

# S&P affirms Kuwait's sovereign rating at A+: CBK

Financial assets ensure stable outlook

KUWAIT CITY, June 8, (KUNA): The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) said Friday that the international rating agency of Standard & Poor's confirmed the sovereign rating of Kuwait at A+, with a stable future outlook due to a huge stock of government financial assets support estimated at about 418 percent of the gross domestic product in 2024.

In a statement, the Central Bank noted that the Standard & Poor's report indicated that Kuwait's structural and financial reforms are still lagging behind its peers, and its economy is considered among the most dependent on the oil sector, among GCC countries, which It exposes its economy to fluctuations of the oil market.

The statement added that Standard & Poor's expected that the real gross domestic product would grow by 2.4 percent on average during the years 2025-2027, compared to a contraction of 2.3 percent in 2024, assuming a slight easing in the restrictions of the OPEC+ agreement on oil production.

CBK also pointed out that the rating agency also expected to accelerate the implementation of large government investment projects and focus on partnerships between the public and private sectors and high-impact projects led by the (New Kuwait 2035) vision.

Regarding the rating prospects, the statement noted that the stable future outlook reflects the agency's assumption that the large financial and external balances in Kuwait will continue to be strong during the forecast period, supported by a huge stock of government financial assets estimated at about 418 percent of the gross domestic product in 2024, which is among the largest sovereign funds of countries.

CBK noted that the agency expected these assets to reach 447 percent of the gross domestic product during the years 2024-2027, pointing out that these huge government assets are expected to mitigate the economic risks associated with the heavy dependence on the oil sector and potential fluctuations in oil prices.

It stated that the agency listed the most important factors that could lead to a downgrade of the country's sovereign credit rating in the event of a significant increase in public financial imbalances driven by a decline in oil prices or the absence of financial reforms.

The rating could also be downgraded if the government remains without comprehensive financing arrangements for the deficits in the general budget, the report noted.

CBK also said that the agency stated that the country's credit rating could

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Sheikha Rima hosts charity dinner

## Kuwait humanitarian role earns UN Sec-Gen's praise

WASHINGTON, June 8, (KUNA): UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres hailed Kuwait's role in supporting humanitarian work around the world.

Guterres made the remarks during the annual charity dinner, hosted by Goodwill Ambassador of UNHCR and the Kuwait-America Foundation Sheikha Rima Al-Sabah late Friday.

Guterres expressed deep gratitude for Kuwait and His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for the continuous support for UNHCR.

He also thanked Sheikha Rima for her achievements and efforts in providing international financial aid to Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and other countries during her 20-year term as a Goodwill Ambassador.

The UN top official also applauded the role of the World Central Kitchen (WCK) charity in providing food for those affected by war and conflict in the Ukraine, Gaza Strip and other places around the world.

On his part, UNCHR chief Filippo Grandi said that donors' financial aid improves the lives of millions who fled their homes and countries due to wars and conflicts.

The refugee crisis is growing and had become a "global catastrophe", with no less than 114 million refugees around the world, mainly women and children, said Grandi.

Meanwhile, former Kuwait Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah said humanitarian work is among Kuwait's top priorities, adding that Kuwait became one of the top UNHCR supporters in the past decade.

Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah presented WCK founder Jose Andres with an honorary award in appreciation of his humanitarian efforts, especially in Gaza, where the organization is providing thousands of meals daily to Palestinians. He also conveyed his deepest condolences over the death of seven WCK employees in Israeli occupation air raids last April in Gaza.

In the same context, Sheikha Rima Al-Sabah said she will continuously support UNHCR's work around the world, noting that she had gathered over USD one million to support the organization this year.

Taking serious measures to address the refugees' crisis is a must, as the situation is deteriorating around the world, she noted.

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Former Kuwait Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah honors World Central Kitchen (WCK) founder Jose Andres at the Kuwait-America Foundation and UNHCR annual charity dinner.



Former Kuwait Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah, his wife Goodwill Ambassador of UNHCR Sheikha Rima Al-Sabah and UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres.



KUNA photos  
Former Kuwait Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah, his wife Goodwill Ambassador of UNHCR Sheikha Rima Al-Sabah and Kuwaiti Ambassador in Washington Sheikh Al-Zain Al-Sabah.

## COUNTDOWN TO KUWAIT CRACKDOWN BEGINS

# Zero tolerance for violators, enablers

'No harboring, report expat offenders after June 17'

KUWAIT CITY, June 8: With just 8 days remaining until the deadline set by the Ministry of Interior for residency violators to rectify their status, which concludes on Monday, June 17, the Ministry is actively facilitating and expediting the processing of applications from those seeking to rectify their status, reports Al-Rai daily.

Over the past two months, an average of 1,000 violators per day has ap-

proached the Residence Affairs Departments across the six governorates, as well as the additional centers in Mubarak Al-Kabeer and Al-Raqi, to correct their conditions.

Brigadier General Mazayad Al-Mutairi, Assistant Director General of the General Administration of Residency Affairs, emphasized that the deadline extension, based on the instructions of the First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef, signifies a humanitarian gesture toward violators.

The violators were granted a three-month period from March 17 to June 17,

which represents a golden opportunity unlikely to be repeated.

Following the specified deadline, an integrated security plan will be launched, with no tolerance or hesitation in apprehending violators and those who harbor them. Strict measures will be enforced to control and deport violators from the country.

Al-Mutairi highlighted the deployment of resources and the removal of obstacles for violators, with six departments allocated to receive violators wishing to amend their status in the morning, and two centers operating in the evening for those opting to depart.

The upcoming widespread campaigns will leave no violator unaccounted for, targeting all governorates and companies employing violators.

Those arrested will be detained, fingerprinted, and deported following investigation to identify employers and those who provided the shelter.

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### NewsWatch

KUWAIT CITY: Meteorologist Issa Ramadan has forecast a significant rise in temperatures, expected to exceed 50 degrees Celsius, particularly after mid July, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Ramadan also mentioned an increase in humidity from Saturday until the end of next week. Despite entering the Bawareh period, starting yesterday, there is a possibility of some rain showers occurring.

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RIYADH: The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia announced Thursday that the first day of Eid Al-Adha will be Sunday June 16.

Arafat Day, which precedes the major Muslim holiday, will be observed on Saturday June 15, added the Kingdom's Supreme Court in a statement. (KUNA)

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JEDDAH: Saudi Minister of Hajj and Umrah Dr. Tawfiq Al-Rabiah announced Thursday the arrival of over 1.2 million pilgrims, from the four corners of the globe, in the Kingdom to perform hajj rituals.

In a news conference in Riyadh, Dr. Rabiah assured that the pilgrims completed their entry procedures with ease and they are in good health conditions and enjoy high levels of satisfaction.

With the continued arrival of pilgrims, Dr. Al-Rabiah emphasized the importance of cooperation from all pilgrims. He stressed the need for adherence to regulations and instructions to ensure a smooth and fulfilling Hajj experience for everyone.

He reiterated the wise leadership's unwavering commitment to ensuring a successful Hajj season. This manifested in early preparations, including diligent reviews of plans, projects, and initiatives. (KUNA)



Kuwait's skyline glows under a clear Friday evening sky, amidst record-breaking temperatures reaching 49°C.

## Kuwait presses IAEA on Israel's nuclear facilities

VIENNA, June 8, (KUNA): Kuwait has called on the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to take the necessary steps to urge Israel to immediately join the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and subject all its nuclear facilities to the comprehensive safeguards system of the IAEA.

This was stated in a speech delivered by the Third Secretary of Kuwait Permanent Delegation to the United Nations in Vienna, Dr. Sara Al-Ajmi, during the discussions regarding the Israel's nuclear capabilities.

Dr. Sara Al-Ajmi, urged in her speech the IAEA to keep the Israeli occupation's nuclear capabilities under discussion in the policy-making meetings of the agency so that it can effectively and competently fulfill its role in verifying and applying the comprehensive safeguards system.

Dr. Al-Ajmi added that despite the commitment of all Middle Eastern countries to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the implementation of the comprehensive safeguards agreement, the Israeli occupation continues its obstinacy, refusing to subject all its nuclear facilities to the system of the IAEA.

She also pointed out that Israel continues to reject any initiatives or serious steps in this regard, preventing the agency from applying the system in the Middle East and creating a zone free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction.

Kuwait's delegation also addressed the situation in Gaza, stating that while the Board of Governors is holding its meetings this week, Palestine was witnessing a dangerous escalation and developments in events.

Dr. Al-Ajmi mentioned in her speech that nearly eight months have passed since the Israeli occupation forces launched brutal attacks on Palestine, disregarding international laws, covenants, and resolutions, resulting in the deaths of tens of thousands of unarmed civilians, most of whom are women and children.

In her speech, she confirmed Kuwait's principled and firm stance in condemning the unfortunate massacres committed by the Israeli occupation forces against Palestinian camps.

Kuwait once again called on the international community to exert strong pressure to stop this blatant aggression, which violates all international laws and norms, to protect Palestinian, thus, serious efforts must be made to hold the perpetrators of these heinous crimes accountable.



Dr. Al-Ajmi

Kuwait Specialty Hospital in Rafah hit

## Kuwait denounces Israeli attack on UNRWA school as 'massacre'

KUWAIT CITY, June 8, (KUNA): The Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Friday expressed the State of Kuwait's strong condemnation of the Israeli occupation's bombardment of an UNRWA school.

The occupation's bombardment took the lives of displaced, unarmed Palestinians including children and women who had taken up refuge at the school building as a protection in the face of the continuing Israeli aggression on Gaza Strip.

This massacre is a continuation of the criminal pattern undertaken by the occupation forces, directed at the unarmed Palestinian civilians, the ministry statement said, affirming the State of Kuwait's demands that the international community and the UN Security Council stop these systematic breaches of all international laws and norms and bring the culprits to account.

Meanwhile, the Israeli occupation forces have attacked the Kuwait Specialty Hospital, in the city of Rafah, south of the Gaza Strip, setting large parts of it on fire.

In a press statement, Director of the Kuwaiti Hospital Dr. Suhaib Al-Hams condemned occupiers systematic targeting of hospitals in the Gaza Strip and putting them out of service.

He described that the health situation in Rafah as extremely catastrophic after all Rafah hospitals were put out of service due to the Israeli assault.

He noted that dozens of dead bodies and injured people are scattered in the streets of the Rafah Governorate as the Israeli occupation forces prevent medical teams from reaching them.

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## Schengen visa fees to surge 12 percent

KUWAIT CITY, June 8: According to an announcement made by the European Commission, the fees to apply for a Schengen visa will be increased by 12 percent starting from Tuesday, June 11, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Currently, the fees to apply for a Schengen visa is 80 Euros for adults and 40 Euros for children between the ages of 6 and 12. These fees will be increased to 90 Euros (around KD 30) for adults, and 45 Euros (approximately KD 15) for children.

The European Commission explained

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Palestinians mourn their relatives killed in the Israeli bombardment of the Gaza Strip at al-Aqsa Hospital in Deir al-Balah, central Gaza Strip, Saturday, June 8, 2024. (AP)



Prayer Timings		
Fajr .....	03:13	Asr ..... 15:21
Sunrise ..	04:48	Maghrib .. 18:46
Zohr .....	11:47	Isha ..... 20:18

# Local

BIOMETRIC/FINGERPRINT APPOINTMENT: <https://meta.e.gov.kw/En/>

## HH the Crown Prince and PM send congratulation cables

# HH Amir congratulates Jordan King on coronation anniversary

### Opinion

#### ‘New horizon’

## Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled ... and supporting youth

By Sattam Ahmed Al-Jarallah  
CEO, the Arab Times

It is a blessing when a country has a wise leader -- a leader who comprehends the meaning of difficult tasks and a leader who has a team that understands what needs to be done. If you have such ingredients in a country, things become easy.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah worked on the firm and decisive path to fortify institutions by choosing wisely to put the right person in the right positions, especially in the sensitive posts; so there is no misstep that could affect the course of the renaissance that His Highness seeks.

Hence, he chose an experienced Crown Prince -- a diplomat of high caliber who knows how to formulate his positions; and not afraid to stand with the truth, Kuwait and its people.

He is Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. He was the Prime Minister who, in the most difficult stages, bore the responsibility of extricating Kuwait from the ordeal of the ‘Corona’ pandemic. He worked with all his abilities and efforts for the sake of the people wherever they were.

He was also the Minister of Foreign Affairs under sensitive, regional and international circumstances; through which, Kuwait placed a difficult number in the international and regional equations. Undoubtedly, this is a point of credit for the man, because his demeanor coincides with the cultural and traditional spirit of the nation.

Tolerance among the people of the country was also translated into various initiatives in the region. Thus, he was the teacher in the fine arts of diplomacy. This is also a point in Kuwait’s interest.

This is an indication that we have State figures capable of playing their role in the most difficult stages. Accordingly, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled assuming this important position did not come out of the blue, rather from the experience and expertise he acquired in an arduous work process.

Without a doubt, HH the Crown Prince is responsible for many files. He must create paths for the future in many fields. If he is not an experienced figure like His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, a number of problems will arise in the future.

With His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, we can rest assured that we are in the custody of great figures, headed by His Highness the Amir and assisted by brave and calm-minded aids who know how to manage a country tired of the crises it has experienced due to reckless ventures.

It is now time for the country to emerge from the cocoon of backwardness into the space of real Kuwait, which has been able to overcome all crises throughout the four centuries.

Since he was a minister, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled has been keen on supporting Kuwaiti youths; because he is convinced that “the youth is the pillar of the future.” He expressed this many years ago.

At this stage, which requires intensifying efforts to serve the country, we are certain that His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled will be at the forefront of defending the rights of young people to prove their worth in various fields.

## Kuwait Municipality urged to clarify allocation of Safafeer Market sites

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 8: The executive branch, represented by Kuwait Municipality Director General Saud Al-Dabbous, has addressed the Municipal Council regarding the Souq Al-Safafeer Market contract and asked the latter to respond to the letter that the Public Authority for Industry (PAI) sent to the Municipality in accordance with the regulations.

The daily obtained a copy of the letter stating that a decision was taken about the site of Safafeer Market on Feb 21, 2018; approving the request of PAI to re-allocate sites one and two in Shuwaikh with a total area of approximately 4556.3 square meters.

These sites should be allocated for the National Fund for Small and Medium Enterprises Development and Care to establish a crafts complex, provided that the permitted activities on the site are limited to general crafts and industries in accordance with the structural plan for developing Shuwaikh commercial craft



Al-Dabbous

## Ministry allocates school health centers for scholarship students

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 8: The School Health Department at the Ministry of Health has announced the allocation of eight school health centers to receive scholarship students to complete scholarship procedures according to the residential address shown in the civil identification card.

Director of the department Dr. Wafa Al-Kandari said the ministry is keen on allocating such centers in all governorates. These centers include Hamad Al-Sager Health Center in Adailiya in the Capital Governorate, Reggai Health Center in Farwaniya Governorate, School Health Center in Adan Specialized Health Center (Block Two) in Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate, School Health Center in Bayan (Block Eight) in Hawally Governorate, Jahra Health Complex and Mutlaa Health Center N10 in Jahra Governorate, and

Fahaheel and Sabah Al-Ahmad health centers -- Sector D in Ahmadi Governorate.

Al-Kandari revealed these clinics serve scholarship students from Sunday to Thursday at 7:30 am to 1:00 pm during the morning period, and from 2:00 pm to 9:00 pm in the evening period except Sabah Al-Ahmad and Mutlaa centers N10, which cater to students only in the morning period on Sundays and Tuesdays. She said the students must personally present valid original documents with the copies as follows: letter of acceptance from the Ministry of Higher Education or proof of the student’s acceptance to the university, recent personal photo, civil identification card, birth certificate, vaccination certificate, passport and applications related to the destination, if any.

She also affirmed the ministry’s commitment to provide the students with the necessary healthcare and other related services with the best quality standards.

KUWAIT CITY, June 8, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Saturday a cable of congratulations to King Abdullah II of Jordan on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of his coronation.

His Highness the Amir praised Jordan’s achievements and comprehensive development in all fields under the wise leadership of King Abdullah II.

His Highness also lauded the deep-rooted relations between Kuwait and Jordan, wishing the King everlasting health and wellness, and further prosperity and progress to the Hashemite Kingdom.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah sent on Saturday a cable of congratulations to King Abdullah II of Jordan on the occasion of the 25th

anniversary of his coronation, wishing the monarch everlasting health and wellness, and further prosperity and progress to the Hashemite Kingdom under his wise leadership.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah also sent a cable of congratulations to King Abdullah II of Jordan on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of his coronation.

## ‘MoH ready to provide Kuwaiti pilgrims with medical care’

KUWAIT CITY, June 8, (KUNA): The Ministry of Health declared on Saturday that the whole team of medical services for the Kuwaiti hajj expedition had arrived in holy Makkah.

Dr. Abdullah Al-Sanad, the MoH official

spokesman said in a statement to KUNA that all of expedition’s medical equipment had been set up. The MoH clinics will open on Sunday with start of the Kuwaiti pilgrims’ arrival, he said, affirming that the ministry will secure all

medical needs for the devotees namely the elderly and those suffering from chronic diseases.

The ministry had declared that 41 health prevention centers had been set up to immunize the pilgrims.

# South Abdullah Al-Mubarak area faces water & sewage shortages

## Residents call for urgent intervention

By Mohammad Al-Musleh  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 8: The residents in South Abdullah Al-Mubarak suffer from a number of problems, most notably the lack of services including the sewage network and water delivery.

Representative of the residents Khaled Al-Daihani confirmed to the daily that 3,200 families have been suffering for more than three years due to the absence of several services and non-operation of government facilities, while the concerned government agencies are in deep slumber.

He stated that the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) established a sewage network connected to the main line of the Ministry of Public Works; but the latter is not ready to establish a temporary sewage station, so some residents were forced to break the asphalt and connect sewage to their homes through the main network. He affirmed the ministry has been informed about the need to establish a temporary sewage station, but it has not responded till date.

He explained the residents’ suffering has been exacerbated by the absence of water delivery to homes, as the Fresh Water Networks Sector in the Ministry of Electricity stipulated that water should be delivered to the plots where 80 percent of the citizens reside and this requires urgent intervention to deliver water.

He added the Ministry of Education and PAHW should take advantage of the summer period to ensure the opening of schools for the next academic year. He wondered: “How can people reside in the area, if the services are not complete?”

He went on to say that the area lacks entrances and exits, urging the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART) to establish entrances and exits that comply with traffic engineering regulations. He asserted that the imminent deduction of Kuwait Credit Bank installment for housing loans weighs heavily on the residents in the area.

He called on the government to authorize the Government Performance Monitoring Agency to supervise the work of the Council of Service Undersecretaries to expedite the completion of projects and provide services to the residents.

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The First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef has issued a decision to appoint Brigadier General Fahad Al-Obaid as the Director General of Correctional Institutions, and to refer the former director Brigadier Nasser Nasser Al-Azmi to the ministry’s headquarters.

According to security sources, the minister approved the placement of leadership positions in the residency affairs and service centers sector in order to complement the public security and traffic sectors.

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The Minister of Public Works and the State Minister for Municipal Affairs Dr. Noura Al-Mishaan recently issued a ministerial decision to amend the former ministerial decision No. 206/2009 regarding the requirements to consider for the design and construction of houses in private residential areas, reports Al-Rai daily.

According to a statement issued by Kuwait Municipality, the recent decision comes in line with the urban construction development, and provides more flexible design requirements for the citizens to cover most of their demands.

