



Kuwait's First Deputy PM receives Lebanese Minister of Interior

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, received Lebanese Minister of Interior and Municipalities Ahmad Al-Hajjar upon his arrival at Kuwait International Airport for an official visit to the State of Kuwait.

Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef welcomed Minister Al-Hajjar and the accompanying delegation, wishing them a pleasant stay and a successful visit. He noted that the visit reflects the distinguished fraternal relations between Kuwait and Lebanon, as well as both countries' commitment to strengthening cooperation and coordination across various fields, particularly in security.

The visit will include a series of bilateral meetings and discussions aimed at enhancing security cooperation and exchanging expertise between the two sides, in a way that serves mutual interests and supports security and stability.

The reception was attended by Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior Major General Abdul Wahab Ahmed Al-Wuhaib and the Ambassador of Lebanon to Kuwait, Ghadi Khoury.



Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah receives Lebanese Minister of Interior and Municipalities Ahmad Al-Hajjar upon his arrival at Kuwait International Airport.

KUWAIT RAPS TEHRAN FOR RENEWED BAHRAIN DRONE RAID

Bahrain under Iran fire again

Ceasefire frays after attack on container ship

KUWAIT CITY, June 27, (Agencies): Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed the strongest condemnation and denunciation of the Iranian aggression targeting Bahrain.

In a statement, the ministry said that the attack constitutes a flagrant violation of Bahrain's sovereignty, a direct threat to its stability, and a clear breach of international law.

Kuwait emphasized that continued hostile attacks seriously undermine regional de-escalation efforts, while re-

newing its unwavering solidarity and supporting all measures taken by Bahrain to protect its national sovereignty, territorial security, and citizen safety.

Iran launched a drone assault targeting Bahrain while a ship in the Strait of Hormuz separately came under attack Saturday, in Tehran's likely response to overnight airstrikes by the United States.

Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Jassem Al-Budaiwi, strongly condemned on Saturday Iran's drone attacks on Bahrain.

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Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

Don't waste the minds that contribute to the national product

A FEW days ago, the Saudi government approved the regulations governing foreign ownership, which include many incentives to encourage investment in the Kingdom. This is a significant development step in line with Vision 2030.

It also falls within the strategy of some Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, starting with the United Arab Emirates, then Oman and now Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, which allowed foreigners to own real estate, companies and other investments that were previously restricted to citizens.

This step is not just about investing money in Saudi Arabia, as it aims to invest in capabilities and innovations that strengthen the economy. It aligns with developed countries that attract talent to bolster their strength in scientific, financial, economic and other fields. These countries are acquiring added value that serves their future.

Accordingly, these countries grant citizenship to doctors, engineers, businesspeople and many others with university degrees. Some countries provide them with housing and employment, and also entice investors to invest within their borders. These countries attract skilled professionals and expertise, as Germany and others have done.

This is why we find many highly qualified scientists and investors immigrating to the United States, Canada, Britain, France, Germany, and other European and western countries that warmly welcomed them. Some countries like Ecuador even focused on attracting retirees.

This underscores the tendency of countries to attract the talented. As the saying goes, "Give me money to buy minds rather than giving mind to sell."

Countries do this when they invest by buying or attracting talent. We have seen this in the thousands of qualified Arabs who immigrated to European and other countries where they were offered advantages and incentives unavailable in their own countries, which suffer from outdated laws. In Africa, many scientists have left their countries for other nations that recognized their value, so they have become some of the world's most renowned scientists.

Despite the harshness of what I just described, it reflects the reality in some countries. For years, some Gulf states have been adopting a policy of investing in human capital, not just money. In spite of the difficulties caused by the recent war, some Gulf countries managed to overcome the crisis, thanks to the skilled minds and substantial non-citizen investments. The United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar and Oman have all recovered and are thriving once again.

Governments target the future by preparing the present through a series of advanced legislation that promote investment for future generations, support the economy, and solidify social stability. Without this, nations regress.

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Expat nabbed in Kuwait sting over drug shipment

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff
KUWAIT CITY, June 27: The Ministry of Interior announced the arrest of an Asian after the coordinated efforts of the Drug Control General Department (DCGD) and Kuwait General Administration of Customs (KGAC) foiled an attempt to smuggle narcotics through a shipping company.

The ministry said investigations led to the identification of a suspicious shipment, prompting authorities to set up a carefully planned entrapment in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh. The suspect was arrested while collecting the ship-

ment. A search of the package uncovered 80 sheets of paper impregnated with a synthetic drug. A search of the suspect's residence resulted in the seizure of seven additional sheets prepared in the same manner.

Investigations also revealed that the suspect acted as per the instructions of an individual based in an Asian country, who asked him to collect the narcotics and hide them at various locations.

The ministry added that it is now coordinating with the relevant authorities through international security cooperation channels to complete the necessary legal procedures.



Bursa Kuwait hosts 8 meeting on market outlook & economic perspectives



KFH Group highlights its leadership in banking, capital markets, & Islamic finance



Lulu Hypermarkets launches 'Let's Connect' Tech Festival across Kuwait

Newswatch

CAIRO: The Eighth Conference of the Arab Parliament and Speakers of Arab Councils and Parliaments affirmed on Saturday the importance of a unified Arab parliamentary stance and support for all measures that safeguard the security, sovereignty, territorial integrity, and unity of Arab states, as well as strengthen joint Arab action.

This came in a statement issued at the conclusion of the conference, held at the headquarters of the Arab League in Cairo,

with the participation of speakers of Arab Councils and Parliaments. (KUNA)

ISLAMABAD: An earthquake of 5.9 magnitude jolted several parts of Pakistan, including federal capital Islamabad on Saturday, said National Seismic Monitoring Centre (NSMC).

The NSMC said the earthquake originated at a depth of 178 kilometers, with its epicenter located in the Hindu Kush region of Afghanistan. (KUNA)

Embassy of India engages media in Sharq luncheon

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jun 27: Indian Ambassador to Kuwait Paramita Tripathi hosted a media luncheon at the Mughal Mahal restaurant in Sharq, in line with the commitment of the Indian Embassy to enhance communication with the media and promote dialogue on issues of mutual interest.

During the luncheon, Tripathi expressed her appreciation for the constructive role played by the media in

supporting Kuwaiti-Indian relations and highlighting the contributions of the Indian community to Kuwait's development.

She pointed out that the continuous communication between diplomatic missions and media institutions greatly contributes to ongoing efforts to deepen understanding, ensure transparency, and strengthen relations between the two friendly nations.

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GCC and US urge Iraq to uphold commitments

Kuwait sovereignty reaffirmed in Manama

MANAMA, June 27, (KUNA): GCC foreign ministers and US Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Thursday reaffirmed respect for Kuwait's sovereignty and territorial integrity, consistent with international law and relevant UN Security Council resolutions, including resolution 833.

This came in a joint statement following the Ministerial Meeting of the United States and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in Manama, co-chaired by Rubio and Bahraini Foreign Minister Dr. Abdullatif Al-Zayani, current chairman of the GCC Ministerial Council, with foreign ministers from GCC member states and Secretary General Jassem Al-Budaiwi.



Part of the Ministerial Meeting of the United States and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in Manama.

The ministers emphasized Kuwait's sovereignty over its territorial waters and called on the Government of Iraq to uphold its bilateral

and international commitments. The ministers stressed the importance of the Government of Iraq

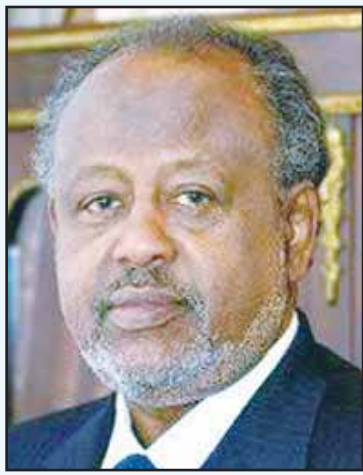
Continued on Page 5



Prayer Timings
 Fajr 03:16 Asr 15:25
 Sunrise .. 04:51 Maghrib .. 18:51
 Zohr 11:51 Isha 20:24



HH the Amir



Ismail Omar Guelleh

Amir congratulates Djibouti Pres. on Independence Day

KUWAIT CITY, June 27, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Saturday a congratulatory cable to the President of the Republic of Djibouti, Ismail Omar Guelleh, on his country's Independence Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished the President of Djibouti good health and well-being and more progress and prosperity for Djibouti and its people.

Crown Prince congratulates

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-

Sabah sent on Saturday a congratulatory cable to the President of the Republic of Djibouti, Ismail Omar Guelleh, on his country's Independence Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Crown Prince wished the President of Djibouti good health and well-being.

PM congratulates

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent on Saturday a congratulatory cable to the President of the Republic of Djibouti, Ismail Omar Guelleh, on his country's Independence Day.

'Kuwait-Egypt cooperation in foodstuff arena crucial'

Food exports to Kuwait see huge rise: envoy

KUWAIT CITY, June 27, (KUNA): Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry Deputy Director General Emad Al-Zaid said recently that cooperation between Kuwaiti and Egyptian food industry companies is a strategic option amid global economic changes and food security challenges.

Al-Zaid made the remarks during a virtual meeting organized by the Chamber in cooperation with Egypt's Food Export Council, with the participation of Egyptian Ambassador to Kuwait Mohammad Abu Al-Wafa, Minister Plenipotentiary for Trade Essam Briqa, and Food Export Council Executive Director Mai Khairy.

He said Egypt has significantly strengthened the competitiveness of its food industry sector in recent years, supported by a broad production base, growing infrastructure and rising investments.

Al-Zaid stressed that supply chain and food security challenges require long-term partnerships capable of creating new opportunities for growth, investment and innovation.

He affirmed the Chamber's commitment to ex-



Emad Al-Zaid



Abu Al-Wafa

panding cooperation with Egypt's food industry sector as a strategic partner in supporting economic development and enhancing food security.

For his part, Ambassador Abu Al-Wafa said the increase in Egyptian food exports to Kuwait reflects strong growth in the sector, backed by Egypt's extensive agricultural and industrial capabilities.

He noted that infrastructure upgrades, industrial development and investment reforms have enhanced the sector's competitiveness, adding that Egyptian food industry exports reached a record USD 6.33 billion in 2025.

Abu Al-Wafa said Kuwait's dynamic private sector and focus on food security provide a solid foundation for sustainable partnerships in food manufacturing.

The meeting brought together Kuwaiti and

Egyptian companies to discuss developments in the food and beverage sector and available opportunities in both countries.

MWRE inks KD 74m deal: The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy signed a contract for the establishment and maintenance of Shuwaikh Water Distribution Complex with Khaled Al-Kharafi and Brochen Construction Contracting Company, with a total value of KD74.703 million, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The ministry aims to develop the water sector infrastructure and raise the efficiency of the storage and distribution systems in view of the expansion of industrial and agricultural areas. It obtained approval from the Central Bank of Public Tenders (CAPT) to sign the contract with the company that offered the lowest price and met the specifications upon completion of the legal and technical procedures.

This is one of the strategic projects aimed at strengthening the water security system. It plays a vital role in ensuring the continuity of water supply and raising network operating efficiency by increasing the storage capacity to 66 million gallons per day, freshwater pumping rates to 54.5 million gallons per day, and pumping of low salinity water to reach 23.5 million gallons per day.



Mourners in a local Kuwaiti Hussainiya commemorating 'Ashoura.'



Photos by Rizk Taufiq

Mosques, Hussainiyas throughout Kuwait hold ceremonies to commemorate 'Ashoura'

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: Mosques and Hussainiyas throughout the country held ceremonies commemorating Ashoura and the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (Peace be Upon Him), his family and companions on Friday morning, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Worshippers gathered to commemorate the events on that day, and the lasting sacrifices and stances it embodied.

The gatherings on the 11th night of Muharram contin-

ued, recalling the aftermath of the tragedy of Imam Hussein's martyrdom and the suffering and anguish endured by his family.

Speakers at the Hussainiya pulpits emphasized that the message of Karbala did not end with the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (Peace be Upon Him), as it signaled the beginning of a new phase in which the Ahlul-Bayt (Peace be Upon Them) assumed the responsibility of preserving the movement and revealing the truth about

what befell the Muslim nation. They stressed that Imam Hussein's victory was a victory for principles and values, and that sacrifice, steadfastness and dignity conveyed a timeless humanitarian message that transcends time and place.

They explained that this occasion is an opportunity to draw inspiration from the real meanings of patience, steadfastness and responsibility, asserting that the uprising of Imam Hussein (Peace be Upon Him) taught gen-

erations that defending the truth is not measured by the results of battles, but by the soundness of one's principles and adherence to values and constants.

They called for emulating the Ahlul-Bayt (Peace be Upon Them) in terms of ethics, faith and reform, and for consolidating the values of unity, compassion and community service. They affirmed that Ashoura will remain an enduring school of awareness, dignity and the triumph of truth.

Courses begin July 1: Al-Humaidhi

1,711 private sector companies offer training

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: Nasser Al-Humaidhi, Deputy Director General for Labor Affairs at the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM), revealed that the number of training opportunities offered by private sector companies in the summer student training program reached 1,711 provided by 79 entities operating in various sectors, while the number of registered applicants reached 3,217 and the number of those accepted was 1,533.

Al-Humaidhi said the training period will begin

on July 1 and will continue until the end of August, adding that the registration was from April 24 to June 11.

He indicated that the project is in accordance with the national policy on unifying and coordinating efforts to regulate the labor market and support nationals working in the private sector through different means, including training students to work in the private sector.

He pointed out that PAM has been offering the summer training program since 2004. He disclosed that more than 12,000 students have so far been trained in many sectors -- banking, retail, insurance, cooperative societies, telecommunica-

tions, law, factories and others.

The applicants for the training program should be Kuwaiti citizens and enrolled in one of the following educational stages:

- Third and fourth years at the university,
- Second year in colleges and institutes where the study period does not exceed two academic years,
- Grades 11 and 12.

The applicants must not be registered in the Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS), should attend the training sessions during the morning or evening hours of the program, and completed at least half of the required courses.



Training courses in progress.

KCCI photo

Courses target production of competent 'arbitrators'

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: The Kuwait Center for Commercial Arbitration, which is affiliated with the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI), announced the conclusion of the new and improved edition of its "Arbitrator Training Program" for 2026, which started on June 7 and continued for three weeks.

This vital program is part of the ongoing strategy of the center to raise legal and arbitration awareness, and to prepare competent national arbitrators and experts.

Through this program, the center aims to provide advanced and high-quality training supervised by a select group of professors and local and international arbitrators, with the goal of equipping participants with the necessary legal, technical and practical skills to resolve commercial disputes.

The program has three main phases:

Phase One (Arbitration Agree-

ment): This phase focused on the concept of arbitration agreements, their various forms, and the criteria for their validity and legal requirements. It includes intensive workshops and practical sessions on drafting arbitration clauses in commercial contracts to avoid legal loopholes.

Phase Two (Arbitration Panel and Arbitration Proceedings): This phase covered the legal status of the arbitrator, their rights and obligations, mechanisms for forming arbitration panels, and the administrative and technical skills necessary for managing arbitration sessions, hearing witnesses and addressing pleadings.

Phase Three (Arbitration Award and Drafting): This crucial phase was dedicated to training on the essential elements of the arbitration award, confidential deliberations among the panel members, and drafting and issuance of final and enforceable arbitration awards.

Kuwait participates in Saint Petersburg Int'l Legal Forum

MOSCOW, June 27, (KUNA): The 14th Saint Petersburg International Legal Forum kicked off on Wednesday with broad international participation, including Kuwait, represented by its Embassy in Russia and Acting Charge d'Affaires Counselor Ahmad Abdulrahman Al-Buajjan.

Kuwait's participation comes within the framework of its interest in following international legal developments and strengthening communication with institutions concerned with legal and diplomatic affairs, in line with its approach of promoting respect for international law and supporting



Al-Buajjan

dialogue and cooperation among states.

Kuwait's participation reflects its continued support for the principles of the United Nations Charter, respect for international law and the peaceful settlement of disputes, as well as efforts aimed at promoting international security, stability and cooperation.

The forum featured discussions on the future of the international legal order and challenges facing multilateral legal institutions amid global political developments. Participants also exchanged views on modern legislation and mechanisms for enhancing international legal cooperation.

Held from June 24 to 26 and organized annually by the Russian Ministry of Justice, the forum is considered one of the leading international platforms dedicated to legal affairs and the exchange of expertise among government officials, judges, legal experts and academics from around the world.

Defendant acquitted in carrying booze for sale

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: The Misdemeanor Appeals Court upheld the ruling of a lower court that acquitted a defendant of possessing alcoholic beverages with the intent to sell them, using a vehicle rented under his elderly mother's name to sell alcohol to his customers, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Attorney Youssef Al-Mohammad from the office of Attorney Inam Haidar represented the defendant.

The Public Prosecution charged the defendant with possessing 27 bottles of various types of alcoholic drinks for sale, as per the arrest and investigation reports.

Al-Mohammad argued that the evidence was insufficient, emphasizing that the case file had no record of any sale, distribution or dealings with customers. He asserted that no money, records or correspondence were found in the possession of his client to prove he was selling alcoholic beverages.

The defense also relied on the testimony of the defendant's mother, who rented the vehicle and stated that she did not see prohibited substances inside it at the time of the incident.

When one door shuts, God opens many doors for you

"A YOUNG American man worked at a large lumber mill. When he turned 40, he was shocked when his boss informed him that he was fired and had to leave permanently," columnist **Ahmad Al-Dawas** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"The man went out into the street, hopeless, frustrated and in despair after losing his livelihood and having no other source of income, neither he nor his wife. He went home and told his wife what happened.

"He decided to mortgage his house and work in construction. Ironically, his first project was building two small houses, into which he put his utmost effort. More small projects followed and multiplied. After continuous efforts, he became a famous millionaire. He is Wallace Johnson, the man who founded and built the Holiday Inn hotel chain.

"Johnson says in his memoirs, 'If I knew where the boss who fired me lived, I would have gone to him and thanked him deeply for what he did for me. When that difficult situation happened, I was very hurt, and I didn't understand why. Now I understand that God wanted to close one door in my face to open a better path for me and my family.'

"I remember a foreign ambassador who was upset after being transferred to his country's embassy in the Soviet Union 42 years ago due to the hardships of life there. He would have preferred another country, but once there, he was able to dedicate his time to his beloved hobby: writing.

"What you consider bad luck may actually be good luck. Let's say a man wanted to marry a woman, but she rejected him, leaving him heartbroken. Later, he might marry someone better or vice versa.

"On a national level, when America defeated Japan in World War II in 1945, Japan was subjected to harsh measures, military and otherwise. However, Japanese leaders demonstrated remarkable foresight and wisdom by accepting these difficulties. Although all doors were closed to Japan, and it was prevented from rearming and making political decisions, the doors to industry and scientific advancement were opened.

"The crisis that afflicted Japan with its defeat in 1945 enabled it to emerge from the ruins of war and become one of the world's major economic powers. The shift in Mao's communist ideology in China led to a remarkable economic transformation and development. When the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, markets opened to investors in Europe.

"During the October 1973 War, the Arabs drastically increased the price of oil, which damaged the global economy. Since then, western countries began to consider alternatives to oil, discovering and manufacturing solar panels and utilizing hydrogen gas in car engines.

"This applies not only to these stories but also to life in general.

"Wise people do not grieve excessively over losses nor rejoice excessively over gains. They always thank Allah for everything He has given them. These are the truly happy ones, for happiness lies in accepting Allah's decree and destiny.

"Allah Almighty says in Surah Al-Hadid, Verse 22: 'No calamity befalls the earth or yourselves except that it is in the record before We bring it into being. Indeed, that, for Allah, is easy - so that you may not grieve over what has escaped you nor rejoice over what He has given you. And Allah does not like anyone who is arrogant and boastful.'

"Remain calm when receiving news, both good and bad. Do not despair in pain or rejoice excessively."

Also:

"Legal jurisprudence and statutory provisions concur that a doctor must exercise due care and make their best efforts in treating patients, rather than guaranteeing complete recovery," **Turki Faisal Al-Otaibi** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"A physician is not liable just because treatment fails to result in a cure, liability arises only if a professional error is established and a direct causal relationship is proven between that error and the damage sustained by

the patient.

"For professional liability to be affirmed, it must be clearly demonstrated that the doctor, through negligence or lack of knowledge, breached scientific foundations and the generally accepted rules governing medical practice.

"Accordingly, the core challenge lies in achieving an equilibrium between reassuring doctors and enabling them to practice their profession freely and confidently, while protecting patients against medical malpractice.

"In order to maintain this balance, Law No. 70/2020 on the practice of medicine and related professions, as well as the rights of patients and healthcare institutions, was enacted. The law aims to establish a modern legal framework that serves the interests of both doctors and patients and alleviates the doctors' excessive fear of legal accountability, which could otherwise adversely affect their decision-making in critical medical situations.

"Among the most significant issues addressed by the law is the principle of 'informed consent', defined as the approval granted by the patient or their legal representative for a medical procedure after being fully informed of its nature and consequences, in accordance with the law and its executive regulations.

"The law obliges doctors to obtain such consent and imposes upon them the duty to inform patients truthfully and transparently about their medical condition, the stages and causes of the illness, the proposed diagnostic and therapeutic options, the benefits and risks associated with each procedure, and the available alternatives, using clear and simplified language suited to the patient's physical and psychological condition. This obligation includes explaining the treatment plan and the expected, albeit not uncommon, complications.

"The law specifies the individuals authorized to provide informed consent, which may be issued by the patient personally if they are married or have reached 18 years old, regardless of gender, or by their legal representative.

"If this is not feasible, consent may be provided by the father, mother, spouse or an adult relative up to the second degree.

"In the case of patients under the age of 18, consent may be obtained from the father, mother, legal guardian or an adult relative up to the second degree.

"The law permits patients aged 15 years or older to give consent themselves, unless the medical condition necessitates hospitalization for more than 24 hours.

"For cosmetic surgeries and procedures, the patient's consent is required if they are 21 years old or older, otherwise, consent must be obtained from both parents or the legal guardian.

"Special provisions govern organ transplantation, permitting individuals aged 18 years or older to donate organs to relatives up to the second degree.

"The law also regulates cases involving patients under the care of the Ministry of Social Affairs, as well as family foster care situations, by identifying the authority competent to issue consent in such cases.

"The legislation addresses situations in which consent is refused and such refusal poses a threat to the patient's life or safety. In these circumstances, the matter is referred to a specialized medical committee to take the appropriate decision. An exception is made for emergencies, accidents, and critical cases requiring immediate medical intervention to save life, in which instances the doctor may proceed without prior consent.

