



Kuwait furious on Iran, proxies strikes

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ALL HANDS ON DECK AS KUWAIT TAKES BACK CONTROL

Jleeb sweep sets stage for 'wider' crackdown



First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah supervises the intensive security campaign in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh, which targeted residency violators, illegal structures and violations of state property regulations.



Ministry of Interior photos

Zero-tolerance drive targets violators, illegal businesses

By Munif Naif and Mohammed Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 15: An intensive security campaign was conducted in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh on Wednesday, under the field supervision of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, with the participation

of an unprecedented number of entities, particularly the military units.

The campaign is aimed at apprehending violators and removing encroachments on state properties, with direct follow up by Undersecretary of the ministry Major General Abdulwahab Al-Wuhaib, and in the presence of acting Assistant Undersecretary for Public Security Affairs Major General Hamad Ahmed Al-Munaifi.

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Raffle rigging mastermind gets 15 years, KD 3mn fine

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

KUWAIT CITY, July 15: The Court of Appeals, presided over by Judge Abdullah Al-Sanea, with Judges Saud Al-Mutairi and Basam Al-Ghunaim as members, issued its final ruling in the manipulation of commercial raffled draws and money laundering case, increasing the sentence imposed on the Ministry of Commerce and

Industry employee from 10 years to 15 years and fined him KD3 million for bribery, money laundering and forgery.
The court sentenced an Egyptian woman, her husband and 15 other defendants to 10 years in prison with a fine of KD3 million each. Four defendants were sentenced to four years in prison for bribery and forgery.

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Newswatch

NEW DELHI: The India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), came into force on Wednesday.

Indian Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal said that "today marks a defining milestone in India-UK ties. Under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement and the Agreement on Social Security, have come into force, delivering zero-duty market access for nearly 99% of India's exports, covering almost 100 percent of trade value."

The Indian minister said that the agreement creates unprecedented opportunities for textiles, leather, gems and jewellery, engineering goods, marine products, chemicals, processed foods, MSMEs, farmers and manufacturers. (AP)



The Ministry of Higher Education praises KFH's role in supporting 'Wajhni' campaign for scholarship students



10 Warba Bank honors Kuwait's top high school graduates

Day by Day

A WOMAN asked a wise man, "What is love, sir?"
He replied, "In the past, love meant making sacrifices for someone, but today, love means entertaining someone."

Another woman asked him, "Who are friends?"
The wise man said, "In the past, a friend was someone who stood by you in times of need. Today, you long for a friend in every hardship."

She then asked, "Who are relatives?"
He replied, "In the past, a relative was someone who came to you when you needed them. Today, a relative often means envy and rudeness."

Such is life. One day it is for you, another day it is against you.
... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar



Ministry of Defense photo

Defense Minister Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah checks on injured Kuwait Navy personnel receiving treatment after the recent attack.

Conflict escalates as US resumes blockade

Iranian assault on Kuwait injures 4 Navy personnel

By Munif Naif
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, June 15: The General Staff of the Kuwait Army announced that the country's air defense systems engaged a large-scale drone attack following what it described as hostile Iranian aggression in the early hours of Wednesday.

Explosions heard across several parts of Kuwait were the result of successful mid-air interceptions by air defense units, the General Staff said in a statement, urging the public to follow all safety instructions issued by the relevant authorities.

The Ministry of Defense later confirmed that Kuwaiti Air Defense forces intercepted and destroyed a barrage of hostile aerial targets, including one ballistic missile, five cruise missiles and 33 armed drones launched against the country on Tuesday

evening.
Ministry spokesman Colonel Saud Al-Atwan said the attack targeted several vital and civilian facilities across Kuwait. While the incoming threats were successfully neutralized, falling shrapnel caused material damage in a number of residential and industrial areas.

He also revealed that a Kuwaiti Navy vessel came under attack during the assault, leaving four service members injured. The wounded sailors were evacuated to specialized medical facilities and are reported to be in stable condition.

Colonel Al-Atwan stressed that the Kuwait Armed Forces remain on the highest state of alert and operational readiness to defend the country's borders, protect its sovereignty and ensure the safety of citizens and residents.

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Kuwait's 50°C heat fuels power conservation drive

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/ Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 15: The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy announced that two sub-feeders in two main substations went out of service due to a technical malfunction, resulting in power outage in Hawally (G) and Al-Siddiq (D).

Emergency teams rushed to the site to carry out repair works and restored power.

Meanwhile, the ministry sent notifications through the Sahel application, urging the public to conserve electricity and water, indicating that "the country is experiencing high temperatures and increased electricity demand."

It stressed that conserving electricity will stabilize the electrical system and ensure the continuity of service for everyone.

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Kuwait moves to rein in 'overloaded' trucks

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 15: The Ministry of Public Works is currently preparing to float an inclusive tender for the study and design of truck weighing stations, their routes and associated facilities.

This project aims to lessen the damage to the road network caused by exceeding weight limits and violating designated lanes, resulting in subsidence, potholes and other damages that cost the state millions of Kuwaiti dinars annually.

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HORIZON TALK

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Muhammad Ali, the illiterate man who transformed Egypt into a modern power

He arrived in Egypt in 1801 and found it in a state of chaos and conflict among three competing powers

He skillfully maneuvered among all sides, allying with the Mamluks and then turning against them

He gained the support of the people and the scholars of Al-Azhar, presenting himself as their advocate

He orchestrated the Citadel Massacre of 1811, one of the most infamous and bloody events in Egyptian history

He invited around 500 Mamluk emirs to a celebration, then ordered the gates to be closed and had them killed

He eliminated the Mamluks and got rid of his final major rivals to secure his control over Egypt

He expanded his power beyond Egypt and conquered Sudan

He first assisted the Ottomans in Greece and later turned against them

He sent his son, Ibrahim Pasha, to defeat the Ottomans

An imposter came to a city and began selling unusual goods

With each passing day, his business grew more popular, which surprised a wise man visiting the city

The wise man was puzzled about how to convince these people that they had fallen victim to deception

He called out, "O people, I have bought all of Hell!"

The people left the imposter, reassured by the wise man's receipt that they would not enter Hell.



Kuwait furious on Iran, proxies strikes

Cabinet nods Kuwait Airways shareholding shift

KUWAIT CITY, July 15, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti Cabinet, chaired by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, approved on Tuesday a draft decree-law transforming the Kuwait Airways Corporation into a fully state-owned shareholding company.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sharida Al-Maousherji announced following the meeting that the Cabinet has referred the draft decree to His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, for final endorsement.

During the session, Minister of Finance Dr. Yaqoub Al-Rifai presented the sovereign credit rating report for the first half of 2026.

The report confirmed Kuwait's high investment-grade ratings, with Standard & Poor's at AA-, Fitch at AA-, and Moody's at A1, all maintained with a stable outlook.

This stable financial position is bolstered by key structural reforms, notably the implementation of Law No. (60) of 2025 concerning financing and liquidity, which has significantly enhanced government financing flexibility and public debt instruments.

On the diplomatic front, the Cabinet was briefed on recent high-level talks between His Highness the Amir and UAE President Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed Al Nahyan during his recent state visit to Kuwait.

The Cabinet also took note of an Amiri order declaring a four-day official mourning period, during which national flags will be lowered to half-mast, following the passing of the late Father Amir of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani.



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah chairs the Cabinet meeting.

bin Khalifa Al Thani.

Additionally, Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah briefed the Cabinet on Kuwait's participation in the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative and NATO ministerial meetings held alongside the NATO Summit in Ankara.

Shifting to security matters, the Cabinet strongly condemned the hostile aggression launched by Iran and its affiliated militias in Iraq targeting Kuwaiti border posts and an offshore drilling platform owned by the Kuwait

Oil Company, which resulted in casualties and material losses.

The executive body declared these continuous operations a flagrant violation of Kuwait's sovereignty and a direct challenge to UN Security Council Resolution 2817 (2026).

The Cabinet affirmed Kuwait's inherent right to take all necessary measures to protect its borders and ensure the safety of its citizens and residents under international law.

Furthermore, the Cabinet expressed its strong denunciation of the ongoing attacks targeting the Consulate General of Kuwait in Basra, Iraq.

It emphasized the urgent need for the Iraqi government to fulfill its obligations under the 1963 Vienna Convention on Consular Relations and take decisive action to hold the perpetrators accountable.

Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah briefed the Cabinet on military readiness.

He assured ministers that the Kuwait Armed Forces maintain maximum preparedness to counter any threats to the country's territorial integrity.

The Cabinet also expressed solid support for regional allies, condemning Iranian-linked attacks targeting Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, and Jordan.

These included missile strikes against Saudi territory and hostile actions against Saudi and Emirati tankers in the Strait of Hormuz, which the Cabinet warned pose a direct threat to global energy supplies and maritime navigation.

In local developments, the Cabinet reviewed and approved a series of "Green Urban Development Initiatives" submitted by public oil firms, private enterprises, and civic groups.

The Cabinet commended Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Humoud Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and his committee for their efforts in spearheading these nationwide greening and beautification projects.

The session concluded with the review and approval of various ministerial committee reports and minutes, with several outstanding files referred to specialized committees for further regulatory vetting and recommendations.



Kuwait's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Hamad Al-Mashaan and other dignitaries visit Qatar embassy to express condolences on the demise of Qatar's Father Amir.



Photos by Samer Shiqer

Kuwait Deputy FM, other dignitaries offer condolences on demise of Qatar's Father Amir

KUWAIT CITY, July 15, (KUNA): Kuwait's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Hamad Al-Mashaan offered his condolences Wednesday over the

passing of Qatar's Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani.

In a written message at the Embassy of Qatar in Ku-

wait, Ambassador Al-Mashaan expressed deepest condolences and sincere sympathy to Qatar, its leadership, government, and people, and to the family of the deceased,

praying to Allah the Almighty to bestow vast mercy and forgiveness upon the deceased and solace upon his family.



Egyptian Consul in Kuwait Sherif Badir visits the Egyptian man injured in the Iranian attack.

Consul visits Egyptian injured in Iranian attack on oil facility

KUWAIT CITY, July 15: Egyptian Consul in Kuwait Sherif Badir visited the Egyptian who was injured in the Iranian attack on an oil facility where he is employed, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

During the visit, Badir had a meeting with the medical team in charge of the treatment of the injured, inquired about his health condition and wished him a speedy recovery.

He also revealed that Egyptian Ambas-

sador to Kuwait Mohamed Gaber Abu El-Wafa called the injured Egyptian worker to check his condition, and that he is in constant communication with the consulate to monitor his health.

On behalf of the embassy and the consulate, Badir expressed gratitude to the relevant authorities for taking care of the injured Egyptian citizen. He also commended the efficiency and speed of the response teams that dealt with the aftermath of the attack.



KUNA photo
Head of the Kuwaiti delegation participating in the 17th Arab conference of media security agencies' heads Col. Abdullah Al-Hajri and accompanying team.

Kuwait: Media security key to enhancing public security

TUNIS, July 15, (KUNA): Head of the Kuwaiti delegation participating in the 17th Arab conference of media security agencies' heads Col. Abdullah Al-Hajri confirmed on Wednesday that the Kuwaiti Interior Ministry stresses importance of media security, considering it key in enhancing community security.

Al-Hajri emphasized to KUNA during the meeting held by the Arab Interior Ministers Council that digital platforms and modern

technologies are tools that help convey media security messages, especially in enhancing communication with the youth and different segments of society.

He pointed out the importance of strengthening Arab media security cooperation, sharing expertise, and making use of modern technologies to develop awareness messages and tackle challenges, which helps build security and safety among Arab communities.

KD 24mln project hot on anvil

'Fish farms to reduce rates by more than fifty percent'

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 15: A recent government report revealed that the "Economic Production of Multiple Marine Fish (Fish, Crustaceans, Molluscs, and Coral)" project has reached 67 percent completion.

The report explained that the project is progressing according to a set timeline and is expected to be fully completed by 2030 at a total cost of KD 24 million.

The project aims to stabilize prices for the benefit of consumers, combat monopolies, and provide a secure strategic reserve to ensure the stability of the local market, especially during geopolitical and global crises.

The project also aims to develop Kuwait's aquaculture industry, ensure a sustainable supply of fresh seafood, and prevent unjustified price increases.

The project will help ease the growing pressure on natural fish stocks by narrowing the gap between supply and demand. It will also create job opportunities for young people and support the growth of related industries, including fish canning, marketing, transportation, and marine feed production.

In this regard, economic expert Salem Al-Kandari said the aquaculture project is expected to help stabilize fish prices in the local market.

He noted that locally caught fish, such as zubaidi and hamour, are among the most ex-

pensive here compared to other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

Al-Kandari predicted that the availability of integrated fish farms covering all species would lead to a price reduction of up to 50 percent, as has happened in Saudi Arabia and Oman.

He stressed that the recent shortage of local fish has contributed to the rise of imported fish, such as Iranian fish, which many consumers prefer due to the similarity of its fishing environment to that of Kuwait.

Al-Kandari emphasized that the actual implementation of this large-scale project will restore balance in favor of high-quality national products.

He affirmed that the project will provide strong support for Kuwait's industrial sector, particularly because many vital and economic industries are directly linked to the fish sector, including processing industries such as canning, packaging, and the production of utensils and related paper products.

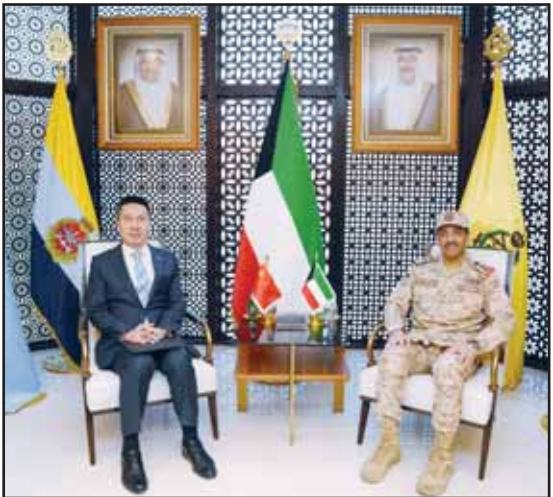
Al-Kandari highlighted the project's significant role in supporting the pharmaceutical and cosmetics industries, including the production of nutritional supplements such as Omega-3 oil extracted from fish liver and tissues, as well as collagen extracted from fish scales, which is used in moisturizing skin care products.

He pointed out that increased fish production will positively impact the retail and food sectors, leading to the opening of more seafood restaurants and the expansion of retail markets across Kuwait.

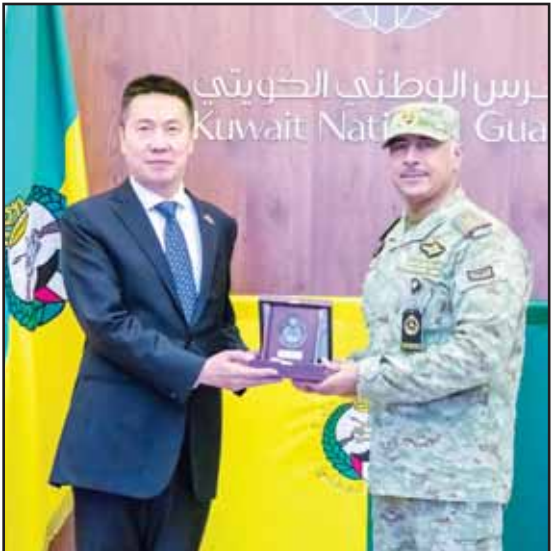
Al-Kandari stressed that this growth will create a supportive environment for young Kuwaitis to establish their own small and medium-sized enterprises related to the sector.



Al-Kandari



KUNA photos
Chief of the General Staff Lieutenant General Khaled Al-Shra'ian receives the Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait Yang Xin.



Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Undersecretary Lieutenant General Hamad Al-Barjas exchanges mementos with the Chinese ambassador.

Kuwait, China to cement bilateral, military bonds

KUWAIT CITY, July 15, (KUNA): Chief of the General Staff Lieutenant General Khaled Al-Shariaan met Chinese Ambassador Yang Xin on Wednesday to discuss bilateral relations, military cooperation and ways to further strengthen joint collaboration between the two countries.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Chief of the General Staff Major General Pilot Sabah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Land Force Commander Brigadier General Hamad Al-Suwaidi and the Chinese military attache to Kuwait.

Meanwhile, Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Undersecretary Lieutenant General Hamad Al-Barjas met Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait Yang Xin on Wednesday to discuss a number of issues of mutual interest between the two sides.

The meeting was attended by Assistant Undersecretary for Financial Affairs and Resource Management Major General Riyadh Tawari and Acting Commander of Military and Security Affairs Brigadier General Abdullah Abdullah, the National Guard said in a statement.

Call for unified pact template for construction, demolition

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 15 : Municipal Council member Abdullatif Al-Duaij on Wednesday submitted a proposal to issue a standard contract template approved by the Kuwait Municipality for the construction and demolition projects in private residential areas.

The proposal aims to guarantee the rights of both parties and prevent disputes arising from mediocre contracts.

In his proposal, Al-Duaij explained that construction and demolition projects in private residential areas recently witnessed disputes between owners and contractors due to flaws in contract clauses. He stated that a unified template will protect the rights of both parties through the inclusion of essential clauses that cannot be waived, in addition to ensuring the legality of the approved contract template and it will be the binding contract in case of disputes. He affirmed that the proposed contract template provides a unified legal framework that eases the resolution of cases submitted to the Municipality and the judicial authorities.

The proposed contract template consists of mandatory clauses covering the scope of work, schedule, payments, guarantees, delays and penalties, dispute resolution mechanism, insurance and subcontractors, while allowing the addition of clauses agreed by both parties without violating the core clauses.

Coordination is underway with the Ministry of Justice and the relevant technical authorities to review the proposed model from a legal and technical standpoint before its adoption.

HORIZON TALK

Ahmed Al-Jarallah



Muhammad Ali, the illiterate man who transformed Egypt into a modern power

He was an Albanian officer in the Ottoman army who was sent to Egypt to expel the French. He did not speak Arabic; in fact, he was illiterate until the age of 45. He possessed remarkable cunning and limitless ambition. He eliminated his rivals and compelled the Ottoman Sultan to appoint him governor of Egypt. He came close to bringing down the Ottoman Empire. He was Muhammad Ali Pasha.

When Muhammad Ali arrived in Egypt in 1801, he found the country in a state of chaos and conflict among three competing powers - the Ottomans, the Mamluks, and the scholars of Al-Azhar, who represented the people.

He skillfully maneuvered among all sides. He initially allied himself with the Mamluks against the Ottoman governor, then turned against them when they imposed heavy taxes on the population. He later sided with the people and the scholars, presenting himself as their advocate.

In 1805, the scholars of Al-Azhar convened and decided to remove the Ottoman governor and appoint Muhammad Ali in his place. It was one of the rare moments when the people asserted their will.

However, the Mamluks remained a threat to Muhammad Ali. To eliminate them, he orchestrated one of the most infamous and bloody events in Egyptian history - the Citadel Massacre of 1811. He invited around 500 Mamluk emirs to a celebration at the Citadel. Once they arrived, he ordered the gates to be closed, and gunfire erupted from the walls.

Through this massacre, Muhammad Ali eliminated the Mamluks and removed his final major rivals.

So how did this man transform Egypt from an Ottoman province into a major power?

After consolidating his rule, Muhammad Ali launched his ambitious project of confiscating land and converting it into state property. He monopolized trade and agriculture, built a modern army based on the European model, established a navy, and sent educational missions to Europe.

Muhammad Ali's goal was to create a strong state independent of Ottoman control. With his newly built army, he expanded beyond Egypt and conquered Sudan. He initially assisted the Ottomans in Greece, but later sent his son Ibrahim Pasha to fight them and conquer the Levant. His forces advanced to the outskirts of the Ottoman capital, bringing the empire close to collapse.

But the European powers, led by Britain, intervened

- He arrived in Egypt in 1801 and found it in a state of chaos and conflict among three competing powers
- He skillfully maneuvered among all sides, allying with the Mamluks and then turning against them
- He gained the support of the people and the scholars of Al-Azhar, presenting himself as their advocate
- He orchestrated the Citadel Massacre of 1811, one of the most infamous and bloody events in Egyptian history
- He invited around 500 Mamluk emirs to a celebration, then ordered the gates to be closed and had them killed
- He eliminated the Mamluks and got rid of his final major rivals to secure his control over Egypt
- He expanded his power beyond Egypt and conquered Sudan
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- He sent his son, Ibrahim Pasha, to defeat the Ottomans
- An imposter came to a city and began selling unusual goods
- With each passing day, his business grew more popular, which surprised a wise man visiting the city
- The wise man was puzzled about how to convince these people that they had fallen victim to deception
- He called out, "O people, I have bought all of Hell!"
- The people left the imposter, reassured by the wise man's receipt that they would not enter Hell.

to stop his advance and forced him to retreat. He was left to rule Egypt and Sudan while securing the succession of power within his family.

From an illiterate officer to the founder of modern Egypt, Muhammad Ali proved how ambition and political skill could create power. However, the rivalry among

major powers could also bring any expansionist project to a halt.

* * *

The imposter who deceived the people of the city

It is said that an imposter once came to a city, and people gathered around him to buy his unusual goods. With each passing day, his goods became more popular.

One day, a wise and righteous man visited the city, and was astonished by the people's eagerness to gather around the imposter. When he asked about the reason behind the large crowds, he was told that the man was selling plots of land in Paradise and issuing deeds for them. Whoever died while holding such a deed would enter Paradise and reside in the plot they had purchased.

The wise man was puzzled about how to convince the people that the man was a fraud and that those who had bought from him had fallen victim to his deception.

Eventually, the wise man came up with a clever solution.

He approached the imposter and asked him, "How much does a plot in Paradise cost?"

The man replied, "One hundred dinars."

The wise man then asked, "If I wanted to buy a plot in Hell from you, would you sell it to me?"

The imposter was surprised and said, "Take it for free."

The wise man replied, "No, I want to buy it for a price that I will pay you, and you must provide me with a receipt."

The imposter said, "I will give you a quarter of Hell for one hundred dinars, which is the price of one plot in Paradise."

The wise man asked, "What if I want to buy all of it?" The imposter replied, "You must pay me four hundred dinars."

The wise man immediately paid him the four hundred dinars and asked him to issue a receipt, which was then witnessed by a large number of people.

