



Amir, Crown Prince, PM laud students Page 2



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Near-50°C weekend heat to sear Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, July 2, (KUNA): The Meteorological Department has forecast that the country's weather during the weekend will generally be hot to extremely hot during the day and warm at night.

The acting Director of the department, Abdulaziz Al-Qarawi, told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that weather maps and numerical models indicate the country is affected by an extension of a surface low-pressure system accompanied by a hot air mass and northwesterly to variable winds that are light to moderate in speed, becoming active at times and causing dust to rise in open areas.

He explained that the daytime weather on Friday will be extremely hot and relatively humid in coastal areas, with northwesterly to variable winds light to moderate, occasionally active between 10 and 40 km/h. Maximum temperatures are expected between 46°C and 48°C, and the sea will be light to moderate with waves between two and five feet.

The weather on Friday night will be warm and relatively humid in coastal areas, with northwesterly to variable winds light to moderate at speeds of 8 to 28 km/h. Minimum temperatures are expected between 29°C and 31°C, and the sea will be light to moderate with waves between one and three feet.

The daytime weather on Saturday will remain extremely hot and relatively humid in coastal areas, with northwesterly to variable winds light to moderate at speeds of 8 to 28 km/h. Maximum temperatures are expected between 45°C and 47°C, and the sea will be light to moderate with waves between one and three feet.

Saturday night will be warm and relatively humid in coastal areas, with northwesterly to variable winds light to moderate at speeds of 8 to 30 km/h. Minimum temperatures are expected between 28°C and 30°C, and the sea will be light to moderate with waves between one and three feet.



Photo by Samer Shiqr

As the blazing sun sinks below the horizon, crowds gather along Kuwait's beaches, seeking refuge from another day of relentless summer heat.

27,141-worker transfer wave ends as Kuwait shuts window

SMEs lead massive labor shift

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 2: The Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) confirmed the end of the grace period for the transfer of workers from sectors, in which such a move is prohibited, to other sectors.

These workers were granted the opportunity to transfer to other sectors from May 1 to June 30, 2026 in accordance with Ministerial Resolution No. 2/2026.

PAM disclosed that the total number of workers who benefited from the resolution reached 27,141. It stated that the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) sector recorded the highest number of transfer requests with 16,048 workers, followed by the agricultural sector with 4,460 workers, industrial sector with 3,300 workers, livestock sector with 3,087 workers, and fishing sector with 246 workers.

It stressed that these figures proved the success of the resolution in meeting the demands of the labor market, maintaining its stability, and implementing the directives of the political leadership to better serve the public, thus, contributing to raising the efficiency of the labor market and ensuring its flexibility.



Moudhi Fahad Al-Dousari



Tayba Abdulhadi Al-Hajri



Noura Meshal Al-Azmi

Journey to 100%

Perfect scores, bright futures

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 2: Amidst an atmosphere of joy and pride, the top-achieving high school students expressed their happiness as they celebrated their accomplishments, marking the culmination of years of hard work and dedication.

Moudhi Fahad Al-Dousari, a student from Latifa Al-Shamali High School who topped the Science section with a perfect score of 100 percent, expressed her immense joy upon receiving the news of her success, describing it as the crowning achievement of years of diligence and perseverance.

Al-Dousari said words could not fully describe her feelings, and that

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Kuwait Prime Minister leads review of strategic project implementation

KUWAIT CITY, July 2, (KUNA): His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah chaired a meeting Thursday of the ministerial committee tasked with following up on the country's major development projects.

During the meeting, His Highness was briefed on the latest progress of several strategic projects, including implementation rates and approved timelines for completing their various phases.

The meeting was attended by Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan, Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Housing Affairs Abdullatif Al-Mishari and Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Dr. Subaih Al-Mukhaizeem.

Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment Abdulaziz Al-Marzouq, Advisor at the Diwan of the Prime Minister Dr. Khaled Al-Fadhel, Director General of the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority Sheikh Dr. Meshal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Acting Head of the Diwan of the Prime Minister Sheikh Khaled Mohammed Al-Khaled Al-Sabah, and Head of the Fatwa and Legislation Department Counselor Salah Ateeq Al-Majed also attended the meeting.



PM Diwan photo

HH the PM chairs a meeting of the ministerial committee tasked with following up on the country's major development projects.

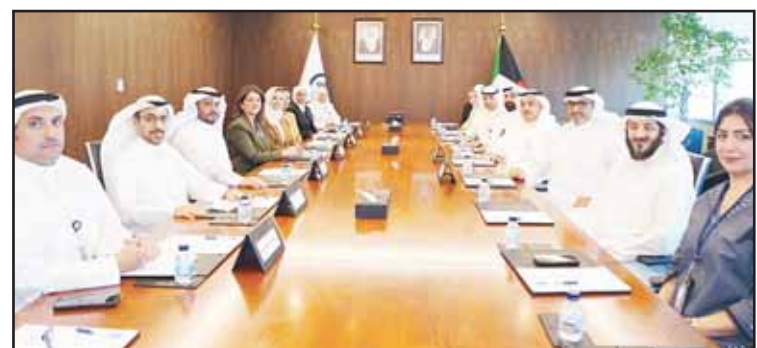
Agencies align to combat money laundering and terror financing

KUWAIT CITY, July 2, (KUNA): Head of Kuwait Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) and Chairman of the National Committee for Anti-Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing Dr. Hamad Al-Mukrad met Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) Chairperson Dr. Rana Al-Faris to discuss enhancing cooperation and exchanging expertise.

Dr. Al-Mukrad told KUNA on Thursday that money laundering and terrorist financing are considered corruption

crimes according to provisions of the law. He said the meeting followed a series of coordination meetings that led to adopting a new methodology to strengthen institutional cooperation, expedite information exchange, improve coordination, and enhance integrated performance.

He added that Nazaha's membership in the National Committee strengthens coordination among national bodies and unifies efforts to combat financial crimes.



FIU photo

The Head of the Kuwaiti Financial Intelligence Unit, Dr. Hamad Al-Mukrad, during his discussion with the Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) Chairperson Dr. Rana Al-Faris, on strengthening institutional cooperation.

Suitcase secrets exposed in Kuwait T4 fake goods bust

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 2: Customs inspectors at Kuwait International Airport's Terminal 4 apprehended a passenger arriving from China after a

search revealed three suitcases containing counterfeit goods, including clothing, watches, shoes, and accessories.

The passenger was also found carrying sums of money in various

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News watch

KUWAIT CITY: An explosion struck a cafe in the Hijaz area of central Damascus on Thursday, killing six people and injuring 22 others, health officials said.

Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) quoted Dr. Ahmad al-Bakkour, director of Ambulance and Emergency Services at the Health Ministry, as saying that 14 people were evacuated from the scene on Al-Nasr Street to Al-Mujtahid Hospital, including four who were pronounced dead and 10 who were injured. One additional injured person was transferred to the Syrian Red Crescent Hospital. (KUNA)

BEIRUT: Lebanon and Syria signed on Thursday an agreement to establish a joint high-level committee focusing on expanding bilateral cooperation.

The agreement was signed by Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam and Syrian Foreign Minister Asaad Al-Shaibani.

Speaking at a joint press conference, Salam said the discussions aimed to enhance cooperation across several sectors, with priority given to electricity interconnection, transport, trade, facilitating cross-border movement, and strengthening bilateral relations. (KUNA)

New avian 1st

Kuwait records rare Sooty Gull

KUWAIT CITY, July 2, (KUNA): Kuwaiti birdwatchers Omar Al-Shaheen, Abdulrahman Al-Sarhan and Hamoud Al-Shayji have recorded the Sooty Gull in Kuwait for the first

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EPA photo

The Sooty Gull spotted in Kuwait for the first time.



Amir, Crown Prince, PM laud students

Education Minister wins praise for outstanding exam results

KUWAIT CITY, July 2, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent cables on Thursday to Kuwaiti and resident high school and religious studies institute students, congratulating them on excelling in the 2025-26 school semester.

His Highness the Amir wished the students and their families more success, expressing hopes for continuous progress and academic excellence.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah also sent a cable of congratulations to the Minister of Education Sayyed Jalal Sayyed Al-Tabtabaei, praising the successful implementation of the final examination plan for senior high school students for the 2025-26 academic year.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir expressed sincere appreciation and gratitude for the diligent efforts of the staff at the Education Ministry, commending the proactive measures adopted by the ministry that resulted in a seamless examination process, while wishing the students continued success on their academic journey.

Crown Prince congratulates

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent cables on Thursday to Kuwaiti and resident high school and religious studies institute students, congratulating them on excelling in the 2025-26 school semester.

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HH the Amir

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HH the Prime Minister

Minister Al-Tabtabaei

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Education Minister congratulates 10

The Minister of Education Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei congratulated the Grade 12 students on their outstanding

performance in the 2025/2026 academic year final exams, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Al-Tabtabaei announced the results for the public and private schools (scientific and literary streams), as well as religious education.

He praised the excellence and perseverance of the students despite the exceptional circumstances during the academic year, particularly the Iranian aggression, which necessitated a shift from in-person to online classes.

He then revealed the top 10 students in the scientific, literary and religious education streams, while commending the efforts of the students, their families, and the educational and administrative staff in ensuring the success of the academic year.

Top 10 students in the Science Section:

- First: Tayba Al-Hajri (Capital Educational District) - 100 percent
- Second: Ghaliya Al-Azmi (Ahmadi Educational District) - 100 percent
- Third: Moudhi Al-Dosari (Capital Educational District) - 100 percent
- Fourth: Tamara Al-Hindi (Special Education) - 100 percent
- Fifth: Anna Tayyar (Special Education) - 100 percent

- Sixth: Hala Al-Zamil (Special Education) - 100 percent
- Seventh: Rasha Khader (Special Education) - 100 percent
- Eighth: Raghad Qasim (Special Education) - 100 percent
- Ninth: Sidra Hussein (Special Education) - 100 percent
- Tenth: Adel Khalil (Special Education) - 100 percent

Top 10 students in the Arts Section:

- First: Yasmin Wadi (Special Education) - 99.79 percent
- Second: Habiba Mohammed (Special Education) - 99.78 percent
- Third: Noura Al-Azmi (Ahmadi Educational District) - 99.48 percent
- Fourth: Shawq Al-Anzi (Ahmadi Educational District) - 99.17 percent
- Fifth: Amsha Al-Basman (Farwaniya Educational District) - 99.12 percent
- Sixth: Fawzi Al-Nutaifi (Capital Educational District) - 99.07 percent
- Seventh: Munira Al-Malabi (Ahmadi Educational District) - 99.03 percent
- Eighth: Malak Mohammad (Hawally Educational District) - 99.01 percent
- Ninth: Fatima Al-Sharrah (Hawally Educational District) - 98.90 percent
- Tenth: Khalaf Al-Anzi (Special Education) - 98.89 percent

Top 10 students in Religious Education:

- First: Farah Darwish - 100 percent
- Second: Kawthar Rashid - 99.89 percent
- Third: Aisha Al-Kandari - 99.66 percent
- Fourth: Zahraa Jad Al-Rab - 99.55 percent
- Fifth: Sumaya Suleiman - 99.55 percent
- Sixth: Maryam Mubarak - 99.43 percent
- Seventh: Omar Badawi - 99.43 percent
- Eighth: Hajar Al-Hariti - 99.20 percent
- Ninth: Tasneem Al-Jamal - 99.20 percent
- Tenth: Hour Al-Duwaish - 99.09 percent

CITRA – 70 fraud and scam reports tackled

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 2: The Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) announced that it handled 70 fraud and scam reports in June.

In a statement released recently, CITRA revealed that the reports included 39 websites, one text message, four telephone calls, 20 social media posts and six WhatsApp messages.

CITRA emphasized the need to report suspicious methods, links or calls, and to refrain from sharing personal or banking information with dubious entities.

Meanwhile, CITRA recently referred two contracts to the State Audit Bureau (SAB) for review, pre-audit and audit procedures, and then approval if there are no comments that require clarifications from the authority.

One of the contracts is for the numbering resources project of CITRA at a total cost of KD197,709, while the other is for the Microsoft licenses for employees and servers at a total cost of KD198,600.

Training for ‘Olympiad’ hopefuls begins Aug 23

KUWAIT CITY, July 2: The Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity, a subsidiary of Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS), announced the registration period for the second edition of its ‘Train the Trainers’ program for the 2026 International Chemistry Olympiad (IChO), in cooperation with the Department of Education at the National Taiwan Normal University (NTNU), reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press statement Thursday, the center revealed that the program aims to prepare and qualify specialized national personnel to train students participating in the International Chemistry Olympiad according to international scientific standards.

Registration for the program begins on Sunday and will continue until Aug 8, while the names of those accepted will be announced on Aug 16. The program will be held from Aug 23-27 at the Sabah Al-Salem University City campus.

The program consists of 30 hours of intensive training – 60 percent theoretical study and 40 percent practical training in laboratories.

It will be supervised by Prof. I-Ji Chang from NTNU, who has vast academic and research experience in advanced Chemistry and in preparing participants for international science olympiads.

The program is for Chemistry teachers in public and private schools, university faculty members, and in Chemistry and Chemical Engineering experts. It focuses on developing advanced scientific knowledge and practical laboratory skills, as well as cultivating analytical thinking and problem-solving abilities.

Participants will also be introduced to the assessment mechanisms and criteria used in the International Chemistry Olympiad.

Admission to the program has several stages, such as online registration, passing Chemistry and English language tests, and a selection and assessment phase conducted jointly by the center and NTNU.

A total of 25 participants will be selected for the program.

For more information, the center invites those interested to visit the Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity website (www.sacgc.org).

Info and Youth ministers eye boost in cooperation

KUWAIT CITY, July 2, (KUNA): Minister of State for Communications and Information Technology and Acting Minister of Information and Culture, Omar Al-Omar, met with Minister of State for Youth and Sports, Dr. Tariq Al-Jalal, to discuss ways to enhance cooperation and coordination between the two sides.

The Ministry of Information said in a press statement on Thursday that the meeting comes within the framework of strengthening integration between government entities to serve the development of institutional and media work.

The statement added that both sides emphasized during the meeting the importance of continuing cooperation to support development efforts and raise the efficiency of work, particularly in the media, youth, and sports sectors.



KUNA photo
 Kuwait's Ambassador to Bangladesh Ali Hamada meets Bangladesh's Foreign Minister Dr. Khalilur Rahman

Kuwait, Bangladesh discuss ways to further bolster ties

KUALA LUMPUR, July 2, (KUNA): Kuwait's Ambassador to Bangladesh Ali Hamada met Bangladesh's Foreign Minister Dr. Khalilur Rahman on Thursday to discuss bilateral ties, ways to strengthen cooperation, and issues of mutual interest.

Speaking to KUNA after the meeting, Hamada said the talks reflected Kuwait's commitment to further strengthening ties with Bangladesh across all sectors in line with the shared interests of both countries.

The ambassador conveyed Kuwait's and Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah's congratulations to Bangladesh on its election to the presidency of the upcoming session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

In return, Dr. Rahman expressed Bang-

ladesh's appreciation for Kuwait's valuable support for its successful candidacy.

Hamada said he looks forward to Bangladesh continuing to support shared priorities during its presidency of the General Assembly through closer coordination, consultation and joint action in the interests of both countries and the wider Islamic world.

He also reaffirmed Kuwait's appreciation in the close cooperation and coordination between both countries in international forums, calling for further strengthening of that partnership.

The ambassador commended the strong Kuwait-Bangladesh relationship across various fields and expressed his best wishes for Bangladesh's continued progress, prosperity and closer bilateral cooperation.



Jahra Governorate photo
 Jahra Governor Hamad Jassim Al-Habashi attends the meeting.

Solve traffic problem, build amenities along ‘walkways’

KUWAIT CITY, July 2: The Public Services Committee at the Jahra Governorate Council recently held its meeting no. 6/2026, with Jahra Governor Hamad Jassim Al-Habashi in attendance.

The committee discussed several items on its agenda including the priority service-related matters in the governorate.

It reviewed proposals submitted by citizens about services, including the need to solve the traffic problem, enhance urban connectivity between different areas in the governorate and develop amenities along the pedestrian walkways.

It deliberated on issues referred by its Health, Education and Community Development counterparts, and the responses of government agencies regarding service and regulatory issues.

It also talked about the comments on water transportation services, followed up the treated water issue in the governorate and Abdally Agricultural Area, and looked into ways to overcome challenges in coordination with the other concerned authorities.

Meanwhile, the Governor underscored the need to activate the role of the council committees in monitoring service-related issues and maintaining coordination with the relevant government agencies to expedite the resolution of issues and improve services.

Appeals process kick starts for Grade 12 2nd semester results

KUWAIT CITY, July 2: The Ministry of Education announced that it has started receiving appeals on the results of Grade 12 exams for the second semester of the 2025/2026 academic year for students in the Science section, Arts section, and Religious Education students, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The ministry stated in a post on its X account that the appeal process will continue for three days, from Thursday, July 2 to Saturday, July 4. Each student is allowed to submit appeals for a maximum of three subjects through the Ministry of Education's website under the Student Services section.

Feed distribution stopped: The Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) announced a temporary suspension of feed distribu-

tion during the first week of July due to an upgrade to its electronic system, reports Al-Rai daily.

PAAAFR explained that the suspension began on Wednesday, July 1, and will continue until Thursday, July 9. Distribution is scheduled to resume on Sunday, July 12 after the completion of the upgrade.

The measure is part of PAAAFR's efforts to develop its digital infrastructure and improve electronic services in line with digital transformation, aiming to facilitate feed distribution for beneficiaries, reduce time and effort, and enhance data accuracy and transaction speed.

PAAAFR urged livestock breeders and landowners benefiting from subsidized feed to plan their needs in advance, stressing that the suspension is temporary and for technical purposes aimed at improving service quality and performance.

Other Voices

Al-Rawdatain water firm and the diligent minister

By Ahmad alsarraf

SINCE its establishment, Al-Rawdatain Water Bottling Company has operated quietly, at times in a rather opaque manner. Little is known about its ownership, operational structure, or management. There is no record of members of parliament in previous assemblies raising questions about it, and its financial results related to profits and losses have not been publicly detailed.

Research indicates that the company was established at the request of the late Amir, Jaber Al-Ahmad, after economic studies confirmed the viability of the project. It was founded in November 1980. Its capital was contributed by the Industrial Bank of Kuwait, the Ministry of Finance, the Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS), the Kuwait Trading, Contracting and Foreign Investments Company, the Kuwait Investment Company, and the Kuwait Hotels Company.

Production began in 1983 with a capacity of 170,000 liters of natural groundwater. Ten years later, likely due to limited management capacity and low returns, PIFSS acquired the shares of the remaining shareholders, except for the Industrial Bank of Kuwait's 30 percent stake.

The Rawdatain field is located 100 kilometers north of Kuwait, covering an area of 50 square kilometers. It is the largest freshwater reservoir in Kuwait and is known for its unique mineral properties. Its age is estimated to be between 4 and 5 million years.

Suddenly, after more than 40 years since its establishment, the company has become a competitor to other bottled water companies, both local and international, thanks to the quality and variety of its products. The company has established a strong presence and now sells its products online, thanks

to its current dynamic management team, none of whose members I know personally. I hope the management will be more committed to promoting its products to all government agencies and encouraging the use of this national product.

For half a century, we have suffered from the problem of power outages, especially in the summer, when air conditioning becomes a matter of life and death. I, along with thousands of others, have been forced to pay exorbitant sums to purchase generators for our businesses, warehouses, factories, and homes. Despite this, hundreds of tons of food, especially perishable goods, have spoiled. We have all suffered from electricity outages linked to mismanagement involving some former officials. Over 400 million dinars were spent during a single summer on purchasing generators, most of which later turned out to be scrap metal.

Like other technical and sensitive ministries, the Ministry of Electricity requires a conscientious and competent leader, one who is strong, honest, and capable of making decisions. Many of these qualities were present in previous electricity ministers. However, the current minister, Subaih Al-Mukhaizeem, has these capabilities, in addition to the support of the political leadership. As a result, Al-Mukhaizeem succeeded where his predecessors struggled.

We have not heard any statements about power outages, nor calls for conservation, nor reliance on government-run generators to supplement electricity in specific areas. The system is now operating at a reasonable pace, even though this month and the next are expected to be the most demanding in terms of electricity consumption due to many people refraining from traveling.

I would like to express thanks to the Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, Al-Mukhaizeem, for his efforts.

email: a.alsarraf@alqabas.com.kw

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Why should Gulf economic bonds with Iran be frozen?

"If the war ends, agreements are signed, missiles and drones cease, and diplomatic delegations resume travel between capitals, should the Gulf states immediately normalize their economic relations with Iran? I believe the answer is no," columnist **Bassam Fahad Thunayyan Al-Ghanim** wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

"It is politically, security-wise, and economically prudent for the Gulf states to freeze any new economic expansion with Iran for at least a full year. During this period, the situation can be assessed, and the Iranian regime's post-war behavior can be studied before any long-term strategic decisions are made. True peace is not measured by the signing of agreements, but by the extent of adherence to their terms.

"The region has witnessed the signing of dozens of agreements, understandings, and pledges over past decades, many of which have produced outcomes different from what was hoped for. Successful states do not base their policies on intentions, but on facts, results, and actual behavior on the ground.

"The fundamental problem does not lie with the Iranian people, who deserve development, stability, and normal relations with their neighbors. The problem lies in the policies that have governed Iran over the past decades, policies characterized by the export of crises abroad, support for armed groups, interference in the affairs of several Arab states, and the allocation of a significant portion of Iran's resources to the pursuit of regional influence instead of directing them toward internal development.

"The end of the war does not automatically mean the end of these policies. The Iranian constitution remains in place, the same institutions remain in place, and the political ideology that has governed Iran for decades remains dominant. To date, there are no sufficient indications of a comprehensive review of this approach. Reopening economic channels with Iran immediately after the war's end could be a hasty step that grants the Iranian regime substantial economic gains before any genuine changes in its regional behavior are ensured.

"The Gulf states are not obligated to maintain permanent hostility, nor are they obligated to forget quickly. Relations between states are not built on emotions, but on interests, trust, and mutual commitment. A full year of reflection and evaluation is a logical and balanced option, during which the Gulf states should monitor several indicators, most importantly the extent of Iran's actual commitment to non-interference in the affairs of Arab states.

"The second crucial factor is determining the fate of armed groups and militias linked to Iran in the region. Third, the evolution of Iranian political and media discourse toward the Gulf states must be monitored. Fourth, it is essential to determine whether there has been a genuine review of the policies that have contributed to the region's crises over past decades. Fifth, it is important to understand the direction of Iranian spending after the war. Will it be directed toward domestic development or towards rebuilding instruments of external influence?

"History teaches us that the most dangerous strategic errors are those committed in moments of excessive optimism after the end of wars, when everyone believes the past has been completely closed, while the underlying causes of the crisis still exist beneath the surface. Therefore, Gulf wisdom today lies neither in permanent severance nor in hasty rapprochement, but rather in measured caution. One year may be sufficient to test intentions, observe behavior, and assess the true direction of Iranian policy after the war.

"If it is proven that the region has indeed entered a new phase based on respect for sovereignty, good neighborliness, and non-interference in the internal affairs of states, then it will be in everyone's interest to build normal and stable relations that serve all the peoples of the region. However, if experience proves that only the form of the crisis has changed while its underlying causes remain the same, then this year of reflection will save the Gulf states many years of mistakes, costs, and risks. Wise policy does not reject peace; it tests it first."

Also:

"Summer vacation represents an important milestone in the lives of individuals and families. It is a period everyone looks forward to after a year of study or continuous work," columnist **Muhammad Nasser Al-Alem** wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

"However, perspectives on vacation vary. Some see it simply as a time for rest, while others view it as a valuable opportunity that can be transformed into a genuine investment, benefiting individuals both in the present and the future.

"The value of time does not change

according to seasons or occasions. Time is a person's true capital. Summer vacation offers more space to manage it in a flexible and creative way. Hence the importance of planning vacations in advance, balancing rest and recreation with learning and gaining new experiences.

"Reading is one of the best ways to utilize vacation time, as it broadens horizons, develops culture, and opens new avenues of thought. Enrolling in training courses or volunteer programs contributes to developing personal and leadership skills and provides young people with practical experiences that classrooms may not always offer. Vacation presents an opportunity to strengthen family bonds through family visits, shared trips, and activities that bring family members together away from the pressures of daily life. Some beautiful memories remain with us for years, born from simple moments spent together.

"It is important to prioritize physical and mental well-being. Exercise and outdoor activities help rejuvenate and improve quality of life. Excessive use of electronic devices wastes time and reduces the true benefit of a vacation.

"Successful societies view vacations as opportunities for growth and development, not merely as times for leisure and consumption. When children learn from a young age how to manage and invest their time, they acquire one of the most important skills for success in life. What will we do after vacation? If we end the vacation having acquired a new skill, broader knowledge, stronger family relationships, or better health, then we will have achieved the true meaning of vacation.

"Summer vacation is not a fleeting period, but a renewed opportunity for self-improvement. When we make the most of our vacation, time becomes an accomplishment, and days become a store of experience and success."

"I have written several times about many forms of fraud and scams. The most prominent and traditional image, for years now, is that of scam messages sent by some people online," columnist **Ahmad Al-Dawas** wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

"One of them claims to have a project that guarantees profits and that participants will receive large returns. In Kuwait, hundreds of Kuwaitis and residents once entered a real estate exhibition and found a company that dazzled visitors with luxurious décor and a warm welcome from a well-dressed female employee. The company promised to purchase houses in America and rent them out for a 20 percent commission. Each person paid \$50,000, and it later turned out that the houses were dilapidated, burdened with taxes, unsellable and uninhabitable, and located in areas with high crime rates.