Weather		
Expected weather for next 24 hrs:		
By Day:	Hot and humid especially over coastal areas with light to moderate freshening at times southwesterly wind to southeasterly wind, with speeds of 10-40 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.	
By Night:	Hot to rather hot and humid especially over coastal areas with light to moderate southeasterly wind to southerly wind, with speeds of 08-35 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear and a chance for mist forming over some areas.	
Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	48	35
Kuwait Airport	49	28
Abdaly	48	31
Jahra	50	32
Salmiyah	40	32
Nuwaisib	48	29
Wafra	48	26



KUNA photo  
Director General of the General Administration of the Kuwaiti Coast Guard, Brigadier General Sheikh Mubarak Ali Al-Sabah, during his meeting with the Bahraini Minister of Interior, Sheikh Rashid bin Abdullah.

## Coast Guard chief meets Bahrain’s interior minister

## Bahrain & Kuwait seek ways to boost security cooperation, maritime safety

By Kholoud Al-Enezi

MANAMA, June 8, (KUNA): Director General of Kuwait’s Coast Guard Commodore Sheikh Mubarak Ali Al-Sabah hailed Thursday the distinguished level of Kuwaiti-Bahraini relations.

In a statement to KUNA after

his meeting with Bahraini Minister of Interior Sheikh Rashid bin Abdullah in Manama, Sheikh Mubarak underlined the importance of cooperation between the Kuwaiti and Bahraini Coast Guards for developing their capabilities.

He also noted that the meeting discussed the joint efforts to strengthen security cooperation and coordination as well as exchanging experiences to maintain security and safety of the two Arabian Gulf states’ maritime borders.

## Le Flécher distributes DELF and DALF certificates to students

## Ambassador hails increase in French speakers

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 8: French Ambassador to Kuwait Claire Le Flécher has confirmed that one third of the Kuwaiti people understand French and many of them speak the language fluently; expressing her happiness over the growing number of French speakers in Kuwait and the higher demand for French culture, along with the rising number of Kuwaitis studying in her country.

Le Flécher made the statement during the distribution of Diploma in French Language Studies (DELF) and Advanced Diploma in French Language (DALF) certificates to students who successfully completed these courses.

She said: “I am very pleased to host this reception at my residence. We welcome DELF and DALF graduates -- children and adults -- who have reached a certain level in the French language and passed. These certificates are important as the holders are allowed to apply to universities and improve their level of the French language. These are official certificates that can be obtained only through the embassy by completing courses that the French Institute offers every year.”

She pointed out that French is a very beautiful language, but at the same time, it is somewhat difficult. She affirmed that Kuwaitis exert tremendous efforts to learn the language, which means the parents push their children to learn French and this involves strengthening relations between France and Kuwait.



Le Flécher

guage unites us in our diversity, as confirmed by the President of the Republic, Emmanuel Macron.”

She revealed that French is the fifth mostly spoken language in the world -- spoken daily by more than 235 million people and understood by more than 300 million people across the five continents. “This language provides broad possibilities for enhancing communication between populations and cultures while building the world of tomorrow,” she asserted.

She added Francophone is enhanced by cultural diversity and human values, makes intercultural dialogue an engine for positive development, and opens a path

that contradicts the painful premise of a clash of civilizations or a war of religions. “While respecting the differences and peculiarities of each person, Francophone also expands the field of possibilities in a global spirit of openness, as an alternative to globalization that will be synonymous with unifying the world. Kuwait understood this situation very early and focused on teaching the French language since 1966, when the language was introduced into the school system. Thanks to the work of the Ministry of Education and the General Inspectorate for Teaching the French Language, French has become the third language taught in Kuwait. It is a sign of the strong and lasting relations between our countries. Approximately 500,000 French speakers are in Kuwait with more than 1,400 French teachers and more than 40,000 students; while about 10,000 students are studying French for their baccalaureate degree every year.”

She also affirmed that “DELF attracts about 400,000 candidates every year, and has seen nine million candidates pass throughout the world since 1985. It honors more than 100 candidates of all ages every year in Kuwait.”

Meanwhile, Benoit Catala, Advisor for Cooperation and Cultural Work and Director of the French Institute in Kuwait said: “The Institute is the only accredited center for these internationally recognized certificates, which are valid for life and allow their holders to work, study and to immigrate to French-speaking countries. We use the European Framework of Reference for teaching French.”



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A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

‘Thorough background check vital for judicial appointment’

“WE’VE discussed at length the qualities required for judiciary members, noting that they are typically selected from among the top graduates with Bachelor of Laws degrees,” columnist Counselor **Adel Boutros** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

“However, academic excellence alone is not sufficient for one to hold such a prestigious position. A judge must also come from a reputable background, ensuring they were raised in a good environment, starting with their family. The family must have a good reputation, with no members known for bad behavior or criminal tendencies.

“To this end, candidates for judicial appointments undergo thorough background checks. Investigators examine the environments in which they were raised and the behavior of their close relatives, such as parents, siblings, spouses, and cousins.

“This is to ensure that none of them view crime as anything other than shameful and contemptible, rather than a sign of cleverness or skill.

“It is generally accepted that judges adhere to the law strictly, but exceptions do exist, reinforcing the rule rather than negating it. We’ve previously mentioned a judge in Egypt who broke this rule by committing a heinous crime: the murder of his young wife, a broadcaster.

“This judge married her in secret, promising to reveal their marriage later, but when he failed to do so, she threatened to expose him. This included revealing his professional misconduct.

“Fearing for his career and personal life, he plotted to kill her. He and an accomplice rented a remote farm and prepared tools, a gun, and chains for the crime.

“On the appointed day, he lured her to the farm under the guise of giving it to her as a gift. Once there, he attacked her, and with his friend’s help, killed her. They then mutilated her body to prevent identification.

“Despite the brutality of this crime, it remains an exception to the rule. The global standard is that judges maintain impeccable conduct and avoid any suspicion.

“This judge, however, violated these principles in a manner more fitting of a hardened criminal. Further investigations revealed suspicions of additional crimes, leading to a comprehensive inquiry into his finances and assets, which included numerous properties and business interests.

“If all accusations against this judge are proven, he stands as an exception that confirms the rule of judicial integrity. His unique circumstances may have led him down this dark path, but we hope such instances remain rare.”

**Also:**

“There is a broad consensus that our educational system is deeply flawed, from its foundations to its outcomes. It is equally accepted that a failing educational system leads to the gradual collapse of society,” columnist **Asrar Johar Hayat** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

“Therefore, urgent and immediate reform of the educational system is necessary, as we no longer have the luxury of time.

“When we talk about reforming the educational system, the first thing that comes to mind is curriculum reform and development. However, while this is crucial, it is a time-consuming process, and we may not have the time to wait.

“Therefore, I propose a practical and applicable solution that can be implemented more swiftly than curriculum reform.

“According to the theory of Intended Learning Outcomes, the primary focus should be on the quality of educational outcomes, particularly the human element that will eventually manage and build society.

“To improve educational outcomes quickly, we must focus on the teachers, as they are the cornerstone of the educational process. The equation is simple: improving the quality of teachers and their performance will result in better educational outcomes.

“To start with, teacher education colleges in Kuwait should attract distinguished students and direct them to the specializations needed by the Ministry of Education. The field of education should be made attractive to students who are passionate about teaching.

“Additionally, the Ministry of Education should focus on developing the skills of current teachers and training them in innovative teaching methods. Teachers play a crucial role in curriculum development, as they convey the curriculum to students.

“A well-trained teacher can enhance the curriculum by incorporating rich and modern information from

new studies and research, thereby presenting the material in a more developed and contemporary manner.

“Teachers must also be equipped with the latest teaching methods that resonate with the current generation. The traditional method of rote learning is outdated; our classrooms need to become interactive learning environments.

“One significant way to develop teachers is to implement a teacher licensing project, supervised by an independent body affiliated with the Council of Ministers, not the Minister of Education. This ensures impartiality.

“Once the license is activated and linked to joining the teaching profession, it implies that teaching is not just a fallback option but a profession for those who excel at it and can produce knowledgeable and educated generations.

“Furthermore, a new organizational structure for teachers should be developed, including academic levels similar to those for university professors.

“Teachers should be able to advance from novice teacher to assistant teacher, and eventually to senior teacher, through specific training courses or tests.

“This progression should be linked to job promotions and salary increases, providing incentives for teachers to improve their skills and climb the academic ladder.

“The teaching profession is a noble one, requiring a prestigious social and financial status. Those who teach our children should be the elite. Thus, we must ensure that teachers are given this status, including increased salaries.

“This should be accompanied by a clear mechanism for selecting top high school graduates for teacher preparation colleges, ensuring that the teaching profession attracts and retains the best candidates.

“Our children are the cornerstone of the future, and we must ensure the quality of their education to prepare them for university studies and beyond. We have a long journey of development ahead, requiring national leaders and skilled personnel to manage our projects and build the society we aspire to.

“Therefore, improving the quality of educational outcomes is the first step in educational reform, and this can be achieved by elevating the standard of our teachers. There is always more to discuss on this important topic.”

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“The star and accidents ... The collision of cars on crowded streets like that of the State of Kuwait does not seem strange, especially since someone who did not dream of being photographed next to a car in his country now owns an Arabic car in our country. He even uses the parking lots for the disabled, and parks his car near mosques, schools and homes of citizens without fear or shame,” columnist **Talal Al-Saeed** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“This is no longer surprising in Kuwait, but what is strange is that in the event of an accident, God forbid, you are forced to wait for hours until the accident procedures are completed

“The active minister may have solved the problem of the lack of investigators in police stations with his new decision requiring police officers to fulfill their official duty. However, the minister does not know the arduous journey before you reach the police station to obtain a document in order to proceed with the repair of your car! This is in addition to the overcrowding and congestion of streets caused by accidents – whether minor or major. All of these are due to the accident procedures!

“The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia eliminated all kinds of crowding and waiting for completion of accident procedures and obtaining the repair document through the establishment of a company called ‘Najm’ that deals with this whole story. It creates a diagram of the accident, holds the insurance companies accountable and gives everyone their rights, even far from the outpost! The company saved time and effort, reduced pressure on police stations, and cars are neither parked on the streets nor disrupted traffic movement!

“It is not shameful to copy the Saudi experience and benefit from it, as long as the active minister is developing the work of the Ministry of Interior. So, why does he not seek the help of the Saudi ‘Najm’ Company to establish a similar company in Kuwait, while avoiding the mistakes that ‘Najm’ Company committed, if any?

“Like us, Minister Fahd Al-Yousuf knows that car accidents are still the major cause of road congestion, and that insurance companies are delaying the payment of accident compensation to citizens. The Saudi government addressed all of these issues through ‘Najm’ Company. When will we see a Kuwaiti star eliminate this problem? Good.”

– Compiled by PFX Fernandes & Mahmoud Ateyieh



Chief of Staff of Kuwait Army during the inspection of the Artillery and Land Force Institute.

KUNA photos

Lieut-Gen Al-Mezyan given presentation on tasks, missions

Army Chief of Staff visits Land Force Artillery and Institute

KUWAIT CITY, June 8: The Chief of Staff of Kuwait Army Lieutenant General Bandar Al-Mezyan conducted a field visit to the Land Force Artillery and Land Force Institute, reports **Al-Anba** daily. Upon his arrival at the artillery, he was given a presentation on the tasks and missions assigned to the Land Force Artillery.

Lieutenant General Al-Mezyan praised the high level of training and the advanced professionalism of the individuals.

He then moved to Land Force Institute where Lieutenant General Bandar Al-Mezyan was received by the Commander of the institute Major General Khalid Ali Al-Zayed.

He was then given a presentation on the training and teaching methods as well as the curricula provided by the institute. At the end of his visit, Lieutenant General Bandar Al-Mezyan highly praised the efforts exerted by the individuals in Kuwait Army and their readiness to defend their nation and preserve its stability and safety.

Coast Guard makes big drug bust at sea, seizes 50 kilos of hashish

Cell phones, knives recovered in surprise prison raid

KUWAIT CITY, June 8: As part of the efforts of the Ministry of Interior to confront drug dealers and smugglers and control networks smuggling poisons into the country, the Coast Guard General Department, in cooperation with the Drug Control General Department, foiled the smuggling of 50 kilograms of hashish with an estimated value of KD150,000 as four persons attempted to bring the narcotics into the country by sea, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

Coast Guard officers monitored the maritime borders and intensified search and investigation operations on drug smugglers, so information was obtained about a group of people attempting to smuggle prohibited substances by sea.

By monitoring the advanced radar system, the location of the contraband and those involved was identified. After obtaining permission, the Coast Guard officers arrested the suspects and found 50 kilograms of hashish in their possession. They were referred to the concerned authorities, along with the confiscated narcotics.

Assistant Undersecretary for Border Security Affairs Major General Mubjil Bin Shouq and a number of Coast Guard officials supervised the opening of the contraband.

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**Surprise inspection raids in prison:** For the second time in few weeks, inspection teams from Special Security Forces launched a surprise campaign in Central Prison, in collaboration with the Central Prison Security, during which a number of prohibited items were seized including smart phones, wires, knives and drugs, reports **Al-Shahed** daily.

These illicit items, which were well hidden, have been collected and referred to the concerned authorities for necessary legal measures.

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**PAFN seizes rotten meat:** During a routine inspection of food items at Mubarakiaya market, the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition, Wednesday, seized over half a ton of rotten meat that had been offered for sale to unsuspecting consumers at various meat and butcher shops, reports **Al-Qabas** daily.

Muhammad Al-Kandari, the head of the Mubarakiaya Center within the authority, confirmed the closure of several butcher shops found selling meat deemed unfit for human consumption. He noted that the meat displayed unnatural characteristics, including changes in color, shape, and odor, indicating spoilage.

Furthermore, Al-Kandari revealed that workers were found operating within these shops despite sustaining injuries, without presenting the necessary medical reports issued by competent authorities. Such violations jeopardize public health and safety, warranting swift action from regulatory bodies to ensure compliance with food safety standards.

Al-Kandari said PAFN remains vigilant in its efforts to safeguard consumer welfare, underscoring the importance of stringent inspections and enforcement measures to prevent the sale of contaminated or substandard food items in Kuwait’s markets.

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**Encroachments removed:** Head of the Violations Removal Department at the Kuwait Municipality branch in Ahmadi Governorate Eng. Majed Al-Mutairi has confirmed the removal of encroachments on State properties – canopies in Mahboula and 13 illegal reserves along Umm Safaq Road, reports **Al-Jarida** daily.

In a press statement, Al-Mutairi disclosed that the inspection team carried out field tours under the supervision and direct follow-up of Ahmadi Municipality Branch Manager Saad Al-Shaiba.

Meanwhile, the Public Relations Department at the Municipality has announced the intensification of inspection tours by the Municipality teams in all branches as per the directive of Director General of the Municipality Eng. Saud Al-Dubos. The department said the Municipality teams are continuously conducting field tours, while urging all those who violated the regulations to correct their violations in order to avoid legal problems.

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**Bureau signs MoU with GRAS:** The National Bureau for Human Rights recently signed a memorandum of understanding with the Kuwait Society for Drug Awareness and Prevention (GRAS) to bolster constructive collaboration in areas of shared objectives, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

This agreement aims to foster communication channels that facilitate the exchange of ideas and best practices, as well as mutual support for the execution of technical and professional programs.

Ban on selling fresh, frozen mince

MoCI seizes ‘adulterated’ Zamzam water

KUWAIT CITY, June 8: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) announced the seizure of a store supplying ‘adulterated’ Zamzam water packed in cans and polyethylene bags ready for sale in the Hawalli region and legal procedures are being completed to refer the case to the Commercial Prosecution, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

The Ministry of Commerce said in a press statement that the seizure was in implementation of Ministerial Resolution No. 216/2014, which stipulates that “it is prohibited to import Zamzam water for a commercial purpose and prohibit its display and circulation in the markets.”

A sticker printed with Zamzam water was placed on it and was offered for sale. The daily explained that the Hawalli Monitoring Team of the Commercial Control and Consumer Protection Sector seized 23,300 packaged cans of 200ml with Zamzam water and stickers were found placed on 923 cartons for the purpose of selling them.

On the other hand, the Ministry of Commerce prohibited butcheries and meat showrooms from selling fresh and frozen (minced) meat except in the presence of the consumer and upon his request.

It also prohibited butcheries from adding fat that is not part of the meat when weighing it and selling it to the consumer.

□ □ □

**Review penal legislation:** Public Prosecutor Counselor Saad Al-Safran issued a decision to form a working team to review and evaluate the penal legislation, headed



KUNA photo

An official of the Hawalli Monitoring Team of the Commercial Control and Consumer Protection Sector checking the adulterated Zamzam water.

by First Public Prosecutor Counselor Bader Al-Massad with a number of Kuwaiti public prosecutors as members, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

The Public Prosecution posted on its official ‘X’ account that the main tasks of the team are to review, study and compare the Kuwaiti criminal legislation with contemporary criminal legislation to ensure it is in line with the latest developments in the field.

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# Water crisis grips Al-Mutla’a City, residents urge immediate action

Price of single tanker load jumps to 15 dinars

KUWAIT CITY, June 8: Residents of Al-Mutla’a city are grappling with a severe scarcity of fresh water, exacerbated by the closure of the Amghara water station, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The closure has led to increased pressure on the Jahra water station, resulting in extended waiting times for water tanker fill-ups, now reaching up to 6 hours. Consequently, the price of a single tanker load



A long line of tankers waiting to be filled due to low water pressure during filling process.

## Drive for professional standards

### Municipality organizes workshop on code of employment conduct

KUWAIT CITY, June 8: The development and information sector of the municipality, in collaboration with the Civil Service Commission, is set to organize a workshop titled ‘Code of Employment Conduct’ for municipality supervisors, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Scheduled for, Sunday, the workshop seeks to elevate professional standards, enhance service quality, build public trust, and reinforce principles of corporate governance through

integrity, transparency, and adherence to regulations.

Yousef Al-Azmi, Deputy Director General for Development and Information Sector Affairs, highlighted that the workshop will feature lectures by specialized speakers and involve participation from supervisors across various municipal sectors.

The objective is to refine methods, enhance skills, and improve performance, ultimately resulting in better public service delivery.

has skyrocketed to 15 dinars, leaving residents burdened by exorbitant costs.

In light of this dire situation, residents have appealed to authorities in the Council of Ministers, the Ministry of Works, and the Environment Agency to urgently address the water crisis, particularly as summer approaches. They emphasize the urgent need to operationalize sewage plants to alleviate the burden on the community.

Khaled Al-Anzi, Chairman of the Al-Mutla’a Residents Committee, expressed frustration over the neglect of their city, stating that the crisis extends beyond water filling delays to include sewage issues. Despite promises to address these concerns, including the operation of sewage pumps, little progress has been made.

Mishal Al-Hajri, head of the volunteer committees of Al-Mutlaa city, highlighted the severity of the water crisis, attributing it primarily to malfunctioning water pumps. With the closure of the Amghara pump, the pressure on the Jahra pump has intensified, leading to significant delays in water distribution.

Residents urge swift action from authorities to alleviate their suffering, emphasizing that the water crisis poses a significant threat to their well-being, particularly with the onset of summer.

## Co-op ‘achieves’ positive growth

KUWAIT CITY, June 8: Chairman of the Board of Directors of Sulaibikhat and Doha Cooperative Society Mubarak Al-Arboud has affirmed the completion of the inventory of the central markets and branches, reports Al-Jarida daily.

In a press statement, Al-Arboud disclosed the financial results are positive based on the report that the financial director submitted to the Board of Directors -- more than KD 220,000 from January to May.



The Kuwait Red Crescent Society begins the second phase of distributing aid to the people of southern Lebanon.

## Food, cleaning supplies for over 6,000 families

### KRCS starts second phase of aid in Lebanon

BEIRUT, June 8, (KUNA): The Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) started, Friday, its second phase of distributing relief aid to southern Lebanese people affected by Israeli occupation attacks since October 2023.