He then shouted at the top of his voice, "O people! I have purchased all of Hell, and I will not allow any of you to enter it, for it now belongs to me according to this receipt. As for you, nothing remains for you except Paradise. You have no other place to go, whether you buy plots or not."

Upon hearing this, the people dispersed from around the imposter, reassured by the wise man's receipt that they would not enter Hell.

The imposter realized that he had been outwitted and that he was more foolish than those who believed him.



Farwaniya Governorate photo
Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah chairs the meeting.

Roads, infrastructure high on meet agenda

KUWAIT CITY, July 15: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah on Tuesday presided over the coordination meeting with acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Public Works Eng. Eid Al-Rashidi, Assistant Director General for Planning and Engineering Affairs at the General Traffic Department Brigadier General Khaled Al-Dahoum, Director of the Traffic Engineering Department Dr. Khaled Al-Kandari, and members of the Farwaniya Governorate Council retired Lieutenant General Ali Al-Shanfa, Saad Al-Hadba and Hessa Al-Mutawa.

Also present at the meeting were Farwaniya Governorate Council member and representative of the Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) Falah Al-Enezi, representatives of the Ministry of Public Works Eng. Mohammad Boursli and Eng. Abdullah Al-Mutairi, representatives of the Roads Engineering Department Eng. Abdullah Al-Shamroukh and Eng. Hamdan Al-Enezi, and representatives of the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Eng. Sarah Al-Mutairi, Eng. Abdullah Shah, Eng. Ali Al-Mutairi and Eng. Ibrahim Al-Khader.

They discussed several topics related to road and infrastructure development projects, as well as the implementation procedures and coordination mechanisms among the relevant government agencies to expedite work, overcome obstacles and strengthen cooperation.

The Governor underscored the importance of regular coordination meetings among the concerned entities and to intensify the concerted efforts in monitoring project implementation.

He commended the participating entities for their co-operation, and expressed his gratitude for their efforts in supporting development and service projects.

Kuwaiti 'flying' at 175kph arrested, car impounded

By Munif Naif
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 15: Despite repeated warnings issued by the General Traffic Department at the Ministry of Interior regarding the need for motorists to strictly comply with the speed limit, a security source reported that a citizen was detained at the traffic police station and his vehicle was impounded for driving at 175 kilometers per hour on Jahra Road.

The source confirmed that legal measures were taken against the citizen.

The ministry indicated that the legally mandated speed limit is 120 kilometers per hour.

Crackdown on fake 'usables'

Kuwaiti detained for arson

KUWAIT CITY, July 15: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) announced the seizure of two warehouses located in two residential buildings containing large quantities of counterfeit clothing and footwear bearing international brand names, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In an official statement, the ministry explained that the perpetrators were found to be displaying and selling these goods to consumers in violation of laws governing the protection of intellectual property rights and trademarks .

This illegal activity infringes on the rights of trademark owners and harms Kuwait's reputation and standing in international rankings related to combating counterfeit goods and protecting intellectual property rights.

The ministry revealed that 3,800 counterfeit items were confiscated and an official report documenting the incident was filed.

□ □ □

Kuwaiti detained: The General Department of Criminal Investigations' Capital Investigation Department, has solved the case of the deliberate arson of two vehicles in Rawda, with the arrest of a Kuwaiti citizen, who confessed to committing the crime, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to security sources, the Ministry of Interior's Operations Room had received a report about a vehicle fire in Rawda, Block 2. A security patrol immediately arrived at the scene, where the complainant stated that he owned the two damaged vehicles and that the fire was intentionally set. The first vehicle was a 2026 Honda, and the second was a 2013 Dodge, both of which were damaged in the blaze.

The victim identified a citizen born in 1981 as a possible suspect, citing previous disputes between them.

The Criminal Investigation Department then launched an investigation using surveillance camera footage, which led to the identification and arrest of the suspect. Necessary legal procedures were taken against the accused in preparation for his referral to the court.

□ □ □

PAAET order overruled: The Court of Appeals overturned the decision of the Board of Directors of the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) to reject the promotion of a faculty member to the rank of Associate Professor, affirming that the decision violates the relevant regulations , reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The court also cancelled the consequences of the decision. It highlighted the principle that all administrative decisions are subject to judicial review, and that no administrative decision is immune from scrutiny once it is proven to be a violation of the law or contain an error.

Traffic congestion study tops plans for new residential city

By Inaas Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 15: Municipal Council member Abdullah Al-Enezi submitted a proposal to assign the executive branch of the Kuwait Municipality, in coordination with the Ministry of Interior (represented by the General Traffic Department), Ministry of Public Works, Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) and other relevant entities, to conduct a comprehensive traffic study for Jaber Al-Ahmad Residential City, covering current and future projects in order to improve the quality of life and guarantee sustainability.

Al-Enezi disclosed that the study will include the assessment of the entrances, exits and internal road network at the city, gauging its ability to handle traffic flow in the future, improvement of the connectivity with main roads, development

of intersections and internal roads, and presentation of engineering solutions to the expected traffic congestion.

He said the city consists of 6,679 residential units and an integrated system of service facilities, thus, transforming it from a purely residential city into a commercial, service and investment hub. He cited the implementation of major projects like Aventura Mall, Jaber Mall, Olympic Village and Jahra Corniche, in addition to the approved sites for the construction of a university, a hospital, private schools, commercial and administrative complexes, and investment housing. He indicated that these projects are expected to attract tens of thousands of visitors, employees and students daily.

He stated that the city is currently connected by three entrances and exits on Jahra Road 80, one entrance and one exit on Doha Road, and another on Jamal Abdul Nasser Road 85.

GTD shuts down road for repairs

Municipality issues 65 June citations

KUWAIT CITY, July 15: The Public Relations Department of Kuwait Municipality announced that the Audit and Municipal Services Monitoring Department at Jahra Municipality conducted several inspection campaigns in June to ensure that commercial establishments were complying with municipal regulations and requirements, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Saad Al-Harbi, Director of the Audit and Municipal Services Monitoring Department in Jahra Municipality, explained that the campaigns resulted in the inspection of 136 establishments and the issuance of 65 citations for violations such as failure to maintain advertisements and operating after the expiration of licenses . A total of 18 warnings were also issued during the month.

Al-Harbi emphasized that field inspections will continue, and he urged shop owners to comply with municipal regulations to avoid legal consequences.

□ □ □

Another road closed: The General Traffic Department announced the full closure of Mhammad Al-Ajmi Street (Road No. 207) in both directions, from the intersection with Street 3 to Al-Ghous Street (Road No. 203), starting Tuesday, July 14 until the completion of maintenance work, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The closure is part of ongoing road maintenance works in the area between Sabah Al-Salem and Al-Masayel.

MUGHAL MAHAL

مغل محل

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Kuwait Red Crescent Society Director General Fawaz Al-Mazrouei, ICRC Cooperation Programs Officer Ali Housh, and ICRC Humanitarian Affairs Adviser Dr. Hiyam Al-Fassam during the workshop.



The workshop covered international standards, humanitarian principles, and the role of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).



Kuwait Red Crescent Society President Khaled Al-Mughamis honors ICRC Cooperation Programs Officer and lecturer Ali Housh.

KRCS holds workshop on climate change preparedness

ICRC, UNDP share input

KUWAIT CITY, July 15, (KUNA): Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS), in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), organized a workshop on global humanitarian efforts in response to climate change risks to strengthen the capabilities of its personnel.

KRCS Director General Fawaz Al-Mazrouei told KUNA the workshop is part of the society's efforts to enhance the readiness of its national cadres to address growing humanitarian challenges resulting from climate change by benefiting from international expertise and best practices.

He said capacity building and training are key to improving disaster response and supporting communities most affected by climate change, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals and efforts to enhance the efficiency of humanitarian work.

The workshop reviewed international standards and humanitarian principles, the role of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and the UNDP in addressing climate change challenges, as well as KRCS' efforts in preparedness and emergency response. It concluded with honoring the participating organizations and lecturers.



Attending a workshop titled "International and Humanitarian Efforts in Preparedness and Response to Climate Change Risks."



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Ministry aims to boost efficiency

Public Works refers employees for retirement as part of reform plan

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 15: Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Mohammed Al-Mashaan has referred a number of ministry employees for retirement.

In a press statement, the ministry explained that the decision aligns with Minister Al-Mashaan's vision to develop the work environment and meet the requirements of the next phase by empowering qualified national talent capable of advancing the development process and improving performance levels.

The ministry is implementing a comprehensive development plan aimed at enhancing institutional efficiency, accelerating progress, and improving the quality of services.

preprehensive development plan aimed at enhancing institutional efficiency, accelerating progress, and improving the quality of services.

The coming phase will include further measures to support national talent and enable them to take on a greater role in the ministry's various sectors, strengthening sustainable development and helping achieve the ministry's objectives.



Dr. Al-Mashaan

MoSA sets Aug 22 exams for applicants

720 Kuwaitis to compete for 90 cooperative supervisory posts

By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 15: Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs Dr. Khaled Al-Ajmi announced that the exams for 720 Kuwaitis, who applied for 90 financial and administrative supervisory positions in the cooperative societies, will be conducted on Aug 22.

This recruitment process is part of the plan of the ministry to complete the nationalization of supervisory positions in cooperatives, ensuring transparency and equal opportunities.

Al-Ajmi disclosed that 236 citizens applied for the financial supervisor position and 483 for the administrative supervisor position.

He said the ministry signed a cooperation protocol with a private university to prepare and conduct the examinations according to professional and academic standards that ensure integrity, impartiality and accurate measurement of professional competence.

He stated that the university will organize a training course for applicants starting July 26 -- two weeks prior to the examination date -- to familiarize them with the nature of the examinations, the topics and procedures. He clarified that participation in the training course is optional and will not be included in the evaluation criteria.

examination date -- to familiarize them with the nature of the examinations, the topics and procedures. He clarified that participation in the training course is optional and will not be included in the evaluation criteria.

He added that the examinations scheduled for Aug 22 will be conducted in two sessions -- the first will be from 9:30 am to 11:00 am and the second will be from 1:00 am to 2:30 pm -- with video recording to ensure transparency, procedural integrity, and adherence to the highest administrative and technical standards.

He explained that advancing to the personal interview stage requires obtaining at least 80 percent in the written exam, adding that the personal interview conducted by the concerned committee in the ministry constitutes 10 percent of the final evaluation.

He also affirmed that the commitment of the ministry to establish a specialized academic body to administer the exams reflects its dedication to building a modern system for selecting candidates for supervisory positions based on competence, merit and transparency.

He clarified that this step is in compliance with the directives of the political leadership, instructions of the Council of Ministers, and recommendations of Minister of Social, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthah Al-Huwailah.



Dr. Al-Ajmi

PIFSS offers online pension certificates

KUWAIT CITY, July 15: The Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS) continues to provide online services for issuing various types of certificates, eliminating the need for beneficiaries to visit its branches, reports Al-Rai daily.

In a statement, PIFSS explained that the service is available through three digital platforms - the institution's official website, the "Zukhr Insurance"

mobile application, and the Sahel application.

The service includes the issuance of several certificates required by government and private entities, such as pension certificates, subscription period certificates, proof of registration, certificates confirming non-payment of pensions, and other documents. Certificates are issued immediately after verifying the beneficiary's identity.

LOCAL



Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Minister of Foreign Affairs



Le Hoai Trung, Vietnam's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister

Kuwaiti, Vietnamese FM's review ties and regional developments

KUWAIT CITY, July 15, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah held a phone call on Wednesday with Vietnamese Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Le Hoai Trung, during which they reviewed bilateral relations and

ways to further strengthen cooperation across various fields.

The two ministers also discussed the latest regional developments and exchanged views on ongoing efforts to address the current situation, Kuwait's Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

Farwaniya Governorate, PAAET explore closer institutional ties

KUWAIT CITY, July 15: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah received Director General of the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) Dr. Hassan Mohammed Al-Fajjam, accompanied by Director of Legal Affairs Dr. Nasser Al-Maraghi, Assistant Dean of the College of Basic Education Dr. Ibrahim Al-Anzi, Assistant Dean of the College of Business Studies Dr. Abdullah Al-Ajmi, and a member of the PAAET Security Committee Dr. Khaled Al-Awadhi.

According to a press release issued by Farwaniya Governorate, Sheikh Athbi Al-Nasser emphasized the importance of enhancing cooperation and coordination between Farwaniya Governorate and PAAET to support national efforts aimed at developing applied education outcomes and strengthening its role in meeting the needs of the labor market.

During the meeting, they discussed several topics of mutual interest, including mechanisms to enhance institutional cooperation,



Farwaniya Governorate photo Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Al-Nasser and PAAET Director General Dr. Hassan Al-Fajjam exchange a commemorative shield during their meeting.

support educational and community initiatives, and align efforts with the state's goals of achieving sustainable development.

Dr. Al-Fajjam and the accompanying delegation expressed their sincere thanks and appreciation to the governor for the warm reception, and praised his commitment to strengthening cooperation with state institutions in the interest of the public and in service of Farwaniya Governorate.

Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nasser pays tribute to Omani ambassador



Former Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr. Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, outgoing Omani Ambassador Dr. Saleh bin Amer Al-Kharousi, diplomats and guests join in a ceremonial cake-cutting during the farewell reception honoring the ambassador in Kuwait.

Al-Kharousi praised for contributions during tenure

By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 15: Former Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Dr. Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah honored outgoing Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to Kuwait Dr. Saleh bin Amer Al-Kharousi.

A number of officials, diplomats and staff at the Omani Embassy attended the event.

Speaking at the event, Sheikh Dr. Ahmad Al-Nasser praised the efforts exerted by Al-Kharousi throughout his tenure in Kuwait, hence, he greatly contributed to strengthening fraternal relations and cooperation between the State of Kuwait and the Sultanate of Oman. He wished him continuous



Photos by Samer Shiqr
Outgoing Omani Ambassador Dr. Saleh bin Amer Al-Kharousi addresses the media.

success in his future endeavors.

On the other hand, Al-Kharousi expressed his deep gratitude to Sheikh Dr. Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad for honoring him. He said the gesture is a manifestation of the depth of the relationship between the two countries and their brotherly peoples.

He pointed out that his tenure in Kuwait witnessed numerous achievements that further strengthened bilateral relations, most notably the exchange of high-level visits, such as the state visit of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq to the State of Kuwait, during which His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah warmly welcomed him.

He is hoping that relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the State of Kuwait will witness more progress and prosperity, and that Allah will grant both countries continuous security and stability to strengthen the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

Continued from Page 1

Jleeb sweep

For the first time, the campaign was carried out through the coordinated efforts of the Kuwait Armed Forces, Ministry of Interior, Kuwait National Guard, Kuwait Fire Force, Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, Ministry of Public Works, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Public Authority for Manpower (PAM), Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN), Kuwait Municipality, and the Emergency Medical Services Department at the Ministry of Health.

During the campaign, the authorities cordoned off the entire area, apprehended Residency Law violators and outlaws, uncovered encroachments on state properties, addressed the illegal construction issue, shut down unlicensed commercial activities in private residential areas, and dealt with overcrowded houses that failed to follow the safety and security standards.

The relevant authorities, each according to their jurisdiction, cut off electricity and other services in violating properties and took legal action against the owners.

In a related development, fully equipped shelters with all the essential services were prepared to cater to families and individuals affected by the campaign to vacate illegal or dilapidated buildings, ensuring their safety by providing them with secure alternatives.

In a statement on the sidelines of the campaign, Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef affirmed that this operation signals the beginning of continuous security campaigns covering all governorates.

He asserted that the security of Kuwait and the rule of law are the top priorities, indicating that protecting the reputation of the country and maintaining the security and safety of everyone living on its land are considered a national responsibility that should not be compromised.

He highlighted the extent of the environmental and health risks in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh, stressing that environmental and health pollution poses a grave threat to public health, especially since a large number of the residents in the area are working in vital sectors, such as hospitals and restaurants, which could lead to the spread of diseases.

Moreover, the judicial enforcement team at the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy disconnected electricity from 102 properties found to have violated the electricity connection regulations.

Sources confirmed that the ministry is committed to participating in such campaigns, in cooperation with other concerned authorities. They pointed out that these campaigns aim to eliminate encroachments on the

facilities of the ministry, particularly the electricity and water networks, and to uncover power connection violations and take action against those proven to have committed violations.

The ministry explained that these measures greatly contribute to reducing the load on the electrical grid and protecting its facilities, especially during the summer months.

Kuwait's 50°C

It recommended setting air conditioners to 24 degrees Celsius or higher in unused rooms, turning off lights and unused appliances, and avoiding the use of high-consumption devices during peak hours from 11:00 am to 5:00 pm.

Furthermore, the ministry obtained approval from the State Audit Bureau (SAB) to sign a contract for the supply, installation, and operation of a battery and charger testing laboratory and workshop at a cost of KD1.994 million.

The project aims to establish and equip a specialized laboratory and workshop for testing batteries and circuit breakers, thereby, raising the efficiency of testing operations and improving the reliability and operational safety of electrical equipment and systems. It also supports preventative maintenance plans, reduces downtime, and improves service quality.

On Wednesday, the Meteorological Department forecast extremely hot weather across Kuwait, with temperatures expected to reach 50 degrees Celsius during the day.

The weather is expected to be accompanied by moderate to strong northwesterly winds, reaching speeds of 20 to 60 km/h at times, causing dust in some areas.

At night, temperatures will remain hot, with dust gradually settling and northwesterly winds continuing at light to moderate speeds of 12 to 35 km/h.

The minimum expected temperature is 34 degrees Celsius.

Kuwait moves

Through this project, the ministry intends to find sustainable technical solutions for regulating truck traffic to protect the national road network, improve pavement quality, and extend the lifespan of road asphalt.

The project includes conducting technical and field studies to provide an accurate database of truck numbers, types and routes to help in developing pavement layer designs based on actual traffic loads and raise the efficiency of maintenance work in the future.

It will divert truck traffic and the

related facilities away from residential and urban areas, thereby, ensuring public safety and reducing traffic congestion.

It will introduce smart monitoring systems for measuring, tracking and electronically managing truck weights.

The ministry is coordinating with CAPT to issue the tender, given that its estimated cost exceeds KD75,000, hence, CAPT is in charge of floating the tender and receiving bids from specialized companies.

Raffle rigging

The defendants are accused of manipulating the results of 110 commercial raffle draws, in which the prizes included 96 vehicles, cash and in-kind prizes and travel tickets.

The court refrained from sentencing 38 defendants, while it acquitted 12 defendants of all the charges filed against them.

Attorney Jarrah Mubarak Al-Wawan, lawyer for one of the defendants in the 'Ya Hala' draws case, revealed that the Court of Appeals accepted the arguments of the defense, thereby, overturning the four-year prison sentence previously imposed on his client and refrained from imposing a new sentence. He asserted that the ruling is based on the court's assessment of the circumstances surrounding the case and the arguments and pleadings presented by both sides.

In its ruling, the court affirmed that the crimes committed by the main defendant compromised the integrity of public office and undermined confidence in official documents, commercial draws and government systems.

The court emphasized that the sentence imposed by the lower court is disproportionate to the severity of the crimes, taking into consideration the leading role of the defendant in the criminal plot.

It explained that the defendant, in his capacity as head of the Free Offers Department at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, did not commit an isolated act, as he rather led a series of crimes that included bribery, forgery of official documents, manipulation of the official electronic system of the ministry, and money laundering within an organized criminal group, along with exploiting his official position.

It indicated that the defendant received KD282,000 in bribes, stressing that the crimes he committed are considered systematic and organized criminal acts aimed at generating illicit profits. It added that the defendant drafted and approved 110 official reports containing false information.

It then confirmed that the defendant was the mastermind behind the

criminal plot, enabling the other defendants to take the prizes and vehicles in the raffle draws.

Iranian assault

On Wednesday, Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Al Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah visited several Kuwait Naval Force sites to review operational activities and assess combat readiness following the attacks.

According to the Ministry of Defense, the minister praised Naval Force personnel for their professionalism, high morale and steadfast commitment to safeguarding the nation's security. He also visited the injured sailors, checked on their condition and followed up on the medical care they are receiving.

During the visit, Sheikh Abdullah was briefed by the attending medical team on the servicemen's health status, commended the medical staff for their dedicated efforts and wished the injured personnel a speedy recovery.

Earlier, Chief of the General Staff Lieutenant General Khaled Al-Shuraiaan also visited the wounded naval personnel in hospital, where he received a briefing on their recovery, praised the medical teams and expressed his wishes for their swift recovery.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs strongly condemned what it described as hostile Iranian aggression against Kuwait, saying the attacks injured military personnel and caused material damage.

In a statement, the ministry said the continued attacks constitute a blatant violation of Kuwait's sovereignty and pose a serious threat to the country's security and the safety of its citizens and residents.

It added that the aggression violates international law and UN Security Council Resolution 2817 (2026), warning that such actions undermine regional and international efforts to preserve peace and stability.

The ministry reaffirmed Kuwait's right under international law and the UN Charter to take all necessary measures to protect its sovereignty, security and territorial integrity.

Meanwhile, Spokesperson of Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) Brigadier General Mohammad Al-Gharib disclosed that six firefighting teams, supported by the teams of the Kuwait Armed Forces and Kuwait National Guard, controlled the fire that broke out at a site attacked by Iran on Tuesday evening.

Al-Gharib affirmed that no human casualties were reported and the losses were limited to material damage.

Diplomatic support for Kuwait grows

Foreign Minister Sheikh Jar-

rah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah held separate telephone conversations with Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, Bahrain's Foreign Minister Dr. Abdullatif Al-Zayani, and Jordanian Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ayman Al-Safadi.

In each call, the ministers condemned the Iranian attacks targeting their countries, reaffirmed their sovereign right to defend their territories and discussed coordinated diplomatic efforts to address the escalating regional security situation.

The United Arab Emirates also strongly condemned the renewed Iranian missile and drone attacks on Kuwait, Bahrain and Jordan, describing them as a flagrant violation of the sovereignty of the three countries and reaffirming its full solidarity with them.

Egypt issued a similar condemnation, describing the attacks as violations of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the affected states while expressing full support for measures to safeguard their security and stability.

The Secretary General of the Arab Interior Ministers Council, Mohammed Kuman, likewise denounced the attacks on Kuwait, Bahrain and Jordan, calling them blatant violations of international charters and reaffirming the council's solidarity with the affected countries and their right to defend their sovereignty.

