ensuring its readiness to meet future needs."

"By the end of the Korean War in 1953, South Korea was one of the poorest countries in the world. Its buildings and infrastructure had been destroyed, its economy had collapsed, and its natural resources were limited." Kuwaiti writer **Dr. Abdullah Al-Turajji** wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

"It would have been easy for the state to focus on finding money as a quick fix for its crises, but it chose a different path, asking a more profound question - how do we build an economy that generates wealth?"

"South Korea understood that true wealth does not come from an abundance of money, but from a society's capacity for production, innovation, and work. It therefore placed people at the center of its development project and invested heavily in education, training, and skills development. Education was not seen merely as a social service, but as a long-term economic investment that builds the capabilities needed to drive future growth.

"At the same time, the state supported national industry and encouraged local companies to produce, export, and compete globally. The goal was not to increase consumption or rely on imports, but to create genuine added value through manufacturing, technology, and productive labor.

"Over time, Korean startups evolved into major global corporations, and industry became a cornerstone of the national economy. Administrative discipline and long-term planning played a pivotal role in the success of the Korean experience.

"The state focused on efficiency, accountability, and sound resource management, recognizing that development is not a matter of temporary decisions or quick fixes, but rather a continuous process that requires a clear vision, patience, and commitment.

"One of the key lessons from the South Korean experience is that money alone does not create wealth. Some countries may resort to selling a successful public company or a vital strategic asset to cover a temporary financial deficit, making the problem appear resolved. However, in reality, they have sacrificed a source of sustainable production and wealth to address a temporary crisis.

"Printing more banknotes may give the impression of increasing the money supply, but it does not create wealth if it is not accompanied by genuine growth in production. Increasing the money supply without a corresponding increase in goods and services often leads to inflation and rising prices."

— Compiled by Simi K. Kutty



KUNA photo
Chief of Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Sheikh Mubarak Humoud Al-Sabah on Sunday received Pakistani Ambassador to Kuwait Dr. Zafar Iqbal.

KNG Chief, Pakistan envoy discuss joint interest issues

KUWAIT CITY, June 22. (KUNA): Chief of Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Sheikh Mubarak Humoud Al-Sabah on Sunday received Pakistani Ambassador to Ku-

wait Dr. Zafar Iqbal.

In a press release, KNG said that the meeting tackled matters of joint interest between both sides.



Farwaniya Governorate photo
Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah met with Director of Farwaniya Governorate Fire Department Brigadier General Othman Al-Wazagh at his office in the headquarters of the governorate on Sunday.

Talks focus on readiness, rapid response to blazes

KUWAIT CITY, June 22: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah met with Director of Farwaniya Governorate Fire Department Brigadier General Othman Al-Wazagh at his office in the headquarters of the governorate on Sunday.

Head of Farwaniya Fire Station Colonel Abdullah Al-Haddad and Head of Ardiya Fire Station Colonel Mohammad Al-Khaldi accompanied Al-Wazagh at the meeting, which focused on coordination between the governorate and the Farwaniya Fire Department.

During the meeting, Al-Wazagh explained the operational mechanisms of the fire stations in the governorate. He detailed the efforts exerted to ensure readiness and rapid response to reports and incidents, while enumerating the main tasks and services of the department.

Meanwhile, the Governor commended the vital role played by the department and its personnel, as well as their field efforts and continuous work to guarantee security and safety in the governorate.

He also emphasized the importance of continuous cooperation among various government agencies to better serve the citizens and residents.

At the end of the meeting, Al-Wazagh expressed gratitude to the Governor for the warm reception and appreciated his commitment to support coordination among government agencies in order to improve services for residents in the governorate.



Jahra Governorate photo
Jahra Governor Hamad Al-Habashi inspected Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah Road on Monday.

Gov. on inspection tour of 'Sheikh Jaber Road'

KUWAIT CITY, June 22: Jahra Governor Hamad Al-Habashi inspected Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah Road on Monday.

Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Public Works Eid Al-Rashidi accompanied the Governor during the inspection tour, which aimed to assess the condition of the road, review the latest developments, and identify issues or needs requiring attention.

The tour is in line with the commitment of Jahra Governorate to monitor vital roads, particularly those connected to Mutlaa City and its entrances and exits in order to better serve the residents in the city, ease their movement, and for the benefit of those traveling to other northern areas.

The Governor emphasized that monitoring roads connected to the city is the top priority of the governorate, considering the rapid residential expansion and increasing traffic volume in the city.

He underscored the importance of continuous field coordination with the ministry and other relevant authorities to monitor ongoing procedures and address issues according to priority.

At the end of the inspection tour, the Governor appreciated the cooperation of the ministry and its commitment to follow up projects and observations related to the roads in the governorate. He added that the governorate will keep on following up service files that affect the citizens, especially the roads, entrances and exits.

Court acquits ex-MP Mutair

KUWAIT CITY, June 22: The Court of Cassation, presided over by Judge Abdullah Al-Jassem, overturned the ruling of the Court of Appeals, which sentenced former MP Mohammad Al-Mutair to two years in prison with hard labor in the political seminar case, reports *Al-Seyassah* daily.

The court dismissed the appeal of the Public Prosecution and upheld the initial ruling of acquittal.

The court also ruled that Al-Mutair's appeal was dismissed due to his absence, in accordance with the procedures governing appeals before the Court of Cassation.

Earlier, the Court of First Instance acquitted Al-Mutair of the charges, then the Court of Appeals overturned the ruling and sentenced him to two years in prison with hard labor.

This case is based on accusations that Al-Mutair incited HH the Amir's position, defamed the judges of the Constitutional Court, and failed to show due respect to members of the judiciary in a seminar.

Death upheld for wife killer

Asian from noose to life

KUWAIT CITY, June 22: The Court of Cassation commuted the death sentence imposed on a Bangladeshi man convicted of murdering his friend and stealing the mobile phone of the latter to life imprisonment, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The Public Prosecution charged the defendant with the premeditated murder of the victim after assaulting him, which led to his death, and then stealing his phone.

The case was referred to the Criminal Court, which sentenced him to death.

In another case, the Court of Appeals upheld the death sentence imposed on an Indian man convicted of the premeditated murder of his wife.

The case file revealed that the crime occurred during a family dispute, when the defendant assaulted his wife, resulting in her death.

He was referred to the Criminal Court, which convicted him and sentenced him to death.

Encroachers deadline: Kuwait Municipality announced a final two-week grace period, starting Monday, June 22, and ending on July 6, for violators to remove encroachments on state property throughout Kuwait, reports *Al-Seyassah* daily.

It confirmed that a comprehensive field campaign will be launched immediately

after the grace period to monitor and remove all forms of illegal use and encroachments.

Kuwait Municipality urged everyone to cooperate and take the initiative to remove any violations within the specified timeframe, prioritize the public interest, preserve state property, and avoid legal repercussions.

Total road closure: The General Traffic Department announced the complete closure of Mohammad Bin Hamada Al-Ajmi Road (Road No. 207) between Sabah Al-Salem and Al-Masayel, for traffic coming from Makrad Al-Makrad Street and King Fahad bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud Road towards King Abdulaziz bin Abdulrahman Al-Saud Road, reports *Al-Seyassah* daily.

The closure will continue for 20 days starting Monday, June 22, 2026.

EPA probes dark slick: The Environment Public Authority (EPA) is investigating a report circulating on social media regarding a dark-colored water slick near a drainage outlet in Anjafa, reports *Al-Seyassah* daily.

In an official statement, EPA explained that its specialized technical teams visited the site and observed several environmental indicators. Water samples were collected for laboratory testing and analysis in coordination with relevant government agencies to determine appropriate action.



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'Aman' team reviews PAFN's emergency management procedures



KUNA photos

The National Emergency, Crisis and Disaster Management Center (Aman) held a coordination meeting with the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN) to review its plans and procedures for dealing with emergency situations related to food security and food safety.

KUWAIT CITY, June 22, (KUNA): The National Emergency, Crisis and Disaster Management Center (Aman) held a coordination meeting on Monday with the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN) to review its plans and procedures for dealing with emergency situations related to food security and food safety.

Aman said in a press statement on Monday that the meeting discussed monitoring and follow-up mechanisms, preventive measures

in place, as well as frameworks for coordination and cooperation with relevant entities to ensure the continuity of food control operations and enhance preparedness for various exceptional circumstances.

The team added that the meeting also explored ways to strengthen integration and information-sharing among concerned entities, supporting efforts to establish a comprehensive national system for emergency,

crisis and disaster management and contributing to enhancing food security and improving emergency response efficiency.

Aman, which operates under the Council of Ministers, is tasked with establishing a comprehensive national framework for emergency and disaster management, unifying national efforts, building an integrated risk management system, and raising preparedness and crisis response capabilities.

'Probe root cause of migration'

Kuwait eyes balanced, comprehensive approach

GENEVA, June 22, (KUNA): Kuwait stressed on Monday the importance of adopting a balanced and comprehensive approach to migration issues that respects state sovereignty and international obligations while ensuring the protection of migrants' rights.

The remarks were made by Third Secretary at Kuwait's Permanent Mission to the United Nations in Geneva, Ahmad

Salmeen, during the interactive dialogue with the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants at the 92nd session of the United Nations Human Rights Council.

Salmeen said Kuwait aligned itself with statements delivered on behalf of the groups to which it belongs and took note of the Special Rapporteur's report and its recommendations aimed at enhancing the protection of migrants' rights and ensuring respect for their human dignity.

He added that Kuwait supports the report's emphasis on adherence to international law and

human rights principles, stressing the need to strengthen international cooperation in addressing the root causes of irregular migration, including armed conflicts and humanitarian crises.

Salmeen reaffirmed Kuwait's firm commitment to relevant international conventions and its continued support for international humanitarian and development efforts aimed at assisting communities affected by crises and disasters.

He noted that Kuwait believes international solidarity remains essential in addressing the conditions that force individuals to flee their homes and seek migration opportunities elsewhere.



Farwaniya Governorate photos

Top and above: Governor of Farwaniya Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah arrives at one of the Bohra community Husseiniyas.

Governor all praise for police securing 'Husseiniyas' safety

KUWAIT CITY, June 22: Governor of Farwaniya Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah on Monday inspected some Husseiniyas in Farwaniya Governorate to ensure that security and organizational arrangements are in place.

Director General of the Farwaniya Governorate Security Directorate Brigadier General Mohammad Eid Al-Ghasab and many security officials accompanied the Governor during the inspection tour, which covered the Imam Al-Mahdi Husseiniya in Riggae and Al-Burhani Center Husseiniya in Ardiya Industrial Area.

During the tour, the Governor looked

into the efforts of the security and organizational authorities, and inquired about the well-being of Husseiniya attendees. He commended the Husseiniya officials for their cooperation with the relevant authorities, which helps provide a suitable environment and facilitates the organized and safe conduct of religious rituals.

At the end of the inspection tour, the Governor praised the efforts of the security forces and their dedication to their field duties, as well as their efforts to maintain security and safety. He also called for adherence to regulations and instructions to guarantee the safety of everyone.

News in Brief

Biometric passports for Lebanese

KUWAIT CITY, June 22: The Lebanese Embassy in Kuwait will launch its new biometric passport issuance service by early July 2026, reports Al-Jarida daily.

According to informed sources, this will make the Lebanese Embassy in Kuwait the first Lebanese embassy to adopt this technology.

They explained that the Lebanese Interior Minister Brigadier General Ahmed Hajjar will travel to Kuwait to participate in the official launch of the service at the embassy.

This procedure will allow Lebanese residents in Kuwait to obtain the new biometric passports without having to travel to Lebanon for biometric fingerprinting and passport issuance.

This step represents a qualitative leap in consular services provided to the Lebanese community and is part of a plan to modernize official document issuance procedures and expand the scope of electronic and biometric services outside Lebanon.

The sources confirmed that a team of Lebanese General Security officers has already arrived in Kuwait and has begun the necessary technical and logistical preparations to operate the new system, in addition to training embassy staff on how to use the equipment and receive applications.

MPW submits project: The Ministry of Public Works submitted the project for the construction of entrances and exits in Jaber Al-Ahmad City to the State Audit Bureau (SAB), reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The project, with an estimated value of KDI.07 million, is currently undergoing preliminary auditing, review and regulatory assessment by the bureau.

In another development, the ministry contacted the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) regarding the contract for the study, design and supervision of construction works for the permanent headquarters of the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN).

During its meeting last Wednesday, the Board of Directors of the agency decided to postpone issuing a decision on the contract, pending the response of the ministry, which is expected within 10 working days and will include details of the amendments that were previously discussed.

According to the ministry's proposed schedule, the design phase of the project will extend over a period of 24 months, followed by a 39-month construction supervision phase.

The tender is an important component of the broader development and construction project, which includes the establishment of the headquarters for PAFN employees and an inspection department in Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate



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Continued from Page 1

PAM aligns

According to PAM, the circular aims to establish a more flexible regulatory framework that reflects the evolving needs of the labor market. It stated that this objective will be achieved by ensuring the compatibility between the academic credentials of expatriate workers and the positions they occupy, thereby, enhancing efficiency, transparency and the effectiveness of work-related procedures.

It also clarified that the circular allows the amendment of academic qualifications or professional classifications if proven to match the actual nature of the employee's work. It added that the amendment will be carried out in accordance with the procedures and regulations to guarantee more accurate and effective oversight of the qualifications and occupations.

It added that the preparation of the Unified Kuwaiti Guide for Occupational Description and Classification is ongoing. It pointed out that the guide will improve the work environment and regulate qualifications and professions in line with labor market demands and future workforce requirements.

Executions carried

appeal and constitutional guarantees afforded to them.

In an official statement, the Public Prosecution affirmed that preserving human life and protecting blood and honor are among the highest objectives established by divine laws and legal systems.

It explained that the executions were carried out after the convicts were afforded all their legal rights of defense and litigation, starting with the investigations conducted by the Public Prosecution, the trials before the three levels of litigation, the issuance of final and binding verdicts, and the ruling on the appeal for reconsideration submitted by one of the convicts.

The death sentence was imposed on the following five convicts:

- Kuwaiti citizen Ali Manahi Mufreh Al-Subaie for premeditated murder, attempted murder, and possession of a firearm and ammunition without a license.

- Kuwaiti citizen Hassan Salem Ayesh Al-Rashidi for kidnapping with intent to kill, premeditated murder, unlawful confinement of the victim, and possession of narcotics and a firearm without a license.

- Egyptian resident Mahmoud Hamdi Ahmed Hassan for kidnapping a victim by force and threats with the intent to rape her, rape, unlawful confinement, and making threats.

- Bedoun resident Ahmed Mohammed Qate' Obeid for premeditated murder.

- Kuwaiti citizen Malih Al-Humaidi Mufiz Al-Harshani for premeditated murder.

The Public Prosecution confirmed that the sentences were based on final judicial rulings issued by the Criminal Courts, upheld by the Court of Appeals and the Court of Cassation, and ratified by His Highness the Amir of the State of Kuwait, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

It stressed that the implementation of these rulings embodies the rule of law, the achievement of justice, and the protection of society from serious crimes.

Kuwait airport

Meanwhile, Kuwait International Airport has steadily restored operations to advanced levels following damage caused by what officials described as a "heinous Iranian attack" on the airport and its facilities. Acting Director General of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), Engineer Duaij Al-Otaibi, said.

Al-Otaibi stated that the DGCA continues to carry out repair, maintenance, and rehabilitation works under the supervision of its Chairman, Sheikh Hamoud Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and in line with directives issued by Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Al-Sabah.

He noted that, through the combined efforts of DGCA personnel and the support of the political leadership, the authority has managed to overcome the impact of the attack and restore air traffic to stable operational levels.

"The authority is continuing efforts to repair the damage to airport buildings and facilities," Al-Otaibi said, adding that operational performance is improving in tandem with the steady rise in air traffic and the number of arriving and departing flights.

He explained that repair works on infrastructure and airport facilities were implemented in accordance with ministerial directives, enabling teams to overcome major challenges and prepare the airport to resume operations efficiently.

Air traffic has shown marked improvement, with the number of daily arrivals and departures reaching approximately 190 flights, he said. Several airlines have resumed operations, and flight numbers are expected to increase further upon completion of ongoing maintenance, rehabilitation, and equipment upgrades at Terminal 1.

Al-Otaibi commended the efforts of DGCA staff and volunteers, emphasizing their key role in restoring operations and supporting the country during the emergency period.

He also expressed appreciation for the cooperation and support extended by the Ministry of Interior, the General Administration of Customs,

Kuwait Airways, Jazeera Airways, KAFCO, and other partners and service providers operating at the airport.

Al-Otaibi further thanked the Saudi General Authority of Civil Aviation for its cooperation and continued support, in addition to the backing received from Gulf Cooperation Council countries and other Arab states.

He affirmed that Kuwait has successfully presented its legal and technical position before the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), securing international support that confirms the validity of its stance regarding the attacks targeting Kuwait International Airport.

This support, he added, has helped safeguard Kuwait's rights and underscores that serious violations and breaches of international aviation agreements have taken place.

Khaitan blaze

fire before it spread further. The scene was handed over to the relevant authorities and investigations were launched to determine the cause of the fire.

KFF urged citizens and residents to follow fire safety and prevention guidelines to protect lives and property and help prevent similar incidents.

Analysts warn

family businesses among the top 100 Arab family businesses for 2026, according to the Forbes report, underscores the importance of the resilience of major family businesses in Kuwait.

He attributed this to their financial strength and robust economic systems, which have enabled them to become major financial and economic pillars in Kuwait.

Dr. Al-Bassam explained that some family businesses maintain their strong position throughout the first two generations but begin to decline in the third generation if disputes and conflicts arise, especially with the increasing number of children and grandchildren.

Family businesses decline due to disagreements over positions or the distribution of wealth unless the heirs are in agreement.

Family businesses contribute to supporting the national economy and assist the government in implementing development projects. Some family businesses are focused solely on developing their own resources without considering the public good.

Meanwhile, financial analyst and former advisor to the Ministry of Finance, Mohammed Ramadan, believes that the success of family businesses in Kuwait, and the inclusion of six Kuwaiti companies among the top 100 Arab companies in the Forbes ranking, is the result of continuous government spending on development projects, in addition to companies' efforts to grow their capital through innovative expansion methods.

Ramadan explained that family businesses tend to shine in the first and second generations and often lose this momentum in the third. Therefore, some family businesses in Kuwait fall out of competition after reaching the later stages of their lifecycle unless they maintain their financial strength and stability in a sustainable manner.

He pointed to the Forbes 2025 report, which included seven Kuwaiti family businesses among the top 100 strongest Arab family businesses, while their number dropped to six in 2026.

Ramadan stressed that what ensures the long-term stability of family businesses in Kuwait is the careful selection of their management teams and the building of strong relationships with other entities.

He indicated that the absence of competition from sole proprietors contributes to their growth and strength.

In addition, the former president of the Kuwaiti Contractors Association, economist Dr. Salah Boursli, attributed the success of family businesses in the Gulf and Kuwait to several factors, including their financial strength, which protects them from unexpected financial shocks.