"In another case, a scammer contacts a victim claiming to be a bank employee and asks them to update their banking information, then proceeds to steal from them. Banks have repeatedly warned customers that they never request such information. Recently, a citizen fell victim to electronic fraud when he paid KD 1 to confirm the purchase of an item, only to be surprised that the scammer had withdrawn his entire bank balance within seconds.

"A few days ago, an Arab source reported that in 2008, a rumor spread in some Gulf countries and Egypt claiming that old Singer sewing machines contained a rare substance known as "red mercury," and that this substance was being sold for millions of dollars. People rushed to acquire these old, neglected machines. The fraudster who started the rumor had previously bought a large number of worthless old sewing machines and stored them.

"After the rumor spread, the dilapidated machines became a source of huge profit, as many people rushed to buy them in the hope of quick wealth. The price of the machines soared, and some people sold their possessions or depleted their savings, hoping to get rich quickly. Later, the truth emerged, and it turned out that the "red mercury" story was nothing but a hoax. The prices of the machines then suddenly collapsed, and many people lost their money.

"The situation in Lebanon is dangerous. A peace agreement was signed between Lebanon and Israel aimed at restoring Lebanon's sovereignty over its southern territories. Israel stipulated the disarmament of Hezbollah, while Hezbollah threatened civil war. Following the announcement of the agreement in Washington, Hezbollah supporters protested by blocking roads in Beirut with burning tires in opposition to the agreement.

"Does Hezbollah lack a sense of patriotism? Does it not care about the safety of the country and its citizens? Hezbollah only cares about carrying out the orders of its masters in Iran."

— Compiled by Simi K. Kutty



Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah warmly welcomed the guests.

Coordination boost sought in social, community works

KUWAIT CITY, July 2: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah on Wednesday met with acting Assistant Undersecretary for Social Welfare and Development Affairs and Director General of the Social Development Sector at the Ministry of Social Affairs Iman Al-Enezi, who was accompanied by Director for Public Relations and Citizen Services at the Ministry of Social Affairs and member of the Farwaniya Governorate Council Hanan Al-Gharib.

The Governor warmly welcomed the guests, while underscoring the

importance of strengthening cooperation between the governorate and the ministry in supporting community programs and initiatives, and to improve the services provided to citizens and residents.

They discussed several topics of mutual interest and ways to solidify coordination in social and community works.

Al-Enezi and Al-Gharib expressed their gratitude to the Governor for the warm reception, and praised the commitment of the governorate to fully cooperate with various government entities.

Stolen pickup truck set on fire in Kabad region

KUWAIT CITY, July 2: A citizen reported the theft of his Nissan pickup truck from in front of his rest house in Block 7 in Kabad. The vehicle was later discovered completely burned in front of a mosque in the same area, reports *Al-Anba* daily.

According to a security source, the Public Prosecution has classified the incident as a felony.

Security authorities have launched an investigation to determine the circumstances of the case and identify and apprehend those responsible for the theft and the deliberate destruction of the vehicle.

Better social, healthcare services eyed for inmates

CAIRO, July 2, (KUNA): The 23rd Arab Conference of Heads of Penal and Correctional Institutions kicked off recently with the participation of Kuwait to discuss ways to develop correctional institutions.

Secretary-General of the Council of Arab Interior Ministers Dr. Mohammad Koman said in his opening remarks that the conference agenda reflects Arab countries' commitment to developing penal and correctional institutions, improving inmates' conditions and providing them with better social and healthcare services.

Koman said this approach was reflected in Sunday's workshop on advancing healthcare services for inmates in penal and correctional institutions within the framework of human rights. He added that the conference is discussing the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules), noting that a model Arab plan was prepared in 2015 to develop the performance of penal and correctional institutions in line with international standards.

He also highlighted the Model Code of Conduct for personnel working in correctional institutions, which was adopted by the Council of Arab Interior Ministers in 2019.

Koman said the agenda also includes discussion of Bahrain's pre-release care program, which won second place in the 2025 Prince Naif Award for Arab Security in the category of pioneering security programs.

He called for keeping pace with digital transformation and utilizing modern technologies to improve the efficiency and security of penal and correctional institutions, while promoting the exchange of expertise through presentations by participating Arab states.

The conference is discussing several issues related to the development of correctional institutions, including improving inmates' conditions, enhancing social and healthcare services, expanding the use of digital technologies in prison administration, and reviewing Arab experiences in the field.

Kuwait is represented by Assistant Director of the General Prison Colonel Abdullah Al-Ajmi and Assistant Director of Information and Follow-up at the Correctional Institution Colonel Ayed Al-Saeed.

The Kuwaiti delegation participated on Sunday in a workshop on advancing healthcare services for inmates of Arab penal and correctional institutions within the framework of human rights.

Mol launches service to register drone 'control'

KUWAIT CITY, July 2: Sahel app announced on its X account that the Ministry of Interior has launched a new online service that allows users to register proof of drone ownership, reports *Al-Seyassah* daily.

This service enables users to register drone ownership data, as well as view, update, or delete the registered information.

One dead as car turns turtle in Al-Raqqa area

KUWAIT CITY, July 2: A vehicle overturned on Al-Ghous Road in Al-Raqqa, resulting in one death.

The competent security authorities took legal measures and the body of the victim was transferred to the Forensic Department.

A security source said the Operations Unit at the Ministry of Interior received a report about the accident. Securitymen and paramedics rushed to the location, where they discovered that the driver already succumbed to his injuries. The paramedics then referred the corpse to the Forensic Department.

'Dowry is debt owed by husband, must be paid'

KUWAIT CITY, July 2: The Court of Appeals upheld the ruling of a lower court which obligated a Gulf resident to obtain an official marriage certificate from the Sharia Documentation Department and to pay his wife the agreed-upon dowry of KD 35,000, reports *Al-Anba* daily.

The wife had filed the case to secure her legal rights and have the marriage officially registered. The court confirmed the validity of the marriage contract and the agreed dowry amount.

Lawyer Alaa Al-Saeedi insisted that the husband's refusal to register the contract did not deprive the wife of her legal and financial rights, stressing that the dowry is a debt owed by the husband once the agreement between both parties is established.

Man says beaten by brother: A Kuwaiti citizen filed a complaint alleging that he was beaten by his brother following a dispute at their home in Abdullah Mubarak, reports *Al-Anba* daily.

The complainant submitted a medical report confirming injuries, including redness and bruising to his right ear, scratches on his neck, and a perforated right eardrum.

The Public Prosecutor ordered the Criminal Investigation Department to conduct the necessary investigations, and a case was registered.

Cassation statistics: The Supreme Judicial Council said the different divisions at the Court of Cassation adjudicated a total of 1,988 appeals in June, with an adjudication rate of 182 percent, reports *Al-Seyassah* daily.

Statistics issued by the Court of Cassation showed that the appeals adjudicated last month are as follows: 918 appeals in the morning sessions, 136 appeals on Penal Code cases, 429 appeals in the evening sessions, and 505 appeals in the Appeals Assessment Department.

It also stated that 1,092 new appeals were filed at the Court of Cassation.

Changing expats address for cash

PACI staffers jailed, fined

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 2: The Criminal Court, chaired by Judge Al-Dhuwaih Al-Dhuwaih, sentenced an employee of the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) to five years in prison with hard labor and fined him KD340 for bribery and forgery of official and electronic documents for changing the residential addresses of several expatriates in exchange for money.

The court also sentenced a middleman and three expatriates to three years and four months in prison with hard labor and fined them double the amount of the bribes they received or facilitated.

It ordered the deportation of the three expatriates upon completion of their prison term, while it acquitted 13 other defendants

of all charges due to insufficient evidence.

It also ordered the confiscation of the forged documents and the mobile phone used in the illegal activities.



It set the fees for the two appointed lawyers for two of the defendants at KD50 each.

Case files indicated that from 2022 to 2025, the convicted employee abused his official position and entered false information into the PACI automated system, resulting in the falsification of registered residential addresses for several expatriates, and received bribes in return.

Investigations revealed that one of the defendants acted as an intermediary between the employee and other individuals, receiving the bribes and delivering them to the convicted employee.

The court clarified that the fines were calculated according to Article 35 of Law No. 31/1970, which stipulates that the fine must be double the value of the bribe given or promised.


Accordingly, the court fined the convicted employee KD340, the mediator KD80, KD130 each for the other defendants, and KD80 for a female defendant.


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'Cancer survivors hope for victims'

'Be Strong' team wins laurels

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 2: The Women's Cultural and Social Society, headed by Dr. Fajr Al-Husseini, organized a ceremony to honor the sixth cohort of cancer survivors and to recognize the organizations and individuals who support the "Be Strong" team.

The recognition was held in appreciation of their dedicated efforts in supporting the team's mission and raising community awareness about the importance of psychological and emotional support for patients.

The attendees of the event included members of the Society's Board of Directors, Sheikha Sheikha Al-Abdullah, Honorary President of the Kuwaiti Sports Club for the Disabled, as well as a number of social and media figures and those interested in health and volunteer work.

Dr. Al-Husseini emphasized the Society's strategic partnership with the "Be Strong" team, which has resulted in numerous initiatives, including breast cancer awareness programs.

She highlighted the Society's commitment to involving survivors in awareness campaigns, given their ability to convey a humanitarian message based on their firsthand experiences with the disease and its challenges.



Dr. Fajr Al-Husseini

Dr. Al-Husseini affirmed that the Society's health program, which began in the 1980s, is one of the oldest volunteer health programs in Kuwait and continues to implement various initiatives focused on women's and family health.

She revealed that the upcoming season will see the launch of awareness programs addressing geriatric and Alzheimer's diseases, as well as initiatives related to children's health, alongside ongoing breast cancer awareness campaigns and field visits to patients in hospitals.

Meanwhile, Laila Jamal, head and founder of the "Be Strong" team and cancer awareness ambassador in Kuwait, expressed her pride in receiving the sixth edition of this award, emphasizing that it

recognizes everyone who has contributed to supporting the team's mission, including doctors, volunteers, and institutions.

Jamal explained that the team currently includes about 12 cancer survivors who provide moral support to those currently battling the disease to help them overcome stress, with the assistance of a specialized family counselor who offers social and family guidance. The team began in 2014 as a personal volunteer initiative and was officially registered in 2023 under the auspices of the Ministry of Social Affairs.

She went on to explain that her personal experience as a cancer survivor after battling the disease in 2010 was a turning point in her life and a motivation for dedicating her efforts to serving patients.

Jamal praised the significant development in public awareness in Kuwait, thanks to the integrated efforts of health institutions, official bodies, and civil society organizations.

She commended the advanced level the country has reached in cancer treatment, emphasizing that the treatment protocols and medications used are comparable to those of leading international centers.

Jamal concluded by calling for the adoption of new legislation and initiatives that would provide cancer patients with more facilities that take their health conditions into account and contribute to improving their quality of life, including allocating parking spaces near government offices.



KUNA photo

Kuwait's Embassy in China participated in the fourth round of consultations on establishing the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Development Bank.

Kuwait joins SCO Dev. Bank consultations

BEIJING, July 2, (KUNA): Kuwait's Embassy in China participated in the fourth round of consultations on establishing the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Development Bank, held in Shenzhen, China, to discuss the bank's institutional framework, governance structure, financing mechanisms, and proposed role in supporting infrastructure and sustainable development projects.

Counselor of the Kuwaiti Embassy in Beijing Abdulaziz Al-Dakheel told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) on Wednesday that the meeting, held last month on 29 and

30, brought together representatives of SCO member and partner countries.

Participants also discussed the bank's role in promoting economic integration among participating states, he added.

Delegates reviewed the next steps for finalizing the bank's founding documents before submitting them to the relevant authorities under the agreed timeline, while continuing consultations on the project's technical and organizational aspects, he mentioned.

90 days deadline set for data update in rental applications

KUWAIT CITY, July 2: Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Housing Affairs, Eng. Abdul Latif Al-Mishari, issued a ministerial decree to amend certain provisions of the Housing Welfare Regulations, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The decree adds a new article, numbered "96-bis", to the regulations governing government-owned rental housing. It implements a proposal submitted by the Women's Housing Committee, based on a study of the circumstances of beneficiaries of government-owned rental housing.

The decree emphasizes the importance of updating beneficiary data to ensure housing services are provided to those truly entitled to them, and to promote fairness and transparency.

The Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) clarified that the new article stipulates that applications for government-owned rental housing will remain valid only if beneficiaries update their documents and data within 90 days from the date of notification. If a beneficiary fails to update their information, PAHW has the right to cancel the application and remove it from its records

without prior notice or warning.

Security high in talks: Kuwait's Ambassador to the United States, Sheikha Zain Al-Sabah, on Wednesday participated in a joint meeting pitting Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and Jordanian ambassadors with the Chairman of the US House Foreign Affairs Committee, Representative Brian Mast, alongside several senior committee members.

According to a press release by the Kuwaiti Embassy, the high-level session focused on reviewing the latest regional developments across the Middle East.



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KUNA photo

Kuwait's Ambassador to Indonesia Khaled Al-Yaseen presents a memento to Indonesia's Minister of Investment and Downstream Industry and CEO of the Danantara Investment Management Agency Rosan Roeslani.

Kuwait, Indonesia eye stronger trade, investment partnership

KUALA LUMPUR, July 2, (KUNA): Kuwait's Ambassador to Indonesia Khaled Al-Yaseen held talks with senior Indonesian officials on strengthening economic and investment cooperation and other issues of mutual interest.

According to a statement from the Kuwaiti Embassy in Jakarta, received by KUNA on Wednesday, Al-Yaseen met with Indonesia's Minister of Investment and Downstream Industry and CEO of the Danantara Investment Management Agency Rosan Roeslani, to discuss expanding economic cooperation.

Roeslani welcomed closer economic, trade and investment ties with Kuwait,

highlighting Indonesia's wide range of opportunities for foreign investors, the statement added.

Al-Yaseen also met with Indonesia Investment Authority (INA) CEO Oki Ramadhana, who expressed his country's interest in building more partnerships with global sovereign wealth funds, including Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA).

During both meetings, Al-Yaseen highlighted the longstanding and deep-rooted ties between Kuwait and Indonesia, underlining the importance of expanding existing strategic economic partnerships to advance the mutual interests of both countries.

Kuwait, WFP discuss ways to enhance humanitarian work

KUWAIT CITY, July 2, (KUNA): Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs, Dr. Amthal Al-Huwaila, met with the World Food Programme (WFP) Country Director, Virginia Arribas, on Wednesday to discuss ways to enhance cooperation in humanitarian and relief work.

A ministry statement said the meeting reviewed the most prominent projects and programs implemented by the Ministry in the field of social development and addressed Kuwait's leading role in supporting humanitarian and relief efforts on regional and international levels.

The statement added that the two sides discussed national and international frameworks, laws, and regulations governing fundraising operations,

which promote transparency, protect the reputation of charitable and humanitarian work, and safeguard it from any illicit practices, including money laundering and the financing of prohibited activities.

According to the statement, Minister Al-Huwaila emphasized the political leadership's commitment to continuing to support countries and peoples affected by crises and disasters and to strengthening cooperation with international organizations to solidify Kuwait's position as a leading center for humanitarian and charitable work.

The statement explained that the WFP Country Director reviewed the organization's efforts in implementing relief programs and providing humanitarian assistance around the world. Arribas expressed hope to enhance cooperation with the Ministry through coordination with Kuwaiti charities in order to expand the scope of humanitarian aid and deliver it to the largest possible number of beneficiaries.



Dr Al-Huwaila

Recognition reflects strong cooperation

UN Office honors KUNA for excellence in media coverage

KUWAIT CITY, July 2, (KUNA): The United Nations Office in Kuwait honored the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) in recognition of its distinguished media coverage of UN activities and programs.

The recognition came during a meeting between Acting KUNA Director-General Mohammad Al-Mannai and the UN Secretary-General's Representative in Kuwait, Ghada Al-Taher.

Al-Taher praised KUNA's professional and credible coverage of UN initiatives, stressing the importance of further strengthening media cooperation to support the UN's objectives and raise public awareness of its activities in Kuwait.

In turn, Al-Mannai reaffirmed KUNA's commitment to expanding cooperation and coordination with the UN Office in Kuwait to highlight international efforts and enhance awareness of humanitarian and development issues.

The meeting reviewed existing cooperation between the two sides and explored opportunities to broaden their media partnership, while Al-Taher also honored several KUNA officials, editors and journalists for their outstanding professional contributions to covering UN activities and programs.



UN Secretary-General's Representative in Kuwait, Ghada Al-Taher, honors the Acting KUNA Director-General Mohammad Al-Mannai.



Group photo with the UN Secretary-General's Representative in Kuwait and a number of directors and editors of KUNA.



Left: Part of honoring KUNA in recognition of its professional efforts and media contributions. Right: Group photo with UN Secretary-General's Representative in Kuwait and a number of directors and editors of the KUNA.



KUNA photos and editors of the KUNA.

Kuwait widens shingles jab for adults over 50

KUWAIT CITY, July 2, (KUNA): Kuwait's Ministry of Health announced Thursday an expansion of its voluntary shingles vaccination program, broadening eligibility to include all adults aged 50 and older, as well as adults aged 18 and above with weakened or suppressed immune systems.

In a press statement, the ministry said it has also expanded vaccination sites to improve access across Kuwait.

People wishing to receive the shingles vaccine can visit their nearest preventive health clinic or consult their

physician to confirm their eligibility, the statement explained.

The vaccine is available at 40 preventive health clinics in primary healthcare centers, as well as preventive health clinics at the country's main hospitals.

Shingles is caused by the reactivation of the varicella-zoster virus (VZV), with the risk increasing with age or a weakened immune system and potentially leading to long-term complications, particularly postherpetic neuralgia, which can last for months or years and significantly affect quality of life.

Continued from Page 1

Kuwait records

time, marking the species' first confirmed national record.

Al-Shaheen, a birdwatcher at the Environment Public Authority, told KUNA on Thursday that the bird was observed and photographed by the three birdwatchers recently in Kuwait Bay.

He said the sighting highlights the health of Kuwait's marine environment and its biodiversity, noting the species has been added to the country's official bird list, bringing the total number of recorded species to 426.

He noted that the sooty gull breeds on islands and coastal areas of the Red Sea and occurs in the southern Arabian Gulf, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, southern Pakistan and along the East African coast.

Perfect scores,

her achievement was the result of hard work and perseverance.

She dedicated her success to her country, her parents, and her siblings.

Al-Dousari also stressed the importance of time management, following a clear study plan, consistently reviewing lessons from the beginning of the academic year, and relying on God.

She also highlighted the unwavering support she received from her family, teachers, and school administration.

Al-Dousari said she hopes to enroll in the Faculty of Medicine at Kuwait University, describing it as her lifelong dream.

Meanwhile, Tayba Abdulhadi Al-Hajri, a top student from Doha High School for Girls who achieved a perfect score of 100 percent in the Science section, also expressed her overwhelming joy at her achievement.

She said her feelings upon receiving the results were exceptional and indescribable, after years of hard work, dedication, and determination to achieve academic excellence.

Al-Hajri dedicated her success to her parents, whom she described as her greatest supporters throughout her studies, as well as to His Highness the Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad, and Kuwait.

She said success is achieved through planning, discipline, and confidence in one's ability to overcome challenges, rather than luck, adding that high school

requires commitment, perseverance, and the determination to overcome any difficulties students may face.

Al-Hajri said she hopes to enroll in the Faculty of Pharmacy at Kuwait University, citing her passion for health sciences and her desire to serve the community.

She encouraged fellow high school students to overcome challenges, remain patient and persistent, and have faith in God.

In addition, Noura Meshal Al-Azmi, the top-ranked Kuwaiti student in the Arts section with a score of 99.48 percent from Umm Al-Hayman Secondary School for Girls, expressed her immense joy at the achievement.

She said the result was the culmination of years of hard work and perseverance, describing it as a major milestone in her educational journey.

Al-Azmi expressed her deep gratitude to God for this achievement and dedicated her success to her parents and family members, who supported her with constant encouragement and confidence.

She stressed that although she had hoped for an even higher result, she was completely satisfied with what she had achieved.

Al-Azmi said she hopes to enroll in the College of Education at Kuwait University to major in History. She described the field as a lifelong passion and said she aspires to help educate future generations about their nation's history, strengthen national identity, and instill patriotic values.

Suitcase secrets

currencies, which were handled in accordance with legal procedures.

The General Administration of Customs (GAC) initiated the necessary legal procedures, prepared a seizure report and referred it to the relevant authorities.

A separate report was also prepared regarding the counterfeit goods, which will be referred to the relevant departments at GAC to complete the procedures in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

The GAC affirmed its continuous efforts to tighten customs control at all ports of entry and to combat all illegal practices, thereby, contributing to the protection of markets, safeguarding the rights of trademark owners, and enhancing the security of society and the national economy.

KNPC-KIPIC merger signals major oil industry overhaul

Oil minister lauds historic restructuring move

KUWAIT CITY, July 2, (KUNA): The merger of state-owned Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) and Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company (KIPIC) represents a "watershed" moment in national oil sector restructuring efforts, Oil Minister Tariq Al-Roumi said on Wednesday.

Hailing the event as a "strategic" accomplishment for the national oil industry, he told a ceremony to announce the merger that it was a "major" step forward towards the overhaul of Kuwait's oil sector, helping build an industry that is both "flexible and sustainable," in line with development strategies and aspirations.

The merger would boost coordination across key fields such as exploration, production and petrochemicals, which in turn, would improve "operational efficiency and faster decision-making," putting Kuwait's oil sector firmly in place towards competitiveness at a time of volatility in the global market, the minister underlined.

He went on to express his gratitude for the support of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, saying oil sector growth would not have been possible without their backing.

Offering his input on the merger, the chief executive of KNPC's parent organization, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC), Sheikh Nawaf Al-Sabah traced back the oil sector's restructuring efforts to 2019, in which the aim was to ratchet up operational efficiency and protect the rights of the industry's



KUNA photos

Group photo during the event.



Kuwait's Oil Minister Tariq Al-Roumi delivering his speech.



CEO of Kuwait National Petroleum Company Wadha Al-Khatib



KPC Vice Chairman and CEO Sheikh Nawaf Saud Al-Sabah

workforce, the official said.

On the ongoing overhaul of the national oil industry, he said that the process has by and large bore fruit, particularly reaping financial rewards including savings KD 30 million in the form information technology contracts and more efficient distribution of human resources, which generated KD 6 million in fur-

ther savings, added the official.

Highlighting the magnitude of the merger, KNPC chief executive Wadha Al-Khatib said that the highly complex process was completed over the course of a two-year period and was broken down into some 2,500 highly intricate procedures, which ultimately led to a 7,650-strong unified workforce, she added.

With a rich history that dates back more than 65 years, she said that KNPC now stands on the precipice of a "new era," after the merger with KIPIC, emphasizing that she expected an energy powerhouse that is capable of meeting soaring local demand, in addition to supplying the global market with sublime petroleum-based products.



Photo during the GCC extraordinary ministerial meeting on agriculture and food security.

Kuwait joins GCC talks on food security strategy

KUWAIT CITY, July 2, (KUNA): Minister of State for Development and Sustainability Dr. Reem Al-Fulaij headed the Kuwait's delegation to the GCC extraordinary ministerial meeting on agriculture and food security, held virtually on Thursday under Bahrain's chairmanship.

The Public Authority for Food and Nutrition said in a press release that the meeting discussed the implementation of directives from GCC leaders regarding the study of es-

tablishing strategic Gulf food storage zones for essential goods. The initiative aims to enhance Gulf food security and improve the readiness of GCC countries to address challenges and crises related to supply chains.

The statement also indicated that the meeting adopted recommendations that will strengthen Gulf integration in strategic sectors and bolster the food security system across GCC countries.

INTERNATIONAL



US President Donald Trump boards the newly designated Air Force One, a formerly Qatari-owned jumbo jet that has been converted into the official US presidential aircraft, at Joint Base Andrews, Md on July 1, to attend the opening of the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library in Medora, ND. (AP)

Qatari jet takes flight as Air Force One for Trump trip to N.Dakota

US President Donald Trump on Wednesday took his maiden voyage on a new Air Force One - a retrofitted Boeing 747-800 worth \$400 million gifted by Qatar that embeds his personality more deeply into the institution of the American presidency.

Gone is the trademark light blue hull that helped Air Force One blend into the sky. The refurbished jet is painted in Trump's preferred color scheme: a navy-blue belly with red and gold stripes. It has the luxury features that the president believes a commander-in-chief's

entourage should have - plush carpets, lie-flat seats, wood paneling and a presidential seal on the seat belts, according to reported tours of the plane.

Trump told reporters that he was proud of the luxurious plane. "You can do two things: You can low-key it, or you can show it," he said.

The retrofitted Qatari jet is intended to serve as a "bridge" between the aging Boeing jets that have served as Air Force One for the last 36 years and two new aircraft, which are years behind schedule and expected to be delivered in

2028 at the earliest. Trump toured the new jet just weeks after returning to the White House last year and directed that it be prepared for his use for the bulk of his remaining time in office.

The compressed timetable set by the president limited the modifications to the plane. Images of the jet captured since its unveiling and analyzed by the Associated Press show that it is not equipped with at least some of the same missile detection and countermeasure systems as the outgoing Cold War-era jets. (AP)

Extraordinary heat in N.East arrives to clash with fourth of July revelry

WASHINGTON, July 2, (AP): Multiday warnings of extreme heat landed in New York, Boston and Philadelphia on Wednesday as sultry weather pushed east just ahead of Fourth of July celebrations in a region that revels in its role as a historic hub of US independence.

Temperatures in the high 90s Fahrenheit (30 degrees Celsius) were forecast for the Northeast; Philadelphia and Boston could top 100 by Thursday. Throw in humidity, and the real-feel heat index will be even higher at times, the National Weather Service said.

A heat dome - high-pressure systems above a region that trap heat and humidity - has been smothering parts of the U.S., from the Midwest to the East Coast. It will add much discomfort amid 250th anniversary parades, ship flotillas, outdoor concerts and, in Boston, a popular public reading of the Declaration of Independence from a historic balcony Saturday.