US reimposes blockade

In latest development, the U.S. reimposed a naval blockade on Iran and intensified its airstrike campaign Wednesday in retaliation for Tehran's attacks on ships trying to pass through the Strait of Hormuz. The American strikes hit an Iranian army barracks, killed at least seven troops and wounded more than 260 people across the country, Iranian officials said.

Days of back-and-forth strikes by the U.S. and Iran across the Middle East - and renewed threats to the waterway crucial to global energy supplies - have shredded the interim deal to end the conflict and the region could tip back into all-out war.

The U.S. first imposed a blockade in April and then lifted it last month after signing the interim deal that paused the fighting and set a 60-day period for negotiations over issues such as Iran's nuclear program. Those talks have stalled as fighting over the Strait of Hormuz has intensified.

When the U.S. and Israel launched the war on Iran on Feb. 28, Tehran effectively closed the waterway to shipping traffic - a move that sent the price of oil, fertilizer and many other goods soaring far beyond the region and gave Iran major leverage in negotiations. Those rising prices pose a particular challenge to U.S. President Donald Trump and his Republican Party, which hopes to retain control of Congress in elections

in November. But Washington has struggled to successfully reopen the waterway.

Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard threatened Wednesday to halt all energy exports from the Middle East over the blockade.

"The export of oil and gas from the region will be either for everyone or for no one," it said.

The U.S. carried out a wave of strikes, hitting dozens of targets overnight, the military's Central Command said Wednesday, and then resumed striking Iran during daylight - an unusual move that further signaled the increasing tempo of the attacks.

Within 17 hours of reimposing the blockade on Iranian ports, Central Command said U.S. forces had "redirected" two commercial vessels attempting to run the blockade.

"The U.S. military remains vigilant and prepared to ensure full compliance," it said on social media.

Among the U.S. military's targets was Greater Tunb Island, which is viewed as a strategic point in the Strait of Hormuz. Central Command said the attack targeted Iranian defense and missile sites.

Iran took control of three islands - Abu Musa, Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb - from what would become the United Arab Emirates in 1971. The UAE has sought to reclaim them.

Some analysts have suggested that if the U.S. seized the islands, they could allow it to control the strait.

Another strike targeted a barracks for Iran's 388th Mechanized Infantry Brigade, which operates tanks and armored vehicles, in Sistan and Baluchestan province, Iranian state television reported. The report said the Americans fired at least 13 missiles in the attack and that the seven dead included conscripts and career soldiers. A number of troops were wounded.

Including those at the barracks, more than 30 people have been killed in recent days, Iranian government spokesperson Fatemeh Mohajerani said, without elaborating.

Hossein Kermanpour, a spokesperson for the Health Ministry, meanwhile, said over 260 people were wounded in overnight strikes alone - a figure far larger than for any other round of recent violence between Iran and the U.S. He did not say how many people were killed overnight.

The army said it would make "a decisive response to this aggressive action by the American enemy," according to state TV.

Missile alert warnings sounded in Bahrain and Kuwait early Wednesday as they faced incoming Iranian fire - a daily occurrence in recent days. Jordan said it shot down three incoming Iranian missiles. Iran claimed attacks on the three nations, all of which host U.S. forces.

Lawmakers fuming over Trump's military action

US Senate Democrats block \$1 trillion defense bill in protest over Iran war

WASHINGTON, July 15, (AP): Senate Democrats blocked a \$1 trillion annual defense bill Tuesday, refusing to advance the bipartisan package that would substantially increase Pentagon spending, including a pay raise for the troops, in protest of President Donald Trump's war against Iran.

Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer announced his opposition and other key Democrats said they could not support the annual bill, known as the National Defense Authorization Act, as the war drags into a fifth month with no clear endgame in sight. The tally was 50-46, failing largely along party lines to reach the threshold needed.

"The NDAA cannot become a permission slip for that recklessness that we see occurring in Iran," Schumer, of New York, said ahead of voting.

"Donald Trump does not get to drag the American people deeper into a war he cannot explain and does not know how to end-and then demand that Congress look the other way."

The Senate vote comes a day after the White House formally notified Congress that it had resumed bombing strikes against Iran, effectively undoing the fragile ceasefire in the U.S.-Israel led conflict that has resulted in economic disruptions, including volatile gas prices ahead of the midterm elections.

Congress has tried repeatedly to slap guardrails on the administration, voting more than 10 times on various war powers resolutions that would halt hostilities. But those efforts have not succeeded, and most Republicans in the House and Senate majorities back Trump.

Senate Majority Leader John Thune called the defense package a good bill and implored his colleagues to provide the resources to ensure the US is kept safe.

"We have an obligation here in Congress to ensure that they have everything they need for whatever the mission may be," he said.

After the bill failed to advance, Thune switched his vote in a procedural move that will allow the leader to bring it back up for consideration again later.



Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-NY, speaks to reporters at the Capitol in Washington on June 23. (AP)

For decades, Congress had made sure to approve the annual defense bill each year, setting the policy and direction for the department and authorizing the funds that would later be allocated to carry out its investments in systems, supplies and missions.

This year, the 66th annual NDAA is running into a double-whammy of opposition. Lawmakers are fuming over Trump's military action against Iran and resisting the White House request to substantially increase Pentagon spending

to \$1.5 trillion, up from about \$900 billion last year.

The sizable boost of funds aligns with the White House's 2027 budget request as the Trump administration seeks a generational investment to modernize the Defense Department, which it refers to as the Department of War under Secretary Pete Hegseth.

Hegseth was scheduled to meet later Tuesday evening with House Republicans as Congress considers providing additional money through a separate budget reconciliation bill the party can pass on its own, overpowering the opposition from Democrats.

The White House has requested \$350 billion from Congress under the budget reconciliation process, but House GOP leaders have indicated it is likely to be a much smaller amount, more in line with \$87 billion the White House requested last month as supplemental funding for Iran.

But Republican deficit hawks are skeptical of the big budget numbers, despite support for the war within their ranks.

The extra defense funding comes on top of the additional \$150 billion Republicans already provided the Pentagon last year under Trump's big tax breaks bill that some say has not been spent or fully accounted for.

At the same time, senators want to impose restraints on Hegseth if he fails to comply with their demands for more information about department procedures and accounts.

The Senate bill would block the secretary's travel funds unless he provides reports they have requested, including on a deadly Iran school strike at the start of the war.

Democrats, however, are pushing for further limits in line with a war powers resolution that would force the cessation of military actions.

Sen. Tammy Duckworth, D-Ill., a veteran who flew helicopter combat missions in Iraq, said she would oppose the bill unless it included her amendment to end the war.

"Simply throwing more money at an out-of-control military operation is not strategy. It's a recipe for a forever war."

House passes bill to 'ditch the switch', make daylight saving time permanent

WASHINGTON, July 15, (AP): There will be no turning back the clock if the House has its way.

The House passed a bill Tuesday that would make daylight saving time permanent. Proponents, including the White House, argued the change would provide more daylight during the times that Americans are most active. The vote was 308-117.

Daylight saving time is that period between spring and fall when clocks in most parts of the United States are set one hour ahead of standard time. States could opt out if their respective legislatures act to do so before the bill's enactment. The Senate would also have to pass the bill before it could be signed into law, but it's unclear if it will do so.

Rep. Gus Bilirakis, R-Fla., said Americans are ready to "ditch the switch," saying that changing the clock twice a year creates unnecessary disruption. More important, he said, it would give families more daylight time in the evening to spend outdoors and support local businesses.

"In my home state of Florida where tourism is a cornerstone of our economy, having more predictable daylight hours is a practical improvement that benefits workers, businesses and visitors alike," Bilirakis said.

Detractors said permanent daylight saving time would lead to



Ian Rodgers fastens the hands to a clock at Electric Time Company on Nov 1, 2022, in Medfield, Mass. (AP)

darker and potentially more hazardous winter mornings where children will be waiting for school buses and parents will be driving to work in darkness.

"Millions of Americans will wake up during the winter months in complete darkness with the sun not rising until long after people get up and travel to school or work or have to go about their days," said Rep. Mary Gay Scanlon, D-Pa.

Rep. Jim McGovern, D-Mass, said he supported the bill, but he questioned whether it was the best

way for Congress to be spending its time.

"For folks getting crushed by rent, groceries, utility bills and healthcare costs, is this really the best the majority can do?" McGovern said. "Is this really the most pressing issue before the American people at this moment?"

A 2025 poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research shows that if forced to choose, most Americans would prefer to keep that extra hour of daylight in the evening.

US military will be out of Iraq by end of Sept, say Iraqi PM and Pentagon

WASHINGTON, July 15, (AP): The US military will leave Iraq by the end of September, American and Iraqi officials said Tuesday, following a 23-year presence that started with the 2003 invasion against Saddam Hussein and ended with much smaller operations against the Islamic State group.

President Donald Trump, standing alongside Iraqi Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi at the White House, said "we don't think we need the military there anymore" and noted Iraq's growing relationships with oil companies.

"The relationship is a whole big relationship where we don't need the military," Trump said. "We're there to help them. We're there to protect them if need be. But we don't think that's going to be necessary."

Speaking through an interpreter, al-Zaidi said "US forces will be out of Iraq" by Sept 30, "while US companies will be inside Iraq."

The Pentagon said in a subsequent statement that it was reaffirming a 2024 agreement with Iraq to end its mission against IS fighters. Many of the US troops still serving in Iraq at the time of the deal, which was made during the Biden administration, already have departed.

The United States has been shifting the burden for combat-



US Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth, right, welcomes Iraqi Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi, to the Pentagon, during a ceremony on July 14 in Washington. (AP)

ing IS in Iraq from American and coalition forces to Iraqi troops who have been trained by the US military. American troops have been diminishing their footprint, withdrawing from areas and consolidating forces.

The US invaded Iraq in March 2003 in what it called a massive "shock and awe" bombing campaign that lit up the skies, laid waste to large sections of the country and paved the way for American ground troops to converge on Baghdad. The invasion was based on what turned out to

be faulty claims that Saddam Hussein had secretly stashed weapons of mass destruction. Such weapons never materialized.

The US presence grew to more than 170,000 troops at the peak of counterinsurgency operations in 2007. The Obama administration negotiated the drawdown of forces, and in December 2011, the final combat troops departed, leaving only a small number of military personnel behind to staff an office of security assistance and a detachment of Marines to guard the embassy compound.

Top EU official visits Ukraine, vows continued support against Russia

KYIV, Ukraine, July 15, (AP): European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen went to Kyiv on Wednesday to mark Ukraine's annual Statehood Day, pledging continued military and financial support for the country's independence as it holds out against Russia's 4-year-old full-scale invasion.

Ukraine's sovereignty has been threatened since Russian forces occupied Ukraine's Crimea in 2014 and Moscow illegally annexed the peninsula, followed eight years later by the all-out invasion of February 2022. Statehood Day, celebrating the country's self-determination, is a public holiday in Ukraine.

The war has killed thousands of soldiers and civilians, forced millions to flee their homes, reduced Ukrainian cities to rubble and fueled fears the confrontation could slide into an open conflict between Russia and NATO, whose member nations have supported Kyiv. No peace settlement is in sight.

Senior officials from southeastern European countries also were expected in Kyiv on Wednesday for a



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, right, awards European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen in Kyiv, Ukraine on July 15. (AP)

periodic gathering focused on Black Sea and regional security. Last year's meeting in the southern Ukraine city of Odesa reaffirmed the countries' support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has recently won important pledges of further support, including from the Group of Seven leading industrialized nations and the so-called Coalition of the Willing countries.

Von der Leyen, the European Union's top official, said her trip to the Ukrainian capital was her 11th in wartime. Europe is watchful of Russia's broader intentions on the continent and has provided billions of euros (dollars) to Ukraine as well as diplomatic support.

Von der Leyen said she would announce new steps toward integrating the European and Ukrainian defense industries as well as providing new help to prepare Ukrainian air defenses for next winter, when Russia usually tries to knock out the power.

Her visit came as Western officials and analysts say Ukraine's increasingly frequent and accurate drone and missile attacks are hitting high-profile targets deep inside Russia, severely disrupting the Russian army's supply lines and causing civilian fuel shortages.



Emergency workers on site during a fire at a building complex in the center of Brussels on July 14. (AP)

At least 6 killed in Brussels building fire

At least six people were killed and two injured in a fire on Tuesday at a building being renovated in downtown Brussels. Authorities in the Belgian capital said that their bodies had been found in an elevator at the site.

The fire started on the second floor of the building in a main shopping area, and the flames spread into a lift shaft, said Brecht Speybrouck, a spokesperson for the Labor Audit Office. He said that 250 workers at the site were evacu-

ated.

First responders struggled to get to the lift shaft, where at least two elevators had been blocked. On Tuesday evening, the Labor Audit Office confirmed that six bodies were found in one of the elevators, according to Belgian broadcaster RTBF. The bodies had not been identified.

Brussels mayor Philippe Close told The Associated Press that thermal cameras and sniffer dogs were used to try to find the victims. (AP)

Political journey over, says UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer

LONDON, July 15, (AP): Prime Minister Keir Starmer said that he was leaving the United Kingdom "in better shape than I found it" as he fielded questions, criticism and even a bit of praise from lawmakers in the House of Commons for the last time on Wednesday.

Starmer, who leaves office next week, bid farewell to the boisterous weekly Prime Minister's Questions sessions where he has traded barbs with opposition politicians and defended his government's record. On Monday, he will step down as prime minister after losing the support of his Labour Party, handing over power to a new Labour leader, Andy



Starmer

Burnham.

"Every prime minister knows when they take up the torch that the day will come when they have to pass it on," said Starmer, who has spent six years as leader of the Labour Party and two as prime minister.

"This is the end of my political journey," he said, though he plans to remain a backbench lawmaker for now.

Britain's parliamentary democracy allows governing parties to change leaders, and thus prime ministers, without the need for a general election. The next national election doesn't have to be held until 2029.

In a session that mixed somber seriousness and political criticism with personal tributes and jokes, Starmer opened by saying he was "horrified" at the killing last week of the former lawmaker Ann Widdecombe. Counterterrorism police are investigating it as murder.

Gibraltar ushers in new era as British territory's border fence with Spain removed

MADRID, July 15, (AP): Thousands of people who travel every day between the southern tip of Spain and the British territory of Gibraltar will no longer have to cross a physical border, beginning on Wednesday.

The official opening at midnight on Tuesday - after a border fence was fully removed - allows a new freedom of movement under a historic treaty between the European Union and the United Kingdom. It came after years of post-Brexit wrangling.

The contested British Overseas Territory of 38,000 people is perched at the southern end of the Iberian Peninsula, in a strategic location mere miles from Morocco where the Atlantic Ocean meets the Mediterranean Sea.

Soon after midnight, crowds crossed freely between Spain's La Línea de Concepción and Gibraltar in both directions. Many wore Spanish soccer jerseys after Spain's victory against France in the World Cup semifinal on Tuesday, adding to the celebratory mood.

"What you feel here is the brotherhood between the two people," Gibraltar's Chief Minister Fabian Picardo told Spanish broadcaster RTVE.

When Britain left the EU in 2020, the relationship between Gibraltar and the bloc had been left unresolved.

Previous talks on a deal to ensure people and goods could keep flowing across the border had made halting progress. In 2025, the EU and U.K. an-

nounced an agreement on those issues, with the two sides and Gibraltar's government signing a treaty Tuesday that eases border crossings.

The U.K.'s Foreign Office Minister Stephen Doughty said Tuesday that the agreement secured Gibraltar's long-term economic future and interests.

Maroš Šefčovič, the EU's trade representative, praised the agreement, too. "It has taken four years of patient, complex negotiation, but the outcome speaks for itself," Šefčovič said. "It is a very special feeling to see a fence come down."

Without a deal, Gibraltar could have faced a hard land border with full passport checks, posing economic risks for the territory deeply dependent on some 15,000 Spaniards - almost half of Gibraltar's workforce - who cross the frontier every day for work.

Leisure visits by people crossing both sides of the border would have been affected, too.

"People who are visiting family in Spain, or whose Spanish family is visiting them in Gibraltar. Children who are going to football matches and extra-curricular activities, either in Spain or in Gibraltar. They will be able to do that without having to worry about frontier queues," Picardo told The Associated Press in an interview.

US marine biologist, conservationist shot dead in Philippines, says police

MANILA, Philippines, July 15, (Agencies): A distinguished American marine biologist has been shot dead by three men who entered his house in the central Philippines, police said on Tuesday.

Kent Carpenter, 73, was with his Filipina companion in a house in the coastal town of Sibulan, in Negros Oriental province, on Sunday night when the masked men forced their way in.

One drew a gun and shot Carpenter in the head, killing him instantly, police said his companion told them. The men took a laptop, an unspecified amount of cash and a backpack before fleeing, national police spokesperson Col. Allen Rae Co told reporters.

Regional police spokesperson Lt. Col. Joem Malong told The Associated Press that Carpenter's companion sustained unspecified injuries and was being treated. Investigators were trying to determine the motive for the killing and identify the attackers.

Carpenter was a marine biologist who had worked as a lecturer at the Silliman University, in Dumaguete city, Negros Oriental, Malong said. The U.S Embassy in Manila did



This 2023 photo provided by Old Dominion University shows Professor Kent Carpenter. (AP)

not immediately respond to a request for comment.

"We assure the victim's family, the community and our foreign visitors that this case is being treated with utmost urgency and no effort will be spared until justice is served," regional police director Brig. Gen. Romano Cardino said.

Carpenter had been a biological sciences professor at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia, since 1996. His research

- which focused on the Philippines and the Coral Triangle between the Indian and Pacific oceans - shaped conservation efforts around the world, university officials said. They said he was on an extended research assignment in the Philippines and planned to retire in September.

"He dedicated his career to expanding our understanding of the world's bodies of water and protecting some of its most vulnerable ecosystems," Old Dominion President Brian Hemphill said in a statement. He described Carpenter's killing as sad and devastating. "His scholarship and passion impacted and inspired many individuals locally, nationally, and internationally."

Also:

MANILA: The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology said a 6.5-magnitude offshore earthquake struck **Davao Occidental** province in the southern **Philippines** on Tuesday night.

The institute said the tectonic earthquake occurred at 11:49 p.m. local time at a depth of 10 km, with the epicenter 104 km southwest of the coast of Balut Island.



Wang Huning, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, meets with a delegation of the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) led by Le Minh Tri, member of the Political Bureau of the CPV Central Committee and chairman of the CPV Central Committee's Commission for Internal Affairs, in Beijing, capital of China on July 14. (Xinhua)

China's top political advisor meets CPV delegation

China's top political advisor Wang Huning met with a delegation of the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) led by Le Minh Tri, member of the Political Bureau of the CPV Central Committee and chairman of the CPV Central Committee's Commission for Internal Affairs, in Beijing on Tuesday.

Wang, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consulta-

tive Conference (CPPCC), said General Secretary of the CPC Central Committee Xi Jinping has maintained close strategic communication with General Secretary of the CPV Central Committee To Lam.

Wang noted the top leaders of the two sides reached new important common understandings this April, providing strategic guidance for the relations between the two parties and the two countries, and the development of the world socialism cause. (Xinhua)



Relief workers unload US humanitarian aid for people affected by the earthquakes in La Guaira, Venezuela on July 8. (AP)

Earthquake aid keeps flowing from Florida to Venezuela, as volunteers unite to help recovery

CARACAS, July 15, (AP): After her grandmother's house in Caracas narrowly survived last month's devastating back-to-back earthquakes, Alessandra Izaguirre was desperate to help Venezuela.

"Seeing my grandma and all these people affected made me feel like I had to do something, even if it was from the US," said the 18-year-old, who has spent the last couple weeks preparing food for volunteers at the Doral, Florida headquarters of the nonprofit Global Empowerment Mission.

Izaguirre is one of thousands of people who have participated in an exceptionally large grassroots humanitarian effort based at GEM, supported by donations from across the US and beyond and still going strong nearly three weeks after the catastrophe.

Hundreds of volunteers still show up each day at GEM's warehouses in Doral, where about half the population is of Venezuelan descent. They sort donated supplies -- curated to

address the latest needs -- and prepare them for transport to Caracas on daily flights.

GEM's system, facilitated by the US State Department, has given members of the Venezuelan diaspora and others an outlet to support the ongoing crisis, and a trusted mechanism to send aid amid widespread concern about theft and corruption on the part of Venezuelan officials.

"Whatever we can get to the Venezuelan public is what counts," said Izaguirre.

The effort also underscores the stunning dynamic shift between the US and Venezuela since President Donald Trump ordered then-Venezuelan president Nicolás Maduro's capture in an early morning raid on Jan 3. With military personnel again on the ground, the US has assumed a response role that would have been unimaginable before January, when Trump said the U.S. would "run" the country and seized control of its oil exports.

"This is a whole different ani-

mal," said GEM founder and president Michael Capponi, who was denied entry to Venezuela while trying to deliver aid during the reign of Maduro, who long rejected humanitarian help, equating it to foreign intervention. "We land a private plane, it gets unloaded by US soldiers, it goes in a truck we pay for and to a warehouse that we completely control. It doesn't touch the hands of the Venezuelan government."

The 7.2- and 7.5-magnitude earthquakes struck 39 seconds apart on June 24, killing at least 4,500 people with thousands more still missing. They destroyed 190 buildings and damaged over 850, Venezuelan officials said, leaving 17,000 displaced and ravaging critical infrastructure providing electricity, clean water and sanitation.

GEM's headquarters became a donation collection point almost immediately. Some donors were initially skeptical that aid could reach those who needed it without being

stolen or misused by a notoriously corrupt government, Capponi said. After GEM made its first successful aid distribution, the movement grew bigger than he'd seen in decades of global response.

Companies like Goya, Walmart and Amazon contribute supplies while professional sports teams have donated funds. But much of the aid is still amassed from thousands of individuals' contributions.

"They're going to Walmart with their credit card, buying 15 cans of food and bringing it in a shopping bag," said Capponi. "It doesn't sound like a lot, but when it's 2,000 people... it's an enormous amount of aid."

Lines to drop off aid at GEM have at times been so long police had to help manage traffic. Supplies arrive from across North America: Two brothers drove a U-Haul of goods from Canada. Another group arrived from Mexico. Trucks have rolled in from Nevada, Texas and California.

Subcontinent

Pak-administered Kashmir clashes kill 1: Clashes between police and supporters of an outlawed political group left at least one police officer dead and several others wounded on Tuesday in the Pakistan-administered Kashmir, officials said.