He explained that the second factor is that family businesses usually place the right person from the family in the appropriate leadership position. The third factor relates to the absence of corruption in family businesses, as a successful leader in a family business would not steal from their own or their family's money.

Dr. Boursli believes that the presence of a board of directors with a cohesive vision enhances financial stability within family businesses and prevents conflicting decisions.

He explained that the importance of family businesses lies not only in generating wealth for their members but also in their impact on the overall economic level of the country. This is why family businesses in the Gulf and Kuwait occupy such a prominent position, possessing the capacity for innovation and capital growth. Family businesses in the Gulf and Kuwait are committed to providing high-quality products, strictly prohibiting any form of commercial fraud, and relying on genuine products.

Dr. Boursli stated that family businesses in Kuwait control more than 80 percent of the private sector's businesses.

Kuwait voices

deaths and injuries.

His Highness prayed to Allah Almighty to bestow His mercy upon the victims, wishing the injured a speedy recovery and continued good health.

Similarly, His Highness the Crown Prince, Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, sent a cable of condolences on Monday to Qatar's Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, expressing his sincere sympathies over the victims of the explosion that occurred at a factory in the Ras Laffan Industrial City.

In the cable, His Highness the Crown Prince conveyed his heartfelt condolences and solidarity following the incident, which resulted in several deaths and injuries.

His Highness prayed to Allah Almighty to bestow His mercy upon the victims, wishing the injured a speedy recovery and continued good health.

His Highness the Prime Minister, Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, also sent a cable of condolences on Monday to Qatar's Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, expressing his sincere sympathies over the victims of the explosion that occurred at a factory in the Ras Laffan Industrial City.

Kuwait expressed its full solidarity and sympathy with Qatar following the explosion at a liquefied natural gas facility in the Ras Laffan Industrial City, which resulted in deaths and injuries.

In a statement issued on Monday, the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs conveyed Kuwait's sincere condolences and heartfelt sympathies to the government and people of Qatar, as well as to the families of the victims.

The ministry also wished a speedy recovery to those injured in the incident, reaffirming Kuwait's support for Qatar during this difficult time. On Sunday night, an explosion tore through Qatar's key natural gas export terminal as workers tried to resume operations after Iran bombed it during the war, causing a fire that killed at least 13 people and hurt 66 others.

The blast at the Ras Laffan industrial area could cause further chaos in global energy markets, as Qatar remains one of the world's top natural gas producers. Qatar shut down its production after Iran's grip on the Strait of Hormuz meant it couldn't get shipments out to clients.

With Iran loosening its grip as negotiations continue over a permanent end to the war, Qatar began work to try to restart its export terminal. That sparked the explosion and fire at the Barzan gas supply facility, state-run QatarEnergy said.

"I would like to emphasize that this was an accident and not sabotage or hostile in nature," Energy Minister Saad Sherida al-Kaabi told a news conference Monday afternoon in Doha, Qatar's capital.

The minister gave the toll and said the dead came from India and Pakistan. The nationalities of the 66 injured included people from Qatar and a variety of African and Asian nations, al-Kaabi said.

The scale of the damage remains unknown.

The Barzan plant had a capacity of almost 1.4 billion standard cubic feet of sales gas per day, which Qatar used primarily for local electricity generation and to power its crucial water desalination plants in the desert reaches of the Arabian Peninsula.

Qatar owns nearly all of the plant, with a small share also held by ExxonMobil. The oil company did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

In March, an Iranian missile hit Ras Laffan, sparking a fire that caused "extensive" damage before it was extinguished, authorities said. Qatar had already halted production there because of Iranian attacks.

Rubio's tour

his counterparts in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to discuss shared regional priorities.

In other news, France and Germany reached an agreement on the strategy and governance of a European defense industry company, the Elysee presidential palace said in a statement on Monday.

Namely, the agreement will focus on the joint company KMW and Nexter Defense Systems, also known as (KNDS), added the statement, citing the deal as aiming to bring the two sides into becoming joint shareholders through common transactions.

The "agreement and the transaction are subject to German parliamentary budget approval," it said, hailing this Franco-German framework as a decisive step towards strengthening their common sovereignty in land defense, added the statement.

It went on to stress the core principles of the agreement, which include long-term shareholder commitment, parity in governance rights and appropriate oversight of security matters, the statement highlighted.

The statement described the deal as a "shared ambition" of France and Germany, which seeks to develop KNDS into a leading European and global defense company serving the French and German armed forces, in addition to boosting its competitiveness in Europe.

Strengthening Europe's industrial and defense capabilities, supporting their armed forces and boosting European sovereignty are the primary objectives of the agreement, according to the statement, hailing it as a "decisive step towards a more sovereign Europe."



Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research photo
A group photo of officials and researchers of KISR and the NICBM following the signing of the MoU.

KISR and NICBM ink MoU on construction innovation partnership

KUWAIT CITY, June 22, (KUNA): The Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on Monday with the National Industries Company (NICBM).

The MoU aims to strengthen cooperation in research, development and innovation in the construction and infrastructure sector, in line with the objectives of Kuwait Vision 2035.

KISR Director General Dr. Faisal Al-Humaidan said in a press statement that the MoU reflects the institute's commitment to strengthening strategic partnerships and activating the role of scientific research in providing practical solutions to development challenges.

Al-Humaidan pointed out that the agreement aims to expand joint cooperation through the implementation of research and applied projects, the exchange of scientific and technical

expertise, and the development of innovative construction materials and technologies that contribute to enhancing the efficiency of the construction sector, supporting sustainability and increasing the added value of national industries.

He noted that the cooperation also seeks to improve performance indicators in the infrastructure and building materials sector, particularly with regard to increasing the localization of construction materials, improving their quality in line with international standards, and reducing reliance on imports.

He said the MoU includes integrated programs to qualify and build the capacities of national personnel through field training and knowledge exchange between KISR researchers and company specialists, providing a stimulating research environment.

Al-Humaidan stressed that the co-

operation with the National Industries Company represents a model of integration between research and industrial institutions and contributes to accelerating technology transfer and transforming scientific research outputs into applications with tangible economic impact.

He added that the partnership is expected to yield measurable outcomes and performance indicators, including reducing construction costs through innovative locally manufactured solutions, achieving higher rates of national workforce employment, and lowering the carbon footprint of construction projects in line with Kuwait's environmental commitments.

The signing ceremony was attended by NICBM Deputy CEO for Factories Marzouq Bouarki, along with a number of officials and researchers from both sides.

Kuwait, China expand 'sustainability' agenda

Agri-tech solutions eyed

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 22: Minister of State for Development and Sustainability Dr. Reem Al-Fulaij met with Ambassador of China to the State of Kuwait Yang Xin at the headquarters of the Environment Public Authority (EPA) to discuss ways to strengthen cooperation in the fields of development and sustainability.

During the meeting, both sides reviewed the existing areas of collaboration related to environmental protection, energy and sustainable development. They also explored opportunities to expand cooperation on issues of mutual interest, particularly in the advancement of desalination and wastewater treatment technologies, strengthening food security amid regional developments, climate-related challenges that Kuwait is facing, and combating desertification.

They talked about the application and development of modern technologies in the agricultural sector to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Al-Fulaij proposed stronger coordination between EPA and other government entities responsible for environmental affairs, and their counterparts in the People's Republic of China, to identify opportunities



EPA photos
Minister of State for Development and Sustainability Affairs Dr. Reem Al-Fulaij with China's Ambassador to Kuwait Yang Xin.

for cooperation, exchange expertise relations, and advance the shared interests and perspectives, strengthen bilateral tests of both countries.

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Announcement

The owners of

Sahala Insurance Brokerage LLC

have submitted a request to the Insurance Regulatory Unit to cease operations and terminate their operating license, number

(IBC20210033)

Anyone with an objection should submit it in writing to the Insurance Regulatory Unit at its headquarters located on Khalid Bin Al Waleed Street - Kamco Tower, within three months of the date of this announcement.

The objection must be accompanied by supporting documentation; otherwise, it will not be considered.



The Chicago city skyline is seen Aug 27, 2025. (AP)

8 killed, 38 injured in Chicago shootings during holiday weekend

At least eight people have been killed and 38 others injured in a series of shootings across US Chicago during the extended Juneteenth Holiday weekend as of Sunday, local police said.

At least two dozen shooting incidents had been reported since 5 p.m. Friday. The victims ranged in age from 14 to 70, according to the Chicago Police Department.

At least 12 people were wounded Friday night when two gunmen opened fire from an SUV into a crowd gathering on Chicago's Far South Side, the department said.

US President Donald Trump on Sunday renewed his call for military intervention in the country's third-largest city.

"Why isn't Governor Pritzker calling me for help. I could make Chicago a safe City in ONE MONTH, in ONE YEAR, it would be one of the safest!!!" Trump wrote in a post on Truth Social on Sunday morning.

In 2025, Trump deployed National Guard troops on crime-fighting missions in Democrat-led cities, including Chicago, drawing fierce resistance.

Although data from the Chicago Police Department showed a slight uptick in shooting incidents compared to the first half of last year, violent crime has generally declined in the city in recent years, in line with national trends. (Xinhua)

LA Mayor Bass declares emergency

Heat, wind spark wildfires in US West

WASHINGTON, June 22, (AP) - Extreme heat and dry, windy conditions fueled several wildfires in the West on Sunday, including an uncontained blaze in Utah that forced the evacuation of a small town southwest of Salt Lake City.

The Iron Fire in Utah's Juab County was first detected Saturday and had blackened 34 square miles (87 square kilometers), authorities said. The fire about 70 miles (113 kilometers) southwest of Salt Lake City forced the evacuation of Eureka, population 1,000, and people at a nearby ranch.

No homes had been lost, and UTAH Fire Info, a multiagency operation, said in a post on X that firefighters conducted a successful backburn operation to protect the town.

Kelly Wickens, a fire prevention specialist with the Utah Division of Forestry Fire and State Lands, warned that the fire was continuing to grow amid drought conditions. Wickens said the fire was human-caused and remains under investigation.

Utah Gov Spencer J Cox visited the town Sunday.

"We knew that there was going to be extreme fire danger, and sure enough we had multiple fires," Cox said.

The Iron Fire was one of six fires burning in Utah at varying levels of containment.

A wildfire prompted evacuations over the weekend near Sedona, Arizona, burning about 300 acres (120 hectares) of steep and rugged terrain near Oak Creek Canyon. As of Sunday afternoon, about 300 fire personnel were



A helicopter dumps water on a wildfire above the University of Utah in Salt Lake City on June 21. (AP)

fighting the blaze, which remained uncontained. Residents evacuated earlier were still not being allowed to return home.

Much of the Western US from the Rockies to the Pacific coast saw above-average temperatures this weekend with even hotter weather anticipated for early this week. Officials warned that the prolonged dry, hot weather and relatively low humidity increased the risk of fire danger.

Also:

LOS ANGELES: Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass declared an emergency Saturday to ensure the city gets the resources it needs to fight a large ware-

house fire that has sent large plumes of smoke into the air.

"The city and county have opened spaces for families seeking relief from the smoke, and we will continue working around the clock and doing everything possible to put this fire out completely," Bass said in a news release announcing the emergency declaration.

The fire at a privately owned cold-storage warehouse in the city's Boyle Heights neighborhood started Wednesday, prompting shelter-in-place orders in the area because of the risk of hazardous air. Residents were told to close all windows, doors and vents, turn off air conditioning and bring people and pets to an inside room.

Trump says either Republican candidate would be good pick in S.Carolina's gov runoff

New York's congressional candidates make final case in last day before primary

NEW YORK, June 22, (AP) - New York's congressional candidates have a final chance to make their case Monday on the last full day of campaigning before a primary election in which an ascendant progressive left is taking on establishment Democrats.

The races have become bellwethers of Mayor Zohran Mamdani's political clout, testing whether the young democratic socialist can leverage excitement he ignited last year to reshape the city's congressional delegation.

And he has been working hard to promote his slate of three House candidates, lending his star power to several campaign videos, along with hosting a rally with US Sen Bernie Sanders last week to boost his picks just before the election.

"The party of the past will not be what leads us into the future. We need a Democratic Party with backbone," Mamdani said.

Meanwhile, in another closely watched race, Jack Schlossberg, the 33-year-old grandson of former President John F. Kennedy, is hoping to ride his family ties and big

social media following to a seat in Congress representing part of Manhattan.

But the Kennedy scion is facing strong opposition from Alex Bores, a state Assembly member at the center of a Silicon Valley spending war over his proposals to regulate artificial intelligence, and Micah Lasher, another state Assembly member who has deep experience in New York government and is backed by many of the state's Democratic leaders. George Conway, an attorney who was once married to a top Trump adviser but later became one of the president's critics, is also in the race.

In his campaign's closing stretch, Schlossberg rallied with David Letterman, former host of the "The Late Show with David Letterman." His mother, Caroline Kennedy, cut a campaign ad for him. Lasher hit the street to meet voters. Bores releasing an ad about the dangers of AI and worked to highlight the millions of dollars that Big Tech players are spending to oppose his run.

Mamdani has not made an endorsement in that race.

Instead, he's focused on three oth-



Mayor Zohran Mamdani, (right), gestures on stage with US Sen Bernie Sanders, I-VT., during a Get Out The Vote rally ahead of New York's primary election on June 18, in the Brooklyn borough of New York. (AP)

er congressional contests, including two featuring embattled incumbents.

Darializa Avila Chevalier, a democratic socialist whose campaign has been buoyed by the mayor's support, is challenging US Rep Adriano Espaillat, who was the first Dominican American elected to Congress in a

district that includes northern Manhattan and part of the Bronx.

Espaillat has drawn attention to inflammatory social media posts Avila Chevalier made in her 20s, attempting to portray her as an unserious candidate. Avila Chevalier, in a recent debate, said she regretted the

posts and apologized for one crass post about former Vice President Kamala Harris.

Former city Comptroller Brad Lander got the mayor's endorsement in his attempt to unseat US Rep Dan Goldman, a fellow Democrat.

Lander, who appeared in the crowd at a joyous City Hall ceremony celebrating the Knick's NBA championship win on Thursday, has worked to play up his alliance with the mayor, while Goldman, who did not endorse Mamdani in his mayoral race, has tried to shift the conversation to his own productivity in Congress.

Mamdani is also supporting Claire Valdez, a former state Assembly colleague and democratic socialist ally, in her bid to defeat Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso in the race to succeed retiring US Rep Nydia Velazquez.

Reynoso and Valdez are both progressives who share many similar views, though Valdez has framed herself as a potential Mamdani ally in Washington.

Also:

COLUMBIA, SC: US President

Donald Trump changed his tune Friday heading into South Carolina's runoff next week, saying either Republican contender for governor - not just Lt Gov Pamela Evette, whom he endorsed before the primary earlier this month - would be a good pick.

On his Truth Social platform, Trump praised both Evette and state Attorney General Alan Wilson, writing: "Both have had amazing careers, and have been with me from the beginning. They are MAGA and America First all the way!"

The move represents a hedging of Trump's bets in a primary season where he has seen some of his endorsed candidates fall short, rare defeats that have stirred doubts about his clout as he approaches the back half of his second term.

Trump previously gave Evette his "Complete and Total Endorsement." He also said "A BIG added plus" for her campaign is that Henry McMaster Jr. - the son of the current governor, a close ally - may be Evette's running mate. But the 38-year-old lawyer later said he would not be considered for the post.

Burnham confirms bid to succeed position

Starmer announces resignation as UK's PM

LONDON, June 22, (AP) - British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said Monday he is stepping down as leader of the governing Labour Party and will leave office within weeks, forced out by his own party scarcely two years after being elected in a landslide.

Starmer says he will remain caretaker prime minister until the party chooses a new Labour leader - with expectations growing that it will be former Greater Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham, following his victory in a special parliamentary election last week.

Burnham confirmed in a social media post that "I will put myself forward as part of this process." Former Health Secretary Wes Streeting, who was considered his main rival for the top job, said he will back Burnham.

That makes it more likely that Burnham will be selected without a leadership contest. He returns to Parliament after nearly a decade as Manchester mayor and will be sworn in as a lawmaker later on Monday.

Only members of Parliament can stand for the party leadership.

Starmer is the sixth prime minister in a decade to stand outside 10 Downing Street and announce a premature departure. His statement comes the day before Britain marks the 10th anniversary of its vote to leave the European Union, a decision that still roils the country's economy and politics.

After weeks of insisting he would fight to keep his job, Starmer conceded to growing pressure to hand over to a new leader who can try and revive the government's flagging fortunes. He led Labour to a landslide election victory in July 2024, but since then his popularity and that of the party have plummeted.

Starmer made the announcement outside his official 10 Downing St. residence, the spot where he delivered his first speech as prime minister two years ago.

His voice choked with emotion near the end of the brief statement, which was watched by a group of staff, Cabinet ministers and scores of journalists.

"The question my party is asking now is whether I am best placed to lead us into the next general election," Starmer said. "I have heard the answer of my parliamentary party to that question, and I accept that answer with good grace."

He said he spoke to King Charles III,



Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer speaks to the media outside 10 Downing Street to announce his resignation in London on June 22. (AP)

Britain's constitutional monarch, to inform him of the decision.

Starmer spent the weekend pondering his future following Burnham's special election victory.

It's unclear whether Burnham, who is due to be sworn in as a member of Parliament on Monday, will now face a coronation or a challenge. Starmer said nominations for a leadership contest will open on July 9, and the new leader will be in place by the time Parliament returns from its summer break on Sept 1.

If Burnham is the only candidate, the change could come by mid-July.

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

Labour is losing liberal voters to the growing Green Party and facing a rising Reform UK, the Nigel Farage-led anti-immigration party that consistently leads in nationwide opinion polls.

US President Donald Trump weighed in even before an announcement, linking Starmer's potential exit to two of his recurring bugbears: immigration and renewable energy.

"Keir Starmer will resign as Prime Minister of The United Kingdom. He failed badly on two very important subjects- IMMIGRATION AND EN-

ERGY (OPEN NORTH SEA OIL!). I wish him well! President DJT," Trump posted on his social media platform.

Starmer's initially warm relationship with the president has soured in recent months over issues including the Iran war, which the U.K. didn't join.

In contrast to missteps on the domestic front, Starmer has won praise for his international role, notably in rallying European support for Ukraine in its fight against Russia's invasion, and working to mitigate the economic and political turmoil unleashed by the Iran conflict.

A NATO summit in Turkey next month may be his last foray on the world stage as Britain's leader.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen praised Starmer's legacy.

"It can take many leaders years to grow into the statesman you became in just two years," she said on X. "European and Ukrainian security is stronger because of you. Thank you, dear Keir."

While many Labour lawmakers have rallied behind Burnham, some have said that Starmer had been treated unfairly. London legislator Neil Coyle railed on X against "the prospect of an utter stitch-up & the media circus being rewarded."

"When the next leader cannot change Trump, Iran, Ukraine, Putin, Musk, broadcast editorial & algorithm bias overnight they'll bay for his blood too. Better keep that guillotine sharp," he wrote.