"In all cases, the law underscores the obligation of the doctor to ascertain the patient's mental capacity before obtaining consent, and requires new consent to be secured for any medical procedure not previously agreed on.

"Still, the fundamental duty of the doctor is the performance of their work in accordance with recognized scientific and technical standards, while respecting the patient's dignity and privacy, avoiding discrimination or exploitation of need, and ensuring accuracy and honesty in the communication of medical information, in a manner that strengthens mutual trust between the doctor and patient and maintains the stability of the medical profession."

— **Compiled by Saeed Mahmoud Saleh**



Jahra Governorate photo

Jahra Governor Hamad Al-Habashi and the security team at the Husseinia site.

Safe, secure and organized environs sought for faithful

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: Jahra Governor Hamad Al-Habashi inspected Imam Al-Jawah Al-Taqi Husseinia, at Haya Abdulrahman Al-Jassem Intermediate School in Al-Qairawan to assess the level of preparedness for 'Ashoura', and the organizational and security measures in place.

The inspection visit is in line with the ongoing efforts of the Governor to monitor various facilities in the governorate that cater to a large number of citizens during

the month of Muharram, while ensuring the availability of essential services, regulating entry and exit procedures, and maintaining smooth traffic movement.

Al-Habashi underscored the need for continuous coordination among the concerned authorities and raising the level of readiness at such venues, affirming that Jahra Governorate is keen on providing a safe, secure and organized environment for the worshippers.

Major fall in drugs cases

Mol strategy reaps benefits

KUWAIT CITY, June 27, (KUNA): **Drug smuggling and trafficking cases recorded a significant decline during the first half of 2026 compared to the same period last year, said Director General of the General Department for Drug Control Brig. Gen. Mohammad Qabazard.**

Speaking to KUNA on the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, observed annually on June 26, Qabazard said drug smuggling cases fell from 102 in the first half of 2025 to just 15 during the corresponding period this year, while drug trafficking cases dropped from 354 to 184.

He said the figures demonstrate the success of the Ministry of Interior's strategy to tighten the grip on drug smuggling, trafficking and distribution networks, contributing to reduced availability of many narcotic substances, the near disappearance of some drugs from the local market, and a rise in their street prices.

Qabazard affirmed that the General Department for Drug Control has witnessed positive field results following the implementation of the new anti-narcotics law, while continuing to carry out pre-emptive operations against smuggling and trafficking networks, leading to a direct decline in

drug-related crime rates.

He added that the Ministry of Interior is continuing to implement a comprehensive security and preventive strategy to combat narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, focusing on cutting off supply sources, pursuing trafficking and distribution networks, and strengthening community partnerships and prevention efforts to safeguard society.

The new anti-drug law, he noted, has not only strengthened deterrence but has also enhanced prevention and treatment by allowing drug users to voluntarily seek treatment before legal action is taken against them.

This has encouraged many families to report relatives struggling with addiction and enroll them in rehabilitation and treatment programs.

Qabazard revealed that addiction-related reports increased by 14.9 percent during the first half of 2026 compared with the same period in 2025, describing the increase as a positive indicator reflecting growing public confidence in the state's procedures and greater community awareness of the importance of seeking treatment.

He stressed that all reports concerning drug users are handled with complete confidentiality to protect families' privacy and encourage cooperation with the relevant authorities, adding that the increase in reports also reflects the success of awareness campaigns and preventive programs conducted by the ministry.



Farwaniya Governorate photo

Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah receives the guests in his office.

KCB hailed for helping citizens in funds hitch

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah had a meeting with acting Director General of Kuwait Credit Bank (KCB) Sultan Jassim Al-Dabbous, along with Director of the KCB branch in Farwaniya Governorate Dr. Mohammad Al-Afasi.

They discussed issues of mutual interest and ways to strengthen cooperation between the governorate and the bank, focusing on easing procedures and covering the needs of citizens, particularly those related to housing and credit services.

Sheikh Athbi Nasser stressed the importance of close coordination and integration among state institutions, while commending the role of KCB in supporting citizens through financing solutions that help promote family welfare and housing stability.

On the other hand, Al-Dabbous affirmed that the bank is ready to coordinate with and provide full support to the governorates in meeting their requirements and needs. He pointed out that such cooperation will raise the efficiency and quality of services offered to citizens in line with the directives of the political leadership.

He also thanked the Governor for paying attention to issues concerning citizens and his efforts to reinforce cooperation among government agencies.

Other Voices

The evening itch

By **Ahmad alsarraf**

I often suffer from dry skin on my feet and legs, especially after having a shower. I wondered because it contradicted the common belief that itching is caused by poor hygiene. The urge to scratch often arises during sleep, forcing people to wake up and try to alleviate the discomfort with soothing creams or moisturizers.

I researched the cause of this itching after every shower and found a list of common reasons for dryness in one or more areas of the body as follows:

■ Low humidity, especially in air-conditioned or heated environments.

■ Showering with hot water, as it removes the skin's natural oils. Therefore, it is always advisable to avoid using a rough 'loofah' to cleanse the body.

■ Using perfumed soaps.

■ Insufficient consumption of water throughout the day.

■ Aging, as the body's production of sufficient oils decreases.

■ Medical conditions, such as eczema, psoriasis, contact dermatitis, or as a result of diabetes or thyroid problems.

What are the easy ways to treat or alleviate the effects of these conditions?

■ Apply cream, ointment or lotion immediately after showering. This helps the cream, ointment or lotion penetrate the skin's pores.

■ Use lotion with certain ingredients, such as urea (10-25 percent), lactic acid, shea butter or ceramide, as these are effective for the feet and legs. Wear cotton socks to allow the cream to penetrate the pores of the skin.

■ Avoid hot showers, especially in the afternoon, and reduce shower time. It is recommended to use a gentle, fragrance-free soap like Dove or one that is suitable for sensitive skin.

■ Use a humidifier at home, especially in the bedroom. A humidifier is cheap. Maintain indoor humidity level at 40-60 percent.

■ Drink a lot of water.

If these measures do not help, consume omega-3 fatty acids from fish, flaxseeds and walnuts to support the barrier function of the skin and reduce the urge to scratch, which damages the barrier and worsens the condition.

Before applying a cream, it is advisable to use a cold compress or gently pat the affected area with a damp hand.

Before consulting a dermatologist, try using an over-the-counter hydrocortisone cream (one percent).

If the itching persists, a visit to the doctor is necessary, especially if the condition is continuous, spreading or accompanied by redness, scaling or cracking that does not heal. A dermatologist can rule out eczema, psoriasis or an underlying condition, such as diabetes or hypothyroidism.

Sand removal tenders

By **Mohammad Ghanem**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: The Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) has confirmed the opening of bids for two tenders for sand removal from highways in the northern and southern areas on behalf of the Maintenance Engineering Sector at Ministry of Public Works.

A total of 19 companies competed for the two tenders -- 10 for the southern area and nine for the northern area).

CAPT will submit the tender documents to the ministry for review and presentation of technical recommendations within 30 days. These recommendations will then be forwarded to the State Audit Bureau (SAB) for pre-audit procedures.

Through these two tenders, the ministry aims to ensure smooth traffic flow, maintain safety and security standards, and protect infrastructure from the dangers of sand accumulation on highways.

Special Buffet

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Nod to leave for faculty members

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: Dr. Mona Al-Ahmad, President of Abdullah Al-Salem University, presided over the recent meeting of the University Council, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

Al-Ahmad welcomed Dr. Salman Khalifa Al-Sabah, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Health, to the University Council as the public sector representative for a two-year term, in accordance with Public Universities Law No. 76/2019.

Meanwhile, Dr. Adel Al-Hussainan, acting Secretary General of the university, said the council approved the minutes of Meet-

ing No. 2/2026, held on April 15, 2026, and reviewed the follow up report on the implementation of resolutions adopted in previous meetings.

Al-Hussainan also confirmed that the council approved a memorandum on the conduct of final examinations for students in all courses through in-person attendance, dated April 24, 2026.

The council endorsed the circular issued on June 2, 2026 regarding the resumption of face-to-face instruction for the summer semester of the 2025/2026 academic year, effective June 7, 2026.

Other Voices

The judgment many people get wrong

By Dr. Fawaz Khaled Alkhateeb
Managing Partner, Taher Group Law Firm

During the past three months, I have spent countless hours inside Kuwait's specialised State Security courtrooms, appearing in cases that arose during one of the region's most sensitive periods following the unlawful Iranian aggression and the heightened political tensions that followed. Yet the most important lesson I have taken away was not the prison sentences, the acquittals, or even the legal arguments. It was hearing the same conclusion repeated outside the courtroom after many judgments were delivered: "The defendant has been acquitted." In many cases, that conclusion was legally incorrect.



Fawaz Alkhateeb

Recent weeks have witnessed a series of significant State Security judgments involving allegations of harming the country's national interests, inciting sectarian division, promoting prohibited organisations, and misusing social media during a period of exceptional regional sensitivity. The outcomes have varied.

Some defendants received custodial sentences, others were acquitted, while in numerous cases the courts refrained from pronouncing punishment. Additional hearings remain scheduled through the end of June and early July, ensuring these issues will continue to attract public attention.

It is this third category of judgments that has become one of the most misunderstood concepts in Kuwaiti criminal law.

Many people understandably assume that if a defendant leaves the courtroom without going to prison, the case must have ended in acquittal. The law says otherwise. An acquittal means the prosecution failed to establish criminal responsibility. A judgment refraining from pronouncing punishment means the court reached the opposite conclusion. The offence was proven, criminal responsibility was established, and the defendant was convicted. Only then did the court decide, within the limits prescribed by law, not to impose the punishment itself.

This is not an act of judicial sympathy, nor does it diminish the seriousness of the offence. Rather, it reflects a deliberate legal philosophy. Kuwaiti law allows judges, in carefully defined circumstances, to conclude that the interests of justice may be better served by accountability combined with an opportunity for rehabilitation than by immediate imprisonment. The conviction remains, and the defendant must comply with strict conditions imposed by the court, including good conduct obligations and, in many cases, financial guarantees. Breaching those conditions may carry significant legal consequences.

These judgments have acquired even greater significance following the introduction of Decree-Law No. 51 of 2026, which established specialised judicial circuits to hear State Security and terrorism-related offenses. The legislature recognized that cases affecting national security require both specialised judicial expertise and

swift resolution while preserving the rights of the accused. Within this framework, appellate judgments are final, making every stage of litigation critically important for both the prosecution and the defense.

Having appeared before these courts, I have learned that lawyers and the public often read judgments differently. Lawyers begin by asking why the court reached its decision. The public often focuses only on what the decision was. Yet in law, the reasoning behind a judgment is frequently more important than the final line announcing it. Two defendants may both leave the courtroom without imprisonment, but one may have been acquitted while the other has been convicted and granted a carefully regulated opportunity to demonstrate rehabilitation.

The practical outcome may appear similar; the legal consequences are entirely different.

As these cases continue to move through Kuwait's specialised State Security courts, one lesson deserves to outlive the headlines. Judicial decisions should not be understood through social media commentary alone. They should be understood through the legal principles on which they are built. The recent judgments demonstrate that a strong justice system is measured not only by its ability to punish wrongdoing, but also by its ability to distinguish, within the framework of the law, between punishment that protects society and rehabilitation that ultimately serves it. Understanding that distinction strengthens public confidence in both the courts and the rule of law.



Fawaz@tahergrp.org



Kuwait University photo
The lecture in progress at the College of Graduate Studies, Kuwait University.

KU holds orientation for graduate courses

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: The College of Graduate Studies (CGS) at Kuwait University organized an orientation for new students admitted to the graduate programs for the 2026/2027 academic year.

The orientation was held at Sabah Al-Salem University City recently to familiarize students with the academic and administrative procedures related to their postgraduate studies.

Present at the event were acting Dean of the college Dr. Meshal Khalaf Al-Gharib, acting Assistant Dean for Student Affairs Dr. Iman Tawfiq Al-Sharhan, a number of college officials and the new students.

Speaking at the event, Al-Gharib congratulated the students on their admission to the graduate programs and wished them success throughout their academic journey. He explained that the purpose of the orientation is to provide students with an outline of course registration procedures, clarify the requirements of the next stage of their studies, and introduce them to the academic services. He also stressed the importance of maintaining communication with the program directors to review study plans and gain a clear understanding of the requirements and expectations of their respective programs.

Meanwhile, Al-Sharhan stated that graduate studies are considered an extension of the academic path and founded on scientific research, critical thinking, and the continuous development of research and scholarly skills. She encouraged the students to comply with the regulations, decisions and instructions of the college, while underscoring the need to obtain information only from official channels.

Fatima Hussein, Head of the Admissions and Registration Department at the college, presented an overview of the academic laws, regulations and procedures relevant to graduate students. She highlighted the importance of activating and regularly monitoring university email accounts, obtaining university identification cards, and becoming familiar with the program director and the program secretary.

Kuwait renews support for Jordanian judge's ICJ election

NEW YORK, June 27, (KUNA): Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Tareq Al-Bannai, has renewed his country's stalwart support for Judge Mahmoud Al-Hamoud's election to the International Court of Justice (ICJ), lauding his illustrious legal career and monumental contributions to international jurisprudence.

Al-Bannai remark was made during a specialized panel discussion convened at the Kuwaiti Mission headquarters, organized in strategic partnership with the Permanent Mission of Jordan and the Perma-

nent Observer Mission of the Arab League to the UN. The symposium was entitled, "Does International Law Constitute a Complete Legal System Questioning the Concept of Non-Denial?"

The Kuwaiti envoy emphasized that Judge Al-Hamoud's profound multi-decadal track record across the legal and diplomatic arenas remains a vital asset to the international court, particularly in bolstering the global rule of law and facilitating the peaceful resolution of interstate disputes.

He noted that Al-Hamoud's election to

the ICJ bench in 2025 stood as a global testament to his exceptional legal acumen.

Highlighting the broader cultural and institutional significance of the election, the Kuwaiti envoy stated that Judge Al-Hamoud's presence on the bench ensures the essential representation of Arab legal traditions within the principal judicial organ of the United Nations.

Reviewing his career milestones, Ambassador Al-Bannai pointed to Judge Al-Hamoud's extensive experience, which includes serving as Jordan's Permanent

Representative to the UN, chairing the UN International Law Commission, and successfully representing the Hashemite Kingdom in landmark cases before the ICJ and various international tribunals.

Concluding his remarks, the Kuwaiti diplomat asserted that the symposium offered a timely exploration of international legal principles, emphasizing that the current fractured geopolitical landscape demands an unyielding commitment to the UN Charter, international law, and multilateral legal mechanisms over unilateral confrontation.



KUNA photo
IICO supports 35 Jordanian, Palestinian university graduates from low-income families.

Kuwait expands charity 'globally'

Widespread praise for efforts

KUWAIT CITY, June 27, (KUNA): Kuwaiti charitable organizations continued over the past week expanding their humanitarian efforts in several countries in need through sustainable relief and development projects, while receiving international recognition that highlighted Kuwait's role in global humanitarian work.

The initiatives covered education, water projects and sustainable development, reflecting Kuwait's continued commitment to supporting vulnerable communities and strengthening international partnerships.

Director of Resources and Media at the Sheikh Abdullah Al-Nouri Charity Society, Abdulatif Al-Dawas said the society's recent recognition by the Supreme Council of Kyrgyzstan reflected appreciation for its humanitarian efforts and development initiatives abroad.

He noted that the society's projects had positively impacted thousands of beneficiaries and said it would continue expanding humanitarian partnerships and sustainable initiatives.

Deputy Director General for Projects

at the International Islamic Charitable Organization (IICO), Ibrahim Al-Bader said the organization continues investing in human development through educational initiatives.

He highlighted the "Benaar" project, which supported 35 outstanding Jordanian and Palestinian university students from low-income families through educational, living and career guidance programs.

He added that the project's second season launched the "Benaar Guide," a comprehensive framework aimed at developing students' skills and preparing young leaders.

On his part, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Al-Safa Charity and Humanitarian Society, Mohammad Al-Shaya said the society continues implementing water projects in several countries to ease the suffering of vulnerable communities.

He said the society built 15 water networks in Kyrgyzstan and drilled 156 fresh-water wells in eight countries during the first half of 2026, providing safe and sustainable water sources for thousands of people.

Al-Shaya stressed that Kuwaiti charity work continues to focus on sustainable projects that improve health, social and economic conditions for communities in need.

Court obligates citizen to pay back loan and legal expenses

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: The Court of Appeals canceled the verdict of a lower court that dismissed a financial claim, and then obligated a citizen to pay KD20,000 and the legal expenses, reports Al-Seyasah daily.

The higher court issued the decision

after confirming that the money transferred to the citizen was a loan through the WhatsApp messages, which proved the claimant transferred the money to the bank account of the citizen as a loan. The claimant requested the court to order the citizen to pay the loan.

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Continued from Page 1

Kuwait sovereignty

taking all necessary measures to ensure the security and safety of all diplomatic missions in Iraq, and to protect them from any threats or attacks, in accordance with Iraq's relevant international obligations.

They welcomed the June 17 memorandum of understanding (MOU) signing between the United States and Iran and recognized the important mediation roles played by Pakistan and Qatar.

They stressed the need to maintain momentum and unity as negotiations proceed toward a more permanent end to hostilities and the shared objective of preventing Iran from ever developing or otherwise acquiring a nuclear weapon.

The ministers further emphasized that lasting regional peace and security requires addressing the full spectrum of Iran's threats, including its ballistic missiles, drones, and its support of proxies in the region.

The ministers also emphasized the importance of reopening the Strait of Hormuz, noting that free, unconditional, and unrestricted navigation, including the right of transit passage as guaranteed under international law, remains essential to regional and global security.

The ministers rejected any tolls, fees, or attempts to assert control over the Strait, and welcomed the Sultanate of Oman and International Maritime Organizations announcement on the launch of an evacuation plan for over 11,000 seafarers stranded in the region.

The further emphasized that any trade and investment with Iran is conditional and reversible, contingent on Iran's compliance with the MOU and the final deal, cessation of its destabilizing behavior, and creation of the conditions necessary for economic engagement.

Regarding Syria, they expressed support for the Syrian people in building a stable, peaceful, inclusive and sovereign country fully integrated into the region and reaffirmed their commitment to Syria's sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity.

They decided to continue working with, and providing assistance to, the Syrian government to address key challenges such as countering terrorism, restoring basic services, improving its investment climate, and enabling the voluntary return of refugees and internally displaced people.

As for Lebanon, the ministers reaffirmed their full commitment to Lebanon's sovereignty, security, stability, and territorial integrity. To that end, they welcomed ongoing bilateral negotiations between Israeli occupation and Lebanon, facilitated by the US, aimed at creating the conditions for a lasting peace and security agreement

between the countries.

In that respect, the ministers emphasized the importance of maintaining a negotiation process, which is not conditional on the outcomes of other conflicts, welcoming the development of a practical approach that allows for the restoration of security and Lebanese state authority and the demarcation of permanent boundaries.

They stressed that full Lebanese sovereignty cannot be achieved while non-state armed groups maintain military capabilities outside the Lebanese state authority and called for the full disarmament of all such groups and the restoration of the Lebanese states monopoly of force, while recognizing the importance of supporting the Lebanese Armed Forces in doing so.

As regards to Gaza, the ministers reaffirmed their support for President Trumps Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, endorsed in UN Security Council resolution 2803.

In this regard, Secretary Rubio welcomed the historic participation of GCC members in the Board of Peace and thanked them for their commitments to advance stabilization, recovery, and reconstruction efforts in Gaza.

The ministers stressed the importance of the demilitarization of all non-state armed groups to enable Gaza's reconstruction and the need to hand over responsibility to an independent, technocratic civil Palestinian committee.

They commended President Trump's statement that the United States opposes annexation of the West Bank and underscored that progress on Gaza redevelopment and Palestinian Authority reforms will create the conditions for a credible pathway to Palestinian self-determination and statehood.

The ministers further reaffirmed that no one will be forced to leave Gaza, and those who wish to leave will be free to return.

In conclusion, they condemned attacks by Iranian proxies in Iraq against GCC countries, including drone attacks damaging civilian facilities, critical infrastructure, and energy security, while supporting Iraq's government efforts to restrict weapons to state control and prevent non-state armed groups from using Iraqi territory to threaten neighboring countries.

Embassy of

She confirmed that since assuming her post, she has been keen on expanding communication with various entities, including government institutions, the business sector, civil society organizations, educational institutions and the media, in order to strengthen the strategic partnership between Kuwait and India, and underscore the

depth of the historical, cultural and economic ties that bind the two countries.

She praised the role of the Indian community, one of the largest expatriate communities in Kuwait, in supporting the economy and society, stressing that the embassy remains committed to looking after the interests of Indian citizens and promoting bilateral relations in various fields.

Bahrain under

In a statement, Al-Budaiwi said that Iran's continued targeting of civilian facilities and vital infrastructure, amidst international and regional efforts to establish security and peace and resolve the crisis, confirms its desire to undermine initiatives aimed at containing the crisis and obstruct all efforts to achieve security and stability in the region.

He affirmed the GCC's support for all measures taken by Bahrain to enhance its security, preserve its sovereignty, and safeguard its territorial integrity.

Egypt strongly condemned the drone attacks targeting Bahrain, calling them a violation of its sovereignty and an unacceptable escalation that undermines regional peace efforts.

The Egyptian Foreign Ministry stated on Saturday, that these attacks disrupt ongoing stability initiatives, stressing the need to refrain from actions that fuel tension.

Egypt reaffirmed its full solidarity with Bahrain and fellow Gulf states, backing all measures taken to safeguard their security and territorial integrity.

The attacks in the Arabian Gulf show the danger of the Iran war again spinning out of control, even after Iran and the U.S. reached an interim deal to try and agree on a final accord to end the conflict.

The U.S. had launched airstrikes overnight in response to an Iranian drone attack on a container ship trying to leave the strait on Thursday, continuing a string of attacks that have shaken the war's uneasy ceasefire.

Meanwhile, a multinational maritime body overseen by the U.S. Navy said Saturday that it would expand a route near Oman in the strait to allow for both inbound and outbound traffic. That likely sets up a new flashpoint with Tehran, which sees the strait as a key source of leverage in ongoing talks with the U.S.

Bahrain has been one of the strongest critics of Iran and is home to the U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet. It just hosted U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio for a meeting of the Gulf Cooperation Council's foreign ministers, which ended with a call for an end to Iran's attacks and for the strait to be completely open.