In a statement to KUNA, relief coordinator for the Lebanese Red Cross Yousef Boutros said that the KRCS is continuing its relief aid distribution to the Lebanese in cities and villages in the south whose security had been threatened by Israeli occupation attacks.

In coordination with KRCS, the Lebanese Red Cross’ aid includes food and cleaning supplies for over 6,000 Lebanese families, added Boutros.

Meanwhile, Member of Qana town municipality in Tyre Hassan Ftouni extended his gratitude to the leadership and people of Kuwait for their unending support and assistance for Lebanon and its people.

Ftouni underscored the KRCS’ efforts in southern Lebanon, empowering people in regards to their current security and economic difficulties.

The KRCS’ relief and contributions

## Minister Al-Omar gives directives to speed up civil services digitalization

KUWAIT CITY, June 8, (KUNA): The Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of State for Communications Affairs, Omar Al-Omar, issued directives on Thursday to expedite the digitalization process for civil services.

In a press release, the min-



Al-Omar

istry said that the orders came from the higher ups and Council of Ministers with the aim of improving work conduct, accelerating and easing transactions, creating a productive work environment for the benefit of the public.

Open door policy has also been enforced, it continued, on all the agencies, leaders, supervisors and to listen to the general public and ease their transactions.

It added that the ministry will receive citizens through appointments that can be booked on the (Sahel) application.

extend to its “loaf project,” aiding and supplying food to thousands of Syrian and Lebanese families and refugees over the years.

With Eid Al-Adha around the corner, the KRCS will distribute food to Lebanese, Syrian and Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

## Chamber commends strong bilateral relations

### Mongolian delegation seeks tourism investment ‘opportunities’ in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, June 8: The Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry hosted the economic delegation from Mongolia, focusing on the tourism sector, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Led by Sergelin Burev Shadai, Ambassador of the Republic of Mongolia to Kuwait, the delegation engaged with various Kuwaiti member agencies and companies.

During the meeting, the Chamber commended the strong bilateral relations between Kuwait and Mongolia, highlighting the positive impact of such visits on enhancing trade cooperation between the two countries. These interactions serve as vital tools for fostering joint collaboration and increasing the volume of trade.

Ambassador Shadai expressed appreciation for the ongoing cooperation with the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry, emphasizing Mongolia’s keen interest in joint investments with Kuwaiti businesses across diverse sectors.

The primary objective of the delegation’s visit was to explore investment prospects in Mongolia’s tourism sector and establish collaborative projects to bolster investment cooperation between the two nations.

Members of the Mongolian delegation showcased the array of tourism services available in Mongolia, including recreational trips and high-quality hotel services. They underscored Mongolia’s vast tourism potential, which has witnessed a significant increase in tourist arrivals in recent years.

The exchange of in-



Photo from the event

## French envoy inaugurates Ladies Diwaniya initiative

KUWAIT CITY, June 8: The French Ambassador to Kuwait, HE Claire Le Flecher, inaugurated the ‘Ladies Diwaniya’ at her residence, welcoming a diverse group of women from various fields including business, politics, arts, culture, and fashion, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Speaking on the occasion, the French envoy said she is honored at hosting the event, emphasizing that the aim is to provide a platform for inspiring and empowering women to connect, share stories, and build

strong networks of solidarity.

The initiative is to pay homage to Kuwaiti Diwaniya traditions, celebrating the hospitality and lifestyle excellence of Kuwaiti women.

Le Flecher highlighted the gathering’s goal of fostering open communication, empowering women, and driving positive societal change. Regular meetings are expected to facilitate idea exchange, innovative projects, and mutual support, ultimately enhancing the influence of Kuwaiti women across all sectors.

sights and presentations during the meeting provided valuable insights into the burgeoning tourism opportunities in Mongolia, paving the way for potential investment ventures and mutually beneficial partnerships between Kuwaiti and Mongolian enterprises.

## PAFN reaffirms commitment to food safety

KUWAIT CITY, June 8: Dr. Reem Al-Fulaij, Chairperson of the Board of Directors and Director General of the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition, emphasized the Authority’s commitment to its role in monitoring imported, manufactured, and traded food in Kuwait, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Saying food safety is a collective concern, she told KUNA, that the World Food Safety Day, observed annually on June 7 under the theme “Safe food today for a healthy tomorrow,” underscores the importance



Dr. Al-Fulaij

of ensuring safe food practices.

Dr. Al-Fulaij stressed that PAFN is dedicated to swiftly exchanging information on food safety and taking immediate action in coordination with relevant state authorities in response to any incidents related to food safety.

She highlighted the range of food safety incidents, from minor occurrences to significant international crises, noting that over 600 million people worldwide contract food-borne illnesses annually, resulting in 240,000 deaths.

Dr. Al-Fulaij emphasized that these illnesses and fatalities can be prevented by prioritizing food safety across the entire food supply chain, from producers to consumers.

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NOW	NOW
BHD 76.230 net	BHD 170.247 net

Promo period from 1<sup>st</sup> June to 11<sup>th</sup> June 2024

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# World News Roundup

## Europe

**Attacks in Ukrainian regions kill 28:** Russia-installed officials in the partially occupied Ukrainian regions of Kherson and Luhansk say Ukrainian attacks left at least 28 people dead as Russia and Ukraine continued to exchange drone attacks overnight into Saturday.

A Ukrainian attack Friday on the small town of Sadove in Ukraine's partially occupied Kherson region killed 22 and wounded 15 people, Moscow-backed governor **Vladimir Saldo** said.

Russian state news agency Tass cited Saldo as saying that Ukrainian forces first struck the town with a French-made guided bomb, then attacked again with a US-supplied HIMARS missile. He said Ukrainian forces had "deliberately made a repeat strike to create greater numbers of casualties" when "residents of nearby houses ran out to help the injured".

Further east, Leonid Pasechnik, the Russia-installed governor in Ukraine's partially occupied Luhansk region, said Saturday that two more bodies had been pulled from the rubble following Friday's Ukrainian missile attack on the regional capital, also called Luhansk, bringing the death toll to five. Pasechnik also said 60 people were wounded in the attack.

Ukraine did not comment on either assault. (AP)



Saldo

**Biden apologizes to Zelenskyy:** US President Joe Biden on Friday for the first time publicly apologized to Ukraine for a monthslong congressional holdup in American military assistance that let Russia make gains on the battlefield.

Biden met in Paris with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who appealed for bipartisan US support going forward "like it was during World War II."

A day earlier, the two had attended ceremonies marking the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings in Normandy, where Biden had drawn common cause between the allied forces that helped free Europe from Nazi Germany and today's effort to support Ukraine against Russia's invasion and Zelenskyy had been greeted with a rapt ovation.

"I apologize for those weeks of not knowing what's going to happen in terms of funding," Biden said, referring to the six-month holdup by conservative Republicans in Congress to a \$61 billion military aid package for Ukraine. Still, the Democratic president insisted the American people were standing by Ukraine for the long haul. "We're still in. Completely. Thoroughly," he said. (AP)

**'No threat warranting use of N-arms':** Russian President Vladimir Putin said Friday that he sees no current threat to Russia's sovereignty that would warrant the use of nuclear weapons but again warned that Moscow could send arms to countries or groups to strike Western targets.

Speaking at the St Petersburg International Economic Forum, Putin said use of nuclear weapons is only possible in "exceptional cases" and that he does not believe "such a case has arisen." The Russian leader has repeatedly raised the specter of a nuclear attack since he sent troops into Ukraine in 2022.

On Friday, he repeated a warning made days earlier that Moscow "reserves the right" to arm Western adversaries as a response to some NATO allies allowing Ukraine to use their weapons to strike targets inside Russia.

"If they supply (weapons) to the combat zone and call for using these weapons against our territory, why don't we have the right to do the same?" Putin asked. (AP)

**Slovaks, others go to polls in EU elections:** Voters in Slovakia, Italy and other European Union nations are casting their ballots Saturday on the third day of elections for the European Parliament, with populist and far-right parties looking to make gains across the 27-member bloc.

In Slovakia, the election was overshadowed by an attempt to assassinate populist Prime Minister Robert Fico on May 15, sending shockwaves through the nation of 5.4 million and reverberating throughout Europe. Analysts say the attack could boost the chances of the premier's leftist Smer (Direction) party, the senior partner in the governing coalition, to win the vote.

Fico, who took office last fall after campaigning on a pro-Russian and anti-American platform, has been recovering from multiple wounds after being shot in the abdomen as he greeted supporters in the town of Handlova. (AP)

**Sunak apologizes for skipping ceremony:** British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak apologized Friday for leaving D-Day commemorations in France early to return to the election campaign trail - a decision slammed as disgraceful by his political rivals.

Sunak, who is fighting to keep his job in Britain's July 4 election, said that, "on reflection" the decision was a mistake.

Sunak was not alongside leaders including President Joe Biden, French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelenskyy for the major memorial event at Omaha Beach in Normandy on Thursday. Former Prime Minister David Cameron, who is now foreign minister, represented the United Kingdom.

Labour Party leader Keir Starmer, the current favorite to win the election, attended and was pictured meeting Zelenskyy and other leaders. (AP)

**Danish PM suffers minor whiplash:** The Danish prime minister is suffering a minor whiplash but is otherwise fine after a man assaulted her in central Copenhagen, her office said.

Police confirmed on social media Platform X on Friday that "there has been an incident" with Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen and that a 39-year-old man was arrested.

Frederiksen was rushed to a hospital for a check-up soon after, and though unharmed, she was "shaken by the incident," according to her office, adding that she has canceled her program for the day to rest.

Jens Stoltenberg, NATO Secretary-General, said he was shocked to hear what happened to Frederiksen. (AP)

**'Probe deaths of political prisoners':** United Nations special representatives on human rights have called on Belarusian authorities to investigate the torture and deaths of political prisoners.

A report produced by the UN special rapporteur for Belarus says five people who have died in custody in Belarus were convicted on politically motivated charges.

The report noted that none of the deceased underwent an autopsy and said that the fact the prisoners died while in jail "creates a presumption of arbitrary deprivation of life by State authorities." It called on Belarusian authorities to launch "prompt, effective, impartial and transparent investigations into all deaths in custody."

The UN human rights advocates said they were particularly concerned about several Belarusian opposition politicians, lawyers and activists who are currently in prison and whose whereabouts have not been known for more than a year. (AP)

**Knox vows to 'fight for truth':** Amanda Knox told Italian TV that she was surprised by a Florence appeals court's decision to find her guilty of slander in light of a European court ruling that police who took her confession had violated her human rights.

"I will fight for the truth," Knox told Sky TG24 in her first public comments since the guilty verdict on Wednesday. "It's been 17 years that I have been unjustly accused."

Knox was a 20-year-old exchange student in the university town of Perugia when she and her then-Italian boyfriend were accused of murdering her housemate, 21-year-old Meredith Kercher, who was found dead in the apartment they shared on Nov. 2, 2007. (AP)



US President Joe Biden delivers a speech on the legacy of Pointe du Hoc, and democracy around the world, on June 7 as he stands next to the Pointe du Hoc monument in Normandy, France. (AP)

## Biden looks to Pointe du Hoc to inspire the push for democracy abroad & at home

US President Joe Biden on Friday summoned Americans to defend democracy from threats at home and abroad - and cast an implicit contrast with Donald Trump - as he drew on the heroism of Army Rangers who scaled the seaside cliffs of Pointe du Hoc in the D-Day invasion 80 years ago.

The same spot was etched in the nation's political memory in 1984, when President Ronald Reagan honored the "boys of Pointe du Hoc" and drew com-

mon cause between their almost unthinkable feat in the face of Nazi Germany's tyranny and the Reagan-era Cold War struggle against the Soviet Union.

Now, Biden sought to channel both historic moments to advance his own vision for the country's global role in the face of two grueling wars and in an election year when former President Trump has continued to lie about his 2020 election loss and has threatened to dismantle US commitments overseas

if he regains the White House.

"As we gather here today, it's not just to honor those who showed such remarkable bravery that day June 6, 1944," Biden said. "It's to listen to the echo of their voices. To hear them. Because they are summoning us. They're asking us what will we do. They're not asking us to scale these cliffs. They're asking us to stay true to what America stands for." (AP)

## Politics

### Secured ballot access in enough states to win: RFK

## Reverse felony conviction, says Trump

PHOENIX, June 8, (AP) - Donald Trump returned to the campaign trail Thursday with a trip to Arizona, his first appearance in a battleground state since he was convicted in a hush money scandal, repeating his critiques of the case against him as politically motivated and calling for his conviction to be overturned on appeal.

"Those appellate courts have to step up and straighten things out or we're not going to have a country anymore," Trump said at a Phoenix town hall organized by Turning Point, a conservative youth organization that has seen its influence rise alongside Trump's takeover of the GOP.

### Verdict

Trump is expected to appeal last month's conviction on all 34 charges in his New York hush money trial, in which he became the first former American president to be convicted of felony crimes. He responded defiantly to the verdict against him a day after a New York jury found him guilty last week of a scheme to illegally influence the 2016 election through a hush money payment to a porn actor but had not spoken directly to the swing-state voters who will decide the November election until Thursday, when he used a profanity to decry the "fake" and politically motivated case against him.

The crowd of thousands inside the mega church, where bass for the pre-show and introductory music was turned up so high that it shook seats and media camera shots, chanted the same profanity in response.

The Phoenix Police Department said 11 people at the event were transport-

ed to hospitals, treated and released for heat exhaustion. Officials said an excessive heat warning was in effect for the area during Trump's town hall, where many of Trump's supporters were unable to get inside before it reached capacity, and Phoenix set a new record high of 112 degrees Fahrenheit by mid-afternoon.

Trump's conviction infuriated his supporters, who pumped tens of millions of dollars into his campaign in the immediate aftermath. Trump blames his conviction on President Joe Biden, though the case was brought by the locally elected district attorney in New York, and many of his allies are calling for revenge.

"What are they going to campaign on?" Juan Arredondo of Peoria, Arizona said of the Democrats as he waited to get inside Trump's rally. "They can't campaign on the border. They can't campaign on the economy."

Trump focused much of his hour-long speech and subsequent Q&A on the US-Mexico border, blaming a litany of problems - from inflation to the long-term health of Social Security - on illegal immigration, characterizing Biden's policies "a deliberate demolition of our sovereignty and our borders."

The influx of foreign-born adults vastly has raised the supply of available workers after a US labor shortage had left many companies unable to fill jobs.

### Also:

**PHOENIX:** Former Donald Trump presidential chief of staff **Mark Meadows** and Trump 2020 Election Day operations director **Michael Roman**

pleaded not guilty Friday in Phoenix to nine felony charges for their roles in an effort to overturn Trump's **Arizona** election loss to **Joe Biden**.

Meadows and Roman appeared by videoconference for separate brief hearings before **Maricopa** County Superior Court Commissioner **Shellie Smith**, who set an Oct 31 trial date.

Meadows and Roman spoke during the hearings only to respond to Smith's questions with their names and birthdates. Their attorneys spoke for them to enter their pleas of not guilty.

The indictment alleges Meadows worked with other Trump campaign members to submit names of fake electors from Arizona and other states to Congress in a bid to keep Trump in office despite his November 2020 defeat at the ballot box.

**PHOENIX:** Robert F. Kennedy Jr. claimed Friday that he's qualified for the ballot in enough states to win the presidency as an independent candidate, but there's a major caveat: at least 10 of the states have not certified his candidacy.

Kennedy is racing to secure a place on the ballot in states with at least 270 electoral votes, the minimum needed to become president, before a June 20 deadline to qualify for a CNN debate later this month.

Kennedy's campaign said he submitted 3,300 signatures in **Minnesota** on Friday and listed the state among 19 states with 278 electoral votes where he claims ballot access. But by the campaign's own admission, at least half of those states have not verified that his submission is valid.



Law enforcement officers maintain their presence at Schemengees Bar and Grille in the aftermath of a mass shooting in Lewiston, Maine on Oct 28, 2023. Thousands of pages Maine State Police documents released on June 7 include detailed descriptions of the chaos and carnage surrounding the state's deadliest mass shooting. (AP)



Biden



Lowell

## America

**LA shooting kills 1:** A shooting near a college in Los Angeles killed a man and wounded four other people Friday night, police said.

Homicide detectives were involved in a shooting death investigation on the 800 block of Greenleaf Boulevard in Compton, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department said in a statement.

The shooting was reported around 8 p.m. and a man was pronounced dead at the scene, the statement said.

The other four victims were transported to a local hospital and their conditions were not immediately known, the statement said.

Deputies said the shooting happened near Compton College but was not connected to the school, KCAL-TV reported.

There was no information available about a suspect. (AP)

**Biden's daughter testifies:** Hunter Biden's daughter Naomi testified Friday in his federal gun trial about visiting her father while he was at a California rehab center, telling jurors that he seemed to be improving in the weeks before he bought the revolver in 2018.

"I hadn't seen my dad in a long time, and I knew he was in a rehab facility there. He reached out," she told jurors softly, explaining that they met at a coffee shop, along with his "sober coach." As she was dismissed from the stand, she paused to hug her dad before leaving the courtroom.

The defense began calling witnesses shortly after federal prosecutors wrapped up their case. Hunter Biden's attorney **Abbe Lowell** started by calling another gun store clerk who was there when the gun was purchased, raising questions about what he saw as inconsistencies on the form. (AP)



Britain's Prince William leaves Chester Cathedral after the wedding of Olivia Henson and Hugh Grosvenor, the Duke of Westminster. William took a day out from royal duties on Friday to serve as an usher at the wedding of his friend Grosvenor, an event briefly disrupted by environmental protesters. The wedding of 33-year-old Grosvenor, one of Britain's wealthiest landowners, to his partner Henson, 31, is one of the high-society events of the year in Britain. (AP)

Boone, 46, has pleaded not guilty to the second-degree murder charge.

Boone initially told detectives with the Orange County Sheriff's Office that she and her boyfriend, Jorge Torres, had been playing hide and seek in the residence they shared in Winter Park, Florida, when they thought it would be funny for Torres to get into the suitcase.

They had been drinking, and she decided to go to sleep, thinking that Torres could get out of the suitcase on his own, she told detectives, according to an arrest report.

When she woke up the next morning, she didn't find Torres but then remembered he was in the suitcase. She unzipped the suitcase, and found him unresponsive, the arrest report said. (AP)

**Teen appeals life sentence:** A teenager who was convicted of fatally shooting four students at his high school in Michigan is appealing his life sentence, his attorneys announced Friday.

Officials with the state Appellate Defender Office said in a statement that they have filed a request for Ethan Crumbley to be resentenced.

Crumbley, now 18, pleaded guilty to 24 charges, including one count of terrorism and four counts of first-degree murder, and was sentenced in December to life without parole. He was 15 at the time of the shooting. (AP)



Africa

3 Americans go on trial

33m in Sahel need lifesaving aid – UN

UNITED NATIONS, June 8, (Agencies): Facing a web of complex crises, 32.8 million people in Africa’s Sahel region, stretching from Senegal to Eritrea, need lifesaving assistance and protection, UN humanitarian

ians said on Friday. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) put the warning in its 2024 Humanitarian Needs and Requirements Overview for the Sahel, highlighting the nature of the humanitarian crises faced, what this means for those living in the region, and how humanitarians are responding to these crises. United Nations secretary general is António Guterres.

The report said some critical areas of concern are the Liptako Gourma region (covering Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger), and the Lake Chad basin (including Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria), with spillover effects increasingly felt in the Gulf of Guinea’s coastal countries and Mauritania.

“Across the Sahel, growing violence and conflict threaten lives and livelihoods, forcing families to flee their homes and preventing access to basic social services — 2.2 million children are deprived of their right to education due to school closures, and close to 1,300 health centers are closed,” OCHA said.