KYIV, Ukraine, June 22, (AP) - A Russian drone strike on the city of Sumy in northeastern Ukraine killed three members of the same family, including a 13-year-old boy and his father, and wounded another two, a regional official said Monday.

Russia has pounded civilian areas of Ukraine with drones and missiles since it launched its all-out invasion of its neighbor more than four years ago, and a United Nations tally says more than 16,000 civilians have died in the war. U.S.-led peace efforts have failed to stop the fighting.

The Sumy attack hit a home and killed a 36-year-old man, his 13-year-old son and a 73-year-old woman who was the mother of the man's partner, according to Oleh Hryhorov, the head of the regional military administration. The man's partner and 10-year-old son were wounded, he said.

The number of civilian casualties in Russian attacks has jumped recently, according to the U.N. Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, as Moscow's forces struggle to gain momentum on the battlefield.

At least 274 civilians were killed and 1,763 injured in Ukraine in May - the highest monthly total of civilian casualties since April 2022, it said earlier this month. Most casualties



Rescuers carry a body that they removed from under the rubble of an apartment building following Russia's missile attack in Kharkiv, Ukraine on June 20. (AP)

are in cities far from the front line, it said.

A Russian nighttime drone strike also killed a woman and wounded three people, including an 11-year-old boy, in the southeastern Ukrainian city of Zaporizhzhia, regional head Ivan Fedorov said.

In total, Russia launched 88 long-range attack drones and one ballistic missile overnight, Ukraine's air force said, with air defenses shooting down or jamming 79 of the drones.

Ukraine, meanwhile, fired many more drones toward Russia and territories it controls, according to the Russian Defense Ministry, as Kyiv sustained its long-range campaign against oil facilities, military transport and infrastructure.

The Russian Defense Ministry said Monday its forces intercepted 301 Ukrainian drones during the night over multiple Russian regions, the illegally annexed Crimea peninsula, the Azov Sea and the Black Sea.

Czech public broadcasters stage strike over govt plan

PRAGUE, June 22, (AP) - Journalists and other employees formed a human chain around the Czech public radio in Prague on Monday as part of a warning strike against a plan by the government to overhaul the funding for public broadcasters.

The move by the government of populist Prime Minister Andrej Babiš has triggered protests that warned of a threat to media independence.

According to a plan approved by the government last week, public radio and television would be financed from the state budget starting next year, instead of fees paid by individuals, households and businesses.

Critics say the change would give the three-party coalition government power to influence the media, citing the examples of populist governments in Slovakia under Prime Minister Robert Fico, and in Hungary under former Prime Minister Viktor Orbán.



Thousands of people march to protest against a government plan to change public broadcaster funding in Prague, Czech Republic on May 24. (AP)

Police uncover 3 tons of cocaine

Australia and Canada sign a \$1.75 billion deal to build long-range radar in Canada

MELBOURNE, Australia, June 22, (AP): Australia and Canada signed a \$1.75 billion export agreement on Monday to build an Australian-designed long-range radar system in Canada.

Australian Defense Minister Richard Marles and Canadian Secretary of State (Defense Procurement) Stephen Fuhr signed the first phase of a pact to provide early warning radar coverage from the Canada-United States border into the Arctic.

"What this really means is that Australia and Canada are now partners in terms of the future development of the Over-the-Horizon Radar," Marles told reporters at the Australian Parliament House in the capital Canberra.

"There is now a very strategic dimension to the relationship," Marles added.

Fuhr said the two British Commonwealth countries, both of which are partners in the Five Eyes intelligence-sharing alliance that also includes the United States, Britain and

New Zealand, had "stood shoulder-to-shoulder for generations."

"As the world adjusts to its new strategic and economic realities, I can't think of a stronger partner to work with more than Australia," Fuhr said at a joint press conference with Marles.

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney announced he'd chosen Australia's radar system over comparable US technology shortly after he came to power last year.

In March, Carney became the first Canadian prime minister to visit Australia in 12 years.

During the visit, Carney and his Australian counterpart Anthony Albanese agreed to increase cooperation on defense technologies, artificial intelligence and critical minerals.

BAE Systems Australia said in a statement it will support both governments in developing the Arctic Over-the-Horizon Radar.

The Australian system, developed over 40 years, works by refract-



Australian Defense Minister Richard Marles, (left), and Canada's Secretary of State Stephen Fuhr speak to the media after signing an agreement on export of an Over-the-Horizon Radar system at Parliament House in Canberra, Australia on June 22. (AP)

ing high-frequency electromagnetic waves off the ionosphere to detect distant objects that are invisible to conventional radars because of

Earth's curvature.

The deal is Australia's largest ever defense export. Australia's previous record defense export was a \$700

million deal signed in 2024 to provide Germany with 100 Australian-made Boxer heavy weapon carrier vehicles.

Also:

MELBOURNE, Australia: Police found 2.7 metric tons (3 tons) of cocaine on a property on Sydney's outskirts in Australia's largest ever seizure of the drug, officials said on Monday.

The drug was found on June 19 in plastic tubs buried in underground bunkers hidden beneath three shipping containers on a semirural property in the suburb of Londonderry on Sydney's western edge, the Queensland Joint Organized Crime Taskforce said in a statement.

The containers had false floors that provided access to the cocaine, which police estimate had a street value of 816 million Australian dollars (\$572 million). Two Sydney residents, men aged 21 and 25, were arrested at the property and charged

with possessing a commercial quantity of an illicit drug. They face potential sentences of life in prison.

Australia's previous record cocaine haul was 2.34 metric tons (2.58 tons) seized in 2024 from a fishing boat near K'gari, formerly known as Fraser Island, off the Queensland state coast.

Police said the cocaine found in Sydney, the capital of New South Wales state and Australia's most populous city, landed by boat at Midge Point in the sparsely-populated Queensland tropics. They allege that a Sydney organized crime group transported the drug by road to the city, a distance of 1,800 kilometers (1,100 miles), police said.

Police added that they suspect the shipment was landed from the same mother ship as 178 kilograms (392 pounds) of cocaine previously seized in Queensland. Six people have been charged over that cocaine and 142 kilograms (313 pounds) of methamphetamine that was also found in the investigation.

Shooting at Philippines high school kills 3 students, 2 suspects arrested

MANILA, Philippines, June 22, (AP): Two students armed with hand guns opened fire in a high school in the central Philippines on Monday, killing three fellow students and wounding another seven, police said.

The suspects, aged 14 and 15, were arrested. The suspects and the victims were students of the San Jose National High School in Tacloban city, where the mid-morning shooting happened, regional police chief Brig. Gen. Jason Capoy said.

An investigation was underway to determine the cause of the shooting in the government-run school, which has more than 1,500 students. Capoy said that the suspects, who were close friends, said in initial questioning that they were bullied in school. He did not elaborate.

They have no criminal records and it's not immediately clear where they got the 9 mm pistol and cal. 38 revolver that were used in the attack. They managed to bring the guns into the campus because there was only one guard on duty at multiple entrances and exits, Capoy said.

"The suspects barged into two rooms because after the shooting in the first, the children scammed



In this photo taken from a video, students react after a shooting incident at the San Jose National High School in Tacloban city, Philippines on June 22. (AP)

and the suspects apparently ran after some victims into another room," Capoy told reporters.

Most of the dead and wounded were female students, he said.

In a video posted online, students hiding under desks in a shut class-

room can be heard screaming and weeping as gunshots could be heard outside. Some called their mothers. Other videos show visibly terrified students streaming out of the school campus, some holding and embracing each other.

One of the suspects was arrested in the school after the attack but the second fled and hid in a house nearby. He was found by police who were when alerted by residents, police said.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. ordered a thorough investigation of the shooting and asked law enforcers to boost security in all schools, workplaces and public areas, Communications Undersecretary Claire Castro said.

"The president was saddened by this incident. Anybody, especially the parents of the victims, will feel sad and terrified," Castro said.

The national police have urged the public to remain calm and cooperate with authorities by providing any information that may aid the ongoing investigation.

Crimes involving the use of firearms are prevalent in the Philippines, partly due to the proliferation of unlicensed firearms, but school shootings are relatively rare.

Ex-South Korean justice minister gets 25 years for role in martial law imposition

SEOUL, South Korea, June 22, (AP): A former South Korean justice minister was sentenced to 25 years in prison on Monday after a court found him guilty of helping ousted President Yoon Suk Yeol carry out his brief imposition of martial law in 2024.

The Seoul Central District Court said it was clear Park Sung-jae played a key role in Yoon's attempted power grab following the declaration of martial law on Dec. 3, 2024, including ordering ministry officials to assess detention capacities at correctional facilities to prepare for possible arrests of politicians.

Park also instructed officials to review dispatching state prosecutors to Yoon's martial law command to support its operations and have related immigration authorities stand by for possible travel ban impositions, the court said.

Yoon's martial law, which followed a yearslong standoff with liberals controlling the legislature, lasted only about six hours before lawmakers broke through a blockade of soldiers Yoon dispatched to the National Assembly and voted to overturn it, forcing Yoon's Cabinet



Former South Korean Justice Minister Park Sung-jae arrives for his trial at the Seoul Central District Court in Seoul, South Korea on June 22. (AP)

to lift the measure.

Judge Lee Jin-gwan said Park abandoned his responsibility to uphold the country's Constitution and law by taking part in Yoon's authoritarian push.

Park had denied the charges, saying he was merely carrying out duties required during a national emergen-

cy. Park's lawyers didn't immediately say whether they would appeal.

Yoon was impeached and suspended from office on Dec. 14, 2024, before being formally removed by the Constitutional Court in April 2025. He was arrested in July 2025, and multiple criminal trials are ongoing.



East Timor's President Francisco 'Lu Olo' Guterres delivers his speech in Dili, East Timor, on Jan 26, 2018. (AP)

Former East Timor prez Guterres dies

Francisco Guterres, a former president of East Timor and a leading figure in the country's independence movement, has died. He was 71.

Guterres, widely known by his nom de guerre "Lu Olo," died on Sunday at Prince Court Medical Centre in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, where he had been in intensive care, his family said on the late president's official Facebook account. The cause of death was not immediately disclosed.

Guterres served as president from 2017 to 2022, capping decades of involvement in the politi-

cal and armed struggle that led to independence for Southeast Asia's youngest nation in 2002.

"Throughout his life, he remained committed to the freedom of his people and the building of a democratic nation," Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said in a message of condolences to his family and the people of East Timor, known also as Timor Leste.

Fretilin, the party Guterres had led for years, said his death was a "profound loss" for all those who shared the goal of building a free, democratic and sovereign country. (AP)

Ethiopia's ruling Prosperity Party retains parliamentary majority

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia, June 22, (AP): Ethiopia's ruling party has maintained an overwhelming majority in parliament following the June 1 election, according to final results on Sunday.

Prime Minister **Abiy Ahmed's** Prosperity Party won 438 seats out of 501 in the House of Representatives, the National Election Board of Ethiopia said.

The Tigray region, where hundreds of thousands of people had died in the war between the federal forces and regional groups, was again excluded from the election, denying it a voice in parliament and further pushing it to the margins. The region has not had federal representation for six years.

The electoral board chairperson, Melatwork Hailu, said Sunday that the board maintained "institutional neutrality and performed its duties solely in accordance with the law and electoral guidelines, without interference."

group and the federal government in Amhara, and the Oromo Liberation Army rebels in Oromia, has been the main cause of instability as the government seeks to disarm the groups.

Turnout was 94%. More than 50 million people, out of Ethiopia's estimated population of 130 million, were registered to vote, the board said.

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Ahmed

The election was marred by a crackdown on dissent. Insecurity in the Oromia and Amhara regions resulted in 143 polling stations failing to open, the election board said. Fighting between the Fano armed

US strike on an alleged drug boat kills 2 in Pacific Ocean

WASHINGTON, June 22, (AP): The US military has conducted another strike against a boat accused of smuggling drugs in the eastern Pacific Ocean, immediately killing two people and leaving six survivors amid an ongoing campaign against alleged traffickers in Latin America.

The latest attack - which now number at more than 60 - brings the number of people who have been killed in boat strikes by the US military to more than 210 people since the Trump administration began targeting those it calls "narcoterrorists" in early September.

It is unclear if the survivors of this strike, or the one conducted on June 16 which left two survivors, were rescued. However, in both cases, US Central Command said that they notified the US Coast Guard. The Pentagon did not immediately answer



Trump

questions about the out

As with most of the military's statements on strikes in the eastern Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Sea, US Southern Command said it targeted the alleged drug traffickers along known smuggling routes. The military did not provide evidence that the vessel was ferrying drugs.

A black and white video posted on X showed a boat speeding through the water before being struck by a visible projectile and then bursting into flames.

President **Donald Trump** has said the US is in "armed conflict" with cartels in Latin America and has justified the attacks as a necessary escalation to stem the flow of drugs into the United States and fatal overdoses claiming American lives. But his administration has offered little evidence to support its claims of killing "narcoterrorists."

Critics of the strikes have questioned the overall legality as well as their effectiveness. Part of the argument has been that the fatalities behind many fatal US drug overdoses is typically trafficked over land from Mexico, where it is produced with chemicals imported from China and India.



Cuba's President Miguel Diaz-Canel, (right), Raul Castro, center, Commander Ramiro Valdés, (center left), and Jose Ramon Machado Ventura, left, attend an event marking the 172nd anniversary of the birth of national independence hero Jose Marti, in Havana, Jan. 27, 2025. (AP)

Cuba's ex-VP Menéndez dies

Ramiro Valdés Menéndez, a former vice president and a key figure of the Cuban Revolution who fought alongside Fidel Castro, died Sunday, the Communist Party and Cuba's government said. He was 94.

Valdés was one of the closest allies of Fidel and his brother Raúl Castro since the 1953 attack on the Moncada barracks that marked the beginning of the Cuban Revolution. He remained an influential figure in the follow-

ing decades.

The joint statement did not provide details on the cause of death.

"Ramiro Valdés Menéndez deserves the respect and admiration of the Cuban people for his dedication and proven loyalty to the revolutionary cause," said the statement published by the official news portal Cubadebate.

On X, President Miguel Diaz-Canel said Valdés' death hurt like the loss of a father. (AP)

Rival challenges vote

De la Espriella holds slim lead in Colombia's election

BOGOTA, Colombia, June 22, (AP): A polarized Colombia gave conservative political outsider Abelardo de la Espriella a razor-thin lead in a runoff election that will be challenged in the coming days by the ruling party's progressive candidate.

De la Espriella, a business owner and lawyer who earned US President Donald Trump's endorsement despite never having run for office, led progressive lawmaker Iván Cepeda taking 49.7% of the votes, with 99.9% of results released by electoral authorities. Cepeda, Petro's ally, earned 48.7% support. Election officials have not formally announced a winner.

A victory by de la Espriella is expected to usher in policies that will reverse the agenda of outgoing President Gustavo Petro, including a controversial plan to hold parallel peace negotiations with illegal armed groups. Petro's protégé, law-



Police guard while supporters of presidential candidate Ivan Cepeda of the ruling Historic Pact protest after election results showed him trailing in the runoff election in Cali, Colombia on June 21. (AP)

maker Ivan Cepeda, had pledged to push forward that strategy and other social reforms if he won Sunday's

vote. The election was colored by people's fears of a renewed internal conflict.

"I will govern for all Colombians," de la Espriella, nicknamed "The Tiger," told thousands of supporters as he stood behind bulletproof glass in the northern city of Barranquilla on Sunday night. But his conciliatory tone changed as he spoke.

"Pack your bags and prepare to exercise the opposition," he added. "Make no mistake, Mr Cepeda. You already know how fiercely the tiger roars."

Speaking from Bogota after the vote count was tallied, Cepeda told supporters that his campaign considers the count "unofficial and non-binding" and that his team will challenge results from more than 30,000 voting stations. No recount has flipped the results of a presidential election in Colombian history.

"We will not allow ... the rollback of the social gains we have achieved," Cepeda said. "We will not allow democracy to be violated."

Focusing on SMEs, green projects in ESG strategy

ABK launches 2025 Sustainability Report highlighting its ESG achievements

KUWAIT CITY, June 22: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) recently launched its 2025 Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Sustainability Report, showcasing its innovative business model that integrates sustainability principles into the core of its operations and day-to-day activities while advancing sustainable initiatives across all areas of the business.

The report has been prepared in accordance with the latest Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) standards and aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Kuwait Vision 2035, ensuring the highest levels of transparency and reliability in data disclosure.

The report reflects the Bank's success in reshaping its daily operations, from reducing paper-based transactions within branches to enhancing decision-making processes, to fully align with ESG principles and support sustainable development objectives in Kuwait and the markets where it operates, namely Egypt and the UAE.

On this occasion, **Sager Albenali**, Chief Communications Officer at ABK, said, "Today, we are taking another significant step in reinforcing our leadership by adopting an advanced model that connects long-term financial stability with a conscious response to emerging environmental and social challenges. We are proud that our 2025 Sustainability Report complements the banking sector development agenda and demonstrates our success in achieving meaningful progress in supporting green and sustainable finance, as well as developing small and medium-sized enterprises, which are a key pillar of the national economy."



Sager Albenali

He noted that the report demonstrates the Bank's current and future focus on developing robust frameworks for assessing and managing climate and environmental risks, protecting both the Bank's assets and shareholder value, and directing capital toward projects that deliver positive developmental impact across the country.

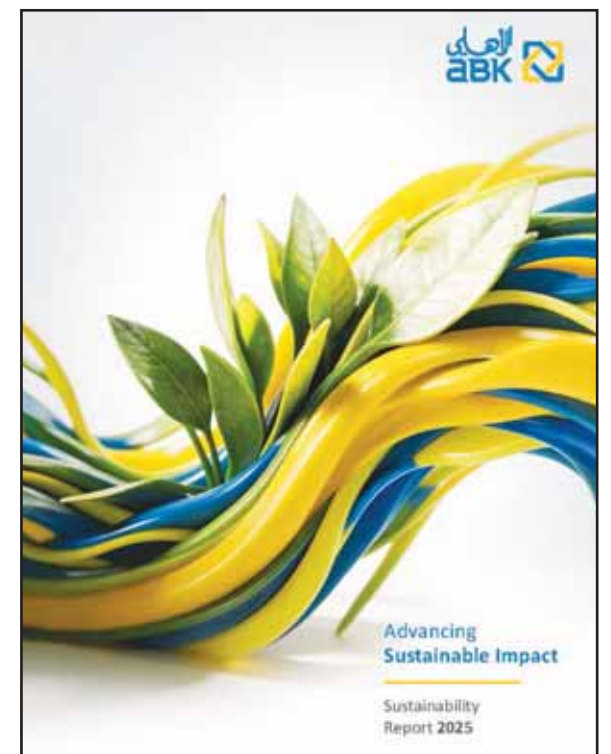
Albenali added, "The report highlights our strong commitment to comprehensive digital transformation, alongside our continued investment in national talent, increasing and empowering women in line with regulatory requirements and sound governance principles."