The violence erupted after Pakistani authorities reopened roads that followers of the banned Joint Awami Action Committee had blocked for nearly a month. Residents have complained of food and medicine shortages as well as restricted transport due to the group's blockade, according to a police statement.

The region's home secretary, **Chaudhry Guftar Hussain**, accused armed members of the group of killing the officer by opening indiscriminate fire.

Hussain announced earlier Tuesday that security forces were launching an operation across Pakistan-administered Kashmir "to clear all roads blocked by the banned Jammu and Kashmir Awami Action Committee at entry and exit points."

The Joint Awami Action Committee is an alliance of several groups that has been staging sit-ins at multiple locations since last month, demanding the abolition of 12 seats in the regional Legislative Assembly reserved for refugees who migrated to Pakistan from Indian-controlled Kashmir decades ago. (Xinhua)

4 dead, 15 injured in Pakistan bus accident: At least four people were killed and 15 others injured after a speeding passenger bus overturned following a collision with a motorcycle in Pakistan's eastern Punjab province on Tuesday, rescue officials said.

The accident occurred near Kala Khatai Road in the Muridke area of Sheikhupura district when the bus lost control after hitting the motorcycle and over-

turned, a spokesperson for Rescue 1122 said.

Rescue teams rushed to the scene and shifted the injured to a government hospital after providing first aid. Six other injured passengers received treatment at the scene and were discharged, the spokesperson said. (Xinhua)

3 Afghan refugee camps vacated in Pakistan: Three Afghan refugee camps in Bannu district of Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province have been completely vacated after 525 families were repatriated to Afghanistan under the government's ongoing repatriation drive, a senior district official told Xinhua on Tuesday.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Umar Khitab Khan said the families from the Bizan Khel, Ghoriwala and Mamand Khel camps were repatriated via the Torkham border, with the provincial government providing funds, transport and other logistical support.

He said the repatriation campaign had now shifted to Afghan nationals living in rented houses and private residences in Bannu and nearby villages, with local police assisting in identifying and processing them. (Xinhua)

'9 fishermen confirmed dead in India': The bodies of nine fishermen had been recovered in India's eastern state of West Bengal, while six others remained missing, after a trawler carrying them had gone missing on July 2 amid rough weather, said a state government official on Tuesday.

The incident was reported from West Bengal's Sundarbans area, famous for marshy mangrove forests. The ill-fated fishermen hailed from Digha, Nadia, Howrah, East Medinipur areas of West Bengal, and also from the neighbouring state of Odisha.

The rescue operation was still being carried out by the personnel of the Indian Coast Guard, the Indian Navy, the West Bengal Police, the state's fire department and the forest department to locate the missing fishermen. (Xinhua)



Women and children fetch water at dusk in the Korsi refugee Camp in Birao, the Central African Republic on March 27. (AP)

Africa

CAR, UNHCR discuss resuming refugees repatriation: Cameroonian authorities, officials from the Central African Republic (CAR) and the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) met on Tuesday to discuss the relaunch of the voluntary repatriation of CAR refugees.

"We are looking at practical arrangements. We will review the shortcomings and find solutions to ensure that refugees return voluntarily and safely to the Central African Republic," Cameroon's Minister of Territorial Administration Paul Atanga Nji said during the tripartite meeting in the capital Yaounde.

He added that more than 28,000 CAR refugees have voluntarily returned home since the repatriation process began in 2019. (Xinhua)

Sierra Leone drops criminal case against Koroma: The Office of the Attorney-General and Minister of Justice of Sierra Leone has officially discontinued criminal proceedings against former President Ernest Bai Koroma.

In a public notice issued on Tuesday, the office said that the proceedings are no longer before any court in Sierra Leone.

Koroma was charged with treason and misprison of treason following investigations into an alleged failed coup attempt. He was granted bail on medical grounds, allowing him to travel overseas for specialized treatment while the case remained pending before the courts, according

to the notice.

As a legal consequence of the discontinuance, Koroma's bail has come to an end with immediate effect, the office added. (Xinhua)

5 killed, 14 injured in car accident in Algeria: Five people were killed and 14 others injured in a car accident in Algeria's southern province of Tamanrasset on Tuesday, the country's Civil Protection Department said.

The crash occurred on National Road No. 1, about 50 km toward the town of Ain Amguel in Tamanrasset, when a passenger bus collided with a second, unoccupied bus.

Emergency crews administered first aid before evacuating the wounded to a local hospital for treatment. (Xinhua)

Uganda school bus crash kills 1, injures 15: A school bus driver was killed and 15 other people were injured after a bus carrying students on a geography study tour crashed into a stationary truck in the eastern Ugandan district of Bugweri early Tuesday, police said.

The bus, carrying 73 students on a study tour to central Uganda, rammed into the rear of the stationary truck at Nawangisa village along the Mbale-Iganga Highway at about 4:45 a.m. local time (0145 GMT), according to a police statement.

"The bus driver died instantly, while the 15 victims sustained injuries of varying degrees," the statement said, adding that the injured included 13 students, a bus conductor and a teacher. (Xinhua)



A man sits on the Malecón seawall after sunset during a blackout in Havana, Cuba on July 14. (AP)

authorities indicated that 4% of the city had received electricity. The provinces of Guantánamo and Cienfuegos reported that they had begun distributing power to their hospitals, and Matanzas confirmed that power had been restored to the city's historic center.

Also:

SANTIAGO: Five people were killed early Tuesday in Chile's capital Santiago after a pickup truck crashed into a public transport bus and a commercial building, sparking a fire, firefighters said.

"We have five people dead who were occupants of the pickup truck and the fire is now under control," **Sergio Yevenes**, third commander of the Santiago Fire Department, told reporters.

According to Chile's Carabineros police force, the occupants of the pickup truck fled a police checkpoint and ran a red light, causing the vehicle to hit a bus traveling toward downtown Santiago.

The ensuing explosion also severely damaged a shop and a pharmacy in the popular commercial area of the **Franklin** neighborhood.

Kuwait oil price surge to \$87.94 pb

KUWAIT CITY, July 15, (KUNA): Price of Kuwaiti oil rose by USD 10.48 to reach USD 87.94 per barrel (pb) in Tuesday’s trading, up from USD 77.46 pb on Monday, according to Kuwait Petroleum Cor-

poration (KPC) on Wednesday. Globally, Brent crude rose USD 1.66 to settle at USD 84.73 pb, while US West Texas Intermediate rose USD 1.55 to close at USD 79.34 pb.

Business

The Bank delivers a digital experience that brings it closer to its customers

NBK redefines customer engagement through an innovative Digital Business Card

KUWAIT CITY, July 15: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) continues to advance its digital transformation journey with the launch of its Digital Business Card, an innovative initiative designed to make every customer interaction more connected, intuitive, and meaningful. By bringing communication, information, and feedback into a single digital touchpoint, the initiative makes it easier for customers to access the support, expertise, and services they need.

The Digital Business Card enables customers to instantly access an employee’s professional profile by scanning a QR code or using Near Field Communication (NFC) technology. Through a single digital touchpoint, customers can connect directly with their banker, access relevant products and services, and share feedback on their experience, creating a more convenient and personalized banking journey.

The initiative reflects NBK’s commitment to delivering experiences that are simple, responsive, and tailored to customer needs. By making it easier for customers to connect with the right person, access relevant information, and share their feedback, NBK continues to foster stronger relationships built on trust, understanding, and long-term engagement.

Commenting on the launch, **Lulwa T. Al-Sane**, SVP - Head of Customer Success at National Bank of



Lulwa Al-Sane

■ A digital business card that turns every customer interaction into a fully integrated interactive experience



Kuwait, said: “At NBK, we are constantly looking for new ways to make banking simpler, more relevant, and more connected. The Digital Business Card creates a direct and convenient channel between our customers and employees, making it easier to access information, receive guidance, and engage with the Bank in a way that feels both personal and effortless.

Every interaction is an opportunity to better understand our customers and strengthen our relationship with them. By combining communication, service information, and customer feedback within a single platform, we can respond more effectively to customer needs, continuously enhance our services, and deliver experiences that are increasingly relevant and valuable

to each individual customer.”

Beyond serving as a digital alternative to traditional business cards, the platform offers customers access to a wide range of NBK products and services, including accounts, cards, loans, and digital banking solutions. It also incorporates Voice of the Customer (VoC) surveys, allowing customers to share feedback directly and conveniently following their interactions with the Bank.

The initiative further enhances transparency and trust by providing customers with a clear and professional way to identify and communicate with NBK representatives, whether relationship managers, relationship officers, personal banking officers, or other frontline employees.

The initiative also contributes to NBK’s sustainability objectives by reducing reliance on printed business cards while providing a smarter and more efficient alternative.

Through the Digital Business Card, NBK is turning everyday customer interactions into opportunities to build stronger relationships, gain deeper customer insights, and continuously refine the banking experience. The initiative reflects the Bank’s ongoing commitment to delivering innovative solutions that make banking easier, more relevant, and more rewarding for its customers.

Kuwait: Real estate activity weakens further in Q2, though prices show early signs of recovery

By National Bank of Kuwait

Real estate sales remained subdued in the second quarter of the year, extending the weakness seen in Q1, though the market showed tentative signs of stabilizing as geopolitical tensions eased following the interim US-Iran peace agreement. The composition of activity also shifted in Q2, with residential sales recovering to partially offset continued softness in the investment segment and commercial transactions witnessing a sharp pullback after performing strongly in Q1. Real estate prices in Q2 posted their first quarterly growth in a year, driven by a rebound in residential prices. The outlook for the real estate market for the remainder of the year remains tied to the conflict in the Gulf; a breakdown in the US-Iran ceasefire arrangement that leads to renewed hostilities and closure of the Strait of Hormuz could adversely affect confidence in the market. We are cautiously optimistic, though, on the prospect for a recovery in real estate activity in 2026.

Total property sales in the April-June 2026 period fell to KD826 million (-8.2% q/q; -17.8% y/y), closing lower for the second con-

secutive quarter. The value of sales in Q2 was also the lowest in more than two years and a notable retreat from Q4 2025’s decade-high figure of KD1.3 billion. (Chart 1.) The decline was driven by the notoriously volatile commercial segment, where sales nearly halved to KD112 million (-47.4% q/q; +7.9% y/y) following exceptionally strong activity in Q1, and by a second consecutive quarterly fall in investment sector activity, which, at KD287 million (-1.6% q/q; -40.5% y/y), is the lowest level in two years, highlighting the impact of regional geopolitical uncertainty on investor sentiment. The subdued performance of this segment is also consistent with bank data showing slower credit growth for real estate activities. In contrast, residential property sales increased in Q2 to KD427 million (+8.2% q/q; +2.0% y/y), reversing part of the weakness recorded in Q1 to reach their highest level in three quarters, while transaction volumes also recovered. The improvement suggests that underlying demand could be firming despite prevailing geopolitical and macroeconomic uncertainty.

Meanwhile, real estate prices showed tentative signs of stabilization during Q2, according to our real estate price index. Overall prices rose by 1.0% q/q, ending three consecutive quarters

of decline, though they were still down by -5.8% y/y on last year. (Chart 2.) Residential prices recorded the strongest improvement, increasing by 3.8% q/q for a first quarterly gain since Q2 2025, though they, too, remained well down on last year’s levels (-10.0% y/y). The rebound may indicate that the sharp correction witnessed over the past year is beginning to moderate as residential demand improves and sentiment gradually recovers following the easing of regional tensions. Investment prices, in contrast, weakened modestly during the quarter (-1.8% q/q; -0.9% y/y), which is broadly consistent with the softness in investment sales activity amid continued investor caution. Nevertheless, the recovery in residential sales and stabilization in overall prices suggest that the market may be moving beyond the period of acute weakness seen in Q1. However, a sustained recovery will require a broader improvement in investment activity, which will likely be contingent on regional stability. The recent increase in tensions between Iran and the US which threatens the peace agreement signed between the two protagonists in June warrants the maintenance of a cautious view about the prospect for materially higher real estate activity during the remainder of the year.



Achieving 23% emissions reduction

stc publishes 2025 Sustainability Report, highlights ESG progress

KUWAIT CITY, July 15: The Kuwaiti Telecom Company stc, the forerunner in the way for digitalization, and providing services and innovative hubs for clients in Kuwait, announced its publication of its sustainability report for the year of 2025; the third report of its kind, which covers the values of sustainability in its strategy, governance, operations and corporate decision making.

With this occasion, stc shared that it views the publication of the 2025 Sustainability Report as an important step in reflecting the company’s continuing commitment to enhancing transparency and embedding environmental, social, and digital governance principles across its many operations.

The company also affirmed that this report embodies the progress it is making in the areas of sustainability, whether through developing its governance framework, strengthening environmental initiatives, investing in human capital, enhancing customer experience, or supporting digital innovation.

stc added that integrating sustainability into the company’s strategy and operations has become a fundamental part of its corporate approach, ensuring long-term value creation for all stakeholders and reinforcing its role in supporting Kuwait Vision 2035 and contributing to building a more resilient and sustainable digital future.

The company also emphasized that establishing a Sustainability Steering Committee, chaired by the CEO, represents a significant step forward in enhancing oversight of ESG initiatives and ensuring their integration across various departments, reflecting stc’s commitment to continuous improvement and compliance with the highest global standards in disclosure and sustainability.

This report highlights the company’s progress throughout the year, particularly following the establishment of the Sustainability Steering Committee, chaired by Engineer Moataz Abdullah Al-Darrab, CEO of stcKuwait. This committee has strengthened oversight of sustainability and ESG (Economic, Social, and Governance) initiatives and enhanced accountability and governance across various departments. The report affirms stc

Kuwait’s commitment to creating long-term value through responsible growth, digital innovation, enhanced social impact, robust governance, and environmental protection, aligning with Kuwait Vision 2035 and enabling a sustainable digital future for the country.

And in regards to governance and full transparency, stc Kuwait established a Sustainability Steering Committee, chaired by the CEO, to enhance oversight of ESG initiatives and ensure their integration across various departments.

The report was also prepared in accordance with the GRI standards, the SASB standards, and the Kuwait Stock Exchange’s ESG Disclosure Guide, in addition to aligning with the stc Group’s Sustainability Strategy and Kuwait Vision 2035.

On the environmental front, the company successfully reduced its diesel operating sites by 31% by adopting electric and hybrid power solutions. It also reduced its first-tier greenhouse gas emissions by approximately 23% compared to the previous year and fully digitized its paper-based forms and retail operations to support paperless processes.

In terms of talent/competency development, stc Kuwait achieved an employee experience index of 88.8%, the highest in the company’s history. It completed performance evaluations for all employees, maintained a 61% Kuwaiti workforce, and provided over 1,600 training hours during the year.

Regarding customers and digital innovation, the company served over 2.3 million subscribers while maintaining 100% 4G and 5G network coverage in Kuwait.

It achieved a 90.4% customer satisfaction rate and a 95% first-time call resolution rate. Furthermore, it continues to foster innovation through programs such as inspireU and Weyak, which support entrepreneurs and contribute to the development of digital solutions.

In the area of trust and cybersecurity, stc Kuwait recorded zero actual cyber breaches, zero breaches of customer privacy, and zero regulatory or legal violations during 2025, reflecting the strength of its cybersecurity and digital governance system.

Chart 1: Real estate sales



Source: Ministry of Justice (MoJ)

Chart 2: Real estate price index



Source: Ministry of Justice, NBK estimates

Table 1: Real estate sales & prices

	4Q24	1Q25	2Q25	3Q25	4Q25	1Q26	2Q26
(KD million)							
Total real estate sales	1,081.9	829.7	1,004.7	1,243.2	1,296.5	899.3	825.8
% Y/Y	40.4	19.0	17.7	46.8	19.8	8.4	-17.8
% Q/Q	27.7	-23.3	21.1	23.7	4.3	-30.6	-8.2
Residential	455.8	346.1	418.2	396.0	591.1	394.3	426.6
% Y/Y	29.2	-2.0	24.2	3.2	29.7	13.9	2.0
% Q/Q	18.8	-24.1	20.8	-5.3	49.3	-33.3	8.2
Investment	432.7	345.4	482.6	406.6	435.2	291.8	287.1
% Y/Y	87.6	49.0	116.2	28.2	0.6	-15.5	-40.5
% Q/Q	36.4	-20.2	39.7	-15.8	7.0	-33.0	-1.6
Commercial	193.3	138.2	103.9	440.6	270.2	213.3	112.1
% Y/Y	3.3	22.9	-64.6	201.5	39.7	54.3	7.9
% Q/Q	32.3	-28.5	-24.8	324.2	-38.7	-21.1	-47.4
Real estate price index (100=2019)	119.4	120.4	120.6	116.9	116.3	112.5	113.7
% Y/Y	-3.5	1.1	2.9	1.4	-2.6	-6.5	-5.8
% Q/Q	3.5	0.8	0.2	-3.1	-0.6	-3.2	1.0
Investment	105.7	107.1	106.1	104.7	106.3	107.0	105.1
% Y/Y	1.8	4.4	7.1	5.3	0.6	0.0	-0.9
% Q/Q	6.4	1.3	-0.9	-1.3	1.6	0.7	-1.8
Residential	134.6	135.3	136.9	130.6	127.4	118.7	123.2
% Y/Y	-7.7	-1.6	-0.5	-1.8	-5.4	-12.3	-10.0
% Q/Q	1.2	0.5	1.2	-4.6	-2.5	-6.8	3.8

Source: Ministry of Justice, NBK calculations NBK calculations

* The NBK real estate price index is based on a dataset of real estate transactions available at the Ministry of Justice website. The index is calculated on a quarterly basis by type of real estate for all governorates. The methodology is based on a fixed-weight Laspeyres type with the base year 2019.

Public-private partnership model highlighted in 'Wajhni' campaign

The Ministry of Higher Education praises KFH’s role in supporting ‘Wajhni’ campaign for scholarship students



Fahad AlSaad



Dr. Bader Al-Busairi



Jassim Al-Kandary showcasing the bank's services for students.



Dr. Bader Al-Busairi and higher education officials with officials from Kuwait Finance House.



Students flock to the Kuwait Finance House booth.



Dr. Bader Al-Busairi and officials from Kuwait Finance House were among the attendees.



Part of the audience.

KUWAIT CITY, July 15: The Undersecretary of the Ministry of Higher Education, Dr. Bader Al-Busairi, commended Kuwait Finance House (KFH) for supporting “Wajhni” national scholarship campaign. He emphasized that this partnership strengthens the Ministry’s efforts to prepare students studying abroad and serves as a prime example of a successful public-private partnership supporting Kuwaiti scholarship recipients.

This came on the sidelines of the orientation meeting held by the Ministry of Higher Education, in cooperation with KFH, for students admitted into the external scholarship plan for the 2026/2027 academic year.

Shaping the future

Head of Group Public Relations and Media at KFH, Yousef Abdullah Al-Ruwaieh, congratulated the admitted students, wishing them success and academic excellence on their path to contributing to the nation’s development.

He highlighted KFH’s pride in its ongoing partnership with the Ministry of Higher Education on “Wajhni” campaign, an initiative that has already reached thousands of students and parents, raised academic awareness and better prepared them for university life abroad.

Al-Ruwaieh emphasized that empowering youth and supporting education are core pillars of the bank’s social responsibility and sustainability strategy. This commitment stems from a firm belief in the power of education to build a brighter future and cultivate the local talent needed to drive national development and progress across all sectors.

Al-Ruwaieh highlighted “Wajhni” campaign as a highly successful model of public-private collaboration dedicated to supporting Kuwaiti scholarship students. The initiative guides students through every step of their academic journey, from early awareness and registration to comprehensive post-admission orientations that prepare them for university life. He emphasized that investing in these students today directly strengthens Kuwait’s future workforce and fuels national development.

Youth are the nation’s asset

Meanwhile, Senior Manager PR and Event Management at KFH, Fahad AlSaad, emphasized that the bank considers youth and students the na-

tion’s greatest asset. He highlighted KFH’s ongoing commitment to supporting educational initiatives that empower youth, sharpen their skills, and prepare them for successful future careers.

AlSaad pointed out that KFH’s participation in “Wajhni” campaign extends the bank’s commitment to supporting training and awareness initiatives that enhance youth job market readiness and develop their creative and innovative capabilities.

Four main topics

Presented by representatives of participating entities, the orientation meeting covered four main topics to prepare students for academic life abroad and familiarize them with key scholarship guidelines.

The educational and guidance topic addressed procedures required before starting the scholarship, while the security topic reviewed awareness guidelines on cybercrime, drug abuse, and prevention. The health topic highlighted key guidelines and instructions students need during their scholarship journey. Meanwhile, the banking topic, presented by strategic partner KFH, covered accounts and services tailored for studying abroad, as well as essential banking procedures before departure and during their studies.

Renewed US-Iran war pushes crude oil to the highest in a month

By KAMCO Invest

The re-escalation of tensions between the US and Iran caused oil prices to once again trade above the USD 80/b as the uncertainty surrounding a lasting peace deal in the region once again pushed a war premium into prices, erasing the declines seen over the previous three weeks. The latest surge in prices came after Iran announced the complete closure of the Strait of Hormuz following attacks by the US that caused a halt in the traffic through the Strait. A blockade reinstated by the US on the transit of Iranian ships through the Strait further pushed prices towards the USD 85/b mark. Prices also got a strong support from a global effort to rebuild inventories to attain energy resilience against future disruptions. Nevertheless, prices have seen consistent declines from over USD 120/b at the start of May-2026 to trade towards the USD 70/b by the end of June-2026.

The attacks during the weekend marked the first direct strike on energy infrastructure in the region in weeks after an offshore drilling platform in Kuwait was hit by a drone attack that caused damages at the facility. The US also struck a number of targets in Iran although both the sides acknowledged that contacts to reduce tensions continue. On the other hand, the war between Ukraine and Russia also escalated with Ukraine striking Rosneft’s Syzran oil refinery in Russia’s Samara region and a number of tankers in the Sea of Azov. Russia is also said to have retaliated with strikes on port facilities in Odesa and Chornomorsk as well as sea vessels. The attacks have caused a shortage of refined fuels with fuel rationing being implemented in several regions.

On the demand side, data from the US showed that refined fuel prices continue to remain elevated even though crude oil prices have receded. This comes despite refinery run rates reaching elevated higher levels. This has caused refining margins to reach all time highs, above the previous record level reached in 2022. The increase shows growing global demand for refined products as some of the key exporters of refined fuels, including the Middle Eastern players as well as Russia has experienced significant curbs. For instance, Russia has banned diesel exports and countries that were relying on Russian refined products like Turkey and Brazil are looking elsewhere for an alternative suppliers. In the Middle East region, the Strait of Hormuz is currently carrying close to 1 mb/d of refined fuel as compared to about 5 mb/d before the war.