New York Mayor Zohran Mamdani advised residents to stay cool inside and avoid "extraordinary temperatures."

"To be breaking into triple digits over the course of these many next days - it is of immense concern given that too often the heat is something that



Children reach for cold bottles of water from US National Park Police Officer R. Douglass as they wait in line for the ferris wheel at the Great American State Fair on the National Mall on July 1, in Washington. (AP)

is underestimated," Mamdani said.

In Hamptonburgh, New York, air conditioning failed on a bus carrying Junior ROTC cadets, resulting in multiple heat-related illnesses, Orange County authorities said. Some cadets were taken to hospitals as a precaution.

Humidity is not uncommon in the Northeast. But Dr. Alexander Azan of NYU Langone Health in New York

said high air temperatures and humidity are a dangerous combination.

"Their body doesn't have that level of acclimatization to respond appropriately to the heat, and so heat stress in the form of what we call heat exhaustion, and in more severe cases, heat stroke, can occur at much lower temperatures than we see in people who live in the South," Azan said.

Kiros defeats longtime House incumbent in Colorado

Trump and Republicans return to communist attacks against Democrats

WASHINGTON, July 2, (AP): US President Donald Trump and his fellow Republicans are reviving a line of attack against Democrats heading into the midterm elections: They're communists.

In just the past week, Trump has issued dark warnings that members of the Democratic Party's ascendant left are communists who want to "completely destroy the traditional American way of life" and even engage in assassinations. Vice President JD Vance has similarly called out communism as a political shift that is "something we haven't seen in the US." House Speaker Mike Johnson has decried "radical candidates" who are "self-described, self-identifying Marxists."

The GOP's ideological focus has been building since Zohran Mamdani, a democratic socialist, won the Democratic nomination for New York City mayor last year. But it's kicked into a higher gear recently after democratic socialists won several New York City congressional primaries last week. The primary victory on Tuesday by another democratic socialist, Melat Kiros, for a Denver congressional seat suggested the trend may extend beyond Manhattan liberalism. Kiros beat US Rep Diana DeGette in a Colorado House primary Tuesday, a stunning victory

for the first-time candidate against a nearly 30-year incumbent and another win for progressive challengers across the country.

"The Democrats are making this easy for us," Rep. Richard Hudson, the North Carolina Republican who leads the House GOP's strategy and fundraising arm, said in an interview. "They're nominating extreme liberals, leftists who are out of touch even with mainstream Democrats."

The messaging effort comes as Republicans scramble to hold onto threadbare congressional majorities in the November midterms. It conflates democratic socialism, which often focuses on securing universal healthcare, higher taxes on the wealthy and stricter corporate regulation, with communism, under which private ownership is largely eliminated.

And it risks overlooking public frustration, particularly among younger voters, with unfettered capitalism at a time of growing income inequality and rising costs.

But it also gives Republicans a much-needed opportunity to shift the conversation back to territory that is more comfortable for them after their party has spent much of the year on defense over the fallout from Trump's decision to launch a war against Iran, which contributed



Democratic congressional candidate Melat Kiros speaks after winning the Democratic nomination during a primary election night watch party at The Broadway on June 30, in Denver. (AP)

to widespread price spikes.

Ralph Reed, the longtime conservative activist who hosted Trump last week at a Faith and Freedom Coalition conference, acknowledged that Republicans are facing steep headwinds this year. But the recent string of wins by democratic socialists, he said, allows Republicans to present a contrast between "common sense and crazy."

The renewed push could tug at tensions among Democrats who

are largely united in their loathing of Trump but are divided over the party's direction. This year's primaries are shaping up as a referendum between centrists who are eager to course correct from what they see as progressive overreach earlier in the decade and a left-wing pushing for even more sweeping change.

"A lot of this anger has been boiling under the surface," said Joseph Geevarghese, executive director of

Our Revolution, which was founded by US Sen Bernie Sanders, a Vermont independent who caucuses with Democrats. "It's coming to the fore in this moment in a very powerful way."

But Rep. Josh Gottheimer, a centrist New Jersey Democrat, called the victories in Colorado and New York "aberrations."

"We've got to fight like hell to keep our party from being hijacked by socialists," he said. "Most of them are bomb throwers, not problem solvers."

Nevada Attorney General Aaron Ford easily dispatched a more progressive rival earlier this year in his Democratic bid for governor in a state Trump carried in 2024. As he eyes a general election challenge to Republican Gov. Joe Lombardo, he insisted candidates like those who won in New York don't represent all Democrats.

He said the Democratic Socialists of America "is not the face of our party."

Rep. Susan DelBene, a Washington Democrat who chairs the House Democratic campaign committee, said in a statement that Republicans were "resorting to desperate attacks that aren't actually about the pocket-book issues."

Trump and fellow Republicans risk missing the mark when the pub-

lic's embrace of capitalism might not be as strong as it was decades ago.

About half of US adults, 54%, have a positive view of capitalism, according to an August poll from Gallup, a slight decline from 61% in 2010. Democrats have driven some of the shift, but favorable opinions of capitalism have fallen among independents as well.

Only 42% of Democrats viewed capitalism favorably, while 66% had a positive view of socialism. The poll found that both younger and older Democrats have warmed slightly on socialism since 2010, but Democrats under age 50 are much less likely to view capitalism favorably. Democrats age 50 or older didn't shift meaningfully.

"Young voters, who I would argue are driving a lot of the electoral energy that we're seeing, came of age politically in a post-Soviet world," Geevarghese said. "The attacks don't land in the same way when Donald Trump was politically of age."

Hudson, who is running the House GOP campaign committee, acknowledged the communism line might not resonate in the same way with all voters, particularly younger people. That's why, he said, it's important for Republicans to tailor their message to the needs of individual districts.

Merz unveils sweeping reform push for Germany: Tax cuts and pension overhaul

BERLIN, July 2, (AP): German Chancellor Friedrich Merz and his government coalition partners presented a comprehensive reform package Thursday with the goal of getting the country's sluggish economy back on track.

The 34 reform measures include an income tax reform with tax cuts for low- and middle income families, an overhaul of the creaking pension system, tougher rules for employees' sick leave and a reduction of the country's stifling bureaucracy.

"These reforms all have one goal: We're setting out into the future," Merz said Thursday. "We're strengthening ourselves so that we can live well in these new times."

Merz's coalition of center-right and center-left parties took office just over a year ago with pledges to reform and turn around Germany's sluggish economy, Europe's biggest. It has since become deeply unpopular, in part because of perceptions that it has squabbled but so far achieved little.

Merz is trying to cut his government coalition free from that nega-



German Chancellor Friedrich Merz arrives for the cabinet meeting at the chancellery in Berlin, Germany on Jan 28. (AP)

tive reputation.

"From the very beginning, we set an agenda with a single goal in mind: We want to get Germany back on track. It is now clear that this is possible," the conservative chancellor said.

Germany's economy returned to

modest growth last year after shrinking for two years in a row. The government expects underwhelming growth of 0.5% this year, a figure that has been pushed down by the fallout from the war in Iran.

The country of 83.5 million people already faced increasing competition from Chinese companies, higher energy costs following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine and issues including U.S. President Donald Trump's tariffs and trade threats. On top of that, it has deeper problems such as high production costs, lagging private investment and increasingly costly health and pension systems caused by an aging population.

On Thursday, the government coalition leaders said that the tax cuts, once fully implemented in 2028, would give an annual tax break for a family with two working parents, two children and a total taxable income of 60,000 euros (\$64,416) of up to more than 600 euros. The total tax relief provided by the reform amounts to approximately 10 billion euros per year.

convicts serving prison terms for "extremist crimes," a term used by the authorities' in their sweeping crackdown on dissent, were pardoned on "humanitarian" grounds.

Lukashenko has ruled the nation of 9.5 million with an iron fist for more than three decades, and the country has been sanctioned repeatedly by Western countries - both for its crackdown on human rights and for allowing Moscow to use its territory in the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. (AP)

Le Pen won't run if ordered to wear bracelet: French far-right leader Marine Le Pen says she won't run for president next year if a Paris appeals court orders her to wear an electronic bracelet over alleged misuse of European Union funds.

The appeals court will deliver its key verdict on Tuesday.

Le Pen, 57, has challenged a March 2025 ruling that found her and other members of her National Rally party guilty of misusing EU Parliament funds in the hiring of aides from 2004 to 2016 who allegedly worked for the party instead of doing parliamentary tasks.

If convicted again, she could be sentenced to a ban from elected office or have to wear an electronic tag - or both - among other options. (AP)



Emergency services personnel work to extinguish a fire after a Russian strike on Kyiv, Ukraine on July 2. (AP)

Ukraine keeps striking Moscow's oil sector

Major Russian attack kills 20 in Kyiv

KYIV, Ukraine, July 2, (AP): Russia hammered Kyiv in an 11-hour drone and missile attack overnight into Thursday morning, killing at least 20 civilians in the city and injuring scores more in what Moscow said was retaliation for Ukrainian strikes on Russian oil facilities.

Loud explosions shook the Ukrainian capital for hours during the night, with many people sheltering in subway stations after authorities issued air raid warnings. Emergency crews were still digging through the rubble of collapsed and charred apartment buildings in search of victims as dawn broke.

Russia's Defense Ministry said in a statement that the deadly bombardment was in response to Ukraine's long-range strikes that have caused severe fuel shortages and put pressure on President Vladimir Putin.

Ukraine's increasingly frequent and large-scale attacks - described by Zelenskyy as a 40-day blitz - have especially targeted oil refineries, causing a fuel crisis that has

frustrated Russians, more than four years after Moscow's full-scale invasion of its neighbor.

Ukrainian officials say they are trying to force Putin to the negotiating table, but so far Moscow's response has been to hit back.

Diplomatic efforts to end the war, most recently by the Trump administration, haven't produced results. Putin thinks that time is on his side, that Western support will peter out and that Ukraine's resistance will eventually collapse under pressure from strategic bombing, Western analysts say.

The attack killed 18 people in Kyiv, the Emergency Service said. More than 90 others were injured, according to Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko.

Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiba said it was a "night of horror" in the capital.

Damage was recorded in 30 locations across the city, mainly residential buildings and civilian infrastructure, according to Tymur Tkachenko,

head of the Kyiv City Military Administration. Some 20 residential buildings were damaged, Interior Minister Ihor Klymenko said.

Flashes from exploding drones and missiles lit up the night, and loud booms echoed through Kyiv. Tracers from air defense fire streaked through the air as a huge pall of black smoke rose into the sky.

Kyiv resident Serhii Budko said three or four ballistic missiles hit his district of the city. "We were inside the shelter and felt the shelter shaking - the ceiling and floor, everything," the 24-year-old told The Associated Press.

In Kyiv's Desnianskyi district, people were trapped inside a damaged nine-story residential building, and in the Darnytskyi district six levels of a nine-story building collapsed.

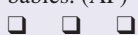
Russia's General Staff chief Gen. Valery Gerasimov reported the results of the "massive retaliatory strike" to Putin, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

Europe

UK apologizes over forced adoption: Prime Minister Keir Starmer formally apologized Thursday for the British state's role in separating tens of thousands of unmarried mothers from their babies, a practice that lasted for decades until the 1970s.

He said in Parliament that "we are deeply and profoundly sorry" for what he called a "stain on our history."

An estimated 185,000 babies of unmarried mothers were adopted in England and Wales between 1949 and 1976. Campaigners have fought for years for acknowledgment that women were pressured, deceived and threatened into giving up their babies. (AP)



Starmer

Belarus pardons 28 political prisoners: Belarus' authoritarian President Alexander Lukashenko on Wednesday pardoned 28 political prisoners, part of his efforts to improve relations with the West.

Lukashenko's decree marking the country's Independence Day celebrated Friday announced that 28

Authorities seek to recover body of Everest climber known as 'Green Boots'

India's Modi and Japan's Takaichi expand defense, economic security ties

NEW DELHI, July 2, (Agencies): Japan and India announced a series of agreements to deepen cooperation in defense, economic and maritime security following talks Thursday between Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Japanese counterpart, Sanae Takaichi.

Speaking after the meeting in New Delhi, Modi said India and Japan will collaborate on naval radio antenna systems, and adopted a joint road map on economic security. He said the leaders also agreed to strengthen cooperation in artificial intelligence, shipbuilding, biogas, semiconductors and critical technologies.

"India and Japan view economic security as a shared security interest," he said.

Japan is among India's largest foreign investors and has backed major infrastructure projects, including the Mumbai-Ahmedabad high-speed rail line. About 1,400 Japanese companies operate in India, nearly half of them in manufacturing.

Two-way trade reached \$27.5 bil-

lion in India's 2025-26 fiscal year, while Japanese investment totaled \$3.2 billion between April and December 2025, according to Indian government data.

Takaichi was in New Delhi on a three-day visit for the 16th annual India-Japan summit. Both countries seek to strengthen their partnership in the Indo-Pacific following Modi's trip to Tokyo last year, when Japan pledged to more than double its investment in India to more than \$61 billion over the next decade.

India and Japan, along with the United States and Australia, are members of the Quad, a grouping that promotes cooperation on regional security, maritime issues and defense to counter China's growing influence in the Indo-Pacific.

Takaichi said New Delhi and Tokyo shared a commitment to Japan's initiative of free and open Indo-Pacific based on freedom of navigation and respect for international law. "Expansion of maritime security cooperation is especially important



Japan's Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, (left), and India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi brief the media after their delegation level meeting in New Delhi, India on July 2. (AP)

for regional peace and stability," she said.

Asked about the initiative, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun said Thursday that some

cooperation.

"Asia-Pacific needs stability, not turmoil; focus on cooperation, not division," Guo said at a regular press briefing in Beijing.

Also:

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and India on Wednesday exchanged updated lists of prisoners held in each other's custody through diplomatic channels under a bilateral agreement on consular access, Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) said.

The ministry said in a statement that the exchange was carried out in accordance with the Agreement on Consular Access signed on May 21, 2008, which requires both countries to share such lists twice a year, on Jan. 1 and July 1.

Pakistan handed over a list of 250 Indian prisoners in its custody to the Indian High Commission in Islamabad, including 198 fishermen.

India, in return, shared a list of 439 Pakistani or believed-to-be Pakistani prisoners held in its jails, comprising

386 civilian prisoners and 53 fishermen, the ministry said.

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NEW DELHI: Indian authorities are seeking to recover the body of a climber known as "Green Boots" from the upper slopes of Mount Everest, nearly three decades after the mountaineer died on the world's highest peak.

The Indo-Tibetan Border Police, an Indian paramilitary force, has begun the process of hiring high-altitude recovery specialists to retrieve what it believes is the body of **Dorje Morup** from Everest's northern route in Tibet.

Morup was part of a six-member Indo-Tibetan Border Police expedition on Everest in May 1996. As weather conditions deteriorated near the summit, three climbers turned back, while Morup and two colleagues continued their ascent. All three died in the storm that claimed eight lives across multiple expeditions in what was one of Everest's deadliest disasters at the time.

Rights group accuses 3 paramilitary commanders of war crimes in Sudan

NAIROBI, Kenya, July 2, (AP): Three senior commanders of Sudan's paramilitary forces were named in a new report from rights group Amnesty International accusing them of overseeing war crimes during the siege and capture of el-Fasher in North Darfur in October.

Speaking on Wednesday during the launch of the report in Nairobi, the capital of neighboring Kenya, Amnesty International Secretary General Agnès Callamard said the Rapid Support Forces, or RSF, committed crimes against humanity and acts of ethnic cleansing during the assault on the city. She called for an immediate ceasefire and the deployment of a United Nations protection force to safeguard civilians.

More than 6,000 people were killed in three days in October 2025 when the RSF seized el-Fasher in an attack that UN experts said bore the "hallmarks of genocide."

Amnesty International analyzed nine videos that showed one RSF commander executing civilians, another torturing detainees, and a third ordering the torture of prisoners.

Callamard said the RSF committed murder, forcible transfer, imprisonment, torture, rape, sexual slavery, other forms of sexual violence, enslave-



A Sudanese soldier from the Rapid Support Forces or RSF stands on his vehicle in the East Nile province, Sudan, on June 22, 2019. (AP)

ment, extermination and persecution. She urged the international community to intervene and stop the attacks on civilians that continue "unhindered."

"It also requires strengthening accountability by ensuring sufficient support for all existing accountability mechanisms for Sudan, including the International Criminal Court, and UN and African Union-backed fact-finding missions. Commanders iden-

tified in this report should be investigated and, where there is sufficient admissible evidence, prosecuted," Callamard said.

The RSF has not commented on the Amnesty report. Amnesty International said it shared the report with the paramilitary group's leader, Gen. Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, last month but had not received a response.



Rescuers and volunteers help to find survivors in the rubble of a collapsed building in Caraballeda, La Guaira state, Venezuela, on June 30, following the June 24 twin earthquakes. (AP)

Venezuela medics fear quake aftermath will trigger widening medical crisis

CARACAS, Venezuela, July 2, (AP): Doctors said Wednesday they feared the aftermath of Venezuela's devastating twin earthquakes could trigger a widening medical crisis marked by untreated injuries, infectious diseases and a healthcare system already on the brink.

Thousands of displaced Venezuelans are sleeping in crowded shelters or outside without access to clean water amid dismal sanitary conditions following the June 24 earthquakes which officials say killed at least 2,295 and left more than 11,000 injured.

Aid workers said the aftermath of the quakes has become a major medical crisis that, unless quickly controlled, would take more lives in the days and weeks ahead. The emergency has laid bare Venezuela's chronic shortage of doctors, the result of years of economic crisis, underfunding and emigration.

"The issue we foresee just around the corner is the infections that patients who have been exposed to the disaster for the longest time might bring," said Eugenio Cova, the head of the trauma unit at Hospital del Oeste Dr. José Gregorio Hernández in Caracas, the capital. "We've already gone through a period of com-

plex trauma - which will continue to occur - but now it's complicated by infections."

Aid workers also warn that the extensive damage to infrastructure could fuel outbreaks of diseases in the hardest-hit communities.

"It's very hot and there's a lot of concern about potential vector-borne diseases," said Veronique Durox, the U.N. humanitarian agency spokesperson for Latin America and the Caribbean. "Waste management, when you see the scale of devastation, it's very concerning."

The United States had 900 military personnel currently on the ground to support relief and rescue operations as of Wednesday, Steven McLoud, a US Southern Command spokesperson, told The Associated Press.

The military has repaired an earthquake-damaged runway at the country's main international airport that serves Caracas to allow for the arrival of humanitarian assistance and stationed naval assets off the coast to receive airlifted survivors. An additional 100 people from the U.S. State Department have been sent to aid those efforts, McLoud said.

So far, the Trump administration

has offered Venezuela \$300 million in assistance channeled through aid groups and the United Nations. But that's just a fraction of the post-earthquake aid the country needs: Material damage from the quakes is estimated at over \$6.7 billion, according to satellite analysis by the UN Development Program.

Fifty other international teams have arrived in recent days to help with search-and-rescue operations, including from countries like Ecuador and Israel that don't have diplomatic relations with Venezuela. Against the odds, rescuers are continuing to find a small number of survivors, including on Tuesday, a toddler who had been trapped for six days.

Long before the earthquakes, Venezuela's public hospitals were strained by shortages of water, energy, critical medical equipment and highly trained staff.

More than 7.7 million Venezuelans have left the country since 2013, when Nicolás Maduro took office and the economy came undone as a result of mismanagement, corruption and a drop in oil prices.

Among those who took flight were many specialized doctors and nurses.

Asia

Papua separatists kill US pilot: A Papua separatist group said Thursday it has shot dead an American pilot who brought Indonesian troops into a 'conflict zone.'

In a statement issued Thursday, Seby Sambom, spokesman for the West Papua Liberation Army, or TPNPB, claimed the group's fighters in Yahukimo regency shot dead American pilot Nicholas F. Goselin and set fire to an aircraft operated by PT AMA, an Indonesian airline, in Balinggama village.

Sambom said the aircraft was targeted because it allegedly violated a TPNPB ultimatum banning civilian flights from entering areas the separatist group considers its operational zones. There was no immediate information on the Indonesians. (AP)

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Thailand pickup truck crash kills 8: An 11-year-old boy crashed a pickup truck into a group of monks on a pilgrimage walk in northeastern Thailand on Thursday, killing eight, officials said.

A total of 35 monks from Mukdahan province, about 600 kilometers northeast of the capital Bangkok, were on the pilgrimage. Five monks were killed at the site, while three others died at a hospital, according to Mukdahan Governor Worrayan Boonnarat. Fourteen others were hospitalized, with four in critical condition.

The group started the 260-kilometer walk to Ubon Ratchathani province about 30 minutes before the crash. (AP)

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This photograph released by the Phu Manorum temple shows monks who were slightly injured from a crash in Mukdahan province taking rest at Phu Manorum temple in Mukdahan province, Thailand on July 2. (AP)

1 dead, 2 injured in Australian house fire: A man has died, and two others have been hospitalized with life-threatening injuries following a suspicious house fire in the Australian state of Queensland.

The Queensland Police Service (QPS) said in a statement on Wednesday that emergency services were called to reports of a residence on fire in the suburb of Hope Island, 54 km southeast of Brisbane, around 11:45 pm on Tuesday.

The fire, which caused extensive damage, was extinguished, and a 38-year-old man was found deceased inside the property. (Xinhua)

Guatemala new AG vows to dismantle predecessor's 'repressive' legacy

GUATEMALA CITY, July 2, (AP): Gabriel García Luna, Guatemala's new attorney general who took office in May, pledged Wednesday to dismantle what he called the "repressive and vengeful" administration of his predecessor, who was sanctioned by multiple countries including the U.S. for stifling anti-corruption efforts.

Guatemala, once a strong US partner in the region on anti-corruption efforts, took a turn under Consuelo Porras, who stifled corruption cases, persecuted justice officials, activists and journalists, and drove many into exile. She also attempted to prevent President Bernardo Arévalo's inauguration and invalidate his presidency by alleging fraud, which was never proven.

"Everyone has a concept of a Public Prosecutor's Office that can be used in a certain way, and we can no longer have that," García Luna told The Associated Press. "It is not a political entity, nor a political weapon for anyone, and I do not intend to repeat the actions taken in previous administrations."

García Luna has already begun moving the institution in a new direction by dismantling the network of Porras' trusted administrative and prosecutorial staff, who were



Guatemalan Attorney General Gabriel García Luna speaks during a press conference in Guatemala City, May 17. (AP)

accused of criminalizing and persecuting former justice officials. He has also launched a commission to review cases of people criminalized.

Porras has denied the accusations against her. The Public Prosecutor's Office while it was under her tenure said the accusations affect Porras' "right to honor, dignity, reputation and the presumption of innocence."

On Wednesday, García Luna expressed his commitment to radical

change to the institution by reviewing potential abuses during the past administration and reviving the prosecutorial profession, which was battered by the exodus of qualified personnel under Porras.

García Luna said his predecessor "formed a parallel government that destroyed the prosecutorial profession, mainly by dismissing between 800 and 1,000 employees during her eight-year tenure."

Africa

South Africa bus crash kills 16: At least 16 people have been killed and 20 others injured when a bus transporting passengers to South Africa's Eastern Cape province overturned in the early hours of Thursday.

According to authorities, the bus was transporting 78 passengers from the city of Cape Town in the Western Cape to Idutywa in the Eastern Cape.

"It is alleged that the bus swerved to avoid colliding with a delivery vehicle when the driver lost control and the vehicle overturned," said Road Traffic Management Corporation spokesperson Simon Zwane.

While initial reports indicated that nine people had been killed, further investigations on the scene revealed a total of 16 fatalities.

Those injured were transported to the hospital in the town of Worcester, about 120 kilometers (75 miles) from Cape Town, while at least 43 passengers refused any medical treatment. (AP)

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'59 dead in Ivory Coast floods this year': Recent floods in Ivory Coast have killed at least 59 people, a government spokesperson said on Wednesday.

Speaking after a Cabinet meeting, Amadou Coulibaly told reporters that "the council deplores the particularly high death toll of 59 this year."

On Monday, floods and landslides triggered by days of torrential rain in the capital cities of Ghana and Ivory Coast left at least 24 people dead and more missing.

Coulibaly did not specify how many people had died as a result of the most recent flooding in Ivory Coast.



In this photo released by Ghana's National Disaster Management Organisation, flooded neighbourhoods are seen in Accra, Ghana on June 29. (AP)

Entire buildings and roads were submerged in Accra, Ghana on Monday, cutting off access to several areas of the Ghanaian capital and in the neighboring city of Tema.

In Ivory Coast, several days of rain brought flooding that left more than a dozen people dead, most of them in municipalities of Attécoubé and Yopougon in the capital, Abidjan, according to the Minister of National Cohesion Myss Belmonde Dogo.

Coulibaly urged residents to follow safety guidelines and leave areas designated as high risk by the government.

Deadly floods are common in parts of Africa, which is among the regions of the world most vulnerable to extreme weather events despite being responsible for a small fraction of global greenhouse gas emissions, according to the World Meteorological Organization. (AP)

Kuwait oil price drops to \$71.93 pb

KUWAIT CITY, July 2, (KUNA): Price of Kuwaiti crude oil drops by USD 7.75 to reach 71.93 per barrel (pb) in Wednesday's trading, compared with USD 79.50 pb the day before, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation

(KPC) said on Thursday.

In global markets, Brent crude fell USD 1.45 to reach USD 71.57 pb, while US West Texas Intermediate declined 92 cents to USD 68.58 pb.

Business

Q8 boosts EV charging footprint to over 800 points

KPC to launch new Q8 fuel stations across Kuwait

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 2: With nearly 6,000 fuel stations spread throughout Kuwait, Kuwait is anticipating the opening of five Q8 fuel stations by Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) in Al-Riqqa, South Surra, Subhan, Ghazali Street and Gulf Street, followed by three more stations later this year.