The report pointed out that the region hosts 2 million refugees and asylum seekers and 5.6 million internally displaced persons, many of whom have faced multiple displacements.

“In the June to August lean season, 16.7 million people will struggle to feed themselves,” OCHA said.

The United Nations and partners need 4.7 billion US dollars this year to support 21 million people in Burkina Faso, Cameroon’s Far North Region, Chad, Mali, Niger, and Nigeria’s Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states. So far, only 16 percent of the funding, or 761 million dollars, has been received.

**Fire leaves dozens without shelter:** A fire at a displacement camp in eastern Congo destroyed around 50 makeshift tents, leaving dozens of families without shelter, according to the United Nations, which said the fire is believed to have started during cooking at a camp.

The Muganga displaced people camp near the provincial capital Goma was hit by fire Wednesday. It had already endured bomb attacks in early May, which killed at least 18 people and injured 32 others, a UN spokesman said. It wasn’t clear what type of explosives were used in those attacks. Most of the victims were women and children.

“While I was trying to empty the house of my valuables, I couldn’t save my most precious items: my tokens to receive various humanitarian assistance,” Anne Marie Nikuze, 60, a displaced person living in the camp with her children and grandchildren told The Associated Press. “The little we had has also gone up in flames,” she said.

“We escaped the recent bomb attacks and now, it’s the fire that has struck us,” Furaha Mulema Mariam, 42, a mother of four, said. “The only luck is that it happened during the day, if it had been at night we would all be dead.”

The decades-long conflict in eastern Congo has produced one of the world’s worst humanitarian crises, with over 100 armed groups fighting in the region, most for land and control of mines with valuable minerals.

The violence has displaced about 7 million people, including thousands living in temporary camps like the one that was attacked last month. Many others are beyond the reach of aid.

**22 Chinese nationals sentenced:** A Zambian court on Friday sentenced 22 Chinese nationals to long prison terms for cybercrimes that included internet fraud and online scams targeting Zambians and other people from Singapore, Peru and the United Arab Emirates.

The Magistrates Court in the capital, Lusaka, sentenced them for terms ranging from seven to 11 years. The court also fined them between \$1,500 and \$3,000 after they pleaded guilty to charges of computer-related misrepresentation, identity fraud and illegally operating a network or service on Wednesday. A man from Cameroon also was sentenced and fined on the same charges.

They were part of a group of 77 people, the majority of them Zambians, arrested in April over what police described as a “sophisticated internet fraud syndicate.”

Director-general of the drug enforcement commission, Nason Banda, said investigations began after authorities noticed a spike in the number of cyber-related fraud cases and many people complained about inexplicably losing money from their mobile phones or bank accounts.

Officers from the commission, police, the immigration department and the anti-terrorism unit in April swooped on a Chinese-run business in an upmarket suburb of Lusaka, arresting the 77, including those sentenced Friday. Authorities recovered over 13,000 local and foreign mobile phone SIM cards, two firearms and 78 rounds of ammunition during the raid.

The business, named Golden Top Support Services, had employed “unsuspecting” Zambians aged between 20 and 25 to use the SIM cards to engage “in deceptive conversations with unsuspecting mobile users across various platforms such as WhatsApp, Telegram, chat rooms and others, using scripted dialogues,” Banda said in April after the raid.

**3 Americans go on trial:** Three Americans accused of being involved in last month’s coup attempt in Congo appeared in a military court in the country’s capital, Kinshasa, on Friday, along with dozens of other defendants who were lined up on plastic chairs before the judge on the first day of the hearing.

The proceedings before the open-air military court were broadcast live on the local television channel.

Six people were killed during the botched coup attempt led by the little-known opposition figure Christian Malanga last month that targeted the presidential palace and a close ally of President Felix Tshisekedi. Malanga was fatally shot for resisting arrest soon after live-streaming the attack on his social media, the Congolese army said.

The defendants face a number of charges, many punishable by death, including terrorism, murder and criminal association. The court said there were 53 names on the list, but the names of Malanga and one other person were removed after death certificates were produced.



An aerial drone photo taken on May 21, 2024 shows China Coast Guard (CCG) vessel Huayang (R) conducting a drill with another CCG vessel in the South China Sea. Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim has called for diplomatic engagement to resolve the South China Sea disputes, stressing that interference from external parties will only make things worse. (Xinhua)

Asia

‘Actions against Manila in sea threaten security’

Japan, US and SKorea hold 1st joint drill

TOKYO, June 8, (AP): Japanese, US and South Korean coast guard vessels conducted their first three-way drill on Thursday off Japan’s coast as the countries strengthen their maritime ties in response to increased assertiveness by China in pressing its territorial claims.

Skirmishes between Chinese and Philippine coast guard vessels have escalated in the South China Sea, triggering fears that the disputes could escalate to an armed conflict between China and the United States, a long-time ally of the Philippines.

Thursday’s joint drill followed an agreement by the leaders of the three countries last August to enhance security cooperation to safeguard peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific.

Patrol vessels from each country and two helicopters joined search and rescue operations in waters off the northern coast of Maizuru in Kyoto prefecture, based on a scenario of rescuing crew members from a South Korean ship that caught fire after colliding with another boat, the Japanese coast guard said.

Japan in recent years has significantly reinforced its defenses in southwestern Japan, including Okinawa and its outer islands that are considered strategically key in response to growing Chinese assertiveness and tensions around Taiwan, a self-governed island claimed by Beijing.

Coast guards from Japan, the United States and South Korea signed an agreement last month to work together to preserve maritime resources, counter illegal fishing, conduct search and rescue operations and improve maritime law enforcement capabilities in the region.

China routinely sends coast guard vessels into waters surrounding disputed islands controlled by Japan.

Also:

**MANILA, Philippines:** Sweden’s defense chief has expressed alarm over Beijing’s repeated dangerous maneuvers against Philippine vessels in the South China Sea, saying such actions threaten global security, undermine stability and underscore the need to invest “for our security and freedom.”

Defense Minister Pål Jonson spoke Thursday night in a diplomatic reception in Manila for Sweden’s national day after meeting his Philippine counterpart, Gilberto Teodoro Jr., on expanding defense relations. Sweden is one of the possible sources of super-

Vietnam confirms arrest of writer, historian San for ‘Facebook post’

BANGKOK, June 8, (AP): Authorities in Vietnam announced Friday that they have charged prominent journalist and historian Truong Huy San with violating a national security law because of writing he had posted on Facebook, the website of the newspaper Tuoi Tre and other state media reported.

The reports citing the Security Investigation Agency of the Ministry of Public Security said San, better known by his pen name Huy Duc, was charged with “abusing the rights of freedom and democracy to infringe upon the interests of the State, the rights and legitimate interests of organizations and individuals.”

A lawyer, Tran Dinh Trien, was also charged under the same Article 331 of the Penal Code, according to the reports, which said both men were ordered detained for prosecution and that security officials were to carry out searches of their workplaces and homes. The offense is punishable by two to seven years in prison.

Trien is a former deputy director of the Hanoi Bar Association who has been involved in many high-profile

legal cases. His arrest was also related to commentary about the government that he had posted on Facebook, said the report.

The announcement was the first official confirmation of the men’s detention. It was not clear if or how their cases were connected.

Also:

**HONG KONG:** Two British judges have resigned from Hong Kong’s top court, the city’s judiciary said, deepening worries over the city’s rule of law under a Beijing-imposed national security law.

The judiciary said in a statement that Jonathan Sumption and Lawrence Collins, who both serve as non-permanent overseas judges of Hong Kong’s Court of Final Appeal, have tendered their resignations to the city leader. But it did not give further details about their decisions.

Collins told The Associated Press that his resignation was “because of the political situation in Hong Kong.” But he said he continues “to have the fullest confidence in the court and the total independence of its members.”

since last year, causing collisions.

China’s use of powerful water cannons had damaged Philippine vessels, injured several Filipino navy personnel, and strained diplomatic relations. Manila has filed diplomatic protests and publicized Chinese actions against the Philippine coast guard and navy vessels in an effort to gain international support.

“These acts put human lives at risk, they undermine regional stability and international law and they threaten the security in the region and beyond,” Jonson said. “These are not only threats to your national security but threats to our common global security.”

The Philippines coast guard belatedly reported Friday that one of its high-speed boats was blocked and surrounded by Chinese coast guard vessels as it approached a Philippine territorial outpost in the Second Thomas Shoal on May 19 to get a sick Filipino military sailor from a navy boat deployed near the shoal outpost.

would be part of a broader Russian response to the US support for Ukraine.

The officials said that the Russian military presence was notable but not concerning. However, it’s taking place as Russian President Vladimir Putin has suggested that Moscow could take “asymmetrical steps” elsewhere in the world in response to President Joe Biden’s decision to allow Ukraine to use US-provided weapons to strike inside Russia to protect Kharkiv, Ukraine’s second-largest city. (AP)

**Tent encampments cleared:** Mexican federal immigration authorities said they have cleared one of Mexico City’s largest downtown tent encampments of migrants.

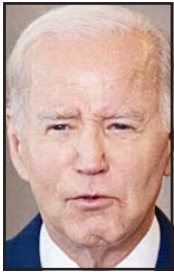
The National Immigration Institute says the migrants had been forced to pay bribes of between \$12 and \$35 to an official, who they didn’t identify, for the right to pitch a tent in the tightly-packed space. Most of the 432 migrants at the camp had some sort of visa allowing them to remain in Mexico, and simply agreed to leave. There were also some Mexican people at the camp, presumably homeless persons.

About 99 migrants were taken either to immigration offices or shelters. More than half of them were from Haiti, with most of the remainder either from Venezuela or Central America.

There used to be an office of the Mexican Commission on Refugee Aid, COMAR, nearby, but that office was closed on May 29. (AP)



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi speaks to the media at the forecourt of the Indian presidential palace after receiving a letter from the President of India, Droupadi Murmu, inviting him to form the next central government, in New Delhi, India on June 7. Modi on Friday was formally elected leader of the National Democratic Alliance coalition, which won the most seats in the national election after his political party failed to win a majority on its own. (AP)



Biden



Castro

Lat/Am

**Panama shooting kills 1:** Two unidentified gunmen opened fire on a group of students on a rural campus of the University of Panama Friday, killing one and wounding another before escaping, according to police and school officials.

University Rector Eduardo Flores Castro said via the social platform X that agricultural sciences students were doing field work at the university’s regional center in Veraguas about 155 miles (250 kilometers) southwest of the capital when the shooting took place.

Later in a statement, he identified the student who was killed as 27-year-old Alvaro Leones.

“Leones was an outstanding member of our university community, whose academic commitment and spirit of solidarity leave an indelible imprint on the entire university community,” Flores said. He offered condolences to his family and friends.

The director of the regional campus where the shooting occurred, Pedro Samaniego, did not witness the shooting, but was on campus. (AP)

**Guatemala lawyer killed:** A Guatemalan lawyer who worked closely with organizations representing farmworkers and Indigenous groups was killed in an apparent ambush, human rights organizations said Thursday.

José Domingo was with two members of the United Farmworkers Committee when they were shot by a group of men south of the capital, said Daniel Pascual, a leader of that organization.

Guatemalan authorities had not commented on the attack. The other two men were wounded, one seriously, Pascual said. Domingo was helping to legalize a land title in the area, Pascual said. Land ownership issues are often contentious in rural Guatemala where Indigenous peoples and farmworkers struggle to obtain title to the land they live on and frequently face illegal evictions.

“It was an ambush, the crime was planned and premeditated,” Pascual said. “Common criminals don’t act that way.”

Domingo had defended the farmworker organization in a number of cases, as well as other Indigenous groups. (AP)

**Russia ships to arrive in Havana:** Four Russian ships, including a nuclear-powered submarine, will arrive in Havana next week, Cuban officials said, citing “historically friendly relations” between both nations and as tensions escalate over Western military support for Ukraine in its war with Russia. Cuba’s foreign ministry said in a news

release that the ships will be in Havana between June 12 and June 17, noting that none of them will carry any nuclear weapons and assuring their presence “does not represent a threat to the region.”

The announcement came a day after US officials said that Washington had been tracking Russian warships and aircraft that were expected to arrive in the Caribbean for a military exercise. They said the exercise



Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) leader, Julius Malema, front center, arrives at the Results Operation Centre (ROC) in Midrand, Johannesburg, South Africa on June 1. South African opposition parties were meeting Friday and will continue crunch talks into next week to consider the ruling African National Congress’ offer to become part of a government of national unity. (AP)



Market Movements				07-06-2024			
		Change	Closing pts			Change	Closing pts
↑	PHILIPPINES	-	PSEI	+8.90	6,518.76		
	DUBAI	-	DFMGI	+3.50	3,982.25		
	PAKISTAN	-	KSE 100	+14.33	73,816.31		
↓	JAPAN	-	Nikkei 225	-19.58	38,683.93		
	BRITAIN	-	FTSE 100	-39.97	8,245.37		
	EUROPE	-	EURO Stoxx 50	-17.78	5,051.31		

# Business

## Gulf Bank receives affirmation of strong credit ratings from ‘Capital Intelligence’

Long-term foreign currency rating affirmed at ‘A+’

KUWAIT CITY, June 8: Capital Intelligence Ratings (“CI Ratings”) has affirmed the Long-term Foreign Currency and the Short-term Foreign Currency of Gulf Bank ratings at “A+” and “A1”, respectively. At the same time, CI Ratings has also affirmed the Bank’s Stand alone Rating of “a-“, with a “Stable” Outlook.

On the other hand, CI Ratings has also affirmed the rating of Gulf Bank’s KWD 50 million Basel III-compliant Tier 2 Subordinated Bonds at “BBB+”. The Outlook for the Bond is “Stable”.

According to the recently publish CI Ratings report, Gulf Bank’s Stand Alone and Core Financial Strength are both supported by the Bank’s well established business franchise, especially in retail banking, good and resilient loan asset quality metrics, solid and improved capital position and good liquidity metrics. The Core Financial Strength also reflects the Bank’s size as the fifth largest bank in Kuwait in terms of total assets, with one of the largest distribution networks in the country and a sound market share of both loans and deposits, as



Dalal Al-Dousari

mentioned by CI Rating announcement.

On Gulf Bank’s asset quality, CI Ratings stated in their report that :“We consider Gulf Bank to be a well-managed institution and conservative lender. Loan asset quality metrics have remained good and

resilient, underpinned by a fairly well diversified loan book by customer segment and economic sector”

Commenting on Capital Intelligence Ratings Bank and Bond credit rating announcement, Ms. Dalal Al-Dousari, Gulf Bank’s Deputy General Manager of Investor Relations said: “We are very pleased to receive the affirmation of our Bank’s Long-term Foreign Currency rating at “A+” and our KDW 50 million Tier II Subordinated Bond rating at “BBB+” by Capital Intelligence Ratings. This is an international acknowledgement of Gulf Bank’s positive market position and highly experienced management team that contributed to its well- established business franchise and sound market share, solid and improved capital position and good liquidity metrics.”

Gulf Bank continues to be well recognized in terms of its credit worthiness and financial strength internationally as it is rated ‘A’ by three major credit rating agencies.

In addition to Capital Intelligence recent affirmation of its Long-Term Foreign Currency Rating at ‘A+’ with a Stable Outlook, Gulf Bank has a Long-Term Issuer Default Rating of ‘A’ with a ‘Stable’ Outlook by Fitch Ratings and a Long-Term Deposits rating of ‘A3’ with a ‘Positive’ Outlook by Moody’s Investor Services.

### General index declines by 6 points

## Boursa Kuwait ‘faces’ volatility amid selective selling pressure

By Mahmoud Shendi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 8: The Boursa Kuwait experienced fluctuations in key indicators during the week’s trading sessions, characterized by a decline in market value and trading activity. Notably, selective selling pressure on leading stocks contributed to a decrease of 6 points in the general index.

The Premier Market Index closed the week’s trading at 7,669.28 points, marking a decline of 0.17% from the previous week. Meanwhile, the main market index saw a slight increase of 0.28%, closing at 5,974.48 points. The main market 50 index ended the week in positive territory, registering a growth of 0.26%.

Trading activity witnessed a decline in 6 sectors, with healthcare experiencing the most significant decrease of 3.41%. Conversely, industrial sectors led the gainers,

rising by approximately 4.10%. Notable performers included Kuwaiti Al-Sakab stock, which experienced the largest decline at 19.64%, while “Arkan” emerged as the top gainer with an 18.03% increase.

KFH stock, despite a decline of 1.10%, remained active in trading, recording a volume of 63.48 million shares and liquidity of 46.04 million dinars.

Overall, trading activity saw a collective decline, with liquidity and quantities decreasing by 26.95% and 26.36% respectively. The number of transactions executed during the week also decreased by 14.98%.

Despite challenges, the Boursa Kuwait continued to attract foreign investments, with new investments amounting to 93.3 million dinars during the first 5 months of 2024. This was supported by active purchasing operations by institutions and companies.

### Other Voices

### ‘Catalyst for new city development’

## Kuwait’s ambitious concept for Mubarak Al-Kabeer port

By Kamel Al-Harami

Independent Oil Analyst

The Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port is located on the eastern side of Boubyan Island in North Kuwait. This island is the biggest of the nine islands. This port has the deepest depth when compared to our three ports - Shuwaikh, Doha, and Shuiba.



Al-Harami

The revival of progress at our Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port follows a visit to the construction site by our Minister of Public Works along with a Chinese delegation overseeing the project with specialized engineers. This affirms our commitment to completing this strategic project on time, following a hiatus of several years due to some internal disputes being resolved.

It appears that we are finally set to conclude the project, which was initiated in 2011 with an estimated cost of \$1.1 billion, and originally slated for completion by 2016. Now, we are determined to press forward and finish this mega strategic initiative within the upcoming years without any obstacles stopping us.

This port is set to become the biggest in the northern part of the Arabian Gulf region, serving two major importing nations - Iraq and Iran. It will also serve other Gulf states. Its operation will significantly enhance Kuwait’s economy through trade and exchange of services.

The recent visit by the Chinese delegation last month will

be reciprocated by a Kuwaiti delegation to China.

This project holds immense significance, and is set to serve as the cornerstone for future projects and set examples for further developments.

The port is intended to become an industrial hub, situated on an island, and will serve as a model for the development of our remaining eight islands.

It is important to move forward and actively pursue industrial projects, and eventually establish ourselves as the owner of the largest port in the region.

The government must take decisive action and avoid any further delays, even if it means incurring additional costs in the millions.

We are embarking on the creation of a new city on the island, setting a precedent for others to follow. All its infrastructure should be contained within the island, distinct and separate from the mainland.

This opportunity is too valuable for us to miss or prolong. We must forge ahead without looking back, and focus on creating jobs and future projects. This is the first government deal that presents an opportunity for us to benefit from and excel.

Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port is a dream come true, one that can unlock many opportunities, including the potential relocation of population alongside the development of housing, industrial zones, shops, malls, and more.

Kuwait is fortunate to have China as a supportive partner in this project, which stands to symbolize the emergence of a new Kuwait.

□ □ □

email: naftikuwaiti@yahoo.com

### Merger between KNPC and KIPIC promises positive outcomes

## KIPIC announces significant organizational adjustments

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 8: The Board of Directors of Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company (KIPIC) has made significant organizational changes.

The ‘Area 5’ operations team is being transferred to the Gas Operations Group, with Adel Al-Husseini continuing as its head, reporting to the Director of the Gas Operations Group.

Furthermore, the “Liquefied Gas” maintenance team will now be known as the “Area 7” operations team, with the senior management officials to be appointed at a later date.

Additionally, the technical support team for operations is renamed the “Area 8” operations team, with Ghanem Abdullah Al-Ghanim remaining as its head, reporting to the Director of the Gas Operations Group.