Ambassador Al-Bader meets EU officials in Croatia

Kuwait champions multilateralism at Dubrovnik Forum

KUWAIT CITY, June 27, (KUNA): Kuwait's Assistant Foreign Minister for European Affairs Ambassador Najeeb Al-Bader affirmed Saturday that Kuwait's participation in the 19th Dubrovnik Forum 2026 reflects its diplomatic approach based on promoting dialogue and multilateral cooperation.

Ambassador Al-Bader told KUNA that the Croatian forum, themed "The Age of Multipolarity: Many Directions, One Future," provides a leading strategic platform to exchange vital views on international developments and enhance global understanding.

Heading Kuwait's delegation to the high-level event, the ambassador engaged in ministerial sessions and strategic discussions alongside foreign ministers and various prominent representatives of international organizations to address shared global challenges.

The comprehensive agenda covered critical geopolitical shifts in the international order, energy security challenges, artificial intelligence development, and the future of technological competition, alongside prospects for enhanced digital transformation amid current global challenges.

Discussions also focused heavily on crucial maritime security, the safety of international navigation routes, global supply chain resilience, and global trade dynamics, emphasizing international cooperation to support sustainable global peace and security.

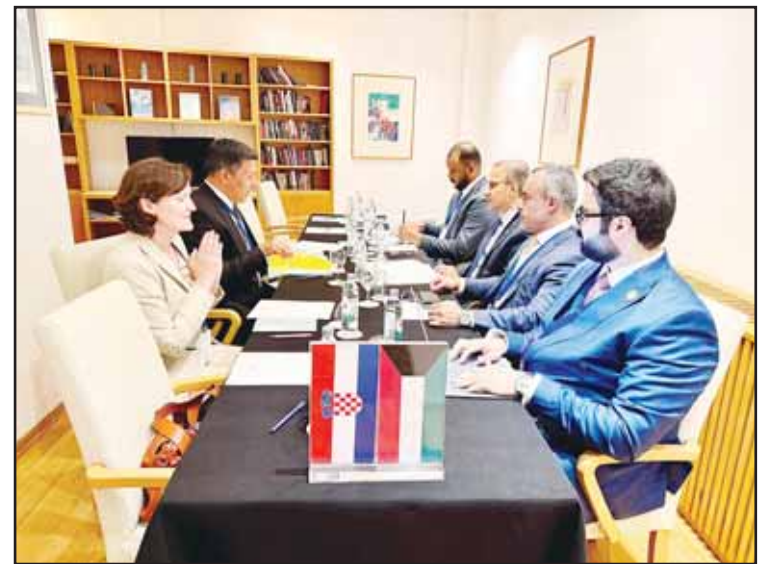
On the forum's sidelines, Ambassador Al-Bader held bilateral meetings with Croatian Minister of Foreign and European Affairs Gordan Grlic Radman and Political Affairs Director-General Dr. Tomislav Lendic to boost bilateral relations.

These constructive meetings comprehensively reviewed relations between Kuwait and Croatia, exploring diverse ways to strengthen bilateral cooperation across various fields to serve the mutual interests of both friendly countries and their peoples.

Ambassador Al-Bader also met European Union Special Representative for the Gulf Region Luigi Di Maio, discussing prospective cooperation avenues between Kuwait and the European Union while reviewing the latest regional and international developments.



Left: Kuwait's Assistant Foreign Minister for European Affairs Ambassador Najeeb Al-Bader with Croatian Minister of Foreign and European Affairs Gordan Grlic Radman. Right: Ambassador Al-Bader with European Union Special Representative for the Gulf Region Luigi Di Maio.



Ministry of Foreign Affairs photos Part of the meetings.



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INTERNATIONAL

Dangerous weather hampers firefighters and leads to fireworks bans in western US

WASHINGTON, June 27, (AP): Hot, dry and windy conditions are fueling a fast-moving wildfire in Utah, forcing the governor to declare an emergency and restrict fireworks as critical weather across the West gives way to mounting concerns that anything could cause a spark.

Firefighters are facing more challenges on the ground from what fire managers and experts call unprecedented conditions.

Air tankers and helicopters were grounded Friday as winds picked up on the Cottonwood Fire, the largest blaze currently burning in the US. Gusts were clocked at 45 miles per hour (72 km/h) and humidity levels were in the single digits, leaving crews with few options for slowing the flames, especially as they raced through the treetops.

"We are not expecting the weather to be kind to us for the next couple of days," said Alyssa Mason, a spokesperson assigned to the fire.

"We are seeing extreme fire behavior out there with some crown runs and definitely some spotting."

Burning in a sparsely populated area of southern Utah, the Cottonwood Fire ballooned Friday to more than 112 square miles (290 square kilometers). One of several large wildfires burning in Utah, it severely damaged the Eagle Point ski resort in Beaver County and forced evacuations. In the community of Marysvale, the smoke blocked out the sun Friday as ash rained down.

"We're looking at a full 48 hours of critical weather that we have not seen in Utah in the last five years," meteorologist Jason Straub told a community meeting in Beaver County Friday evening.

A cold front on Sunday will bring winds that could push the fire in new

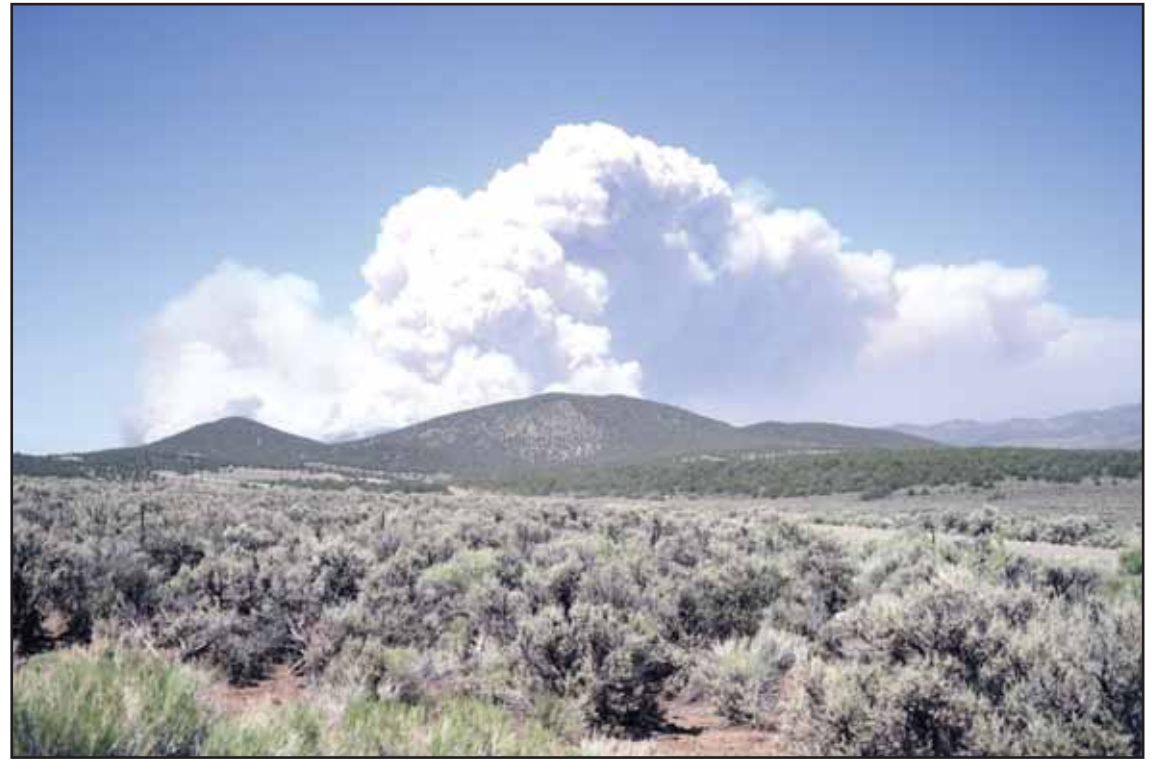
directions before the weather starts stabilizing next week, he said.

The smoke pushed mostly east, meaning air quality at popular vacation spots like Zion and Bryce Canyon national parks - located far south of the flames - hasn't been significantly affected beyond some haze in the Bryce area.

Still, the plume was visible from miles away, even as far as Colorado.

It's like nothing seen in recent memory, Utah state forester Jamie Barnes said earlier this week. She acknowledged that fires are spreading farther and faster "under conditions that defy historical expectations."

Nationally, nearly 3 million acres have burned since the start of the year, pushing the U.S. ahead of the 10-year average. The National Interagency Fire Center said firefighters are making progress on containing fires from Alaska to Florida.



A plume of smoke rises from the Cottonwood Fire, Friday, June 26, 2026, near Beaver, Utah. (AP)

Trump-backed Letlow faces Fleming in Louisiana GOP Senate runoff

Governor Newsom urges national 'billionaires' tax' while fighting one in California

LOS ANGELES, June 27, (AP): California Gov Gavin Newsom, a Democrat who is considering a run for president as he approaches the end of his term, called for a national "billionaires' tax" on Friday even as he fights another proposal targeting the wealthy in his home state.

Newsom also said the US government should own a stake in artificial intelligence companies. His proposals, outlined in a Substack post, aligns him with the Democratic Party's populist left, and he argued that urgent changes are needed to prevent the elite concentration of wealth and power from undermining democracy.

"It's time for an economic reset for America," Newsom wrote.

The governor announced his agenda a day after an influential health care union in California pledged to go forward with a ballot measure that would impose a one-time 5% tax on the assets of billionaires living in the state as of Jan. 1, 2026.

Newsom opposes that measure, as do many of the liberal interest groups that typically favor higher

taxes. They fear it would drive billionaires out of California, eroding the state's tax base over the long term for a one-time influx of cash. A technology mecca, California has more billionaires than any other state - a few hundred, by some estimates.

"You may not be able to pick up and move to Texas or Florida to shelter your income from taxation, but I promise you that billionaires can, and do," Newsom wrote. "Wealth is movable, and it shops for the state with the lowest taxes. The fight belongs at the federal level, where this broken system was created in the first place."

Newsom said the solution is a new national tax policy, rather than a state-by-state system. He proposed a minimum tax on anyone with a net worth above \$100 million. He also wants to make it illegal for the wealthy to borrow against their stock portfolios to fund their luxury lifestyles tax free.

Newsom said there should be new rules for inheritance taxes, warning that "the transfer of wealth among the ultra-wealthy will lock in a per-



California Gov Gavin Newsom mingles ahead of the Obama Presidential Center dedication ceremony on June 18 in Chicago. (AP)

manent American aristocracy of inherited wealth." And he wants to raise corporate tax rates to where they were before President Donald Trump's first-term tax cut.

The need is especially urgent as artificial intelligence threatens to displace workers and further concen-

trate wealth, he wrote.

"We need to ensure every American owns a stake in the future being built by AI through a national public equity fund that takes a major stake in the new economy," he wrote.

"Simply, as artificial intelligence reshapes the country, every American should own a piece of the future it builds."

Revenue generated by his proposals could be used to retrain workers, fund universal child care, make college free and increase funding for health care.

Newsom, who has drawn attention as one of Trump's most high-profile political antagonists, is getting an early start on laying out a policy framework for his potential White House bid months before the mid-term elections, which have typically marked the informal start of overt presidential campaigning.

The embrace of a wealth tax by Newsom, a moderate on tax policy despite his liberal reputation, signals a notable shift in the political landscape since Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren struggled to get traction in her 2020 campaign, which she largely centered around a 2% wealth tax.

Newsom portrayed the nation's tax code as a corrupt system built to help an elite few.

"Money buys influence, and influence rewrites the rules," he wrote.

"Those rewritten rules funnel even more wealth to the few. Under this weight, democracy itself starts to buckle."

US Rep Ro Khanna, a Democrat from Silicon Valley who is also considering running for president, said Newsom is trying to duck the California fight with a national proposal that goes too easy on billionaires. He supports the California ballot measure.

Also:
BATON ROUGE, La: US President Donald Trump's preferred candidate for US Senate in Louisiana is looking to clinch the GOP nomination Saturday and deliver another win for the president, who has sought to replace Republicans who cross him with hand-picked loyalists.

US Rep Julia Letlow, who was endorsed by Trump, and state Treasurer John Fleming are competing in the runoff. The two finished ahead of Sen Bill Cassidy in the May 16 primary after Trump denounced the two-term senator, who voted to convict him following his 2021 impeachment.



Smoke rises over the city center after a Russian attack on Kyiv, Ukraine on June 25. (AP)

Ukraine strikes industrial facility in Volgograd as Russia drone attack kills 1

KYIV, June 27, (AP): Ukraine struck a major industrial facility in the Russian city of Volgograd, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Saturday, while a Russian drone attack killed a man in Ukraine's north-eastern Sumy region overnight.

Ukraine stepped up its long-range aerial attacks on Russian military industries and energy facilities, aiming to cut Moscow's revenue for the war and make Russians feel the consequences of the invasion, now in its fifth year.

The campaign, which Zelenskyy has said aims to bring Russian President Vladimir Putin to the negotiating table, has choked Russian fuel supplies and military deliveries, stalling Moscow's efforts on the battlefield and heaping pressure on Putin, Western officials and analysts say.

Writing on X, Zelenskyy said that FP-5 Flamingo missiles hit the Titan-Barrakadya facility in Volgograd in southwestern Russia, describing it as a "major industrial complex" where

Russia "produces artillery systems and specialized military equipment, including components for missile launch systems."

According to Ukraine's General Staff, the facility manufactures equipment for missile systems, including self-propelled launchers and transport-loading vehicles for the Iskander-M missile system, which it said is "the same system Russia regularly uses to strike Ukrainian cities."

Volgograd Gov. Andrei Bocharov confirmed an attack on a business in the region's Krasnooktyabrsky district, saying 10 people had been wounded and taken to a hospital. He said production facilities at the site were damaged but did not identify the company.

Ukraine's state security service said Saturday morning that Ukrainian forces also struck an oil pumping facility in Russia's Vladimir region that supplies fuel to Moscow, for the second time this month.

The attacks came a day after

Ukraine launched what appeared to be one of Kyiv's biggest drone assaults since the Kremlin's full-scale invasion more than four years ago. The major nighttime attack targeted a dozen Russian regions, Russian-held Crimea and the surrounding seas, Moscow's Defense Ministry said Friday, noting that Russian air defenses intercepted 660 Ukrainian drones.

Zelenskyy said Thursday he had ordered "a 40-day influence operation," believed to mean an escalation of attacks, aimed at "compelling (Russia) to end the war" after US peace efforts over the past year yielded no breakthrough.

Meanwhile, in Ukraine's Sumy region, a 66-year-old man was killed in a Russian drone strike on a private residence in the region, regional head Oleh Hryhorov said Saturday.

Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin reported that 47 Ukrainian drones were downed as they flew toward the Russian capital. He did not report any casualties or damage.

Charles will not live at Buckingham Palace after completion of costly refurbishment

LONDON, June 27, (AP): King Charles III will not live at Buckingham Palace after the completion of a 10-year, 369 million-pound (\$487 million) refurbishment program as the monarchy seeks to increase public access to the historic building that has been the center of royal life for almost 200 years.

Royal officials stressed that the king and Queen Camilla would continue to work out of the palace, which will remain "the ceremonial and operational center" of the monarchy. But for the rest of Charles' reign, the king and queen will remain in nearby Clarence House.

"It is and will remain Monarchy HQ, the crown jewel of our national buildings," said James Chalmers, the senior royal official responsible for managing the king's financial affairs.

The decision was announced Thursday during a briefing on royal finances at which Charles became the first British monarch to reveal the taxes he paid to the government. The king paid 12.9 million pounds (\$16.1 million) in income and capital gains taxes in the 2024-25 financial year, up from 11.7 million pounds the previous year.

The announcements come as the royal family tries to shift the narrative after months of embarrassing headlines about the links between the convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein and the former Prince Andrew, now known as Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor.

The public's focus on Mountbatten-Windsor has overshadowed the king's efforts to modernize the monarchy and show that the 1,000-year-old institution can evolve.

Built in the 1820s, Buckingham Palace has been the London home of every British monarch since Queen Victoria. With 775 rooms, the pal-



Britain's King Charles III salutes the troops outside Buckingham Palace during Trooping the Colour, the King's annual birthday parade, in London on June 13. (AP)

ace also provides office space for the royal bureaucracy and hosts lavish state dinners for visiting presidents and potentates.

The palace is also a focal point for the public, with crowds gathering under its famous balcony to cheer as kings and queens announce the end of wars, celebrate their marriages and mark historic events, such as Queen Elizabeth II's 70 years on the throne. It also provides the backdrop for parades down the broad ceremonial avenue known as The Mall.

But after all the wear and tear, the palace was starting to show its age. In 2017, the royal household began a 10-year program to update obsolete plumbing, wiring and heating and upgrade the building so it could continue to house the monarchy for another 50 years. The project is scheduled to be completed next year.

But now the king and queen have

decided to live at Clarence House, a stately home close to the palace where Charles has lived since he was Prince of Wales.

That decision will allow the palace to increase access public access, hosting more events and expanding the number of visitors and tours of the building, Chalmers said. The palace already receives about 700,000 visitors a year.

Royal watchers are waiting for more details about plans for the palace. Ed Owens, author of "After Elizabeth: Can the Monarchy Save Itself," said it would be a shame if, for example, the building lies vacant for much of the year.

"I'm hoping for a second act in terms of this decision," he told The Associated Press. "I'm waiting to see whether there will be a sort of a more radical proposal for what Buckingham Palace might be in the future."

Europe

Four injured in Poland knife attack: Four people were wounded after a man attacked patients and staff with a sharp weapon at a hospital in Jastrzebie-Zdroj, southern Poland, on Thursday evening, Polish media RMF24 reported, citing local police.

The attack took place at the Provincial Specialist Hospital in Silesian Voivodeship. Three victims sustained stab wounds to the chest and one suffered neck injuries. Their conditions were serious but stable, hospital officials said.

The suspect was controlled by a ward chief before police arrived and was subsequently detained. Police are investigating the circumstances surrounding the attack. (Xinhua)



Heatwave fuels fires across BiH: Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) issued heat warnings for large parts of the country on Friday as temperatures were forecast to reach up to 38 degrees Celsius, while firefighters continued battling multiple fires fueled by the hot and dry weather.

According to the Federal Hydrometeorological Institute of BiH, orange heat alerts were issued for the southern, northern and western parts of the country.

In the southern city of Mostar, firefighters continued efforts to secure a major landfill, where a fire has burned since Monday. Authorities said the state of technical and technological emergency declared following the fire remains in force. (Xinhua)



Police officers stand guard after a migrant taxi-boat accident, in Equihen-Plage, northern France on April 9. (AP)

UK to open new sponsorship routes for eligible refugees

LONDON, June 27, (AP): Britain's government said it will open safe, legal routes for eligible refugees, while also changing human rights laws to make it easier to deport people who are in the country illegally.

The new routes will allow community groups, universities and employers to sponsor refugees to come to the UK. Authorities said the plan was inspired by a similar "community sponsorship" program in Canada that has settled some 400,000 people in the country since 1979.

"I will open new legal routes for genuine refugees, while closing loopholes that have been too often abused," Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood said Friday.

At the same time, Mahmood said, a new immigration law will seek to prevent "abuse" of human rights laws and crack down on "vexatious claims." It will tighten the definition of family so that it is restricted to immediate family members only.

Critics have said the European Convention on Human Rights is often cited to prevent the deportation of people who have no right to stay in the U.K.

Wife of S.Korea's ex-president Yoon sentenced to 7 years for corruption

N.Korea's Kim calls for 'destructive' military posture as South vows to boost drones

SEOUL, South Korea, June 27, (Agencies): North Korean leader Kim Jong Un observed major weapons tests and called for the military's "deadly and destructive offensive posture" to be bolstered, state media reported Friday, as South Korea announced it would drastically boost its drone warfare capabilities.

The development comes as tensions remain high on the Korean Peninsula, with Kim pushing to strengthen both nuclear and conventional military capabilities while refusing to return to talks with South Korea and the United States.

The tests watched by Kim on Thursday were meant to evaluate the power of a "special mission" warhead for a tactical ballistic missile, an upgraded multiple rocket launch system and the hit accuracy of shells with an extended firing range of a self-propelled gun-howitzer, the official Korean Central News Agency said.

KCNA cited Kim as saying results of the tests proved the technological progress achieved in a push to bring

about a change in the fire posture on southern border areas, implying the tested weapons systems target sites in South Korea including US military bases there.

Kim said North Korea's self-defense policy includes an objective to strengthen "the deadly and destructive offensive posture to make no enemy dare to confront," KCNA said. "To make the enemies feel constant uneasiness and fear is just an important aspect of the exercise of war deterrent."

KCNA said the special mission warhead tested is aimed at "inflicting fatal damage on major targets including airfields, ports and power facilities of the enemy."

Later Friday, South Korea's Defense Ministry announced plans to beef up its drone forces, citing growing military threats by North Korea which allegedly received technology assistance from Russia. The plans include developing long-range exploding drones, acquiring more than 20,000 low-cost reconnaissance and attack drones and training the country's entire 500,000 troops as "drone warriors."



In this photo provided on June 26, 2026, by the North Korean government, its leader Kim Jong Un, center right, visits the site of weapon tests at an undisclosed location, North Korea on June 25. (AP)

"North Korea is also currently receiving technology transfers from Russia, so there's an urgent need for us to respond proactively to the changing nature of warfare and the evolving operational environment," Defense Minister Ahn Gyu-back

told reporters.

Ahn said the plans reflect how low-cost loitering munitions like drones are becoming crucial in modern warfare, including in Russia's invasion of Ukraine that also involved thousands of North Korean troops fight-

ing alongside Russian troops. Ahn said the South Korean military plans to have 500,000 "drone warriors" across the army, navy, air force and marines who operate drones "easily like personal firearms."

North Korea has been focusing on enlarging its nuclear and missile arsenals since Kim's high-stakes diplomacy with US President Donald Trump collapsed in 2019. He's later underscored the need to build sophisticated conventional weapons as well.

On Tuesday, North Korea commissioned the 5,000-ton destroyer that Kim touted as a symbol of the country's growing naval and nuclear capabilities. The Choe Hyon is North Korea's most advanced warship.

In response to Trump's repeated outreach to restart diplomacy, Kim has suggested that talks can resume if the US drops its demand for denuclearization of North Korea as a precondition of diplomacy. Kim has taken a harsher posture on South Korea, calling it his country's "principal enemy" and building more military structures along the rivals' heavily fortified border.

Kim has boosted his diplomatic footprint in past years by expanding ties with Russia with his support of its war against Ukraine. Earlier this month, Chinese President Xi Jinping visited North Korea for the first time in seven years for a meeting with Kim.