On the supply front, global crude oil supplies witnessed a sharp recovery during June-2026 as a number of Middle Eastern producers regained pre-war level output levels. Crude oil output from OPEC producers increased by more than 2 mb/d during June-2026. Output in Kuwait reached near pre-crisis levels of around 1.9 m/d by the end of te month, although average output remained at 1.4 mb/d. Production by the UAE reached the highest level in six years at around 3.8 mb/d.

Oil Prices

Crude oil prices surged since the start of July-2026 as uncertainty over the US-Iran peace agreement increased followed by recent attacks. Brent futures prices saw a marginal gain during the week ended 3-July-2026 that came after three consecutive weeks of declines. This week started with crude oil trading with a gain of over 12% following the attacks and the closure of the Strait of Hormuz initially by Iran followed by the recent announcement by the US to block Iranian ships sailing through the Strait. Another key development was the demand from the US of a 20% reimbursement on cargo shipped through the Strait of Hormuz, which is around USD 30 Mn on full supertankers carrying oil, based on current prices.

The increase in crude oil prices had a broader economic impact and affected other asset classes including a sharp rise in 2-year treasury yields, a sell-off in the equity market and elevated US dollar against a basket of currencies. This also caused a fall in gold and sliver prices

while the economic growth projections for the Euro-area was further slashed to 0.5% for 2026 vs. an earlier forecast of 0.7% based on a recent poll of economists from Bloomberg. Higher crude oil prices are expected to feed into inflation in the US and globally that could cause an earlier-than-expected rate hike by the US Fed, based on latest consensus expectations.

In terms of monthly price trend, average crude oil prices in June-2026 showed the steepest declines since the pandemic. Average spot Brent crude oil price dropped for the second consecutive month and reached USD 85.2/b during June-2026 registering a decline of 21%, the biggest monthly decline since April-2020. On the other hand, average OPEC reference basket price witnessed a slightly bigger decline of 21.6% to reach average of USD 89.8/b during June-2026 from USD 114.6/b in May-2026. Kuwait export grade crude prices witnessed a slightly higher decline as compared to the three crude grades with a fall of 22.2% to reach an average of USD 92.3/b during June-2026. In terms of consensus estimates, there was broad-based decline in expectations for the next five quarters with Q3-2026 Brent crude prices expected to reach USD 80/b vs. an estimate of over USD 85/b last month.

World Oil Demand

OPEC once again for the third consecutive month lowered its forecast for global oil demand this year. The agency expects demand to grow by 0.78 mb/d in 2026 vs. previous forecast of a growth of 0.97 mb/d. For 2027, the agency expects oil demand to grow by 1.94 mb/d, an upward revision from a growth of 1.78 mb/d forecasted last month. On the other hand, forecasts from the IEA shows that for the first time since the pandemic in 2020, global oil demand is expected to contract by 1 mb/d during 2026 from its earlier forecast of a contraction of around 1.1 mb/d. As per the IEA, global oil demand recovery is on track after reaching a low of 97.9 mb/d in May-2026, down 5.3 mb/d as compared to May-2025. The agency expects global demand to increase by more than 8 mb/d by October-2026 from the May-2026 lows. As per the IEA, crude oil demand is expected to improve in future quarters led by a rebound in peak seasonal travel season in addition to the release of pent-up demand. As per the agency, quarterly demand for crude oil contracted by 4.8 mb/d y-o-y in Q2-2026 and is expected to see a smaller contraction in Q3-2026 by 1.7 mb/d, followed by a rise of 1.2 mb/d in the final quarter. For 2027, the IEA expects demand to growth by 2.0 mb/d.

Crude oil imports in China continued to drop in June-2026 with some analysts expecting the decline to be sharper than 6.4 mb/d of imports recorded in May-2026. As per vessel-tracking data from Signal Ocean, seaborne crude oil imports in China declined by 23% y-o-y during 1H-2026 to reach an estimated 1.44 billion barrels vs. 1.87 billion barrels during 1H-2025. The biggest decline was seen in May-2026 where-in imports almost halved and remained at lower levels in June-2026 whereas preliminary data and estimates for July-2026 shows a marginal m-o-m uptick of 2%. A report from Bloomberg showed that crude oil imports are expected to recover in coming months as China has relaxed fuel export curbs and has asked refiners to keep run rates high backed by purchase of crude oil from Saudi Arabia, Iraq and the UAE after the prices declined recently. As per the report, seaborne and pipeline imports are forecasted to return to pre-war levels by Q4-2026. Meanwhile, crude oil import by India reached a record high of 5 mb/d during June-2026 with 2.6 mb/d imports sourced from Russia.

World Oil Supply

World oil supply rebounded sharply during June-2026 after seeing three consecutive months of declines until May-2026. Data from IEA showed that world oil supply increased by 4.8 mb/d during June-2026 to reach 98.8 mb/d following a 0.6 mb/d decline in May-2026. The increase came after crude oil flows resumed from the Strait of Hormuz, although partially, in addition to record production from the US. However, the IEA said that despite an increase, world output remained close to 9.4 mb/d below pre-war levels. For the full year, the agency expects

world oil supply to decline by 3.7 mb/d to an average of 102.6 mb/d. For 2027, the IEA forecasts a growth of 7.5 mb/d provided transit volumes increase.

Meanwhile, the OPEC kept its forecast for non-DoC liquids production for 2026 broadly unchanged in its latest monthly report at a growth of 0.64 mb/d with Brazil, the US, Canada and Argentina being the key drivers of growth this year. At the country level, however, OPEC made a small upward adjustment to its supply forecast for the US and Latin America that was offset by a downward adjustment to supply forecast for the Middle East region. For 2027, the forecasts were also kept unchanged at a growth of 0.62 mb/d.

Oil production in the US reached record high levels last week at 13.9 mb/d after a weekly increase of around 50 tb/d. the higher output followed consistent increase in oil rig count in the US. Data from Baker Hughes showed nine weeks of growth in oil rigs in the US in the last eleven weeks, reaching the highest level in thirteen months at 445 oil rigs. The higher output also helped US refill its crude oil inventory stocks that increased for the first time in ten weeks to reach 411.3 million barrels during the week ended 3-July-2026. The disruption caused by the Middle East war forced countries to tap their oil reserves over the last few months. Data from China shows two consecutive months of decline in crude oil inventories with 43.2 million barrels of withdrawals from its vast reserves of close to 1.21 billion barrels.

OPEC Oil Production & Spare Capacity

OPEC crude oil production showed a partial recovery in June-2026 from a multi-decades low level seen during the previous month caused by the closure of the Strait of Hormuz. The growth in output came after a temporary peace deal between the US and Iran opened the critical route for around three weeks only to see a closure over the last weekend following a renewed war in the region. Average OPEC output increased by 2.34 mb/d during the month and stood at 18.75 mb/d, according to data from Bloomberg, led by a broad-based increase in production by almost all member countries in OPEC. Within the group, Kuwait witnessed the steepest increase of 870 tb/d with output averaging at 1.36 mb/d during June-2026. Reports citing oil industry sources in Kuwait showed that the country has restored output at a faster-than-expected pace to reach near pre-war level production of around 1.9 mb/d. However, the recent attacks on offshore drilling facilities may derail the pace of recovery fully to prewar levels. Saudi and Iran also increased production by 550 tb/d and 510 tb/d, respectively, while Iraq increased its output by 220 tb/d. On the other hand, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon were the only countries that showed a marginal decline in monthly crude oil production during June-2026, as per Bloomberg.

OPEC secondary sources showed OPEC output increasing by a slightly smaller pace of 1.41 mb/d during June-2026 (excluding output from the UAE). OPEC data also showed Kuwait seeing the fastest rate of production recovery in the group by 880 tb/d to reach an average output of 1.45 mb/d followed by Iraq that showed an increase of 446 tb/d to reach an average output of 1.97 mb/d. Iran also increased production by 155 tb/d to reach 2.44 mb/d during the month. On the other hand, OPEC secondary sources showed a decline in output in Saudi Arabia by 99 tb/d with average output reaching 6.8 mb/d.

Oil production in Nigeria increased by 150 tb/d as per Bloomberg, to reach 1.67 mb/d. A recent report from the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission showed that crude oil production in the country was the highest since April-2020.

Meanwhile, oil production in Russia increased by 120 tb/d in June-2026, as per data from the IEA, contrary to OPEC secondary sources that showed a decline in Russian output by 61 tb/d. The rest of the non-OPEC DoC countries showed only a marginal change in output.

Governor of Al-Asimah commends private sector’s role in supporting educational excellence

Warba Bank honors Kuwait’s top high school graduates



KUWAIT CITY, July 15: Warba Bank organized its annual ceremony to honor top-performing Kuwaiti high school graduates for the 2025/2026 academic year. The event was held under the patronage and in the presence of the Governor of Al-Asimah, His Excellency Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, alongside Shaheen Hamad Al-Ghanem, Chief Executive Officer of Warba Bank, and other bank executives.

The annual initiative reflects Warba Bank’s corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategy, which focuses on education, youth empowerment, academic excellence, and the development of national talent.

Recognized Student Categories:

The ceremony recognized outstanding Kuwaiti students across various educational tracks, including:

- **Public Education:** The top 10 students in the Scientific Stream and the top 10 in the Literary Stream.
- **Religious Education:** The top 10 students from the Religious Institute.
- **Private Education:** The top 5 students in the Scientific Stream and the top 5 in the Literary Stream.

Executive and Official Commentary:

Shaheen Hamad Al-Ghanem, Chief Executive Officer of Warba Bank, stated:

“We gather to celebrate a distinguished group of Kuwaiti students whose academic achievements reflect



Part of the honoring ceremony.

■ Shaheen Al-Ghanem: Investing in national talent is one of the most sustainable ways to build a knowledge-based economy

determination and hard work. At Warba Bank, we believe that investing in national talent is one of the most sustainable ways to build a knowledge-based economy, and we remain committed to supporting educational initiatives that develop a generation prepared to contribute to Kuwait’s future development.”

Al-Ghanem added that corporate social responsibility is embedded in Warba Bank’s institutional framework and is designed to create sustainable, long-term community impact, with education serving as a fundamental pillar.

His Excellency Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, Governor of Al-Asimah, commended Warba Bank’s annual initiative, noting:

“Honoring outstanding students serves as a strong community message that reinforces the value of education and diligence. These achievements reflect the dedication of students, their families, and educational institutions, supported by active private-sector participation in national development.”

About Warba Bank:

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

Combining outdoor CPE & eero Pro 7 for superior indoor Wi-Fi

Zain Kuwait brings an enhanced whole-home connectivity experience with latest 5G solution

KUWAIT CITY, July 15: Zain Kuwait is announcing its latest solution for a superior home internet experience, combining the Zain Outdoor 5G CPE router with the new eero Pro 7 mesh Wi-Fi 7 system to help customers enjoy stronger and more reliable connectivity and performance in challenging indoor environments.

Designed around real customer needs, the solution supports households facing weak indoor coverage, unstable home internet, or Wi-Fi challenges caused by home size, room layout, construction materials, insulation, basements, lower floors, and other structural barriers that can affect signal quality.

Leveraging the reliability and capabilities of the ZainOutdoor 5G CPE router, the solution is designed to better capture the 5G signal from outside the home and distribute high-performance connectivity indoors through the all-new eero Pro 7 mesh Wi-Fi system, creating amore reliable whole-home internet experience.

Zain’s latest offering delivers practical connectivity solutions that respond to customers’ everyday digital lifestyles, from streaming and gaming to remote work, online learning, video calls, and connected smart home devices. It also addresses growing demand from customers in larger homes and newly developed residential areas, such as Al-Mutlaa, where many households seek dependable home internet solu-



tions that suit the structure and location of their homes.

The new solution brings together the power of Kuwait’s most awarded 5G network and the next-generation mesh capabilities of eero Pro 7. This integrated setup, provided with outdoor installation support, is particularly relevant for customers who need better performance across

large villas, basements, far rooms, dedicated entertainment areas, home offices, and spaces where indoor reception may be affected by concrete, insulation, or distance from the main router.

This builds on Zain’s collaboration with eero, an Amazon company, bringing advanced mesh networking technology to Zain

customers in Kuwait and further strengthening the company’s home internet portfolio. With the addition of eero Pro 7, Zain is introducing a premium Wi-Fi 7 experience designed for modern homes with growing connectivity demands.

eero Pro 7 is a tri-band Wi-Fi 7 router engineered for powerful whole-home performance. It supports wireless speeds of up to 3.9 Gbps and more than 200 connected devices per unit, making it suitable for households with multiple users and high-bandwidth activities taking place at the same time, including 4K streaming, cloud gaming, online meetings, smart security systems, automation, and connected entertainment devices.

Through eero’s mesh technology, customers can extend coverage across multiple floors and rooms using connected access points that work together to create a seamless Wi-Fi experience. eero Pro 7 can operate in wired or wireless configurations, offering flexible deployment options depending on each home’s layout and connectivity needs.

Zain continues to reinforce its role as the digital lifestyle enabler and trusted connectivity partner of choice for households in Kuwait. By focusing on real home internet challenges and introducing solutions that combine 5G, outdoor connectivity, and advanced mesh Wi-Fi, Zain is helping customers build stronger, more reliable digital experiences at home.

‘Algorithm under fire’

26 Meta workers sue over AI-driven layoffs

WASHINGTON, July 15, (AP): A group of 26 Meta employees has sued the company, claiming it used artificial intelligence systems to select people for layoffs, disproportionately targeting those on medical, parental or family leave.

They are among the 8,000 employees, or about 10% of its workforce, Meta said it would lay off in May. The lawsuit filed late Monday in federal court in Oakland, California, claims the company used internal AI systems, keystroke and activity-monitoring data, AI token-usage dashboards and algorithmically assisted performance rankings, among other methods, to determine who would be laid off.

Many of these scores and ratings “by design, cannot be accumulated by an employee who is on protected medical or family leave, or whose output is reduced by a disability,” the lawsuit says. Meta, according to the lawsuit, did not account for protected leave when taking employees’ scores into account and “did not pause the system for the individualized, leave- and accommodation-neutral review that the law requires.”

As a result, people on protected medical or family leave were disproportionately selected for layoffs, the lawsuit says. Each of the 26 anonymous employees in the lawsuit took protected leave and requested or received a reasonable accommodation for disability. Though they have been notified of their layoffs, all 26 remain employed by Meta, with separations set to begin July 22.

Many of the employees in the lawsuit took pregnancy or parental leave, during which time they wouldn’t have worked and thus had their measured output reduced. Others took medical leave - one disclosed a “serious health condition and disability” that was approved by Meta’s own provider. But according to the lawsuit, he was “discouraged and deterred from taking that leave by a manager” who warned that doing so would result in his selection for the anticipated layoffs. Meta offered no accommodation for his disability, the lawsuit says.

Meta said in a statement that the claims “lack merit and are not based on facts. Workforce management and organizational decisions were and are made by people, not AI.”

About half the plaintiffs had taken leave for caregiving or pregnancy-related reasons. Eight are women who had taken maternity or pregnancy-related leave, four are men who had taken parental leave and one is a woman who had taken leave to care for a family member and later bereavement leave.

The lawsuit says the layoffs violated several state and federal laws, including the Family and Medical Leave Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Pregnancy Dis-



A Meta logo is shown on a video screen at LlamaCon 2025, an AI developer conference, in Menlo Park, Calif., April 29, 2025. (AP)

crimination Act and the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act.

The complaint also references “disparate impact liability,” a longstanding civil rights concept that President Donald Trump’s administration moved to abandon. Disparate impact, codified in Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, holds that facially neutral policies or practices can be discriminatory if they disproportionately burden a protected class of workers and aren’t necessary for the job.

The Trump administration has ordered federal agencies to deprioritize disparate impact liability enforcement, arguing that its use undermines “meritocracy” and encourages the assumption that any racial or gender imbalance in a workforce is the result of discrimination. The order has led the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to drop discrimination cases on behalf of some workers.

However, the lawsuit against Meta underscores that companies remain vulnerable to disparate impact litigation in the age of AI despite the Trump administration’s efforts to stamp out its enforcement. Workers are still free to pursue such lawsuits on their own if the EEOC rejects their complaints, and several state laws specifically prohibit disparate impact discrimination.

In the case against Meta, lawyers for the plaintiffs argued that the company’s “algorithmically assisted selection process, by systematically recording such absences as reduced performance, falls more heavily on women than on men.” That’s because women disproportionately take pregnancy and caregiving leave, according to the lawyers. The lawsuit cites Title VII’s prohibition on employment practices that have a disparate impact, as well as a landmark 1971 Supreme Court ruling that recognized the doctrine.

The plaintiffs’ lawyers said in a statement that the lawsuit asks for one thing - preserving the status quo to keep the workers employed pending arbitration. That’s because “once these separations are final, the harms are irreversible: employer-subsidized health coverage lost during pregnancy, postpartum recovery, and active medical treatment; time-bound leave rights extinguished; unvested equity forfeited; and immigration consequences triggered.”

High-tech exports lift China

China Q2 growth slows to 4.3%, weakest in 3 years

HONG KONG, July 15, (AP): China’s economy slowed sharply to a 4.3% annualized pace of growth in the April-June quarter, the government said Wednesday, the weakest in over three years.

The official data fell short of forecasts and was far below the economy’s strong 5% pace of growth in January-March, despite a surge in exports driven partly by the boom in artificial intelligence, and by robust global demand for Chinese electric vehicles.

China has largely shrugged off wider economic impacts from the Iran war as soaring energy prices pushed up global inflation. Exports rose 17.6% in the first half of the year from a year earlier, and 27% in June, according to customs data.

But domestic spending and investment have lagged, limiting the boost from export manufacturing for an economy that has struggled to regain momentum since parts of China were locked down during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“This was the slowest growth in any quarter since the lockdown-impacted fourth quarter of 2022,” said Lynn Song, chief economist for Greater China at ING Bank in a note.

Some economists say China’s economy is becoming increasingly unbalanced as heavy state support and private investments pour into frontier technologies like AI, computer chips and robotics while other areas such as lower-value manufac-

turing and jobs creating services industries languish.

Exports of high-tech products such as electric vehicles, computer chips and other electronic equipment have risen sharply, helped by hefty government support since China’s leaders have made development of advanced technologies a top priority.

China ran a record \$1.2 trillion global trade surplus last year, drawing complaints from policymakers in other countries over their trade imbalances with the world’s second-largest economy. Many have pointed to those heavy state subsidies, which they say contribute to an oversupply of manufactured goods that end up being exported overseas. Industrial output by value rose 5.4% in the first half of the year from a year earlier.

As is true in many countries, the expansion of AI and robotics has also raised worries at home over whether businesses will create enough jobs to sustain growth in the longer term.

Chinese families have cut back on big purchases, their appetite for spending constrained by a prolonged property slump and uncertainties over jobs and wages.

As China remains reliant on its exports to sustain overall growth, “China’s growth model has become increasingly imbalanced,” said Eswar Prasad, a professor of economics and trade policy at Cornell University. Substantially increasing

domestic demand will be tough as confidence remains weak, he added.

Mao Shengyong, deputy head of China’s National Bureau of Statistics, told reporters that given the increasingly unstable and uncertain global situation, the imbalance between strong supply and weak demand “remains acute” at home.

As China focuses on high-tech manufacturing and pursues “higher-quality economic growth,” it will work to build a robust domestic market and offer support to keep employment stable, he said.

Highlighting weaker points in the economy, investment in fixed assets, such as factory equipment, fell 5.7% year-on-year in the first half of the year, while retail sales of consumer goods climbed a meager 1.3%. Housing prices continued to fall.

China’s economy is going through a “significant transition,” said Wei Li, Head of Multi-Asset Investments at BNP Paribas Securities (China).

For the whole of 2026, Chinese leaders have set a growth target of 4.5% to 5%, slower than last year’s 5%. Overall economic growth for the first half of the year was at 4.7%, the data released Wednesday showed.

The International Monetary Fund recently raised its forecast for China’s annual growth by 0.2 percentage point to 4.6%. It expects China’s economy to expand just 4.1% in 2027.

Books

Former president reflects on leadership and defining decisions

Biden to publish ‘Promise Me, America’ memoir after Nov midterm elections

NEW YORK, July 15, (AP): Former President Joe Biden will publish a memoir this fall, publisher Little, Brown and Company told The Associated Press.

“Promise Me, America,” which Biden says will touch upon everything from the economy to his decision to drop his bid for reelection, is scheduled to come out Nov. 17.

The timing of the book - two weeks after midterm elections in which Democrats seek to regain control of Congress - could raise concerns within his party. Many Democrats remain divided on Biden’s legacy and his ill-fated determination to seek a second term in the White House, and leaders hope to keep the fall campaign focused on the record of Republican President Donald Trump.

“‘Promise Me, America’ is about the challenges we faced as a nation. It’s about the decisions I made and why I made them,” Biden said in a video statement accompanying Wednesday’s announcement. “Most of all, it’s about my faith in the promise of America.”

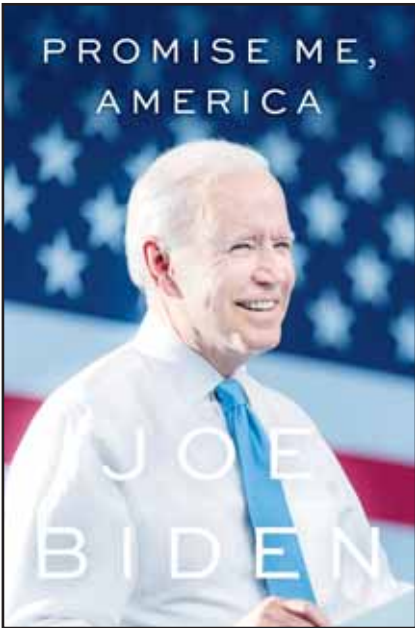
Reports of Biden’s book have circulated for more than a year, and the former president himself has referred to it during public remarks, appearing to suggest it would be

released before November’s election.

Biden, who will turn 84 three days after the publication of “Promise Me, America,” has long presented himself as an upholder of standards and traditions; presidential memoirs are one of them. With a handful of exceptions, modern presidents since Harry Truman in the 1950s have published books about their White House years. Little, Brown declined to release financial details for “Promise Me, America,” although presidents have usually reached deals worth at least seven figures.