He continued, "We believe that transparency and reliability in the disclosure of non-financial information are fundamental to building lasting trust with our shareholders, customers, stakeholders, and the wider Kuwaiti community. We will continue to innovate and deliver banking solutions that support the development of a resilient and sustainable economy."

Sustainability as a Daily Practice
Albenali explained, "A genuine commitment to sustainability begins with the smallest details of daily operations. We have successfully embedded sustainability into our employees' culture and everyday behavior, as well as into our customers' journey from the moment they enter our branches or use our mobile application, enabling them to actively participate in environmental preservation and community support."

He emphasized that through its annual Sustainability Report, the Bank seeks to present a leading example for the banking sector and position sustainability as a daily driver of its business activities. The report is now available on the Bank's website.

Albenali added, "Sustainability is no longer simply a business choice for ABK; it is the foundation upon which we are building the future of our



business. We remain committed to directing capital toward projects that generate attractive returns while creating measurable environmental and social impact that safeguards future generations."

He also revealed the Bank's plans to expand its sustainability strategy through the launch of a new suite of banking products and solutions tailored for both corporate and retail customers, supporting the national strategy to reduce emissions and achieve carbon neutrality.

Furthermore, he highlighted the Bank's efforts to strengthen resilience against emerging climate risks by integrating environmental and climate stress testing into its enterprise risk management framework, in line with international best practices.

Leading the Transition
ABK aims to become the preferred financing partner for sustainable infrastructure projects, renewable energy developments, and initiatives that contribute to diversifying sources of income beyond traditional reliance on oil.

The Bank's sustainability strategy is strongly centered on people. This includes promoting financial inclusion through advanced and accessible digital services, investing in young national talent, supporting entrepreneurship and SMEs, and sponsoring numerous events and initiatives across various sectors.

ABK also focuses on investing in human capital through advanced training programs designed to enhance employee capabilities and attract new graduates, while extending support to entrepreneurs and SME owners as key drivers of economic diversification and sustainable job creation in Kuwait.

Strengthening Governance
The Bank places the development of governance frameworks among its highest priorities to ensure business is conducted with the utmost transparency and professional ethics, thereby strengthening the confidence of

shareholders, customers, and society alike.

ABK has further enhanced its digital capabilities, expanded automation solutions, and introduced customer-centric services that prioritize client needs, improving operational efficiency, enriching the customer experience, and promoting responsible resource utilization.

Recently, the Bank strengthened its digital ecosystem through the launch of its new mobile banking application and the introduction of numerous digital solutions and services, while continuously enhancing its website, reinforcing its position as a leading and responsible financial institution.

Concluding, Albenali said, "For us, sustainability is a continuous journey of development and a long-term partnership aimed at contributing effectively to a safer and more prosperous financial future for generations to come in Kuwait and across the regional markets in which we operate."

Corporate Social Responsibility
The Bank's social responsibility initiatives during 2025 included a wide range of sponsorships throughout the year, including sponsorship of Al Amiri Hospital's Health Day to raise awareness of diabetes, sponsorship of the Kuwait Association for the Care of the Blind graduation ceremony, and sponsorship of the Porsche Club Kuwait Festival. In addition, the Bank organized its Ramadan initiative, distributing thousands of Iftar meals and food baskets during the holy month.

The Bank also worked to promote financial literacy among school students through a variety of workshops delivered as part of its Financial Literacy Program, which included field visits to numerous schools across Kuwait.

Furthermore, the Bank contributed to supporting the 'Let's Be Aware' campaign to advance financial inclusion and raise awareness of customers' rights and responsibilities when dealing with banks, among other key topics. These efforts resulted in the Bank being recognized as one of the leading supporters of the campaign during 2025.



Ibrahim Al-Baghli and Abdullah Al-Shalabi with Zain and V-Thru teams.

Subscribe to Shabab for exclusive deals

Zain Shabab Club lands on V-Thru

KUWAIT CITY, June 22: Zain Kuwait today announced its latest partnership with V-Thru, Kuwait's leading virtual drive-thru platform, to launch the Zain Shabab Club, an exclusive club within the V-Thru app dedicated to Zain's Shabab plans subscribers.

The partnership was announced at the Zain Innovation Campus (ZINC) at the company's HQ in Shuwaikh, joined by Zain Kuwait Marketing Communications Manager Ibrahim Al-Baghli and V-Thru Co-Founder and CEO Abdullah Al-Shalabi, along with teams from both sides.

Shabab customers can now enjoy access to special offers and discounts across a wide range of restaurants and cafés available on V-Thru. This further strengthens the lifestyle value proposition of Shabab plans by giving young customers more everyday benefits that match their interests, routines, and preferences.

Zain continues to focus on delivering more than connectivity by building a complete digital lifestyle ecosystem for young customers. With Shabab plans, customers aged 21 to 24 can enjoy a postpaid experience designed around how they live, communicate, stream, explore, and connect, combining generous 5G data, unlimited social media, access to the latest devices,

top streaming platforms and world-class content, Zain Perks offers, and more at competitive prices.

V-Thru offers a convenient digital platform that allows users to access restaurants and cafés through a seamless virtual drive-thru experience. By introducing the Zain Shabab Club inside the V-Thru app, both partners are creating a dedicated space for Shabab subscribers to discover exclusive offers that complement their unique lifestyles.

Shabab plans have been designed around the needs, ambitions, and daily lifestyle choices of young people in Kuwait. The partnership with V-Thru adds a new layer of value to the Shabab experience by giving customers access to relevant offers they can enjoy across their favorite restaurants and cafés.

The collaboration also builds on the strong relationship between Zain and V-Thru, which have partnered on several initiatives in the past, including the Zain Summer Program, where Zain's young interns were given the opportunity to experience V-Thru's technical and operational tracks firsthand. This reflected both companies' shared interest in supporting youth, innovation, entrepreneurship, and practical exposure to digital business models.

Main market leads losses

Kuwait stocks end in red

KUWAIT CITY, June 22, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait ended Monday's trading session in negative territory, with its general index declining by 17.02 points, or 0.19 percent, to close at 8,742.73 points. Trading activity saw 368.9 million shares change hands through 22,468 transactions, with a total value of KD 96.2 million (approximately USD 313.2 million).

The Main Market index recorded the steepest drop, falling 61.43 points, or 0.70 percent, to 8,734.46 points.

Trading volume reached 175.5 million shares across 9,407 transactions, valued at

KD 28 million (approximately USD 91.1 million).

The Premier Market index also edged lower, shedding 8.46 points, or 0.09 percent, to settle at 9,198.21 points, with 193.3 million shares traded through 13,061 transactions worth KD 68.1 million (approximately USD 221.7 million).

Meanwhile, the Main 50 Index declined by 42.90 points, or 0.44 percent, to close at 9,701.06 points, with 155.9 million shares traded in 7,561 transactions valued at KD 24.7 million (approximately USD 80.4 million).

Featuring fee-free credit cards, reduced-rate loans, and monthly draws

Gulf Bank unveils new internal Employee Financial Wellbeing Initiative offering exclusive banking benefits to its employees

KUWAIT CITY, June 22: As the most rewarding bank in Kuwait and the bank closest to the community, Gulf Bank continues to extend this commitment from its customers and the wider community to its own employees. In line with its ongoing efforts to enhance customer experience, and as part of its continued investment in its people, Gulf Bank announced the launch of a new internal Employee Financial Wellbeing Initiative titled "Because You Are Part of the Gulf Bank Family, Your Benefits Are Always Greater."

The initiative aims to enhance employees' banking experience and support their financial wellbeing through a range of exclusive banking benefits designed specifically for Gulf Bank employees.

The initiative offers a comprehensive suite of employee-only benefits, including returns of up to 3.5% on their accounts, an interest-free salary advance of up to 2.4 times their salary, credit cards with no annual fees, and loans at a reduced interest rate of 1%. It also includes special offers and tailored rewards programs designed to meet employees' needs and help them save more effectively.

Gulf Bank has also introduced special monthly draws for employees based on their credit card spending. Five winners will be announced every month, with each receiving a prize of KD 250. Employees will earn one entry for every KD 10 spent locally, and three entries for every KD 10 spent internationally, with a minimum monthly spend of KD 100.

The initiative aims to deliver tangible value across three key pillars: savings, liquidity, and spending. Through these benefits, employees receive comprehensive financial support that helps them manage their finances with greater ease, while providing them with a smoother and more rewarding banking experience.

Commenting on the occasion, Mr. Hamed Al-Tamimi, Acting General Manager of Human Resources at Gulf Bank, said: "We are proud that Gulf Bank is among the leading banks that continue to invest generously in human capital and in strengthening the work environment, whether by providing an ideal workplace for employees or by continuously enhancing their professional and personal capabilities through training and development in collaboration with leading local and international institutions."

Al-Tamimi noted that the initiative comes as part of the Bank's 2030 Strategy, which considers human capital to be its most valuable asset. He added that this approach enhances the quality of the work environment and motivates employees to excel, pointing out that the Employee Banking Experience Initiative is a clear example of the Bank's commitment to providing innovative solutions that reflect its vision of building a supportive and sustainable work environment.

He continued: "This direction reflects Gulf Bank's commitment to designing banking solutions that take into account employees' specific needs and aspirations, while helping them ease life's financial pressures and strengthen the balance between their personal and professional lives."

He added: "To ensure the best possible service, a dedicated banking team has been established within the Human Resources Department under the name Employee Banking Services Team. This team is responsible for providing personalized guidance, faster support, and easier access to the most suitable banking solutions for each employee. The initiative is also supported through multiple communication channels, including emails, SMS notifications, employee sessions, and a series of Gulf Bank Family podcast episodes that highlight the key benefits and opportunities available."

Gulf Bank affirmed that this initiative is aligned with the Bank's strategy and complements a number of decisions and measures aimed at strengthening the work environment. These include ensuring equality between women and men in employment benefits, reducing daily working hours by half an hour, and continuing efforts to promote sustainability, inclusion, equity, and the empowerment of women, youth, and people with disabilities.



Hamed Al-Tamimi

Gulf Bank continues to invest generously in strengthening the work environment and employee wellbeing



One of the branches of Gulf Bank.

The Bank further emphasized that being the most rewarding bank in Kuwait starts from within, by ensuring that employees themselves benefit from a banking experience that is rewarding, supportive, and aligned with their personal and financial aspirations. Through this initiative, Gulf Bank reinforces its position as a bank that remains close to its customers, employees, and the wider community.

CPI edges up 2.49% year-on-year

Kuwait inflation supported by food, services

KUWAIT CITY, June 22, (KUNA): Data released by Kuwait's Central Statistical Bureau (CSB) on Sunday showed that the consumer price index (inflation) rose by 2.49 percent at the end of May 2026 compared to the same month a year earlier.

The CSB told KUNA in a statement that Kuwait's inflation rate increased by 0.07 percent in May compared to April 2026.

It attributed the annual increase to higher prices across key groups influencing the consumer price index, particularly food, health, clothing and footwear, education, and miscellaneous goods and services.

The bureau said the price index for the food and beverages group rose by 5.96 percent in May compared to the same month of 2025, while the tobacco and cigarettes group increased by 0.07

percent. It added that the clothing and footwear group rose by 1.10 percent, while housing services prices increased by 0.49 percent. Prices for household furnishings and maintenance equipment also rose by 1.18 percent.

The health group recorded an increase of 1.19 percent, while transport prices rose by 4.46 percent compared to May 2025.

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.



Kuwait Finance House reinforces market leadership through investment solutions

KUWAIT CITY, June 22: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) consolidates its banking leadership through an advanced suite of savings and investment products. Intelligently designed for diverse customer segments, these solutions match customers' financial journeys and investment capabilities. This aligns with an innovative vision balancing wealth growth with sustainable returns, while enhancing financial stability and financial planning awareness.

Injaz

Reaffirming its commitment towards meeting youth investment aspirations, KFH offers Injaz investment plan, enabling the youth to plan ahead and achieve their dreams by investing their savings to start a business or purchase a house. The Injaz investment plan is available for customers aged 21 to 55, with saving durations ranging from 2 to 15 years.

By committing to monthly savings that yield investment profits, customers gain access to a growing fund available whenever they need it. When opened, Injaz will automatically have a Takaful insurance coverage in customer's name. This insurance will cover the unpaid savings due to death or total disability (due to sickness or accident) during the saving period. The investment plan also offers the convenience of adjusting investment amounts, or monthly installments at any time, with automatic monthly transfers from the customer's account.

Customers may withdraw up to 60% of the balance in the first year, and up to 60% each year following the initial withdrawal. They can also deposit fixed amounts in addition to their monthly savings without affecting the plan schedule. The full investment amount, together with the accumulated profits, becomes available at the end of the term. The target investment amount ranges from KD 3,000 to KD 120,000.

Jameati

In line with its responsibility towards future generations, KFH offers the Jameati long-term investment plan to help parents build a secure financial foundation to meet their children's education expenses.

To benefit from this long-term investment plan, the child must be no older than 14 years, and the customer's age must be between 21 and 61 years. By the time the child reaches university age, the accumulated savings and profits will be available to cover all university education expenses, paving the way for a promising future. The investment term of Jameati ranges from 4 to 18 years.

Although the Jameati investment plan is designed as a long-term solution, customers have the flexibility to adjust the investment amount or monthly contributions at any time. Additionally, customers can withdraw up to 60% of the balance in the first year, and up to 60% each year following the initial withdrawal. The target investment amount ranges from KD 3,000 to KD 120,000.



Rafaa

Believing that big steps require early planning, KFH offers the Rafaa long term investment plan to help customers cover the expenses of their children's marriage. Through Rafaa investment plan, customers can save monthly amounts and benefit from higher investment returns on their savings, in addition to Takaful coverage. Upon their children reaching the pre-determined age, the total accumulated savings, together with the investment profits, will be available to cover marriage expenses.

Among the conditions of the investment plan is that the age of the customer's child must be less than 20 years, and the customer's age must be between 21 and 61 years. The investment term of Rafaa plan ranges from 4 to 25 years. The target investment amount ranges from KD 4,000 to KD 120,000.

Rafaa advantages include the following: the investment amount or monthly payments may be amended at any time and the amounts can be automatically transferred on monthly basis from the customer account to Rafaa investment account. The customer can withdraw 60% of the balance in the first year and 60% every year after the initial withdrawal. In addition, the customer can automatically increase the monthly investment amount once every two years. It is also possible to deposit specific financial payments, in addition to the monthly deductions, without affecting the schedule of the investment plan. The saving amount and accrued profit during the investment period shall fall due upon expiration of the investment plan.

It is worth noting that KFH long-term investment plans feature Takaful coverage with several options including diminishing Takaful coverage and fixed Takaful coverage. The customer may withdraw from the investment plan account upon the lapse of the first year during the investment plan period. Long-term plans are also characterized by their full flexibility concerning the amendment of the amount to be invested and the monthly payments at any time. The customer may also deposit certain payments, in addition to the monthly deducted amounts, without any impact on the investment plan schedule or the targeted amount.

Thimar

The most prominent of these offerings is Thimar investment plan which is designed to achieve a secure retirement. This plan is available for customers aged 21 to 55, with investment term ranging from 5 to 39 years.

Thimar key features include the flexibility to adjust the target amount, or the monthly deduction at any time. Additionally, customers can withdraw up to 60% of the balance in the first year, and up to 60% each year following the initial withdrawal. They also have the option to increase the monthly investment amount automatically once every two years. The target investment amount ranges from KD 4,000 to KD 120,000.

When opening Thimar plan, a Takaful insurance coverage is automatically issued in the customer's name. The insurance will cover the unpaid savings due to death or total disability (sickness or accident) during the saving period.

Shifaa

KFH also offers Shifaa long term investment plan, providing a Takaful coverage for private health care. The saving plan allows customers, ranging between 21 and 60 years of age, to save monthly amounts and obtain higher investment returns upon the investment's end term or when needed. Shifaa includes two main elements, savings with high investment returns and Takaful coverage for death or permanent total disability due to sickness or accident in addition to emergency diseases.

Customers can save monthly amounts while benefitting from higher investment returns on their savings, in addition to Takaful coverage that guarantees the customer the full target amount throughout the coverage period. In the event of health-related needs, the savings remain readily accessible, enabling customers to cover the required healthcare expenses.



Abdullah Al-Mansour and Rohit Nanda in a group photo with talabat and Centrepoint teams.

Enhancing app with fashion and home retail

talabat and Centrepoint tie up to boost quick commerce in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, June 22: Expanding its lifestyle offering in line with customers' evolving needs, talabat, the leading everyday app in the Middle East & North Africa (MENA), announced the onboarding of Centrepoint to its platform in a strategic move that further broadens its retail network beyond food and groceries. The partnership was formalized in a signing ceremony held at talabat's Kuwait HQ, attended by representatives from both parties, including Abdullah Al-Mansour, Director of Corporate Affairs at talabat Kuwait, and Rohit Nanda, Executive Vice President and Country Head, Landmark Group, Kuwait.

"Today's signing marks an important step in our efforts to further strengthen talabat's role as a leading everyday app," commented Al-Mansour. "As we continue to expand our offering beyond food, working with leading retailers such as Centrepoint help bring lifestyle, fashion, and home essentials closer to our customers. This partnership further enhances the convenience and variety available on our platform, enabling us to better serve customers' everyday needs."

"Our partnership with talabat significantly strengthens Centrepoint's omni-channel ecosystem by tapping into the evolving on-demand retail landscape. Quick commerce is a key growth driver for Centrepoint as it enables us to capture urgent, need-based purchases for daily essentials and unlocks new potential for premium utility gifting missions. By combining our retail footprint covering all governorates in Kuwait with talabat's digital strength, we are driving incremental



Abdullah Al-Mansour, Director of Corporate Affairs at talabat Kuwait, and Rohit Nanda, Executive Vice President and Country Head, Landmark Group, Kuwait, during the signing ceremony.

- Latest step in talabat's expansion beyond traditional delivery categories
- Building on talabat's growing portfolio of retail and lifestyle brands
- Enhancing customer access to trusted brands through one platform

sales, optimizing inventory efficiency, and accelerating digital growth. Customers will enjoy the ultimate convenience, receiving their favorite Babyshop essentials and Lifestyle Beauty products through a seamless, faster delivery experience," said Rohit Nanda, Executive Vice President and Country Head, Landmark Group, Kuwait.

Building on the success of "Centrepoint Beauty" earlier this year, this strategic partnership between talabat and Centrepoint brings a

comprehensive shopping experience into a single, smart platform. Customers across all governorates in Kuwait can now browse and order from a diverse selection of more than 3,000 products—spanning fashion, home, and daily essentials—and have them delivered in 45 minutes or less. This collaboration underscores talabat's ongoing expansion beyond traditional food delivery, redefining the retail sector with a seamless, on-demand experience that caters to everyday needs.