Also:

SEOUL: Kim Keon-hee, wife of South Korea's former president Yoon Suk-yeol, was sentenced to seven years in prison for corruption, including the sale of government posts, live footage showed Friday.

The Seoul Central District Court handed down the prison sentence, saying Kim unhesitatingly received luxury goods that are practically unattainable for ordinary people.

The team of **Min Joong-ki**, an independent counsel who led investigations into corruption allegations involving the former presidential couple, sought a 7.5-year sentence for Kim for selling public offices in exchange for high-priced jewelry and luxury goods.

Kim's defense team reportedly planned to appeal the ruling.



A coastline is hit by high waves as a typhoon approaches Futtsu city, Chiba prefecture near Tokyo on June 27. (AP)

2 tropical storms pound Japan, causing flooding and landslides

Two major storm systems pounded Japan on Saturday, causing landslides and floods and leaving one dead and several injured, media and officials said.

The storms, Mekkhala and Higos, have dumped heavy rain and damaged roads as Japan experiences its annual rainy season.

A man in his 70s died and three others were injured

after a house collapsed in a landslide in Yamaguchi Prefecture on Friday, Japan's Kyodo News Agency reported.

Television footage from Kyoto showed the Kamo River swollen with churning, muddy water. A flooding alert was issued in parts of Kyoto, Osaka and other areas in western Japan. (AP)

Small plane crash at Beijing high-rise kills pilot and injures 13: authorities

BEIJING, June 27, (AP): Chinese authorities on Saturday said a small plane that crashed into a building in Beijing the day before had killed the pilot and injured 13 others.

The authorities of the Chaoyang district, a vibrant business area, said a two-seat light sport aircraft collided with a high-rise building near the East Third Ring Road at 5:55 p.m. on Friday and caused the casualties.

The short statement on WeChat did not identify the building or the pilot, who the authorities said was the only person on the craft.

The global flight-tracking service provider Flightradar24 on Friday said the plane crashed into the CITIC Tower, also known as China Zun, which rises more than 1,700 feet (528 meters), just east of a major ring road in a cluster of skyscrapers.

The 108-story CITIC tower is one of the most recognizable skyscrapers in Beijing and is the tallest building in the city.

Flightradar24 posted on social media the path of the plane, a Sunward SA 60L Aurora, which took off from an airport about 50 kilometers (30 miles) east of Beijing. It headed westward and ended just east of the East Third Ring Road.

Associated Press photos showed on Saturday apparent marks of the crash



A passerby tries to take photo of the damage on the Citic Tower also known as Zun Tower in Beijing, China on June 26. (AP)

on the glass facade on one side of the CITIC Tower. A hole there had been covered up.

It was not immediately known what caused the crash in a city with strict airspace controls, including a recent ban on drones. An investigation is underway into the situation, the authorities said.

It was also unclear whether the injured were in the building or were hit by debris, but the statement said they were receiving treatment.

The CITIC tower is just a roughly 20-minute drive from Zhongnanhai, a former imperial garden that now serves as headquarters of China's top leadership, and a 15-minute drive from the Forbidden City, a popular tourist attraction.

Social media posts about the crash were scrubbed from China's walled-off internet on Friday, though footage has made its way outside of China's firewall and is circulating on overseas sites such as X.com.

Crucial window for rescuing survivors narrows as Venezuela enters 3rd day after deadly twin quakes

LA GUAIRA, Venezuela, June 27, (AP): The situation has grown more desperate by the hour in Venezuela as people dig through the rubble of collapsed homes and apartment buildings three days after the devastating one-two punch of 7.2 and 7.5-magnitude earthquakes, knowing time is running out to find survivors.

Authorities announced Friday night that they would block access to La Guaira, the epicenter of the destruction, as chaos and traffic began to hamper search efforts. Officials said anyone who wants to enter would now have to seek official permits, but provided few details of who would be allowed in.

Venezuelans took the search for missing loved ones into their own hands, citing a scarcity of government rescuers, as the human toll of Wednesday's quakes climbed to at least 920 dead and more than 51,000 missing. People reported seeing few state rescue teams in the hardest-hit areas, despite authorities projecting an image of a robust government response.

Aid agencies consider the first 48 to 72 hours to be a crucial time frame to retrieve people alive, though that can be extended if they have access to food and water.

"Each person saved is a miracle," said Jorge Ro-

dríguez, president of the National Assembly. "We are not going to hide absolutely anything about the magnitude of this tragedy."

In the state of La Guaira, just north of the capital, Caracas, Nazareth Jimenez sobbed into a loved one's shoulder as she watched neighbors use hammers and power tools to try to cut through slabs of concrete in a building reduced to a mountain of debris. She was wracked with anxiety as she waited to see if her siblings, nephews, nieces and friends would emerge alive.

"My God, how are we going to get them out of there?" Jimenez murmured.

"We're making a call for help to the government and countries across the world," she said, pleading for machinery capable of moving collapsed structures. "There are still people alive in there."

Government forces distributed food and water to survivors in La Guaira, and acting President Delcy Rodríguez said her government was mounting a full response during these "critical hours for rescuing people alive."

She welcomed the arrival of international rescuers and humanitarian aid. She said La Guaira had been militarized and more help was on the way, even as residents said it was just a fraction of what they needed.

The disaster poses a huge challenge for Rodríguez, the former vice president who took office in January after the capture and removal of then-President Nicolás Maduro by the United States. Venezuela has been facing economic disarray for more than a decade, and many people reject the legitimacy of the political movement Rodríguez represents.

The number of dead was expected to climb, and people reported tens of thousands of missing on independent digital databases. Those figures likely included people who have been incommunicado due to the lack of cellphone signals, and some reports may be duplicates.

The number of injured was more than 3,300 as of midday Friday, and authorities said they rescued 243.

The International Organization for Migration said up to 6.76 million people could be affected, some 2 million of them in Caracas alone. The destruction was amplified by the quick succession of shallow quakes, experts said.

Loyce Pace, the International Red Cross' regional director for the Americas, said "people are still terrified to reenter what were their homes."

Indeed, many continued to sleep on the street. Omar Reyes said around 20 family members died.



Residents and rescue workers search through the rubble two days after an earthquake struck in La Guaira, Venezuela on June 26. (AP)

Asia

6.6-magnitude offshore quake hits Philippines: The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology said a 6.6-magnitude offshore earthquake struck Davao Oriental province in the southern Philippines on Friday evening.

The institute said the tectonic earthquake occurred at 7:34 p.m. local time at a depth of 10 km, with the epicenter 90 km southwest of the coast of Balut Island.

A 7.8-magnitude quake struck the region on June 8, killing at least 81.

The Philippines, an archipelagic nation in Southeast Asia, is frequently affected by earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and tsunamis due to its location along the Pacific "Ring of Fire," a vast horseshoe-shaped zone of intense seismic and volcanic activity surrounding the Pacific Ocean. (Xinhua)

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Myanmar destroys large amounts of narcotics: Myanmar authorities marked the 39th International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking on Friday, destroying large quantities of seized narcotics and precursor chemicals in ceremonies held in Yangon, Mandalay and Taunggyi.

Official figures showed that narcotic drugs and precursors worth 603.77 million U.S. dollars, seized from across the country, were destroyed during the events.

The destroyed narcotics included 31 kinds of drugs worth more than 321.32 million dollars in Yangon, 27 kinds worth 113.68 million dollars in Mandalay, and 93 kinds worth 168.77 million dollars in Taunggyi. (Xinhua)

Subcontinent

Gunmen kill 4 in NW Pakistan: Four people were killed after unidentified armed assailants opened fire on a private ambulance in Pakistan's northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province on Friday, police sources said.

The attack occurred in Bannu district, where gunmen targeted the ambulance, killing all four occupants, the sources told Xinhua.

A heavy police contingent rushed to the scene after receiving information about the incident and shifted the bodies to a nearby hospital.

Police cordoned off the area and collected forensic evidence from the crime scene.

Initial investigations suggest that the attack may have been an act of terrorism, although authorities said all possible angles are being examined.

A search operation has been launched to trace and arrest the attackers, while an investigation into the incident is underway.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attack. (Xinhua)

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Afghan road mishap claims 2 lives: Two commuters were killed and 10 others sustained injuries in a road accident in Ghazni province, east of Afghanistan, on Thursday night, provincial police spokesman Khalid Sarhadi said Friday.

Blaming reckless driving for the deadly mishap, the official noted that all the injured, some in critical condition, had been shifted to a nearby hospital. Earlier, a similar accident left one dead and injured nine others in the western Badghis province on Tuesday. (Xinhua)

Burkina Faso cuts diplomatic ties with France

Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, June 27, (AP): Burkina Faso's military government severed diplomatic ties with France, its former colonial ruler that had been a key security partner for the West African nation before relations fractured.

The junta said in a statement Friday it broke off relations with France effective immediately, accusing it of "blatant neo-colonial ambitions and active support for subversive networks and terrorists," without providing evidence.

France's Foreign Ministry spokesman Pascal Confavreux said in a statement that the country regrets the "hostile and unfounded decision, which illustrates the worrying drift of the Burkinabè authorities."

"Necessary reciprocal measures are currently under review," he said. Confavreux added that France is monitoring the safety of French government personnel and citizens in Burkina Faso and urged them to exercise heightened vigilance.

The West African country of 23 million people has been battered by yearslong violence perpetrated by extremist groups linked to al-Qaida and the Islamic State group, as well



In this photo provided by RIA Novosti, Burkina Faso President Ibrahim Traore arrives at the Grand Palace at the Kremlin in Moscow, Russia, on May 10, 2025. (AP)

as government forces often accused of extrajudicial killings. Its wider Sahel region is the world's deadliest region for extremism.

It was unclear what would follow the end of diplomatic relations or how the French embassy in Burkina Faso would be affected.

"The conditions essential for fostering relations based on mutual respect, reciprocal trust, and respect for the principle of non-interference in internal affairs and national sovereignty are no longer met," Burkina Faso's Communications Minister Pingdwené Gilbert Ouedraogo said in a statement.

Kuwait oil price surges to \$77.34 pb

KUWAIT CITY, June 27, (KUNA): Price of Kuwaiti crude oil rose by 53 cents to USD 77.34 pb in Friday's trading, up from USD 76.81 per barrel on Thursday, according to Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on

Saturday. In global markets, Brent crude fell USD 3.27 to settle at USD 71.99 pb, while US West Texas Intermediate declined USD 2.69 to USD 69.23 pb.

Business

In collaboration with MEIRA

Boursa Kuwait hosts meeting on market outlook & economic perspectives

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: As part of its efforts to advance investor relations practices, reinforce transparency and support the development of the Kuwaiti capital market, Boursa Kuwait hosted an event entitled "Kuwait Capital Market Outlook: Market Developments and Investor Perspectives" on Tuesday, June 23, 2026, bringing together representatives from the exchange, the economic research sector and investor relations professionals from listed companies.

Organized in collaboration with the Middle East Investor Relations Association (MEIRA) and its Kuwait Chapter, the event explored market prospects and economic perspectives while facilitating an exchange of views on key financial developments in Kuwait.

The meeting opened with welcome remarks from Mr. Fahad Abdulmohsen Al-Besher, IR Director of Boursa Kuwait and Mr. Mohammad Abdal, Head of the MEIRA Kuwait Chapter and Chief Corporate Affairs and Communications Officer at Zain Group.

Investor relations in times of volatility

The discussions took on particular significance amid the heightened geopolitical uncertainty witnessed across the region in recent months and its impact on investor sentiment and economic activity. They also highlighted the importance of listed companies remaining prepared to navigate these developments by maintaining clear communication channels and ensuring timely disclosure to preserve market confidence.

"The strategic partnership between Boursa Kuwait and the Middle East Investor Relations Association (MEIRA) reflects our shared commitment to strengthening the foundations of investor relations across Kuwait's capital market," said IR Director at Boursa Kuwait Mr. Fahad Abdulmohsen Al-Besher.

"Effective investor engagement, transparent disclosure and consistent corporate communication are no longer supplementary practices and have become essential to strengthening market confidence, reinforcing corporate credibility and supporting long-term capital formation," he said.

Al-Besher affirmed that Boursa Kuwait continues to support listed companies in adopting the latest international best practices to enhance the effectiveness of investor communication and reinforce Kuwait's position as a trusted investment destination.

Structural upgrades and product development strengthen market resilience

In his presentation, Senior Director of Product Development and Data Services Mr. Ahmad Mohammad Al-Jasem showcased the progress of the Market Development Program, highlighting the pivotal role of structural reforms in enhancing the resilience of the operational environment, its ability to absorb volatility and the stability of trading amid the prevailing geopolitical uncertainty.

Al-Jasem explained that the latest series of substantial enhancements, which included the implementation of the Central Counterparty system (CCP), the activation of cash settlements through the Central Bank of Kuwait's KASSIP system, the upgrade of brokerage firms to Qualified Broker status and the development of closing auction mechanisms, has served as an important safeguard by improving the efficiency of clearing and settlement processes and reducing operational risks. These enhancements have further strengthened the confidence of regulatory authorities and the investment community in the market's efficiency and ability to withstand external shocks.

"Expanding the product base through the introduction of fixed-income instruments, including bonds and sukuk, as well as exchange-traded funds (ETFs), represents a strategic step toward providing a broader range of investment and financing options that enable investors to hedge and manage risk effectively during challenging periods," he added.

"This solid foundation also paves the way for the tran-



Boursa Kuwait organizes Capital Market Outlook event.

- The event brought together investor relations professionals from listed companies to discuss key trends shaping capital markets and investor engagement practices
- The sessions featured a presentation on recent developments in the Kuwaiti capital market and Boursa Kuwait's latest products, as well as a panel discussion on the outlook for the Kuwaiti economy amid current geopolitical developments

sition to the new trading system and the introduction of financial derivatives, supporting the development of a deeper financial market characterized by the highest standards of transparency and global competitiveness."

Market outlook and economic perspectives: structural resilience and strategic disclosure

The event featured a fireside chat examining the key dimensions of the current economic landscape. Moderated by Ms. Eman Alawadhi, Group Senior Vice President of Corporate Communications and Investor Relations at KIPCO, the session hosted Chief Economist at the National Bank of Kuwait Mr. Daniel Kaye, who presented an insightful analytical framework for the investment community and listed companies, exploring the direct and indirect implications of geopolitical developments for the local and regional business environment.

Discussions covered their impact on energy markets, shipping activity through the Strait of Hormuz, banking liquidity and credit growth, as well as the resulting implications for Kuwait's sovereign credit rating and the resilience of its financial sector. They also highlighted the pivotal role of investor relations professionals during periods of uncertainty.

Participants agreed that clear and consistent disclosure is no longer merely a regulatory requirement, but a strategic tool that enables companies to communicate their operational and financial resilience and helps markets assess risks fairly without being driven by short-term shifts in sentiment.

Commenting on the growth outlook, Mr. Kaye emphasized that Kuwait's strong fiscal position and the role of government spending provide the non-oil economy with

sufficient resilience to absorb geopolitical shocks, stating:

"The real challenge lies not just in overcoming the immediate impact of the crisis, but in maintaining the momentum of reforms and major development projects that will shape the quality of future growth."

Addressing listed companies and investors, Mr. Kaye added, "The resilience of the recovery will depend on the stability of trade flows and financial conditions. During such critical periods, the true value of investor relations becomes particularly evident, as providing an accurate and transparent view of financing priorities and long-term plans is essential to preserving corporate credibility and sustaining the confidence of both local and international investors."

Pillars of sustainability and strategic partnership

The event represents a key component of Boursa Kuwait's corporate sustainability strategy and reflects its longstanding partnership with the Middle East Investor Relations Association (MEIRA) and its Kuwait Chapter, which aims to deepen the culture of governance and reinforce transparency in alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 4, "Quality Education," and Goal 17, "Partnerships for the Goals." These efforts contribute to enhancing market efficiency and expanding knowledge among all stakeholders across the investment ecosystem.

"This meeting reflects the active role that Boursa Kuwait plays in advancing investor relations practices and strengthening communication between listed companies, capital markets and the investment community. Our engagements have become even more significant today, as

rapidly evolving geopolitical developments and heightened uncertainty across the region have established new expectations for corporate communication," said Mr. Mohammad Abdal, Head of the MEIRA Kuwait Chapter and Chief Corporate Affairs and Communications Officer at Zain Group.

"At the same time, rising expectations from the investment community place greater responsibility on listed companies to enhance the quality of their disclosure, uphold transparency and maintain consistent communication in line with international best practices," he added.

"The quality of disclosure and the clarity of investment messaging have become increasingly important, as investor relations have evolved into a strategic function that extends well beyond shareholder communications to building trust and supporting fair corporate valuations. This collaboration provides a pivotal platform that empowers listed companies to cultivate stronger relationships with investors, serving as an important safeguard for capital market stability while enhancing its regional and international competitiveness," Abdal said.

Practical tools that make a lasting impact on market efficiency

The longstanding collaboration between Boursa Kuwait and the Middle East Investor Relations Association (MEIRA) has resulted in several high-value knowledge initiatives, most notably the "Investor Relations Best Practices Guide", which serves as a strategic and practical reference that equips listed companies with the professional tools required to manage their communications with agility and efficiency during both stable and volatile market conditions.

These knowledge-building efforts complement Boursa Kuwait's ongoing structural development initiatives, which aim to strengthen the capital market and broaden its horizons. Together, they directly reinforce Kuwait's position as an attractive and sustainable investment destination, distinguished by high standards of efficiency and transparency.

As part of its corporate responsibility, Boursa Kuwait recognizes that its strategic success is closely linked to the prosperity of the national economy and the development of society. The exchange continues to lead and support initiatives that generate positive environmental and social impact while adopting international best practices in environmental, social and governance (ESG) matters. These efforts help advance financial literacy and create sustainable long-term value for all stakeholders.

The discussion forms part of Boursa Kuwait's corporate sustainability strategy and builds on its longstanding strategic partnership with the Middle East Investor Relations Association and its Kuwait Chapter.

The collaboration reflects Boursa Kuwait's commitment to promoting best practices in investor relations, strengthening standards of transparency and corporate governance and enhancing awareness and knowledge among market participants and is aligned with Goal 4 on Quality Education and Goal 17 on Partnerships for the Goals of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Over the years, Boursa Kuwait has collaborated with the Middle East Investor Relations Association to organize a series of webinars, panel discussions and workshops, as well as develop joint resources. These include the Investor Relations Best Practice Guide, which serves as an important reference for market participants and equips them with the knowledge and tools required to navigate investor relations effectively and professionally.

Boursa Kuwait has also launched several initiatives aimed at enabling companies and investors to capitalize on the opportunities available in the market and contributing to Kuwait's position as an attractive and thriving investment destination, supported by an efficient and transparent capital market apparatus.

Other Voices

Oil price is falling, how low will it go?

By Kamel Al-Harami
Independent Oil Analyst

From its peak of over \$100 a barrel three weeks ago, oil price fell to its current low level of about \$70. The decline is continuing unless OPEC+ calls for immediate action through further production cuts.

The other concern is how far oil prices will fall, hurting the economies of oil-producing countries and creating huge deficits in their annual budgets. As a result, many of these countries may be forced to borrow from international banks, since most oil-producing nations base their budgets on an oil price of around \$90 per barrel. This will inevitably lead to substantial budget deficits.



Al-Harami

The question is: How long some oil-producing and oil-exporting countries can continue depending on a single source of income? There is already a surplus of oil, with more supplies expected to enter the market from various parts of the world. Proven global oil reserves stand at about 1.6 trillion barrels, while annual consumption is around 106 million barrels per day. This results in abundant availability with little concern about future shortages, provided demand remains steady and exploration and drilling continue, bringing additional production on stream.

Oil-producing countries should be concerned about their long-term prospects in the midst of weakening oil prices. The continuous decline in prices means continuing to face large budget deficits, while remaining dependent on one primary source of income. Searching for alternatives to oil is the answer, but the real question is: How to identify, develop and successfully replace oil as the main source of national income?

It seems that this time the decline in oil

prices is likely to continue, with no clear signs of stabilization. There is simply too much oil in the market, with even more expected to come. Spare production capacity remains substantial, while demand is not growing strongly.

Although global demand may increase by about one million barrels per day, which is considered normal annual growth, the problem remains that there is too much oil available and insufficient demand growth to absorb the additional crude supplies.

The short-term outlook for crude oil prices is not encouraging. There appears to be little room for additional oil to be consumed, and the current surplus is likely to persist. With no immediate solutions available, oil prices may continue to fall.

At present, no producer seems willing to reduce crude oil production for only a short period, only to face the same situation again a few months later.

For many years, OPEC and OPEC+ have dealt with similar market conditions. However, OPEC seems to have grown weary of repeatedly reducing production, only to encounter the same oversupply problem again a few months later, with limited success.

It may be time for OPEC to allow production to follow normal market conditions without further intervention and to let oil prices adjust naturally, without production restrictions.

Meanwhile, producers outside OPEC have increasingly influenced the market. As a result, OPEC and OPEC+ no longer appear to be as effective as they once were.

It is time for other oil producers to assume greater responsibility for stabilizing oil prices. The burden should no longer rest solely on OPEC.

Perhaps, it is time for OPEC to step back and allow others to play a bigger role in restoring balance in the market.

Oil price is declining and it is time for other oil producers to become actively involved. It may be time to give OPEC a break.

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Enriching customer experience with the best innovative digital services

NBK provides customers easy around the clock access to their valuables through digital safety deposit boxes



Hisham Al Nusif

Al Nusif: We are committed to providing innovative services that keep up with the banking sector's fast-paced technological progress.

■ The customers' satisfaction and providing them with the best banking service is an integral part of the bank's culture.

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: National Bank of Kuwait's automated safe deposit box service allows customers to easily access their valuables 24/7, without the need for staff intervention, through a smart automated mechanism that retrieves the safety deposit box and delivers it to the customer inside a private room, ensuring the highest levels of privacy and comfort.

NBK is the first bank in Kuwait to offer this service, in a step that reflects its leadership in providing advanced banking solutions that combine innovation and meeting the growing customer needs, in addition to keeping pace with the latest global trends that incorporate technology in traditional services.

This service offers an advanced experience that meets the aspirations of customers seeking secure, fast, and flexible solutions. It grants them complete control over managing their safe deposit boxes according to their own schedule, enhancing their independence and keeping pace with their fast-paced lifestyles.

Moreover, digital safety deposit boxes feature the highest security standards. They are designed using fire-resistant materials, providing reliable

protection for valuables and important documents from potential risks, while also ensuring the highest levels of confidentiality and privacy.

Providing this service comes as part of the Bank's ongoing efforts to develop its services by incorporating the latest digital solutions, further contributing to improving customer experience and providing more efficient and seamless services.