The book’s title echoes a 2017 memoir by Biden, “Promise Me, Dad,” which centered on the death of his son, Beau Biden.

Vowing as a candidate to “restore the soul” of his country, Biden was sworn into office in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and in the aftermath of the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol by Trump supporters seeking to stop his certification as president. Biden’s term was defined by a wide range of conflicts and achievements, from his handling of wars in Ukraine and the Middle East to the passage of ambitious infrastructure and economic aid bills. But many readers will likely want to know more



This book cover image released by Little, Brown and Co. shows ‘Promise Me, America’ by Joe Biden. (AP)

about his health while president, including the disastrous debate in June 2024 against Trump that led to his giving up his reelection bid. Then-Vice President Kamala Harris, who ran instead, lost decisively to Trump.

Former first lady Jill Biden wrote in her own book that her husband seemed so weak and disoriented during the debate that she feared he was having a stroke. In “View from the East Wing,” published in June, she noted that the White House had initially said he was suffering from a cold.

“The biggest lesson for us, I think, was that if you don’t explain something well enough then the question won’t go away,” she wrote. “There was never a satisfying enough explanation offered for Joe’s debate performance, and a lot of people never got over it.”

Biden was the oldest man to serve as president and his health was a source of speculation for much of his term; Biden and his White House advisers have faced intense criticism from Democrats and Republicans for allegedly concealing the extent of his problems. A notable book release from 2025, Jake Tapper’s and Alex Thompson’s “Original Sin,” was subtitled “President Biden’s Decline, Its Cover-Up, and His Dis-

astrous Choice to Run Again.”

That same year, Biden announced he had been diagnosed with prostate cancer.

Biden’s previous books also include “Promises to Keep,” a campaign work published to boost his run for president in 2008, when Barack Obama was the eventual nominee and Biden his running mate. “Promise Me, America” comes out during a year when nonfiction sales have declined and few political books have caught on, although recent bestsellers have included Vice President JD Vance’s “Communion” and an inside account of Trump’s second term, by New York Times reporters Maggie Haberman and Jonathan Swan, “Regime Change.”

A Little, Brown spokesperson said that Biden plans to tour on behalf of the book and give interviews. In his video announcement, Biden said that many people had been asking him how he was doing.

“I’ve been spending a lot of time with my family. I’m dealing with a cancer diagnosis, been getting treatment, and it’s going really well,” he said. “I want to thank all those who have offered their prayers and support and well-wishes. It’s meant the world to me and to Jill.”

Obituary

Towering figure in editorial satire

Fearless Pulitzer-winning political cartoonist Pat Oliphant dies at 90

PHOENIX, July 15, (AP): Pat Oliphant, an influential political cartoonist known for creating caricatures of U.S. and world leaders, died Monday. He was 90.

Oliphant died at his home in Santa Fe, New Mexico, from age-related issues, said his son, Grant Oliphant.

A multidimensional artist who also created sculptures, lithographs and oil paintings, Oliphant was widely considered the most syndicated editorial cartoonist in the U.S. During the 1980s, his daily political cartoons appeared in more than 500 publications in the country and around the world.

For over five decades, Oliphant’s work ridiculed powerful figures - from President Lyndon B. Johnson to Donald Trump - with a blunt and meticulous stroke. He drew Jimmy Carter with large teeth and lips, alluding to his background as a farmer and the cultural stereotype of adaptation to rural work, and depicted Ronald Reagan, whom he thought was uninterested in the suffering of the American people, with a cork in his ear.

Those who knew Oliphant said his gift was to merge the shrewdness of an observer of the political scene with a witty sense of humor into art.

“He redefined what it meant to be a political cartoonist and to be fearless in his work,” said Bill Banowsky, director of the documentary A Savage Art: The Life & Cartoons of Pat Oliphant. “His work has a fierce pursuit of bringing injustice to light. And he was very effective.”

Oliphant tackled controversial subjects that were largely deemed unacceptable by the establishment at the time. That included the Catholic Church and its pedophilia scandals in 2002 and Israel’s offensive against Hamas in Gaza in 2008. But his ethnic caricatures also drew complaints



This 1964 photo shows political cartoonist Pat Oliphant. (AP)

about false stereotypes and racism from organizations like the Asian American Journalists Association and the American-Arab Anti-Dis-crimination Committee.

Born in Adelaide, Australia, in 1935, Oliphant started as a copy desk aide at a local newspaper, where he discovered his interest in art while seeing a cartoonist at work. His first in-house cartoonist job was at The Advertiser in his hometown.

“He decided cartooning could merge his interests in art and commentary,” Grant said. “He wanted to be the best in the world.”

About a decade after he moved to the U.S., Oliphant joined The Denver Post in 1964 and won a Pulitzer Prize for editorial cartooning in 1967. He thought the prize committee had honored the weakest piece of work he’d submitted for consideration, and criticized the prize process itself afterward.

Actor undergoes striking transformation for dark comedy

Tom Cruise’s longtime praise for ‘Amores Perros’ leads to ‘Digger’

BURBANK, California, July 15, (AP): Tom Cruise still remembers being in awe of Alejandro G. Iñárritu’s feature directorial debut “Amores Perros,” which took home the Academy Award for best international feature film in 2001.

“What a brilliant film. It was amazing,” Cruise told journalists at a recent press event. “Every aspect of that film was very thought out, very detailed, and you could feel the powerful human voice of someone who was incredibly skilled at what they were doing.”

Twenty-five years later, Iñárritu and Cruise have collaborated on the highly-anticipated dark comedy “Digger.” Cruise kicked off his promotional tour for the film - and previewed a potential Hollywood awards campaign - at a trailer reveal event last week on the Warner Bros. studio lot. He greeted and posed for photos with film journalists and influencers.

“He’s never made something like this before, nor have I,” said Cruise, who told journalists it felt as if all the skills he has developed throughout his 45-year acting career led up to his performance in the film, set for theatrical release on Oct. 2.

Iñárritu knew the role was meant for Cruise.

“The transformation he went through was astonishing,” said the filmmaker in a prerecorded video at Thursday’s event. “And I think we both know what it means to carry an entire career into a single moment like this. We both knew that throughout our journeys, we had never done anything even close to this.”

The 64-year-old actor and producer stars in Iñárritu’s “Digger” alongside a cast of A-list talent like



This image released by Warner Bros. Pictures shows Tom Cruise as Digger Rockwell in a scene from “Digger.” (AP)

John Goodman, Sandra Hüller, Riz Ahmed and Jesse Plemons.

Iñárritu first approached Cruise with the script and read it to him line by line over a series of days, a method Cruise says he asks of all collaborators.

“I’m listening to everything that’s in his mind, so that I can understand that, and then I know how to contribute to it, and bring that collaboration together. And to be there with

Alejandro, it was beautiful,” said the actor.

The trailer showcases an eccentric oil baron named Digger Rockwell, played by Cruise in heavy prosthetic makeup, whose company sets off a chain of events and hijinks.

Iñárritu says he had the idea for the film just after completing “The Revenant,” but it took him a decade to complete the story.

“Not script, not a film, just a re-

lentless recurring obsession that has endured through all these wild years. I knew who this character was,” said the Oscar-winning director. “I knew how he spoke, how he survived, how he seduced reality into agreeing with him ... I wasn’t looking for a story. I was looking for the right way of saying it.”

Like “The Brutalist” and “One Battle After Another,” the film was shot on VistaVision.

The Conversation

Black children’s books celebrating everyday joy face bans, yet they help all children understand human experience

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

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By Wintre Foxworth Johnson, University of Virginia; Brooke Harris Garad, Butler University; Jennifer D. Turner, University of Maryland, and Tiffany D. Meadows, University of Virginia

Since 2021, there have been nearly 23,000 bans on individual books in libraries and public schools. Many of these bans remove Black and LGBTQIA+ literature from bookshelves. Approximately 44% of the books banned in 2024 and 2025 featured characters of color and 39% featured characters who identify as LGBTQIA+.

Targeting books by or about Black people has a long history in the U.S., with classics like Toni Morrison’s 1987 “Beloved” frequently appearing on banned book lists. When books that highlight the richness of Black people’s lives are taken out of circulation or placed on a prohibited list, these stories and illustrations become less available to children of all backgrounds.

Research shows that children’s literature can help readers, including very young ones, see into others’ worlds and explore what it means to be human.

Informed by our roles as parents, educators and literacy researchers, we study “Black livingness” literature.

We describe Black livingness as Black chil-

dren’s fiction by Black authors that depicts Black children and families as whole, joyful, thriving and engaged in everyday acts of living.

Children’s literature can humanize Black people in a way that news coverage, television, films and school textbooks and curriculum often do not, helping to combat racial bias and stereotypes.

There are many Black children’s books that showcase the lives of well-known historical figures in the Black community, like Harriet Tubman, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rosa Parks.

These books demonstrate how these leaders and activists challenged racism, and they affirm that Black people’s fight against different social inequalities are important to Black life in the United States.

But resisting is not the only thing that Black communities do.

These books, particularly when the same few are repeatedly used in schools, run the risk of limiting children’s understanding of Black people’s lives.

All children benefit from reading Black children’s literature. Seeing Black children and their families living ordinary yet robust lives in stories undermines negative portrayals.

Our recent work showcases contemporary Black children’s books that illustrate rich depictions of Black life and provide helpful examples for young children of all backgrounds.

We have identified three important themes about Black life that emerged across a variety of contemporary Black children’s literature published between 2020 and 2024.

Research shows that extended members of Black families serve important psychological, fi-

nancial and emotional roles in many Black children’s lives.

Nancy Redd’s “Bedtime Bonnet,” for example, is a 2020 book that chronicles a little girl’s search for the bonnet she wears while sleeping, which she eventually finds atop her grandfather’s head.

“Bedtime Bonnet” illustrates the playfulness that can occur in an intergenerational household during the nightly bedtime routine.

The 2021 picture book by Winsome Bingham, titled “Soul Food Sunday,” details a little boy and his grandmother preparing Sunday dinner. “Soul Food Sunday,” highlights Black food culture and the important traditions that are passed down in the kitchen and at dining room tables.

Tricia Elam Walker’s 2021 book, “Dream Street,” illustrates the joy and hopefulness that abounds within a Black community on a block named Dream Street.

These books highlight the significance of extended families and normalize the role of grandparents, aunts, cousins and “othermothers,” - meaning women who care for children who are not biologically their own - in children’s living and growing.

Throughout Black Americans’ long history of struggling for freedom, imagination has been a way of dreaming up new conditions and clinging to hope for the future.

Today, contemporary children’s picture books like “The Year We Learned to Fly,” by Jacqueline Woodson, and “My Rainy Day Rocket Ship,” by Markette Sheppard, illustrate this tradition, as the children in both books engage in imaginative play on rainy days, transporting themselves elsewhere in the midst of boredom. (AP)

Variety

LOS ANGELES: Meghan, the Duchess of Sussex, has earned a Daytime Emmy nomination for her Netflix show.

The former actor who married Britain’s Prince Harry in 2018 was nominated in the outstanding lifestyle program category for “With Love, Meghan” on Tuesday.

The show is competing against “A Different Breed,” “George to the Rescue,” “The Motherhood,” and “The Wizard of Paws.”

The 53rd annual Daytime Emmy Awards will be presented Oct. 30 at the Hollywood Palladium.

The Duchess of Sussex’s show featured cooking, entertaining and gardening segments and included appearances by celebrities like Chrissy Teigen and Mindy Kaling, and a cameo by her husband, Prince Harry. The show aired for two seasons in 2025 and had a holiday special.

Then known as Meghan Markle, she starred in the legal drama “Suits” from 2011 to 2018, before leaving to marry into the royal family.

CBS received a leading 48 nominations.

The nominees for daytime



Markle

drama series are: “Beyond the Gates,” “Days of Our Lives,” “General Hospital,” and “The Young and the Restless.” (AP)

□ □ □

NEW YORK: The Writers Guild of America became the latest group to challenge Paramount’s \$81 billion acquisition of Warner Bros. Discovery on Tuesday, filing a lawsuit that seeks to block the merger on the grounds it would cause “specific harm” to movie and TV writers working across the U.S.

A Paramount-Warner merger “threatens the economic and creative health of the American entertainment industry,” reads Tuesday’s federal complaint, which was filed by both the Writers Guild of America West and Writers Guild of America East (jointly the WGA).

The union argued that the merger would create less competitors and give the larger company “both the incentive and the ability” to lower wages and the number of projects that offer workers employment.

“This proposed combined entity would be the largest employer of writers, with tremendous power to suppress our wages, eliminate opportunities for emerging writers, cut jobs across the industry, and produce less programming,” WGAE President Tom Fontana said in a statement.

A Warner-Paramount tie-up would bring together two of the five last legacy studios in Hollywood. (AP)

Gardening

From fungicides to watering habits, these tips help your garden thrive

Rose lovers’ guide to preventing and treating black spot

NEW YORK, July 15, (AP): Few garden plants attract as much admiration as roses. They’re as beautiful in the garden as they are in a vase, and their flowers are almost universally a symbol of love.

Unfortunately, they don’t always grow without challenges. Wilting, infestations and infections are not uncommon. And none are more dreaded than the often-deadly black spot disease.

Although there is no cure for black spot, it can be effectively managed - and future growth protected - with a bit of vigilance.

Caused by the fungus *Diplocarpon rosae*, black spot disease causes telltale black spots on foliage. Left unchecked, the often-fatal infection will diminish blooms and severely weaken plants, which increases their susceptibility to other diseases, pest infestations and winter injury.

If your plant is affected, prune away all infected leaves and branches and rake all fallen plant parts from the soil. Then, place the debris in a sealed bag and dispose of it in the trash; leaving it on the soil will lead to reinfection. Avoid doing this when the weather is humid, as spores spread rapidly when exposed to moisture.

There are many fungicides indicated for the prevention and treatment of black spot.

The most effective contain the chemical mancozeb. After cleaning up around the plants, apply the fungicide according to the package directions (probably three applications spaced 10 days apart). The fungicide should stop disease progression, and keeping the ground clear of affected leaves will prevent spores from making themselves at home in the soil, where they would otherwise reinfest



A bumblebee lands on a rose blossom at a horticultural exhibition in Erfurt, Germany, on June 8, 2018. (AP)

the plants.

Alternatively, Neem oil and copper fungicide are among the most environmentally friendly treatments for black spot. Apply after cleaning up around plants, as above, and take care to follow package directions carefully.

Next spring, when leaf buds begin to open, apply a preventive fungicide, such as Neem oil, copper or one containing the active ingredient potassium bicarbonate.

Spraying a solution of 1 tablespoon each of baking soda and ultrafine horticultural oil diluted in a gallon of water can also be a preventive against black spot and other fungal and mildew diseases. Don’t be tempted to use more baking soda than recommended, however. Its salt content can injure plants if overused.

Planting onions or tomatoes near roses will also help discourage black spot fungal infections.

Following best practices can go a long way, too: Space plants sufficiently to allow light and air to circulate between plants and into inner branches. Water deeply only once a week (less during rainy periods) using a soaker hose, which directs water straight to roots and keeps foliage dry. Overhead sprinklers and other methods that wet leaves encourage the growth of fungal diseases such as powdery mildew, in addition to black spot.

Selecting resistant varieties, especially in humid conditions, is the best way to avoid the disease. Shrub roses such as those in the Knockout and Oso Easy families, are among the most immune, but there are some cultivars of other species that offer varying degrees of resistance, too. When shopping for plants, you’ll find resistance information on labels and catalog descriptions.

Shanghai enters ‘AI moment’ with upcoming WAIC 2026

SHANGHAI, July 15, (Xinhua): Shanghai is ushering in its major AI moment of the year with the forthcoming 2026 World AI Conference (WAIC) and High-Level Meeting on Global AI Governance, scheduled from Friday to Monday.

Themed “AI Partnership for a Brighter Future,” the event will include more than 140 forums, bringing together 1,400 guests from home and abroad, while featuring six sections: Conferences & Forums, Exhibitions & Showcases, Awards & Competitions, Application Experiences, Innovation Incubation, and Talent Attraction.

The conference will be hosted across four venues in Shanghai’s Pudong, Zhangjiang and Xuhui. Activities will include the main forum, subforums, and exhibitions of smart devices, AI plus cul-

ture and entertainment experiences, and a wide range of cutting-edge AI products.

For the first time, the exhibition area will exceed 100,000 square meters, with over 1,100 enterprises expected to participate. Organizers said exhibitors will showcase more than 3,000 products and technologies, with over 300 products making their global debuts.

Among the exhibition highlights are Huawei’s latest AI computing super node system Atlas 950, MiniMax M3 multimodal foundation model, and the world’s first agentic AI phone, alongside a range of humanoid robots and AI-powered dexterous hands.

China has hosted WAIC for eight consecutive years, with the conference serving as a platform to forge global AI partnerships to unlock AI’s benefits for all.

Culture & Heritage

Experts reveal ancient Roman looks through DNA

Hungary exhibition revives forgotten faces



Visitors look at Roman-era skulls and their facial reconstructions in the Aquincum Museum’s exhibition titled “Once we were like you” which showcases characters and the fictional life stories of those who once lived in the bustling Roman settlement of Aquincum, in Budapest, Hungary, July 7, 2026. (AP)



Roman-era skulls and their facial reconstructions are on display at the Aquincum Museum’s exhibition titled “Once we were like you” which showcases characters and the fictional life stories of those who once lived in the bustling Roman settlement of Aquincum, in Budapest, Hungary, July 7, 2026. (AP)



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UK plans overnight social media curfew for teenagers

LONDON, July 15, (AP): The British government announced plans on Wednesday for 16 and 17-year-olds to face a voluntary overnight social media curfew, its latest attempt to reduce online harm for children.

It said that features that can keep users scrolling for longer, such as videos that automatically play one after another, will also be switched off by default for older teenagers.

Critics questioned the effectiveness of the measures given that the teenagers will be able to switch off these default settings.

The planned restrictions come a month after the government unveiled a social media ban for under-16s, which is expected to cover platforms including Snapchat, TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, Facebook and X, but not messaging services like WhatsApp and Signal, from next spring.

The measures, which are one of the final acts of the government of Prime Minister Keir Starmer, will have to be legislated upon. It is widely believed that his expected successor Andy Burnham will follow through with the plans.

Kanishka Narayan, the U.K.’s online safety minister, downplayed talk that teenagers would just turn off optional social media curfews, saying it is a “disservice” to them to suggest they would.

He pointed to a recent pilot program involving more than 300 teenagers and parents across the U.K. that saw social media usage drop dramatically overnight as well as helping improve sleep and concentration.

وزارة التجارة والصناعة
Ministry of Commerce & Industry
دولة الكويت : دولة الكويت



Toyota LANDCRUISER PRADO
Model Year: 2024 & 2025

VIN:JTEAACAJR0002466 TO JTEAACAJXS027431

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@MOCIKW

BUDAPEST, Hungary, July 15, (AP): A blacksmith, a stable boy, a soldier, a slave: The faces and stories of these and other residents of an ancient Roman city in modern Hungary have been brought to life in remarkable fidelity for a new exhibition in Budapest.

The display, which runs until Oct. 31, showcases highly detailed facial reconstructions from over a dozen skulls found in the ancient city of Aquincum, once a bustling Roman settlement on the empire’s Danube frontier.

Visitors to the Aquincum Museum come face-to-face with hyperrealistic models of Roman-era individuals, each crafted using DNA analysis and other techniques from fields such as archaeology and anthropology to determine how the people may have looked in life nearly 2,000 years ago.

“Our main goal was to bring a few of these individuals closer to the people of today,” said Loránt Vass, an archaeologist and the exhibition’s co-curator.

The title of the exhibition, “Once we were like you,” attempts to answer questions about ordinary people in ancient societies: What did they look like? What were their names? What was their fate?

Experts with the Aquincum Museum used DNA analysis of unearthed bones to reveal skin, hair and eye color and whether the person may have had freckles.

The shape, density and other characteristics of the skull revealed details of the structure of the face as well as the person’s age and whether they had sustained any injuries or suffered from disease.

Based on the findings, curators came up with names, trades and biographical stories to each of the reconstructed faces, giving them new life.

Péter Vámos, another of the exhibit’s co-curators, said the invented details were “based on authentic historical foundations” as well as information gathered from analysis of the skulls, which are displayed under the reconstructions.

“We don’t even know their names, unfortunately, but we tried to incorporate everything that anthropology and genetic studies could tell us about their life history,” he said.

One character, a construction worker they named Respectus, is described as having made his living in Aquincum plastering walls and splitting stone blocks. The exhibit says the work took its toll on his bones, and in a wine-fueled skirmish in a local tavern, his nose was broken and one of his teeth knocked out.

The story and social status of Respectus is typical of many Aquincum residents depicted. Vass said their studies showed that the bones of almost all individuals show a “fairly high degree” of inflammation.

“They were subjected to regular physical labor, and in many cases they were exposed to starvation for a certain period of time,” he said. “Based on this, it can be concluded that most of them belonged to the lower middle class, which is the least remembered segment of Roman society.”

Of the 16 reconstructions, six are silicon moldings that have been painted and meticulously adorned with true-to-life hair, clothing and jewelry.

Emese Gábor, who handcrafted the silicon reconstructions, said that while artificial intelligence also can be used to model ancient faces, “they just appear on a screen.”

“The advantage of this kind of reconstruction is that it can be displayed in a museum, it can be viewed from all angles and is totally life-size,” she said. “I stick to scientific methods and combine classical and modern scientific methods in this work.”

Tibetan heritage meets modern design in Paris

CHENGDU, July 15, (Xinhua): In a workshop in southwest China’s Sichuan Province, a discarded aluminum can left behind by a guest at a village homestay is melted down and recast as a snow leopard, using the ancient craft of Lima copper casting. The intricate technique has been practiced by Dawa Drolma’s family for seven generations.

It involves blending gold, silver, tin, zinc and other metals. For centuries, Lima copper was used mainly for Buddhist statues and ritual objects. Dawa Drolma and her brother have since introduced rings, necklaces and pendants, bringing a craft once associated with temples into everyday life.

The transformation reflects a broader trend across China’s Tibetan-inhabited regions, as a new generation of artisans and entrepreneurs adapts centuries-old traditions for contemporary markets, while preserving the techniques and stories that define them.