Sources revealed that these fuel stations, designed by Kuwait Petroleum International (KPI) according to international standards, will offer consumers various types of fuel, as well as electric vehicle charging and other marketing services 24/7.

The newspaper obtained information that KPI has an extensive network of fuel stations throughout Europe, offering conventional and high-performance fuels, such as Q8 High Performance Diesel and Q8 High Performance 100 Octane, in

addition to alternative fuels like Q8 HVO+, LPG, LNG and CNG, as well as electric vehicle charging stations.

The data stated that this sustainable network is designed to reduce emissions by utilizing advanced infrastructure for storing and supplying low-impact alternative fuels at each location.

The total number of fuel stations equipped with solar panels mounted on canopies belonging to KPI has reached 644, enhancing its energy independence and reducing carbon emissions.

A total of 296 service stations are equipped with electric vehicle charging points, thereby, improving customer access to renewable energy sources.

KPI continues to search for opportunities to upgrade equipment at its service stations to phase out older technologies and raise energy efficiency, which include the installation state-of-the-art cooling technology at more than 120 of its retail locations.

It allocated a huge budget for investment in electric vehicle charging infrastructure over the next five years in order to set up fast chargers at 500 Q8 locations in Benelux countries by 2030.

In the last two years (2024 and 2025), KPI made remarkable progress, increasing the number of electric vehicle charging points operated by Q8 from 477 to 837. The network of charging points available through fuel and electricity card services grew by more than 35 percent in two years, reaching more than 780,000 points.

In Italy, KPI installed 217 electric vehicle charging points at 174 service stations, including 66 high-performance 300 kW charging poles, in partnership with Enel X Way. In the Benelux countries, 227 charging points were installed at 62 service stations.

KPI is now developing a charging infrastructure network owned by Q8.

Benchmark index slips 0.09%

Boursa Kuwait closes lower

KUWAIT CITY, July 2, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait closed Thursday's session lower, with the benchmark general index slipping 8.10 points, or 0.09%, to 8,696.42. Trading volume reached 279.3 million shares across 22,496 transactions, worth KD 81.9 million, or about USD 251.4 million.

The main market index fell 17.65 points, or 0.20%, to 8,955.64, as 188.18 million shares changed hands in 13,524 transactions valued at KD 41.8 million, or about USD 128.3 million.

The premier market index also edged down, losing 6.48 points, or 0.07%, to finish at 9,092.64. A total of 91.18 million shares were traded through 8,972 transactions, with a value of KD 40 million, or about USD 122.8 million.

In contrast, the Main 50 Index rose 65.06 points, or 0.66%, to 9,985.79. The index saw 163.8 million shares traded in 10,870 cash transactions, with turnover amounting to KD 37.3 million, or roughly USD 114.5 million.

AI to transform asset management

GCC Asset Management hits \$2.7 tn in 2025: BCG

DUBAI, July 2: Assets under management (AuM) in the GCC grew by 10% in 2025, reaching \$2.7 trillion and marking one of the strongest annual performances in over a decade, according to a new report from Boston Consulting Group (BCG). The findings, released as part of BCG's Global Asset Management Report 2026: An Imperative for Growth, reveal that the GCC retail segment demonstrated particularly strong performance, recording growth of 14% while institutional assets increased by 9%. While institutional assets continue to dominate the regional market, retail assets are growing at a faster pace, with retail representing 7% and institutional assets accounting for 93% of total regional AuM.

Saudi Arabia continues to anchor regional growth, commanding the highest share of retail mutual funds and ETFs across both the broader Middle East and the GCC, followed by the UAE and Kuwait. The Kingdom's General Organization for Social Insurance Public Pension Agency (GOSI-PPA) remains the largest pension fund in the region, with Kuwait's WAFRA maintaining its position as the second largest. Among sovereign wealth funds, the Kuwait Investment Authority recorded the largest externally managed AuM, followed by the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority.

"The GCC asset management industry is at an inflection point that demands a fundamentally different approach to competition," said Lukasz Rey, Managing Director & Partner and Middle East Head of Financial Institutions at BCG. "While near-term dynamics will depend on the broader market environment, the region's structural fundamentals remain compelling, and many asset managers continue to view the GCC as a strategic priority. Firms that invest in distribution capabilities and technological transformation will be best positioned to navigate uncertainty and capture the opportunities ahead."

In addition to regional dynamics, BCG's Global Asset Management Report 2026 identifies key structural forces transforming the industry on a global scale, from the growing centrality of distribution to the adoption of AI-driven operating models and the emergence of tokenization.

Globally, BCG's report finds that growth is becoming more concentrated among leading firms with scale and distribution access. Revenue growth is decoupling from asset growth as fees decline, while traditional economies of scale are being offset by rising technology investment and fee pressure. Together, these trends point to a more competitive environment in which only a subset of firms is positioned to capture disproportionate growth.

Distribution Becomes the Key Competitive Differentiator

The report emphasizes that the basis of competition in asset management is undergoing a structural shift globally, with distribution emerging as the primary battleground for growth. As product manufacturing becomes increasingly commoditized, control of distribution channels, including platforms, advisors, and institutional relationships, is becoming the key determinant of success.

AI is accelerating these shifts by compressing traditional differentiation and enabling new forms of scale. Globally, BCG estimates asset managers could reduce costs by 25-35% over the next three to five years, while increasing research coverage two- to five-fold and client coverage per relationship manager three to five-fold, all with faster, more scalable personalization. AI allows firms to scale without proportional headcount increases, fundamentally changing the economics of growth. However, most firms remain in early adoption stages, focused on pilots rather than full transformation. Those that fail to redesign their operating models



Lukasz Rey, Managing Director and Partner BCG



Mohammad Khan, Managing Director & Partner, BCG

- Retail segment leads expansion with 14% growth while distribution strength and technology capabilities emerge as critical differentiators in an increasingly competitive landscape
- AuM in 2025 represents a 10% growth from 2024

risk falling behind AI-native competitors that can scale faster and operate more efficiently.

"Middle East asset managers have an opportunity to leapfrog traditional operating models by embedding AI and digital capabilities into their core operations," said Mohammad Khan, Managing Director & Partner at BCG. "While the path forward will require navigating evolving market conditions, firms that move strategically to build scalable distribution networks and technology-enabled platforms will be well positioned to shape the next era of regional asset management."

Tokenization as a Catalyst for Disruption

Alongside AI, BCG's global report identifies tokenization and digital assets as emerging forces that could reshape market structure. The value of tokenized real-world assets is projected to reach \$14 trillion by 2030 and \$55 trillion by 2035, creating new channels for distribution, ownership, and product design. These developments could alter how assets are accessed, transferred, and managed, potentially weakening traditional advantages tied to scale and distribution while enabling new entrants to compete.

"The convergence of tokenization, AI, and evolving investor expectations is reshaping the competitive landscape in ways that favor agility over incumbency," said Nabil Saadallah, Managing Director & Partner at BCG. "For asset managers in the GCC, success will increasingly hinge on their ability to deliver personalized solutions at scale, those who embrace this shift stand to unlock significant value in a rapidly transforming market."

As market-driven growth gives way to competition-driven growth, asset managers face a more complex and less forgiving landscape. Capturing net inflows, building scalable distribution, and embedding technology into core operations will determine which firms succeed.

As part of its ongoing efforts to support employee wellbeing

The Gulf Bank continues to foster a positive work environment through 'Break the Routine' initiative



Part of the events.



KUWAIT CITY, July 2: As part of its continued efforts to foster a positive work environment and support employee wellbeing, Gulf Bank continues to organize its monthly "Break the Routine" initiative, designed to bring employees together, refresh the workplace atmosphere, and encourage stronger team engagement.

The initiative reflects Gulf Bank's commitment to supporting its employees beyond their day-to-day professional responsibilities by creating meaningful opportunities for connection, wellness, and enjoyment within the workplace.

During the latest edition, employees enjoyed a range of wellness-focused services and activities, including complimentary nutrition consultations, body composition analysis, weight measurement,

healthy snacks, and exclusive subscription discounts. A dedicated wellness products booth also offered discounts of up to 30% on selected items, giving employees access to products that support a healthier lifestyle.

To further enhance the experience, the event featured entertainment activities, games, and promotional offers with discounts of up to 25% on various products. Employees also enjoyed a specialty coffee experience through a dedicated booth offering a wide selection of beverages, adding a relaxed and enjoyable touch to their workday.

Through "Break the Routine," Gulf Bank aims to provide employees with a space to step away from the pressure of daily tasks, connect with colleagues, and recharge in a positive and engaging setting. The

initiative is part of the Bank's broader approach to employee engagement, which focuses on building a workplace culture where employees feel valued, motivated, and connected to the organization.

In parallel, Gulf Bank continues to invest in employee development through specialized training programs covering key areas such as leadership, time management, creative thinking, and customer service. These programs combine theoretical knowledge with practical applications, enabling employees to translate learning into stronger performance in the workplace.

The Bank also continues to promote employee engagement through initiatives that celebrate individual and team achievements, recognize outstanding performance, and encourage innovation and idea sharing.

These efforts contribute to a workplace culture where employees feel empowered to actively contribute to the Bank's continued success.

Gulf Bank's focus on employee wellbeing also extends to professional wellness programs, including health awareness sessions, fitness-related activities, and support services when needed. These initiatives reflect the Bank's belief that employee wellbeing plays a vital role in achieving a healthy balance between professional and personal life.

By organizing "Break the Routine" on a regular basis, Gulf Bank reaffirms its commitment to building a healthy, balanced, and dynamic workplace. The initiative highlights the Bank's belief that investing in people is one of the most sustainable and impactful ways to drive long-term institutional success.

Sustainability seen as gateway to new market opportunities

UNDP, AmCham advance sustainable procurement

KUWAIT CITY, July 2: The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Kuwait and the American Business Council - Kuwait (ABCK) - AmCham Kuwait convened private sector businesses for an introductory session on Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP), aimed at helping businesses understand how procurement is evolving, strengthen their competitiveness, and prepare for future market opportunities in line with Kuwait Vision 2035 and its sustainability ambitions.

Public procurement is no longer just about what governments buy; it is about the value public spending creates. Sustainable Public Procurement places sustainability at the heart of purchasing decisions so that public spending delivers greater economic, environmental, and social value. Around the world, procurement is increasingly being used to encourage innovation, reduce emissions and waste, strengthen local businesses and SMEs, and deliver greater long-term value for society.

Globally, UNDP supports governments in strengthening procurement systems and advancing sustainable public procurement as a driver of sustainable development, stronger institutions, and inclusive economic growth. The session provided participants with practical insights into these global trends and their relevance for businesses in Kuwait.

"Every business wants to remain competitive, but competitiveness today is increasingly shaped by how businesses respond to changing market expectations. As procurement evolves, suppliers that can demonstrate long-term value, alongside quality, innovation, and responsible business practices, will be better positioned to seize future opportunities. UNDP is helping businesses understand these changes, strengthen their readiness, and contribute to Ku-



Representatives of UNDP Kuwait, the American Business Council-Kuwait (AmCham Kuwait), and private sector businesses pose for a group photo during an introductory session on Sustainable Public Procurement, aimed at strengthening business competitiveness and supporting Kuwait Vision 2035.

wait's Vision 2035," said Ms. Emma Morley, Resident Representative of UNDP Kuwait.

The session introduced participants to global trends in Sustainable Public Procurement, explored practical examples from Kuwait, and highlighted how businesses can strengthen their readiness for evolving procurement expectations.

Participants also shared their experiences with current sustainability practices, as well as the opportunities and challenges they face in responding to evolving procurement expectations. These discussions will help inform future dialogue and engagement on Sustainable Public Procurement in Kuwait.

"At AmCham Kuwait, we see this session as an opportunity to help companies better understand how procurement requirements are evolving and what that may mean for their businesses. Many suppliers are already being asked to demonstrate not only technical capabilities, but also how

they manage areas such as efficiency, responsible business practices, and long-term value. Our partnership with UNDP allows us to bring these conversations directly to the private sector in a practical and accessible way. By helping companies understand emerging expectations and identify opportunities for improvement, we can support their competitiveness, strengthen market readiness, and contribute to the broader goals of Kuwait Vision 2035," said Mr. Pete Swift, Chairman of the Board of AmCham Kuwait.

UNDP continues to support efforts to strengthen public institutions and foster greater collaboration between the public and private sectors. By helping businesses understand evolving procurement expectations and prepare for future opportunities, Sustainable Public Procurement can contribute to a more competitive, resilient, and diversified economy in support of Kuwait Vision 2035.

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About UNDP: UNDP is the leading United Nations organization fighting to end the injustice of poverty, inequality and climate change. Working with our broad network of experts and partners in 170 countries, we help nations to build integrated, lasting solutions for people and the planet. Learn more at undp.org or follow at @UNDP. For more information, please contact:

UNDP Kuwait | Nayla Bissat | nayla.bissat@undp.org

About AmCham Kuwait: Founded in 1985, AmCham Kuwait is a non-profit organization composed of Fortune 500 corporations, SMEs, and prominent business leaders from both the United States and Kuwait. As a key advocate for American business interests in Kuwait, AmCham Kuwait works to strengthen the commercial and economic ties between the two nations. For more information, please visit www.amchamkuwait.org or follow us on social media @abck1985.

Global FinTech publication recognizes the bank as a key enabler of growth and innovation across the sector

The Fintech Times: NBK leads Kuwait's FinTech market

KUWAIT CITY, July 2: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) continues to reinforce its position as the leading financial institution driving the transformation of the financial technology (FinTech) sector in Kuwait, further underscoring its pivotal role in supporting and advancing the country's rapidly evolving FinTech ecosystem.

This leadership position has also received independent recognition through a recent feature published by The Fintech Times on Kuwait's FinTech landscape in 2026, which positioned NBK as the market leader and a key enabler of growth and innovation across this strategically important sector in Kuwait.

The Fintech Times is regarded as one of the leading global media platforms specializing in the FinTech industry and is widely recognized as a key international reference in the sector. The platform covers the latest ideas and innovations shaping the world of financial technology, with a strong focus on delivering high-quality content distributed through a broad global network.

As Kuwait's financial technology sector continues to evolve at an accelerated pace, NBK remains committed to providing the banking architecture and technological foundations re-

quired for FinTech companies to build, scale, and operate efficiently. This is supported by the Bank's long-term strategic investments in core banking systems and advanced digital platforms, creating a stable and trusted operating environment that serves as a strong foundation for the growth of innovative financial services.

NBK's partnership with AZ eWallet marked a key milestone in this journey, representing the first collaboration of its kind within Kuwait's FinTech sector. Through Virtual IBAN (V IBAN) services, the Bank enabled the company to conduct its day-to-day operations seamlessly and efficiently. This landmark collaboration represented a pioneering achievement in the Kuwaiti market and further reinforced NBK's role as a key enabler of advanced financial services and next-generation digital solutions.

Building on this foundation, NBK now provides comprehensive support to FinTech companies through an integrated suite of services, including Virtual IBAN (V IBAN) creation, a full range of Application Programming Interfaces (APIs), and ATM as a Service solutions through QR code-enabled cash withdrawal technologies, all under the umbrella of



Deema Al AbdulRazzaq

■ Al AbdulRazzaq: Advanced banking architecture and financial services enable FinTech companies to launch, scale, and grow efficiently

Banking as a Service (BaaS).

These solutions enable FinTech companies to scale efficiently while leveraging the Bank's advanced banking infrastructure, which is widely regarded as a benchmark for security, reliability, and operational resilience in Kuwait.

Commenting on this achievement, Deema Al AbdulRazzaq Vice President – Head of FinTech Partnership Consumer Banking Group said: "Kuwait's FinTech sector is entering a new phase of growth built on strong foundations and trusted partnerships that continue to accelerate the pace of innovation. At NBK, we are proud to lead this transformation by providing advanced banking architecture and financial services that enable FinTech companies to develop innovative solutions capable of meeting the market's evolving needs. Our role extends beyond traditional banking services to empowering these companies to launch, scale, and operate with confidence through secure, reliable, and resilient financial infrastructure that has become a benchmark within the Kuwaiti market."

Al AbdulRazzaq added that NBK remains firmly committed to supporting the next generation of financial innovation, emphasizing

that as Kuwait's FinTech ecosystem continues to evolve, the Bank will continue to invest, innovate, and expand its capabilities in ways that further strengthen its position as the trusted banking partner helping shape the future of this strategically important sector in Kuwait.

NBK plays a pivotal role in enabling innovation across Kuwait's FinTech ecosystem by providing the banking foundations upon which startups and institutions rely to build digital solutions, scale their operations, and achieve sustainable growth. Through its advanced services and strategic partnerships, the Bank continues to support the next generation of FinTech companies while contributing to the sector's competitiveness and continued evolution.

Furthermore, the Bank also reaffirms its ongoing commitment to leading the development of Kuwait's FinTech sector through the continuous expansion of its digital services and further investment in technological infrastructure that supports innovation and reinforces a more advanced financial ecosystem. At the same time, the Bank continues to serve as a trusted strategic partner that enables businesses and contributes to driving economic growth in Kuwait.

UAE and Oman lead GCC loan growth as Kuwait contracts

GCC banks see loan growth slow to 8-quarter low amid geopolitical tensions

By KAMCO Invest

GCC banking sector witnessed the initial impact of the geopolitical situation in the region with q-o-q gross loan growth for listed banks slowing to the lowest since Q1-2024. This comes as regional geopolitical considerations continue to influence credit market dynamics resulting in a more cautious lending environment. Meanwhile, on the spending side, project awards in the region remained resilient reaching USD 76.1 Bn in Q1-2026 vs. USD 53.2 Bn during the previous quarter. Economic activity in the region witnessed a sharp slowdown during March-2026 due to the war as seen from the PMI figures for the region with Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait falling into contraction. However, activity in the non-oil sector saw a strong rebound, especially in Saudi Arabia and UAE with the PMI in the growth zone of over 50 points while Kuwait and Qatar seeing smaller contraction during April-2026 and May-2026.

Aggregate gross loans reached USD 2.53 Trillion at the end of the quarter, registering a growth of 2.2% vs. 2.7% growth in the previous quarter. Net loan growth also contracted to a five-quarter low of 2.5% reaching USD 2.44 Trillion at the end of the quarter vs. 2.38 Trillion at the end of Q4-2025. At the country level, gross loan was up for all the countries in the region, except for Kuwait where it declined by 1.1% q-o-q during Q1-2026 while Oman and UAE witnessed healthy mid-single digit sequential growth.

In terms of topline performance, aggregate banking sector revenues reached a new record high during the quarter at USD 35.3 Bn, although the growth was the smallest in four quarters at 0.9%. The stunted growth was led by a decline in revenues reported by banks in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain that almost fully offset the increase in revenues registered in the remaining GCC countries. UAE-listed banks posted the biggest increase in revenues with a q-o-q gain of 4.7% followed by Qatar-listed banks with a revenue growth of 2.3%.

The net profit for the sector recovered during Q1-2026 after a decline during the previous quarter. Aggregate net profits reached USD 16.8 Bn during the quarter registering a q-o-q growth of 4.6% and a y-o-y growth of 5.0%. The increase in bottom line was led by a broad-based growth across countries aggregates with only Oman registering a decline while the rest of the countries showed a q-o-q increase.

Highlights - GCC Banking Sector

This report analyzes the financials reported by 55 listed banks in the GCC for the quarter ended Q1-2026. Data for individual banks have been aggregated to the country level. Some of the key observations from the most recent financial quarter for the GCC Banking Sector includes the following:

War and inflation push global central banks back to tightening...

The global interest rate environment has entered a highly complex and deeply fragmented phase, sharply departing from the coordinated easing narratives that markets initially hoped for at the start of the year and before the Middle East war. Central banks across advanced economies find themselves dealing with a structural higher-for-longer reality as the war in the Middle East and the resulting energy-price spike pushed inflation higher across major economies and forced developed-market central banks to abandon - or even reverse - their easing cycles. Meanwhile, a profound divergence has emerged between Western central banks, which remain on high alert against lingering price pressures, and Asian authorities, who are navigating an entirely different set of domestic growth and deflationary challenges.

In the United States, the Federal Reserve delivered a major hawkish pivot at its June-2026 meeting, holding the federal funds rate steady at 3.50% to 3.75% for the fourth consecutive time in Kevin Warsh's first meeting as Fed Chair. While markets had broadly anticipated a pause, a stunning shift in the Fed's dot plot revealed that multiple officials are actively leaning toward additional tightening. Driven by a rebound in core PCE inflation to 3.4% in May-2026, the Fed under its updated leadership has signaled that cheaper capital is effectively off the table for the foreseeable future, forcing investors to price in just one potential rate adjustment for the remainder of the year. The median projection for the federal funds rate at the end of 2026 rose to 3.8%, up from 3.4% in March-2026.

Contrastingly, the ECB moved more decisively, raising all three key rates by 25 basis points on June 11, lifting the deposit facility rate to 2.25%, the main refinancing operations rate to 2.40% and the marginal lending facility to 2.65%, with effect from 17 June 2026. This marked the ECB's first rate increase since 2023, catalyzed directly by surging global energy costs and supply chain shocks stemming from intense conflict in the Middle East. The hike responded to eurozone inflation accelerating to 3.2% in May, the highest reading since September 2023, with the ECB revising its 2026 inflation forecast up to 3.0% while trimming growth to just 0.8%. The Bank of England, on the other hand, chose to proceed with extreme caution, maintaining its base rate at 3.75% for a fourth consecutive month. UK CPI inflation stood at 2.8% in May 2026 and is expected to climb to a little over 3.25% in Q4.

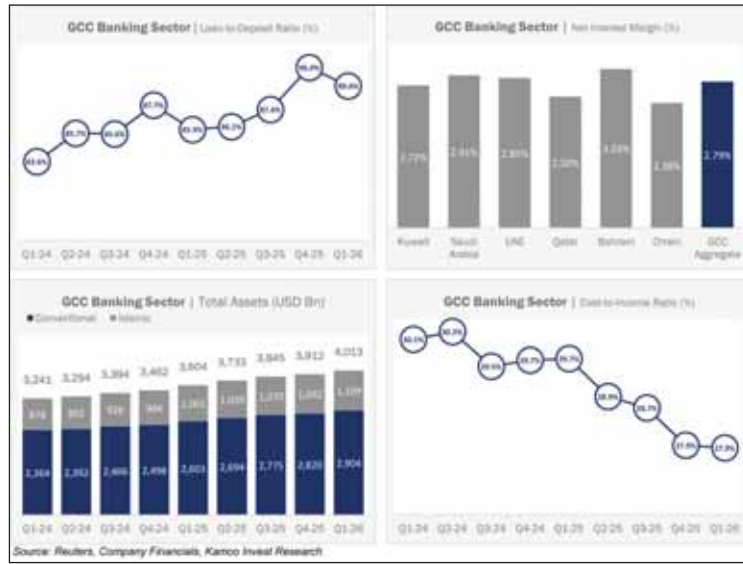
Far removed from the tightening cycles of the West, China's central bank (PBOC) has transitioned from an active monetary easing posture into a phase of careful "policy observation." Backed by a stronger-than-expected 5.0% GDP growth rate in the first quarter and positive industrial price recoveries, the Chinese central bank has kept its key lending rates at record lows for a 13th straight month in June 2026, holding the one-year loan prime rate at 3.0% and the five-year LPR at 3.5%, balancing caution over the war's fallout. Instead of implementing broad-based rate cuts, Beijing is leaning heavily on highly targeted, structural monetary tools and liquidity injections to eliminate hidden intermediate financing costs for small enterprises, keeping its newly issued corporate loan rates hovering near record lows of around 3.05%.

Looking ahead to the end of the year, the global interest rate outlook points toward sustained divergence and very limited room for monetary relief but leans toward tightening or holding in the developed world. The U.S. Federal Reserve is widely expected to maintain its hawkish pause, with the absolute maximum market expectation capped at a single 25 bps cut by late autumn, 3.50-3.65 effectively pushing any major easing cycle deep into next year. In Europe, the ECB's path remains tethered to volatile geopolitical premiums; if energy prices refuse to cool, further incremental hikes cannot be ruled out, keeping Eurozone rates anchored at their current restrictive levels. The ECB is expected to potentially hike at least once more, with markets pricing in roughly a 50% probability of a further hike in September. Conversely, China is likely to keep rates at record lows, with rising inflation reducing the incentive to cut, though policymakers retain a bias toward supportive policy if growth weakens further. The primary risk to all these paths is the durability of the energy shock as a sustained de-escalation and falling oil prices could quickly soften the hawkish tilt, while renewed conflict would reinforce it.

Credit growth slows reflecting the impact of the war...

Based on data from GCC central banks, total outstanding credit facilities across the six GCC member states reached approximately USD 2.17 trillion at end-March-2026, representing a robust y-o-y increase of 9.2% (USD 182.2 Bn) compared to March-2025, and a quarterly expansion of 2.6% (USD 54.0 Bn) since December-2025. This sustained credit growth reflects the region's continued economic diversification efforts, robust infrastructure spending, and supportive monetary policies despite global economic uncertainties. Saudi Arabia remains the dominant credit market, accounting for over 41% of regional credit, followed by UAE at 27% and Qatar at 18%. Economies like Kuwait, Bahrain, and Oman collectively represent approximately 14% of the GCC credit market but are showing impressive growth trajectories, particularly Oman with 11.4% y-o-y expansion.

Kuwait's total credit facilities to residents reached KWD 54.1 Bn (USD 176.5 Bn) at end-March 2026, expanding 7.8% y-o-y and 1.8% YTD. The standout performer was the Public Services sector, surging 91.7% y-o-y to KWD 209.3 million, reflecting increased government infrastructure financing. The Crude Oil & Gas sector grew 25.8% y-o-y to KWD 2.17 Bn, benefiting from elevated energy prices and upstream investment. Non-Bank Financial Companies (NBFCs) expanded 23.6% y-o-y as alternative lending channels gained traction. Real Estate lending grew 5.7% y-o-y to KWD 11.02 Bn, while Personal Installment Loans - the largest category - increased 4.3% y-o-y to KWD 17.36 Bn. The Trade sector



contracted 6.8% y-o-y, potentially reflecting tighter working capital requirements and inventory adjustments. Consumer lending remained essentially flat, suggesting household deleveraging trends.