On this occasion, Mr. Hisham Al Nusif Chief, Consumer Banking - Consumer Banking Group said: "We are proud to be the first bank in Kuwait to provide such a smart solution that combines safety and easy access,"

which grants our customers greater control over their valuables 24/7 with complete privacy. We diligently work towards enhancing the Bank's leading role by providing exceptional digital financial services that can keep up with the banking sector's fast-paced technological progress around the world. Moreover, we will always prioritize providing an exceptional banking experience that not only meets our customers' needs but also predicts their future aspirations".



Al Nusif also emphasized that NBK will continue to provide the best banking solutions by focusing on the opinions and suggestions of the customers and using advanced databases to form a comprehensive idea that contributes to enhancing their experience, interactions, and satisfaction, as well as meeting their needs. Indicated that in doing so, NBK is committed to keeping up with the latest market trends and further underpinning its leadership in digital innovation by continuously introducing services that merge innovation, convenience and security while adopting effective and advanced technological solutions.

The Bank will also continue to enhance the value it provides for its customers through innovative products and services that meet their aspirations and align with recent international trends, as customer satisfaction is essential at NBK.

NBK strives to keep building a long record of high quality services by adopting more technologically innovative initiatives that should accelerate providing them in markets and further enhance customer experience.



Kuwait Finance House Group participating in the conference.

Bank participated in Global Banking & Markets Middle East Conference

KFH Group highlights its leadership in banking, capital markets, & Islamic finance

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) Group participated in the prestigious Global Banking & Markets Middle East (GBM Middle East) Conference, held at Madinat Jumeirah Conference & Events Centre in Dubai. The event is recognized as one of the Middle East's leading financial gatherings, bringing together more than 2,000 senior decision-makers, investors, issuers, sovereign representatives, corporates, and banking experts from across the region and international markets. The conference hosts over 140 industry speakers and facilitates hundreds of business meetings annually, making it a key platform for advancing regional and global financial cooperation.

Speaking on the occasion, General Manager Corporate Banking and Syndication at KFH, Nasser AlShaya, said that KFH's participation reflects its position as a leading financial institution and a key player in supporting economic growth and major development projects across its markets of operation.

He noted that KFH leveraged the conference to engage with a diverse network of banking institutions, investors, corporates, and financial market participants, while showcasing its comprehensive range of financing and banking solutions.

"KFH is one of the world's largest Islamic financial institutions and a leading banking group. Through our participation, we highlighted our capabilities in corporate banking, syndicated finance, project finance, trade finance, treasury solutions, and capital markets services, in addition to our innovative Islamic banking products designed to meet the evolving needs of customers and businesses," AlShaya said.

He added that the conference provided valuable opportunities to strengthen existing relationships, explore new business prospects, and discuss financing



Nasser AlShaya

Khalid AlRukhayes

AlShaya: KFH showcases integrated financing solutions and strengthens strategic partnerships
AlRukhayes: Conference provides a platform to discuss capital markets, sukuk, treasury, and investment opportunities

opportunities linked to infrastructure, energy, real estate, and other strategic sectors.

Meanwhile, Deputy General Manager Global Markets Trading and Investments at KFH, Khalid AlRukhayes, said that the conference serves as an important platform for discussing developments shaping global and regional financial markets, including treasury activities, fixed income, sukuk markets, investment strategies, risk management, and emerging opportunities in the GCC and wider region.

"The event gathers influential decision-makers from banks, sovereign entities, investment institutions, asset managers, and corporate issuers, creating a unique environment for exchanging market insights and exploring collaboration opportunities," AlRukhayes stated.

He explained that KFH's participation aligns with its strategy to remain closely engaged with market developments and industry trends while strengthening cooperation with key stakeholders across the financial ecosystem.

AlRukhayes added that KFH representatives held constructive discussions with market participants on developments in capital markets, sukuk issuances, liquidity management, treasury solutions, and investment opportunities. These discussions highlighted KFH's expertise in global markets and its commitment to delivering value-driven solutions to clients and investors.

He noted that KFH's presence at the conference further reinforces its leadership in Islamic banking and finance, while supporting its efforts to expand partnerships and contribute to the development of regional financial markets.

Visitors to the KFH pavilion, including investors, fund managers, banking professionals, and financial market specialists, expressed strong interest in the Group's products and services. They commended KFH's consistent growth, solid financial performance, innovation capabilities, and its leading role in advancing Islamic finance both regionally and globally.

JPMorgan boosts dividend after stress test clearance

All 32 major US banks pass Fed's 'stress test'

NEW YORK, June 27, (AP): All 32 of the nation's biggest banks passed the Federal Reserve's annual "stress test" of the financial system, the central bank said Wednesday, a sign that the banking system would remain healthy even if a major economic contraction occurred.

The annual stress test measures whether a bank's capital, a financial cushion it uses to absorb losses, would remain at healthy levels even after hundreds of billions of dollars in projected losses. The tests are required under the Dodd-Frank Act, the law passed after the 2008 financial crisis that nearly brought down the global financial system.

The 2026 scenario that the Fed used is similar to the one they used last year. In the Fed's scenario, unemployment would rise from 5.5% to 10% and the U.S. economy would contract 4.6%. Housing prices would fall 30% from their current levels and the stock market would plunge 58%.

The scenario would result in the nation's 32 biggest banks facing \$708 billion in loan losses, but the overall capital ratio of these banks would fall only 1.6 percentage points, from 12.8% to 11.2%. By law and regulation, these large banks' common equity Tier 1 capital ratio must remain above 4.5%, plus additional buffers that vary by bank.

The stress test applied only to the nation's most systematically important banks, those whose failures would bring significant turmoil to the financial system.

A bank that performed poorly on the stress test could face higher capital requirements, which could limit its ability to pay dividends or buy back stock. Banks typically announce their plans for dividends and share repurchases after the Fed releases the stress-test results. Shortly after the Fed's announcement, JPMorgan Chase said it would increase its quarterly dividend to \$1.65 a share from \$1.50 a share, and intends to buy back an additional \$50 billion in stock.

Trump threatens with 100% tariff

US-EU trade rift deepens over digital services taxes

WASHINGTON, June 27, (AP): President Donald Trump on Friday threatened a 100% tax on imports from any country that imposes a tax on digital services from United States companies.

In a post on social media, Trump took aim at European countries that he said are discussing "imminent" implementation of taxes on American companies. The U.S. president has repeatedly sought to use tariffs as way to deter such taxes, but many countries are looking for revenues as their economies increasingly operate in digital realms that are dominated by American companies.

"Please let this statement serve to represent that any Country that imposes such a Tax will immediately be met with a 100% TARIFF on any and all Goods sent to the United States of America," Trump wrote.

He added that the new tax would supersede any previously negotiated trade deals. Trump said the penalty would apply to any country that moves forward with such a tax, but he singled out European nations in his post.

The move could lead to a larger showdown that could increase prices and hinder economic growth, possibly setting off a larger trade war if the 27-member European Union was compelled to retaliate.

"Unilateral measures targeting such legitimate policies are unjustified. If pursued, the EU will respond swiftly and decisively to defend its rights and regulatory autonomy," said Olof Gill, a spokesperson for the European Commission on Friday.

He defended taxation on technology companies as "non-discriminatory" and applied equally to "all large companies, regardless of their origin."

Trump has repeatedly pushed against foreign efforts to tax or regulate American tech giants. Last year, he threatened new tariffs on any country that

moved to do so. A post from last August said that digital taxes and regulation "are all designed to harm, or discriminate against, American Technology."

The threat comes ahead of Trump's July 4 deadline for the European Union and the United States to start implementing a tariff deal that caps tariffs on most EU exports at 15%.

The European Union in May finalized a trade deal with the United States that caps most tariffs on EU exports at 15%. The deal followed months of debate within the EU after European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen tentatively struck the deal last year while visiting Trump's golf course in Scotland.

Digital taxes were not part of the agreement and have remained a sticking point between the U.S. and the European bloc.

The U.S. government has previously conducted tariff investigations into digital services taxes under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974. But it was unclear how Trump would carry out his threat and whether he would apply the tariffs broadly or initially target certain nations.

Britain, which is no longer part of the EU, has since 2020 levied a 2% digital services tax on revenues earned by search engines, social media sites and online marketplaces that "derive value" from U.K. users.

The British government said in a policy document at the time that corporate tax rules for digital businesses had "led to a misalignment between the place where profits are taxed and the place where value is created."

The U.K. tax includes thresholds, so mainly large international companies will pay it. The tax was designed to "ensure the large multinational businesses in large-scale make a fair contribution to supporting vital public services," the document said.

'Retirement planning starts with cash'

Take this simple step as you approach retirement

An important job in the two or so years leading up to retirement-right up there with figuring out your healthcare coverage and winding down your work activities-is building up a cash cushion. In addition to being there as a source of funding when you eventually retire, cash has the salutary effect of providing a buffer if you retire earlier than you expected due to unforeseen circumstances.

As you build out your Bucket portfolio, here's some guidance on the amount, source, and location of those liquid reserves.

Your cash bucket should consist of one to two years' worth of portfolio withdrawals, not living expenses. That's because at least some of your living expenses will likely be coming from outside your portfolio- Social Security or a pension, for example. And the composition of those cash flow sources may well change throughout your retirement.

To set up your Bucket 1 initially, think through your cash flow sources for the first few years of retirement. Let's say a 66-year-old wants to retire in two years and expects that he'll need to spend \$80,000 per year, in total, from his \$1.5 million portfolio, at that time. He wants to delay filing for Social Security until age 70, so all of his spending will come from his portfolio in those first few years of retirement. After that, roughly half his spending needs will come from Social Security.

If he wanted to be conservative, he could build a cash cushion consisting of \$160,000- his years 1 and 2 portfolio withdrawals. His Bucket 2-high-quality bonds-would consist of eight years' worth of portfolio withdrawals, which at that point will be \$40,000 per year (his \$80,000 total spending less Social Security income). The remaining \$1 million and change could go into a globally diversified equity portfolio.

In addition to thinking through the size of



This Oct. 24, 2016 file photo, shows dollar bills in New York. (AP)

your liquid reserves bucket, it's also worth considering the "where" of it. Will you hold cash in your taxable accounts, tax-sheltered accounts, or some in both? To help answer that question, you need to consider your sequence of withdrawals in retirement.

Taxable accounts are often first in the queue for retirement withdrawals because their ongoing tax costs are higher than those of tax-sheltered accounts. (In a taxable account, you enjoy long-term capital gains tax treatment on the sale of appreciated winners you've held for more than a year, but ordinary income is dunned at your higher ordinary income tax rate.) But some retirees may benefit from spending from their tax-deferred accounts early in retirement, with an eye toward reducing future required minimum distributions and tax bills. This is a good spot to get advice from a financial or tax adviser. Armed with the knowledge of where you'll turn for your spending in the first part of your retirement, you can then figure out where best to hold your liquid reserves.

Once you've determined how much of a cash bucket you plan to set aside and where

you'll hold it, the next step is figuring out how to build it up. Ideally, you'd give yourself a couple of years to enlarge your cash position rather than having to find the money just before retirement. Many people moving into retirement will have a few options.

Additional savings: For pre-retirees who are still saving, a logical way to begin bulking up cash is to direct new contributions into cash. Say, for example, the aforementioned retiree is making the maximum allowable 401(k) contribution of \$32,500 and putting another \$8,600 into an IRA. By directing two years' worth of contributions to cash in those two accounts, he could arrive at nearly half his target cash allocation (\$82,200 of his \$160,000 target) by the time he reaches his retirement.

Bonuses and inheritances: If you've recently received a surprise cash injection, the assets are a logical source for bulking up cash reserves. They're probably already in cash and in a taxable account.

Rebalancing: Trimming equities and adding those assets to cash and bonds provides a twofold for people closing in on retirement: It reduces risk and helps cover cash flows for the first few years of retirement. This kind of selling can trigger a tax bill, so get some tax advice and/or concentrate rebalancing in tax-sheltered accounts to lessen the impact.

Reducing risky positions: Even if your portfolio's asset allocation doesn't need adjusting, you may still have problematic holdings in your portfolio: the employer stock you know you should scale back on, the individual-stock portfolio that's duplicative of what's in your mutual funds, or the costly active fund that hasn't earned its keep relative to an inexpensive exchange-traded fund. Such holdings can be ideal sources when building up your cash reserves, just mind the tax consequences if you're selling them from a taxable account. (AP)

Unbeatable deals and interactive technology experiences

Lulu Hypermarkets launches 'Let's Connect' Tech Festival across Kuwait



Photos during the event.

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: Lulu Hypermarkets has officially launched its much-anticipated annual tech promotion, "Let's Connect" Sponsored by Motorola, bringing together the latest innovations, exclusive deals, and immersive experiences for customers across Kuwait. The promotion will run from June 25 to July 10, 2026, offering shoppers an exciting opportunity to explore cutting-edge technology while enjoying some of the biggest tech promotions of the year.

The grand inauguration of the festival took place at Lulu Hypermarket Al Rai, where Lulu's senior management and invited officials formally launched the event, marking the beginning of a nationwide celebration of technology, connectivity, and innovation. The launch ceremony highlighted Lulu's commitment to bringing the latest technological advancements and value-driven offers to customers while creating engaging experiences for families and technology enthusiasts.

As one of the largest technology-focused promotions organized by Lulu Hypermarkets, "Let's Connect" features exceptional offers across a wide range of product categories, including smartphones, accessories, consumer electronics, home appliances, and smart technology solutions.

The event showcases the latest innovations in mobile technology and smart devices, providing customers with access to new-generation products and hands-on demonstrations. The partnership enhances the festival's focus on innovation, allowing visitors to experience emerging technologies and discover products designed to simplify and enrich everyday life.

Shoppers can take advantage of exclusive discounts and special promotions on products from some of the world's most popular technology brands, including Apple, Samsung, Sony, Panasonic, and many more. From flagship smartphones and wearable devices to home entertainment systems and household appliances, the festival offers attractive deals across a comprehensive

range of technology products.

One of the standout attractions of this year's event is the Robotics & AI Workshop Zone. Sponsored by Mee tech AI Steam Education in collaboration with UBTECH International Robotics, China an interactive learning space designed to inspire curiosity and innovation among students and visitors. The workshop offers participants the opportunity to explore robot assembling, concepts, and demonstrations conducted by experienced instructors. The initiative reflects Lulu's commitment to supporting educational engagement and encouraging interest in future technologies among younger generations.

Customers are invited to visit Lulu Hypermarkets to experience the excitement of the "Let's Connect" Tech Festival, explore the latest innovations, participate in interactive activities, and enjoy exclusive offers available for a limited time

Trump tightens grip on AI releases

WASHINGTON, June 27, (AP): ChatGPT maker OpenAI said Friday it is restricting the release of its new artificial intelligence model at the request of President Donald Trump's administration, the latest in an unprecedented government vetting of AI products for cybersecurity risks.

Its chief rival, Anthropic, announced hours later that the Trump administration has approved a limited release of its strongest cybersecurity model, two weeks after the U.S. Commerce Department effectively banned it.

Both companies said their newest models would be available to small groups of trusted partners. OpenAI said its new AI product, called GPT-5.6 Sol, would be accessible only to customers approved by the Trump administration.

"We don't believe this kind of government access process should become the long-term default," OpenAI said in a statement. The company said it viewed the testing period as a temporary step on the "path to broader availability in the coming weeks."

OpenAI's staggered release of a powerful new AI system follows actions the government took earlier this month against Anthropic, maker of the Claude chatbot. Anthropic took offline two new AI models, known as Fable 5 and Mythos 5, just days after unveiling them to comply with a Trump directive blocking their use by foreign nationals. The government on Friday lifted restrictions on one of those models, Mythos 5, enabling it to be "redeployed to a small group of cyber defenders and infrastructure providers," Anthropic said.

The White House said Friday it continues to collaborate with frontier AI labs on addressing the challenges of scaling the fast-growing technology.

Officials have grown increasingly concerned since Anthropic warned earlier this year that its Mythos model was adept at finding software flaws in a way that could be weaponized by malicious hackers and threaten critical computer networks around the world.

Trump earlier in June signed an executive order on AI oversight that established a framework for the federal government to vet the national security risks of the most advanced AI systems for up to 30 days before their public release. The order described participation by AI developers as voluntary but the framework has not yet been fully developed.

Some of Trump's allies have laid blame on San Francisco-based Anthropic and CEO Dario Amodei for the need for heightened government scrutiny.

"Dario came to Washington a few months ago, back in April, and basically said that he had created a cyber weapon called Mythos," said investor David Sacks, who co-leads Trump's council of technology and science advisers, on a recent podcast. "And he spiked the cortisol level, got everyone really worried. And there was some truth to it in terms of the sense that this model had advanced cyber capabilities."

OpenAI, also based in San Francisco, said its new Sol model (pronounced "SOHL" like the Spanish word for sun) "is better at helping people find and fix vulnerabilities" than it is at carrying out cyberattacks and does not cross the company's own risk threshold. But it acknowledged there could be unforeseen risks especially if its model is combined with

other tools.

"That uncertainty, along with the model's broader step change in capabilities, is why we are pairing the model's increased capabilities with stronger safeguards and a phased release," the company said Friday.

OpenAI hasn't named any of the roughly 20 customers that have been approved to use the new model so far.

U.S. Rep. Lori Trahan, a Massachusetts Democrat and co-author of a bipartisan bill that would regulate AI, said in a statement that she is concerned "the Trump administration is deciding company by company who gets access to the newest AI model. No law. No process. No oversight. Just appointees in Washington deciding who's in and who's out."

A broad group of technology experts has also criticized the government's actions that led Anthropic to shut down Fable, which the company had pitched as a safer version of Mythos. It's now been unavailable for two weeks, even after the government lifted restrictions Friday on the more powerful Mythos.

"I just want to say that pretty much nobody in the cybersecurity industry believes that there's any factual basis for this action," Stanford University cybersecurity expert Alex Stamos said on a call with reporters earlier this week.

Stamos, the chief product officer at AI security company Corridor and a former chief security officer at Facebook parent Meta, said he reviewed an analysis of research on Fable by Anthropic's primary cloud computing backer, Amazon, and didn't find any risks that aren't present with other publicly available AI models, including those made in China.

"If the administration is honest about wanting the United States to beat China in this race, then this is about the dumbest thing they could possibly do," Stamos said.

OpenAI CEO Sam Altman spoke with U.S. Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick about the model release Wednesday, part of a series of negotiations in recent weeks between AI industry executives and Trump officials.

Anthropic has also been part of those talks, but Amodei has had a more contentious relationship with the Trump administration. The Pentagon designated Anthropic as a national security risk for raising ethical and safety concerns about AI usage in war, and Trump himself ordered federal agencies to stop using Claude. Anthropic responded with a lawsuit that is still working its way through federal courts.

Anthropic said Friday it was "pleased" by the partial release of Mythos late Friday and will "continue to work with the government to expand access" and make Fable available again to general users. Lutnick told Anthropic in a letter dated Friday that its work to address the government's concerns "yielded significant progress."

The government's heightened AI oversight adds another complication to exploratory moves by OpenAI as well as Anthropic to take their companies public on Wall Street, following SpaceX's record-setting June 12 initial public offering.

Trump has floated the possibility of the U.S. government owning a stake in leading AI companies, describing a concept where "pieces could be given to the American public, where the American public essentially becomes a partner with the companies."

Ex-officials unite to help workers adapt to AI

US eyes AI gains without massive job pain

WASHINGTON, June 27, (AP): America has been rushing into an artificial intelligence future without much of a plan to stop what could be catastrophic job losses.

Critics warn of doomsday scenarios out of a sci-fi thriller, while backers say AI will generate so much new wealth that no one should worry too much about millions of layoffs.

A new bipartisan nonprofit hopes to ensure that America can realize the economic gains promised by AI without its workers suffering.

RAISE US is starting with more than \$500 million to deploy on new forms of education and training, putting a focus on partnering with states and major employers rather than the federal government.

Founded by former Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo, a Democrat, and former Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb, a Republican, the group aims to pilot programs and incentives to help American workers pivot to new careers in an economy that will increasingly be automated by artificial intelligence.

"We're talking about a certain level of unemployment that could destabilize our country and our democracy," Raimondo said in an interview. "If you want to lead the world in AI, you have to take action to make sure our democracy doesn't crumble."

The nonprofit is initially partnering with officials in Arkansas, Connecticut, Maryland and Utah, along with several of America's largest companies and charitable organizations. The group intends to develop policies that connect schools more closely to employers, so that layoffs can be replaced by the potential for new jobs with higher incomes. They also are exploring changes to corporate taxes and other incentives with the goal of keeping people working.

"Good things tend to happen when you convert have-nots into haves," Holcomb said.

Among the companies serving as anchor partners with RAISE US are Amazon, Microsoft, Anthropic, the OpenAI Foundation and Bank of America. Other employers involved in the project include UPS, General Motors, Eli Lilly, Mastercard, chipmaker AMD, Cisco and IBM.

Raimondo, the former Democratic governor of Rhode Island who played a formative role in setting AI policy as the Biden administration's commerce secretary, will be the nonprofit's CEO.

The advisory board includes former Republican House Speaker Paul Ryan, billionaire investment manager Stephen Schwarzman, AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler and the economists David Autor, Erik Brynjolfsson and Raj Chetty.

An April analysis by the Boston Consulting Group estimated that roughly half of U.S. jobs will be reshaped by AI over the next few years. The analysis said that as many as 25 million jobs could be eliminated in the U.S. over the next five years. Goldman Sachs, in March, sep-

arately released an estimate that a quarter of U.S. work hours could be automated by AI.

More than just a glorified search engine or a generator of video clips and novelty images, AI could fill roads with driverless trucks, create factories staffed by robots and supplant office workers, lawyers and doctors.

President Donald Trump has expressed little anxiety about the possibility of AI displacing human workers.

Asked on Tuesday ahead of touring a Mack Trucks factory in Pennsylvania if AI could cause truckers to lose their jobs, Trump told a reporter, "Right now, they're not."

The president has been banking on the buildout of AI data centers and power plants to drive hiring and overall economic growth. While AI-related investments have helped the economy, manufacturing has shed 68,000 jobs and the trucking transportation sector has cut 28,300 jobs since the start of Trump's second term, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

"We have, right now, so many jobs that are going to be available and the biggest problem we have is getting the people," Trump said. "So we're really doing spectacular."

AI experts have warned of gaps between the transformations that AI could create and a 20th century social safety net of unemployment insurance and four-year college that seems ill-prepared for the scope, scale and speed of the change.