A global recognition reinforcing the bank's commitment to excellence in human capital management & talent development

NBK achieves a pioneering milestone as the first GCC bank to obtain 4 ISO certifications across human resources functions

KUWAIT CITY, June 22: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) announced a major milestone with the Group Human Resources Department obtaining four internationally recognized ISO certifications, reflecting the Bank's steadfast commitment to applying the highest global standards in human capital management and talent development.

NBK is the first and only bank across the GCC to secure this integrated suite of specialized ISO certifications in human resources, underscoring the maturity of its institutional framework and its adoption of international best practices.

This achievement reflects the efficiency, reliability, and robustness of the Bank's human capital management and development policies and systems. The certifications span the full employee lifecycle, from talent acquisition and employee engagement to capability development and measurable performance outcomes.

The certifications obtained by the Bank include:

- ISO 23326:2022 – Human Resource Management (Employee Engagement)
- ISO 30414:2025 – Human Capital Reporting and Disclosure
- ISO 30405:2023 – Recruitment Guidelines
- ISO 10015:2019 – Competence Management and People Development

The ISO 23326:2022 certification reflects the Bank's success in fostering an engaging work environment that strengthens employee engagement and reinforces a corporate culture built on trust and commitment, positively contributing to productivity and long-term sustainability.

Meanwhile, the ISO 30414:2025 certification underscores NBK's commitment to the highest standards of transparency and governance through the adoption of advanced methodologies for measuring, analyzing, and disclosing human capital metrics in line with internationally recognized frameworks.

In the area of talent acquisition, the ISO 30405:2023 certification highlights the efficiency and professionalism of the Bank's recruitment processes, ensuring alignment with global best practices in a manner that enhances talent quality and supports NBK's strategic objectives.

As for the ISO 10015:2019 certification, it reflects the integrated approach adopted by NBK in identifying training needs and designing advanced development programs that enhance performance efficiency and deliver measurable and sustainable institutional impact.

Collectively, these certifications cover a comprehensive spectrum of human resources functions and strategies, including talent acquisition



- Global standards advancing employee engagement and institutional transparency
- Attracting and developing talent through world-class practices
- NBK strengthens its position as a leader in human capital management
- Sustainability at the core of NBK's people development strategy
- Best-in-class approaches to training, development, and impact measurement

and recruitment, human capital reporting and disclosure, learning and development, competence management, performance management, employee relations, compensation and benefits, as well as human resources governance.

This broad scope underscores the Bank's success in aligning its policies and procedures with the highest international standards, further strengthening its position as an employer of choice in the region and reinforcing its leadership in adopting advanced operating models that support institutional sustainability and elevate performance excellence.

The achievement also reflects NBK's longstanding commitment to investing in its human capital and highlights its leadership in adopting global best practices in human resources management, contributing to the delivery of an advanced and integrated employee experience.

Moreover, this international recognition reaffirms the success of the Bank's strategic vision in building a future-ready institution driven by highly skilled talent capable of adapting to evolving



NBK headquarters

market dynamics and supporting sustainable growth with resilience and consistency.

By aligning its human resources policies and practices with the highest international standards, the Bank continues to strengthen its institutional capabilities and reinforce its innovation- and excellence-driven approach, creating sustainable value for all stakeholders.

These certifications further enhance NBK's position as a leading institution in human capital management across the GCC banking sector and reaffirm its ongoing commitment to sustainability, continuous development, and operational excellence.

The Bank also continues to cultivate a high-performing and empowering workplace environment through the introduction of impactful initiatives focused on employee wellbeing, inclusivity, and continuous professional development, further reinforcing its competitiveness and strengthening its position as an employer of choice regionally and internationally.

Furthermore, this strategic direction enhances the Bank's readiness to meet future demands while ensuring institutional resilience and operational continuity with a high degree of efficiency.

NBK remains committed to investing in talent development and providing a progressive workplace environment aligned with global best practices, further reinforcing its position as a leading financial institution and its ability to deliver sustainable long-term value.

Fed hawkish surprise: Global rates repriced as FX markets track policy divergence

By National Bank of Kuwait

Global markets this week continued to navigate a more hawkish monetary policy environment led by the United States, where the Federal Reserve kept rates unchanged at 3.50%-3.75% but signalled growing support for future tightening as inflation forecasts were revised higher to 3.6% for 2026. Strong US retail sales of +0.9% MoM, resilient labour market conditions with jobless claims at 226K, and firm consumer spending reinforced expectations that policy will remain restrictive. Treasury markets reflected this shift, with short-end yields moving higher while equities rebounded, supported by technology and AI-related optimism. DXY closed the week at 100.849 [+1.10%]. Meanwhile, stronger Canadian retail sales also pointed to resilient consumer demand, with advance estimates indicating sales rose 1.0% MoM in May following a 0.5% MoM increase in April. USDCAD closed the week at 1.4153 [+1.17%]. In Europe, the European Central Bank maintained a hawkish stance as officials defended the recent increase in the deposit rate to 2.25%, while warning that inflation risks could keep price growth elevated through 2026. EURUSD closed the week at 1.1471 [-0.84%]. Elsewhere, the Swiss National Bank maintained rates at 0% while reiterating its readiness to intervene in FX markets as inflation remained subdued at 0.6% YoY. USDCHF closed the week at 0.8071 [+1.24%]. In the United Kingdom, the Bank of England held rates at 3.75% in a 7-2 vote, supported by inflation holding at 2.8% YoY, stronger retail sales of +1.2% MoM, and an unemployment rate of 4.9%. GBPUSD closed the week at 1.3232 [-1.30%]. Across Asia-Pacific, the Bank of Japan raised rates by 25 bps to 1%, its highest level since 1995, while signalling further tightening amid rising inflation risks and continued yen weakness. The Reserve Bank of Australia maintained its cash rate at 4.35%, balancing persistent inflation against slowing economic momentum, while New Zealand reported GDP growth of 0.8% QoQ and 1.5% YoY, supporting hawkish expectations ahead of the July meeting. AUDUSD and NZDUSD closed the week at 0.7012 [-0.50%] and 0.5738 [-1.63%] respectively. Commodity markets remained focused on the evolving US-Iran ceasefire agreement, with Brent crude closing the week at 80.57 [-7.74%], and spot gold at 4155.71 [-1.51%], while yield curve dynamics remained closely monitored through the US 2s10s and 5s30s spreads, which closed the holiday-shortened week at 27.0 bps [-12.4 bps] and 66.3 bps [-9.5 bps], respectively.

United States and Canada

Fed Holds Rates at 3.50%-3.75% and Signals Potential Hikes; US Inflation Forecast Raised to 3.6% in 2026
The Federal Reserve unanimously left the federal funds rate unchanged at 3.50%-3.75% at its first meeting under Chairman Kevin Warsh, while adopting a more hawkish tone centred on restoring price stability. Policymakers revised their 2026 median inflation forecast sharply higher to 3.6% from 2.7%, while core inflation projections were raised to 3.3% from 2.7%. At the same time, growth expectations were trimmed to 2.2% from 2.4%, while the unemployment forecast improved slightly to 4.3% from 4.4%. Although officials remain divided on the policy outlook, with nine members projecting at least one rate hike this year and six anticipating two or more increases, Warsh emphasised the Committee's commitment to achieving its 2% inflation target. Strong labour market conditions, resilient economic growth,

Currencies	Previous Week Levels				This Week's Expected Range		3-Month
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	Forward
EUR	1.1568	1.1418	1.1622	1.1471	1.1360	1.1530	1.1515
GBP	1.3406	1.3163	1.3461	1.3232	1.3150	1.3325	1.3231
JPY	160.24	159.74	161.81	161.30	160.20	162.50	160.10
CHF	0.7971	0.7910	0.8092	0.8071	0.7980	0.8150	0.7991

and persistent inflationary pressures linked to energy costs and AI-related investment continue to support a restrictive policy stance, with markets now fully pricing in a rate increase by October. DXY last printed at 100.849.

US Retail Sales Rise 0.9% MoM as Control Group Sales Increase 0.7% and Gasoline Receipts Jump 3.4%

US consumer spending remained resilient in May, with retail sales rising 0.9% MoM, marking a fourth consecutive monthly increase despite elevated fuel prices. Excluding gasoline stations, sales still advanced a solid 0.7% MoM, highlighting broad-based consumer demand. Eleven of thirteen retail categories recorded gains, led by a 1.2% rebound in motor vehicle sales and a fifth consecutive increase in online retail spending. Control-group sales, which feed directly into GDP calculations, also rose 0.7% MoM, indicating strong underlying consumption momentum heading into the summer period. While higher gasoline prices contributed to the headline strength through a 3.4% increase in fuel receipts, household spending has also been supported by larger tax refunds, rising equity markets, and continued labour market resilience. The data suggest consumer activity remains a key pillar supporting US economic growth despite persistent inflationary pressures and tighter financial conditions.

Canada Retail Sales Rise 0.5% MoM in April; Advance Estimate Points to 1.0% MoM Growth in May

Canadian retail sales continued to expand in the second quarter, with an advance estimate indicating receipts rose 1.0% MoM in May following a 0.5% MoM increase in April. The data imply retail sales growth of approximately 1.9% in Q2, assuming June is flat, extending the streak of quarterly gains to eight consecutive quarters. April's increase was largely driven by a 5.1% MoM rise in gasoline station and fuel vendor sales, reflecting higher fuel prices, while retail sales excluding gasoline were flat and unchanged in volume terms. Core retail sales, which exclude gasoline stations and motor vehicle dealers, declined 0.7% MoM for a second consecutive month, led by weaker food and beverage (-2.0% MoM) and general merchandise (-1.7% MoM) sales. However, motor vehicle and parts dealers recorded a 1.7% MoM increase, supporting overall consumer spending. USDCAD last printed at 1.4153.

Europe and the United Kingdom

ECB's Lane Defends 25 bps Hike, Sees 2026 Inflation Elevated; Lagarde Warns of AI-Driven Financial Stability Risks

ECB Chief Economist Philip Lane defended the Bank's recent 25 bps rate increase, which lifted the deposit rate to 2.25%, citing persistent inflationary pressures, resilient economic activity, and a stable financial system. Lane reiterated expectations that inflation would remain elevated through 2026 and noted that the upper bound of the ECB's neutral rate is estimated at around 2.5%,

suggesting further policy tightening remains possible should underlying price pressures persist. Separately, European Central Bank President Christine Lagarde warned that AI could create new vulnerabilities for financial stability, highlighting the risk of financial crises arising from increasingly interconnected and powerful AI systems. The ECB has already stress-tested financial institutions against scenarios and plans further engagement with bank executives to strengthen resilience and preparedness against AI-related threats. EURUSD last printed at 1.1471.

SNB Keeps Policy Rate at 0%, Maintains FX Intervention Readiness, Swiss Inflation Forecast Raised to 0.6% in 2026

The Swiss National Bank maintained its policy rate at 0% while reiterating its willingness to intervene in foreign exchange markets if necessary to prevent excessive appreciation of the Swiss franc. Policymakers modestly increased their inflation forecast for 2026 to 0.6% from 0.5%, while projections for 2027 and 2028 were set at 0.6% and 0.7% respectively, remaining comfortably within the SNB's 0%-2% price stability range. Although inflation has accelerated, the central bank continues to view medium-term price pressures as subdued, supported by a weaker franc and easing haven demand following the recent Middle East ceasefire. The SNB maintained its growth outlook of around 1.0% for 2026 and 1.5% for 2027, while emphasising that uncertainty surrounding inflation and economic activity remains elevated. The decision reinforces the Bank's preference for an accommodative stance while retaining flexibility to respond to renewed currency appreciation risks. USDCHF last printed at 0.8071.

BoE Holds Bank Rate at 3.75%; UK Inflation at 2.8% YoY, Retail Sales Rise 1.2% MoM, Unemployment Falls to 4.9%

The Bank of England kept Bank Rate unchanged at 3.75% in a 7-2 vote, although two policymakers supported an immediate increase to 4% amid ongoing inflation concerns. Recent economic data provided a mixed but generally supportive backdrop for holding rates steady. UK inflation remained unchanged at 2.8% YoY in May, below expectations of 3.0%, while services inflation rose to 3.7%. In May, retail sales rebounded strongly, increasing 1.2% MoM after a revised 1.0% decline in April, reflecting stronger consumer demand supported by promotional activity and favourable weather conditions. Labour market indicators also showed signs of stabilisation, with payroll employment increasing by 2K in May and unemployment declining to 4.9%. The BoE lowered its projected inflation peak to 3.25% in Q4 2026 from 3.6% previously, citing easing energy price pressures following the US-Iran truce. Nevertheless, policymakers maintained a cautious stance, highlighting continued upside risks to inflation and uncertainty surrounding the durability of the ceasefire. GBPUSD last printed at 1.3232.

Asia-Pacific

BOJ Raises Policy Rate to 1%, Highest Since 1995, as Markets Price 60% Probability of Another Hike by October

The Bank of Japan increased its benchmark interest rate by 25 bps to 1%, marking the highest policy rate since 1995 and signalling a continued path towards monetary normalisation. The decision passed by a 7-1 vote as policymakers highlighted rising risks that underlying inflation could exceed the Bank's 2% target amid elevated energy prices and strengthening inflation expectations. The BOJ also announced that it will cease reducing bond purchases from April 2027, maintaining monthly purchases at approximately JPY 2T (USD 12.5B) and effectively completing a major phase of policy normalisation. Markets interpreted the statement as notably hawkish, with overnight swaps now pricing a 60% probability of another rate increase by October. Meanwhile, the yen remains under pressure near multi-decade lows against the US dollar despite higher domestic rates, increasing the risk of further intervention by Japanese authorities should currency weakness intensify. USDJPY last printed at 161.30.

Australia Holds Cash Rate at 4.35% as Unemployment Reaches 4.5-Year High and Growth Momentum Slows

The Reserve Bank of Australia unanimously left its cash rate unchanged at 4.35%, pausing its tightening cycle as policymakers assess the impact of previous rate increases on economic activity. Governor Michele Bullock acknowledged that inflation remains above the Bank's 2%-3% target range but noted growing evidence that restrictive monetary policy is slowing demand. Recent data indicate weakening economic momentum, with unemployment rising to its highest level in four-and-a-half years, household spending softening, and housing market activity moderating. While the RBA maintained a tightening bias and stressed that further rate increases remain possible should inflationary pressures persist, markets reduced expectations for additional hikes later this year. Policymakers also highlighted the importance of developments in global energy markets, noting that easing oil prices following the US-Iran ceasefire agreement could help alleviate inflation risks, although uncertainty surrounding the outlook remains elevated. AUDUSD last printed at 0.7012.

New Zealand GDP Rises 0.8% QoQ and 1.5% YoY as Markets Lean Towards a July Rate Hike

New Zealand's economy expanded by a stronger-than-expected 0.8% QoQ in the first quarter of 2026, following an upwardly revised 0.5% increase in the previous quarter, while annual growth held at 1.5% YoY. The expansion was driven by gains in manufacturing, agricultural production, services activity, household spending, and investment, while GDP per capita also increased 0.5% QoQ. However, much of the improvement occurred before the Middle East conflict intensified, with subsequent rises in fuel prices weighing on consumer confidence and business sentiment. As a result, economists expect economic activity to have slowed significantly in the current quarter. Despite these headwinds, markets continue to price an 80% probability of a 25 bps rate hike by the Reserve Bank of New Zealand in the next meeting on July 8, reflecting concerns that inflation risks may persist even as growth momentum moderates. NZDUSD last printed at 0.5738.

Kuwait

USD KWD closed last week at 0.30730.



This image released by Disney shows characters Buzz Lightyear, voiced by Tim Allen, left, and Woody, voiced by Tom Hanks, in a scene from 'Toy Story 5.' (AP)

'Toy Story 5' rakes in biggest box-office debut of the year with a franchise-best \$160 million

NEW YORK, June 22, (AP) — "Toy Story" still has a friend in moviegoers.

The fifth installment in the Pixar series debuted with \$160 million in domestic ticket sales, according to studio estimates Sunday, easily setting a new franchise record and notching the biggest opening weekend of the year.

Launching 31 years after the original "Toy Story" first landed in theaters, "Toy Story 5" far surpassed the previous series-best debut: \$120 million for "Toy Story 4" in 2019. Internationally, it was just as successful, with \$152 million in opening-weekend sales, for a worldwide haul of \$312 million.

The "Toy Story" franchise is one of the most profitable for The Walt Disney Co. Before "Toy Story 5" launched, the movies had collectively grossed more than \$3 billion, while also pulling in billions from merchandising.

Though the series seemed to reach a conclusion with 2010's "Toy Story 3," the decision to revive the franchise almost a decade later — while controversial — has been extremely lucrative. "Toy Story 4" exceeded \$1 billion in ticket sales, and "Toy Story 5" is all but certain to do as well.

Among animated films, only 2018's "Incredibles 2" had a bigger opening weekend (\$182.7 million) than "Toy Story 5."

Keeping the "Toy Story" movies going has gotten more expensive, though. The fifth movie cost \$250 mil-

lion to make, not including marketing. It returns a voice cast led by Tom Hanks (as Woody), Tim Allen (as Buzz Lightyear) and Joan Cusack (as Jessie).

In the sequel, the toys are pushed aside when Bonnie gets a new tablet. It's directed by Andrew Stanton, the Pixar veteran who helmed "Finding Nemo" (2003) and "WALL-E" (2008). "Toy Story 5" also features a new song by Taylor Swift, "I Knew It, I Knew You."

Reviews have been very good and audiences gave "Toy Story 5" an "A" CinemaScore, suggesting it should remain a force in theaters for weeks.

After its chart-topping debut, Steven Spielberg's "Disclosure Day" slipped to second place with \$17 million in its second weekend. That's not the hold that Universal Pictures was hoping for. Dropping 61% from its first weekend suggests "Disclosure Day" might not find the legs Spielberg's sci-fi thriller needs to break out this summer.

Still, the \$115 million budgeted movie, starring Emily Blunt, Josh O'Connor and Colman Domingo, has grossed \$160.4 million globally in two weeks. "Disclosure Day" stands a good chance of remaining the top adult-oriented option in theaters in the coming weeks.

"Toy Story 5" faced little competition from newcomers. A24's "The Death of Robin Hood," a violent revisionist

approach to the old legend, flopped with \$2.6 million on 1,762 screens. The film, starring Hugh Jackman and directed by Michael Sarnoski, was modestly budgeted at \$20 million. But after finding mixed reviews, audiences didn't go for the movie, either. It earned a "C+" CinemaScore.

Neon's "Leviticus" came out just ahead of "The Death of Robin Hood," with \$2.7 million from 1,076 theaters. Written and directed by Adrian Chiarella, the buzzy low-budget horror film is about two teen boys who meet at conversion therapy. It's a fine start for an indie with a small budget of \$3.5 million and good word-of-mouth. But "Leviticus" also faced unusually strong competition in the still-potent horror hits "Obsession" and "Backrooms."

The top horror choice remained "Obsession," the microbudget phenomenon by 26-year-old Curry Barker. In its sixth weekend, it nearly equaled its \$17 million opening weekend from mid-May. The Focus Features release, which cost less than \$1 million to make, added \$14.2 million to bring its domestic total to \$215.8 million and its global haul to \$333.3 million.