Saudi Arabia's banking credit reached SAR 3.36 trillion (USD 894.8 Bn) at end-March 2026, growing 8.2% y-o-y and 1.8% YTD. The Kingdom's Vision 2030 mega-projects continue to drive sectoral lending patterns. Transport & Communications led growth at 25.2% y-o-y to SAR 75.5 Bn, reflecting investments in logistics hubs, ports, and telecommunications infrastructure. The Electricity, Water, Gas & Health sector expanded 22.8% y-o-y to SAR 222.9 Bn, aligned with massive investments in power generation, desalination, and healthcare infrastructure. Finance & Insurance lending grew 14.7% y-o-y as the financial sector deepens and capital markets develop. Building & Construction increased 9.2% y-o-y to SAR 143.5 Bn, supporting the ambitious real estate and tourism development projects like NEOM and the Red Sea Project. Manufacturing expanded 5.7% y-o-y, benefiting from industrial diversification initiatives. Mining & Quarrying contracted 6.9% y-o-y, potentially reflecting project completion cycles in the extractive sector.

The UAE's banking credit reached AED 2.14 trillion (USD 582.4 Bn) at end-March 2026, demonstrating the strongest y-o-y growth in the GCC at 14.4%, with YTD expansion of 4.4%. The Personal Loans for Business Purposes category surged 50.1% y-o-y to AED 168.7 Bn, indicating robust entrepreneurial activity and SME financing. Mining & Quarrying expanded 32.6% y-o-y, albeit from a small base. Electricity, Gas & Water grew 21.2% y-o-y to AED 60.8 Bn, reflecting the Emirates' substantial investments in clean energy and water security infrastructure. Construction & Real Estate - the largest lending category - grew 10.7% y-o-y to AED 384.6 Bn, driven by continued property market activity in Dubai and Abu Dhabi. Manufacturing increased 9.9% y-o-y, benefiting from industrial zone development and export-oriented manufacturing initiatives. Trade grew 7.9% y-o-y, while Financial Institutions lending expanded 4.4% y-o-y. Government credit contracted 0.9% y-o-y as sovereign balance sheets strengthened with higher energy revenues.

Qatar's banking credit facilities totaled QAR 1.46 trillion (USD 400.6 Bn) at end-March 2026, growing 5.1% y-o-y and 1.6% YTD - the most moderate expansion rate among GCC states. The Services sector led growth at 8.6% y-o-y to QAR 279.0 Bn, reflecting the country's continued push toward economic diversification and post-World Cup service sector development. Consumption lending expanded 7.9% y-o-y to QAR 196.8 Bn, indicating healthy household spending capacity. The 'Others' category grew 5.4% y-o-y. However, key industrial sectors showed mixed performance. Industry declined 9.1% y-o-y to QAR 17.4 Bn, while Real Estate contracted 7.5% y-o-y to QAR 161.9 Bn, potentially reflecting a correction following the World Cup construction boom. General Trade and Contractors categories showed modest growth of 1.9% and 1.2% y-o-y respectively. Notably, "Outside Qatar" lending (foreign credit) grew robustly at 17.9% y-o-y, suggesting Qatari banks are increasingly active in regional and international markets.

Bahrain's banking credit reached BHD 13.24 Bn (USD 35.1 Bn) at end-March 2026, expanding 5.0% y-o-y and 2.0% YTD. The Kingdom demonstrated balanced growth across multiple sectors. Education lending surged 60.5% y-o-y to BHD 26.0 million, albeit from a small base, reflecting investments in human capital development. Manufacturing grew 24.5% y-o-y to BHD 509.9 million, benefiting from Bahrain's industrialization strategy. The Activities of Households category expanded 21.5% y-o-y, while Human Health grew 20.4% y-o-y. Financial and Insurance Activities - among the largest categories - increased 11.3% y-o-y to BHD 904.5 million, reflecting Bahrain's role as a regional financial hub. Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities grew 10.6% y-o-y. However, Mining & Quarrying contracted 15.6% y-o-y, while Construction declined 8.2% y-o-y and Accommodation services fell 7.9% y-o-y, potentially reflecting sector-specific headwinds or project completion cycles.

Oman's banking credit totaled OMR 29.25 Bn (USD 76.0 Bn) at end-March 2026, achieving robust y-o-y growth of 11.4% and YTD expansion of 5.5% - among the strongest performances in the GCC. The Sultanate's credit growth reflects its ambitious Vision 2040 economic transformation agenda. Private Sector credit - the dominant category - grew 9.7% y-o-y to OMR 22.33 Bn, driven by diversification investments and SME development initiatives. Government credit expanded 8.7% y-o-y to OMR 2.16 Bn, supporting fiscal spending requirements during the economic transformation period. Public Enterprises credit showed the strongest growth at 29.2% y-o-y to OMR 4.48 Bn, reflecting increased financing for state-owned entities executing strategic projects in energy transition, port development, and tourism infrastructure. Non-Resident credit grew 17.1% y-o-y, indicating Omani banks' expanding regional footprint. The balanced growth across all borrower categories suggests healthy and diversified credit expansion across the economy.

Preliminary April 2026 data indicates continued, albeit more measured, credit expansion across the GCC. Kuwait recorded a 0.31% month-on-month increase to KWD 54.30 billion, Saudi Arabia grew 0.63% M-o-m to SAR 3.38 trillion, Qatar edged up 0.24% M-o-m to QAR 1.46 trillion, Bahrain posted the strongest monthly gain at 1.43% M-o-m to BHD 13.43 billion, while Oman remained essentially flat at 0.19% M-o-m growth to OMR 29.31 billion. UAE April data is not yet available in the reporting. This steady but moderated monthly growth pattern reflects the GCC banking sector's prudent approach amid evolving regional geopolitical dynamics and global macroeconomic uncertainties.

Lending growth eases to 8-quarter low...

Aggregate lending by listed banks in the GCC continued to show q-o-q growth during Q1-2026, although the sequential growth was the lowest since Q1-2024. The growth was broad-based across country aggregates, barring Kuwait that registered a marginal decline during the quarter. Aggregate gross loans at the GCC level reached a new record high of USD 2.53 Trillion, recording a growth of 2.2% in Q1-2026 vs. 2.7% during the previous quarter. The y-o-y growth continued to remain steady in double digits at 12.3%. Listed banks in Oman registered the biggest q-o-q growth in loans at 5.3% reaching USD 84.7 Bn mainly led a broad-based growth across listed banks in the Sultanate with Bank Sohar recording a healthy double-digit growth in lending during the quarter.

Banks in UAE were next with a q-o-q growth of 4.4% or USD 33.3 Bn to reach USD 781.6 Bn during Q1-2026 as a majority of the banks reported a sequential growth in loans. Bank of Sharjah reported a double-digit growth in lending while Emirates NBD also registered a healthy growth of 7.1% during the quarter. Banks in Saudi Arabia registered a modest growth of 1.6% or USD 14.0 Bn, the second-lowest growth in nine quarters, with aggregate gross loans of USD 862.3 Bn at

the end of Q1-2026. Banks in the Kingdom recorded a 2.6% increase in consumer installment loans and 2.0% increase in commercial loans while other categories of loans remained flat.

Customer deposits growth reaches 3-quarter high...

Total customer deposits reported by listed GCC banks reached a new record high level at the end of Q1-2026 at USD 2.87 Trillion registering a q-o-q growth of 3.4%, the highest in the last three quarters. The y-o-y growth when compared to Q1-2025 came in at 8.7%. The growth was broad-based as seen in higher q-o-q customer deposits in all countries in the GCC. At the country level, Oman-listed banks registered the strongest growth in deposits during the quarter that reached USD 90.4 Bn at the end of Q1-2026 with a growth of 4.9%. UAE-listed banks were next with customer deposits breaching the USD 1 Trillion mark to reach USD 1.04 Trillion after a q-o-q growth of 4.7%.

Banks in Qatar also showed a healthy customer deposit growth of 4.2% to reach USD 453.6 Bn. The rest of the country aggregates showed q-o-q growth ranging from 1.1% and 2.2%.

Loan-to-deposit ratio surged to a new high in Q1-2026...

The aggregate net loan-to-deposit ratio for the GCC banking sector remained elevated above the 80% mark at the end of Q1-2026 but receded from a record high level of 85.8% in the previous quarter to 85.0% in Q1-2026. The ratio increased y-o-y by more than 300 bps during the quarter and has remained consistently above the 80% mark over the last eight quarters and reflects improving asset utilization as well as better margins to offset pressure from declining interest rates.

The ratio, however, showed strong divergence across countries with Saudi Arabia registering the highest ratio during the quarter followed by Qatari banks. Data from listed Saudi banks showed loan-to-deposit ratio remaining above the 100% mark at 100.5%.

Data from Sama also showed the ratio of commercial bank claims on private sector to total deposits receding slightly during Q1-2026 to 105.18% from 107.57% at the end of Q4-2025. The ratio declined to 104.06% as the latest data from SAMA's monthly report for April-2026. The elevated ratio in Saudi Arabia also highlights challenges on the liquidity front in the banking sector and also indicates higher external funding requirements in the near term in addition to the issuances in the current year via bonds and sukuk.

In the case of Qatari banks, the ratio reached 94.2%, the second highest in the GCC, but declined when compared to 97.3% recorded at the end of Q4-2025. On the other hand, Banks in UAE registered growth in the ratio that stayed above the 70% mark at 72.7%, flat as compared to the previous quarter. Aggregates for Bahrain and Oman also showed q-o-q improvement in the loan-to-deposit ratio while Kuwaiti banks showed a marginal decline.

Net interest income shows marginal q-o-q growth...

Aggregate net interest income reported by banks listed in the GCC showed a marginal improvement of 0.1%, the smallest growth in the last four quarters to reach a new record high of USD 24.4 Bn during Q1-2026. The q-o-q growth came after interest rates remained steady with no cuts announced by central banks while lending continued to witness growth in almost all country aggregates.

At the country level, the trend remained mixed with three country aggregates showing declines in net interest income and the remaining three showing growth. Omani banks once again ranked first in terms of growth in net interest income at 3.3% to reach USD 0.6 Bn. Kuwaiti and Saudi-listed banks were next with growth of 1.6% and 1.0%, respectively, to reach USD 8.5 Bn and USD 2.7 Bn during Q1-2026. On the other hand, Bahraini banks showed the biggest decline in net interest income that reached USD 0.7 Bn falling by 5.2%. Qatari and UAE-listed banks also showed marginal declines of 1.1% and 0.5%, respectively.

Non-interest income growth supported overall revenues...

Total banking revenues continued to show growth for the fourth consecutive quarter in Q1-2026, although the sequential growth was at a four-quarter low level of 0.9% reaching a new record high level of USD 35.3 Bn during Q1-2026. The marginal increase was led by a mixed trend at the country level, with listed banks in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain registering q-o-q declines that was more than offset by higher total revenues registered growth in the rest of the GCC aggregates. UAE-listed banks registered the biggest growth in revenues with an increase of 4.7% followed by Qatar-listed banks with growth of 2.3%. Banks in Oman showed a marginal growth of 0.2% during Q1-2026.

The growth in total revenues was mainly led by a healthy growth in non-interest income during the quarter that supported a flatish growth of 0.1% in net interest income. Non-interest income showed increased by 2.6% after showing a decline in the previous quarter to reach USD 10.9 Bn during Q1-2026.

Impairments decline after three consecutive quarters of growth...

After showing increases for three consecutive quarters, impairments booked by banks in the GCC showed a seasonal decline during Q1-2026. Total loan impairments declined by almost a third during the quarter to reach USD 2.7 Bn as compared to one of the highest quarterly levels during Q4-2025. The decline during Q1-2026 was mainly led by fall in impairments in five out of six countries in the GCC. Banks in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait registered more than 50% decline in loan impairments that reached USD 374.5 Mn and USD 295.8 Mn during Q1-2026, respectively. Listed banks in Qatar also registered double-digit decline in impairments with a fall of 22.3% reaching USD 802.9 Mn during the quarter. The decline in impairments booked by listed banks in UAE and Bahrain were marginal while Omani banks showed higher impairments that increased by 14.3% to reach USD 107.9 Mn during Q1-2026.

Meanwhile, despite the fall in impairments during Q1-2026, the cost of risk for the GCC banking sector stayed elevated due to higher impairments in the previous three quarters. The cost of risk (ratio of 12-month provisions vs. average loans) increased marginally to 0.47% during Q1-2026 vs. 0.46% during Q4-2025 for the aggregate GCC banking sector. The ratio was highest in the case of Qatari banks at 0.82% in Q1-2026 followed by Bahraini banks at 0.61%. The ratio was the lowest in the case of Saudi and Kuwaiti banks at 0.27% and 0.43%, respectively, while UAE-listed banks showed slightly higher cost of risk of 0.5% after seeing an increase from 0.44% during Q4-2025.

NIM continued to decline led by the impact of previous rate cuts...

The aggregate net interest margin reported by GCC-listed banks continued to decline during Q1-2026 as a larger share of lending was nimped at the lower interest rates after the rate cuts announced during 2025. The NIM at the GCC level reached 2.79% at the end of Q1-2026 falling marginally when compared to 2.81% at the end of Q4-2025. The ratio showed a broad-based decline falling in four out of six countries in the GCC. The ratio for Kuwaiti and Saudi banks showed marginal increase during the quarter to reach 2.72% and 2.91% at the end of Q1-2026. On the other hand, banks in Qatar, Bahrain, UAE and Oman registered declines.

Bahraini banks ranked first in the GCC in terms of NIMs that stayed above the 3% mark at 3.03% in Q1-2026 as compared to 3.07% during Q4-2025. Saudi-listed banks were next with NIM of 2.91%, almost flat when compared to 2.90% at the end of Q4-2025 followed by UAE and Kuwaiti banks with NIM of 2.85% and 2.72%, respectively.

GCC banking RoE declined for the second consecutive quarter...

Aggregate return on equity (RoE) for the GCC banking sector declined for the second consecutive quarter during Q1-2026 from one of the highest levels recorded during Q3-2025. Aggregate RoE reached 15.6% during Q1-2026 as compared to 15.7% recorded during the previous quarter. The marginal decline in the ratio reflected a fall in the case of four out of six country aggregates in the GCC. Banks in Kuwait, UAE, Qatar and Bahrain recorded a slight decline in the ratio during Q1-2026 while Saudi-listed banks and Omani banks showed marginal improvements. Total shareholder equity reached USD 434.4 Bn at the end of Q1-2026, registering a marginal decline of 0.6% as compared to Q4-2025.

At the country level, UAE-listed banks once again topped in the region with the highest RoE at the end of Q1-2026 at 18.0%, although it declined slightly by 50bps for the second consecutive quarter. Saudi-listed banks were next with an RoE of 15.7%, registering a quarterly increase of 40bps followed by Qatari banks with an RoE of 14.8% recording a decline of 130 bps from the previous quarter.

KFH supports youth's academic future through strategic partnership with Wajhni

KUWAIT CITY, July 2: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) continues its strategic partnership with the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research through its participation in the 2026 Wajhni national external scholarship campaign. This partnership reaffirms KFH's leading social role and its ongoing commitment to supporting education and empowering youth.

Held over five days at The Avenues, the campaign attracted strong interest from students and parents, welcoming more than 5,000 participants. The campaign helped raise awareness of sound academic planning and introduced students to the educational opportunities available through external scholarship programs.

KFH also participated in the opening of the Technical Support Center at Sanabil Tower, providing technical assistance to students during the Ministry's scholarship registration period.

Dr. Bader Hasan Al-Busairi, Undersecretary Ministry of Higher Education, praised KFH's contributions and partnership with the Ministry, as well as its leading role in supporting students. He emphasized the Ministry's commitment to continuing this cooperation in a manner that serves the best interests of students.

Meanwhile, Head of Group Public Relations and Media at KFH, Yousef Abdullah Al-Ruwaieh, said that the Bank's strategic partnership with the Wajhni campaign reflects its firm belief that education is the most sustainable investment in Kuwait's future. He added that supporting education and empowering students remain among the key pillars of KFH's corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategy.

Al-Ruwaieh noted that education and the empow-



Yousef Al-Ruwaieh, Dr. Bader Hasan Al-Busairi, Wissal Al-Zamel, Ministry and bank officials.

- **Al-Ruwaieh:** Record turnout as campaign attracts over 5,000 participants
- Our participation reflects our belief that investment in education creates opportunities and empowers future generations

erment of students and youth are central to KFH's CSR strategy. He emphasized the Bank's continued support for specialized educational initiatives aimed at developing student skills and nurturing talent.

These efforts include sponsoring school and university activities, as well as organizing awareness workshops on financial literacy and entrepreneurship. Furthermore, KFH supports training programs

for students and recent graduates to prepare them for the job market, boost their innovation capabilities, and develop qualified national talent capable of driving sustainable development.

At the Wajhni exhibition, KFH showcased a diverse range of products and services tailored to the needs and aspirations of young people. A dedicated team from KFH also engaged directly with students and parents, answering their inquiries about the Bank's services and initiatives that support their educational journey.

Wissal Al-Zamel, Media Advisor to the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, commended KFH for sponsoring Wajhni Campaign. She praised the Bank's national and social role in supporting students and enhancing academic awareness, noting that the partnership reflects the importance of collaboration between public and private sector institutions in serving young people and supporting their educational journey.

Al-Zamel added that such strategic partnerships contribute to raising academic awareness and enabling students to make informed educational decisions that support their academic and professional future while advancing Kuwait's national development plans.

It serves to note that KFH also sponsors a dedicated student support center at Sanabil Tower for students planning to study abroad. The center provides specialized guidance throughout the scholarship application process, assists with administrative procedures, and offers support in using relevant online platforms and digital services, helping students complete their study-abroad journey with greater ease, confidence, and efficiency.

Investors face steep losses

Trump receives \$1.2 bn from crypto ventures in 2025 filing

NEW YORK, July 2, (AP): President Donald Trump took in nearly \$1.2 billion from his crypto businesses last year, a federal filing released Tuesday shows, locking in profits while his investors were socked with losses.

Mere startups when he took the oath of office, the new ventures have now eclipsed in revenue much of his vast property portfolio that took him decades to accumulate. Fueling their rise were billionaire investors and Trump's own move to quash a federal crackdown on the industry.

Trump got more than \$500 million from his World Liberty Financial business selling new crypto products, including "governance tokens," according to the required annual disclosure report with the Office of Government Ethics. It also showed another crypto business, CIC Digital LLC, took in more than \$600 million from sales of souvenir-type "meme" coins stamped with his face.

Both the tokens and the coins have plunged in value since the sales.

Trump also took in millions last year from selling Trump-branded Bibles, sneakers and other small items in another unprecedented move for the presidency. The sale of Trump-branded watches alone brought in \$4.7 million.

The 927-page disclosure form paints a stark, if incomplete picture of the massive growth of the president's wealth since taking office last January through a web of business interests - many of which have benefited from the policy moves of Trump's own government. Trump has insisted that his sons direct his finances but the arrangement rejects the conflict of interest protections that his recent predecessors in office had instituted.

Forbes estimates Trump's net worth at \$6 billion, up from \$2.3 billion in 2024.

The rise of crypto relative to Trump's property is especially noteworthy because he first rode to office boasting of his property wins. It's also remarkable because that mainstay business also boomed last year. Trump took in tens of millions in fees from a flurry of new hotel, resort and condo deals overseas that amounts to the biggest property expansion ever in the century since the family business was founded.

Many of those countries were negotiating with the U.S. over tariffs, military aid and other important matters while the family business was striking the deals.

A property in the United Arab Emirates generated \$10.4 million for the Trump business last year. One in Saudi Arabia being built by a real estate developer close to the ruling family sent the president's company \$9 million. And one in Bucharest, Romania, and another in Qatar sent him \$5 million each.

One of his prominent domestic properties, Mar-a-Lago in Florida, notched big growth last year, too.

Trump took in \$77 million from the property, a 50% jump from the year earlier when he was just another citizen, as heads of state and business people flocked to it in his new term.

The disclosure report doesn't give profit figures, just revenue, so it's impossible to know how much

he is earning.

Trump said Wednesday that most of his gains last year came from the stock market and he's just riding along with everyone else.

"We're all profiting," he said. "I'm profiting because I have a lot of money and a lot of cash."

But crypto was clearly the big revenue generator last year in part due his own moves since taking office - pushing policies friendly to the industry and reversing a Biden administration regulatory crackdown.

The regulators are still worried. Before Trump's World Liberty began selling "governance tokens," they issued warnings about this new kind of crypto asset, saying that unlike stocks, the tokens offer no ownership stake in the issuing company, just voting power on certain corporate policies, and are difficult to value.

Buyers pounced anyway, including a Chinese billionaire who spent \$75 million on the tokens and \$200 million on the souvenir coins. In February last year, a federal lawsuit charging him with duping investors was paused before being settled for a \$10 million fine.

The billionaire, Justin Sun, has repeatedly denied his spending on Trump businesses had anything to do with his federal case, while World Liberty has dismissed the notion of a conflict of interest.

Meanwhile, investors have seen the value of their Trump-tied holdings drop significantly.

The price of World Liberty tokens has fallen 80% since they started trading in September. And the Trump souvenir coins that spiked to more than \$74 in the days after launching in January 2025 now sell for \$1.68.

The White House has repeatedly said Trump put his business in a trust managed by his sons and is not involved in its decisions and that there are no ethics issues to discuss.

"Neither the President nor his family has ever engaged - or will ever engage - in conflicts of interest," spokeswoman Anna Kelly said. "All actions by President Trump and his administration are taken in the best interest of the American people."

The Trump umbrella company, the Trump Organization, has said its deals overseas were with private companies, not with governments.

Still, it is difficult to know what is truly private in countries ruled by authoritarians, royal families and one-party governments.

For a new Trump resort in Vietnam, the report shows Trump took in \$5 million last year after the ruling Communist Party sent its deputy prime minister to sign off on the deal and, according to The New York Times, pushed farmers off the land to make way for the construction.

Whether the deals played any role in changing U.S. policies in ways these countries sought is nearly impossible to know, but the countries did get what they wanted.

Vietnam got tariff relief. Qatar got access to advanced U.S. technology previously off limits, and Saudi Arabia got U.S. fighter jets it had coveted for years.

AI and skill mismatch add pressure to US hiring

US employers pull back on hiring in June amid elevated inflation, global commotion

WASHINGTON, July 2, (AP): U.S. employers slowed hiring last month and added only 57,000 jobs, less than half the previous month's total and a sign companies still have a cautious economic outlook.

The Labor Department said Thursday that the unemployment rate declined to a low 4.2% from 4.3% in May, though the decline mostly occurred because many people out of work gave up looking and were no longer counted as unemployed.

The figures suggest businesses remain wary of the economy's health, with inflation at a three-year high and consumer confidence near post-pandemic lows. The job market has been stuck in a "low-hire, low-fire" rut in which the employed enjoy some job security while layoffs are low, but those out of work are struggling to get hired. Strong hiring in the spring raised hopes the economy was escaping that dynamic, but Thursday's report suggests it hasn't happened.

Strong job gains that were initially reported in April and May were revised lower. Hiring in May was marked down to 129,000 from 172,000, while April's job gains are now 148,000, down from an initial estimate of 179,000.

Restaurants, bars, and hotels cut 61,000 jobs, a sharp disappointment for those who expected the World Cup tournament that is taking place in multiple U.S. cities would lead to at least temporary job gains. Retailers also shed 7,500 jobs.



Hiring sign for sales professionals is displayed at a store, in Vernon Hills, Ill., Wednesday, April 15, 2026. (AP)

Chad Moutray, chief economist at the National Restaurant Association, said member companies are seeing signs consumers are pulling back on eating out, particularly outside higher-income households. They are also seeing evidence of a "K-shaped" economy, with wealthier households pulling ahead of middle- and lower-income ones.

"We continue to hear that a lot of Americans are struggling to make ends meet," he said. "If you're catering to the upper-end of the K, you're doing fine. If you're catering to the lower part of the K, you're seeing some challenges in the last couple of months."

Many businesses may be wary of hiring as they navigate the imple-

mentation of artificial intelligence, but last month professional and business services, a category that includes architecture, engineering, and software developers - occupations expected to be vulnerable to AI - added 36,000 jobs. Healthcare, the economy's most consistent job creator, added nearly 47,000 positions.

The economy is growing modestly despite ongoing challenges. It expanded at a 2.1% annual pace in the first three months of the year, though some forecasts expect it will slow in the April-June quarter.

Ongoing job gains, however, suggest that the Federal Reserve's key interest rate, at about 3.6%, may not be high enough to restrain the econ-

omy and cool inflation. Fed chair Kevin Warsh in Portugal Wednesday reiterated that he would push inflation back to the Fed's 2% target, though he wouldn't comment on whether the Fed would raise rates at its next meeting, in July.

Historically, a job gain of just 57,000 would be seen as weak. Yet as more Americans retire and new immigration has dropped sharply, the U.S. workforce is barely growing. In that case, some economists think even gains at that level may be enough to keep the unemployment rate unchanged - or even lower it.

Mismatches between job-seekers and employers could be slowing hiring as well. Nicole Bachaud, labor economist at ZipRecruiter, said AI adoption could have encouraged a trend she's noticed on their website: Companies are increasingly posting jobs seeking more senior, experienced workers, while job hunters are instead gravitating toward entry-level jobs.

With far fewer people quitting their jobs than just after the pandemic, Bachaud said, companies are having more trouble recruiting experienced workers from other businesses. At the same time, that's left less-experienced workers struggling to break into the job market.