"AI is now disrupting multiple sectors simultaneously, faster than any institution can respond," said Vivienne Ming, a neuroscientist who has written the book, "Robot-Proof: When Machines Have all the Answers, Build Better People."

Ming said that she agrees with an argument by economists that the wealth generated by AI could create demand for more workers that could offset any job losses. But she said the skills that matter in an AI economy go beyond professions such as plumbing or construction and involve curiosity and intellectual flexibility.

"Neither our education system nor our labor policies are building the foundational human capital that AI-era work actually requires," she said.

Raimondo said the new nonprofit wants to use states as a vehicle for testing ideas that Congress can later embrace as policies, paving the way for the possibility of more profound changes to both the tax code and the educational system.

"I don't have a lot of hope for bold action by Congress in the next few years on this issue, and I don't think we can wait a few years," she said. "I also think there are many examples in history that when the federal government does take action, they will look around at what has been working in states. I feel pretty confident that they will look at the work that we've done."

AI is helping gas stations collude to raise California fuel prices, lawsuit says

AI-powered software has allowed gas station operators across California to illegally collude and drive up prices at the pump, according to a federal lawsuit.

The proposed class action lawsuit, filed Monday, accuses gas station giants including Marathon and Circle K of violating California's antitrust law through Kalibrate, a fuel-pricing software system used across the world. The plaintiffs describe Kalibrate as the "central nervous system for a conspiracy to extinguish retail price competition among gas stations."

According to the lawsuit, Kalibrate helps "coordinate high prices" and even discourages its users from pricing their gas lower than competitors, saying that doing so would trigger a "downward spiral."

"Kalibrate promises that if gas stations surrender their pricing decisions and competitively sensitive cost and volume data to Kalibrate Fuel Pricing, the software will enable them to avoid competing with other area stations and to charge higher prices to consumers," the lawsuit said.

Californians already pay some of the highest gas prices in the nation, and prices have surged across the globe since the start of the Iran war.

The lawsuit is the latest to accuse software companies of driving up the

cost of living for millions in the U.S. Other examples include the Department of Justice's lawsuit against RealPage, which has been accused of helping landlords drive up rent prices, and the DOJ's lawsuit against Agri Stats, a data-sharing company accused of helping the meatpacking industry inflate grocery prices. The DOJ has settled both of those lawsuits in the past year, though various state attorneys general are still pursuing lawsuits against RealPage and numerous property management companies.

Concern over algorithmic pricing prompted Democratic California Gov. Gavin Newsom last year to sign a bill saying that state antitrust law applies to pricing algorithms, helping to pave the way for this week's lawsuit.

Kalibrate is headquartered in Manchester, England, and operates in more than 70 countries. It did not respond to a request for comment Wednesday.

The lawsuit accuses Kalibrate of facilitating cartel-like collusion. Only this time, instead of competitors making a secret deal "over cigars in a smoky back room," the price-fixing is done through AI, according to the lawsuit.

"As technology has advanced, so too have the mechanisms available to

competitors to fix prices without the cigars, the smoke, or even the room," the lawsuit says.

Among the examples the lawsuit lists is a "restoration" tool that helps "nearly all gas stations in an area raise their prices contemporaneously and by a large amount."

According to the lawsuit, research into algorithmic fuel-pricing software found average price increases of about 6 cents per gallon, rising to as much as 30 cents per gallon in markets where many stations use the technology.

"Because of the volume of fuel sold across California, a single cent increase at the pump will drain a whopping \$134 million from California drivers' wallets every year across the state," the lawsuit says.

The defendants in the lawsuit - which also include BP, Speedway, EG America, Walmart and Albertsons - collectively operate more than 1,700 gas stations in California, according to the lawsuit. None of them immediately responded to a request for comment.

The lawsuit seeks to represent California drivers who bought gas at stations using Kalibrate software since June 2022. (AP)

Falconers hail AI breeding success after a decade of preparation

Kuwait produces first homebred peregrine falcon

By Suzanne Nasser

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: The hatching of a peregrine falcon chick is more than just a successful breeding event, as it signaled the beginning of a new chapter in Kuwaiti falconry.

After years of research, planning and experimentation, Kuwaiti falconers achieved a milestone by producing the first peregrine falcon in the country through the use of artificial insemination techniques.

Falconer Salem Al-Sahloul, one of the founders of the project, explained that the concept of

breeding falcons locally started about 10 years ago, after studying the experiences and practices of falcon breeding farms in other Gulf countries and Europe. He said the implementation of artificial insemination techniques in Kuwait began two years ago.

Al-Sahloul disclosed that the first successful peregrine falcon was produced at the Al-Sahloul Center. He expressed optimism about the future of the initiative and indicated that there are plans to expand the project over the coming years, with the goal of producing 50 to 60 birds annually.

Falconer Fahad Al-Awadhi indicated that falcon production is much more than the breed-

ing process itself, as it requires the careful selection of distinguished bloodlines and genetic traits that meet the expectations of breeders and participants in falconry competitions. He said the project aims to preserve and develop strong falcon breeds through scientifically based breeding practices and long-term development strategies.

Al-Awadhi talked about one of the falcons in the project, classified as an 'Imprinted Parent'. He explained that this type of falcon is raised from the moment it hatches through a specialized process involving human care and preparation for future breeding purposes. He revealed that the bird was produced from

an imprinted female and an imprinted male, each raised under specific conditions and according to distinct breeding methods.

He added that the resulting falcon also belongs to the imprinted category. "Raised from hatching through the same specialized approach, this classification makes the bird suitable for future breeding programs and enables its use in mating processes aimed at producing new generations of falcons in the coming years," he elaborated.

He pointed out that the current focus is on the production of peregrine falcons, including efforts to breed gyrfalcons and saker falcons as part of the broad



A newly hatched peregrine falcon in Kuwait, showing a hooked beak, dark eye, and finely patterned black, white, and grey plumage.

Norway uncovers time capsule

Shipwreck porcelain reveals 18th-century trade routes



Visitors view an exhibition on the Porcelain Shipwreck at the Norwegian Maritime Museum in Oslo, Norway. (Xinhua)

OSLO, June 27, (Xinhua): About 600 meters below the surface of the Skagerrak Strait off southern Norway, large quantities of Chinese porcelain have rested for more than two centuries inside an 18th-century merchant vessel.

Now, Norwegian maritime archaeologists are bringing parts of the ship's cargo back into public view, opening a rare window onto the movement of Chinese porcelain into Europe and its place in 18th-century consumer life and trade networks.

Known to researchers as the Porcelain Shipwreck, the wreck contains Chinese porcelain, glass goblets and bottles, chandelier fragments, grain, textiles and other organic materials. Some recovered objects have been put on display at the Norwegian Maritime Museum in Oslo.

For researchers, the finding is not only a spectacular deep-sea archaeological discovery, but also a time capsule that may help explain how goods from China, northern Europe and possibly the Baltic region converged in one maritime trade system.

Rare wreck in deep waters

The wreck was discovered by Espen Saastad, a watch designer from Porsgrunn in southeastern Norway who also operates a small remotely operated vehicle, or ROV, and seabed survey company.

Saastad recalled the first time he and the museum team approached the wreck with an ROV. "We saw a lot of white items," he told Xinhua. "When we were getting really close to the wreck, we saw all these plates, all these cups, the jar, and all these crystal things from the chandeliers."

Saastad said they quickly suspected that the objects must be Chinese porcelain. "It was a really fantastic experience in the boat, and everybody was very excited."

Frode Kvalo, a maritime archaeologist at the Norwegian Maritime Museum and project leader of the Porcelain Shipwreck, said the work is being carried out in stages. The first task is to understand what kinds of materials, trade goods and ship equipment remain at the site, and how they are distributed, before a full excavation can be planned.



Frode Kvalo, a maritime archaeologist at the Norwegian Maritime Museum and project leader of the Porcelain Shipwreck, shows a piece of Chinese porcelain recovered from the wreck in Oslo, Norway. (Xinhua)

According to the museum, the wreck is believed to be a fully laden 18th-century merchant vessel. Based on observations so far, the vessel appears to have had a round stern and may have been a galliot, a type of merchant ship characteristic of northern Europe. The wreck measures about 22 meters in length and includes the remains of two masts.

So far, researchers have identified large quantities of Chinese porcelain, chandelier parts, glass goblets, bottles and barrels of grain. Crates found at the site may contain textiles and organic materials, possibly including tea, herbs or medicines.

A brick recovered from the ship's galley bears the stamp of Luebecker Ratsziegelei, a brickwork in the German city of Luebeck that operated from the 15th century until 1772.

Kvalo said the importance of the wreck lies in its good state of preservation, the high quality of the objects and the unusual cargo composition, which brings together Chinese porcelain, northern European glassware, chandeliers, grain, textiles and other organic materials.

The depth also makes the project significant. Kvalo said Norwegian archaeologists had not previously worked on a shipwreck in the open sea at a depth of 600 meters, and archaeological work at such depth had not been carried out in northern Europe before.

Comedy legend honored across film world

Brooks turns 100 & Hollywood is still laughing

NEW YORK, June 27, (AP): The 2000 Year Old Man is turning 100. Mel Brooks on Sunday will celebrate his centennial birthday.

The comedian and filmmaker has been awaiting the milestone. Earlier this year, Judd Apatow titled his retrospective documentary on him: "Mel Brooks: The 99 Year Old Man!"

"I was born to make people laugh," Brooks says in the film. "So, I do that."

Brooks was born Melvin Kaminsky in Brooklyn, New York, on June 28, 1926. After serving in the Army during World War II and performing in the Borscht Belt, Sid Caesar hired him as a writer. On his "Show of Shows," Brooks met Carl Reiner, who'd remain a lifelong friend and with whom he created the "2000 Year Old Man" sketches.

Reiner would pepper Brooks' ancient man with questions about what Jesus was like. "Jesus ... yes, yes," Brooks would answer. "Thin lad. Wore sandals. Always walked around with 12 other guys."

Brooks went to make classic comedies like "The Producers," "Blazing Saddles," "Young Frankenstein" and "High Anxiety." It all started, Brooks told The Associated Press in 2021, with his childhood in Williamsburg,



In this file photo, Mel Brooks arrives at the premiere of "Mel Brooks: The 99 Year Old Man" in Los Angeles on Jan. 20, 2026. (AP)

Brooklyn.

"I wanted to keep the party going. I wanted to keep the happiness and joy and explosions of laughter going into a dour part of our lives, not our childhood anymore," Brooks recalled. "I was once interviewed and the guy said, 'What was the happiest part of your life? Was it winning the Academy Award? Was it marrying Anne Bancroft?' I said no, not at all. It was my childhood. From about 4 or 5 to 9, it was the most exciting, happiest,

joyous life that anyone could experience.

"The guy said, 'What happened at 9?' I said, 'Homework.'"

Even now, Brooks hasn't retired. In April, Brooks submitted a video message to Eddie Murphy to honor him for his AFI life achievement award. In May, he announced that he was donating thousands of his documents and photographs to the National Comedy Center in Jamestown, New York.

"I've always been proud to say that I make people laugh for a living," Brooks said then in a statement. "So, knowing that my work will have a home at comedy's national archive and continue making people laugh leaves me with a deep sense of pride."

To mark the occasion of Brooks' centennial, the American Film Institute on Friday named 1974's "Blazing Saddles" the funniest film of all time. It has previously ranked sixth on its list of 100 greatest movies. Brooks' film displaced "Some Like It Hot" - which Brooks had long held wasn't as funny as his movies - from the top spot.

"He's right!," said Bob Gazzale, AFI president and chief executive. "We're happy to right this wrong as Mel celebrates his centennial. It's good to be the king, and may he live to be a 2,000 year old man. Happy birthday, Mel!"

Brooks has sometimes made mortality a joke, too. In a 1980s sketch, he created a coin-operated gravestone for himself that played a videotaped message. It began: "I was Mel Brooks, one of the funniest little Jews to walk the Earth."

When asked in that AP 2021 interview if he thought much about death, Brooks said no.

Amani Book House offers reading and skills training

Small library offers hope in Nairobi's Kibera slum

NAIROBI, June 27, (Xinhua): Amid rows of iron shacks and narrow winding alleys in Kibera, one of Africa's largest urban informal settlements, a new building is drawing excited children.

Inside the Amani Kibera Book House, some young readers sit around wooden tables, flipping through colorful books and chatting, while others sit on the floor, immersing themselves in stories and discovering worlds beyond their own.

Officially opened on Tuesday, the community library was jointly developed by Condition_Lab, an architectural research studio affiliated with the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and Kenya's Kounkuey Design Initiative.

Named after the Swahili word "Amani," meaning peace, the library reflects the community's aspirations for education, opportunity and hope.

Among the visitors was 17-year-old Paul Muhoro, who carefully browsed the shelves in search of medicine books. "I want to become a doctor one day," he said. "There are many people here who are sick and suffering. I want to help them."

Muhoro said he plans to visit the library regularly and encourage his friends to do the same.

A science-fiction novel captivated Lindsay, a secondary school student



Children read books inside the Amani Kibera Book House in the Kibera slum of Nairobi, the capital of Kenya. (Xinhua)

who dreamed of becoming a lawyer. "I want to speak for people and help them defend their rights," she noted, adding that the library has already become one of her favorite places in the community.

"When we first visited the community in 2022, we saw children running through the narrow alleyways and sensed their eagerness to learn," said Liu Ziwei, a member of the Condition_Lab team. "We knew almost im-

mediately that we wanted to build a library here."

From the outset, the project was shaped by local participation. Residents contributed ideas during the design process and took part in the construction work, helping ensure that the building reflected the needs of the community, according to Liu.

"We didn't want to place an isolated modern structure in Kibera," Liu said. "We wanted to create a space that

could breathe with the community and become part of its everyday life."

The team adopted flexible interior layouts and relied as much as possible on locally available materials that would be easier to maintain. Special attention was also given to natural lighting and ventilation to create a safe and comfortable environment for reading and learning.

Ben Ooko, founder of Amani Kibera, a community-based organization, described the library as "a beacon" for the neighborhood.

According to Ooko, the community previously relied on a small reading facility built from temporary materials such as sheet metal and wood. The structure offered limited space and sometimes had to be closed because of safety concerns.

The new library, he said, provides not only better facilities but also renewed confidence in the future. "It keeps refreshing people's hopes. It helps them believe that the future is something worth looking forward to and striving for."

In his view, education remains one of the most powerful tools for transforming lives. "Through reading, children in Kibera can learn about stories, ideas and knowledge from around the world," he said, adding that "this space will connect Kibera to the world."

The Conversation

The art of literary translation exposes the limits of AI

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

By Krupa Shandilya
Amherst College

For centuries, people have dreamed of undoing Babel.

Sci-fi novelists envisioned universal translators, and linguists devised international languages, all in pursuit of a world where one person could speak and another could understand, regardless of where either was born.

Artificial intelligence appears to be taking humanity one step closer toward that goal.

AI-powered tools are already being widely used by lawyers to translate legal documents from one language to the next. The mass market romance publisher Harlequin has turned to AI to translate its novels for international audiences. And hospitals are deploying AI translation to communicate directly with patients in multiple languages.

The speed and skill with which these AI-powered translation tools operate are certainly impressive.

But there is an important frontier for translation technology, one that it might never be able to breach: the poem.

That's because translating poetry, thus far, has been a uniquely human experience. It de-

mands intimate knowledge of two languages, which large language models certainly possess. But it also requires a mastery of different cultures and perspectives, what literary critic Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak calls a "worlding" of language and culture.

When scholars have studied the creativity of chatbots by prompting them to produce poetry, they've noticed that the poems tend to be more homogeneous and standardized than those written by humans.

Chatbots' poetry translations have similar issues.

AI seems to struggle in three main areas: rendering metaphor, decoding complex sentence structure and creatively conveying mood or emotion.

To demonstrate these flaws, I worked closely with Adeeba Shahid Talukder, an award-winning poet and translator, to write this piece and to translate the 1953 poem "Mulaqat" or "Meeting," composed by one of the most famous Urdu poets of the 20th century, Faiz Ahmed Faiz.

Faiz was born in 1911 in Sialkot, in pre-Partition India. In 1947, when that area in the Punjab became part of present-day Pakistan, Faiz became a citizen of the newly founded country, though his relationship with it was marked by both hope and disillusionment. He lived in different parts of the world for long stretches of time, but he returned to Pakistan toward the end

of his life. He died there in 1984.

His poetry is celebrated for its marriage of classical tropes like the ache of unfulfilled longing for the beloved - and the lover's willingness to be consumed or destroyed in his pursuit of her - with the political struggles of his time, like the plight of working people and the dream of a Marxist revolution. His poetry is notoriously difficult to translate because of its highly ornate, extended metaphors, which have few easy equivalents in English. This forces the translator - be it human or machine - to push the limits of language.

From 1951 to 1955, Faiz was imprisoned on allegations of sedition against the Pakistani state. His first three months were spent in solitary confinement.

From Faiz's letters, scholars learned that despite the isolation of his imprisonment, he felt as if the experience made him more attuned to his senses, as if he were "falling in love again for the first time." His time in jail was also among his most prolific as a poet, with "Meeting" composed during his sentence.

When Faiz composed "Meeting," he had been separated from his wife and two daughters for two years. He was keenly aware of missing parts of their childhoods that would never return.

This biographical information can help translators understand the poem's exploration of "vasl," or the meeting of lover and beloved. A common trope in classical Urdu poetry, it usually captures

the joy and exultation of the lovers' union.

But in Faiz's poem, the union with the beloved also contains an acute awareness of mortality and the transience of beauty - a recognition of what has been lost, and the suffering still to come.

That's why we rendered the opening lines of "Meeting" as "This night is the dark, lush tree of a grief greater than you and I."

ChatGPT's translation is more literal: "This night is the tree of pain."

While there is nothing technically wrong with this translation, the chatbot's version doesn't capture the nuances of the tree metaphor and the way its dense, expansive branches can encompass the complexity and beauty of the emotions evoked by the night of the lovers' union.

AI also fails to grasp the poem's intricate sentence structure. ChatGPT has translated "in its shadow a thousand moons / have wept away all their light" as a nonsensical construction: "Within a thousand moons' shadows, / And all my light has wept itself away."

This error appears to have happened because the chatbot translated "apna" - a reflexive possessive pronoun in Urdu - as "my," inaccurately parsing it as referring to the speaker instead of the moons.

Finally, and most importantly, AI models lack the ability to express emotion the way a human can. A machine with no bodily experience

of being human cannot meaningfully perceive a poem so enmeshed in human experience. Its engagement is merely superficial.

In its attempt to convey the mood of the original piece, ChatGPT offers: "From its dew in quiet, / A few drops rest upon your brow, / And glitter like tiny diamonds."

It's clear that ChatGPT is struggling to decode the grammatical structure of the poem and is trying to make the text lyrical enough to convey the awe and wonder of the original. But the model's contrivances toward the lyrical - for example, describing diamonds as "tiny" or "glittering" - have no relation to the original poem.

"From its dew in quiet" is an incoherent clause. The phrase that seems to have thrown the model off is "isi kt shabnam se khamoshi ke yeh cand qatre," or "its dew / has rained drops of silence."

Urdu literary critic Shamsur Rahman Faruqi has explained how Urdu poets "treat metaphor as fact and then go on to create further metaphors from that fact." In "Meeting," the metaphor of the night of the reunion as a tree becomes a fact, which allows for the flowering of a new metaphor - that of the dew on its leaves as drops of silence that fall on the lover and their beloved. These silences, heavy with sorrow, then adorn the beloved like precious jewels, conveying the idea that only a profound grief can beget such beauty. (AP)

PARIS

MEN'S FASHION



Models wear creations as part of the Issey Miyake Homme Spring Summer 2027 collection presented in Paris, France, Thursday, June 25, 2026. (AP)

Style meets swelter Too hot for haute

PARIS, June 27, (AP) — The most coveted accessory at the Paris Fashion Week shows this week was not a bag, a sneaker or a watch. It was an ice pack.

As a historic heat wave gripped the French capital, fashion houses fought to keep guests cool with mist machines, chilled towels, parasols and iced Evian on silver platters.

It wasn't enough. Historic venues sweltered, guests were packed in tight, air conditioning was absent or inadequate and water ran short — at one house, organizers weighed serving none at all, having found only plastic bottles to hand out.

That mattered because Paris Fashion Week is not a minor cultural event.

It is one of France's most visible export machines: six fashion seasons a year, global luxury houses, celebrities, editors, buyers and clients moving through an industry worth billions, often inside aging venues built for a cooler age.

This week raised a harder question: whether Paris should keep staging menswear and haute couture in the height of summer at all if climate change keeps bringing more frequent and intense heat waves.

"I honestly thought I was going to pass out," said Ben Freeman, a London-based fashion critic from Australia.

Paris neared 41 degrees Celsius (106 Fahrenheit) during a heat wave that pushed France into emergency mode. Large parts of the country were under red alert, and hospitals were told to prepare for more heat-related cases.

Like the dusty Louvre, which cut hours and said its historic building "remains vulnerable and is not sufficiently adapted to climate change," fashion week exposed a Paris problem as much as a fashion one: how to keep prestige institutions running when the weather no longer fits the build-

ing, the calendar or the crowd.

"Paris Fashion Week is the canary in the mine," Freeman said.

At a Paris Fashion Week Men's where the industry paid to imagine next summer could barely survive this one, houses cooled the people watching the shows, then dressed their models in unseasonable leather, neoprene, wool and fur.

"The calendar does not make any sense," acknowledged Dior's Jonathan Anderson, blaming fractured delivery cycles and a business that bears no relation to the season outside.

Some in the front row suggested that fashion week in the hottest months be scrapped.

"In Paris we don't have AC everywhere, it's quite rare," said Thomas Levy, 24, a fashion student outside one show. "I don't know how the models did it this week in some of the leather and knit coats."

Pascal Morand, who heads France's fashion federation, said organizers were following the government's heat-wave plan.

"We are conscious of the challenges and very attentive to preserving the Fashion Week experience in this context of structural change," he told The Associated Press.

The cause ran deeper — an industry whose fixed parts, from the buildings to the clothes, were designed for a cooler world and a customer who lives somewhere else.

The response included earlier shows, more water, more mist, more shade.

Fashion had already been warned about heat management. In March, Celine built an okoumé-wood pavilion in the courtyard of the Institut de France for a winter show, packed guests inside and still saw some leave because of the temperature.



Eyes top the list of organs most affected by excessive screen time

Electronic devices impacting child growth, requiring awareness and prevention

KUWAIT, June 27, (KUNA): Electronic devices have become an integral part of children's daily routines, embedding deeply into education and entertainment, while sparking urgent questions regarding digital safety and long-term health transformations.