With "Toy Story 5" and "Obsession" driving sales, the summer box office is up 15% from the 2025 summer, according to Rentrak. More impressively, summer ticket sales are nearly equal to the 2019 summer at the same point, not accounting for inflation. The summer to date is just 1.9% down from that year.

Paul Dergarabedian, head of marketplace trends for Rentrak, expects that Hollywood is heading for its best summer since before the pandemic. And the success is coming from both expected and unexpected places.

"To me, this is a hybrid summer and this could be the new blueprint for how you build the perfect summer box-office beast," says Dergarabedian. "You throw in a mix of very eclectic films and not just the usual suspects — the big franchise films, the known brands — but also films like 'Backrooms' and 'Obsession' and original films like 'Disclosure Day.'"

With final domestic figures being released Monday, this list factors in the estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Rentrak:

1. "Toy Story 5," \$160 million.
2. "Disclosure Day," \$17 million.
3. "Obsession," \$14.2 million.
4. "Backrooms," \$7.3 million.
5. "Scary Movie," \$6.7 million.
6. "Masters of the Universe," \$5.6 million.
7. "Star Wars: The Mandalorian and Grogu," \$3.9 million.
8. "Leviticus," \$2.7 million.
9. "The Death of Robin Hood," \$2.6 million.
10. "Michael," \$2.2 million.

Variety

PARIS: A founder of global gaming company Ubisoft, maker of Assassin's Creed, was killed in a plane crash in western France, authorities said Saturday.



Guillemot

The twin-motor Cessna 421 carrying Claude Guillemot and a flight instructor crashed Friday evening near La Baule airport on the Atlantic coast, Mayor Franck Louvrier said in a statement. Both were licensed and experienced pilots. The instructor also was killed, the mayor said. An investigation is underway. Ubisoft confirmed Guillemot's death but did not comment further. (AP)

LOS ANGELES: Former child actor Daveigh Chase, known for her youthful voice in Disney's "Lilo & Stitch" and her villainous performance in the thriller "The Ring," has died. She was 35.

Chase's father, John David Schwallier, confirmed to The New York Times she died from complications of bacterial meningitis and a blood infection. She had been homeless in Los Angeles with her boyfriend near the hospital where she died, he told the newspaper. (AP)

Paul Simon, 'Airbender' lead week's streaming lineup

A Paul Simon concert special and Season 2 of the live-action "Avatar: The Last Airbender" are some of the new television, films, music and games headed to a device near you.

Also among the streaming offerings worth your time this week, as selected by The Associated Press' entertainment journalists: a new Larry David series celebrating American history, the horror film "Undertone" and the return of Star Fox.

Filmmaker Ian Tuason uses soundscapes to scare audiences in his debut feature "Undertone," a minimalist auditory horror about a paranormal podcaster that is streaming on HBO Max on June 26. In his review for The Associated Press, film writer Jake Coyle wrote that "it's a testament to Tuason's evident filmmaking talent that, with these bare bones, 'Undertone' swells into a gripping and unsettling experience. This is a movie that summons many of its scares with a sudden boost in audio levels, the thunderous tick of a clock or the scream of ... a tea kettle. It's even rated 'R' not for bloodcurdling violence or satanic ghouls but, simply, 'language.'"

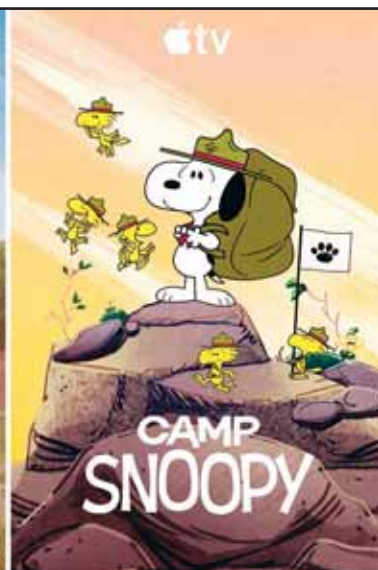
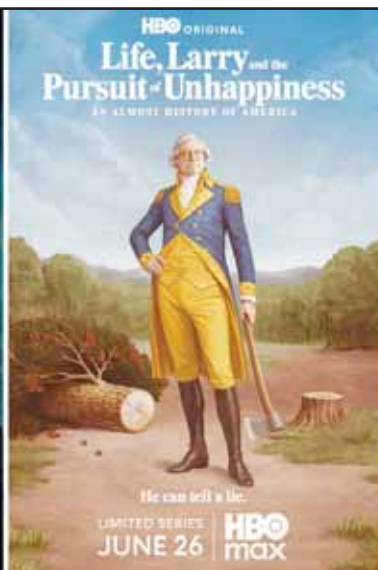
John Cena plays a buttoned-up real estate agent whose carefully curated life gets upended when his chaotic "little brother," played by Eric André, reappears in his life in the new Netflix comedy "Little Brother," streaming on June 26. Michelle Monaghan, Christopher Meloni and Caleb Hearon are all part of the big ensemble cast. Also arriving on Netflix, on Wednesday, June 24, is Julian Schnabel's "In the Hand of Dante," a divisive "literary gangster" movie

with Oscar Isaac, Gal Gadot and Al Pacino. Peacock also has a new Tyler Perry and Jason Blum-produced psychological thriller, "Strung," that will be streaming on Friday, June 26. Chloe Bailey plays a talented violinist who takes a job as a music tutor for a prestigious family in the Malcolm D. Lee-directed pic.

AP Film Writer Lindsey Bahr — It's not as good as catching Paul Simon on the singer-songwriter's "A Quiet Celebration Tour," but it is the next best thing. On Friday, fans can enjoy Simon's brand-new two-hour concert special, "Paul Simon: The Quiet Celebration Concert," stream-



This combination of images show promotional art for 'The Last Airbender,' from left, 'Life, Larry and the Pursuit of Unhappiness,' and 'Camp Snoopy.' (AP)



ing on Disney+ and Hulu. Expect deep cuts, new arrangements and timeless hits record live at McCaw Hall in Seattle. It's also a story of triumph — a legendary performer learning the stage again after beginning to experience hearing loss.

The globally popular English rock band Muse returns with "The Wow! Signal," a new full-length project named after "a powerful 72-second radio burst detected in 1977 originating from the constellation Sagittarius with a bandwidth and intensity that suggested a possible extraterrestrial source," according to a statement. It's a fitting source of inspiration for the space-y stadium rock band, and an appropri-

ate title for an album full of retro-futuristic synth songs ("Nightshift Superstar"), scientific vernacular ("Cryogen") and anthemic guitars ("Unraveling.")

The live-action "Avatar: The Last Airbender" debuts its second season Thursday, June 25 on Netflix. It's set in a world divided into four nations based on the four elements: earth, water, fire and air. A young Avatar named Aang is the only being who can manipulate each of those elements, giving him power that serves him in both everyday life and as protection. In Season 2, Aang is still learning to master his powers.

For most kids, school is out for the summer, and that includes Charlie Brown and the gang. The animated series "Camp Snoopy" returns for Season 2 on Friday, June 26, on Apple TV. It follows the adventures of Snoopy, a beagle scout (get it?), Charlie and their friends enjoying the summer at Camp Spring Lake.

Just in time to celebrate America's upcoming 250th birthday, Larry David stars in a new historical sketch comedy series called "Life, Larry and the Pursuit of Unhappiness." Debuting Friday, June 26, on HBO Max, David plays historical figures alongside guest stars including Jon Hamm, Kathryn Hahn, Vince Vaughn, Bill Hader, Jerry Seinfeld, J.B. Smoove and Isla Fisher. Like David's "Curb Your Enthusiasm," this show is largely improvised and features David's trademark pessimistic, observational humor. Barack and Michelle Obama's Higher Ground company produces the show.

Fox McCloud saved the day in "The Super Mario Galaxy Movie," but it's been a long time since the dashing fighter pilot headlined a game. Nintendo is taking advantage of his newfound celebrity with Star Fox, overhauling his 1997 Nintendo 64 adventure for the Switch 2. The high-flying aerial combat game bounces from planet to planet as players defend the LyLat System from an evil mastermind. You can team up with friends on missions, or engage in 4-vs.-4 battles online. Blast off Thursday, June 25.

AP Writer Alicia Rancilio — Lou Kesten

Salalah welcomes visitors as misty landscapes host festivals

Oman launches Khareef Dhofar season with expanded events



A herd of camels walking along a winding coastal road beside a turquoise ocean, waves crashing on rocky shore, green hills fading into misty clouds.



Aerial view of Salalah, Oman during Khareef Dhofar, with a coastal town surrounded by lush green mountains.

MUSCAT, June 22, (KUNA): The annual Khareef Dhofar 2026 season officially began in the Sultanate of Oman on Sunday. It will continue through September 21, featuring 125 cultural, artistic, sports, and entertainment events across multiple venues to enhance the tourism experience and attract more visitors.

The southern governorate of Dhofar, located on the Arabian Sea about 1,000 kilometers from Muscat, relies on its unique seasonal climate and scenic landscapes to boost tourism and commercial activity.

During the khareef season, lush greenery covers the region, mist blankets its mountains and drizzle creates a temperate atmosphere, particularly in Salalah.

Dhofar boasts a diverse range of tourism assets, including mountain, agricultural, coastal and desert environments, in addition to archaeological and historical sites, beaches, lagoons, nature reserves, springs and waterfalls that serve as major attractions during the season.

To showcase the 2026 season's activities and programs, Dhofar Municipality held a press conference highlighting efforts to strengthen the governorate's position as a global tourism destination and attract more domestic and international visitors after the number of tourists exceeded one million during last year's season.

The municipality said it had prepared a comprehensive program covering sports, culture, arts, entertainment and heritage, including regional and international events as well as heritage activities reflecting Omani traditions and targeting visitors of all age groups.

It added that this year's season will focus on giving each tourism site a unique cultural and entertainment identity inspired by its natural characteristics, helping diversify visitors' experiences across event locations.

Major venues include Atin Square, featuring international performances and cultural activities, the modern waterfront area in Sahal Atin, the Health Garden at Salalah Public Park, Al-Murooj Theatre and Awqad Public Park.

Other attractions include the Osara project at Raysut Beach, Nova Enter-



Tourists explore a lush river valley by boat during the Khareef season in Oman.

tainment Village and the Samharam Heritage Village, offering family-oriented activities, restaurants, cafes, shopping outlets and recreational facilities.

Special programs for children will include the "Children's Time" zone at Awqad Public Park, designed as an educational and entertainment city where children can explore different professions through practical activities.

The "Children's University" initiative will also offer interactive educational programs aimed at developing skills and creativity.

The cultural and artistic agenda includes musical, singing and choral per-

formances, featuring heritage symphonies and choir groups from Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Egypt, in addition to international artistic shows and stand-up comedy performances by Arab entertainers.

Sporting events will feature the Dhofar Marathon, drag racing competitions, the Salalah Cycling Tour and several races across the governorate, alongside a traditional weapons shooting championship at Samharam Village.

Among the major international events scheduled are the second edition of the Dhofar International Theatre Festival from September 14 to 22, bringing together theatre artists and creatives from around the world, and the inaugural Dhofar International Sculpture Festival, which will host sculptors from various countries to create works inspired by Omani culture and the identity of Dhofar.

Official data from Oman's National Centre for Statistics and Information showed that visitor spending during last year's season reached OMR 125 million (USD 325 million), up 3.3 percent compared with the 2024 season.

Dhofar's traditional products, including Omani frankincense, incense, silverware, pottery and Omani sweets, continue to attract strong demand. Salalah's fertile plains are also known for producing tropical fruits such as coconuts, bananas, papayas and sugarcane.

Tourism authorities expect visitor numbers to rise further this year, supported by direct flights to Salalah operated by several regional airlines, including Kuwait Airways and Jazeera Airways.

According to official figures, more than 1.07 million visitors and tourists visited Dhofar during last year's khareef season, marking a 2.1 percent increase compared with 2024.

Oman continues to pursue the goals of Oman Vision 2040, which aims to increase tourism's contribution to gross domestic product to five percent, up from the current level of around three percent, amid continued growth indicators for the sector.



Bustling coastal corniche in Oman during Khareef Dhofar, with palm-lined streets, lively traffic, and waves crashing along a vibrant beachfront boulevard.

Fashion

Milan show goes all in on leather looks

Prada turns street style into luxury uniform



MILAN, June 22, (AP): Miuccia Prada and Raf Simons reimagine jeans-inspired basics in leather and technical fabrics for the latest Prada collection unveiled Sunday during Milan

Fashion Week, saying they wanted menswear looks for people on the street, not just fashion insiders.

The new Prada uniform for next spring and summer: slim, cropped jackets and five-pocket trousers, pulled together with timeless blazers or leather blouses.

"Sometimes you just realize you need a good pasta pomodoro," Simons said before the show, referring to the Italian mealtime staple.

While the collection was inspired by jeans, Prada acknowledged she had never worn a pair in her life, while Simons said he had only recently returned to the everyday classic after two decades of wearing wool trousers year-round.

So against all odds, five-pocket trousers paired with flat-pocket jackets became the new Prada uniform, both slim and cropped.

Most looks were realized in luxurious, buttery leather in monochromes of antique white, gray, burgundy or turquoise that hit the runway to rock guitar



Prada said the goal was a collection of pieces that were universal and to avoid "useless design," which she added was "a lot of what's around" on other runways.

Simons said the designers wanted to reconnect fashion with the way people actually dress, noting that some of fashion's strongest ideas historically came "from the street" rather than being dictated by luxury brands and runways.

"It's a clear silhouette, vertical, simple, sharp, proud. A lot of white, peaceful, hopeful, and cleansing," Simons said.

"We think this collection is breaking the perception of what is perceived as typical luxury in high fashion."

In the spirit of simplicity, the collection was presented in a bare showroom with transparent bench seating.

Everyone had a front-row view, with the VIP section hosting NBA superstar Anthony Edwards, South African-Australian singer and actor Troye Sivan, K-pop boy group ENHYPEN and British actor Louis Partridge.

Crowds of excited fans withstood the early summer heatwave to greet their favorite celebrities.

Models wear creations from Prada's Spring/Summer 2027 men's collection presented in Milan, Italy, Sunday, June 21, 2026. (AP)

actual denim.

A smattering of cropped shirts and knitwear vests featured geo-

metric patterns that were pulled together with clashing silk scarves tied around the midriff. The only

bags were colorful pouches worn at the waist, sometimes attached to thick belts. A pointy shoe with multiple Velcro straps finished the looks.

Outbreak infects 75 medics since May, says WHO

Confirmed Ebola cases in Congo outbreak top 1,000 with 254 deaths: authorities

BUNIA, Congo, June 22, (Agencies): Confirmed cases in the Ebola outbreak in eastern Congo have reached 1,003, including 254 deaths, officials said, as tracing those who had been in contact with patients remains a major challenge.

A total of 100 people have recovered in the outbreak concentrated in the Ituri province since it was declared on May 15, Congo's Ministry of Health said Sunday. At least 365 patients are in hospitals or in isolation, it said.

The Ebola outbreak caused by the rare Bundibugyo virus, which has no vaccines or treatment, was the worst ever in its first month. Officials admit there could be far more cases they still don't know about and that the peak of the outbreak is still ahead.

Contact tracing remains a key issue for local authorities, who have only achieved a 55% coverage rate, the ministry said.

"If you want to control an outbreak, especially Ebola outbreak, you must know the index case. We don't have confidence on when this outbreak started," the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director-General Dr. Jean Kaseya told The Associated Press last week.

Officials also are yet to identify the patient zero and trace more than 35,000 people who have come in contact with infected individuals as of last week, authorities said.

That's partly because eastern Congo is also battling ongoing violence from rebels. In Ituri, attacks by the Islamic State group-backed Allied Democratic Force have cut off access to many villages and forced people to flee their homes, including those sheltering in overcrowded camps and others constantly on the move.

More than a month into the outbreak, officials believe the disease continues to outpace response efforts and no one knows its true scale.

At the Kigonze displacement camp in Bunia, the capital of Ituri province, camp officials said Friday that 10 people had died last week in unusual circumstances, raising the fear of a possible outbreak in the camp of over 20,000 displaced people.



Red Cross workers prepare to bury Vanisa Anifa, a 6-month-old orphaned girl who died of Ebola, at the Bigo Cemetery, in Bunia, Congo on June 19. (AP)

There had been no Ebola case confirmed at the site, camp officials said, but added that the death rate was unprecedented and called for investigation.

The U.N. refugee agency has said at least 2 million people forcibly displaced from their homes, including over 320,000 refugees, live in areas at risk of Ebola in Congo.

In a statement on Friday, the agency said it was "deeply concerned by the accelerating spread" of the virus and "the growing risks it poses to displaced

communities across the region."

"If a disease or epidemic were to spread among the thousands of people living at this (Kigonze) site, it would be a real catastrophe given our already very precarious living conditions," said Charité Banza, a civil society leader in Ituri.

Meanwhile, a senior official from the World Health Organization (WHO) said on Friday that healthcare workers were among the first people infected when the current Ebola outbreak began in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

Speaking via video link from eastern DRC, WHO Emergency Director Marie Roseline Belizaire told a press conference that 75 healthcare workers had contracted Ebola since the outbreak was officially declared on May 15, and 17 of them had died.

"It is a really high price that the system, the healthcare system, is paying, because we don't have enough of healthcare workers in DRC," Belizaire said.

Responding to questions from journalists, she explained that about 90 percent of Ebola patients did not initially show hemorrhagic symptoms. As a result, many people remained at home self-medicating or sought treatment from traditional healers. She also noted that the body of a person who has died from Ebola is more infectious than when the person was alive.

Belizaire emphasized that while the Ebola outbreak remains a major concern, other diseases, particularly malaria, continue to pose serious health challenges and should not be overlooked. She added that China has deployed a medical team to support response efforts, while Uganda is preparing to send one as well.

The WHO official warned that the situation remains serious and continues to evolve. New cases are still being reported across multiple areas, highlighting the need to maintain and accelerate response measures. To date, the DRC has recorded 896 confirmed Ebola cases and 232 deaths across 33 health zones in three provinces.

Health officials focus efforts on mitigating inevitable spread

Utah marks year of battling measles, with no clear end in sight

WASHINGTON, June 22, (AP): Utah has spent the past year fighting measles outbreaks - a grim milestone that could affect whether the United States can keep its measles-free designation.

More than 680 people have gotten sick since the state's first outbreak began on June 20, 2025.

Unlike measles outbreaks in Texas, South Carolina and Arizona, the spread in Utah has been tough to contain to one region - infecting under-vaccinated communities in nearly every county.

Measles popped up in healthcare settings, big-box stores and restaurants, and youth sporting events. In February, an exposure at a state high school wrestling championship sparked at least 46 cases among attendees.

Measles is one of the most contagious diseases known to medicine. It causes a tell-tale rash, high fevers, strong cough, ear infections and diarrhea.