The sources also revealed that further changes are expected to occur this month and July within the company, particularly in KIPIC.

The CEO Wadha Al-Khatib is currently re-organizing senior positions in KIPIC since assuming the role of CEO alongside her executive presidency of the National Petroleum

## Al-Zour refinery surpasses nominal capacity

KUWAIT CITY, June 8: The Al-Zour refinery has been surpassing its nominal capacity of 615,000 barrels of oil per day, instilling confidence in its ability to consistently meet the demand for refined products, reports Al-Qabas daily.

According to sources speaking to Med magazine, the facility has been operating above its nominal capacity for some time without encountering any issues. Stakeholders are reportedly pleased with its current performance.

While the refinery has demonstrated the capability to produce more than 615,000 barrels per day, it is expected to typically operate below this level.

Another source cited by MEED noted that while the refinery can operate at higher levels, it is currently running below its nominal capacity.

This is attributed to various factors, with the quality of the raw material being a key consideration. Heavy crude presents challenges in trans-

porting large quantities.

The Al-Zour refinery faced delays in its operational phase in 2023, including technical problems leading to the temporary closure of the second CDU in April.

Despite these challenges, the Kuwaiti Al-Zour refinery remains one of the largest in the Middle East and North Africa region. It produces gasoline, diesel, and kerosene in compliance with Euro 5 emission standards.

The project, comprising five main engineering, procurement, and construction packages, achieved mechanical completion in 2021. However, factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic have contributed to delays in the operational phase.

In trading, the price of a barrel of Kuwaiti oil rose to \$80.57 per barrel, while Brent crude futures reached \$78.41 per barrel and US West Texas Intermediate crude futures stood at \$74.07 per barrel.

Company.

Al-Khatib has reassured the national workers in KIPIC that the administrative merger be-

tween the KNPC and KIPIC will yield positive outcomes for all employees in light of the new era of merger.

### Emerges as strongest brand among top 5 telco brands worldwide

## stc maintains position as most valuable telecom brand in Middle East

KUWAIT CITY, June 8: Kuwait Telecommunications Company – stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, announced that stc group maintained its position as the most valuable telecom brand in the Middle East for the fourth consecutive year, confirming its leadership status amongst the top 5 strongest telco brands in the world. According to the latest report from “Brand Finance Global 500”, the group emerged as the strongest brand.

Brand Finance conducts an annual ranking of the top 5,000 brands worldwide and publishes over 100 reports on brand valuations across sectors and countries. The 2024 Brand Finance Global 500 report includes the 500 strongest and most valuable brands globally.

The report highlighted stc Group’s outstanding performance, which saw a notable 12% growth in brand value in 2023, reaching USD13.9 billion. The group placed 149th in the list of the top 500 most valuable brands worldwide, a 10-spot rise from 2023. stc Group is the first consumer brand from the Middle East to enter the top 150 global brands list.

In 2023, stc Kuwait demonstrated its unwavering commitment to digital transformation and operational excellence, achieving several key milestones, mainly;

- stc Kuwait shares have been added in a number of the MSCI indexes
- stc Kuwait Inclusion in a number of FTSE Global Equity Index
- stc Kuwait the first operator in Kuwait succeeded on the PoC of passive IOT RF ID on 900MHz band
- stc Kuwait is the first operator in Kuwait succeeded on the PoC of the commercial 5.5G Redcap device that works on 20MHz BW (in N78 band) and provided DL speed > 130Mbps.
- stc Kuwait launched “Your Smart Choice” campaign. The initiative enriches the lives of our customers with smart and easy solutions, including a wide range of advanced services such as top-notch entertainment with Always On plans, the fastest network with FULL 5G, the best home internet with b4ty fiber,extensive roaming with stc Roam, and complete protection with stc Protect.

■ stc Kuwait successfully completed a pilot test for the new Mobile VPN technology, becoming the first telecom operator in Kuwait to achieve this remarkable feat

■ stc Kuwait completed its pilot test to launch a new technology called ‘5G New Calling’, becoming the first telecom operator in Kuwait and the whole region to achieve this remarkable milestone.

■ stc Kuwait Successfully completed the pilot testing of 5G Redcap (Reduced Capability) technology in combination with already proven MEC Mobile VPN service, stc became the first telecom operator in Middle East region to achieve this remarkable milestone

■ solutions by stc Kuwait launched My Business, our Digital Self-Care Portal for B2B customers. The redefined portal falls in line with solutions by stc’s application of modern technologies to enable digital transformation and enrich the lifestyle of its customers.

■ solutions by stc Kuwait unveiled Modar, a state-of-the-art Cloud Managed Network solution, specifically crafted for the business sector and developed in partnership with CloudCampus technology.

■ solutions by stc Kuwait introduced Virtual Private Servers (VPS), a transformative solution tailored to meet the diverse needs of businesses ranging from SMEs to large enterprises and government organizations.

On the corporate social responsibility and sustainability fronts, stc Kuwait was highly active throughout the year under the various launched programs. In 2023, stc Kuwait continued to implement initiatives in key areas such as education, environmental sustainability, sports, health, youth empowerment, and entrepreneurship. Additionally, the Company enhanced its existing campaigns, which included “weyak” – that aims at supporting young entrepreneurs and startups, and the educational ‘upgrade’ initiative – that aims at empowering youth and supporting the education initiatives.



stc the most valuable telecom brand in the Middle East for the fourth consecutive year.

Due to these remarkable achievements, as well as other successful accomplishments witnessed throughout the year, stc Kuwait received numerous reputable awards. These recognitions were awarded to stc Kuwait on both regional and international platforms, recognizing the Company’s excellence across all fronts.

## Rise of corporate ‘zombies’ threatens global economy

NEW YORK, June 8, (AP): They are called zombies, companies so laden with debt that they are just stumbling by on the brink of survival, barely able to pay even the interest on their loans and often just a bad business hit away from dying off for good.

An Associated Press analysis found their numbers have soared to nearly 7,000 publicly traded companies around the world - 2,000 in the United States alone - whiplashed by years of piling up cheap debt followed by stubborn inflation that has pushed borrowing costs to decade highs.

And now many of these mostly small and mid-sized walking wounded could soon be facing their day of reckoning, with due dates looming on hundreds of billions of dollars of loans they may not be able to pay back.

“They’re going to get crushed,” Valens Securities Managing Director Robert Spivey said of the weakest zombies. Added Miami investor Mark Spitznagel, who famously bet against stocks before the last two crashes: “The clock is ticking.”

Zombies are commonly defined as companies that have failed to make enough money from operations in the past three years to pay even the interest on their loans. AP’s analysis found their ranks in raw numbers have jumped over the past decade by a third or more in Australia, Canada, Japan, South Korea, the United Kingdom and the U.S., including companies that run Carnival Cruise Line, JetBlue Airways, Wayfair, Peloton, Italy’s Telecom Italia and British soccer giant Manchester United.

To be sure, the number of companies, in general, has increased over the past decade, making comparisons difficult, but even limiting the analysis to

companies that existed a decade ago, zombies have jumped nearly 30%.

They include utilities, food producers, tech companies, owners of hospitals and nursing home chains whose weak finances hobbled their responses in the pandemic, and real estate firms struggling with half-empty office buildings in the heart of major cities.

As the number of zombies has grown, so too has the potential damage if they are forced to file for bankruptcy or close their doors permanently. Companies in the AP’s analysis employ at least 130 million people in a dozen countries.

Already, the number of U.S. companies going bankrupt has hit a 14-year high, a surge expected in a recession, not an expansion. Corporate bankruptcies have also recently hit highs of nearly a decade or more in Canada, the U.K., France and Spain.

Some experts say zombies may be able to avoid layoffs, selloffs of business units or collapse if central banks cut interest rates, which the European Central Bank began doing this week, though scattered defaults and bankruptcies could still drag on the economy. Others think the pandemic inflated the ranks of zombies and the impact is temporary.

“Revenue went down, or didn’t grow as much as projected, but that doesn’t mean they are all about to go bust,” said Martin Fridson, CEO of research firm FridsonVision High Yield Strategy.

For its part, Wall Street isn’t panicking. Investors have been buying stock of some zombies and their “junk bonds,” loans rating agencies deem most at risk of default. While that may help zombies raise cash in the short term, investors pouring money into these securities and pushing up their prices could eventu-

ally face heavy losses.

“We have people gambling in the public markets at an unprecedented level,” said David Trainer, head of New Constructs, an investment research group that tracks the cash drain on zombies. “They don’t see risk.”

Credit rating agencies and economists warned about the dangers of companies piling on debt for years as interest rates fell but got a big push when central banks around the world cut benchmark rates to near zero in the 2009 financial crisis and then again in the 2020-21 pandemic. It was a giant, unprecedented experiment designed to spark a borrowing binge that would help avert a worldwide depression. It also created what some economists saw as a credit bubble that spread far beyond zombies, with low rates that also enticed heavy borrowing by governments, consumers and bigger, healthier companies.

The difference for many zombies is they lack deep cash reserves, and the interest they pay on many of their loans is variable, not fixed, so higher rates are hurting them right now. Most dangerously, zombie debt was often not used to expand, hire or invest in technology, but on buying back their own stock.

These so-called repurchases allow companies to “retire” shares, or take them off the market, a way to make up for new shares often created to boost the pay and retention packages for CEOs and other top executives. But too many stock buybacks can drain cash from a business, which is what happened at Bed Bath & Beyond. The retail chain that once operated 1,500 stores struggled for years with a troubled transition to digital sales and other problems, but its heavy borrowing and decision to spend \$7 billion in a decade on buybacks played a key role in its downfall.



### Bangladesh unveils 68-blN-USD national budget

The Bangladeshi government on Thursday unveiled a record 7.97-trillion-taka (68 billion U.S. dollar) national budget for the 2024-25 fiscal year starting in July.

The government projected an economic growth of 6.75 percent in the annual budget.

“To maintain this growth in the future, all reasonable support will be continued to encourage agricultural and industrial production. Side by side, proper implementation of important infrastructure projects and adoption of appropriate action plans aimed at increasing export earnings and remittances will help achieve the desired GDP growth,” said Finance Minister AH Mahmood Ali, presenting to the parliament the proposed 7.97-trillion-taka budget of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina’s government.

“We’ve successfully managed the adverse effects of COVID-19 on the economy. However, the geopolitical instability of the world has created fresh risks for us,” Ali said in the parliament.

Despite all the adversity caused by global unrests, he said Bangladesh managed to achieve 7.10 percent, 5.78 percent and 5.82 percent (provisional) growth in 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24 respectively. (Xinhua)

### Reserve Bank of India keeps repo rate unchanged

India’s central bank Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday announced that it has kept the repo rate unchanged at 6.5 percent.

Repo rate is the rate at which the central bank lends money to commercial banks in the event of a shortfall of funds.

This is the eighth time in a row the bank’s Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has decided to keep the key rates unchanged.

“On the basis of an assessment of the current and evolving macroeconomic situation, the MPC at its meeting today decided to keep the policy repo rate under the liquidity adjustment facility (LAF) unchanged at 6.50 percent,” read a statement issued by the RBI.

“Consequently, the standing deposit facility (SDF) rate remains unchanged at 6.25 percent and the marginal standing facility (MSF) rate and the Bank Rate at 6.75 percent. The MPC also decided to remain focused on withdrawal of accommodation to ensure that inflation progressively aligns to the target, while supporting growth,” it said.

Meanwhile, the real GDP growth for 2024-25 is projected to be 7.2 percent with the first quarter (Q1) at 7.3 percent, Q2 at 7.2 percent, Q3 at 7.3 percent, and Q4 at 7.2 percent. (Xinhua)

### Biden administration unveils new rule

## Real-world mileage standard for new vehicles rising to 38 mpg in 2031

WASHINGTON, June 8, (AP): New vehicles sold in the U.S. will have to average about 38 miles per gallon of gasoline in 2031 in real-world driving, up from about 29 mpg this year, under new federal rules unveiled Friday by the Biden administration.

The final rule will increase fuel economy by 2% per year for model years 2027 to 2031 for passenger cars, while SUVs and other light trucks will increase by 2% per year for model years 2029 to 2031, according to requirements released by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

The final figures are below a proposal released last year. Administration officials said the less stringent requirements will allow the auto industry flexibility to focus on electric vehicles, adding that higher gas-mileage requirements would have imposed significant costs on consumers without sufficient fuel savings to offset them.

President Joe Biden has set a goal that half all of new vehicles sold in the U.S. in 2030 are electric, part of his push to fight climate change. Gasoline-powered vehicles make up the largest single source of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions.

The 50% sales figure would be a huge increase over current EV sales, which accounted for 7.6% of new vehicle sales last year.

Even as he promotes EVs, Biden needs cooperation from the auto industry and political support from auto workers, a key political voting bloc, as the Democratic president seeks reelection in November. The United Auto Workers union has endorsed Biden but has said it wants to make sure the transition to electric vehicles does not cause job losses and that the industry pays top wages to workers who build EVs and batteries.

Biden’s likely opponent, former President Donald Trump, and other Republicans have denounced Biden’s push for EVs as unfair for consumers and an example of government overreach.

The new standards will save almost 70 billion gallons of gasoline through 2050, preventing more than 710 million metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions by midcentury, the Biden administration said.

“Not only will these new standards save Americans money at the pump every time they fill up, they will also decrease harmful pollution and make America less reliant on foreign oil,” Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg said in a statement. “These standards will save car owners more than \$600 in gasoline costs over the lifetime of their vehicle.”

The highway safety agency said it has sought to line up its regulations so they match new Environmental Protection Agency rules that tighten standards for tailpipe emissions. But if there are discrepancies, automakers likely will have to follow the most stringent regulation.

In the byzantine world of government regulation, both agencies essentially are responsible for setting fuel economy requirements since the fastest way to reduce greenhouse emissions is to burn less gasoline.

Fuel economy figures used by The Associated Press reflect real-world driving conditions that include factors such as wind resistance, hills and use of air-conditioning. Because of those factors, the real-world numbers are lower than mileage figures put forward by NHTSA.

New passenger cars would have to average nearly 49 miles per gallon in 2031 under the new rule, up from about 36.5 miles per gallon this year.

“These new fuel economy standards will save our nation billions of dollars, help reduce our dependence on fossil fuels and make our air cleaner for everyone,” said NHTSA Deputy Administrator Sophie Shulman.

John Bozzella, president and CEO of the Alliance for Automotive Innovation, a leading industry group, said the Biden administration “appears to have landed on a CAFE rule that works with the other recent federal tailpipe rules.” Bozzella was using an acronym for the fuel standards, which are officially known as the corporate average fuel economy rules.

Dan Becker at the Center for Biological Diversity, an environmental group, slammed the new rules as inadequate.

The highway safety agency is supposed to set strong standards for gas-powered vehicles, he said, “but instead it sat on its tailpipes, leaving automakers free to make cars, SUVs and pickups that will guzzle and pollute for decades to come and keep America stuck on oil.”

The administration “caved to automaker pressure, with a weak rule requiring only a 2% improvement” per year in fuel economy, Becker said, adding that the rule falls short of the agency’s own requirement to set fuel-economy standards at the maximum technologically feasible level.

Bozzella, the industry official, said the government soon might need to reconsider whether the fuel-economy standards are needed “in a world rapidly moving toward electrification” of the vehicle fleet.

The mileage standards are “a relic of the 1970s,” Bozzella said, “a policy to promote energy conservation and energy independence by making internal combustion vehicles more efficient. But those vehicles are already very efficient. And EVs don’t combust anything. They don’t even have a tailpipe.”

Chris Harto, senior policy analyst for Consumer Reports, said the NHTSA rules were not strong enough to pressure automakers to ensure new vehicles are as efficient as possible.

“Today the administration is merely checking the box on the legal requirement” to set fuel-economy standards, he said, adding that NHTSA is hamstrung by statutory limitations that prevent it from explicitly considering EVs in setting mileage standards.

Exports to the U.S. grew just 0.2% in the January through May period compared with the same time last year, while shipments to the European Union declined, slipping 3.9% year-on-year.

Steel, automobiles, home appliances and ships were the fastest growing categories of Chinese exports. Automobiles climbed at the fastest rate, with China exporting 569,000 cars at a growth rate of 26.8% in the first five months of the year compared with the same time last year.

China is facing accusations from the U.S. and the European Union of over-producing and flooding overseas markets with cheap electric vehicles. Both have worked to impose tariffs on such vehicles. Meanwhile, China is also concerned that duties imposed on its EVs would reduce exports amid weakening demand at home.

Lynn Song of ING Economics said that should tariffs on Chinese strategic exports and automobiles be aggressive, there is “potential for retaliation and escalation of trade friction.”

“We remain cautious about the trade outlook for the second half of the year and expect its contribution to growth to decline,” Song said in a note.

Factory activity in China slowed more than expected in May, according to an official survey released last week.

The manufacturing purchasing managers index from the China Federation of Logistics and Purchasing fell to 49.5 from 50.4 in April on a scale up to 100 where 50 marks the break between expansion and contraction.

China has struggled to bounce back after the COVID-19 pandemic, as it grapples with weaker demand globally after the U.S. Federal Reserve and other central banks raised interest rates to counter inflation. A slump in China’s property sector also is weighing on growth.

The 10 nations of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations remained the largest destination for Chinese products, with exports to ASEAN growing 9.7% from year-on-year in the January to May period to \$50.83 billion.

“We’ve successfully managed the adverse effects of COVID-19 on the economy. However, the geopolitical instability of the world has created fresh risks for us,” Ali said in the parliament.

Despite all the adversity caused by global unrests, he said Bangladesh managed to achieve 7.10 percent, 5.78 percent and 5.82 percent (provisional) growth in 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24 respectively. (Xinhua)

FRANKFURT, Germany, June 8, (AP): The European Central Bank cut its key interest rate Thursday by a quarter-point, moving ahead of the U.S. Federal Reserve as central banks around the world lean toward lowering borrowing costs - a shift with far-reaching consequences for home buyers, savers and investors.

The ECB cut its benchmark rate to 3.75% from a record high of 4% at a meeting of the bank’s 26-member rate-setting council in Frankfurt.

Speaking afterward at a news conference, ECB President Christine Lagarde said inflation had eased enough for the central bank to start lowering rates.

But with annual inflation at 2.6% in May and expected to remain above the ECB 2% target into next year, Lagarde declined to indicate how fast or how deep any future rate cuts might be.

“We will keep policy rates sufficiently restrictive for as long as necessary,” she said. “We are not committing to a particular rate path.”