That gap "just shows the mismatch between what employers are looking for and what current job seekers have to offer," she said. It has likely contributed to the frustration many job seekers feel even as the unemployment rate remains low.

IPO boosts tech acquirer's bid for more takeover deals

Bending Spoons raises \$1.7 bn in Wall Street debut

NEW YORK, July 2, (AP): The owner of AOL and other tech businesses hit Wall Street with a \$1.7 billion initial public offering Wednesday.

Bending Spoons priced 58 million shares at \$29 apiece. The company is getting \$1 billion in proceeds, while the rest is going to shareholders. The stock surged 39.7% in its first day of trading under the symbol "BSP" on the Nasdaq, giving it a market value of \$25.2 billion.

Among the company's well-known holdings are the event creation and ticketing company Eventbrite, and the video hosting service Vimeo. AOL, formerly America Online, is a more recent acquisition for the company. The email and search engine service dates back to the dawn of the internet age.

AOL itself went public in 1992 and was a vanguard of technology and communication. It reached a market value of \$164 billion in 2000 shortly before merging with Time Warner. It then

crashed along with the rest of the industry following the bursting of the dot-com bubble. It has been bought and sold several times over the last two decades.

Bending Spoons' key focus is acquiring troubled tech companies and overhauling them. The company takes its name from the fictional concept of bending spoons with the mind, as portrayed in the dystopian AI-focused "The Matrix" films. The company's founders say the name is meant to evoke focus and dedication, as well as some humor.

"We were about to attempt to create a world-class company with \$40,000, a team of five, and a track record that read 0 for 1," the company wrote in its prospectus. "A touch of irony seemed appropriate."

The Italy-based company was founded by three friends in 2013 following the failure of

their first attempt at building a technology startup. It has since grown by buying more than 50 companies.

The acquired companies are reorganized, and AI technology is often a key tool in the redesign. The focus remains on subscription-based revenue from the portfolio of businesses.

The company said it had net income of \$27.5 million on revenue of \$601 million during the first three months of 2026. It had more than 500 million monthly active users and 9 million monthly paying customers as of March.

The company has debt of just under \$4.4 billion. It plans to use proceeds from the offering to invest in new acquisitions.

The Bending Spoons offering comes amid a resurgence in the IPO market this year, highlighted by the record-setting market debut of SpaceX last month.

Expanding AI, green cooperation

Beijing says China-EU trade talks set in fall, to be held regularly each year

HONG KONG, July 2, (AP): China and the European Union will hold ministerial-level trade talks once or twice a year, China's Commerce Ministry said Thursday, as the two sides work to increase and rebalance trade.

The EU faces growing pressure to reduce its trade deficit with China, which widened to about 360 billion euros (\$410 billion) last year, nearly 1 billion euros a day. Chinese cars and batteries are among items increasingly exported to Europe.

Under the newly agreed upon China-EU trade and investment consultation mechanism, Beijing has also invited the EU's trade commissioner, Maroš Šefčovic, to visit China this autumn, ministry spokesperson He Yadong told

reporters. He said the two sides intend to boost their collaboration in areas like artificial intelligence and the transition to renewable energy.

Beijing's remarks followed a meeting between Šefčovic and Wang Wentao, China's commerce minister, on Monday in Brussels. Šefčovic said after the meeting he would be travelling to Beijing in the fall.

As the trade gap between China and the EU widens, Europe needs to "defend our industrial base and keep pushing for a level playing field globally," Šefčovic said. He has set an October deadline for meaningful results on trade rebalancing.

On Wednesday, new EU measures for

protecting the European steel industry and limiting e-commerce small parcels took effect, essentially targeting Chinese firms and imports.

Yuyuantian, a Chinese state media-linked social media account, said in a post last week that China has expressed willingness to increase its imports from the EU but the EU "needs to relax its export controls on high-tech products" from China and not weaponize trade and economic issues.

In June, leaders of the G7 nations issued a joint declaration to build up their supply chains for critical minerals, key for many high-tech and defense sectors, as they aimed at reducing reliance on China.



This image released by Netflix shows Millie Bobby Brown as Enola Holmes in a scene from 'Enola Holmes 3.' (AP)



These images released by Netflix shows Louis Partridge, from left, Millie Bobby Brown and Himesh Patel in a scene from 'Enola Holmes 3.' (AP)

Light-footed sequel a charming return for Netflix's young detective

Brown's charisma powers playful, packed 'Enola Holmes 3'

The "Enola Holmes" movies have done nothing so much as chart Millie Bobby Brown's evolution from child actor to movie star. She was 16 when the first "Enola Holmes" debuted in 2020. As "Enola Holmes 3" arrives on Netflix, she's 22.

And all three movies have been driven by Brown's natural charisma. The first two were directed by Harry Bradbeer, a veteran of "Fleabag," and they delighted in her breaks of the fourth wall. "Enola Holmes" runs on her asides, glances and eyebrow raises.

Everything else in these tales of Sherlock Holmes' younger sister can be a bit over-amped and over-stylized. But "Enola Holmes 3," like the two previous chapters, is spirited and fleet of foot, and, crucially, doesn't take itself too seriously. When Enola's mother, Eudoria (a scene-stealing Helena Bonham Carter) turns up and pronounces, "This is all a ridiculous merry mess," she pretty well nails it.

If the first two "Enola Holmes" films leaned more Y.A., with a light feminist bent, the third film is a touch more grown up, leading Brown's character closer to

rom-com territory. In the movie's opening scene, she hesitates about her imminent marriage to Lord Tewkesbury (Louis Partridge) before rushing by carriage to the wedding.

Her hesitation isn't about her affection for Tewkesbury but out of fear of losing her identity. She's worked hard to live up to the Holmes name, creating her own detective agency in London. Becoming "a lady" doesn't sound so good.

Everyone - well, mostly Tewkesburys since the Holmes are a more mysterious bunch - have gathered for a glamorous des-

ignation wedding in Malta. But Enola's wedding drama is put on hold when her brother (Henry Cavill) is kidnapped.

As a case to center the movie around, it's not the most compelling. If ever there was someone who needs no saving, it's Sherlock. Screenwriter Jack Thorne, working from the character created by author Nancy Springer, throws all manner of secrets, sunken treasure and a British colonialism subplot into a convoluted mix. Anyone who thinks most modern day takes on Arthur Conan Doyle try to paper over their lack of narrative cunning with

blander action-movie theatrics won't be dissuaded by "Enola Holmes 3."

Yet director Philip Barantini, while unable to gamely juggle the disparate plot elements, keeps things amiably brisk. The Malta setting and the movie's "merry mess" make for a fine backdrop for Brown's continuing evolution as a charming big, or small, screen presence.

"Enola Holmes 3," a Netflix release now streaming, is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association for some violence. Running time: 105 minutes. Two and a half stars out of four. (AP)

Prize night turned political

Comedy's finest gather for Maher's big moment

WASHINGTON, July 2, (AP): Comedian Bill Maher was the guest of honor at the Kennedy Center on Sunday night. But President Donald Trump's presence wasn't far away.

Just moments after Maher began to accept the prestigious Mark Twain Prize for American Humor, Matt Friend, a leading impersonator of the president, took to the stage and, in Trump's voice, joked that he would accept the award himself. Trump was a punchline for other comedians and entertainers, including Whitney Cummings, Jay Leno and Woody Harrelson.

For the most part, the barbs weren't particularly biting. Cummings, for instance, said that under Trump's influence, the Kennedy Center would host "white 'Hamilton.'" And once Friend left the stage, Maher largely steered clear of hitting the president. The commentary was nonetheless notable for unfolding in an iconic performing arts venue that Trump has gone to extraordinary lengths to bend to his favor, leaving its future in the coming years uncertain.

Accepting the award, Maher derided extremes in both political parties, rejecting what he called "group-think."

"If you hang around long enough and create something important enough, everyone hates you at some point," Maher said.

The ceremony in the Kennedy Center's Concert Hall wasn't purely political. There were plenty of jokes about Maher's fondness for marijuana, his penchant for controversy, including comments he made shortly after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks that led to the cancellation of his television show, "Politically Incorrect."

But the future of the Kennedy Center hung most prominently over the event.

Shortly after Trump returned to the White House in January 2025, the Republican president fired much of the center's leadership and installed a board largely composed of allies. It named Trump as chairman and his name was added to the building's iconic facade, prompting a legal battle that became a proxy fight over the extent of the president's power.

Trump later said the Kennedy Center would close in July for a two-year renovation. But U.S. District Judge Christopher Cooper upended those plans in May by ruling that Trump's name was illegally added to the building, ordering it removed. The judge also has blocked the closure.

Trump's name has come down from the building, in compliance with the judge's order. But the part of the building once covered with letters spelling the president's name is now shrouded in a tarp. The full closure is on hold. Lawyers for the Kennedy Center have said they are not planning for now to build out programming.

Cooper has asked for an update next month on how long the tarp will remain on the building. For now, the final event scheduled for the Kennedy Center's Concert Hall is "The Freedom Gathering: A Musical Celebration" on July 3.

The legal fight has turned into a saga that at points became fodder for jokes at the Twain gala. At one point, Harrelson joked "we fixed that" in a nod to the court order calling for Trump's name to be removed from the building.

Ahead of the ceremony, Lutnick said Trump "wants to make this building sensational."

But others were more skeptical. Minetree, said "Elle" executive producer Lauren Neustadter, "actually recreated her own version of the Harvard admission video featured in the 2001 movie that starred Reese Witherspoon, "and she hit it out of the park."

The preparation to play Elle in the series debuting on Wednesday, didn't stop there. Minetree says she watched "Legally Blonde" about "200 times at this point," studying Witherspoon's performance, but steering clear of an outright impression of the Oscar winner.

"Reese brought her essence to the character," Minetree said. "And that is something that no one could ever replicate. It would be a disservice if I tried to do that, so I tried to bring the parts of myself that I thought were reflected in Elle."

In "Legally Blonde," we met Elle as a sorority girl who applies to Harvard Law School, gets accepted, and is a star in her class.

"When I read the script it reminded me a lot of old Goldie Hawn movies, or 'Working Girl,' Witherspoon told The AP in 2001. "You think this girl is certainly not very smart because of the way she speaks and the way she looks, and then she just turns the tables on everybody and becomes smarter than everyone, and I just love that."



This image released by Prime Video shows Lexi Minetree, as Elle Woods, in a scene from 'Elle.' (AP)

Lexi Minetree channels Elle's spirit

Rewriting the rules, one pink outfit at a time

LOS ANGELES, July 2, (AP): When Lexi Minetree auditioned for the part of a teenage Elle Woods in a "Legally Blonde" prequel series for Prime Video, she went for it with the determination and creativity that the character herself used to apply to Harvard Law School in the original film.

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Like the film, "Elle" underscores that people don't have to sacrifice their true selves in order to achieve success.

How we meet Minetree's Elle is at her blow-out 16th birthday party, shortly before her parents (played by Tom Everett Scott and June Diane Raphael) break the news that they're all moving to Seattle.

The students at her new school are less than friendly and shun Elle's sunny disposition and pink attire. This is Seattle in 1995 and both grunge music and its culture are everything. Even the cheerleaders wear flannel. It takes time for the student's to warm up to their new classmate, whose ice breaker is "I like iced coffee, the month of July and when people dress kind of tennis-y even if they don't play tennis."

"Such an integral part of the 'Legally Blonde' IP is not judging a book by its cover," said Chandler Kinney, who plays Kimberly, one of Elle's schoolmates who is particularly judgy - at first.

The time seemed right to explore more of Elle's story when Witherspoon noticed the pressures young women feel to live up to unrealistic standards curated online. Studies have linked social media to mental health issues among teens.

Witherspoon "really saw what was happening to young women," said Neustadter of Witherspoon's desire to explore the character as a young woman. "She felt like this was the right moment to give Elle to the next generation."

"Elle reminds us that we should feel good about

being ourselves, feel proud of who we are and to be kind and good to others. It feels like a good reminder for this moment in time."

Telling an origin story of this character just makes sense, Raphael said. We've seen prequels about all kinds of male characters - but "we rarely get to do that with the iconic female characters that we love," she said.

Viewers will recognize a familiar face in the first season of "Elle." James Van Der Beek, who died in February after a diagnosis of bowel cancer, plays Dean Wilson, superintendent of Elle's new school and a mayoral candidate.

Raphael had the most scenes with Van Der Beek and says it was an honor to share scenes with him.

"It's so special to me," she said. "His work on the show is so lovely, and he is such a lovely person. I'd never met him before, and I was so excited to work with him. I was really blown away by his charm and his charisma and mainly his ease."

Season 2 of "Elle" wrapped filming earlier this month, and Minetree is happy viewers won't have to wait long to see a continuation to the story.

"Honestly, Season 2, it's so good," Minetree said. "Season 1 is amazing, but season 2 might be better."

There are also plans to make a third "Legally Blonde" film starring Witherspoon.

"Absolutely, we're on it," Neustadter said. "Don't you worry. We're in the kitchen we're cooking something up."



Comedian and political satirist Bill Maher waves to the stage during the 27th Annual Mark Twain Prize for American Humor Celebrating Bill Maher, Sunday, June 29, 2026, in Washington. (AP)

Modern life runs on devices and online services

Planning a summer trip? Keep your tech safety checklist in mind

NEW YORK, July 2, (AP) — Summer is time for that well-deserved vacation. To get ready for your trip, make sure to get your tech life in order alongside other tasks like packing and making sure you've got passports and tickets.

Modern life is dominated by devices and online services, and tech management is important even when we're supposed to be taking a break from the daily grind.

To help with your tech questions as you prepare to get away, here are some pointers, starting with the things you're leaving at home:

Our homes are filled with electronic devices and electrical items - video game consoles, air fryers, Wi-Fi routers - all plugged in to wall sockets, with many drawing a small amount of "standby power" as they wait to be used.

Also known as phantom or vampire power, this slight but constant trickle of electricity can add up if you've got a lot of devices. It's been estimated that standby power can account for up to 10% of your household electric bill and 1% of greenhouse gas emissions.

Should you unplug them when away? It's a frequent source of debate on social media.

It makes sense to unplug some devices, especially nonessential ones, if your house is going to be empty, said Lifu Tan, a research associate at the University of Cambridge's department of biochemistry whose research focus includes power management electronics.

"A single device on standby may only draw a small phantom load, but many chargers, screens, speakers, adapters and small appliances left plugged in across a home can create unnecessary background consumption," Tan said. "Before going away, I would unplug anything that does not need to perform a useful function, while leaving essential appliances such as fridges, freezers, security systems and monitoring devices running."

For a few devices, like a Wi-Fi router, the decision is not so black and white. Many homes now have connected devices like smart thermostats and doorbells, so keep your router plugged in if you don't want to lose access to



Tourists with an umbrella take a photo in Paris, as France is enduring a grueling heat wave with temperatures soaring above 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit). (AP)

those features.

But will you save any money? Maybe not that much.

The cost of leaving many devices on

standby is relatively low, with televisions among the cheapest, according to testing by British consumer group Which?

"The savings from unplugging most modern gadgets are often smaller than people expect," said Natalie Hitchins, head of the group's home products and services team. "The bigger long-term gains tend to come from choosing energy-efficient products in the first place and using built-in energy-saving settings."

Domestic air travel got a little bit easier after Apple unveiled a new "Digital ID" system for iPhone users to add their U.S. passport information to Apple Wallet, which can be scanned at airport readers if travelers don't have a Real ID.

Digital IDs are accepted at more than 250 U.S. airports, but be aware that they can't be used for international travel or crossing borders.

Heading to a foreign destination? Your phone will be useful for finding your way around a new city, keeping in touch with friends and family back home, and posting photos on social media.

But some apps gobble up data, which risks racking up hefty roaming fees, so check if your phone carrier has an international roaming package.

Otherwise, get an international travel eSIM for your smartphone.

Many newer iPhones and Android devices support adding a second eSIM, which has replaced physical SIM cards. That means it's easy to add one from one of the dozens of eSIM providers offering bargain roaming deals for specific global regions or individual countries.

Don't neglect device security and privacy when you're traveling.

If you're waiting at an airport departure lounge and can't get mobile phone reception, it could be tempting to use a free public Wi-Fi signal. Signing in to a random unsecured network is risky because hackers can secretly put themselves between you and the internet and view everything you do online, slip malware onto your device or even set up a rogue hot spot that looks authentic.

If you do need to do this, make sure to use a virtual private network, or VPN, which is software that creates an encrypted connection to private servers, preventing anyone from seeing your data.

Obituary



Victor Willis, of the Village People, performs during the Festival d'été de Québec in Québec City, Canada on July 11, 2019. (AP)

Leaves a legacy of hits & pop culture

Disco icon Willis dies at 74

NEW YORK, July 2, (AP) — Victor Willis, who co-founded the Village People, co-wrote the disco group's classic hits "Y.M.C.A.," "Macho Man" and "In the Navy," and delighted crowds while dressed as the band's helmeted and mustachioed police officer, has died. He was 74.

"We are profoundly sad to announce the death of Victor Willis, lead singer of Village People," the group posted on its official Facebook page. The cause was identified as "a short but aggressive illness."

Willis was a musician-actor who, among other things, had appeared on Broadway in "The Wiz" when he decided to cash in on the disco craze in 1977 by joining a group made up of beefy, macho-looking guys dressed as a biker, a construction worker, a cop, a cowboy and a Native American chief.

With producer Jacques Morali and Henri Belolo, Morali's business partner, Willis founded the six-member Village People. The idea came to them while partying at an after-hours gay nightclub in the West Village of Manhattan. The group's self-titled debut album was released in 1977.

In 1978, the group released two albums, "Macho Man" and "Cruisin'" - which featured the international hit "Y.M.C.A.," a song that peaked at No. 2 on the Billboard chart. A year later, Village People released the album "Go West," which included "In the Navy," a song that peaked at No. 3 on the chart. "Macho Man" peaked at No. 25 in 1978.

In 2020, Congress described "Y.M.C.A." - with its infectious

chorus of "It's fun to stay at the Y.M.C.A." and an accompanying dance spelling out the letters - as "an American phenomenon" and added the song to the National Recording Registry. In 2021, it was inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame.

Willis also starred in the 1980 movie "Can't Stop the Music," a widely ridiculed comedy starring the Village People and Steve Guttenberg and directed by Nancy Walker. Critic Rex Reed called it "one of the silliest movies ever made."

Village People music is the backbone of pool parties, high school dances, weddings, proms, bar mitzvahs, games and whenever an uplifting mood is needed. The songs also played at gay marches and the White House.

"We will think of Victor every time 'Y.M.C.A.' is played, like today, and all throughout this July Fourth Birthday week," President Donald Trump wrote on social media Wednesday. "My condolences to his wonderful family and group, Victor Willis will be sorely missed."

While musicians like Neil Young, John Fogerty, Phil Collins, Panic! At The Disco and the estates of Leonard Cohen, Tom Petty and Prince sent cease-and-desist letters to stop Trump from using their music, Willis said he didn't feel he was endorsing Trump when the song played.

Willis was born in Texas and grew up in the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood of San Francisco. When he moved to New York, he went to a YMCA on West 63rd Street in Manhattan, which inspired the hit song.

Swift's wedding buzz, Knicks celebration, and the WC energize the city

A summer of joy transforms New York City

NEW YORK, July 2, (AP) — It is a city bathed in the orange-and-blue afterglow of a Knicks championship, gushing with the joy of World Cup fans jamming its bars and its streets, enjoying a singular confetti-raining, fireworks-bursting, parade-rolling, smile-inducing moment that seems to make this place feel even more like the center of the universe it has always claimed to be.

So if a certain pop idol were to choose this island, at this moment, for her vows, could anywhere be more fitting?

"This city has always known how to celebrate big moments. But this summer, so many of them have collided at once," says Rabbi Yael Buechler, 40, of the Riverside section of the Bronx, who is preparing a "Swiftie Shabbat" this weekend with friendship bracelet cookies and a bedazzled challah bread she says is inspired by her "Chuppah Era." "When I look back on the summer of 2026, I won't remember just one event. I'll remember a season when New York felt united in celebration."

New York is always a city whose seduction battles its struggles, where the thrill of finding a subway car with an open seat meets the realization that it's empty because its lone passenger is hurling trash across it. The schlepping, the waiting on line, the \$9 boxes of cereal and \$32 burgers and microscopic



In this file photo, Kansas City Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce, right, and Taylor Swift appear after the Chiefs victory over the Buffalo Bills in the AFC Championship NFL football game in Kansas City, Mo.. (AP)

apartments with titanic rents, the sidewalk mounds of trash, the gutted rat you nearly step onto in the street. All of it can congeal into too much, separating New Yorkers for a season from New Yorkers for life.

But then there are those days when the streets are a storybook, with all the eclectic, utopian splendor Richard Scary could muster, where you step out of an impossibly tiny, immeasurably cute cheese shop to find an im-

promptu classical concert on a front stoop. Neighbors exchange knowing looks at whatever absurdity unfolds before them, parks unfurl like paintings, a kaleidoscope of humanity seems in sync, lights twinkle, dumplings are cheap, pizza is perfect, bagels are fresh from the oven, dreams are all fulfilled.

In the battle between the slog of metropolitan life and its many daily gifts, some felt the recent arrival of a thumb on the scale.

The city's trademark cynicism faded a bit. And in a place where celebrity passersby and visiting monarchs typically get the same collective shrug, a certain exuberance appeared. The beaming young mayor, fresh off an announcement that a swath of New York's tenants would see no rent hike, was even found jumping into a city pool in a suit and tie.

This town has known seasons of many stripes, from that autumn of grief after 9/11 to that spring of solitude and trepidation as COVID-19 first emerged. They always pass. The city moves forward. But however long this Summer of New York stretches and the city pulsates with positivity, locals are relishing it.

"It's easy to feel alone in the big city, but we all feel a bit closer right now," says Dallas Short, a 38-year-old publicist who lives in the Two Bridges neighborhood of Manhattan. "Anything seems possible and attainable right now."

More than anything, the Knicks' fantastic run fueled today's New York temperament, with its underdogs-coming-out-swinging, constantly-rallying-from-behind, Jalen Brunson methodically delivering, OG Anunoby tipping in an impossible shot, and millions of onlookers unsure of what they just witnessed as they slid into a warm bath of delight.

Detroit Motown Museum expands legacy

DETROIT, July 2, (AP) — The Motown Museum in Detroit has been resonating with a different signature sound - the rumble of trucks, the buzz of drills and the pounding of metal - as one of the most significant sites in American musical history undergoes a \$75 million donor-driven face-lift ahead of its 2027 grand reopening.

The expansion of the Hitsville USA campus - a house where chart-toppers by Stevie Wonder, Marvin Gaye and Diana Ross and The Supremes were written, rehearsed and recorded - aims not just to honor Detroit's musical legacy, but also to increase the city's footprint as an education and tourism destination. The museum should enjoy the same level of promotion as other landmarks in the United States, former Motown music arranger Paul Riser Sr., comparing the seminal label's potential to a tourist mecca in New York City.

"The city can really benefit by further marketing this whole concept here," Riser said. "We need to see

more pageantry of Motown. Every time I think Motown, I think Times Square."

Cities across the U.S. have for years promoted musical heritage as a selling point to attract business conventions, exhibitions and tourists. The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame attracts 500,000 people each year to Cleveland, while Nashville's music history and attractions tied to country, gospel and other genres bring in about 17 million people annually.

The Motown Museum says it logs more than 100,000 visitors each year and is expecting at least 325,000 visitors per year after the expansion opens.

"Motown for many, many decades has been just a magical source of pride and inspiration," said Robin Terry, Motown Museum chair and chief executive. "Visitors come to the little house that's Hitsville USA - what used to be the headquarters of Motown - just to touch the magical space where so many of their musical icons ... got their start."



Former Motown music arranger Paul Riser Sr. poses outside Hitsville U.S.A. in Detroit, June 11, 2026. (AP)

Motown was founded in 1959 by Berry Gordy in one of the three homes on West Grand Boulevard just north of downtown Detroit, that currently house the Motown Museum.

Just a year later, The Marvellettes' "Please Mr. Postman" reached number one on the Billboard Hot 100. Hits like "I Heard it Through the Grapevine," "Baby Love," "My Girl" and "The Tracks of My Tears" soon sent the Mo-

town sound around the globe.

Gordy moved the label to Los Angeles in 1972 and sold it to MCA Records in 1988. His late sister, Esther Gordy Edwards, founded the museum in 1985.

The 40,000 square foot (3,716 square meter) expansion is being constructed around the original Hitsville USA house and will feature a theater, a recording studio, retail space and a cafe, as well as immersive exhibits and a searchable back catalog of music and interviews.

"The expansion is so iconic and unique for Detroit," said Riser, who joined Motown at age 17 and won a Grammy in 1973 for best R&B instrumental performance on "The Temptations' "Papa Was a Rollin' Stone."

"I would hope to see the legacies and the historical content preserved," Riser said. "It's OK to having buildings ... but if we don't keep the legacies of these people who built this masterpiece, keep them in mind, we've lost something."

The Conversation

Two centuries after his birth, Stephen Foster still reflects America's contradictions

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

By Christopher Lynch
University of Pittsburgh

The 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence happens to also coincide with the 200th birthday of composer Stephen Collins Foster.

A songwriter who achieved remarkable success in the late 1840s and 1850s with "Oh! Susanna," "My Old Kentucky Home" and many others, Foster was born near Pittsburgh on July 4, 1826.

Though he died destitute in 1864, his memory was revived in the 1890s, when he started variously being referred to as "America's troubadour," "America's folk-song composer" and the "father of American music."

Today, Foster is the only songwriter of his generation with wide name recognition, which owes as much to his music as to his biography.

Perhaps the primary force behind reviving his memory was his brother Morrison Foster, who published a biography about him in 1896. Drawing on the defining feature of his brother's

songs - their lack of specificity - as well as his brother's birthday, Morrison positioned Foster as the "founding father" of a vaguely construed brand of racial and cultural progress.