While most recover, some - including young babies, pregnant people and those with weak immune systems - are at higher risk of developing dangerous complications like pneumonia, brain swelling, blindness or even dy-

ing. Even healthy people can develop issues years down the road, including a rare but fatal degenerative brain disease that manifests about a decade after infection.

The measles vaccine is safe and 97% protective after two doses.

Though Utah's spread has slowed in recent weeks, state epidemiologist Leisha Nolen sees little opportunity to rest. She's worried the start of school and arrival of colder weather in the fall will cause measles to surge again.

"It's still here, it's still transmitting," she said. "We just need those few cases to hit the wrong community and it could flare up really big again."

The worst spread has been in the southwestern part of the state, where 265 people have fallen ill with the vaccine-preventable disease since last summer. Overall, measles infections hit 22 of the state's 29 counties.

In the state's rural northeast, the conditions were also ripe for measles to spread. Daggett, Duchesne and Uintah counties - collectively dubbed the "tricity" health region - has seen the second-largest decline in childhood vaccination rates in the state.

More than 16% of the region's

kindergarteners were missing their measles vaccines in the last school year, according to state data. State-wide, 12.8% were missing their vaccine, putting the state far short of the 95% vaccination rate needed to prevent measles outbreaks.

The TriCounty Health Department logged 74 cases of measles this spring, after people who got sick at the youth wrestling tournament spread the virus in school and later within their households.

The frontier region had seen a rise in vaccine hesitancy for some time, said Sydnee Lyons, the health department's public information officer.

Despite the large number of cases, local and state health officials consider TriCounty's measles response a success.

Health officials focused efforts on mitigating the inevitable spread. Unvaccinated students were excluded from in-person school and people who were sick were told to isolate themselves. And their appeal to care for one's neighbors led to more people coming in to get vaccinated, officials said.

TriCounty's infectious disease specialist Cyndie Mattinson recalled

a parent who told a school nurse she didn't want to talk to the health department because "she was worried that we would be angry with her and be judgmental because her children were unvaccinated."

The nurse vouched for the health department staff, and told the mom to let her know if she felt judged. Mattinson ultimately had a great conversation with the mother.

"The perceptions were changed that we weren't out there to police, we were there to be a help and a resource to the community," Mattinson said.

Utah's lengthy battle with measles will likely affect whether the U.S. can keep its measles-free designation. Public health officials consider measles to be eliminated from a country when it shows it stopped continuous spread within local communities for at least a year.

The national measles case count was 2,104 as of June 18, nearly surpassing last year's record total.

Utah has fought measles for a year, but it's not clear if the earliest clusters are connected with the major outbreak on the Utah-Arizona state line, which was detected in August, Nolen said.



Lauren Ellenburg, a nurse, prepares a combination measles, mumps and rubella vaccine for a patient at Tiger Pediatrics in Easley, SC on March 17. (AP)

Some anglers praise forward-facing sonar, others say hi-tech fishing ruins day at lake

BISMARCK, ND, June 22, (AP): Ah, the serenity of fishing.

Just an angler, a fishing pole and maybe thousands of dollars worth of sonar equipment offering an exact image of what that walleye or bass is doing in the watery depths below.

It's called forward-facing sonar, and the hot-selling products are not only helping anglers increase their catch, they are raising questions about why people go fishing in the first place and whether fish populations can survive the new technology.

"You've got people that are concerned about what's going to happen to the sport of fishing," said Gary Korsgaden, who has written about the sport for decades.

Fish-finding sonar is typically mounted on the bow or back of a boat, sending out sound frequencies that are converted into a picture on a screen based on the time it takes the pings to hit the bottom and return. Earlier products would show where fish were located, but advancements now enable anglers to see images of fish in real time.

"With forward-facing sonar, you can attach it to a trolling motor and you can look around the water under you and you could find exactly, pinpoint where that fish exactly is at any given time," said Dave Dunn, a sales executive at Garmin, a company that manufactures the equipment.

Dunn notes the equipment, which costs about \$2,500 for a full setup, enables anglers to even see their lures and cast directly to fish. It does have a learning curve.

For Minnesota angler Terry Rehm, the new technology is invaluable. Rehm said he doesn't get a lot of lake time due to his work and kids' schedules and forward-facing sonar ensures he makes good use of his time plying the waters.

"It's just nice to be able to hone in on them a little quicker and find them quicker and catch more fish when I'm out here," he said.

Tens of millions of people fish recreationally each year, making it one of the nation's top activities.

But people fish for different reasons and those who care most about the tranquility and beauty of being on a lake can find it puzzling that other anglers eagerly hunch over their screens, watching as fish swim by below.

Still, the use of the technology is growing dramatically, with surveys

in Minnesota finding about 30% of anglers now use forward-facing sonar. Surveys of anglers on several Minnesota lakes found the user rate as high as 63% on one lake last fall, Walleye Alliance spokesperson Nate Blasing said.

Much of the debate around forward-facing sonar plays out on social media, but also podcasts, online fishing forums, trade shows and tournaments.

"It's much like politics now. It tends to get personal. You can agree to disagree," Blasing said.

Criticisms and reactions go back and forth on social media, said Korsgaden, the fishing writer. He said tournament anglers have banned him from their Facebook pages for even raising the topic.

"I think the unfortunate reality is fishing has gotten to be more about, shall we say, success or numbers or quantity, that type of thing, instead of the actual enjoyment of the engagement and making decisions on your own," Korsgaden said.

Even as anglers say the equipment helps ensure they will actually catch

fish, some studies indicate it hasn't led to overfishing.

Wisconsin researchers conducted a controlled experiment last year with two teams of anglers fishing for smallmouth bass, one with forward-facing sonar, the other without. Halfway through the summer, the teams switched.

The team without the technology had higher catch rates, though the team using it caught slightly longer fish, said Greg Sass, fisheries research team leader with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' Office of Applied Science. The sonar users searched more for fish before even fishing, while the other team spent more time actively fishing.

Sass said he is reluctant to apply the study to all fish species and water bodies, but the findings "would be counterintuitive to what I'm hearing in the bait shops or from other people that are on both sides of the fence with technology," he said. More studies are ahead, including for the muskie, a prized predator fish.



Terry Rehm points out a fish on his forward looking sonar system on May 23, in Nowthen, Minn. (AP)



Adelie penguins stand on a block of floating ice at Yalour Islands in Antarctica on Nov 24, 2025. (AP)

Antarctica offers 30-50 year window to plan for sea level rise, says study

MELBOURNE, June 22, (Xinhua): Scientists have identified the next three to five decades as a critical window for anticipating and preparing for Antarctic ice loss and its contribution to rising seas, new research reveals.

The study, under Australia's Securing Antarctica's Environmental Future (SAEF) program, examined how reliably Antarctic ice loss can be projected over the coming de-

cadecades and what this means for sea level rise projections, according to a statement from Monash University released on Thursday.

Published in Nature, the research showed that if ice sheet models accurately reproduce current rates of Antarctic ice loss, they can be used to reliably project the continent's contribution to sea level rise over the next 30 to 50 years.

However, the study found that

predictability declines later in the century as processes such as rapid ice sheet retreat become more likely.

"Accurately predicting how much and how fast global sea levels will rise offers vital information for future coastal planning and government policy," said Monash University researcher Felicity McCormack from SAEF, who led the study.

Health

Dengue cases surge in Bangladesh: Bangladesh reported 220 new dengue cases and two new deaths on Sunday, taking the tally to 4,900 and the death toll to nine so far this year.

According to data released on Sunday by the Directorate General of Health Services, 1,703 dengue cases were recorded so far in June, after 714 in May.

The fresh infection tally indicates the fast-rising trend of the mosquito-borne disease in parts of the country this month.

The June-September monsoon period is the season of dengue fever in Bangladesh, which is considered a high-risk nation prone to mosquito-borne diseases.

Bangladesh recorded 102,861 dengue cases and 413 deaths in 2025. The South Asian nation logged 1,705 dengue-related deaths in 2023, marking the

highest annual death toll. (Xinhua)

India ammonia gas leak kills 7: At least seven people were killed and 67 others hospitalized Sunday following an ammonia gas leak at a seafood unit in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu, officials said.

According to officials, the ammonia leak originated from the seafood processing unit and spread across the premises. Workers present at the facility complained of breathing difficulties, while some suffered bleeding from the mouth and nose.

Although the affected workers were rushed to nearby private hospitals for treatment, seven of them, all women, succumbed.

Personnel from the police, disaster management, fire and emergency services, and health were immediately rushed to the spot to carry out rescue operations. (Xinhua)

Toyota extends manufacturers' championship lead to 127 points

GAZOO RACING defends home turf with 1-2-3-4 Rally Japan win

TOKYO, June 22: GAZOO Racing World Rally Team (GR-WRT) secured a landslide 1-2-3-4 finish at Rally Japan, with Elfyn Evans and co-driver Scott Martin taking victory in the No. 33 Toyota GR YARIS Rally1. They were joined by teammates Sébastien Ogier and Vincent Landais (No. 1) in second, Sami Pajari and Marko Salminen (No. 5) in third, as well as Takamoto Katsuta and Aaron Johnston (No. 18) in fourth to complete a total podium sweep at Toyota's iconic home event.

The result marks the fourth victory for the Toyota GR YARIS Rally1 in five editions of Rally Japan held in Toyota City and comes in what is expected to be the final appearance of the current Rally1 regulations on Japanese roads before new regulations are introduced in 2027.

Akio Toyoda, GR-WRT Chairman, commented: "Elfyn, Scott, congratulations on your third Rally Japan victory! You were incredibly fast on the autumn roads we drove on until last year, and you were just as fast on the fresh green roads this time. You were also the fastest when we drove here together after Rally Japan a few years ago. And you are the only driver who has won so



A Toyota GR Yaris rally car in action during the FIA World Rally Championship in Japan, with fans and photographers lining a traditional roadside stage.

many times right in front of my eyes. I think that means you and me make a great combination as well. Thanks also to Seb and Vincent and to Sami and Marko, the team secured a fantastic podium sweep.

Toyoda added: "In previous years, Rally Japan marked the end of the season and a chance to catch our breath. But things are different now. We are only at the halfway point of the season, and from here on, the calendar is filled with demanding gravel rallies. To everyone on the



Elfyn Evans and Scott Martin celebrate taking the lead alongside officials after securing a Toyota GAZOO Racing podium sweep.

team, thank you for your hard work so far — and please keep pushing. We still have a long and challenging gravel road ahead!"

Held on the twisting, forest-covered roads of the Aichi and Gifu prefectures, Rally Japan took place in warmer temperatures than previous editions following its move from November to late May, with temperatures exceeding 30 degrees Celsius. The narrow mountain roads presented a different challenge for crews, cars, and tyres throughout the event.

Evans and Martin excelled once again, particularly on the event's

iconic Isegami's Tunnel stage, where they made the most of their position at the front of the road order to build an early lead. Pursued by teammates over the following days, they went on to secure victory and claim Evans' third Rally Japan win in four years, his 13th career WRC victory, and his 50th WRC podium finish.

Ogier and Landais, winners of Rally Japan in 2025, secured second place overall, finishing 12.8 seconds behind the winning crew. Pajari and Salminen scored their fifth podium finish in the last six rallies and their sixth top-three finish since securing



A car in action at the FIA World Rally Championship in Japan.

their first podium at Rally Japan just six months earlier.

Competing on home roads, Katsuta and Johnston recovered well after an early setback to finish fourth overall. The duo also claimed a stage victory on the final day and secured second place in both the Power Stage and Super Sunday classifications.

With its Power Stage victory at Rally Japan in 2025, the Toyota GR YARIS Rally1 has now achieved 50 consecutive stage wins on asphalt across the last three WRC rallies held on the surface. Toyota has also extended its manufacturers' championship

lead to 127 points.

Evans now leads the drivers' championship by 20 points, while GR-WRT crews occupy the remaining four of the top five positions in the standings, with Katsuta in second, Solberg in third, Pajari in fourth, and Ogier in fifth.

Toyota's motorsports history dates back over 60 years. Reflecting the concept that 'Roads build people and cars,' Toyota has competed in a wide range of motorsport disciplines worldwide. Its major successes, achieved under the most extreme conditions, together with the hard-won knowledge and technical insights they have yielded, continue to serve as the foundation for building 'ever-better' cars. GAZOO Racing competes in top-level motorsport categories such as the FIA World Rally Championship, as well as in customer motorsport activities using production vehicles.

Round eight of the 2026 FIA WRC is Acropolis Rally Greece (June 25-28), held on rocky mountain roads and in high summer temperatures. The rally's legendary reputation and demanding conditions combine to create a tough challenge for vehicles, tyres, and drivers alike.



Talal Al-Yaqout celebrates silver medal at Arab Athletics Championships in Egypt.

Medal tally has risen to six

Kuwait continues strong form at Arab Athletics Champ'ships

CAIRO, June 22, (KUNA): Kuwait's athletics team delivered a strong performance at the Arab Athletics Championships for Under-16 and Under-23 categories, held in Egypt at the Suez Canal Authority Stadium in Ismailia, featuring 14 Arab nations. The Kuwaiti tally rose to six medals after adding four silver and one bronze medal.

According to Farouq Al-Shaer, member of the Kuwait Athletics Federation board and head of its media committee, Fahad Al-Dhafiri secured silver in the Under-16 long jump with a personal best of 6.40m.

Talal Al-Yaqout added silver in the Under-16 100m hurdles, clocking

13.95 seconds, while Hussein Al-Tamimi claimed silver in the Under-23 shot put with a distance of 16.98m.

In the Under-23 100m hurdles, Jassim Al-Janaei earned silver with a time of 14.08 seconds, and Abdullah Al-Munais took bronze in the same event, finishing in 14.16 seconds.

Earlier in the competition on Saturday, Mohammed Nasser won gold in the pole vault, setting a new personal best of 3.70m.

The championships continue in Ismailia through June 24, featuring the third Arab Under-23 edition and the inaugural Under-16 competition with wide participation from Arab nations.

Vondrousova handed 4-year ban after doping test refusal

LONDON, June 22, (AP): Former Wimbledon champion Marketa Vondrousova was suspended for four years on Monday for refusing an anti-doping test.

The Czech cited "mental stress" and fear when the testing agent "rang my door late at night without properly identifying themselves."

The International Tennis Integrity Agency made the announcement, saying Vondrousova refused a test in December and the maximum four-

year ban for a routine first offense was reached by an independent tribunal following a hearing this month.

Vondrousova became Wimbledon's first unseeded female champion when she beat Ons Jabeur in the 2023 final. She reached a career-high ranking of No. 6 that year. She also reached the French Open final in 2019, losing to Ash Barty.

The 26-year-old Vondrousova detailed her reaction to the missed test in an Instagram post in April.

Al-Tadamon avoids drop

Al-Nasr & Al-Shabab face final-day battle

By Hassan Mosa
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 22: Al-Tadamon secured its place in next season's Premier League after earning a 1-1 draw against Al-Nasr in the second round of the relegation group at Al-Sadaqa and Al-Salam Stadium.

The Farwaniya club moved to 22 points at the top of the standings, while Al-Nasr reached 20 points in second place.

In the other match of the round, Al-Shabab suffered a surprise 2-1 defeat to Al-Jahra at Thamer Stadium. Despite the victory, Al-Jahra's relegation to the First Division had



An intense close-up as Al-Tadamon and Al-Nasr players fight for the ball.

already been confirmed, while Al-Shabab remained on 18 points in third place.

With only one round remaining, the battle to avoid relegation is now between Al-Nasr and Al-Shabab.

The final round, scheduled for next Friday, will see Al-Tadamon take on Al-Shabab, while Al-Nasr faces Al-Jahra.

Al-Shabab must defeat Al-Tadamon and hope Al-Nasr loses to Al-Jahra to secure survival. Al-Nasr, meanwhile, needs just a single point to guarantee its place in the Premier League next season.

Al-Tadamon goalkeeper Abdulrahman Ajaj expressed his delight after the team secured safety, praising the players and coaching staff for their efforts throughout the campaign.

Commenting on reports linking him with a move to Al-Arabi, Ajaj said the club's supporters deserve nothing less than his best and that he hopes to help achieve their ambitions in the future.

Talks focus on boosting handball development

Kuwait aims to expand cooperation with the Asian Handball Federation

KUWAIT CITY, June 22, (KUNA): Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports Dr. Tareq Al-Jalahma held talks on Monday with President Bader Dhiyab on prospects for enhancing cooperation and strengthening partnership in areas of mutual sporting interest.

The discussions focused on supporting the development of handball at both the national and continental levels.

Al-Jalahma told KUNA that the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs and Sports, along with the Public Authority for Sport, is keen to deepen cooperation with the Asian Handball Federation and benefit from its expertise and development programmes.

He emphasized the importance of coordinated efforts to nurture sporting talent and provide an environment that enables athletes to succeed and elevate Kuwait's presence in regional and international competi-

tions.

The meeting reviewed several future initiatives aimed at advancing the handball system, including opportunities for Kuwait to host continental championships and expand training and qualification programmes for coaches, administrators, and referees in line with modern standards of the sport.

Al-Jalahma added that Kuwait has the infrastructure and capabilities required to host major Asian sporting events, noting that upcoming efforts will focus on broadening cooperation with the Asian Handball Federation to develop the sport, refine national talent, and strengthen Kuwait's position on the Asian sporting map.

For his part, Dhiyab praised Kuwait's continued support for sport and commended its efforts in developing sports infrastructure and encouraging youth participation.

He affirmed that cooperation and



Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports Dr. Tareq Al-Jalahma holds talks with Asian Handball Federation President Bader Dhiyab on prospects for cooperation.

coordination will continue in the next phase to further develop Asian

handball and enhance the sport's standing across the region.

Yamashita takes LPGA event in playoff

Clark delivers clutch finish to seal 2nd US Open title

SOUTHAMPTON, N.Y., June 22, (AP): On the edge of the greatest collapse in U.S. Open history, Wyndham Clark held his nerve against a charge by Sam Burns and a Shinnecock Hills gallery that never gave him much love Sunday until he captured his second Open title in four years.

Six shots ahead at the start of the final round, Clark's final act was two putts from just outside 50 feet for par that gave him a 3-over 73 and a one-shot victory over Burns.

Clark, who won the 2023 U.S. Open at Los Angeles Country Club, became the first wire-to-wire winner of the U.S. Open since Martin Kaymer at Pinehurst No. 2 in 2014.

This sure didn't feel like that. His lead was down to a single shot after just five holes, and the stress followed him the rest of the way. The gallery rooted against him all day,



Wyndham Clark holds the trophy after winning the U.S. Open golf tournament at Shinnecock Hills Golf Club in Southampton, N.Y. (AP)

putting all their support behind Scottie Scheffler and his bid for the career Grand Slam. Scheffler had his

own share of mistakes and never got closer than three shots all day.

Clark finished at 4-under 276.



Miyu Yamashita, of Japan, hits onto the 18th green during the final round of the Meijer LPGA Classic golf tournament in Belmont, Mich. (AP)

Burns closed with a 67, his second chance in as many years to win the U.S. Open.