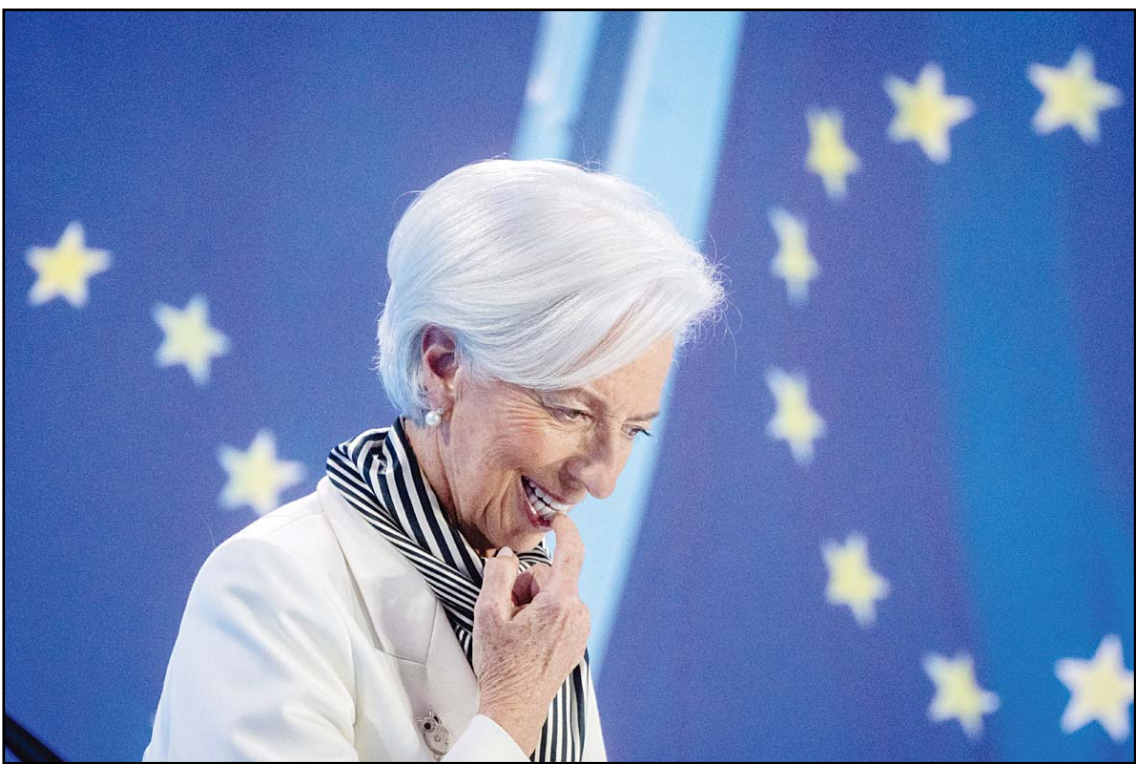
“Are we today moving into a dialing-back phase? I wouldn’t volunteer that,” she said.

Rate increases combat inflation by making it more expensive to borrow in order to buy goods, lowering demand and taking the pressure off prices. But high rates also hold back growth, which has been in short supply in the eurozone.

With inflation coming down but taking its time to reach levels central bankers like, the question now is, how soon, how fast and how deep future rate cuts from the Fed, the ECB and others will be.

Analysts say the ECB will likely leave rates unchanged when it next meets on July 18, while it awaits further confirmation that inflation is under control.

“Today’s cut doesn’t necessarily mark the start of an easing cycle,” said Carsten Brzeski, global head of macro



President of European Central Bank, Christine Lagarde, attends a press conference after an ECB’s governing council meeting in Frankfurt, Germany, on Jan. 25, 2024. The European Central Bank appears ready

to start cutting interest borrowing costs for businesses and consumers - and do it ahead of the Fed. Analysts say a first rate cut is coming Thursday when the bank’s policymakers meet in Frankfurt, Germany. (AP)

at ING, the Dutch banking firm.

Though the annual inflation rate for May is well below a peak of 10.6% in October 2022, the decline has slowed in recent months. Inflation even ticked up slightly from 2.4% in April. Inflation in the services sectors, a broad category that includes everything from medical care and haircuts to hotels, restaurants and concert tickets, remains particularly elevated at 4.1%.

The ECB’s move represents a switch from the onset of the inflation surge, when the Fed took the lead in tightening credit by raising rates starting in March 2022, sending mortgage costs higher but also boosting returns for savers with money in certificates of deposit or money market funds. The ECB started four months later.

Major central banks around the world now are leaning toward lowering interest rates. Central banks in smaller economies have already cut rates,

including in Canada, Sweden, Switzerland, Hungary and the Czech Republic. The Bank of England’s policymakers are scheduled to meet on June 20, but it’s not clear whether the governing board will cut the rate from 5.25%. Japan, an economic outlier among the world big economies, has started raising rates after years of below-zero rates and low inflation.

Lower rates can mean lower mortgage costs and credit card charges for consumers. Lower rates also can boost stock prices and the value of retirement accounts since they diminish returns on conservative alternatives such as certificates of deposit and can mean stronger economic growth that will boost corporate earnings.

The ECB’s higher rates quashed a nine-year-long rally in eurozone home prices and slammed construction activity. Growth in economic output has hovered just above and below zero for

day, that the two sides intend to expand cooperation in exploring and developing complex underground traps. They also plan to coordinate in the renewable energy field, petrochemicals, oil engineering and develop personnel’s skills in the energy sector.

The MoU was signed by Sonatrach

normalizing after years of distortions related to the pandemic. After the brutal pandemic recession, when unemployment rocketed to nearly 15%, hiring soared in 2022 and 2023 as the economy recovered. Wages, before adjusting for inflation, also jumped as businesses desperately sought workers.

“Employment growth is continuing at a solid pace, but there are ample signs that the heat in the labor market over the past few years largely has been removed,” said Sarah House, an economist at Wells Fargo.

The number of open jobs, while still elevated, has fallen to a three-year low. Fewer workers are quitting jobs. Many employers say it’s become easier to find workers to fill positions.

But growth in hourly paychecks accelerated last month, a welcome gain for workers but one that could contribute to stickier inflation. Wages rose 4.1% from a year ago, above the inflation rate. Some companies may raise their prices to offset their higher wage costs.

The Federal Reserve’s inflation fighters would like to see the economy slow as they consider when to begin cutting their benchmark interest rate. The Fed sharply raised rates in 2022 and 2023 after the recovery from the pandemic recession ignited the worst inflation in 40 years.

### A sign of sustained economic health

## US hiring & wage growth picked up in May

### Algeria’s Sonatrach inks deal with Sinopec for fuel exploration

ALGIERS, June 8, (KUNA): The Algerian national oil company Sonatrach has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Chinese oil and gas conglomerate Sinopec to pursue exploration and development of underground fuel resources.

Sonatrach said in a statement, on Fri-

day, that the two sides intend to expand cooperation in exploring and developing complex underground traps. They also plan to coordinate in the renewable energy field, petrochemicals, oil engineering and develop personnel’s skills in the energy sector.

The MoU was signed by Sonatrach

Friday’s report will likely underscore Fed officials’ intention to delay any cuts to their key rate while they monitor inflation and economic data. Most economists expect no Fed rate reductions before September at the earliest. Once the cuts do begin, lower rates on many consumer and business loans, including for mortgages and autos, should follow.

Though Chair Jerome Powell has said he expects inflation to further ease, he has said the Fed’s policymakers need more confidence that inflation will fall back to their 2% target before they would reduce borrowing costs. Annual inflation has declined to 2.7% by the Fed’s preferred measure, from above 7% in 2022.

“This report is going to complicate the Fed’s job,” said Julia Pollak, chief economist for ZipRecruiter. “No one’s getting those very clear signals that they were hoping for that a rate cut is appropriate in July or September.”

Last month’s hiring occurred broadly across most of the economy. But gains were particularly robust in health care, which added 84,000 jobs, and restaurants, hotels, and entertainment providers, which gained 42,000.

Governments added 43,000 positions. Professional and business services, which include managers, architects and information technology, grew by 33,000.

Director General Rashid Hashishi and the head of the Sinopec complex in China, Ma Yongsheng, during a visit by the Algerian company’s chief to the Asian nation.

Sinopec has been operating in Algeria since 2002, with operations at Zarzaitine site carried out in line with a contract inked in May 2022.

One company that is steadily hiring is Recovia, a health provider based in Phoenix that treats mental health, substance abuse and chronic pain. CEO Lance Fritz said the company plans to open three clinics in the next 12 months, each of which will employ 12 to 14 people.

It’s become easier, Fritz said, to hire administrative workers. But competition is still high for the nurses, physical therapists, and other clinicians they need. And his employees have pushed for - and received - higher pay to offset the effects of inflation and Phoenix’s high housing costs.

“We’re paying more for people than we used to, that’s for sure,” Fritz said.

The company is considering using artificial intelligence, he said, to automate some administrative tasks so its employees can spend more time with patients.

One potential sign of weakness in the May employment report was a drop in the proportion of Americans who either have a job or are looking for one; it fell from 62.7% to 62.5%. Most of the drop occurred among people 55 and over, many of whom are retiring baby boomers.

A surge in immigration in the past three years has boosted the size of the U.S. workforce and has been a key driver of the healthy pace of job growth.



# INNOVATION Business Plus



Artificial intelligence advances expose gaps

## Engineers face AI’s growing ethical challenges



People are reflected in a window of a hotel at the Davos Promenade in Davos, Switzerland, Jan. 15, 2024. Voters in the European Union are set to elect lawmakers for the bloc’s parliament, in a major democratic exercise that’s also likely to be overshadowed by online disinformation. Experts have warned about that artificial intelligence could supercharge the spread of fake news to disrupt the election in the EU and many other countries this year. (AP)

‘Research suggests that even when presented with particular scenarios or case studies, engineering students often struggle to recognize ethical dilemmas.’

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

By Elana Goldenkoff  
University of Michigan and Erin A. Cech, University of Michigan

A chatbot turns hostile. A test version of a Roomba vacuum collects images of users in private situations. A Black woman is falsely identified as a suspect on the basis of facial recognition software, which tends to be less accurate at identifying women and people of color. These incidents are not just glitches, but examples of more fundamental problems. As artificial intelligence and machine learning tools become more integrated into daily life, ethical considerations are growing, from privacy issues and race and gender biases in coding to the spread of misinformation. The general public depends on

software engineers and computer scientists to ensure these technologies are created in a safe and ethical manner. As a sociologist and doctoral candidate interested in science, technology, engineering and math education, we are currently researching how engineers in many different fields learn and understand their responsibilities to the public. Yet our recent research, as well as that of other scholars, points to a troubling reality: The next generation of engineers often seem unprepared to grapple with the social implications of their work. What’s more, some appear apathetic about the moral dilemmas their careers may bring - just as advances in AI intensify such dilemmas. As part of our ongoing research, we interviewed more than 60 electrical engineering and computer science masters students at a top engineering program in the United States. We asked students about their experiences with ethical challenges in engineering, their knowledge of ethical dilemmas in the field and how they would

respond to scenarios in the future. First, the good news: Most students recognized potential dangers of AI and expressed concern about personal privacy and the potential to cause harm - like how race and gender biases can be written into algorithms, intentionally or unintentionally. One student, for example, expressed dismay at the environmental impact of AI, saying AI companies are using “more and more greenhouse power, [for] minimal benefits.” Others discussed concerns about where and how AIs are being applied, including for military technology and to generate falsified information and images. When asked, however, “Do you feel equipped to respond in concerning or unethical situations?” students often said no. “Flat out no. ... It is kind of scary,” one student replied. “Do YOU know who I’m supposed to go to?” Another was troubled by the lack of training: “I [would be] dealing with that with no experience. ... Who knows how I’ll react.”

Other researchers have similarly found that many engineering students do not feel satisfied with the ethics training they do receive. Common training usually emphasizes professional codes of conduct, rather than the complex socio-technical factors underlying ethical decision-making. Research suggests that even when presented with particular scenarios or case studies, engineering students often struggle to recognize ethical dilemmas. Accredited engineering programs are required to “include topics related to professional and ethical responsibilities” in some capacity. Yet ethics training is rarely emphasized in the formal curricula. A study assessing undergraduate STEM curricula in the U.S. found that coverage of ethical issues varied greatly in terms of content, amount and how seriously it is presented. Additionally, an analysis of academic literature about engineering education found that ethics is often considered nonessential training. Many engineering faculty express

dissatisfaction with students’ understanding, but report feeling pressure from engineering colleagues and students themselves to prioritize technical skills in their limited class time. Researchers in one 2018 study interviewed over 50 engineering faculty and documented hesitancy - and sometimes even outright resistance - toward incorporating public welfare issues into their engineering classes. More than a quarter of professors they interviewed saw ethics and societal impacts as outside “real” engineering work. About a third of students we interviewed in our ongoing research project share this seeming apathy toward ethics training, referring to ethics classes as “just a box to check off.” “If I’m paying money to attend ethics class as an engineer, I’m going to be furious,” one said. These attitudes sometimes extend to how students view engineers’ role in society. One interviewee in our current study, for example, said that an engineer’s “responsibility is just to create that thing, design that thing and ... tell people how to use it. [Misuse] issues are not their concern.” One of us, Erin Cech, followed a cohort of 326 engineering students from four U.S. colleges. This research, published in 2014, suggested that engineers actually became less concerned over the course of their degree about their ethical responsibilities and understanding the public consequences of technology. Following them after they left college, we found that their concerns regarding ethics did not rebound once these new graduates entered the workforce. When engineers do receive ethics training as part of their degree, it seems to work. Along with engineering professor Cynthia Finelli, we conducted a survey of over 500 employed engineers. Engineers who received formal ethics and public welfare training in school are more likely to understand their responsibility to the public in their professional roles, and recognize the need for collective problem solving. Compared to engineers who did not receive training, they were 30% more likely to have noticed an ethical issue in their workplace and 52% more likely to have taken action. Over a quarter of these practicing engineers reported encountering a concerning ethical situation at work. Yet approximately one-third said they have never received training in public welfare - not during their education, and not during their career. This gap in ethics education raises serious questions about how well-prepared the next generation of engineers will be to navigate the complex ethical landscape of their field, especially when it comes to AI. To be sure, the burden of watching out for public welfare is not shouldered by engineers, designers and programmers alone. Companies and legislators share the responsibility. But the people who are designing, testing and fine-tuning this technology are the public’s first line of defense. We believe educational programs owe it to them - and the rest of us - to take this training seriously. (AP)

### Fake sources a big concern with generative artificial intelligence

## 250 AI tools enhance social science research

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

By Megan Stubbs-Richardson, Mississippi State University; Devon Brenner, Mississippi State University; Lauren Etheredge, Mississippi State University, and Mackenzie Paul, Baylor University

AI - or artificial intelligence - is often used as a way to summarize data and improve writing. But AI tools also represent a powerful and efficient way to analyze large amounts of text to search for patterns. In addition, AI tools can assist with developing research products that can be shared widely. It’s with that in mind that we, as researchers in social science, developed a new database of AI tools for the field. In the database, we compiled information about each tool and documented whether it was useful for literature reviews, data collection and analyses, or research dissemination.

We also provided information on the costs, logins and plug-in extensions available for each tool. When asked about their perceptions of AI, many social scientists express caution or apprehension. In a sample of faculty and students from over 600 institutions, only 22% of university faculty reported that they regularly used AI tools. From combing through lengthy transcripts or text-based data to writing literature reviews and sharing results, we believe AI can help social science researchers - such as those in psychology, sociology and communication - as well as others get the most out of their data and present it to a wider audience. Qualitative research often involves poring over transcripts or written language to identify themes and patterns. While this kind of research is powerful, it is also labor-intensive. The power of AI platforms to sift through large datasets not only saves researchers time, but it can also help

them analyze data that couldn’t have been analyzed previously because of the size of the dataset. Specifically, AI can assist social scientists by identifying potential themes or common topics in large, text-based data that scientists can interrogate using qualitative research methods. For example, AI can analyze 15 million social media posts to identify themes in how people coped with COVID-19. These themes can then give researchers insight into larger trends in the data, allowing us to refine criteria for a more in-depth, qualitative analysis. AI tools can also be used to adapt language and scientists’ word choice in research designs. In particular, AI can reduce bias by improving the wording of questions in surveys or refining keywords used in social media data collection. Another key task in research is to scan the field for previous work to identify gaps in knowledge. AI applications are built on systems

that can synthesize text. This makes literature reviews - the section of a research paper that summarizes other research on the same topic - and writing processes more efficient. Research shows that human feedback to AI, such as providing examples of simple logic, can significantly improve the tools’ ability to perform complex reasoning. With this in mind, we can continually revise our instructions to AI and refine its ability to pull relevant literature. However, social scientists must be wary of fake sources - a big concern with generative AI. It is essential to verify any sources AI tools provide to ensure they come from peer-reviewed journals. AI tools can quickly summarize research findings in a reader-friendly way by assisting with writing blogs, creating infographics and producing presentation slides and even images. Our database contains AI tools that can also help scientists present their findings on social media. One

tool worth highlighting is BlogTweet. This free AI tool allows users to copy and paste text from an article like this one to generate tweet threads and start conversations. Two-thirds of the tools in the database cost money. While our primary objective was to identify the most useful tools for social scientists, we also sought to identify open-source tools and curated a list of 85 free tools that can support literature reviews, writing, data collection, analysis and visualization efforts. In our analysis of the cost of AI tools, we also found that many offer “freemium” access to tools. This means you can explore a free version of the product. More advanced versions of the tool are available through the purchase of tokens or subscription plans. For some tools, costs can be somewhat hidden or unexpected. For instance, a tool that seems open source on the surface may actually have rate limits, and users may find that they’ve run out of free questions to ask the AI. (AP)

‘It is essential to verify any sources AI tools provide to ensure they come from peer-reviewed journals.’

editor’s choice





Television

LOS ANGELES, June 8, (AP): Dick Van Dyke has won a historic Daytime Emmy at age 98.

The actor was honored Friday night as guest performer in a daytime drama series for his part as amnesiac Timothy Robicheaux on Peacock's "Days of Our Lives," making him the oldest Daytime Emmy winner.

"I don't believe this. I feel like a spy from nighttime television," he said. "I'm 98 years old. Can you believe it? This really tops off a lifetime of 80 years in the business. If I had known I would have lived this long I would've taken better care of myself."

"General Hospital" won four trophies, including its fourth consecutive honor as best daytime drama. It's the second time in the ABC show's 61-year history that it won four daytime drama trophies in a row.

Robert Gossett of "General Hospital" won supporting actor honors. The first cousin to the late Oscar-winning actor Louis Gossett Jr. was honored for the second straight year for his role as Marshall Ashford. "General Hospital" also won the directing and writing categories.

Thorsten Kaye of "The Bold and the Beautiful" earned his second straight lead actor win for playing Ridge Forrester.

"I got to be very honest. I don't like award shows. I didn't like award shows until tonight," he said. "The other thing that doesn't make sense is that anyone can do this alone. You need a great boss who sees you and hears you. You need a cast that tolerates you. You need a whole village of people that have agreed that they're not going to let you drown. I've have all of that."

'General Hospital' wins four trophies

A clearly stunned Michelle Stafford of "The Young and the Restless" won best actress as Phyllis Summers, a trophy she first earned in 2004.

"I am honored to be an actor. It is the greatest gig. It is a privilege," she said. "I'm honored to entertain people."

Van Dyke received a standing ovation as he used a cane to make his way to the stage, accompanied by his wife, Arlene, who held the trophy.

"I brought this lady up because she was also on the show," he said. "She played the cop who arrested me."

Producer Norman Lear was 100 when he received his final Primetime Emmy nomination in 2022 and died the next year.

**Domination**

Van Dyke has won four Primetime Emmys, including three in the 1960s for his classic comedy series "The Dick Van Dyke Show."

Van Dyke beat out last year's winner Alley Mills of "General Hospital," Australian actor Guy Pearce of Amazon Freevee's "Neighbours," Linden Ashby of "The Young and the Restless," and Ashley Jones of "The Bold and the Beautiful."

"The Kelly Clarkson Show" continued its domination of the daytime show category with a fourth consecutive victory. The singer, who moved her show from Los Angeles to New York last year, was on hand to collect the trophy.

"The move has been so great, not just for me and my family but for our whole show," she said, singling out NBC. "Thank you for think-

ing of mental health and not just a product."

Courtney Hope, who plays Sally Spectra on "The Young and the Restless," earned supporting actress honors. She originated the role on "The Bold and the Beautiful" in 2017 before moving to "Y&R" in 2020.

Melody Thomas Scott, who has played Nikki Newman on "The Young and the Restless" for 45 years, and her producer-husband, Edward Scott, were honored with Lifetime Achievement Awards. Scott worked on "Y&R" for years before moving to his current job on "The Bold and the Beautiful."

"I can't tell you how encouraging a thing like this is," joked Thomas Scott, who made her acting debut at age 8 in Alfred Hitchcock's "Marnie."