A key to understanding Foster's initial popularity lies in his lyrics, many of which he deliberately crafted to be open to multiple interpretations.

In the plaintive 1854 ballad "Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair," Jeanie can be understood as dead or simply absent. Similarly, Foster's "Hard Times Come Again No More," which he also published in 1854, never specifies what kind of hard times the song refers to. It could be the plight of the working class, disease, war, economic panic or anything else.

Foster and his family were northern Democrats. Like most Democrats at the time, they were aligned with the South, opposed to abolition, and believed that states, rather than the federal government, should decide whether to prohibit chattel slavery.

But for most of his career, when he wrote songs that touched on these issues, he chose not to publish the overtly partisan ones, instead selecting those with open-ended messages.

In one of his biggest hits, "Old Folks at Home," published in 1851, a formerly enslaved man fondly recol-

lects scenes from his childhood and sings that he is "still longing for the old plantation."

Foster wrote the song in part for minstrels who wore blackface on stage and dehumanized Black people in their performances. In the decade before the Civil War, proslavery propaganda was rife with false depictions of emancipated people who regretted having been freed. In this context, many proslavery Americans saw the song's protagonist as longing not just for bygone days but for a return to slavery.

At the same time, some abolitionists saw "Old Folks" as a humanizing portrait of a Black man in an age when racists routinely denied the humanity of Black people. They also appreciated how it depicted the horrors of family separation.

Foster most clearly articulated his personal views in his unpublished campaign songs. For example, he wrote "The White House Chair" for performances under his direction in Pittsburgh in support of the presidential run of James Buchanan, his sister's brother-in-law. In the song, Foster overtly defends the South's place in the union.

Using subtle racial metaphors, he also juxtaposes his Democratic party with the Republicans, whom he claims

were influenced by nonvoting- and nonoffice-holding people of color:

In contrast to these partisan and overtly racist lyrics, the ambiguity in his commercial songs was not an accident but a strategy. They were published in the North and South, performed in racist minstrel shows and polite parlors, and sung by abolitionists and defenders of enslavement alike.

By sidestepping the partisan fray in his commercial songs, Foster was able to achieve widespread popularity. His best songs transcended social divisions by enabling listeners to hear whatever specific political or nonpolitical messages they wanted.

In the years before his death, however, popular taste passed him by. During the fevered sectionalism of the Civil War era, his once-sage ambiguity began to appear wishy-washy. His songs promoting national unity failed to catch on.

He died almost penniless in 1864. For decades, his music and his name faded into obscurity.

Foster's brother Morrison began working to revive the songwriter's memory about 30 years after his death. Morrison was uniquely positioned to do this. Not only had the brothers been very close, but he had also be-

come intimately familiar with Foster's commercial music, helping him learn how to register compositions for copyright and negotiate publishing contracts. Morrison had even helped finalize the words to "Old Folks at Home."

By the 1890s, Morrison was also an elder Pittsburgh Democrat with national connections. He worked closely with his friend Thomas Keenan Jr., editor of the Pittsburgh Press, to raise funds for a statue of his brother in their native city. Throughout the fundraising effort, Keenan helped place dozens of articles about Foster in newspapers across the country.

In 1896, Pittsburgh Democrats tapped Morrison as their candidate for his congressional district. Running as a Democrat in a Republican area, Morrison aimed to center his campaign on the theme of unity. He did this, in part, by harnessing the ambiguity of his brother's songs. It's no coincidence that his biography of his brother was published just days before the announcement of his candidacy.

Reflecting on the significance of the day his brother was born - July 4, 1826 - Morrison wrote in the biography that it was "a memorable day for several reasons." Not only had independence "reached its half-century," but it was also the exact date "Thomas Jefferson

and John Adams died."

With such clever rhetoric - and Keenan's amplification of it - Morrison convinced generations of Americans that his brother was the "founding father" of a new cultural chapter in American life, one built on the political gains of the previous generation.

In Morrison's formulation, his brother "founded a new era in melody and ballad" in which "the grotesque and clownish aspect of (minstrel) songs was softened, and ridicule began to merge into sympathy." According to Morrison, Stephen "opened the way to the hearts of the people, which led to actual interest in the black man."

Such passages portrayed his brother - and by association, Morrison - as sympathetic toward Black people. Supporters of racial equality appreciated that attitude. But even white supremacists often argued that they sympathized with Black people, while also maintaining that they were superior to them.

Just as Stephen needed a variety of Americans to buy his music, Morrison needed a variety of Americans to cast their votes for him. The vague and broadly appealing concept of "sympathy toward Black people" maximized their popularity among large swaths of 1890s America. (AP)

CDC urges people to prevent mosquito bites as West Nile virus season hits a strong, early start

WASHINGTON, July 2, (Agencies): Health officials are encouraging people to use bug spray and mosquito-control efforts as West Nile virus season is off to its earliest and worst start in over two decades.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Wednesday that it had confirmed at least 48 cases - 38 of them severe - as of June 30. Since 2004, the average number of cases reported to the CDC by the end of June is around 10. Federal health officials said 23 states have reported finding West Nile virus, the most in 10 years.

"These findings serve as an important reminder that mosquito season is well underway," said Dr. Erin Staples, a CDC expert on insect-borne diseases. "As families gather outdoors to celebrate Independence Day, we encourage everyone to enjoy their holiday while taking simple steps to protect themselves and their loved ones from mosquito bites."

Most of the cases have been in Arizona. Of the state's 32 total cases, 29 are in Maricopa County. The county, which includes Phoenix, has also recorded four deaths from the virus so far this year.

Officials there asked people to wear bug spray containing DEET, patch up broken window screens and get rid of standing water, where mosquitoes often breed.

"Even an overturned bottle cap can hold enough water for mosquitoes to breed," said Melissa Kretschmer, a county health department official. "It's important that we remove these breeding sources that can form after rain or watering plants."

The CDC also recommends people wear long, loose-fitting clothes when outside to make it harder for mosquitoes to bite them. Experts also suggest people avoid being outdoors around dusk and dawn, when the mosquitoes that

carry the virus are most active.

West Nile virus was first reported in the United States in 1999 in New York, and then gradually spread across the country. It peaked in 2003, when nearly 10,000 cases were reported.

Scientists say many people - perhaps tens of thousands each year - are infected but don't know it because they have no symptoms, or only mild ones such as headaches, body aches, joint pain, vomiting, diarrhea and rashes.

In severe cases, damage to the central nervous system causes potentially deadly inflammation of the brain or spinal cord. Adults older than 60 and people with underlying medical conditions or weakened immune systems face the highest risk of such complications.

In the last decade, health officials have fielded reports of 2,000 cases annually on average, including 1,200 life-threatening neurological illnesses and about 100 deaths.



Marburg: Uganda's Ministry of Health on Wednesday said there are no confirmed cases of Marburg virus disease, following a public health alert issued by the U.S. Embassy warning of a suspected outbreak in the western part of the country.

Speaking to Xinhua by telephone, ministry spokesperson Emmanuel Aineboona said health authorities were not aware of any confirmed Marburg infections.

Last week, the US Embassy in Uganda issued a public health alert, saying it had received reports of a suspected Marburg virus disease outbreak in western Uganda.



A municipal biologist examines a mosquito in Salt Lake City, Aug. 26, 2019. (AP)

Food databases often inaccurate

Nutrition apps can help build healthy habits but for some users gaming features carry risks

WASHINGTON, July 2, (AP): Green means go, red means stop. Trophies or confetti come with good performance, and people who fall behind get nudged to do better.

Those brightly colored engagement tactics long ago jumped from smartphone games to everything from online shopping to sports betting and classrooms. So it should come as no surprise that many nutrition-tracking apps like MyFitnessPal and Noom also use gaming features to keep users coming back.

But as nutrition apps proliferate, some researchers are raising alarms that gamification features may do more harm than good for some people.

Isabella Anderberg, a psychologist researching digital dieting behavior at Flinders University in Adelaide, Australia, said calorie tracking can reinforce behaviors associated with body dysmorphia and disordered eating.

"We do know that not everyone's going to experience harm from using the apps, but there are certainly factors that might increase risk," Anderberg said. "Approach with caution." Anderberg said there is certainly

a place for the apps. Health professionals she interviewed during her research reported that apps can be especially helpful as meal-planning tools for people managing chronic conditions such as heart disease and diabetes. And physical activity apps remind people to move their bodies.

Many users report enjoying them, finding tactics like streak notifications to be motivating.

Angela Drury, an English professor in Woodstock, Georgia, began using MyFitnessPal more than 10 years ago to track protein, fat, carbohydrate and calorie intake when she started CrossFit. She has since cycled through several other apps, including Weight Watchers, Lose It and now Nourish, which is paid for by her insurance and includes blood work and weekly meetings with a dietitian.

Drury said the apps have helped her stay on track with fitness goals and have sometimes steered her away from high-calorie foods when she uploaded photos of meals she was considering eating. She feels a little boost when she gets a badge for continuing a streak for logging



meals, but a notification that says she hasn't entered lunch has the opposite effect.

"Then it felt like it was scolding me," she said.

The way most apps work, users enter height, weight, age and other information and then set a goal. The app says how many calories or macronutrients are needed to reach that

goal, using gamelike elements such as badges, streaks, rewards, points and notifications to encourage user engagement.

Many nutrition tracking apps are free but offer premium versions that users must pay for.

The Centers for Disease Control and others say that how many calories you need depends on factors

including your age, sex and level of physical activity. The CDC provides a tool to calculate how many calories an individual needs.

Critics warn that food databases are often inaccurate, with estimated portion sizes and calorie counts that vary widely.

Courtney Simpson, a behavioral psychologist and director of eating disorders at the Evidence-Based Treatment Centers of Seattle, said some apps encourage people to set calorie goals that are far too low for any adult. That's not only unhealthy but can set people up for failure.

The gaming features keep people coming back to unrealistic goals, creating shame that may contribute to binge eating or other behaviors people are trying to change, Simpson said.

"It's not that gamification itself is bad. It's about what it is promoting," she said. "Is that actually going to be beneficial?"

MyFitnessPal and Noom did not respond to several requests for comment.

Anderberg said people who al-

ready believe that thinner is better are more likely to misuse the apps. Calorie and macronutrient tracking can then become obsessive, which creates more negative feelings when daily goals aren't met.

She urged users to be skeptical of what the apps tell them to do and instead rely on their own intuition. If you feel the need to rest, nurse an injury or treat yourself to something delicious, do so.

"We are sort of losing that ability to read our body cues," she said.

Simpson noted that focusing on weight as a measure of overall health, besides being inaccurate, makes it more likely to lose and regain weight. Such cycling is linked to worse health outcomes over time.

"If you really want lasting change, then you need to be doing behaviors that are feasible and sustainable for you over time," she said.

Drury could see how the apps could be harmful for people predisposed to disordered eating, but she said the most important consideration for her is to set realistic goals and listen to your body.



Solar panels operate at the Dalad Banner Photovoltaic Top Runner Base in northern China's Inner Mongolia province on June 12. (AP)

China's Inner Mongolia bets on solar and wind but coal stays close

ORDOS, China, July 2, (AP): Seen from the air, the arrays of more than 3 million solar panels shimmering in the desert sun at the Dalad Banner solar farm are arranged in the shape of a galloping horse - a symbol of Inner Mongolia's nomadic heritage. A short drive away stands one of the region's many coal-fired power plants, one which sends electricity 700 kilometers (435 miles) to China's capital Beijing.

The proximity of the projects embodies what experts describe as an "all-of-the-above" energy approach for Inner Mongolia, which has become China's largest base of both renewable energy and coal production. Its energy transition mirrors China as a whole: Wind and solar capacity are expanding quickly while coal remains indispensable.

China has been installing wind and solar power faster than any other country. Yet coal-fired plants still supplied around 51% of China's electricity in 2025, according to the latest data from the National Energy Administration.

"While China as a whole is transitioning away from coal, Inner Mongolia is most certainly the most paradoxical part of the story. In Inner Mongolia's case, more renewables often means more coal capacity as well," said David Fishman, an energy consultant at The Lantau Group, who has visited Inner Mongolia's coal plants and the solar farms.

Inner Mongolia wants wind and solar power to increasingly replace electricity traditionally supplied by coal, while also meeting the country's growing demand for power. But officials said both renewables and coal will continue to rise for now, with coal needed to supplement when weather causes interruptions in wind or solar power.

"Many people see there is a conflict or a competitive relationship between traditional energy and renewable energy," said Gu Qing, an official of Inner Mongolia's energy administration, standing at the edge of the Dalad Banner solar farm.

"As more renewable energy capacity is added, coal-fired power will also continue to grow, although the pace will gradually slow," Gu said.

The Dalad Banner solar farm, which Associated Press re-

porters visited on a recent government-organized tour, currently generates around 2 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity annually. It is part of a broader clean energy program started in 2018 in northern China's Kubuqi Desert.

Inner Mongolia is one of the most crucial nodes in China's "West-to-East Power Transmission Project," which transmits electricity from the country's resource-rich northwest to its industrialized east. In 2025, 40% of Inner Mongolia's electricity generation, about 350 billion kilowatt-hours, was sent to other parts of China. The amount is enough to power 120 million households for a year.

Solar and wind installed capacity has more than doubled in the past five years in Inner Mongolia, but coal still dominates electricity generation. Coal-fired plants produced around 590 billion kilowatt-hours in 2025 in Inner Mongolia, while solar and wind generated about 277 billion kilowatt-hours combined.

Coal power capacity in Inner Mongolia has continued to expand over the past five years.

"Because wind and solar are intermittent...we cannot do without the support of coal-fired power," said Huang Zhiqiang, vice governor of Inner Mongolia, during a recent news briefing.

"What is changing is that coal power units are turning from supply-guarantee units to serving as a supporting and regulating role," he said.

Inner Mongolia mined around 1.2 billion tons of coal in recent years, accounting for one quarter of China's total coal production. Over 60% was transported to other provinces. Ordos, the city administering the Dalad Banner, is also one of the country's five largest coal-producing centers designated by the central government.

Officials said renewable energy is beginning to replace existing demand conventionally provided by coal. The transition requires that coal plants ramp down when renewable output is abundant and ramp up when it is not. Huang said Inner Mongolia refurbished all coal power units so they can ramp down to operate at 15% of their capacity so less coal is burned.

Chinese researchers uncover earlier origin of human blood cells

TIANJIN, July 2, (Xinhua): Chinese researchers have uncovered the cellular origin, differentiation pathways and species-specific features of human primitive hematopoiesis, filling a theoretical gap in understanding the developmental rules that operate just before the onset of human gastrulation.

The findings, by researchers from the Institute of Hematology & Blood Diseases Hospital at the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences (IHCAMS), Beijing Institute of Technology, and the Chinese PLA General Hospital, were recently published online in the journal Nature.

Gastrulation is a critical phase in human embryonic development and one of the most mysterious and fascinating chapters in life sciences. During this stage, the embryo transforms from a simple two-layered structure into a complex three-layered architecture, establishing its body axis while undergoing multilineage differentiation and the formation of organ primordia.

It was previously believed that blood cells emerged only after gastrulation. However, by studying a rare early-stage human embryo sample, the team discovered that human hematopoiesis begins much earlier than previously thought. Even before the formal initiation of gastrulation, the hematopoietic "factory" in the embryonic yolk sac is already active, producing primitive erythrocytes, primitive megakaryocytes, and myeloid progenitor cells.

The researchers also constructed the first high-resolution spatial transcriptomic atlas of the pre-gastrulation stage. Their work revealed that the earliest human blood cells do not originate from the epiblast, as traditionally

assumed, but instead derive from the extra-embryonic mesoderm, which itself arises from the hypoblast. This finding settles a long-standing debate over the origin of early human hematopoietic cells.

Furthermore, the embryonic yolk sac is not a functionally uniform hematopoietic site. It contains two distinct "workshops" with different locations and functions: one primarily generates myeloid progenitor cells, while the other predominantly produces primitive erythrocytes and primitive megakaryocytes.

The study not only reshapes the understanding of early human hematopoiesis but also provides physiological benchmarks and fresh conceptual insights for research areas such as de novo regeneration of blood cells in vitro and the study of early human developmental abnormalities, said Lan Yu, a researcher at the IHCAMS.



Cancer: Researchers have developed a new technology that enables cells to perform simple computations and make decisions, which could pave the way for smarter treatments for cancer and other diseases, the university said Wednesday in a statement.

In a study published in Nature Communications, the researchers described a new system that enables cells to process biological signals simultaneously. Instead of reacting to just one sign of disease, the cells can check for a specific combination of signals before taking action.

Until now, building such genetic programs has been difficult because they required many complicated steps, making them less reliable. The new method uses fewer genetic building blocks, making it more efficient and easier to expand, according to the statement.

Flavored noodles linked to more than 100 salmonella infections in Europe - officials

GENEVA, July 2, (AP): European food safety and health officials have reported an outbreak of salmonella infections linked to flavored-noodle products involving 106 confirmed cases - mostly among children and young adults - in 14 countries.

The cases were first reported in November and at least 49 people needed hospital treatment, food safety agency EFSA and the European Center for Disease Prevention and Control said in separate statements on Tuesday and Wednesday.

"Flavored noodle products are the most likely source of an ongoing multi-country outbreak of infections, with evidence linking the cases to items from the same brand," the agencies said.

They did not specify the vendor, but said cases linked to the salmonella Stanley strain were connected to a producer in Ukraine.

Reeva Foods, in a statement last week, cited an "alleged detection" of salmonella Stanley in a specific batch of its instant noodles distributed in the Baltic market and produced by Euro Food Service, a Ukrainian manufacturer of Reeva products.

The company said it had launched an internal probe and withdrew the



This 2009 electron microscope image provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows a large group of Gram-negative Salmonella typhimurium bacteria that had been isolated from a pure culture. (AP)

batches. It said it has taken steps including independent laboratory testing, regulatory audits, environmental monitoring and additional preventive measures as a result.

"The safety of our consumers is our top priority," Reeva said. It said it was cooperating with authorities.

The European authorities said cases have been reported in Austria,

Britain, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland and Sweden.

They cited microbiological evidence that showed an outbreak strain detected in Germany and Lithuania in chicken-flavored and hot-chicken-flavored noodle products. They said further investigation was needed.

Kuwaiti earns international role

Al-Anzi joins Montenegro U18 & U20 handball coaching staff

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 2: Kuwaiti coach Walid Al-Anzi has earned a new international role after being selected by the Montenegro Handball Federation to join the technical staff of its youth national teams, as part of preparations for upcoming European Championship qualifiers leading to the World Cup.

Al-Anzi will work as fitness and conditioning coach with the Montenegro Under-20 team during the European Championship, and will also take on the same role with the Under-18 team in their European Championship qualifiers for the Youth World Cup.

In addition to his physical preparation duties, Al-Anzi will contribute performance reports and provide real-time statistical and technical analysis using advanced analytical systems, supporting the coaching staff in tactical decision-making and enhancing match performance.

The appointment reflects growing confidence in Kuwaiti coaching expertise at the international level, particularly in the areas of physical conditioning and performance analysis within European handball.

Al-Anzi described his selection as an important milestone in his coaching career and a valuable opportunity to gain experience at the European level.



Kuwaiti coach Walid Al-Anzi at the airport prior to his departure for Montenegro.

He expressed pride in the trust placed in him by the Montenegro Handball Federation, stressing his commitment to applying his expertise in physical preparation to help achieve strong results in the upcoming European competitions.

He added that the experience will expose him to advanced coaching methodologies and high-level continental tournaments, which will further enhance his professional development.

Volleyball Federation approves formation of new committees

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 2: Ahead of the 2026-2027 season, the Kuwait Volleyball Federation Board has approved the formation of its working committees during its latest meeting, as part of preparations for the upcoming sports calendar. The new season will begin in September with the completion of remaining events from the 2025-2026 season, followed by the launch of new competitions.

The Competitions Committee will be chaired by Aref Al-Sobhi, with Dr. Jaber Al-Sharif as vice president, Abdullah Al-Najdi as rapporteur, and members Abdulhadi Mubarak Al-Mari and Shaima Ramadan.

The Referees Committee will be headed by international referee Ali Al-Ustadh, with Adel Bonashi as vice president, Dr. Ahmed Al-Eneizan as rapporteur, and members Ahmed Al-Saleh, Hussein Al-Tamimi, and Dr. Latifa Al-Khader.

The federation also approved the Beach Volleyball Committee, chaired by Dr. Abdullah Taleb, with Issa Al-Saleem as vice president, Abdulaziz Al-Holi as rapporteur, and Al-Anoud Al-Moanes as a member.

This step is part of the federation's efforts to distribute responsibilities,



Kuwait handball coaches and staff discuss strategy with players during a break inside the sports hall.

enhance institutional work, and ensure the effective organization of competitions while improving technical and refereeing standards ahead of a busy domestic season.

Meanwhile, the national volleyball team is continuing its prepara-

tions in Cairo, where it is playing its third friendly match against Egypt "B" as part of its external training camp ahead of the West Asian Men's Championship, scheduled to be held in Oman from July 11 to 22.

Team administrator Abdullah Al-

Najdi said the team played a strong match against Egypt "B" and benefited from the competitive experience. He added that the squad also held a joint training session that included a practice match as part of its ongoing preparations.

Fritz cruises past Patrick

WTA finals shift from Saudi to US

LONDON, July 2, (AP): A well-dressed Taylor Fritz impressed again at Wimbledon on Thursday, beating compatriot Patrick Kypson 6-2, 6-2, 7-5 to reach the third round as Princess Kate visited the All England Club.

Fritz's white blazer and NBA-style warmup pants for his walk-on at No. 2 Court drew attention but his play wasn't bad either - he fired 19 aces and avoided getting pushed into a fourth set.

The sixth-seeded American, a semifinalist last year, emphatically pumped his right fist when he broke Kypson to convert his fourth match point.

"I'm really happy that I was able to just get the break there, avoid going to a tiebreaker, avoid going to a fourth, just get it done in three," Fritz said in an on-court interview.

Fritz also won his opener in straight sets and had worn a similar outfit with tear-away warmup pants.

"I'm a bit more low-key so it's definitely something different for me walking out with the whole fit," the 28-year-old Californian said.

"The first round I actually kind of struggled getting the thing off. I saw a video of Frances (Tiafoe) the other day just going full rip-off," Fritz added. "I tried to copy him today."

Fifth-seeded Alex de Minaur also advanced in straight sets, beating Adrian Mannarino 6-3, 6-2, 6-2.

Meanwhile, the WTA Finals, the elite season-ending event in women's tennis, is moving from Saudi



Taylor Fritz of the United States plays a forehand against Dusan Lajovic of Serbia in their first round men's singles match at the Wimbledon Tennis Championships in London. (AP)

Arabia to Indian Wells, California, this year.

The 2026 finals, which the top eight singles players and doubles teams qualify for, are scheduled for Nov. 8-15.

The women's professional tennis tour and Saudi Arabia had signed a three-year deal in 2024 to stage the event in Riyadh. The agreement provided a big increase in prize money.

"Following two impactful years of the WTA Finals in Riyadh, the

WTA requested to move the 2026 WTA Finals to a new host location," the women's tour said. "The Saudi Tennis Federation accepted WTA's proposal, and the two organizations mutually agreed on the conclusion of the hosting arrangement and remain proud of the achievements realized through their partnership."

There were concerns about going back to Saudi Arabia due to military conflicts in the Middle East.

"The saga of the WTA Finals contin-

ues," fourth-ranked Jessica Pegula said at Wimbledon. "It's like we can't catch a break, and I don't necessarily think it's our fault. There just tends to be a lot of world conflicts that seem to happen and get in the way."

"It's unfortunate we couldn't quite end in Riyadh on a good note," she continued. "But, you know, things happen. So I think we just kind of have to go along with that decision. Hopefully I can be there in November."

Powell joins Bulls in latest blockbuster move

Celtics trade Brown to 76ers for George

PHILADELPHIA, July 2, (AP): Jaylen Brown's time in Boston has come to a surprising end, with the Celtics deciding to trade him to one of their most storied rivals.

Brown - the 2024 NBA Finals MVP, a five-time All-Star and the league's fourth-leading scorer this past season - is getting traded by the Celtics to the Philadelphia 76ers, a person with knowledge of the deal's terms said Wednesday.

Boston is getting Paul George, along with a slew of draft capital that could become two first-round picks and two second-round picks, said the person who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the trade does not yet have the required league approvals.

ESPN first reported the trade agreement, and the terms were later confirmed by The Boston Globe.

Add this move to the list of blockbuster moves across the NBA so far this offseason. LeBron James is leaving the Los Angeles Lakers as a free agent, and now this trade joins a long list of moves that involve All-Star-caliber players - like Giannis Antetokounmpo going from Milwaukee to Miami, Kawhi Leonard and Brandon Ingram headlining a swap between the Toronto Raptors and Los Angeles Clippers, and Ja Morant getting traded to Portland by Memphis.



In this file photo, Boston Celtics' Jaylen Brown plays during Game 6 in a first-round NBA basketball playoff series in Philadelphia. (AP)

Now, this. "Welcome to Philly, JB!" Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro posted on social media. "Sixers get way better and, as a bonus, the Celtics get worse!"

It's a move that breaks up what has been one of the league's most successful 1-2 punches in Brown and Jayson Tatum, who helped carry the Celtics to the 2024 NBA title.

Norman Powell to the list of this past season's All-Stars who are changing addresses this summer in NBA free agency.

Powell has agreed to a two-year deal that could be worth up to \$45 million with the Chicago Bulls, a person with knowledge of the talks said Wednesday. Powell also had received some interest from the Detroit Pistons, said the person, who spoke to The Associ-

ated Press on condition of anonymity because the contract cannot be finalized until July 6 at the earliest.