The eyes top the list of organs most affected by excessive screen time, which triggers acute visual strain, continuous dryness, and early myopia due to constant focus on close distances without rest.

Furthermore, spending long hours in incorrect sitting positions causes early neck and back pain while weakening muscle structure, which significantly reduces natural physical activity and essential bodily movement.

This prolonged physical inactivity opens the door wide to complex health issues, most notably obesity and sleep disorders caused by the disruption of melatonin hormone secretion in developing children.

Ophthalmology Consultant and Retina Unit Head at Jaber Al-Ahmad Hospital Dr. Yousef Al-Dhafiri stated that prolonged screen viewing reduces blinking rates, which leads to eye dryness, blurred vision, and visual fatigue.

Recent medical studies link extensive screen use and lack of outdoor play to increasing rates of early myopia, alongside sleep disorders caused by blue light emissions that suppress melatonin.

Parents must watch for warning signs including holding screens too close, frequent eye rubbing, post-use headaches, poor academic concentration, light sensitivity, squinting, or tilting the head while viewing.

Dr. Al-Dhafiri recommended the 20-20-20 rule, meaning every 20 minutes the child looks at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds, to mitigate negative impacts of prolonged screen exposure.

He added that children under two years should completely avoid screens, while those aged two to five should have a one-hour maximum daily, with older children requiring structured rest breaks.

Proper usage environments necessitate good lighting, appropriate screen distance, avoiding devices while lying down, stopping screens two hours before bedtime, and encouraging outdoor play to gain natural sunlight benefits.

Pediatric Orthopedic Surgery Consultant and Team Head at Al-Razi Hospital Dr. Saleh Al-Saifi confirmed that continuous sitting for long periods directly impacts skeletal growth and reduces bone and muscle efficiency.

As children spend more time on electronic devices, they lose vital movement and physical activity required to strengthen muscles and bones, leading to unprecedented physical health degradation among youths.

He explained that children aged eight to ten should not normally suffer from neck pain, which indicates excessive structural load caused by bending toward screens without moving for hours.

Consequently, spinal columns begin showing early signs of roughness and loss of vitality, making electronic devices a major contemporary challenge for



parents regarding physical, visual, and mental development.

Dr. Al-Saifi highlighted that lack of sun exposure due to screen addiction causes vitamin D deficiencies, leaving children's bones less efficient, lower in quality, and highly susceptible to fractures.

Increased physical movement and regular sports strengthen muscles, enhance pediatric vitality, and ensure children grow healthier, counteracting the sedentary lifestyle imposed by modern entertainment technologies and devices.

Former Dean of Social Sciences and Professor of Sociology at Kuwait University Dr. Humoud Al-Qashan cited a Saudi study linking excessive screen use to rising obesity and sleep disorders across Gulf countries.

Children utilize screens as an emotional anesthetic to escape natural feelings like boredom, creating reality detachment, a phenomenon now affecting grandparents who use social media but increase physical isolation.

A child accustomed to rapid visual stimulation loses patience, generating an anxious and distracted generation, which represents a dangerous restructuring of brain chemistry that threatens long-term cognitive development.

Dr. Al-Qashan advised adopting "device-free zones" during family lunch or inside bedrooms, prohibiting phones for everyone including parents and grandparents, rather than relying on total prevention methods.

Kuwaiti families should utilize interactive alternatives, such as taking boys to weekly Diwanis, encouraging girls to attend family visits, and replacing screen time with family conversations and physical games.

Parents must bridge emotional gaps, as contemporary family dialogue has become fast and brief, building an isolation wall where each member drowns in independent digital worlds under one roof.

Psychology Faculty Member at Kuwait University Dr. Saud Al-Ghanim explained that excessive screen recourse constitutes a negative coping mechanism against difficult emotions like boredom, frustration, or ongoing parental conflicts.

The virtual world offers a controlled, safe environment providing validation that children might lack in reality, acting as a sedative that replaces essential emotional regulation skills required for growth.

Studies in educational psychology confirm clear correlations between continuous exposure to violent digital content and increased aggressive behaviors or anxiety levels in children through distinct psychological learning mechanisms.

First, children naturally simulate what they see, building cognitive models linking violence to strength when a game character solves problems through aggression and receives virtual rewards for doing so.

Second, repeated exposure causes emotional bluntness, decreasing natural empathy toward others' pain, which makes children more accepting of violence as a normal component of daily human life.

Violent games increase physiological arousal, keeping the nervous system alert and raising stress hormones like cortisol and adrenaline, which translates into anxiety and exaggerated reactions to normal situations.

Dr. Al-Ghanim concluded that parents must distinguish physical fatigue from psychological withdrawal, recommending digital detox weekends to identify behavioral issues that require specialized professional psychological intervention.

Saudi suspends travel to 3 African nations over Ebola concerns

RIYADH, June 27, (Xinhua): Saudi Arabia on Thursday suspended travel by its citizens to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Uganda and South Sudan, and halted the issuance of all types of visas and the entry of travelers from the three countries as a precaution against Ebola, the Saudi Press Agency (SPA) reported.

The suspension also applies to travelers arriving via third countries who have stayed in any of the three countries within 21 days before entering the kingdom, according to SPA.

Saudi Arabia's Public Health Authority said no confirmed or suspected Ebola cases have been recorded

in the kingdom since its preventive measures were introduced.

Also:

KINSHASA: The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has reported 1,203 confirmed cases of Ebola, including 321 deaths, since the outbreak was declared in mid-May, according to the latest report released Friday by the country's public health authorities.

According to the report, 148 patients have recovered, while 419 patients are in isolation or receiving hospital care. Health authorities also identified 265 suspected cases, including 77 deaths.

World Health Organization Direc-

tor-General **Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus** said Friday on X that contact tracing in the DRC was reaching more people and more Ebola patients were recovering and returning home. However, he warned that the fight was "far from over," saying war and insecurity were still slowing the response and that mistrust remained a key challenge.

The report also listed a series of operational challenges facing the response, including community resistance to post-mortem testing, insufficient treatment capacity in Ituri, where treatment centers were close to saturation, and a contact follow-up rate still below the 95 percent target.

MoH announces 2nd phase of program to prevent Respiratory Syncytial Virus

KUWAIT CITY, June 27, (KUNA): Kuwait Ministry of Health announced Thursday the second phase of a program to prevent Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) by providing voluntary immunization for pregnant women to improve immunity of infants in first months of their lives.

The Department of Public Health organized a workshop regarding latest prevention methods from RSV in line with international standards, a ministry statement said.

Prevention methods include vaccinating pregnant women between weeks 32 and 36 of their pregnancy, or giving anti-bodies for newborn babies in case their mothers did not get the vaccine.

Head of the infectious diseases section at the MoH Dr. Hamad Bastaki said prevention was important to reduce the burden caused by RSV.



KUNA photo Assistant Undersecretary for Public Health Dr. Al-Munther Al-Hasawi.



People look up at the sky from an observatory near the village of Avren, Bulgaria on Aug 12, 2009. (AP)

Large, harmless asteroid to zip past Earth this weekend

A large asteroid will zip past Earth this weekend, but don't worry: It poses no danger.

The space rock - 1997 NC1 - makes its closest approach Saturday morning, coming within 1.6 million miles (2.6 million kilometers), according to the European Space Agency.

Discovered nearly three decades ago by an asteroid-tracking system in Hawaii, the asteroid is between 2,461 feet (0.75 kilometer) to 5,413 feet (1.65 kilometers) wide - roughly the size of

two to four Empire State Buildings.

Skygazers with binoculars and small telescopes may be able to spot the asteroid as a small point of light passing harmlessly through the sky. It won't greet Earth from such a distance again until 2133, according to NASA.

The last time an asteroid similar in size passed safely by Earth from an even closer distance was in 2022, when a space rock called 1994 PC1 made its approach. (AP)

Get a load of this: Humans, great apes share similar giggles – study

NEW YORK, June 27, (AP): Humans and great apes have been giggling in similar ways since branching off the evolutionary tree, a new study suggests.

How do we know this? Researchers tickled 13 captive apes - including gorillas, orangutans, chimpanzees and bonobos - and recorded the results. The new research reexamined those decades-old recordings and compared them with the newly captured giggles of four young children while they were being tickled and playing at home.

It turns out that the chuckles of humans and great apes follow similar rhythms, with regular timing between their laughs, a unifying thread that likely reflects their ties to a common ancestor, researchers said.

"In a way, we are very similar to



A bonobo holds her baby at the Lola ya Bonobo sanctuary in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo on April 8. (AP)

other great apes because we've been laughing in a similar way for 15 million years," said study author Chiara De Gregorio, a primatologist at the University of Warwick in England.

Laughter communicates a playful, happy feeling without using words. Many animals can laugh too, but the giggles don't follow human patterns as closely. When researchers tickle rats, for example, they respond with ultrasonic squeaks.

Scientists trying to uncover how laughter evolved have picked apart animals' facial expressions, but less work has been done on how laughs sound. And compared with apes, human laughter has become faster and more complex. For one, our laughs sound different based on context - from a polite chuckle among colleagues to a full-bodied guffaw with close friends.

Greece bets on space technology to contain wildfires in a global first

ATHENS, Greece, June 27, (AP): In the searing Mediterranean summer, wildfires turn dangerous in minutes.

Greece has learned that at a terrible cost. In 2018, a blaze east of Athens moved with ferocious speed, killing more than 100 people. Five years later, a massive fire tore through a remote nature reserve; it was the largest wildfire ever recorded in the European Union.

Greece is looking to the heavens for help, with a dedicated satellite constellation that monitors for fires. It's a model for the continent as Europe races toward broader independence in space technology.

Four satellites, each smaller than a piece of carry-on luggage, were launched into low orbit in May. That made Greece the first nation in the world to integrate a dedicated satellite array into its national firefighting system.

Built by German company OroraTech, the satellites carry thermal sensors designed to flag new blazes as small as four meters (13 feet) wide, beating traditional satellites that can only spot fires the size of a cruise ship.

As Europe struggles with its latest blistering heatwave, the high temperatures foreshadow the wildfire season. Fires pose a unique challenge in Greece with its tinder-dry mountainous mainland and over 100 inhabited islands.

If a fire ignites, AI-processed satellite data is sent as an alert to commanders with the location, size and intensity already calculated. If multiple fires are burning at once, real-time data is crucial to determining response.

"For example, if you have 10 fires all over Greece and the fire radiative power is lower in some cases, you will not give priority to those ignitions; you will give priority to other ones," Fire Service Col. Zisoula Ntasiou, vice president of the International Association of Fire and Rescue Services, told The Associated Press in an interview.

Thermal sensors also pick up solar panels, hot factory roofs and sun-baked rock faces, but AI models are built to filter out those false alarms before alerts reach emergency services, according to officials involved in the program.

Greece recorded its hottest sum-



Fire burns near the village of Galataki as authorities evacuate the place near Corinth, Greece on July 22, 2020. (AP)



Michel Farah, an OroraTech software engineer, works on a replica of a wildfire-detection satellite at the company's facilities in Athens, Greece, on June 18, 2026. (AP)

mer on record in 2024 and its third-hottest last year.

"The global temperature is going up. That causes fires to change in intensity and ferocity," Ioannis Lantouris, head of OroraTech's Greek operations, told the AP. "Our models have to be faster. They have to be more precise."

Lantouris spoke in his office in Athens, while engineers worked on fire behavior models. Near their desks, they keep a life-sized replica of the satellite.

Thermal satellites add a layer of detection to drones and ground sensors, and Greece has expanded both since the 2018 disaster forced an overhaul of wildfire response. The constellation helps fill coverage gaps from international satellites, spot fires in remote terrain and build more detailed models of fire behavior.

Multiple countries use thermal satellites but Greece is the first to fully integrate them into its firefighting system. The satellites themselves mark an early stage of a broader Europe-backed effort.

Omar welcomed by officials

Somali ref Artan to officiate Zain Premier League finale

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: Somali international referee Omar Artan has arrived in Kuwait after being invited by Kuwait Football Association President Sheikh Ahmad Al-Yousef to take charge of the decisive Zain Premier League match between Kuwait Club and Qadsia, scheduled for tomorrow in the final round of the season.

Upon his arrival, Artan was received by Somalia's Ambassador to Kuwait Abdullahi Mohamed Sheikh, along with Kuwait FA Vice President for Administrative and Financial Affairs Dayeen Al-Dayeen, Secretary-General Dr. Saleh Al-Majroub, Media Director Dr. Sattam Al-Suhaili, and representatives of Alshaya Group, Abdulmohsen Al-Zaben and Ahmed Al-Roudhan.

The final round of the 2025-26



Somali referee Omar Artan poses alongside top football and diplomatic figures.

Zain Premier League will also witness Kuwait Club being officially crowned champions of the season.

International referees to oversee matches

Al-Hajri: Five-club turnout highlights rising interest in para table tennis

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: The opening combined Para Table Tennis Championship of the 2026-27 season begins at 5 p.m. today, bringing together more than 30 athletes from a range of disability classifications and age groups.

The competition features participants from five clubs — Al-Irada, Mubarak Al-Kabeer, Al-Tahadi, the Kuwait Sports Club for the Disabled and Warba — underscoring the growing popularity of the sport in Kuwait.

The inaugural tournament will be staged at the Kuwait Sports Club for the Disabled in Hawalli and will be played under a single-elimination format in accordance with International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) regulations.

Paralympic Table Tennis Commit-

tee chairman Duajj Al-Hajri said all organizational and technical preparations had been completed to ensure the event's success, with every participating athlete officially registered.

"In coordination with the Public Authority for Sport, we have secured specialized tables designed specifically for para table tennis, giving players greater freedom of movement during competition," Al-Hajri said. "The matches will be officiated by international referees from the Kuwait Table Tennis Association."

Al-Hajri added that the participation of five clubs in the season-opening championship reflects the growing interest in para table tennis and the continued development of the sport across



Paralympic Table Tennis Committee Chairman Duajj Al-Hajri.

the country.

Talks focus on technical cooperation

Argentine Ambassador visits Kuwait Volleyball Federation

By Khaled Al-Enezi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: The Kuwait Volleyball Federation, led by Dr. Jaber Al-Mari, received the Ambassador of Argentina to Kuwait, Ramiro Viloso, at its headquarters in the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex, in a visit that underscored the growing sporting ties between the two countries.

The meeting was attended by Federation Secretary-General Talal Al-Nimash and board member Ziyad Al-Anzi. Talks focused on strengthening technical cooperation, exchanging expertise in volleyball, and exploring future areas of collaboration aimed at enhancing the level of the sport in both countries.

Both sides highlighted the value of Argentine experience in volleyball, especially as the Kuwait national team is currently coached by an Argentine technical staff, reflecting confidence in their expertise and contribution to the team's development.

During the visit, the ambassador toured the federation's facilities, observed a training session of the national team, and met with players and coaching staff. He praised the facilities and organization, expressing his best wishes for Kuwait's success in the upcoming



Kuwait Volleyball Federation officials pose with the Argentine Ambassador to Kuwait in a group photo.

competitions.

The visit concluded with an exchange of commemorative gifts between the federation president and the ambassador, symbolizing the strong relationship and ongoing cooperation between the two sides in support of sports development.

Businessman Al-Baker to present plan

New commercial model proposed for Qadsia

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: In a move that could reshape the future of handball at Qadsia Club, businessman Fahad Abdulrahman Al-Baker is expected to present a formal proposal to the club's board of directors at its meeting on Sunday to transform the handball department into an independent commercial entity under his leadership.

The proposal seeks to establish a new administrative and financial framework designed to ensure the long-term sustainability of the sport through professional management, investment opportunities and diversified revenue streams. The initiative would also reduce the financial

burden on the club while safeguarding one of its most successful team sports.

The proposal comes at a pivotal moment after the club's board moved to disband the senior handball team, a decision that has raised concerns among Qadsia supporters and the wider handball community because of the club's rich history and achievements at both the domestic and international levels.

The board is expected to review the proposal during Sunday's meeting, with the Kuwaiti sports community closely watching the outcome. If approved, the initiative could not only determine the future of handball at Qadsia but also serve as a blueprint for similar commercial models at other Kuwaiti sports clubs.



Fahad Al-Baker

Controversial finish hands Russell pole in Spielberg

Hamilton finishes third

SPIELBERG, Austria, June 27, (AP): Just when it seemed Mercedes' Formula 1 pole position streak was surely at an end, George Russell had other ideas.

Russell came through the second-to-last corner seconds after Max Verstappen went spinning off the track toward the barrier, causing a yellow flag which means drivers must slow down.

Russell was warned of the yellow flag ahead of time by Mercedes over the radio and argued he lifted off the accelerator earlier than usual for the corner and that the rest of his lap was still enough for first place.

It was still "an amazing lap," he said.

The stewards agreed and deemed the incident needed "no further investigation", keeping Russell on pole ahead of the Ferraris of Charles Leclerc and Lewis Hamilton for Sunday's "heat hazard" race.

The key factor keeping Russell's lap on the board was that it was a single, not double, yellow flag at the corner.

A single yellow means drivers need to be able to show they slowed down noticeably. A double signifies more immediate danger, and in qualifying means drivers should abandon any attempt at setting a competitive lap time.

Russell argued it was the right call because Verstappen's car was on the other side of a gravel runoff area and slowing down meant he didn't risk losing control and potentially hitting the wreckage.

"I didn't even see the car because the runoff is so far and I think in that instance a single yellow was correct because a double yellow is immedi-



Red Bull driver Max Verstappen of the Netherlands steers his car during the qualifying session ahead of the Austrian F1 Grand Prix, in Spielberg, Austria. (AP)

ate danger," he said.

"I think I did everything right to be very much under control, and it's a very different story to a double."

It's the fourth pole position for Russell this season, not counting sprint races, and puts him level with teammate and standings leader Kimi Antonelli.

By the time Russell crossed the line to take pole, fans and broadcasters assumed Ferrari's Leclerc and Hamilton were set to end Mercedes' run of pole position in each grand prix this season.

They both bested Antonelli's time by less than a tenth of a second shortly before Verstappen went off. Verstappen also looked like a contender for pole with his upgraded Red Bull car and was set to improve on his previous time.

Leclerc is set to start Sunday's race second, and Hamilton third after his win for Ferrari last time out. Antonelli was fourth in his lowest qualifying result of the season.

That makes it likely his lead - 41 points over Hamilton, 50 over Russell - is set to shrink for the second

race running. Antonelli's car broke down in the last race, the Barcelona-Catalunya GP, as Hamilton won and Russell was second.

Mercedes team principal Toto Wolff told Sky Sport Germany it was "a matter of experience" that Antonelli seemed to abandon his lap after Verstappen's crash while Russell was "super clever" in lifting off just enough to keep his lap competitive.

Verstappen's earlier time was still good enough for fifth ahead of the McLarens of Lando Norris and Oscar Piastri.

Sun steadies late to sink Mystics

Valkyries rally past Dream

SAN FRANCISCO, June 27, (AP): Gabby Williams scored 13 straight Golden State points in the fourth quarter, finishing with 16 to rally the Valkyries to a 78-75 victory over the Atlanta Dream.

Kiah Stokes and Kaitlyn Chen each added 13 points for the Valkyries. Williams made all four shots and was 5 for 8 on free throws in the final period to push Golden State over Atlanta for the second time in three days.

Stokes tacked on seven blocks for her seventh game this season with three or more before fouling out. Chen finished 5 for 9 off the bench. Tiffany Hayes had 12 points while Veronica Burton scored 10.

Jordin Canada scored a season-high 23 points, and Angel Reese had her 12th double-double of the year with 15 points, 12 rebounds and five steals for Atlanta (12-6). Rhyne Howard finished with nine points and moved to third on the Dream's career scoring list with 2,631 points.

Sun 68, Mystics 57

In Uncasville Conn, Leila Lacan and Olivia Nelson-Ododa each scored 12 points, Kennedy Burke had 11 off the bench and the Connecticut Sun beat the Washington Mystics.

Nelson-Ododa added nine rebounds for Connecticut (4-15), which has won back-to-back games for the first time all year. Lacan had four steals.

Brittney Griner and Charliise Leger-Walker had 10 points apiece.

Washington took a timeout with 1:06 remaining before committing three turnovers to seal its second straight loss. The Mystics shot 35% from the field and 54% from the free-throw line while getting outscored by 16 points in the paint.

Georgia Amoore led all scorers with 14 points. Sonia Citron and Kiki Iriafen each netted 11 as the Mystics (8-9) had three players finish in double digits.

Connecticut coach Rachid Meziane missed the game due to illness. Associate head coach Roneeka Hodges took over in replacement.

Sky 124, Fire 94

In Chicago, Kamilla Cardoso set a WNBA record by shooting 13 for 13 from the field, scoring a career-high 30 points to lead the Chicago Sky to a victory over the expansion Portland Fire.

Cardoso had the most field goals without a miss in league history and also grabbed eight rebounds as Chicago (5-12) won back-to-back games for the first time since May 9-13.

The Sky also surpassed the franchise record for points in a game of 114, with Jacy Sheldon's fourth-quarter layup breaking the mark.

Sydney Taylor added 29 points and has scored 20 or more four times this season, second among all rookies. Only Olivia Miles has more with seven.

Azura Stevens had 12 while Skylar Diggins and Courtney Vandersloot - who made her season debut after returning from injury - each scored 10.

The Sky jumped out to a 29-17 lead at the end of the first quarter and never trailed again. They shot 66% as a team and hit 15 of their 28 3s.

Bridget Carleton led Portland with 20 points, and Carla Leite had 18



Golden State Valkyries guard Veronica Burton (22) drives the ball downcourt against the Atlanta Dream during the first half of a WNBA basketball game in San Francisco. (AP)

for the Fire (8-10), who made nine 3-pointers.

Aces 99, Wings 84

In Las Vegas, A'ja Wilson scored 32 points and the Las Vegas Aces led nearly throughout to avoid being swept by Dallas with a victory over the Wings.

Chelsea Gray finished with 12 points and nine assists for the Aces, becoming the fourth player in WNBA history with at least 4,500 points and 2,000 assists for her career. She has 2,003 assists.

Jackie Young added 20 points, including a four-point play in the third quarter, and Cheyenne Parker-Tyus totaled 13 points.

Paige Bueckers scored 25 points for the Wings, and Jessica Sheppard had 22 points and 14 rebounds.

The Wings were looking for their first sweep of the Aces since 2018 after winning the first two, both at Dallas. Their most recent victory over Las Vegas was a 96-66 rout on June 15.

The Aces sent a message early this matchup would be quite different. They went on a 10-point run to take a 15-4 lead and led 28-17 after the first quarter.