Dawa Drolma grew up witnessing the chal-



Left: Craftswomen weave Pulu, a traditional Tibetan woolen fabric, in Gyangze County in southwest China’s Xizang Autonomous Region. Right: This photo taken on April 11, 2026 shows jewelry featuring Tibetan cultural elements at a shop of Jiayu, a Chengdu-based lifestyle brand, in Chengdu, southwest China’s Sichuan Province. (Xinhua)



lenges of bringing these treasures beyond her hometown. The aspiration took her to the United States in 2013, where she pursued marketing and business management studies. She returned to Garze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture four years later, determined to transform the family workshop.

“Young Tibetans today understand both our own traditions and the outside world,” she said. “That allows us to build a bridge between them.”

Dr. Al-Nibari underscores importance of avoiding prolonged exposure to direct sunlight

MoH launches ‘Summer is Only Sweet with Your Well-being’ awareness campaign

KUWAIT CITY, July 15: The Ministry of Health on Tuesday launched an awareness campaign titled, “Summer is Only Sweet with Your Well-being,” which will run until July 23 in seven primary healthcare centers in various governorates to raise public awareness on the prevention of seasonal illnesses, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press statement, Dr. Noor Al-Nibari, a family medicine consultant and head of the Patient Empowerment Program, disclosed that dehydration, sunburn and heatstroke are among the most common problems during summer, which require special care.

Al-Nibari underscored the importance of avoiding prolonged exposure to direct sunlight during summer, particularly from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm.

She added that children and the elderly are the most vulnerable to dehydration, so they should avoid exposure to direct sunlight.

She also stressed the need to use sunscreen, wear long-sleeved clothing and drinking enough water.



A view of the exhibition held as part of the ‘Summer is Only Sweet with Your Well-being’ awareness campaign.



KUNA photos



A view of the exhibition held as part of the ‘Summer is Only Sweet with Your Well-being’ awareness campaign.



Dr. Noor Al-Nibari, a family medicine consultant and head of the Patient Empowerment Program



A view of the exhibition held as part of the ‘Summer is Only Sweet with Your Well-being’ awareness campaign.

Study shows blood test can help identify healthy people at high risk for Alzheimer’s disease

WASHINGTON, July 15, (AP): A blood test may predict if apparently healthy older adults are likely to develop Alzheimer’s symptoms in the next five or 10 years, researchers reported Wednesday.

That information could be reassuring or terrifying, but for now it’s a potential tool to speed drug development by helping to identify and enroll high-risk people into studies of possible Alzheimer’s treatments or preventive strategies.

Already large clinical trials are testing if certain drugs could prevent or at least delay the disease - and if any of those pan out, doctors will need an easy way to tell who should try them.

The scientists behind the new study stress that it’s too soon for healthy people to seek out the so-called p-tau217 test, which is currently used to help diagnose whether people experiencing cognitive problems have Alzheimer’s or another disorder.

“Wait and get tested when you can potentially do something about it,” stressed Dr. Reisa Sperling of

the Mass General Brigham Neuroscience Institute, the study’s senior author. “At this point it wouldn’t change what I would tell someone to do. I’d still tell them to eat well, sleep well, exercise a lot and stay engaged.”

The new findings showed that symptom-free older adults who harbored very high levels of p-tau217 had a 38% risk of developing cognitive impairment over five years. That risk grew to 78% by 10 years.

The research was published in JAMA and presented at the Alzheimer’s Association International Conference in London.

It’s not clear exactly what causes Alzheimer’s, but its telltale markers are brain-clogging amyloid plaques and neuron-killing tau tangles. The p-tau217 test measures a form of tau that correlates with how much plaque buildup someone has and gives a hint about tangles, Sperling said.

The Mass General Brigham team analyzed data from 2,684 older adults who were healthy when

they’d joined some long-running Alzheimer’s studies, receiving the p-tau217 blood test at enrollment and yearly cognitive checkups. Between the earliest enrollment in 2004 and last year, about 478 had developed cognitive impairment.

Study participants with very low p-tau217 levels likewise had a low risk of developing cognitive impairment over the five- to 10-year period.

There’s a conundrum in predicting Alzheimer’s: Lots of people harbor high levels of amyloid plaques yet never get dementia. A leading theory is that at some point amyloid buildup triggers an abnormal type of tau to form tangles, leading to symptoms.

Sperling said the blood test data offers some new clues. While different intermediate levels of p-tau217 signaled progressive risk, only the very highest level seemed to correlate with other evidence about that tipping point.

“This is a gradual process where amyloid and tau build up in the brain and this blood-based biomarker is

telling you how far you are in that process,” she said.

Scientists not involved in the study praised it but also offered some reasons to be cautious. One is that only a small fraction of study participants had been tracked for a full decade, so there’s less confidence in the 10-year risk estimate than the five-year risk estimate.

Also, the predictions could be clouded by other factors - older people may be at risk of dying from something else, or have heart-related problems that can cause vascular dementia rather than Alzheimer’s, noted Drs. Suzanne Schindler of Washington University in St. Louis and David Wolk of the University of Pennsylvania in a commentary published in JAMA.

The blood tests “are not yet precise enough to guide individualized prognosis,” wrote Schindler, who also studies p-tau217’s prognostic potential, and Wolk. Still, they said the new work has “provided a crucial piece of the puzzle.”



A human brain affected by Alzheimer’s disease is displayed at the Museum of Neuroanatomy at the University at Buffalo in Buffalo, NY, on Oct 7, 2003. (AP)



A Soyuz rocket launches to the International Space Station carrying Expedition 75 crewmembers, NASA astronaut Anil Menon, Roscosmos cosmonauts Pyotr Dubrov and Anna Kikina, at the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan on July 14. (AP)

US-Russian crew arrives at International Space Station for 8-month mission

MOSCOW, July 15, (AP): A US-Russian space crew arrived Tuesday at the International Space Station after launching from the Russia-leased Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan.

NASA astronaut Anil Menon and Russian crewmates Pyotr Dubrov and Anna Kikina lifted off as scheduled at 7:47 p.m. (10:47 a.m. EDT, 1447 GMT) aboard the Roscosmos Soyuz MS-29 for an eight-month stint on the orbiting outpost. Their spacecraft docked smoothly at the station in automatic mode about three hours after the launch.

NASA Administrator Jared Isaacman attended the launch, the first visit to Baikonur by a NASA chief in eight years that highlighted the ongoing cooperation in orbit between Moscow and Washington, despite tensions over Russia’s military action in Ukraine.

Before the launch, Isaacman met



Expedition 75 Roscosmos cosmonaut Anna Kikina, (top), NASA astronaut Anil Menon, middle, and Roscosmos cosmonaut Pyotr Dubrov, (bottom), wave farewell prior to boarding the Soyuz MS-29 spacecraft for launch on July 14 at the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan. (AP)

ration Roscosmos, Dmitry Bakanov. Speaking during Monday’s meeting with the crew, Isaacman thanked Roscosmos for its efforts to prepare for the mission, saying that “the integrated work performed over the past several months reflects the professionalism and dedication of everyone involved.”

Isaacman also had a meeting with Russia’s Deputy Prime Minister Denis Manturov. Manturov’s office said they discussed prospective cooperation on the International Space Station and other projects.

The mission is Menon’s first space flight and the second for Dubrov and Kikina.

The trio will join NASA astronauts Jessica Meir, Jack Hathaway and Chris Williams, European Space Agency astronaut Sophie Adenot and Roscosmos cosmonauts Sergei Kud-Sverchikov, Sergei Mikaev and Andrei Fedyaev.

DR Congo Ebola cases top 2,000 amid WHO warning of hidden toll

KINSHASA, July 15, (Agencies): Confirmed Ebola cases in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) have surpassed 2,000 as the World Health Organization (WHO) warned the true scale of the outbreak could be “at least two to four times” the reported caseload.

A total of 2011 confirmed cases, including 754 deaths, were reported, according to the latest report released by the country’s health authorities on Tuesday.

The announcement came as the WHO warned earlier in the day that undetected transmission, community deaths and rapid geographic expansion threatened to keep the response behind the epidemic curve.



Health workers walk at the Evangelical Medical Center, in Bunia, eastern Congo on July 3, 2026. (AP)

Chikwe Ihekweazu, executive director of the WHO Health Emergencies Programme, said the current outbreak, caused by the Bundibugyo Ebola virus, was growing faster than any Ebola outbreak.

The outbreak, declared in mid-May, has spread to five provinces and is already the third-largest Ebola outbreak ever recorded, according to the WHO.

“We’ve seen the fastest growth in a single month since the outbreak started and of all the Ebola outbreaks that we have managed,” said Ihekweazu.

“This is a fire,” he said, describing the epidemic that is being fuelled in its core areas while simultaneously spreading outward.

The outbreak appears to be entering a “new phase” characterized by progressive geographic expansion beyond its original epicentre in the Ituri province, said a weekly situation report by the WHO regional office for Africa released Tuesday.

The outbreak has newly spread to two more provinces, namely Tshopo and Haut-Uele, increasing the complexity of the response and elevating the risk of further national and cross-border spread, the report said.

DRC health authorities said on Tuesday that the emergence of new cases in Haut-Uele, which has so far reported 14 cases, including 13 deaths, indicated a further geographical spread, requiring an immediate strengthening of surveillance, diagnostic capacity and operational preparedness.

The detection of cases in Kisan-

gani, a city of more than 1.6 million people and a major transport hub linking east and west of the country, highlighted the risk of wider transmission along key transport corridors, including the Congo River, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs warned on Tuesday.

Despite improvements in laboratory capacity and contact monitoring, around 80 percent of newly confirmed patients were not previously listed as contacts of known cases, which means they were emerging from “unknown chains of transmission,” Ihekweazu said.

As of Monday, 12,430 contacts of confirmed cases have been under surveillance, with the follow-up rate at 67.4 percent, health authorities said, well below the recommended operational target of 95 percent.

The mortality pattern points to the same delays. During the reporting period, 205 confirmed deaths were recorded, nearly 68 percent of which occurred outside treatment facilities, indicating that delayed presentation for care continues to contribute substantially to mortality, said the WHO report.

The current outbreak is caused by the Bundibugyo Ebola virus, for which there is no approved vaccine or specific treatment, unlike the better-known Zaire species.

On Tuesday, a first clinical trial was launched to assess whether the

antiviral obeldesivir can prevent Bundibugyo Ebola infection after exposure.

The trial is being conducted in the DRC and Uganda and aims to enroll nearly 1,000 adults and children aged over 12, said the WHO. Eligible participants must have had direct contact with a confirmed patient, an infected body or a contaminated needle within the previous five days. Recruitment will continue in line with the evolution of the outbreak.

A separate WHO-backed trial, PARTNERS, was launched in the DRC on July 2 to evaluate treatments for patients already infected, as the trial is assessing the monoclonal antibody MBP134 and the antiviral remdesivir, individually and in combination.

Wider crisis

The Ebola response is unfolding against the backdrop of a much broader humanitarian emergency in eastern DRC, where armed violence, mass displacement, food insecurity and multiple disease outbreaks are competing for already limited resources.

Treatment capacity is under mounting strain. As of Monday, 753 patients were in isolation or hospitalization, while Ebola treatment and care facilities were operating at an average of 87.4 percent occupancy nationwide and at or near full capacity in several high-transmission areas, said authorities.

Sun hold off late Fire rally in thriller

Mystics roll past Tempo behind Iriafen’s double-double

TORONTO, July 15, (AP): Kiki Iriafen had 25 points and 14 rebounds, Shakira Austin added 17 points and 10 rebounds, and the Washington Mystics beat the Toronto Tempo 79-62 on Tuesday night.

The Mystics began the second half on an 11-3 run, capped by an Iriafen layup, to take their first lead, 37-35, since the midway point of the first quarter.

Washington outscored Toronto 53-30 in the second half.

Michaela Onyenwere added 15 points for Washington (12-10), which outrebounded Toronto 46-26 and got 20 second-chance points compared to the Tempo’s

three. All-Star Sonia Citron played 31 minutes and was held to just two points - the lowest scoring game of her two-year career.

Julie Allemand led short-handed Toronto (10-14) with 15 points and Nyara Sabally added 13. Brittney Sykes (left plantar fascia), Kiki Rice (left ankle sprain) and Temi Fagbenle (concussion) did not play.

Isabelle Harrison and All-Star Marina Mabrey had eight points apiece in the Tempo’s lowest scoring game this season. Toronto’s previous low was a 68-65 loss to Washington in its first regular-season game on May 8.

Mystics: Host Portland on



Washington Mystics' Nyla Harris (2) shoots on Toronto Tempo's Marie Conde during the second half of a WNBA basketball game in Toronto. (AP)

Thursday.

Tempo: Host Atlanta on Friday.

Sun 90, Fire 87

In Uncasville, Conn., Aaliyah Edwards scored 21 points off the bench, Brittney Griner added 20, and the Connecticut Sun beat the Portland Fire 90-87 on Tuesday.

Leila Lacan went coast-to-coast for a reverse layup to give Connecticut a 90-83 lead with 1:13 left. But Lacan missed a layup on the Sun’s next possession and then turned it over with 20 seconds left to give Portland another chance.

Portland called a timeout with 7.4 seconds left, trailing by three. Carla Leite drove into the lane and found Bridget Carleton in the cor-

ner for a 3-point attempt, but it did not hit the rim as time expired.

Olivia Nelson-Ododa had 16 points and Lacan added 14 for Connecticut (6-18). The Sun shot 53% from the field despite going 3 of 14 from 3-point range.

Leite led Portland (10-14) with 18 points. Gustafson added 15, Emily Engstler had 14 and Bridget Carleton 12.

Portland scored the opening eight points of the fourth quarter to cap a 13-0 run spanning the third-quarter break and get within 72-71. But Portland was unable to take the lead after that.

Fire: At Washington on Thursday.

India defeats England as tour drought finally ends

Patel joins elite ODI list with fifty & four-for

BIRMINGHAM, England, July 15, (AP): India finally ended a long winless run on tour with a six-wicket victory over England in a one-day international at Edgbaston.

England rallied from 107-6 to be 258 all out but couldn’t defend the total. India paced the run chase superbly and reached 262-4 with 28 balls remaining.

The victory revives what has been a dismal tour for India. The Twenty20 world champion was blanked in that format by Ireland in Belfast 2-0 and by England 4-0, surrendering its No. 1 T20 ranking.

But reinforcements including captain Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma, Jasprit Bumrah and Lokesh Rahul - many of whom hadn’t played for weeks - proved too good for England at the start of a three-match ODI series.

The only blemish for India was Gill retiring hurt on 80 due to cramps. Gill was well poised for his third century in his last five internationals for India until he hobbled off. He said he should be available for the second ODI on Thursday in Cardiff.

“We were put under pressure but how we bounced back was important,” Gill said. “The conditions were similar to South Africa (which hosts the 50-over World Cup next year) - not easy for the batsmen with the new ball, it was kicking up. The wicket then settled nicely.”

The target was nicely taxing but India’s risk-free run chase had to overcome a couple of wobbles.

Openers Sharma and Kohli were dismissed cheaply inside the first nine overs.

Gill restored confidence with a



India's Shubman Gill bats during the first ODI cricket match between England and India in Birmingham, England. (AP)

half-century from 51 balls, including 30 from boundaries. When he retired hurt, India had another wobble of three wickets in 15 deliveries.

Shreyas Iyer was run out on 35 by Harry Brook and Rahul played on to Josh Tongue.

But allrounders Washington Sundar and Axar Patel recovered the momentum with constant singles that wore down England hopes.

Sundar survived on 28 when the ball bounced off his pad and shoe and hit the stumps but didn’t knock off a bail. He and the more aggressive Patel strolled to victory with an unbeaten partnership of 102 from a

leisurely 105 balls.

Patel was 57 not out for his fourth ODI half-century, and Sundar hit a career-best 52 with a winning six down the ground.

Patel was named the player of the match for also taking England’s last four wickets. He’s the sixth Indian man to get a half-century and a 4-for in an ODI and first since 2022 by Hardik Pandya against England in Manchester.

Patel broke the partnership that saved England’s innings.

At 106-7, Liam Dawson joined Joe Root and they combined for 121 to lead England past 200.

Dawson earned his first career ODI half-century in his 10th match. Root followed with his 66th ODI 50.

But spinner Patel got Dawson caught on the boundary for 68.

Patel was summoned again when seamer Gurnoor Brar couldn’t bowl the 48th over, apparently injured in his run up. Patel took the last two wickets and stranded Root on a run-a-ball 76. And England left 13 balls unused.

Ben Duckett’s 43 gave England a flying start after choosing to bat but his wicket alongside fellow opener Jacob Bethell and Brook in the span of six balls ultimately cost the host.

A shift from frustration to perspective

Scheffler eyes British Open bounce back

SOUTHPORT, England, July 15, (AP): Scottie Scheffler finally heard about the text his PGA Tour friend never sent, a reminder that even the No. 1 player in golf with four majors and more than 20 victories doesn’t know everything.

It was a list of things to do on the weekend after missing the cut.

“He was like: ‘Hey, you can practice at the facilities. You can still go to the gym. You can also go to the next tournament.’ It was basically all my options,” Scheffler said Tuesday ahead of the British Open. “He never sent it to me, but he told me about it.”

The reason the text was created - without being sent, to Scheffler’s disappointment - was missing the cut at the Scottish Open, his first missed cut in nearly four years, a streak of 78 consecutive cuts that was the longest since Tiger Woods set the record (142) from 1998 to 2005.

Frustrating, yes. Despair? Hardly.

“You never want to have a weekend off, but going into a tournament when you’re defending, there’s al-

ways a bit more stuff to do,” Scheffler said. “So it wasn’t the worst thing in the world.”

Among his duties was officially returning the claret jug he won last year at Royal Portrush, a ritual the Royal & Ancient has turned into a ceremony. Then, it was playing an exhibition with Jordan Spieth, Tommy Fleetwood, Justin Rose and others.

But key to Scheffler’s early arrival was Royal Birkdale, which has hosted the British Open more than any other links course in England since it first joined the rotation in 1954.

He had never seen it. Scheffler had not seen conditions like this - a combination of yellow and brown, which translates to firm and fiery in a links vocabulary. St. Andrews came close in 2022, but Jon Rahm recalls the greens still being soft enough to allow for low scoring.

Scheffler ticked off two items on his friend’s list - he went to the gym in Scotland and then headed to the next tournament. That allowed him time to play 18 holes on Sunday, and to limit



Scottie Scheffler of the United States looks at his putt on the 10th green during a practice round for the British Open Golf championships at Royal Birkdale golf club, in Southport, England. (AP)

his energy in sunbaked Blighty to nine holes on Monday and Tuesday.

His general assessment: “The ball is just going to run forever.”

Is it driver to take it over the bunkers and possibly reach the green on the 393-yard, downwind 16th hole, or hit iron off the tee? Is the redesigned fifth hole at 321 yards worth trying to reach with a pond to the right, a series

of bunkers short and a wee part of a wee burn to the left?

“On each hole there’s a good bit of strategy. There’s a decent amount of thinking,” Scheffler said. “If it wasn’t as firm as it is now, there would be as much decision-making. But I think with the firmness, it creates a whole lot more challenges.”

Rose is among four players - and at 45, the youngest - to have played Royal Birkdale three times in the Open dating to 1998. He was a 17-year-old amateur that year, full of joy and optimism when he holed out a wedge for birdie on the 18th to tie for fourth. He didn’t finish in the top 50 his two times as a professional.

Rose certainly has more experience than Scheffler, but only to a point.

“A links course is interesting because you never really get to know them that well,” Rose said. “Like 2008 I think it was, weather was dreadful. It was wet. You might have been hitting 2-irons and 3-woods into par 4s, and now you could be flicking 52-degree wedges.

Al-Nasr retains Al-Daihani

KUWAIT CITY, July 15: Al-Nasr Club has reaffirmed its confidence in Waleed Al-Daihani, retaining him as the club’s futsal director for the upcoming period in recognition of his dedication and contributions over recent years.

The club’s board commended Al-Daihani for his key role in developing the futsal program, praising his effective leadership and administrative efforts that have helped raise the team’s standards and strengthen its competitiveness. The board also wished him continued success as he seeks to guide Al-Nasr to further achievements.



Waleed Al-Daihani, Al-Nasr Club's futsal director.

Tielemans joins Man United

Lewy ready to provide big lift to Chicago Fire

CHICAGO, July 15, (AP): Robert Lewandowski is looking forward to providing a big lift to the Chicago Fire as he is set to join Major League Soccer.

The 37-year-old, who signed a two-year contract with the Fire, knew he didn’t want to stay in Europe when his contract expired with Barcelona in May.

“I couldn’t imagine myself with a different club besides Barcelona, so that’s why we knew that the next step would be outside of Europe and of course, that it’s not easy to move from Europe to USA, but we are very excited,” Lewandowski said on Tuesday at an introductory news conference at the club’s training facility. “But of course, our lives are changing, but it’s a new experience.”

Lewandowski scored 119 goals in 192 appearances for Barcelona. He helped Barcelona win three La Liga championships in four seasons, including this year, and one title at Copa del Rey, Spain’s national tournament.

Lewandowski also has played a record 167 international games for Poland, beginning with a goal in his debut against San Marino in 2008, when he was 20. Lewandowski is Poland’s all-time leading scorer with 89 goals.

Lewandowski is a designated player, one of three roster spots that MLS teams carry that can exceed the salary cap. The Fire are scheduled to open McDonald’s Park, a soccer-specific stadium, in 2028.

“I see the potential to win titles with the new club,” Lewandowski said. “I’m very happy because it’s the new step in my career, the new step in my life. Now, we’re in a good position, but of course, we have to start working hard, and I also hope that we can enjoy after this season, a lot of what we achieved.”

Adding a player with the resume of Lewandowski was a no-brainer for Fire coach Gregg Berhalter.

The team is in third place in the Eastern Conference as the league prepares to resume after its World Cup break this week. The Fire host the Vancouver Whitecaps on Thursday night, and Lewandowski could make his club debut then.

“This is a massive signing for our football club,” Berhalter said. “We’re excited to bring Robert to the club. We’re excited to see how he can change the culture.”

“We have a good team right now, I think Robert is a piece that can help take us to the top.”

Lewandowski is expected to

form a strike partnership with Hugo Cuypers, who is the league’s leading scorer with 13 goals.