Her husband told the crowd, "I promise to do my very best to try to continue to amaze you."

The wife-and-husband team of Kelly Ripa and Mark Consuelos won daytime talk series host for their "Live with Kelly and Mark." Ina Garten won best culinary series for "Be My Guest" on Food Network.

The ceremony honoring soap operas, talk and game shows aired live on CBS from The Westin Bonaventure hotel in downtown Los Angeles.

The 51st annual Daytime Emmys returned to their usual place on the calendar, just six months after the show's 50th edition aired in December after being pushed back because of last year's Hollywood writers and actors strikes.

Variety



Dick Van Dyke accepts the award for outstanding guest performance in a daytime drama series for 'Days of Our Lives' during the 51st Daytime Emmy Awards on Friday, June 7, at the Westin Bonaventure in Los Angeles. Arlene Silver looks on (from left). (AP)

Film

'I Am Sam' actress finds creative freedom at 30

Fanning connects with role in 'Watchers'

**DETROIT:** A myriad of Detroit's greatest musical exports, including **Diana Ross, Eminem** and **Jack White**, took to the stage in a pulsating sonic spectacle held on the eve of the historic reopening of an 18-story structure that had long symbolized their hometown's decline.

The 90-plus-minute "Live From Detroit: The Concert at Michigan Central" on Thursday night celebrated the city's refurbished train station, which reopens to the public on Friday, six years after Ford Motor Co. took control of the building and more than three decades since the last train pulled out.

The vacant **Michigan Central Station** fell into disrepair and became an emblem of the Motor City's decay. That is until 2018, when Ford announced it was buying the building and adjacent structures as part of the carmaker's plans for a campus focusing on autonomous vehicles.

"Six years ago, we gathered here, and we dreamt of what was possible. We dared to dream that this station, which had become a symbol of a broken city, could once again shine as the symbol of the Motor City," **Bill Ford**, his namesake company's executive chairman, told the crowd before **Ross**, the Motown superstar, opened the festivities with "I'm Coming Out."

The sold-out, ticketed, outdoor event that streamed live on Peacock also featured performances by **Big Sean**, the **Clark Sisters**, Common, Fantasia, **Melissa Etheridge** and the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. Presenters included Detroit Lions legend **Barry Sanders**, current Lions stars **Jared Goff** and **Amon-Ra St. Brown** and actors **Taylor Lautner** and **Sophia Bush**. Organizers said 20,000 people attended the event. And more than 60,000 are planning to tour the train station over the next 10 days.

"For most of my life, it was just a big eyesore," Big Sean said of the train station. "It's an oasis in the middle of the city. It's a metaphor for us all: It's our time right now."

The concert was executive-produced by Eminem and his longtime manager, **Paul Rosenberg**. Eminem was not scheduled to perform, but surprised those in attendance by closing the show with a rousing set that included his new

LOS ANGELES, June 8, (Agencies): It can sometimes be difficult for child actors to shed public conceptions of them as a kid, hindering them from being taken seriously in Hollywood as adults.

But at 30, Dakota Fanning is feeling better than ever about her creative voice and agency.

"At this point in my life, I feel very settled in like who I am and what I want and what I don't want and what I like and what I don't like," she said while promoting her latest film, "The Watchers," which hit theaters Friday.

That's not to say Fanning didn't receive critical acclaim almost as soon as her career began. She is, after all, the youngest person to receive a Screen Actors Guild Award nomination - she was 7 at the time - in the show's nearly 30-year history for her performance in "I Am Sam."

But in the more than two decades since that 2001 breakout role, Fanning has learned a lot about the nature of the business and how to achieve both success and satisfaction in it, something that inspired her to start a production company with her sister and fellow actor, Elle Fanning.

"Being an actor for so long, you are reliant on other people to want you to be in their movie, to pick you, to believe in you," she said of their decision to launch Lewellen Pictures. "Eventually you're like, 'Well, I just kind of want to make that happen for myself.'"

Fanning has made a lot happen for herself, including earning a degree from New York University despite working consistently since the age of 5. While in school, she studied the portrayal of women in film - something she says she has always been interested in, especially when it comes to female characters who aren't necessarily "likable."

"People are people and make mistakes and don't always do the right thing. And I think sometimes people can be afraid to portray female characters in their totality with the messy parts too," she said. "I'm always interested in exploring that and not being afraid to play a character that's not - I mean, I don't even know what likable means. Who's likable?"

The realness of Fanning's character in "The Watch-

ers" is part of what drew her to the role, something she and director Ishana Night Shyamalan bonded over. Based on A. M. Shine's novel of the same name, the film is a kind of psychological horror fantasy which tells the story of Mina (Fanning), a free-thinking young artist who gets trapped with a group of strangers in an Irish forest full of mysterious creatures.

"There was a relatability to the character that I was playing that we both could really understand," Fanning said. "Being a woman in your 20s and figuring things out."

As the daughter of M. Night Shyamalan - who produced the film - it's no surprise that both directing and horror are in Ishana Night Shyamalan's blood. But although she grew up immersed in the world of filmmaking, visiting her dad's sets, it took years before it occurred to her that directing could be in her own future.

"My experience is that the kind of filmmaker role is very much suited to a male kind of psyche. It's sort of about being confident and loud and controlling a space. And so that was very difficult for me to understand how I could fit into that," Shyamalan recalled.

But in recent years, she's observed a changing ethos permeating filmmaking - one she is encouraged by - that helped her realize she could do it.

"It's my feeling that there's like a wave of just a different, kind of like phase two of filmmaking, where I think it can be accessible to a lot more types of people. And that's very necessary," she said. "The types of stories that we tell and the ethics of the process I think in some ways need to be redefined or reinvented for this era."

**Also:**

**BEIJING:** "Civil War," a US movie alluding to political and social divide in the **United States**, premiered on the Chinese mainland on Friday, joining dozens of productions ahead of this year's Dragon Boat Festival holiday.

Since the movie premiered in the US market in April, it has caught the attention of many Chinese, partly due to its political theme rarely seen in imported movies.

**Zhang Yiyu**, a professor at Peking University, said some Chinese moviegoers watched this film because they are interested in the United States and hope to bet-

ter understand the country through this movie.

The conflicts among the various parties in the movie are so intense that effective communication between them is entirely impossible, he said, adding that this actually reflects issues within American society and politics.

For **Qi Minghui**, a moviegoer and U.S. university graduate, the movie reminded her of the racial inequality, wealth gap, gun violence and partisan politics she observed during her years in the United States. "Although an artistically exaggerated work, the movie mirrors the problems in reality," the 31-year-old auditor said.

Numerous moviegoers are sharing their reviews online. "An insightful film that showcases the division within American society," wrote an internet user named "Yongjial11" on the review platform Douban. On microblogging platform Weibo, "Chendu" commented that "I hope that the United States will not instigate civil wars in other countries and be a model country of immigrants where various races blend well."

Set in the near-future, the movie, written and directed by **Alex Garland**, follows a group of reporters who travel across the United States as a rapidly escalating civil war engulfs the nation. It features stars including **Kirsten Dunst** and **Wagner Moura**.

Rating growing political polarization in the United States as a top-tier threat, the Council on Foreign Relations' 2024 annual Preventive Priorities Survey stated that it leads to acts of domestic terrorism and political violence particularly around the 2024 presidential election.

As many people are still reeling from the Jan. 6, 2021 "storming of the Capitol," a recent incident involving **Donald Trump** supporters turning US flags upside down to protest the guilty verdict in his hush-money case raised widespread concerns among Americans.

Describing the movie as a warning for future development, **Shen Yi**, a professor of international studies at Shanghai-based Fudan University, said it depicts the dangers that rising populism poses to the United States, as well as the challenges to the core American spirits such as diversity, unity and solidarity.

single, "Houdini," as well as "Not Afraid" and the most appropriate "Welcome 2 Detroit." (AP)

**LONDON:** Prince Harry has been given permission to appeal the British government's rejection to provide him with publicly funded police protection in the U.K.



Ross

Harry

The Court of Appeal gave the Duke of **Sussex** the go-ahead to challenge a ruling earlier this year in the High Court. The permission was granted in May but only reported Thursday.

Judge **Peter Lane** ruled in February that a government panel's decision to provide "bespoke" security on an as-needed basis after

Harry quit as a working member of the royal family was not unlawful, irrational or unjustified.

"Insofar as the case-by-case approach may otherwise have caused difficulties, they have not been shown to be such as to overcome the high hurdle so as to render the decision-making irrational," Lane wrote.

The long-running fight began more than four years ago when Harry first challenged the panel's decision, arguing that he and his family need an armed security detail because of hostility directed toward him and his wife **Meghan**, Duchess of Sussex, on social media and relentless hounding by the news media. (AP)



People & Places

Opera

‘A world treasure’

Meloni celebrates Italy opera’s UNESCO honor

VERONA, Italy, June 8, (AP): Italian Premier **Gior-gia Meloni** joined top political and cultural figures at Verona’s ancient Arena amphitheater Friday night for an open-air celebration of Italian lyric opera’s recog-nition by UNESCO as a global cultural treasure.

Conductor Riccardo Muti presided over an orches-tra of 170 musicians from Italy’s 14 opera houses, joined by over 314 choral singers and a cast of global star opera stars who delivered a greatest hits of Italian opera from Verdi to Puccini, Donizetti to Bellini for an appreciative crowd. La Scala’s two star dancers, Roberto Bolle and Nicoletta Manni, also performed.

“I am here to testify to my enthusiasm and my pride for the fact that Italian lyric opera has received this great recognition,” Muti told the crowd. “Of course, this is an important moment, because recognition is never a point of arrival but a point of departure.”

“The great masterpieces are our heritage, which we Italians have given to the world,” Muti added in a prepared message for the television audience.

While UNESCO included Italian opera on its intangible cultural heritage list in Decem-ber, the Arena proved a fitting place to celebrate the milestone.

The ancient stone amphitheater built by the Romans is home to a popular summer opera festival that for gen-erations has made opera accessible to the uninitiated with lavish productions. More than half of the 400,000 spectators at the Arena each summer are foreigners.

“We have brought together the entire Italian opera system to celebrate, together with the great singers of the world,” said the Arena’s deputy artistic director, Stefano Trespidi. “I am convinced that this evening will bring benefits to the entire music and opera system.”

Recognition

Joining Italian opera stars like Luca Salsi, Franc-esco Meli and Vittorio Grigolo were international stars including German tenor Jonas Kaufmann, Australian soprano Jessica Pratt and Peruvian tenor Juan Diego Florez. Russian soprano Anna Netrebko canceled at the last minute due to illness.

Though a previous center-left government prepared the UNESCO bid for Italian lyric opera, the recog-nition has been embraced by Italy’s far-right-led gov-ernment. Besides Meloni, also attending the gala were Culture Minister Gennaro Sangiuliano - who has set out to replace foreign opera house directors with Italians - and Senate speaker Ignazio La Russa, both members of her Brothers of Italy Party.

The loudest applause was reserved for Italy’s nonpartisan president, Sergio Mattarella. And Muti seemed to be making a point against Eurosceptics on the far-right when he transitioned from the Italian an-them, with its “Brothers of Italy” refrain echoing the name of Meloni’s party, to Beethoven’s “Ode to Joy,” which is the European Union anthem.

Europeans are voting for European Parliament seats in an election that concludes Sunday and could deter-mine whether far-right parties will have a greater say in the direction of the 27-member bloc.

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Ever since **Giacomo Puccini** died without finish-ing his last opera, “Turandot,” audiences have thrilled to its soaring melodies like “Nessun Dorma,” but also perhaps lamented the lack of a proper ending.

Now the Washington National Opera is offering an alternative, commissioning both new words and new music for the final 18 or so minutes of the piece. The production, with libretto by Susan Soon He Stanton and music by Christopher Tin.

“Turandot,” tells of a Chinese princess who con-demns all her suitors to have their heads chopped off unless they can answer three riddles. When an un-known prince manages to do this, Turandot is obligat-ed to marry him, but he gives her a way out of the bargain if she can guess his identity.

In the final scene, according to the original libretto, the prince kisses Turandot and then - confident he has won her love - reveals that his name is Calaf. The ope-ra concludes amid general rejoicing.

**Francesca Zambello**, artistic director of the WNO, is among those who find this ending less than satisfy-ing.

“You have a very proud and fiery princess who spends the entire opera saying ‘No,’” she said. “Then Calaf comes along, he ignores her ‘No,’ then plants a big old kiss on her against her will, and as a result she is suddenly transformed into this nice, magnanimous ruler.”

Now that the copyright on the work has expired, she said, “I wanted to change the story in a way that I hoped Puccini’s ghost might have approved.”

Adding to the implausibility of the resolution is the character of Liu, a slave girl so devoted to Calaf that she kills herself rather than reveal his name under tor-ture. In the final scene, Liu’s fate is barely mentioned and quickly forgotten.

Puccini had completed his score up to the point where Liu dies, but left only musical sketches for the remainder when he died in 1924 while undergoing treatment for throat cancer.

Franco Alfano was hired to complete the music from Puccini’s notes and it’s usually a version of his score that is performed today, though there have been several attempts to improve upon it.

Luciano Berio orchestrated a new ending which premiered in 2002; Chinese composer Hao Weiya crafted his own version in 2008, and Opera Delaware is offering a conclusion in May composed by Derrick Wang, whose earlier opera “Scalia/Ginsburg” told of the friendship between the two Supreme Court justices.

Motivations

But none have gone as far as WNO in rewriting both text and music for the final scene.

Stanton, a playwright and screenwriter who worked on the hit TV series “Succession,” said she tried to understand Turandot’s character and motivations in a way that rang true psychologically. And she came to a surprising conclusion.

In Turandot’s entrance aria “In questa reggia,” she describes her cruel behavior in sending suitor after suitor to their deaths as revenge for the fate of her an-cestor, Princess Lo-u-ling, who she says was sexually assaulted and murdered.

But Stanton said, “I just didn’t believe her. The body count is so high that it didn’t make sense that she’s going to be killing all these men because of something that happened to a long-ago ancestor.

“It felt more like a trauma response of somebody who’s really afraid of getting married,” Stanton said. So in the new final scene she has Turandot reveal that it was actually she herself who was raped.



Frank Valentini, (center), and the team from ‘General Hospital’ accept the award for outstanding daytime drama series during the 51st Daytime Emmy Awards on Friday, June 7, at the Westin Bonaventure in Los Angeles. (AP)



Kelly Clarkson, (center), and the team from ‘The Kelly Clarkson Show’ accept the award for outstanding daytime talk series. (AP)



Michelle Stafford accepts the award for outstanding performance by a lead actress in a daytime drama series for ‘The Young and the Restless.’ (AP)

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Television

‘An incredible privilege’

Sajak signs off ‘Wheel of Fortune’

LOS ANGELES, June 8, (AP): After 41 years and over 8,000 episodes, Pat Sajak made his final turn as the renowned host of “Wheel of Fortune” on Friday.

The season 41 finale, dubbed the “Thanks for the memories” show, opened on Friday with a clip from Sa-jak’s first episode as the host of “Wheel of Fortune” in 1981 and closed with Sajak’s warm message of gratitude.

In his farewell message, Sajak thanked the viewers of the beloved game show for granting him the “in-credible privilege to be invited into millions of homes, night after night, year after year, decade after decade.”

Sajak, 77, also gave a heartfelt thanks to his “professional other half,” Vanna White, who has co-hosted with him for over 40 years and delivered her emo-tional tribute to Sajak a day earlier.

“We’ve seen a lot of changes in each other’s lives over the years, but we’ve always been there for each other,” he said. “I will miss our nightly closes and her laughter and her good nature. She’s a very special woman.”

Among the many thanks and shout-outs Sajak offered during the final episode before his retirement, he said the crew and staff, some of whom have been working on the show as long as he has, were a “joy” to work with. “Your skills and dedication and good humor made this a place I always wanted to be,” he added.

Sajak thanked one staff member by name: his daughter Maggie. She began working as the show’s social correspond-ent in 2021 and he said their collaboration has been the “best part of the last couple of years.” Sajak also mentioned his son, Patrick, and his wife, Lesly, and said that he is “blessed” to have his family.

The famed host also said that the “real stars of the show” have been the con-testants who competed for cash and luxury prizes throughout the decades of the show’s run. He called them “kind and considerate,” noting that they always “took great pride in talking about their family, their hometown, their friends, their schools, their jobs, even their pets.”

Contestants

Reflecting on the show’s massive reach, Sajak noted that he always found it important to keep the daily half-hour show a “safe place for fam-ily fun,” excluding any social issues or political topics from the banter he shared with contestants and White. He said he wanted to keep the show “just a game,” before noting that to many, it became a part of their daily lives.

“Gradually, it became more than that,” Sajak continued. “A place where kids learned their letters, where people from other countries honed their Eng-lish skills, where families came together along with friends and neighbors and en-tire generations. What an honor to have

played even a small part in all that.”

Sajak’s closed out his message with a crack about how viewers could still see more of him through reruns of the show during its summer break. “The jokes will be the same, but I’d appre-ciate it if you’d laugh anyway,” he quipped before saying a final goodbye.

To make time for his closing mes-sage, Sajak truncated the game by cut-ting out a round. He said he wanted to ensure the competition was still fair for contestants Tammi, Adrienne and Nino, so Sajak spun the wheel him-self and added to their totals. While he initially said he’d add \$1,000 to the prize money the wheel landed on, he bumped the bonus up to \$5,000 for each person after noting that it wasn’t his money he was allocating. “Little Jimmy’s surgery can wait,” he joked.

During her tribute on Thursday, White called Sajak “like a brother” and a “true lifelong friend.” In the pre-recorded video that featured clips and photos of their decades as co-workers, she added that their personal friend-ship has meant even more than their professional collaboration.

Sajak announced in June 2023 that he would retire from his hosting duties at the end of the show’s 41st season, with Ryan Seacrest set to succeed him. White will stay on as Seacrest’s co-host through the 2025-2026 season, based on a contract extension she signed in September.



Ishana Night Shyamalan, (left), and Dakota Fanning pose for a portrait to promote ‘The Watchers,’ May 23, 2024, in Beverly Hills, Calif. (AP)

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Weinstein



Mosley

Variety

**ATHENS, Greece:** Greek police say an ongoing major search and rescue operation on the small eastern Aegean island of **Symi** has still not located British doctor and television presenter **Michael Mosley**, who went missing on Wednesday afternoon after reportedly going for a walk.

Police said Friday that the coast guard, police and fire department were involved in the search, with a helicopter, drones and a police sniffer dog deployed. They have found no trace of the 67-year-old who had been vacationing on the island.

The search was focusing on the area between **Agios Nikolaos**, the coastal area from where Mosely apparently set off on his walk, and the island’s main town of **Symi**. Authorities had also looked into whether he might have left the island alto-gether, but found no indication that anyone had travelled under his name.

**Britain’s** Foreign Office said it was in contact with Greek authorities over the search.

Mosley is well-known in Britain for his regular appearances on television and radio and for his column in the Daily Mail newspaper. He is known outside the **U.K.** for his 2013 book “The Fast Diet,” which he co-authored with journalist Mimi Spencer. The “5:2 diet” set out how people can lose weight fast by minimiz-ing their caloric intake for two days in a week while eating healthily on the other five.

He has subsequently introduced the Fast 800 diet, a rapid weight loss program, and

has made a number of films about diet and exercise.

Mosley has often pushed his body to ex-treme lengths to see the effects of his diets and also lived with tapeworms in his guts

for six weeks for the BBC documentary “Infested! Living With Parasites.”

Worried friends and colleagues expressed their shock over Mosley’s disap-pearance.