"We came in with the focus to kick their butts," Parker-Tyus told NBA TV after the quarter.

Las Vegas, which made 53.3% of its shots, went ahead by as many as 17 points. But Dallas kept chipping away and got to within 53-49 early in the third quarter.

The Wings, who were 2 of 21 from the 3-point arc, got no closer. Dallas didn't get many second chances, with the Aces winning the rebounding battle 35-24.

The Aces have won nine of their past 11 games, but were coming off an 87-76 loss to New York on Tuesday night.

Storm 99, Liberty 88

In Seattle, Flau'jae Johnson scored a career-high 28 points, Dominique Malonga became the youngest player in WNBA history to reach 500 career points, and the Seattle Storm snapped an 11-game skid with a victory over the New York Liberty.

Johnson, a 22-year-old rookie, led all scorers on 11-for-23 shooting and grabbed nine rebounds.

Malonga had 20 points and 10 rebounds for her second straight double-double. She also became the youngest in league history to reach 200 career defensive rebounds.

Serena draws Joint in Wimbledon opener

LONDON, June 27, (AP): Serena Williams will face an opponent less than half her age when she plays 20-year-old Maya Joint in the first round at Wimbledon for her first singles match in nearly four years.

The seven-time Wimbledon singles champion, who is 44, accepted a wild-card entry to the grass-court Grand Slam, where she'll also compete in doubles with her older sister Venus, who turned 46 last week.

It's all part of a tennis comeback that started with two doubles war-

mup matches but kicked into high gear Sunday when the All England Club announced Serena would play singles. Brackets were set in Friday's draw.

Joint was born in Michigan - as was Williams - but represents Australia through her father. She is ranked No. 53 and made her Wimbledon debut last year, losing in the first round to Liudmila Samsonova 6-3, 6-2.

"It's an honor. I always dreamed about playing Serena Williams," Joint said. "If you told me 10 years

ago that I'd be playing her first round at Wimbledon, that's just crazy.

"I hope it's on Centre Court, that would be pretty cool. You just have to play the ball. You can't really think about who you are playing because I'll just get too nervous. I'll just take it one ball at a time."

Joint won the grass-court Eastbourne Open last year for one of her two WTA tour-level singles titles, but she was slowed by a back injury earlier in 2026.

Williams hasn't played a singles



Belgium finds rhythm at World Cup with goal frenzy

Belgians advance atop Group G

VANCOUVER, British Columbia, June 27, (AP): With a flurry of goals, Belgium finally found its footing at the World Cup.

Leandro Trossard scored a pair of goals and Belgium overcame a slow start in the tournament to advance to the knockout round atop Group G with a 5-1 victory over New Zealand on Friday night.

Belgium will face an as-yet undetermined third-place finisher on Wednesday in Seattle. The match was played simultaneously to the other group finale in Seattle between Egypt and Iran, which ended in a 1-1 draw, dropping Egypt out of first.

The Belgians went into the match a surprising third in its group after opening the World Cup with a 1-1 draw against Egypt and a scoreless draw against Iran.

"I think we had the chances as well in the first two games, and we didn't take them. So it's important that we took them today," Trossard said. "And it's always nice to score a lot of goals, and we're just really happy to go through in first place as well, and yeah, a lot of joy."

Kevin De Bruyne, Romelu Lukaku and Alexis Saelemaekers also scored for the Belgians, who were eliminated in the group stage in Qatar four years ago after finishing third at the 2018 World Cup in Russia.

Elijah Just scored for New Zealand, which needed to win outright to have a chance at advancing. The All Whites head home without a first-ever World Cup win.

Should Belgium win its knockout round opener, it will face the winner of the match against the United States and Bosnia-Herzegovina in the round of 16.

"First, we'll have to win our round of 32 match. I don't even know who we'll be playing yet, so it would be disrespectful to start talking about the round of 16 already,"

Belgium coach Rudi Garcia said. "We'll see who comes through."

The finish atop the group also means the Belgium won't have to travel far for their first knockout game. The team's training base is in Seattle.

Trossard came oh-so-close to scoring early in the match, but goal-line technology determined that the ball did not cross the line.

New Zealand defender Finn Surman was called for a handball in the box in the 23rd minute, giving Belgium a penalty kick, but video determined that his arm was in a natural position and play continued.

In a scramble in front of the net, Trossard popped the ball up into the cross bar and it fell into the goal to put Belgium in front in the 28th minute.

It was Belgium's first goal at the World Cup since Michy Batshuayi's goal against Canada in the group opener in Qatar in 2022. Belgium's goal in its 1-1 draw against Egypt in the opener of this tournament was an own goal.

Trossard scored his second early in the second half, striking a rebound off a New Zealand player past goalkeeper Max Cromcombe.

De Bruyne added a stunning strike from outside the box in the 66th minute to all but put the game away for Belgium. He celebrated by making a heart with his hands for the sellout Vancouver crowd.

Just's goal avoided the shutout for New Zealand in the 84th minute, but two minutes later Lukaku scored on a header for Belgium and blew a kiss to the fans. Saelemaekers scored in stoppage time.

"It's been a long journey, and proud of the boys," said Just, who had three goals in the tournament. "Everyone worked their hardest. It just wasn't there."



Belgium's Leandro Trossard (10) is grabbed by New Zealand's Elijah Just (11) during the second half of their World Cup Group G soccer match in Vancouver, British Columbia. (AP)

'I was talking about football, not about people'

Ivory Coast remarks were tactical, not personal: Schweinsteiger

MUNICH, June 27, (AP): Former Germany player Bastian Schweinsteiger said he was talking about Ivory Coast's style and not its players when he spoke last weekend about what his country's national team could expect from its African opponent during their group match.

Schweinsteiger called it, "A bit African football, a bit unorthodox, a bit wild, a bit perhaps also not so conditioned by tactics" and added it was unpredictable. Ivory Coast coach Emere Faé slammed those comments as being racist.

"I was talking about football, not about people," Schweinsteiger said in a statement released by German broadcaster ARD, the same outlet on which he made the remarks. "It's a football analysis. Nothing more and nothing less. ... I certainly didn't mean to offend anyone."

Some commentators criticized his comments as playing into racist stereotypes. Sports commentator Patrick Schnitzler wrote on Instagram of "racist prejudices that we are all passing on unnoticed," and journalist Philipp Awounou, who is Black, wrote in Der Spiegel magazine that the characterizations played on old racist tropes rooted in colonialism. Awounou said he did not think Schweinsteiger is racist.

Germany went on to defeat the



Former German soccer player Bastian Schweinsteiger conducts an interview ahead of the UEFA Nations League soccer match between Germany and Switzerland in Cologne, Germany. (AP)

Ivory Coast 2-1.

Faé then led Ivory Coast into the World Cup knockout round for the first time in its history with a 2-0 win over Curaçao on Thursday. Faé said after the game he hoped Schweinsteiger had made a "clumsy statement that's not necessarily reflective of what's in his life."

"We could call it racist, if we were calling a spade a spade," Faé said.

Jürgen Klopp, who is working for broadcaster Magenta, seemed taken aback when asked about Schweinsteiger's comments by Deutsche Welle in a conversation with journalists in New York on Wednesday.

"Now you want to carry on the subject," Klopp responded before breaking off the interview. "No, no, I have no chance. I have no chance to answer this question. Everybody likes it so you bring me in this situation. It's not my job that everybody likes it, but this is a serious subject, and I don't even know what is appropriate to say. For African people it's one thing, for other people it's another thing, and I'm not here."

ARD executive Axel Balkausky defended Schweinsteiger's stance.

"He summarized his experiences and observations from recent games," said Balkausky, ARD's sports coordinator. "It wasn't about individual people but rather a footballing assessment. I can't detect any form of racism in that or in his choice of words. If the coach of Ivory Coast, Emere Faé, were to speak directly with Bastian, his suspicions would be quickly revised, I am sure of that. Perhaps an opportunity of that sort will arise in the course of the tournament."

Bielsa takes responsibility for Uruguay's debacle

GUADALAJARA, Mexico, June 27, (AP): Coach Marcelo Bielsa looked desolate after Uruguay's World Cup campaign ended in disappointment Friday, saying he was fully responsible for the team's elimination and blaming himself for leaving nothing good for Uruguayan soccer during his stint with the national team.

Uruguay lost 1-0 to Spain, leaving the tournament without any victories. It was coming off draws against Saudi Arabia and Cape Verde. It was newcomer Cape Verde that advanced from Group H in

second-place behind Spain.

Bielsa, the Argentine coach whose contract with Uruguay's soccer federation was valid through the World Cup, said in the past that his work with the national team would end after the tournament in the U.S., Mexico and Canada. He voice had a farewell tone on Friday.

"What do I leave for Uruguayan soccer?" he said. "Nothing, because any contribution that a coach might make to soccer in a country after three years of work never truly takes hold if results aren't achieved. Fourth place in

the qualifiers didn't count for much, and a third-place finish in the Copa América didn't, either. And there is obviously no need to spell it out after what happened now.

"A tenure that left nothing behind."

The veteran coach took full responsibility for the team's campaign at the World Cup, saying he should have been able to get the team to do more considering the quality of its players. But he did feel that Uruguay should have had better luck considering its performances.

Fan

Zone



The stadium echoes with cheers during the World Cup games, as fans drive an intense and emotional atmosphere from start to finish. (AP)

Panini packs sell out as fans race to fill 980 spots in collectible albums



Youth exchange Panini World Cup stickers in Mexico City. (AP)

KANSAS CITY, Mo., June 27, (AP): Adam Martin remembers taking boxes of Panini stickers and their accompanying World Cup albums to a Formula 1 race in May, shortly after his collectibles shop had received a shipment and long before the tournament was to begin.

The idea was to give them to friends with kids. But what happened next surprised him.

"When I walked in with this box of cards," Martin recalled, "hundreds of people of all creeds and cultures said something: 'Where did you get those? How can I get some?'" Those Panini stickers are just that iconic collectible that goes beyond sports collectors."

The stickers depicting players and teams in the World Cup have been around since 1970, when four Italian brothers paid \$1,000 to procure the rights to produce the images. More

than 50 years later, the stickers are available in packs all over the world, and fans young and old not only purchase them but also swap among themselves, helping each other fill their keepsake albums.

This year's book is the largest ever, partly due to an enlarged 48-team tournament, with 980 distinct stickers. They've become such a hot commodity that many stores are sold out, and back-orders may not ship until the tournament has crowned a champion.

"We've sold an unbelievable amount of the stickers," said Martin, one of the owners of Dave and Adam's Card World, which has shops in New York and Europe.

"We thought the order we placed months ago would be enough to tide us over," Martin said. "We've had to re-order twice."

Panini had produced more than 2 billion packs - each containing seven stickers - by the start of the tournament, said Jason Howarth, the senior vice president of marketing and athlete relations for Panini America. That's quite a feat considering the field wasn't set until April 1.

Most stickers are not valuable by themselves, though older ones - such as the debuts of Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo - can fetch hundreds of dollars. The value comes in trying to fill the World Cup album.

"In European and South American culture, completing the sticker album is something almost every child does at some point," said Matt Blazey, from Milton Keynes, England, whose YouTube channel featuring cards and collectibles has more than 62,000 subscribers.

"Most rediscover it in adulthood," Blazey said, "when they realize they have adult money, which brings back all of those memories of bringing stickers into school, showing them off to your mates and swapping them to complete the album."

Indeed, part of the beauty of the Panini stickers is in their accessibility. Each pack only costs about \$2 (1.50 euros).

Beginning with the last World Cup in Qatar, though, Panini also began producing variations with special borders that are much more scarce. Suddenly, stickers with red, purple or orange edges became especially sought-after, and collectors have put huge bounties on ultra-rare, black-bordered, 1-of-1s - as in, one in the world - depicting Messi, Ronaldo, Lamine Yamal and other big stars.

Some industry experts believe the black Messi sticker alone could command \$200,000 at auction.



An Egypt fan cheers for his team during World Cup Group G soccer match between Egypt and Iran in Seattle. (AP)

Sports

Egypt survives late drama to seal knockout spot

Iran left to wait on qualification

SEATTLE, June 27, (AP): An Iranian fan rushed the field in celebration, necessitating seven security guards to successfully bring him down.

Shoja Khalilzadeh ripped his jersey off before being mobbed by the entire Iran team after he fired a shot past Egypt goalie Mostafa Shobeir in the 93rd minute to seemingly give his side a 2-1 lead.

For a few joyous moments, Iran was convinced it had advanced to the knockout round at the World Cup for the first time in the expanded 48-team pool at this year's tournament.

The potential late winning goal was called back due to an offside, though, and Egypt advanced past the group stage.

Iran, meanwhile, will have to wait one day to find out its fate after the two teams played to a 1-1 draw. Egypt will play Australia in the round of 32.

Iran coach Amir Ghalenoei lamented what was the third goal by his side waved off by video review in the tournament.

"Technology is justice," Ghalenoei said in Farsi. "But, I'm upset about our bad luck."

At the conclusion of what was promoted as a "Pride Match" in Seattle, one which neither Iran nor Egypt wanted any part in, the Pharaohs finished in second place in Group G. Belgium, which played to a 1-1 draw against Egypt on June 15, beat New Zealand 5-1 in Vancouver, British Columbia to win the group outright.

Egypt coach Hossam Hassan was grateful his team didn't slide to third in the group, which would have been the case had Khalilzadeh's goal held up.

"We knew we had qualified already, we were sitting at the top of the group," Hossan said. "I thank God for everything. After this goal was ruled offside, I was very happy."

Iran, meanwhile, could still advance to the knockout round for the first time in the expanded 48-team pool at this year's tournament. But, they no longer controls their own destiny after Friday's game.

"We're here to make our history, too," said midfielder Rouzbeh Cheshmi. "(Saturday), if our dream comes true, thank God. If not, we are proud of our game and our players because of how we did the game. The last three games, we held up, so let's see what happens."

Egypt took an early lead on a goal by Mahmoud Saber in the fifth minute. Former Liverpool star Mohamed Salah provided some strong play in the box before Saber fired a shot between the legs of Iranian goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand.



Egypt goalkeeper Mostafa Shoubir (23) collides with players during the World Cup Group G soccer match between Egypt and Iran in Seattle. (AP)

Iran was denied an equalizer in the 11th minute when Egypt goalkeeper Mostafa Shobeir saved a penalty kick, but tied the game in the 14th minute on a goal by Ramin Rezaeian.

After Iran came up just short, its players aired their grievances about numerous complications off the field. The team has endured travel restrictions imposed by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security in light of the war in Iran.

In March, Iran sought to move its group-stage matches to Mexico, with which it has diplomatic ties. Its request to move its base camp from Tucson,

Arizona, to Tijuana was granted two weeks before the team's arrival.

Ghalenoei said members of the team have been limited to their hotels and training facilities, and not explored Tijuana in any capacity. Several team officials and members of the support staff have been barred from traveling into the U.S. with the team.

"We don't have recovery, we don't have any logistic people here to help us. We always complain about these things, but no one helps us - no one," said Roozbeh Cheshmi. "As you know, recovery is an important thing. Small details affect the football."

'We are small, but we have big hearts'

Cape Verde writes new chapter in WC history with knockout qualification; Saudi Arabia out

HOUSTON, June 27, (AP): Tiny Cape Verde defied odds to become the smallest country to earn a spot in the World Cup knockout round behind the stellar play of Vozinha, the 40-year-old goalkeeper who embodied the grit of his nation.

"We are small," he said. "But we have big hearts and we are fighters."

Cape Verde completed an improbable run through the group stage with a third straight World Cup draw, a 0-0 draw against Saudi Arabia on to advance in the tournament.

The small island nation off the western coast of Africa, which is making its debut on soccer's grandest stage, already held 2010 champion Spain to a 0-0 draw and then came from behind to get a 2-2 result against Uruguay.

"The team was very eager to show this to the whole world," Cape Verde coach Bubiata said while draped in his country's flag. "We are proud of having arrived at this stage. We have shown that we are a small country, but that we fight for the things that we want to achieve."

Cape Verde's three points put the team in second place behind Spain, which beat Uruguay on Friday night and won the group.

Cape Verde will play reigning



Cape Verde players celebrate their 0-0 draw with Saudi Arabia after the World Cup Group H soccer match in Houston. (AP)

World Cup champion Argentina in Miami on July 3.

Drawing all three group matches doesn't guarantee advancement at major soccer tournaments. But several teams have done it in the past, including Wales in 1958, Ireland and the Netherlands in 1990, and Chile in 1998. New Zealand, however, also got three draws at the 2010 World

Cup and was eliminated.

On the eve of the match, Bubiata mused, "everyone is entitled to dream and nothing is impossible."

The Blue Sharks proved him right, overcoming seemingly insurmountable odds as this country of just more than 500,000 reached the round of 32.

A woman, her face painted with

a flag of the archipelago, held a sign that read: "Small Islands, Big Dreams."

A dream that these underdogs have made reality as they continue their charmed run on the world stage.

They did it with another strong game from Vozinha, whose tournament success has helped him amass more than 16 million Instagram followers.

He had a save in first half stoppage time, grabbing a header from Mohamed Kanno to keep Saudi Arabia scoreless. Another save came in the 66th minute when he leaped to deflect a shot from Mohammed Abu Al-Shamat.

A third came in the 92nd minute when he stopped a shot by Abdullah Al-Hamdan.

"There is a lot of quality in our national team," Vozinha said. "Maybe for many of you, you think the Cape Verdean player is not good enough. But we came here to show that we have a lot of quality and we are here to compete and our players can play everywhere in the big competition, in the big leagues."

A group of shirtless men in the crowd each painted one letter of his name on their chests as they cheered Cape Verde.



Senegal's Pape Gueye (26) and Iraq's Ibrahim Bayesh (8) battle for the ball during the World Cup Group I soccer match between Senegal and Iraq in Toronto. (AP)

Senegal routs Iraq to boost knockout hopes

TORONTO, June 27, (Xinhua): Senegal secured a dominant 5-0 victory over 10-man Iraq at Toronto Stadium in its final Group I match of the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

The win significantly bolstered Senegal's goal difference, placing the African side in a strong position to qualify for the round of 32 as one of the eight best third-placed teams.

Senegal started with intense pressure, finding the net just four minutes into the match when Abdoulaye Seck headed home from a corner kick.

The momentum shifted further in the 13th minute when Iraq defender Rebin Sulaka was shown a straight red card following a VAR check for denying a clear goalscoring opportunity. With a man advantage, Senegal dominated possession and chances.

After the break, Senegal intensified its offensive efforts, scoring three goals in less than 20 minutes. Ismaila Sarr doubled the lead in the 56th minute with a clinical tap-in, followed by a spectacular strike from outside the box by Pape Gueye in the 59th minute. Gueye completed his brace in the 71st minute to make it 4-0, and Iliman Ndiaye sealed the 5-0 scoreline in the 82nd minute.

Spain wins Group J, Muslera's error sends Uruguay home

GUADALAJARA, Mexico, June 27, (AP): Spain defeated Uruguay 1-0 after another goalkeeping mistake by Fernando Muslera, advancing to the knockout stage of the World Cup and eliminating the South American powerhouse.

Uruguay, a two-time champion, will go home without any victories in its three Group H games. Spain, the European champion, won the group with seven points and will face the second-place team from Group J - either Austria or Algeria - on Thursday in Inglewood, California.

Alex Baena scored in the 42nd minute after Muslera couldn't fully swat away his shot from inside the area. It was the third blunder of the tournament by the 40-year-old Muslera, who asked coach Marcelo Bielsa to substitute him at halftime. Sergio Rochet came in to start the second half.

"He is the one who decided to leave," Bielsa said. The veteran Argentine coach said he feels like Uruguay deserved better luck considering its performances, and should have earned seven points instead of two from its group matches. But he took full responsibility for the team's failure.

At 19th in the FIFA rankings, Uruguay is the highest-ranked team to be eliminated so far.

"Every match is different and you have to win every



Spain's Aymeric Laporte (14) battles for a header with Uruguay's Federico Vinas (21) during the World Cup Group H soccer match between Uruguay and Spain in Zapopan, near Guadalajara, Mexico. (AP)

type of match," Spain coach Luis de la Fuente said. "This was a game with maximum difficulty."

De la Fuente said midfielder Yéremy Pino likely suffered a broken collarbone that would sideline him for the rest of the tournament. Pino, who entered the match in the 66th minute, stayed on until the end despite the injury because Spain had already made all five substitutions.

Cape Verde, which played Saudi Arabia to a 0-0 draw in the other group game, finished second in the group with three points, one more than both Uruguay and Saudi Arabia. Uruguay finished third but without enough points to be among the best eight third-place teams that will advance.

A few Uruguay players cried on the field after the final whistle. Many fans booed the team as it left.

Haaland among 10 regular starters absent

Dembélé's hat-trick sparks France commanding victory over Norway

FOXBOROUGH, Mass., June 27, (AP): Not so fast, Lionel Messi and Kylian Mbappé. Ousmane Dembélé has just entered the Golden Boot race.

Dembélé scored a first-half hat trick, including one off a feed from Mbappé, to help France beat Norway 4-1 at the World Cup.

Dembélé's goals came in the seventh, 20th and 32nd minutes. It was the first first-half hat trick at the World Cup since Russia forward Oleg Salenko scored three of his five goals in the opening 45 minutes against Cameroon at the 1994 World Cup in the United States.

"It is a unique moment," Dembélé said. "But the most important was to finish first of the group in the group stage, and we are focused on the round of 32, which is the most important."

France, which won the World Cup in 2018 and lost in the final four years ago, had already secured its place in



France's Ousmane Dembele celebrates after scoring his side's third goal during the World Cup Group I soccer match between Norway and France in Foxborough, Mass., near Boston. (AP)

the knockout round before Friday's match. Norway was also assured of a spot in the round of 32 and ended up in second place in the group.

Désiré Doué scored France's final goal in second-half injury time.

Dembélé said changing their approach in the final group match was never a consideration. France has 10 goals through three games.

"We want to win all our matches, but we remain focused," Dembélé said.

The fastest World Cup hat trick took only 7 minutes, 42 seconds. Hungarian striker Laszlo Kiss, who had come on as a substitute, managed that feat late in the match against El Salvador at the 1982 World Cup in Spain.

The quickest World Cup hat trick from the start of the match occurred at the 1954 tournament in Switzerland when Austria striker Erich Probst scored his three goals in the opening 24 minutes against Czechoslovakia.

Erling Haaland was among 10 regular starters absent from Norway's starting lineup, presumably to rest. The wholesale changes included Egil Selvik starting in goal in place of Orjan Nyland.

Norway coach Ståle Solbakken said resting so many players was an easy decision for him.