Scheffler, in his first try to get the only major he hasn't won, was three shots back when he rammed a 30-foot birdie putt some 6 feet on the 14th and three-putted for bogey and a 71.

Miyu Yamashita got into a playoff Sunday in the Meijer LPGA Classic when Lottie Woad's 3-foot par try lipped out to close regulation, then won with a 3-footer of her own on the first extra hole.

Five strokes behind third-round leader Jing Yan and four back of Woad going into the day, the 4-foot-11 Yamashita shot an 8-under 64 to get to 17-under 271 at Blythefield Country Club. The 24-year-old Japanese player birdied the par-5 18th in regulation and the playoff.

Woad had a 68, holing out from a bunker for birdie on the 17th before running into trouble on the 467-yard 18th. In the playoff, both players were in front of the green in two. Yamashita played first, hitting a flop shot to 3 feet. Woad then hit her pitch 10 feet past and missed the comebacker.

Yamashita won for the third time

on the LPGA Tour. Last year, she won the Maybank Championship and major Women's British Open and was the LPGA rookie of the year.

The major KPMG Women's PGA Championship begins Thursday at Hazeltine in Minnesota.

Lauren Olivares won the Epsom Tour's Great Lakes Championship at the Highlands for her first professional victory, beating Kaleiya Romero to a birdie on the first hole of a playoff. They each shot 66 to finish at 12 under. ... Thailand's Aunchisa Utama birdied the first hole of a playoff with Norway's Dorteia Forbrigg to win the Dutch Ladies Open on the Ladies European Tour.

American John Catlin outlasted Norway's Kristian Krogh Johannesen with a birdie on the seventh hole of a playoff in the Challenge Tour's English Open.



Saudi Arabia gets World Cup wake-up call against Spain

Big loss was not fatal blow for Saudis

ATLANTA, June 22, (AP): Sitting on the bench, Saudi Arabia striker Saleh Al-Shehri could only put his head in his hands as Spain extended its lead to 4-0 early into the second half at the World Cup.

Saudi Arabia had always been a heavy underdog against the European champion. But still there was hope for an upset. After all, in 2022, Saudi Arabia had famously defeated Argentina in the World Cup. And, just six days ago, in this very stadium, World Cup debutant Cape Verde had frustrated Spain, holding them to a 0-0 draw.

Sunday was different, though, as Spain dominated from the start, recording 22 shots to Saudi Arabia's three.

The 4-0 loss was not a fatal blow for the Green Falcons. A win against Cape Verde on Friday would still give Saudi Arabia a chance to advance out of the group stage.

But the defeat was a demoralizing blow for a country that has poured billions into the sport as it tries to bring more legitimacy to its domestic league and bolster the national team ahead of Saudi Arabia hosting the 2034 World Cup.

Saudi Arabia's team is almost entirely composed of players who compete in the Saudi Pro League, where they play with and against aging superstars like Cristiano Ronaldo, Karim Benzema and Sadio Mané.

Though Saudi Arabia has started to pull back from such spending on international stars, Green Falcons coach Georgios Donis said their presence had raised the standard of the Saudi league and helped local players develop, though he acknowledged that translating those gains to the international stage remains a challenge.

"The more competitive the competition, the better our players will be," he said.

Despite those investments, native Saudi players have sometimes struggled to get significant minutes on the field. Starting goalkeeper Mohammed Al-Owais, for instance, joined a club in the Saudi second tier last year to secure more playing time.

The national team has also had three coaches in the last two years, with Donis appointed less than two months before Saudi Arabia kicked off their World Cup campaign.

The tournament had opened more promisingly last week for Saudi Arabia thanks to a 1-1 draw with Uruguay in which they held the lead until the 80th minute. On Sunday, in Atlanta, though, they never looked threatening and were down 3-0 within the first 25 minutes. Donis called Sunday a "bad result" against "one of the best teams."

Spain coach Luis de la Fuente said the Saudi players had demonstrated some good link-up play but that they had run into a "very powerful" Spanish side.

Looking ahead to Cape Verde, Donis said he was confident his team would rediscover their potential.



Spain's Alex Baena, left, and Saudi Arabia's Musab Aljuwayr battle for the ball during the World Cup Group H soccer match in Atlanta. (AP)

Fan Zone



Fans celebrate a 3-1 win for Egypt after the World Cup Group G soccer match between New Zealand and Egypt in Vancouver, British Columbia. (AP)



A Saudi Arabia supporter gives the thumb-up sign prior to the World Cup Group H soccer match between Spain and Saudi Arabia in Atlanta, Sunday, June 21, 2026. (AP)



Fans react ahead of the World Cup Group H soccer match between Uruguay and Cape Verde in Miami Gardens, Fla. (AP)



New Zealand fans march to BC Place prior to a World Cup Group G soccer match against Egypt in Vancouver, British Columbia. (AP)

Ivory Coast looks to put loss in rearview mirror

Germany defender Schlotterbeck out for rest of World Cup with ankle injury

WINSTON-SALEM, North Carolina, June 22, (AP): Germany defender Nico Schlotterbeck has been ruled out of the rest of the World Cup and beyond with a left ankle injury sustained during Saturday's 2-1 win over Ivory Coast.

Tests on Sunday back at the team camp in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, revealed Schlotterbeck, who had started both of Germany's opening games in the tournament, sustained an injury to the medial ligament in his ankle and will be out for several months, the German soccer federation said Monday.

"We will sorely miss Schlotti on the field as an outstanding defender, especially also his brilliant ability to build up play from the back," Germany coach Julian Nagelsmann said. "It could have been his World Cup. We all tried to lift his spirits yesterday. Luckily, he's a very positive person who's already looking ahead."

Schlotterbeck, who plays for Borussia Dortmund in the Bundesliga, was to stay with the Germany squad for the rest of the World Cup.

"It's a great sign that he's staying with the squad for now, as he has an impact off the field as well," Nagelsmann said. "Despite his ab-



Germany's Nico Schlotterbeck celebrates after scoring his side's second goal during the World Cup Group E soccer match between Germany and Curacao in Houston. (AP)

sence, we're still very well-equipped at center-back for the World Cup with Jonathan Tah, Antonio Rüdiger, Waldemar Anton, and Malick Thiaw."

Germany's win over Ivory Coast put the four-time champion into the knockout stage with a group game to spare. Germany is already assured of top spot in Group E before its final

group game against Ecuador in East Rutherford, New Jersey, on Thursday.

If Ivory Coast wins its next match, Saturday's loss won't matter.

After surrendering two second-half goals to Germany and missing the chance to clinch a knockout stage berth for the first time in its four World Cup appearances, Ivory Coast turns its attention to its last

group stage match against Curacao on Thursday.

Win, and the Elephants are in. Forward Amad Diallo said he and his teammates will get over the Germany loss. They have to.

"We (have) respect for ourselves, but we want to make history for Côte d'Ivoire, and we (are) going to go there with good mentality and try to live again," he said.

Ivory Coast seemed one step ahead of Germany throughout the first half Saturday and a chunk of the second, with midfielder Franck Kessié's first-half goal silencing German fans for a long stretch.

But the German side of the sold-out crowd erupted when Deniz Undav scored the winning goal, his second of the match, leaving Ivory Coast fans hanging their heads.

The team seemed a little shocked as well, and players spoke about the pain of losing a match they felt they should have won.

Still, the good news for Ivory Coast is that its next opponent, Curacao, is No. 83 in FIFA's international team rankings, well down the list from the 31st-ranked Ivory Coast. The Caribbean nation also lost its first match to Germany, 7-1.

Neymar returns to full Brazil training

England aiming to maintain momentum against Ghana

NEW YORK, June 22, (Xinhua): England will look to maintain the positive momentum generated by its opening World Cup victory when it faces Ghana in Group L action on Tuesday.

England's 4-2 win over Croatia provided the start Thomas Tuchel's side had been seeking after a series of underwhelming performances in the buildup to the tournament. The challenge now is to reproduce that level against another difficult opponent.

Tuchel said after last week's victory that midfielder Declan Rice had been dealing with lower back pain, but he is expected to be fit to partner Elliot Anderson in central midfield.

The England coach appears to have only two significant selection decisions to make. Marcus Rashford boosted his chances of a starting role after scoring late against Croatia, although Anthony Gordon is still favored to retain his place on the left wing.

England showed occasional defensive vulnerability in its opening match and Tuchel could consider bringing Marc Guehi into the back four, with either John Stones or Ezri Konsa making way.

There is a strong argument for including Guehi, but Tuchel values Konsa's physical presence, while Stones offers composure in possession. Although an injury-disrupted



Brazil's Neymar, left, looks on before the World Cup Group C soccer match between Brazil and Morocco in East Rutherford, N.J., near New York. (AP)

season has limited Stones' playing time, regular minutes are the only way for him to regain match sharpness.

One of the key individual battles could come on England's left flank, where left back Nico O'Reilly is expected to face his Manchester City teammate Antoine Semenyo. The need to provide defensive support for O'Reilly could further strengthen Gordon's case to start.

Elsewhere, Bukayo Saka has been following an individual training program to manage an Achilles issue and is again expected to begin on the bench. Noni Madueke is set to start on the right wing, while Harry Kane will lead the attack.

Neymar trained fully with Brazil's World Cup squad on Sunday as he prepares for his first international ap-

pearance in almost three years.

The Santos forward, who had partially resumed training last week, completed his first full session with Brazil's squad since it assembled in Teresopolis, near Rio de Janeiro, on May 27.

On Friday, Brazil manager Carlo Ancelotti said the 34-year-old had recovered from a grade two calf strain and would be included in the matchday squad for Wednesday's final Group C match against Scotland in Miami.

Teammate Lucas Paqueta said Neymar's availability had provided a morale boost to the five-time world champion.

"We're all very happy about Neymar's return," the midfielder told reporters on Sunday. "He's an extremely important player for our national team, someone with a wonderful history who can help us a lot. I hope he can be on the field helping us again as soon as possible." Neymar, Brazil's all-time leading scorer with 79 goals in 128 international appearances, has not played for the national team since suffering a ruptured anterior cruciate ligament in October 2023.

Brazil currently leads Group C with four points, ahead of second-placed Morocco on goal difference. Scotland is third with three points and Haiti last, having yet to register a point.



Egypt head coach Hossam Hassan, left, waves a flag with a staff member after winning the World Cup Group G soccer match between New Zealand and Egypt in Vancouver, British Columbia. (AP)

Sports

Egypt finally breaks through at World Cup

Salah delivers the moment Pharaohs have been waiting for

VANCOUVER, British Columbia, June 22, (AP): Egypt's players danced on the field while their red-clad fans celebrated in the stands. The Pharaohs finally got their first World Cup win.

Mohamed Salah scored the go-ahead goal, and Egypt went on to defeat New Zealand 3-1 on Sunday night.

He celebrated his 68th international goal by pumping his fist before he was mobbed by his teammates in the 67th minute. When he was subbed off in the 85th, he was treated to a standing ovation by the sellout crowd at BC Place, Vancouver.

When it was over, coach Hossam Hassan and an assistant grabbed an Egyptian flag and ran around the field waving it aloft. The fans cheered and sang long after the final whistle.

"I always give my best to the national team," Salah said. "Today I think is a very special day, with our first win in the World Cup."

Egypt moved to the top of the standings in Group G with the win, but was not yet assured of a spot in the knockout round. The Pharaohs will play a deciding game against Iran on Friday in Seattle, needing at least a draw to advance.

Egypt is making its fourth World Cup appearance after missing the field in Qatar four years ago. Salah scored a pair of goals in the 2018 World Cup in Russia.

Finn Surman put New Zealand in front in the 15th minute with a flying header off a corner kick delivered by Instagram sensation Tim Payne. It



Egypt's Mohamed Salah (10) challenges New Zealand's Michael Boxall (5) for the ball during the second half of the World Cup Group G soccer match in Vancouver, British Columbia. Inset: Egypt's Mostafa Zico (11) celebrates his goal against New Zealand. (AP)

was the third international goal for the 6-foot-3 defender who plays for the Portland Timbers in MLS.

Omar Marmoush dropped a free kick off to Salah in the 35th minute, but it went just wide and bent into the

side netting, and Egypt went into the half down 1-0.

"In between the first and the sec-

ond half, we said it's a no-go; we are not going to leave this pitch unless we claim the victory for ourselves,

unless we make everyone proud and happy," Hassan said. "I told them, I told the players, I am not willing to withdraw, I am not willing to go two steps back."

Egypt turned up the pressure coming out of the half and Mostafa Zico broke through with the equalizer, finding space between Surman and Payne for a header that goalkeeper Max Crocombe got a hand on but couldn't stop in the 58th minute. Zico celebrated by gesturing for the fans in the crowd to cheer.

Salah took a back-heel pass from Zico for his goal, which puts him just one away from tying his coach for the national team's all-time scoring lead. Trezeguet's diving header wrapped up scoring for Egypt in the 82nd.

Egypt's Hamdy Fathy was subbed off late in the first half after an apparent injury away from the ball. He was replaced by Ramy Rabia.

In the opener against Belgium, Emam Ashour scored the early goal for Egypt, but then Romelu Lukaku subbed into the match and caused chaos in the box, resulting in an own goal for a 1-1 draw.

New Zealand twice took the lead against Iran in their group opener, only to cede it for a 2-2 draw in the end. Elijah Just scored both goals for the All Whites.

New Zealand returns to Vancouver on Friday to face Belgium. The All Whites are still looking for their first World Cup win. But they have not been eliminated yet.

"You just have to believe and be positive," said veteran Chris Wood. "We're still one win away. We can still go in, beat Belgium, and go through. I'm not going to lie, it's going to be very tough."

'Once you're on the pitch, a lot of things become equal'

Cape Verde's dream run at World Cup continues with draw against Uruguay



Cape Verde's Kevin Pina, center, celebrates with teammates after scoring the opening goal during the World Cup Group H soccer match between Uruguay and Cape Verde in Miami Gardens, Fla. (AP)

MIAMI GARDENS, Fla., June 22, (AP): Cape Verde's magical start to its first World Cup isn't over. It might just be getting started.

The tiny island nation that stunned tournament favorite Spain last week did it again against Uruguay - a two-time World Cup champion - on Sunday, coming from behind for a 2-2 draw.

Kevin Pina scored on a free kick for Cape Verde's first-ever goal in the World Cup, and Helio Varela scored the equalizer for what has become one of the most surprising teams of the expanded 48-team tournament - a club now with a legitimate chance of getting into the knockout stage.

"This is something we owe to other smaller national teams - teams that struggled to qualify for a world tournament," Cape Verde coach Pedro Leitao Brito said through an interpreter, adding his entire squad believes it can continue its historic play and reach the knockout stage.

Cape Verde, which has two points in Group H along with Uruguay, faces Saudi Arabia in its final group match.

"We're also here to show that a country may be small, may struggle financially," he added, "but if they are resilient, if they can endure struggle, they can also stand shoulder to shoulder with other major teams and with players who are on another level."

The group of islands off Africa's West coast have about 4,000 square kilometers of landmass and approximately a half million inhabitants, making Cape Verde the third-smallest nation by population to qualify for the World Cup.

Even as a large number of fans at Miami Stadium chanted for Uruguay throughout Sunday's match, Cape

Verdean players seemed undaunted.

"Once you're on the pitch, a lot of things become equal," Leitao Brito said.

Cape Verdean fans who watched their squad pull off one of the stunners of the tournament last week by holding Spain to a scoreless draw continued their celebrations when Pina split Uruguay's wall and blasted a strike past diving goalie Fernando Muslera for a 1-0 lead in the 21st.

Maxi Araujo and Agustin Canobbio scored late first-half goals to put Uruguay ahead. But Varela, minutes after coming into the game in the second half, took advantage of a bad pass by Mathias Olivera and caught Muslera way off his line for a tying empty-net goal and his first international score.

"I had dreamed of this," Varela said in a quote distributed by FIFA, "but I never imagined it would happen this way. Scoring my first goal for the national team on my World Cup debut is incredible. I have no words."

Varela celebrated by hopping into his teammates' arms and flexing atop their shoulders as Muslera and other Uruguay players dropped their heads in disappointment.

"The result, I think, was quite deserved," coach Marcelo Bielsa said afterward through an interpreter. Uruguay failed to capitalize on numerous late chances to take the lead and settled for its second draw after a 1-1 finish against Saudi Arabia in its opener. La Celeste face Spain in their group stage finale, needing a positive result to have a chance at advancing.

"The organizational mistakes that were made - that a squad makes - they always fall upon the driver," Bielsa added. "What I mean by that is the head coach. ... There is no magical recipe whatsoever to fix them. It goes without saying we paid a very high cost for those mistakes."

'We showed a great team spirit'

Beiranvand produces masterclass as Iran digs deep to stall 10-man Belgium



Iran goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand makes a save during the World Cup Group G soccer match between Belgium and Iran in Inglewood, Calif., near Los Angeles. (AP)

INGLEWOOD, Calif., June 22, (AP): Iran's World Cup has been tumultuous off the field, and its play on the pitch still hasn't produced a victory.

Yet Team Melli's dream of advancing to a World Cup knockout round for the first time is still very much alive, thanks to an afternoon of brilliance from goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand in a 0-0 draw with Belgium.

In a World Cup that has already produced several memorable goalkeeping performances, Beiranvand joined the group with seven saves against the Red Devils. His one-handed stop from a prone position on Maxim De Cuyper's point-blank shot early in the second half should rank among the highlight saves of the tournament - and De Cuyper was denied yet again by Beiranvand on a golden opportunity in the 86th minute.

"He's one of our greatest goalkeepers in the history of Iranian football, and he has achieved many things," Iran coach Amir Ghalenoei said. "He's extremely intelligent, very experienced, and he had one of his best days today."

But his teammates couldn't come up with the goal that would have produced a historic victory, not even after Belgium went down to 10 men in the second half. Defender Nathan Ngoy

received a straight red card in the 66th minute when he miskicked a ball backward and then fouled Mehdi Taremi to prevent the Iran star from getting a clean breakaway scoring chance.

Belgium actually generated better scoring opportunities down the stretch while finishing with 23 shots, but both teams left with their second straight draw in group play.

So while neither team was fully happy with the result at SoFi Stadium, Iran drew many more positives.

"The feeling in the dressing room is we could have even get more than what we got today," Iran midfielder

Alireza Jahanbakhsh said. "But we are very, very happy with the performance we had as a team. I think we showed a great team spirit."

During a tumultuous World Cup trip affected by travel restrictions and visa denials from the U.S., Iran just missed a prime opportunity to beat a European team sitting 10th in FIFA's world rankings. Team Melli was essentially the home team in the Los Angeles area for its second straight match in front of a stadium packed with fans from the diaspora both supporting the Iranians and decrying the government, with boos of the anthem.

World Cup Fixtures

Jordan vs Algeria 06:00

Wednesday

Portugal vs Uzbekistan 20:00

England vs Ghana 23:00

Panama vs Croatia 02:00

Colombia vs DR Congo