ESPN and Chicago Sports Network were among those who first reported the agreement between Powell and the Bulls, who will hold a team option for 2027-28. Powell spent this past season in Miami, where he became an All-Star for the first time and averaged 21.7 points in 58 games with the Heat.

Miami will have a very different look this coming season, after the acquisition of Giannis Antetokounmpo in a trade that sent Tyler Herro and others to Milwaukee. Powell will be joining his fifth team, after past stints with Portland, the Los Angeles Clippers, Toronto and the Heat.

Powell is among six - and there likely will be more - All-Star selections from 2026 alone to be on the move this offseason.

He joins Antetokounmpo (Milwaukee to Miami), Kawhi Leonard and Brandon Ingram (the headliners of a trade that brings Leonard back to Toronto and sends Ingram to the Los Angeles Clippers), LeBron James (who is leaving the Los Angeles Lakers for a yet-to-be-decided team), and Jaylen Brown (traded by Boston to Philadelphia for Paul George and draft picks).

Of the 62 players with at least

one All-Star selection in the last five years, just over half - 33 of them - have changed teams at least once in that span.

Nikola Vucevic has signed a deal to return to the Orlando Magic, agreeing on a one-year deal for just under \$4 million, a person with knowledge of those talks confirmed. Vucevic is second all-time on the Magic list in rebounds, third in points and fourth in games played. The 35-year-old center has been in the league for 15 seasons, nine of those with Orlando - and now joins a young core led by Paolo Banchero and Franz Wagner.

Orlando needed another post option after losing Moritz Wagner in free agency to Brooklyn - and Vucevic, who still has a home in central Florida, was the natural fit.

Moritz Wagner, the brother of Franz Wagner, is signing a two-year deal with the Nets.

Vucevic averaged 15.1 points this past season for Chicago and Boston. Also, the Magic re-signed forward Jonathan Isaac. He was waived last week in a procedural move, only to be brought back as expected for what will be his 10th season with the club (including two he missed with injury).

Mitchell Robinson just won a title with New York, and now the center will chase another in Boston.

Targets rising digital talent

Two Esports tournaments launched

KUWAIT CITY, July 2: The Kuwait Esports Club, chaired by Abdullah Al-Ali, has announced the launch of the Kuwait Game Development Championship (KNGD) in collaboration with Kuwait University and organized by NextGen, as part of efforts to support young talent in game development, design, and digital content creation.

Al-Ali said the tournament aims to provide a platform for local creators to turn their ideas and stories into fully developed games, noting that the gaming industry has become a growing sector with strong technical, creative, and economic potential.

He added that the competition will offer cash prizes of up to KD 3,000 for the top winners, designed to encourage innovation, competition, and the development of game projects inspired by local concepts with growth potential.

The club also announced the Kuwait University EA FC 25 Championship, which will feature a total prize pool of KD 600 distributed



Abdullah Al-Ali, Chairman of the Kuwait Esports Club.

among the top three winners, with support from V-THRU.

Al-Ali stressed that these initiatives reflect the club's strategy to strengthen the presence of esports in Kuwait and build a competitive and creative ecosystem that combines programming, gaming, and digital skills, while helping discover and empower young talent in the rapidly expanding sector.

Fernandes joins Tottenham

Anderson set for Man City in record-breaking transfer

MANCHESTER, England, July 2. (Agencies): England international Elliot Anderson is heading to Manchester City after a deal for the midfielder was reached with Nottingham Forest, the clubs announced Thursday.

The deal for the 23-year-old Anderson is worth a reported 116 million pounds (\$155 million), which would make it a club record for City.

The signing will be completed in the coming weeks after he has finished playing at the World Cup. City and Forest said in separate statements.

City said Anderson, who has established himself as a regular for England over the past year, underwent his medical examination in Kansas City and "we look forward to welcoming him to Manchester in due course."

City hired Enzo Maresca as manager this week as the successor to Pep Guardiola.

Forest will make a significant profit on Anderson after signing him from Newcastle for a reported 35 million pounds in 2024.

Tottenham signed Portugal midfielder Mateus Fernandes from West Ham for a reported club-record fee of 85 million pounds (\$113 million) on Thursday.

The 21-year-old Fernandes, who wasn't picked to play at the World Cup, was part of the West Ham team relegated on the final day of last season thanks to a last-day win by Tottenham.

Now he has moved across London to Spurs, who are on a recruitment drive this summer under recently-hired manager Roberto De Zerbi.

Center backs Jan Paul van Hecke and Marco Senesi have already joined, along with former Liverpool left back Andy Robertson, while sections of the British media have also reported that Tottenham has reached an agreement to sign Italy midfielder Sandro Tonali from Newcastle.

Fernandes, who was only at West Ham for one season after joining from Southampton, said De Zerbi

"was a key part of why I have decided to join."

"When we spoke, it was very special," said Fernandes, whose one Portugal appearance was as a late substitute in a 2-0 win over the United States in April. "We look at football in the same way - going onto the pitch as a strong team, with fight and energy, to try and win every game."

Tottenham sporting director Johan Lange described Fernandes as "a player with outstanding technical ability, intelligence and maturity."

"And even at a young age," Lange said, "(he) has shown he can perform consistently in demanding, high-pressure environments."

Tottenham is looking to rebound from the humiliation of a second straight 17th-place finish in the 20-team Premier League, having been in the top division since the late 1970s.

The team will not be playing in Europe next season.

FC Barcelona President Joan Laporta said on Wednesday that his club has made an offer for Atletico Madrid's Argentine international striker Julian Alvarez.

Laporta made the announcement after being sworn back in as president following his victory in the club's March election.

"Deco (Barcelona's Director of Sport) made an offer for a certain amount of money," Laporta said, adding that "we know the player has wanted to come for some time, since he was at Manchester City."

He added that although Atletico had "said in principle, they weren't planning to sell him," the offer for Alvarez is "firm and we'll keep it on the table until we consider otherwise suitable."



Elliot Anderson



'Football is sometimes cruel'

Ivorian media express disappointment and pride after Elephants' elimination

ABIDJAN, July 2, (Xinhua): A day after Cote d'Ivoire's elimination from the 2026 FIFA World Cup following a 2-1 defeat to Norway in the round of 32, Ivorian media outlets on Wednesday expressed a mix of disappointment, frustration, regret and pride.

On Tuesday evening in Arlington, Texas, United States, Norway opened the scoring in the 39th minute before Cote d'Ivoire equalized in the 74th minute through Amad Diallo. Erling Haaland then scored the decisive goal in the 86th minute to secure Norway's victory.

"The dream drowned of an entire nation," headlined the daily *Le Jour*, describing the result as an "unfinished symphony" and highlighting the disappointment among Ivorians after a painful defeat given the performance of the national team.

"The Elephants' dream shattered," also wrote *L'Essor*, which focused on the numerous missed chances by Ivorian attackers. According to the newspaper, Cote d'Ivoire could have qualified if it had been more clinical in converting its dominance on the pitch.

Sports daily *Super Sport* noted that "dominating does not mean winning," pointing to Cote d'Ivoire's lack of attacking efficiency compared with Norway's effectiveness, particularly in the decisive move finished by Erling Haaland, who had been relatively quiet during the match.

La Regionale highlighted other factors behind the Elephants' elimination, referring to a "dream shattered by two fatal mistakes." "Football is sometimes cruel. It rarely rewards the team that plays the better football, but almost always the one that shows realism and concentration at deci-



Ivory Coast's Amad Diallo (15) celebrates after scoring his side's opening goal during the World Cup round of 32 soccer match between Ivory Coast and Norway in Arlington, Texas, near Dallas. (AP)

sive moments," the newspaper said.

The daily also criticized some tactical choices, arguing that substitutions made while Cote d'Ivoire was controlling the match had

disrupted the team's balance. According to the newspaper, the departure of several attacking players reduced the Elephants' offensive impact and allowed Norway to regain confidence before eventually winning.

Despite the disappointment, Ivorian media recalled that Cote d'Ivoire reached the knockout stage of a World Cup for the first time, having failed to do so in its previous appearances.

The elimination came after a campaign marked by a 1-0 victory over Ecuador and a narrow 2-1 defeat to Germany, results that allowed the team to advance to the round of 32.

"Thank you for these moments," wrote *L'Intelligent d'Abidjan*, saying the elimination should not overshadow the progress made by the Ivorian team.

Under the headline "Bravo!", the daily *Liberte* highlighted the youth and potential of the Ivorian players, saying that results could continue to improve through stability, patience and long-term work.

"The Elephants fell with their heads held high," wrote *Le Rassemblement*, praising the players' efforts, courage, determination and commitment despite the elimination.

Le Nouveau Reveil described the result as a "missed opportunity," while praising players who, according to the newspaper, proudly represented Cote d'Ivoire's national colors.

Overall, Ivorian newspapers called for lessons to be drawn from this World Cup journey and urged the country to build on the experience gained for future sporting challenges.

Fan

Zone



Fans across the stands celebrate and respond emotionally as World Cup matches deliver dramatic moments. (AP)

Kane delivers another defining WCup performance for England

Mpasi nearly inspires upset as Congo pushes Three Lions

ATLANTA, July 2, (AP): Harry Kane delivered for England once again, not that any of his teammates doubted he would.

Even though England trailed for the opening 75 minutes of its Round of 32 match against Congo on Wednesday, Kane remained confident. While big names like Lionel Messi and Kylian Mbappé have garnered most of the headlines, Kane has quietly been playing at the top of his game.

That was clear on Wednesday, as the 6-foot-2 forward came up big when England needed it most with a pair of late goals to solidify a 2-1 win and send England to the Round of 16 to face Mexico in Mexico City.

Kane said the key to playing at the highest level is bringing consistency to everyday training.

"That's why you do all the work from behind the scenes, you know, the things that you guys don't see when we're training, when we're at home doing recovery, doing ice baths, treatment, all the little details that make you be consistently at the highest level for as long as possible," Kane said. "Guys like Messi, they're the pinnacle of that."

Congo gave England all it could handle, but substitute Anthony Gordon, who assisted both goals, never had a doubt.

"I never thought they were going to beat us. I knew we would win because I trust everyone on our pitch, and I know how hard we're working and training," Gordon said after the game. "We play the way we train, and we play hard... I just tried to be direct, tried to make (Congo) more tired, and give the ball to 'H.'"

Kane's goals were his fourth and fifth of the day.

Gordon lifted a cross from the left, which Kane headed past Congo goalkeeper Lionel Mpasi for England's first goal of the day. Just over 10 minutes later, Gordon found Kane a second time at the edge of the box, where he sent his shot into the top corner of the net.

Gordon started celebrating as soon as it left Kane's foot.



Congo goalkeeper Lionel Mpasi (1) saves from England's Jude Bellingham (10) during the World Cup round of 32 soccer match between England and Congo in Atlanta. (AP)

"As soon as he hit it, it was golden. I was already celebrating," Gordon said. "Anyone can score a good goal, anyone at this level can put the ball in the top corner. It's the consistency that he does it every day training, every game, is phenomenal. He plays at such a high level."

Sixteen years into his professional career, Kane is beaming with confidence as England looks ahead to a challenging match in the Round of 16.

"I'm feeling as good as I've ever felt, and ultimately, when I get onto the pitch, I know all the work I've done behind the scenes will make me ready for big moments, he said. "That's exactly what happened out there today."

Lionel Mpasi blocked shots with his right hand, his left hand, even took one a bit below the belt.

At one point, England midfielder Jude Bellingham gave him a hug of respect with Mpasi sprawled on the World Cup

turf, the ball safely in his grasp.

In the end, though, the Congo goalkeeper couldn't stop Harry Kane.

The England striker scored two late goals, the winner in the 86th minute, to prevent the upstart team from Africa from pulling off one of the greatest shocks in World Cup history.

England is moving on to the round of 16 after a 2-1 victory Wednesday, while Mpasi will have to console himself with one of the great defensive performances in a tournament filled with stellar play from the keepers.

"I offered my body to science," he said through a translator, managing a wry smile. "But we knew Harry Kane is a super striker and that we had to center on him. Too bad that twice we paid a little less attention to him."

Indeed, the Congolese couldn't hold off one of the world's most dangerous goalkeepers.

Still, it didn't diminish what Mpasi

and his teammates nearly pulled off.

"It is my job to help the team and make saves," Mpasi said in French. "Happily, I was able to make some during the game. I would have loved to save the two that turned into goals."

Already, this was a historic tournament for a country whose only other World Cup appearance came in 1974, when the nation was known as Zaire. That was a quick three-and-out, the squad failing to even score a goal in its defeats - the most embarrassing of them a 9-0 blowout by Yugoslavia.

There was nothing to be ashamed about at its second World Cup.

Much of the credit should go to the 31-year-old Mpasi, who plays club soccer in his native France but represents the country of his parent's birth internationally, a nation best known in sports circles for Muhammad Ali's "Rumble in the Jungle" upset of George Foreman in 1974.

A string of managerial exits

World Cup takes toll on managers

NEW YORK, July 2, (Xinhua): For players, a World Cup defeat often marks the end of a dream. For head coaches, it can mean the end of a job.

Even with the tournament still in progress, a string of team managers have already resigned or been dismissed after failing to meet expectations, underlining the unforgiving nature of football's biggest stage.

The Netherlands' Ronald Koeman, Ecuador's Sebastian Beccacece, Uruguay's Marcelo Bielsa and South Korea's Hong Myung-bo are the latest to step down following the departures of Scotland's Steve Clarke, the Czech Republic's Miroslav Koubek and Tunisia's Sabri Lamouchi.

The decisions had differing circumstances. Some managers arrived under pressure while others had earned widespread praise for navigating qualification, only to see those achievements quickly forgotten.

Bielsa accepted full responsibility after two-time champion Uruguay exited in the group stage without a victory.



Netherlands head coach Ronald Koeman reacts during the World Cup round of 32 soccer match between the Netherlands and Morocco in Guadalupe, near Monterrey, Mexico. (AP)

"For me, this farewell is very painful because of the hopes I had when I took on this project, [but] I cannot

justify the position we finished in," the Argentine said.

Beccacece struck a similar tone after Ecuador's round-of-32 defeat to co-host Mexico.

"My contract ends as soon as the World Cup is over, and since we didn't achieve what we promised, the best thing is to step aside," he said.

The 45-year-old guided Ecuador to second place in South American qualifying and a 19-match unbeaten run before the tournament.

Hong also accepted responsibility after South Korea crashed out in the group stage.

"I failed to deliver the results the public expected," the former defender said. "The responsibility lies entirely with me." Koeman's departure followed the Netherlands' penalty shootout loss to Morocco, the team's earliest World Cup exit.

Scotland's Clarke resigned despite signing a new four-year contract only a month before the tournament. During his seven years in charge, he steered the team to its first World Cup since 1998 and twice qualified for the European Championship.

4 people die in Mexico City during celebrations after World Cup win

MEXICO CITY, July 2, (AP): Mexican health authorities said Wednesday that four people died during massive celebrations in downtown Mexico City after the national team's victory over Ecuador secured a place in the World Cup Round of 16.

Two women and one man were found unconscious on streets near the iconic Angel of Independence monument, where thousands had gathered Tuesday night to celebrate, Mexico City's Health Secretariat said on the social platform X. The victims, who authorities said died of asphyxiation, were 48, 44 and 19 years old. Authorities did not provide additional details about the circumstances of the deaths.

Later Wednesday, Mexico City Health Secretary Nadine Gasman, told a news conference that another man, about 30, was treated by emergency personnel after suffering an epileptic seizure, convulsions, and gastrointestinal bleeding. He died shortly afterward at a hospital of cardiorespiratory arrest.



Belgium's Yuri Tielemans (8) celebrates after scoring during the World Cup round of 32 soccer match between Belgium and Senegal in Seattle. (AP)

Sports

Tillman sends US fairytale run into Round of 16

Bosnia-Herzegovina journey ends

SANTA CLARA, Calif., July 2, (AP): Malik Tillman stepped up for a free kick with a bloody sock and a new right boot after being stepped on by an opponent as the United States scrambled to protect a one-goal lead, down a man in a World Cup knockout round.

Tillman delivered the goal of his life, and one of the biggest ever by a U.S. man at the World Cup, sending this American soccer fairytale into the round of 16.

"I've been dreaming about this game," Tillman said after scoring the final goal in a 2-0 win over Bosnia-Herzegovina on Wednesday night. "I've been dreaming about maybe taking a free kick and scoring a free kick. I've practiced this in training and I think today I showed what I can



United States' Antonee Robinson (5) battles for a header with Bosnia's Edin Dzeko (11) and Nikola Katic (18) during the World Cup round of 32 soccer match between the United States and Bosnia in Santa Clara, Calif., near San Francisco. (AP)

do."

The round of 32 win set up a Monday matchup in Seattle against Belgium as the U.S. hopes to make a deep run on home soil. The Red Devils beat the Americans 2-1 in extra time at 2014's round of 16.

"It's about to keep dreaming," said U.S. coach Mauricio Pochettino, who belted out "Take Me Home, Country Roads" as it played over the public-address system after 10 minutes of stoppage time. "In football all is possible if you believe."

Folarin Balogun put the Americans ahead in the 45th minute with his third goal of the World Cup, then was sent off in the 64th for a red card.

Star Christian Pulisic had a goal disallowed for offside in the 78th, and Tillman helped seal the win when he curled in a free kick that got over the wall and on target from just outside the box in the 82nd. The ball went off diving goalkeeper Nikola Vasilj's right hand and in despite the pain in Tillman's bloody right foot from being stepped on.

Balogun dominated the first half and scored in the 45th minute. The Americans had to scramble after his foul for awkwardly stepping on Tarik Muharemovic and preserved the shut-out despite playing short-handed for more than 30 minutes.

"It felt so comfortable, even down to 10 men," captain Tim Ream said. "That's the way you want to feel. You don't want to have that panic set in. You want have that calm and focus and we had that."

Pochettino became the first U.S. coach with three World Cup victories, and the Americans gained just their second World Cup knockout round win. They made it to the semifinals in the first tournament in 1930 by winning their group and won a round of 16 matchup against Mexico in 2002.

Balogun leads the U.S. with three goals, but will miss the Belgium match because of an automatic suspension for the red card, assessed by Brazilian referee Raphael Claus after a video review. Balogun stepped on an ankle of Tarik Muharemovic,



Bosnia's Armin Gigovic (8) battles with United States' Tyler Adams (4) during the World Cup round of 32 soccer match between the United States and Bosnia in Santa Clara, Calif., near San Francisco. (AP)

apparently not intentionally.

"Obviously the ref made a decision that he made, but I think it's questionable," midfielder Weston McKennie said. "I think there's been many other plays like that throughout the tournament on other players that a card wasn't given at all. It's disappointing."

Balogun matched Landon Donovan in 2010 for the second-most goals by an American in a World Cup, behind only Bert Patenaude's four in 1930.

"Of course he's a great player," Tillman said. "We have great players who can replace him, and give the

best they can, and hopefully score some nice goals as well."

The win snapped a 10-game losing streak for the U.S. against European teams dating to a tie against England in the 2022 World Cup. The Americans had lost seven games and tied six against European nations in World Cup play since beating Portugal in their 2002 opener.

The U.S. had started fast in the group stage matches by scoring in the first 15 minutes of all three games but it was Bosnia that had the better chances early. Matt Freese needed to make two saves early to stop Ermedin

Demirovic following a deceptive goal kick that caught the U.S. defense napping and then again on the ensuing corner kick that Kerim Alajbegovic almost scored on directly.

Balogun took over from there. He had an apparent 31st-minute goal called off for offside and was knocked down in the box on two other opportunities before finally delivering. Ream intercepted a Bosnia goal kick at midfield and passed to Tyler Adams, who flicked to Tillman. The ball, with the help of an errant Bosnian clearance attempt and a deflection, found Balogun in the box. Balogun

slid the left-footed shot past Vasilj. Balogun punctuated the goal with his version of the LeBron James Silencer celebration, drawing a positive reaction from King James himself.

Balogun nearly scored again in first-half stoppage time but his shot from in close deflected off the crossbar and out of play.

Bosnia's second World Cup trip was a success with a draw against Canada in the opener and a win over Qatar that helped the team advance to the knockout round for the first time. But it ended in disappointment.

Egypt aims to keep World Cup dream alive against Australia



Mohammed Salah leads the Egyptian players upon arrival in the state of Texas.

DALLAS, July 2: Egypt will look to continue its World Cup journey and make history when it faces Australia at 9:00 p.m. today at the Dallas Stadium in Texas in the Round of 16.

The Pharaohs enter the match with strong ambitions of reaching the Round of 16 for the first time in their history, a milestone no previous Egyptian generation has achieved in past editions of the tournament.

However, Egypt will be hit by key defensive absences, with left-back Ahmed Abu El-Fotoh and defender Mohamed Abdel Monem ruled out through injury, while Mohamed Lashien is suspended due to accumulated yellow cards. These setbacks are expected to force head coach Hossam Hassan to adjust his defensive lineup.

Hossam Hassan said after the match against Iran that his squad has the qual-

ity to compensate for the missing players, expressing confidence in the team's ability to execute the game plan in crucial fixtures. He is also expected to make several changes to the starting XI.

Australia, coached by Tony Popovic, relies on physical strength and defensive discipline, along with key players such as Nestory Frankunda and Harry Souttar, who play in the English Premier League, giving the side a balance between solidity and attacking threat.

The two sides have met twice previously in friendly matches, with the first ending in a goalless draw in 1987, and the second seeing Egypt claim a 3-0 victory in 2010.

The winner will advance to face Argentina, the world champion, or Cape Verde in the Round of 16.

Tielemans converts late penalty in extra time

Belgium stages stunning comeback to beat Senegal

SEATTLE, July 2, (AP): Belgium overturned a two-goal deficit and scored from the penalty spot deep into extra time to beat Senegal 3-2 on Wednesday in the biggest comeback of the World Cup so far.

Senegal held a 2-0 lead with just 5 minutes of regulation time remaining but late goals by Romelu Lukaku and Yuri Tielemans pushed the round of 32 match into extra time.

Tielemans completed Belgium's comeback by converting a penalty in the 125th minute of the game - the latest goal in World Cup history.

"Being part of this comeback is a proud moment because I scored the last two goals to give the team the win today. I'm very proud of that to be able to help the team to score goals and bring us over the line," Tielemans said.

He was fouled with only seconds to go and with a penalty shootout looming, and the referee awarded the spot kick after a video review, ignoring protests from the Senegal team.

"I do not want to interpret the decision. We all have different interpretations when it comes to awarding a penalty," Senegal coach Pape Thiaw said. "I'd rather not comment, not interpreting the referee's decision."

The win for Belgium marked the second time in the last 11 World Cups that a team trailed by two or more goals in the knockout round and advanced. Belgium also did so in a 3-2 victory over Japan in the round of 16 at the 2018 tournament.

"Senegal deserved to win," Belgium coach Rudi Garcia said.



Belgium players celebrate after winning the World Cup round of 32 soccer match between Belgium and Senegal in Seattle. (AP)

"But, I am happy it was us."

Many of the key players from the Belgium team that finished in third place in Russia in 2018 were instrumental to Wednesday's victory. Lukaku, who leads his nation in goals scored, came off the bench to get Belgium back into the match by scoring in the 86th minute, setting the scene for Tielemans to force extra time.

"It is a cruel loss, as we were good in the game," Thiaw said. "We had

the advantage. We were leading 2-0. However a football match is not an 85-minute one. Belgium came back, and we were not able to deal with that... We must congratulate Belgium as they progress."

Belgium is back in the round of 16 for the third time in four tournaments. The team reached the quarter-finals in 2014 and the semifinals in 2018 but failed to get out of the group stage four years ago in Qatar.

The Belgians will next face the

United States on Monday in Seattle.

Senegal long appeared to be heading toward the round of 16. Habib Diarra scored in the first half and Ismaïla Sarr made it 2-0 at the start of the second. It was his fourth goal of the World Cup, and one of the most beautiful of the tournament. Sarr made a perfect first touch off his chest on a long ball from Moussa Niakhaté and then sent his shot past Belgium goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois.

Hincapié red card highlights strict enforcement of new rule

MEXICO CITY, July 2, (AP): World Cup players were warned before the tournament about a new rule that would result in an immediate red card for anyone covering their mouth when verbally confronting another player.

Officials are actively enforcing that rule change.

The latest incident came on Tuesday night when Ecuador defender Piero Hincapié was sent off in second-half stoppage time of his team's 2-0 loss to Mexico in the round of 32. The red card didn't impact the outcome of the match, which ended moments later.

Hincapié's red card came after an exchange with Mexico forward Santi Giménez.

FIFA established the new rule to prevent players

from hiding abusive, discriminatory or offensive language while on the field.

Nicknamed the "Prestiani Law," rules for red cards to players at the World Cup were added because of a controversy in international soccer this year.

FIFA president Gianni Infantino pushed for changes after Benfica winger Gianluca Prestianni tried to hide verbal insults toward Real Madrid forward Vinícius Júnior in a Champions League match. Soccer's rule-making panel, the International Football Association Board, agreed that players can be penalized with a red card if they cover their mouths when verbally confronting another player.

The rule is not mandatory within the Laws of the

Game but gives tournament organizers like FIFA the option to use it at their discretion.

The rule change was unanimously approved by IFAB, which includes officials from FIFA and the four British soccer federations, at a special meeting ahead of the FIFA Congress. FIFA's proposal followed Vinícius, backed by Real Madrid teammate Kylian Mbappé, accusing Prestianni of making a racially charged insult while raising his jersey to cover his mouth during the game in February.

No. Paraguay midfielder Miguel Almirón was the first player to be punished under the new rule when he was sent off in a group match against Turkey for covering his mouth during a confrontation with defender Mert Mulder.

World Cup Fixtures

Egypt vs Australia 21:00

Saturday

Argentina vs Cape Verde 01:00

Ghana vs Colombia 04:30

Morocco vs Canada 20:00