“It’s not too common to play with two strikers nowadays, but we’ve been working hard on what that looks like around the penalty box, what combinations look like, how to affect the back line with two strikers and we have some really good data points,” Berhalter said.

“We’ve been scoring goals lately, we’ve been really picking apart the back line and we don’t see any reason why that can’t continue with Hugo and Robert on the field together.”

Meanwhile, Manchester United signed Belgium midfielder Youri Tielemans on Tuesday on a five-year contract from Aston Villa.

The announcement of the deal for Tielemans for a reported 35 million pounds (\$46.8 million) comes a day after Brazil midfielder Andrey Santos joined from Chelsea.

United is looking to overhaul its midfield this summer following the departure of Casemiro as a free agent.

“Youri has consistently been one of the most outstanding midfielders in the Premier League throughout the past seven years. He has all of the technical qualities, as well as the ambition and mentality, to thrive at Manchester United,” said United’s director of football Jason Wilcox.

Tielemans has played 90 games for Belgium and just returned from the World Cup. He won the FA Cup with Leicester City in 2021 and the Europa League with Villa last season.

“It’s hard to describe just how proud I am to join Manchester United. Signing for such a special club feels incredible, it is the culmination of years of dedication since I first fell in love with football,” he said.

“I have had the privilege of experiencing success in the game and it has only increased my determination to achieve more.”

United is back in the Champions League next season after a two-year absence and was expected to be active in the transfer market to cope with competing in European club soccer’s top competition and challenge for the Premier League title.

Wilcox said the 29-year-old Tielemans fits with that plan.

“We are delighted to welcome a player of his influence and experience, both on the pitch and within the dressing room, as we continue to build a team ready to challenge for the biggest honours,” he said.

Lopes back as Rovers advance

DUBLIN, July 15, (AP): World Cup star Roberto ‘Pico’ Lopes returned to action in the Champions League and captained Shamrock Rovers into the second qualifying round.

Just 11 days after facing Lionel Messi and Argentina in an epic World Cup round-of-32 game, Cape Verde defender Lopes led the Dublin club to a 5-1 second-leg win over Maltese champion Floriana.

Rovers advanced 5-3 on aggregate score and will now travel to face Ararat-Armenia next week. Rovers must advance through four qualifying rounds to enter the lucrative 36-team main phase starting in September.

The second qualifying round will

see former European Cup winner Red Star Belgrade enter the competition against Larne, the champion of Northern Ireland. Larne advanced Tuesday beating Tre Fiori of San Marino 2-1 for a 3-1 aggregate score.

Vikingur of Iceland got a 2-2 draw in Hungary against Györi ETO to advance 3-2 on aggregate and will face Hapoel Beer-Sheva in the next round.

Vikingur could have to return to Hungary for the second leg on July 28 or 29. Israeli clubs cannot host their home games in UEFA competitions for security reasons, and Hapoel Beer-Sheva chose stadiums in Hungary as a neutral venue in European qualifying matches last season.

Versant wins Bundesliga US media rights

MUNICH, July 15: The Bundesliga has secured a new five-year media rights agreement in the United States with Versant, as the German league looks to expand its audience reach and strengthen its commercial returns after ending its six-year partnership with ESPN.

The deal, which begins with the 2026-27 season, covers English-language coverage of Bundesliga matches in the US. Under the agreement, USA Network will broadcast more than 30 games each season on traditional television, while all 275 league matches will be available to stream for free via the Fandango platform.

According to Sports Business Journal, the

Bundesliga’s previous deal with ESPN was worth around \$30 million per year, totaling approximately \$150 million over five years, and included English and Spanish-language rights.

The league believes the new partnership will deliver strong financial and commercial benefits while allowing more American fans to access Bundesliga action.

The agreement comes amid growing competition for European football broadcasting rights in the US, with reports indicating that ESPN and Paramount+ were also among the companies interested in acquiring Bundesliga rights before Versant secured the deal.



The iconic Bundesliga ball showcased with the German league's official emblem.



Fans from Spain and France celebrate their teams with pride and passion on soccer's biggest stage in New York. (AP)

Collapse in Dallas: French media tear into France after loss

Heartbreaking to watch

PARIS, July 15: The French media did not hold back after France's World Cup 2026 semifinal exit at the hands of Spain, describing the performance with harsh terms such as "confused," "uninspired," "sad," and "without character."

La Voix du Nord delivered a fierce assessment of the two-time world champions, saying France suffered a dramatic collapse in a semifinal that would be remembered as a nightmare. The newspaper criticized Lucas Digne for a costly mistake and accused Michael Olise of failing to make an impact, adding that the entire team was dragged down on a night when "the brilliance belonged to Spain."

L'Équipe described the defeat with the headline "Collapse in Dallas," saying France were overwhelmed in every area of the game and were deservedly eliminated. The publication added that the players lacked personality and were handed a football lesson by Spain.

Libération also highlighted France's struggles, saying Les Bleus "completely collapsed" and never appeared ready for a semifinal battle against a Spanish side that impressed with its technical quality and individual skill.

Ouest-France marked the loss with the front-page headline "The End of the American Dream," featuring an image of Kylian Mbappé covering his face in disappointment. Le Télégramme summed up the defeat simply as "Disappointment," showing a saddened French captain on the pitch after a difficult night.

Across the French press, there was widespread praise for Spain, hailed as the "masters of the game" thanks to its control, organization, and resilience. Le Figaro criticized France for being repeatedly disjointed and lacking inspiration throughout the match.

Meanwhile, Midi Libre chose the emotional headline "France Defeated, Heartbreaking to Watch," alongside a picture of forward Désiré Doué kneeling with his head hidden in his shirt, capturing the disappointment of France's World Cup exit.



France's Kylian Mbappe (10) gestures after the World Cup semifinal soccer match between France and Spain in Arlington, Texas, near Dallas. (AP)

Dallas Stadium has been a hit

World Cup absence of Jones at home of his Dallas Cowboys finally ends in semifinals

ARLINGTON, Texas, July 15, (AP): Jerry Jones, the famous and ever-present owner of the Dallas Cowboys, finally showed up at the World Cup for the last of the tournament-high nine games at his NFL team's home stadium.

The billionaire businessman was keeping up from afar, and he attended Spain's 2-0 victory over France in the semifinals AT&T Stadium on Tuesday.

"I think first and foremost, he's just a big event guy," said Chad Estis, the Cowboys' executive vice president of business operations. "He loves the NFL. He loves the Dallas Cowboys. But he has a passion for events as much as anybody that I know. He very much wanted to ensure that the stadium was operating well."

Judging by fans who eagerly anticipate seeing themselves on the giant video board that hangs above the center of the field and under the retractable roof - and then jump and wave for joy when they do - the venue temporarily renamed Dallas Stadium by FIFA has been a hit.

The Jones family has a suite for the World Cup, and that's where Jones was shown on the video board with his wife, Gene Jones, sitting next to him. The polarizing figure was met mostly with boos from the sellout crowd of 70,176.

Jones and some family members often leave the country on his yacht this time of year - between the end of offseason workouts for the Cowboys in June and the start of training camp in California in late July.

As a result, Jones wasn't there in person for a pair of record-setting performances from Argentina superstar Lionel Messi. Or Japanese fans leaving entire sections spotless by picking up after themselves - twice. Or Portugal star and career men's in-



Dallas Cowboys owner Jerry Jones, center right, watches during the World Cup semifinal soccer match between France and Spain in Arlington, Texas, near Dallas. (AP)

ternational scoring leader Cristiano Ronaldo's final World Cup game.

Those types of seminal moments were what Jones had in mind with the design and building of a stadium that opened in 2009 and in barely more than five years had hosted a Super Bowl and NCAA championship games in football and men's basketball.

Jones also was thinking about the fan experience, having used his own lessons from touring stadiums in Europe to include large standing-room viewing areas on three levels at each end.

An extensive art collection is punctuated by Anish Kapoor's stainless steel sculpture dubbed "sky mirror" outside on the east plaza. Kapoor is the creator of a similar sculpture in Chicago nicknamed "the bean."

To prepare for the World Cup, the Cowboys pumped another \$350 million into a stadium with an original

price tag of \$1.2 billion. The video board looks the same, but there were upgrades in the guts of that, along with new carpeting and furniture mostly in premium areas and an overhaul of the fan shop.

"I cannot tell you how many people come to our stadium and say, 'I can't believe this is 17 years old,'" Estis said. "People think it feels new. The whole thing's been great, but it feels like it culminates in this phenomenal match tomorrow."

Jones had to turn the stadium over to FIFA, which means the governing body got to put up curtains on the huge sliding glass doors on the west end for the only game where the setting sun could have shined into the eyes of the players.

NFL players, including Cowboys, losing footballs in the sun has been an occasional issue each fall. Each time the topic comes up, Jones flatly refuses to consider curtains. He pre-

fers the aesthetics and expects coaches and players to make game plans around the setting sun.

It will be too early in the day for the sun to be an issue when Spain and France play for a spot Sunday in the World Cup final at the home of the New York Jets and Giants in East Rutherford, New Jersey.

Jones wanted that final, but settled for the consolation prize of the most games, including sharing the semifinals with the home of the Atlanta Falcons, where Argentina and England played on Wednesday.

"It's just another great moment in an unbelievable sports legacy," said Dan Hunt, co-chair of the local organizing committee and son of the late Lamar Hunt, who was one of Jones' rivals as owner of the Kansas City Chiefs.

"He's been a world champion," Dan Hunt said. "He's a Pro Football Hall of Famer. He's hosted Super Bowls, hosted almost everything you can at AT&T Stadium. And this is just another moment."

Oh, one other thing Jones had to give up - his personal suite at the 50-yard line. Estis said FIFA thought it was perfect for a VIP area.

"We're like, 'Wait a minute. Are you serious?'" Estis said with a chuckle. "I mean, I understand it. That's why Jerry's suite is there. It's the prime spot."

Jones is giving up his prime spot for arguably the biggest single global sporting event to come to his venue. He'll just be in a different suite.

"I think I could imagine him being a little emotional about it," Estis said. "To see him in design meetings and his attention to detail and his care for what the stadium looked and felt like to people, what it looked like from different angles walking up to it. He just he was so involved in the creation of what it is."

Infantino receives boos from fans during WCup semifinal

DALLAS, July 15: FIFA president Gianni Infantino endured an awkward moment during the 2026 World Cup semifinal between France and Spain, receiving a chorus of boos from supporters after he appeared on the stadium screens during Spain's 2-0 victory.

The Swiss football chief had been present at several matches throughout the tournament, from the group stage to the knockout rounds, but his appearance in the semifinal at the Dallas venue was met with a negative reaction from the crowd.

Television cameras showed Infantino following the game alongside FIFA officials and former Barcelona and Spain star Xavi Hernández. As soon as fans recognized him on the giant screen, whistles and jeers quickly echoed around the stadium.

Despite maintaining a smile, Infantino was unable to win over the spectators. Xavi appeared visibly uncomfortable with the reaction, immediately shifting his focus back to the action on the field and avoiding attention from the crowd.

The FIFA president has recently faced criticism over several issues, including his proposal to expand the World Cup to 64 teams in future edi-



FIFA President Gianni Infantino, center, wearing a Texas belt buckle, adjusts his pants during the World Cup semifinal soccer match between France and Spain in Arlington, Texas, near Dallas. (AP)

tions. He has also come under scrutiny after the red card issued to US player Folarin Balogun was withdrawn following reported involvement from US President Donald Trump.

WC vet Meunier joins Sunderland

LONDON, July 15, (AP): World Cup veteran Thomas Meunier joined Sunderland on Wednesday ahead of the English club's first European campaign for 53 years.

The 34-year-old Belgium defender was a free agent after playing at his third straight World Cup. His contract at Lille expired during the tournament.

Sunderland said Meunier, who previously played for Paris Saint-Germain and Borussia Dortmund, signed a two-year contract.

Newly promoted Sunderland was widely forecast to be relegated last season yet placed seventh to qualify for the Europa League. Sunderland previously played in the European Cup-Winners' Cup in 1973 after a storied FA Cup title as a second-tier team.

Sunderland players carried their good form into the World Cup with captain Granit Xhaka impressing for Switzerland, Brian Brobbey scoring three goals for the Netherlands and Wilson Isidor scoring for Haiti.



Norway's Soren Waerenskjold celebrates as he crosses the finish line to win the eleventh stage of the Tour de France cycling race with start in Vichy and finish in Nevers, France. (AP)

Sports

Spain shuts down France to reach World Cup final



Left: Spain's Pedro Porro reacts after scoring his side's second goal during the World Cup semifinal soccer match between France and Spain in Arlington, Texas, near Dallas. Right: Spain's Lamine Yamal, left and France's Kylian Mbappe vie for the ball during a World Cup semifinal soccer match in Arlington, Texas, near Dallas. (AP)

La Roja extends unbeaten streak to 37

ARLINGTON, Texas, July 15, (AP): Spain's defensive prowess and swagger were just too much for an attacking trio led by France great Kylian Mbappé, and just enough to get the 2010 champions into another World Cup final.

The Spanish team managed a record sixth shutout in seven games so far, winning 2-0 in the semifinals against one of the most prolific scorers in World Cup history.

Teenager Lamine Yamal certainly was correct when he said France should fear Spain. That despite FIFA's top-ranked team being led by Mbappé - their captain with 20 goals in his 20 World Cup games before the semifinals - Bal-lon d'Or winner Ousmane Dembélé and Michael Olise, who has a tourna-ment-high five assists.

"We were up against one of the best national teams in the world, but today, they were facing the best team in the world," Spain coach Luis de la Fuente said.

Mikel Oyarzabal scored from the penalty spot after a heady play by Yamal drew a foul, and Pedro Porro added another goal to put Spain in its second World Cup final.

A day after his 19th birthday, Yamal was denied a goal on a close offside call that came soon after Porro's give-and-go with Dani Olmo in the 58th

minute had put Spain up 2-0. But it was Yamal's smart play against a veteran defender that gave Spain the early lead.

"So difficult to get to this moment, but we want more," Spain midfielder Rodri said. "We want to win this World Cup."

After trying to become only the third team to reach three consecutive World Cup finals, France instead will play in the third-place game in Miami Gardens, Florida, on Saturday.

"Spain has been able to defend well," departing France coach Didier Des-champs said through a translator. "They've closed out all the spaces and also we've made some technical mistakes. So it is difficult to create problems when the technical level is below standard."

This win on soccer's biggest stage marked the third summer in a row that Spain beat France in a tournament semifinal match. Yamal scored in a 2-1 win in the 2024 European Championship semifinals just days before his 17th birthday, and La Roja won 5-4 in Nations League play last year.

Yamal was quick to point out that France should be concerned after Spain's quarterfinal win over Belgium set up another semifinal matchup.

"It's a team who loves to have control of the game, control of the ball. That's what we let them do," said Mbappé, who got none of his three shots on target. "It's difficult when you don't change the play of Spain."

Spain has outscored opponents 12-1 since a scoreless draw against surpris-

ing Cape Verde to open group play. The lone goal allowed by goalkeeper Unai Simón was in the quarterfinal game against Belgium that snapped his World Cup record of 650 scoreless minutes.

This World Cup run has extended Spain's unbeaten streak in regular time to 37 matches (28 wins and nine draws) since March 2024. That broke the country's previous record of 35 in a row from 2007-09.

The loss broke France's record-matching streak of six consecutive World Cup wins, which the team also accomplished in the 2018 and 2022 tourna-ments.

Oyarzabal's penalty kick in the 22nd minute came after Yamal drew a foul when kicked by defender Lucas Digne.

After a poor first touch with his head, Digne was trying to clear the ball when Yamal raced in from behind to challenge in the penalty area. The ball hit off the elbow of the leaping teen before he was kicked by Digne, playing in his 63rd game for France only six days before his 33rd birthday.

Oyarzabal's fifth goal of this year's World Cup marked the first time either team had trailed in their seven games in this tournament. It was his 30th goal in 60 international games for Spain.

For the second goal, Porro broke free and received a pass back from Olmo, who got the touch just before getting knocked off his feet by defender Dayot Upamecano.

Al-Hajri bids farewell to Kuwait Club after 14 years

Kazma prepares for new season with major reinforcements

By Hassan Mosa
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 15: Kazma has made its first foreign signing of the summer transfer window after securing the services of Brazilian striker Patrick Robson as part of its preparations for the upcoming season.

The 1998-born forward, also known as Patrick Alvinete, joins the Orange side after an impressive spell with Cambodian club Svay Rieng, where he helped the team reach the AFC Challenge League final last season before losing the title to Kuwait Club.

Kazma has also strengthened its squad with the signings of Fahad Al-Hajri and Ahmed Al-Zanki from Kuwait Club, while the club has renewed the contract of midfielder Nasser Lafi.

Al-Hajri bid farewell to Kuwait Club after a 14-year spell, describing his departure as one of the most difficult moments of his career.

"After 14 years with Kuwait Club, the time has come to say goodbye. It is one of the hardest moments I have experienced," Al-Hajri said.

He added: "I was honoured to wear the shirt of this great club. During this journey, we achieved



A hard-fought duel during a competitive encounter between Fahad Al-Hajri and opponent.

35 championships together through teamwork, dedication, and sacrifice. I will always be proud of every moment I spent there."

Al-Hajri thanked Kuwait SC honorary presi-

dent Marzouq Al-Ghanem, chairman Khalid Al-Ghanem, treasurer Fahad Al-Ghanem, and former president Abdulaziz Al-Marzouq for their support and trust, while also praising the efforts of the administrative, medical, and technical staff who contributed to the club's success.

He also expressed his appreciation to Ku-wait Club fans, saying their support and en-couragement would always remain in his memory.

Meanwhile, Kazma coach Dragan Tadic has set next Tuesday as the start date for pre-season training, with preparations continuing until July 26, when the team will travel to Turkey for an overseas training camp featuring several friendly matches.

The new season will begin with the Premier League on August 25.

Elsewhere, Qadsia has given defenders Faisal Al-Shatti and Mohammad Al-Sharifi permission to search for new clubs on loan deals.

Al-Shatti, 24, and Al-Sharifi, 21, have pre-viously represented Kuwait's national teams.

In another move, Al-Salmiya has signed Arab Club and Kuwait youth international Ahmed Khorshid on a one-season loan deal.

Al-Sulaibikhat adds two more signings ahead of new season

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

KUWAIT CITY, July 15: Al-Sulaibikhat Club has strengthened its first handball team with the signings of Fa-had Abdulhadi and Mahmoud Ali as part of its preparations for the 2026-27 season. Club chairman Saad Anad Al-Enezi signed the contracts on behalf of the club.

The latest additions form part of the club's recruitment strategy aimed at bolstering the squad with fresh talent to enhance its competitiveness and improve performances in the upcoming campaign.

The club had previously secured the services of local players Nasser Faraj and Hussein Karam, while also bring-ing in Serbian Jovan Milsavic, Brazilian Leandro da Silva, and French inter-national Nicolas Claire to reinforce the team.

The squad will once again be led by national coach Hussein Habib.

First-team manager and former hand-ball star Hussein Siwan thanked the club's board for its continued support, praising its efforts in securing high-quality domestic and overseas sign-ings while ensuring the team has all the technical and administrative resources needed during pre-season preparations.

He said the board's commitment



Fahad Abdulhadi with Club chairman Saad Anad Al-Enezi.

reflects its ambition to build a strong, well-prepared squad capable of com-peting for local honours during the 2026-27 season, adding that the new recruits will provide the team with greater depth and quality.

In other news, Kuwait's national youth handball team opened its 19th Asian Men's Youth Handball Champi-onship campaign in China with a nar-row 29-27 loss to Iran in a Group B encounter.

Elsewhere, South Korea defeated Qatar 28-27, Saudi Arabia beat Oman 40-27, and Bahrain cruised past Chi-nese Taipei 39-27.

Pogacar protects lead

Waerenskjold wins fastest ever stage of Tour de France

NEVERS, France, July 15, (AP): Nor-wegian rider Soeren Waerenskjold at-tacked late and powered to victory in the fastest ever stage of the Tour de France while Tadej Pogacar protected his overall lead on the 11th day of rac-ing.

Waerenskjold finished just ahead of Olav Kooij, Jasper Philipsen and a host of other riders in a sprint fin-ish that seemed inevitable on the rela-tively short and flat 161.3-kilometer (100.2-mile) route from Vichy to Nev-ers in central France.

Pogacar, who stretched his lead to more than 3½ minutes with his third

stage win of this Tour on Tuesday, fin-ished among a bunch of riders with his main challenger Jonas Vingegaard to maintain his advantage.

For the 26-year-old Waerenskjold, it was his first stage win, and no one seemed more surprised by it than him-self.

"It means everything, it's my big-gest win so far and like I said when I came here, I knew that there are two or three guys that are faster than me but if I'm lucky and I have a good sprint like today then it's possible," he said.

Waerenskjold had called the race doctor for treatment on his right hand

a day after the Uno-X Mobility rider crashed on the hilly stage to Le Lioran.

"Sometimes I have really good con-fidence and I believe in myself, but there's many, many times where I feel super tired and like it's impossible to win here," Waerenskjold said. "So yeah, it's crazy that it happened today."

With an average speed of 50.9 kph (31.6 mph), the riders set a record for a road stage on the Tour.

Mathieu van der Poel and Valentin Paret-Peintre attacked from the off and were reined in before four riders man-aged to get away - Julian Alaphilippe, Mathis Le Berre, Nelson Oliveira and

Antho Charnig.

They reached Moulins with 100 ki-lometers to go with a lead of 1 minute, 15 seconds from the peloton.

Alaphilippe fell behind when they reached the category 4 Côte de Billy-Chevannes, a 1.4-kilometer climb at 5%, leaving three leaders with a gap of 45 seconds going into the last 20 kilometers.

That gap shrank to 19 seconds with 10K remaining, the rest of the riders gathered ominously in a huge bunch just behind, and it was no surprise when the leaders were finally caught with 5.5K remaining.

Greenwood makes \$44 mln move to Fenerbahce

ISTANBUL, July 15, (AP): Former England forward Mason Greenwood signed for Fenerbahce to join his third club in three years since being banished from the Manchester United team.

Fenerbahce said in a statement it will pay Marseille 39 million euros (\$44.5 million) and gave the 24-year-old Greenwood a four-year contract.

"It was a no-brainer when they (were) interested in me," said Greenwood, who had been pursued by Atletico Madrid, in a video message posted by his new club. "It's the biggest club in Turkey and I can't wait to get started."