Pat Sajak, (left), and Vanna White, from ‘Wheel of Fortune,’ attend a ceremony honoring Harry Friedman with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in Los Angeles on Nov. 1, 2019. (AP)

“This shocking news focusses our minds on Michael’s wife **Clare** and their sons,” said **Roy Taylor**, a professor of medicine and metabolism at Newcastle University who co-authored “The 8-Week Blood Sugar Diet” with Mosley. “Our thoughts are with them in this terrible time of uncertainty, hoping that he will be found safely.” (AP)

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**NEW YORK:** **Harvey Weinstein’s** lawyers argue in an appeal that he did not get a fair trial when he was convicted of rape and sexual assault in **Los Angeles** in 2022 and sentenced to 16 years in prison.

The brief filed Friday with **California’s** Second District Court of Appeal comes six weeks after his similar landmark #MeToo conviction and 23-year prison sentence in New York were overturned by the state’s highest court.

The California appeal argues the trial judge wrongly excluded evidence that the Italian model and actor he was convicted of raping had a sexual relationship with the director of a film festival that had brought both Weinstein and the woman to Los Angeles at the time of the alleged attack.

Weinstein’s lawyers argued that the judge deprived him of “his constitutional rights to present a defense and led to a miscarriage of justice.” (AP)



WHO reports first human case of H5N2 bird flu in Mexico

Bird flu death in Mexico unrelated to US outbreaks: experts

NEW YORK, June 8, (AP): The mysterious death of a man in Mexico who had one kind of bird flu is unrelated to outbreaks of a different type at US dairy farms, experts say.

Here's a look at the case and the different types of bird flu.

A 59-year-old man in Mexico who had been bedridden because of chronic health problems developed a fever, shortness of breath and diarrhea in April. He died a week later, and the World Health Organization this week reported it.

The WHO said it was the first time that version of bird flu - H5N2 - had been seen in a person.

A different version of bird flu - H5N1 - has been infecting poultry flocks over the last several years, leading to millions of birds being culled. It also has been spreading among all different kinds of animals around the world.

This year, that flu was detected in U.S. dairy farms. Dozens of herd have seen infections, most recently in Iowa and Minnesota.

The cow outbreak has been tied to three reported illnesses in farmworkers, one in Texas and two in Michigan. Each had only mild symptoms.

So-called influenza A viruses are the only viruses tied to human flu pandemics, so their appearance in animals and people is a concern. These viruses are divided into

subtypes based on what kinds of proteins they have on their surface - hemagglutinin (H) and neuraminidase (N). Scientists say there are 18 different "H" subtypes and 11 different "N" subtypes, and they appear in scores of combinations. H1N1 and H3N2 are common causes of seasonal flu among humans. There are many versions seen in animals as well.

**Variety**

H5N1, the version that has worried some U.S. scientists lately, historically has been seen mainly in birds, but has in recent years has spread to a wide variety of mammals.

H5N2 has long been seen in Mexican poultry, and farms vaccinate against it.

It's also no stranger to the United States. An H5N2 outbreak hit a flock of 7,000 chickens in south-central Texas in 2004, the first time in two decades a dangerous-to-poultry avian flu appeared in the US.

H5N2 also was mainly responsible for a wave outbreaks at US commercial poultry farms in 2014 and 2015.

Over the years, H5N2 has teetered between being considered a mild threat to birds and a severe threat, but it hasn't been considered much of a human threat at all.

A decade ago, researchers used mice and ferrets to study the strain afflicting US poultry at the time, and concluded it was less likely to spread and less lethal than H5N1. Officials also said there was no evidence it was spreading among people.

Rare cases of animal infections are reported each year, so it's not unexpected that a person was diagnosed with H5N2.

"If you're a glass half full kind of person, you'd say, 'This is the system doing exactly what it's supposed to do: detecting and documenting these rare human infections, where years ago we were stumbling in the dark,'" said Matthew Ferrari, director of Penn State's Center for Infectious Disease Dynamics.

InfectedIndeed, Mexico Health Secretary Jorge Alcocer said kidney and respiratory failure - not the virus - actually caused the man's death.

**Infected**

Some experts said it is noteworthy that it's not known how he caught the man caught H5N2.

"The fact there was no reported contact (with an infected bird) does raise the possibility that he was infected by someone else who visited him, but it's premature to jump to those conclusions," said Richard Webby, a flu researcher at St.

Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis.

At this point, H5N2 is still considered a minor threat compared to some of the other kinds of bird flu out there. Most human illnesses have been attributed to H7N9, H5N6 and H5N1 bird flu viruses.

From early 2013 through October 2017, five outbreaks of H7N9 were blamed for killing more than 600 people in China. And at least 18 people in China died during an outbreak of H5N6 in 2021, according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

H5N1 was first identified in 1959, but didn't really begin to worry health officials until a Hong Kong outbreak in 1997 that involved severe human illnesses and deaths.

H5N1 cases have continued since then, the vast majority of them involving direct contact between people and infected animals. Globally, more than 460 human deaths have been identified since 2003, according to WHO statistics that suggest it can kill as many as half of the people reported to be infected.

Like other viruses, H5N1 as evolved over time, spawning newer versions of itself. In the last few years, the predominant version of the virus has spread quickly among a wide range of animals, but counts of human fatalities have slowed.

Pandemic's effect still lingers for millions

COVID-19 remains a 'persistent' threat for people with diabetes

By Jamie Hartmann-Boyce  
UMass Amherst

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

At the start of the pandemic, many people living with diabetes were wondering what COVID-19 meant for them. Diabetes was already known to put people at higher risks from other infectious diseases, including flu. Would it be the same with COVID-19? At the time, all scientists could do was make educated guesses.

In 2024, things look very different. A great deal more research is available, as well as effective vaccines, and life has in many ways returned to something like normal.

COVID-19 hasn't disappeared, however, and for the more than 400 million people living with diabetes worldwide, very real risks and impacts from the pandemic remain.

I specialize in drawing on and combining existing evidence to inform health policy across a range of areas. I've been studying COVID-19 and diabetes

since the start of the pandemic and have experienced firsthand some of the many ways in which COVID-19 has affected people with diabetes. I've lived with Type 1 diabetes for the past 30 years. And at the start of the pandemic, I had a lot of questions about what COVID-19 meant for me.

Diabetes is characterized by having higher than normal blood sugars. Different types of diabetes create this condition in varying ways.

Type 1 diabetes occurs when your body attacks the cells that produce insulin.

Insulin is the hormone that converts sugar into energy - without it, sugar remains in the blood, and the body is deprived of the energy it needs. Type 1 diabetes can be treated only by injecting insulin and is irreversible. If left untreated, Type 1 diabetes is fatal. There is no cure. No one knows for sure why some people get Type 1 diabetes and others don't.

By contrast, in Type 2 diabetes - by far the most common type - your body is still producing insulin but is less able to use it. People are more likely to get Type 2 diabetes if they are living with obesity. But people who aren't obese can also get Type 2 diabetes, and many people living with obesity never get diabetes.

Type 2 diabetes often runs in families. It can be treated in a range of ways. This includes weight loss for people living with obesity, changes to diet and exercise, and medications. In some cases, Type 2 diabetes can be reversed.

Type 1 diabetes is most likely to start in childhood or adolescence, and Type 2 diabetes is most likely to start later in life. However, older people can develop Type 1 diabetes, and children can develop Type 2.

There are other types of diabetes, too. Gestational diabetes develops in pregnancy and goes away after giving birth. As with Type 2 diabetes, the body is still making insulin but is less able to use it.

In general, diabetes is on the rise, with most of this being driven by Type 2. By 2050, it's estimated that 1.3 billion people will be living with diabetes worldwide.

Diabetes can damage many parts of your body, including your eyes, heart, blood vessels, nervous system, feet and kidneys. Blood sugar management and regular checkups can help reduce these risks.

In a 2023 study, my colleagues and I reviewed a wide body of literature to examine the extent to which people with diabetes were at increased risk from COVID-19, and whether some people with diabetes were at greater risk than others.

Overall, we found that people with diabetes were about twice as likely to get seriously sick with COVID-19 than people without diabetes. Evidence also consistently showed that people with diabetes were more likely to die from COVID-19 than people without diabetes.

Some people with diabetes appeared to be at greater risk than others. The higher people's blood sugar levels were before or during COVID-19 infection, the worse their outcomes were likely to be. In addition, risks generally seemed higher for people with Type 1 diabetes and people who used insulin.

There are several potential explanations. We know that having higher blood sugar levels makes it harder for people's bodies to fight infections. On average, blood sugar levels are higher in people with Type 1 than Type 2 diabetes. Infection can make blood sugar levels harder to manage.

People with Type 1 diabetes also tend to have lived with diabetes longer than people with Type 2 diabetes, and that might mean their bodies are less able to fight COVID-19 because of diabetes complications - for example, damage to their heart and kidneys.

Disruptions

The pandemic triggered wide-scale disruptions for people living with diabetes. Many found it harder to make appointments with their health care providers. Some found it harder to access their medications. For many people, diet and physical activity were disrupted, too.

We did a wide-ranging, systematic review of 139 studies in more than a million people to examine the impact of pandemic disruptions on people with diabetes. Evidence showed that people were more likely to die from diabetes during the pandemic than before it and were more likely to lose sight because of diabetes during the pandemic than before. People with diabetes need regular eye checkups to help protect their sight; these checkups often didn't happen during the pandemic, and people's vision suffered as a result.

We also found that young people with diabetes fared particularly badly. Children and adolescents with Type 1 diabetes were more likely to be admitted to the hospital with a life-threatening condition called diabetic ketoacidosis, which is when your blood turns toxic because you don't have enough insulin in your body.

Admissions to pediatric intensive care units for diabetes were higher during the pandemic than prior. It might be that people delayed seeking care, or were unable to access care, because of pandemic disruptions. That could mean that by the time young people with diabetes made it to a hospital, they were already really, really sick.

There is still plenty of reason for optimism, though. COVID-19 vaccines have markedly decreased the chances of dying or getting really sick from COVID-19, and in many countries, people living with diabetes have been prioritized for vaccines.

There are also developments in diabetes care. Improved diabetes management, whether it be through technologies such as insulin pumps or continuous glucose monitors, behavior changes or medications, can help reduce risk from COVID-19 and other infections. (AP)



Dr. Asmaa Al Kandari from Kuwait performed two endoscopy procedures and shared them on social media.

Kuwaiti doctor Al-Kandari participates in World Endoscopy Conference

Dr. Asmaa Al Kandari, the Consultant of Internal Medicine and Gastroenterology at the Kuwaiti Ministry of Health, has taken part in the 2024 International Conference on Gastroenterology, Endoscopy and Liver – hosted by the Italian City of Milan.

In remarks to KUNA on Friday, Dr. Al-Kandari affirmed that her participation in the convention was an opportunity to get acquainted with new information in the realm and interact with peers, noting that she was the sole representa-

tive at the event from the Middle East.

This international scientific event is valuable with respect of research and clinical treatment, she said, affirming the need for such interaction to update medical protocols.

The Kuwaiti doctor conducted two endoscopy operations, publicized via the social media.

The conference has drawn 25,000 participants and specialists, some partaking virtually. (KUNA)

A patient's journey from health crises to hope

Optimism: A prescription for well-being

NEW YORK, June 8, (AP): Prince Bhojwani never thought of himself as a negative person, until three trips to the hospital in one month forced him to reconsider.

Before May 2018, he was a healthy but chronically worried start-up founder who regularly did 20-mile (32-kilometer) bike rides. When he suddenly became barely able to walk, with blurry vision and spiking blood pressure, emergency room doctors suspected a stroke, but couldn't pinpoint the cause of his illness. A close friend, however - "one of the most optimistic people I know," he said - pointed out Bhojwani often lacked faith that things would work out, and suggested that had pushed him to burn out.

"I started looking at the world very differently, literally the next day," said Bhojwani, who lives in New York City. He started meditating and taking a moment every morning to feel grateful to be alive. He also found purpose by co-founding a nonprofit, Asana Voices, a South Asian advocacy organization.

In the years since, he hasn't had any similar health crises, despite working longer hours. He credits his newfound positive outlook. "After there was a life-changing event, it kind of forced me to become optimistic," he said. "I can't even

imagine living life the way I did back then."

Optimism in itself is hardly a cure-all, but numerous studies over the decades have demonstrated a link between a positive outlook and good health outcomes.

Experts say a standard for measuring someone's relative optimism has long been the 10-question Life Orientation Test-Revised, published in 1994. (Sample question: On a scale of 1 to 5, respondents are asked how strongly they agree with the statement, "In uncertain times, I usually expect the best.")

Generally, optimism is defined as the "expectation that good things will happen, or believing the future will be favorable because we can control important outcomes," said Hayami Koga, a postdoctoral research fellow at the Harvard Center for Population and Development Studies.

She was the lead author on a 2022 study that found optimism associated with longer life spans and a greater chance of living past 90. In another study, published in May in JAMA Psychiatry, she and other researchers said optimists generally maintained better physical functioning as they aged. They looked at 5,930 postmenopausal women over a 6-year period.

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Hosts Germany beat Greece

# England lose to Iceland in last friendly before Euro 2024



Iceland's Hakon Amar Haraldsson (left), and England's Cole Palmer challenge for the ball during the International friendly soccer match between England and Iceland at Wembley stadium in London. (AP)

# Clark carries Indiana past winless Washington 85-83

Storm top Aces for 6th straight victory

WASHINGTON, June 8, (AP): Caitlin Clark made seven 3-pointers, equaled a career high with 30 points and made enough of her free throws down the stretch to help the Indiana Fever hold on for an 85-83 victory over the winless Washington Mystics on Friday night.

Clark easily had the most 3-pointers of her young career and made three of her four free throws late. She missed the last one, and the ball was knocked out of bounds as the Mystics (0-11) tried to rush up the court. That gave Washington one last chance with 1.4 seconds left, but the Mystics couldn't get a shot off in time.

Clark had eight rebounds and six assists in perhaps her best all-around game so far. She went 8 of 15 from the field with four steals, although turnovers (eight) were an issue again for the former Iowa star.

## BASKETBALL

### Storm 78, Aces 65

In Las Vegas, Jewell Loyd had 25 points and nine rebounds, Skylar Diggins-Smith scored 19 of her 21 points in the second half to go with seven assists, and the Seattle Storm beat the Las Vegas Aces for their sixth straight victory.

Diggins-Smith scored nine points during Seattle's 11-2 run, including two 3-pointers, a three-point play and a nice pass to Nneka Ogumike for a layup, to extend their lead to 74-61 with 2:01 left. Diggins-Smith capped the scoring with 14 seconds remaining.

Nneka Ogumike and Ezi Magbegor each had a double-double for Seattle (7-3), which made 20 of 22 free throws. Magbegor had 14 points, 15 rebounds and five assists, and Ogumike added 12 points and 11 boards.

Loyd reached double-digit scoring for the 51st straight game, extending the longest active streak.

## Mavs need a solution in NBA Finals

## Celtics' formula is lots of 3s, lots of stops

BOSTON, June 8, (AP): When the Boston Celtics make a ton of 3-pointers, forget it. They're probably not going to lose.

That was surely something the Dallas Mavericks understood before Game 1 of the NBA Finals - and if they, or anyone else, somehow were unaware of that fact, it was on full display in the opener.

The Celtics made 16 3s, outscoring the Mavericks by 27 points from long range, in their 107-89 victory Thursday night. Both teams have an off day Friday and are scheduled to resume practice Saturday. Game 2 is Sunday night in Boston.

"We've got to be better," Mavericks coach Jason Kidd said. "Nerves or not being in this situation, we can't use that as an excuse. It's just basketball, and we've got to be better at the game of basketball on Sunday."

And it'll start with doing a better job on 3s - either making more, giving up fewer, or both. Consider these trends for the Celtics this season:

- When making 16 or more 3s, Boston is 51-6. When making 15 or under, the Celtics are 26-14. That's still a very good mark, but at least opponents have a realistic chance of

## BASKETBALL

winning when that happens.

- When the Celtics make more 3s than their opponent, they're 61-5. When they don't, they're 16-15, basically a coin-flip to see who wins.

- When the Celtics make at least four more 3s than their opponent, they're 49-3.

- When factoring in both the regu-

lar season and the playoffs, not only has Boston made more 3s than anyone else (1,572 so far this season, 24 away from matching the league's total-season mark the Celtics set last year), but the Celtics also have a better percentage this season than any other club. They're at .3852 for the season now, a whisker ahead of Oklahoma City's .3851.

"I think they are the best 3-point shooting team in the NBA, so sometimes (it's) really hard to take those away," Mavericks guard Luka Doncic said. "Especially when they have five guys out and they can all shoot. Obviously, we've got to make more."

And it was a team effort for the Celtics in Game 1. That has to be what makes it doubly scary for Dallas - because just about everyone in Boston's rotation was part of the prowess from deep.

Copper sank 13 of 23 shots, none bigger than her final one, in helping Phoenix (5-6) win for just the second time in its last seven games under first-year coach Nate Tibbetts. Griner, fully recovered from a toe fracture that kept her out until now, debuted with 11 points, four rebounds and a block in just over 21 minutes.

Diana Taurasi scored 12 points but made just 4 of 19 shots, including 1 of 7 from beyond the arc, for Phoenix. Copper said Tibbetts originally designed the final play for Taurasi, but the veteran lobbied for Copper to take the shot instead.

### Sparks 81, Wings 72

In Los Angeles, Dearica Hamby finished with 22 points and 12 rebounds to help the Los Angeles Sparks pull away for an victory over the Dallas Wings, snapping a three-game skid.

Hamby has eight double-doubles in 10 games this season for the Sparks (3-7). She made 9 of 16 shots from the floor, 4 of 6 from the free-throw line, and added four assists.

LONDON, June 8, (AP): England was booed by some of its own fans after losing 1-0 to Iceland in its last friendly before the European Championship, while host nation Germany recovered from a goal down to beat Greece 2-1.

Jón Dagur Thorsteinsson left defender John Stones standing as he scored for Iceland in the 16th minute to bring back memories of one of England's lowest points of recent years, its 2-1 elimination by Iceland at Euro 2016.

England created few clear-cut chances against Iceland and nearly conceded a second goal when a promising Icelandic counterattack ended with Thorsteinsson slipping as he shot.

## SOCCER

"We learned a lot and we know the performance wasn't good enough," England manager Gareth Southgate told broadcaster Channel 4. "Equally we needed the game; there's a lot of players that we're managing their minutes and it was obviously a disjointed and disappointing performance and we didn't show enough character."

England, which beat Bosnia-Herzegovina 3-0 on Monday, gets its tournament under way June 16 against Serbia in Group C.

Germany needed substitute Pascal Gross' 89th-minute goal to secure the win over Greece a week before it opens Euro 2024 against Scotland in Munich.

Georgios Masouras gave Greece the lead in the 34th on the rebound after

goalkeeper Manuel Neuer failed to hold a shot from Christos Tzolis. Arsenal forward Kai Havertz leveled in the 56th when he shot on the turn and it went in off Manolis Siopis.

After Benjamin Henrichs sent a shot off the bar in the 83rd, Germany finally took the lead when Gross hit a fierce shot from outside the box.

With a flat first-half performance and a late recovery, the win over Greece continues a mixed bag of form for Germany, which beat France and the Netherlands in friendlies in March but has also lost to Japan, Turkey and Austria within the last 12 months.

Neuer's error for the Greece goal came shortly after Germany coach Julian Nagelsmann confirmed he was cutting Stuttgart goalkeeper Alexander Nübel as he finalized the 26-player squad for the tournament. Barcelona's Marc-Andre ter Stegen and Hoffenheim's Oliver Baumann are the two other goalkeepers in the squad.

Nagelsmann committed in March to having Neuer as his first-choice goalkeeper for Euro 2024, even though injuries meant the Bayern Munich goalkeeper only played his first game under Nagelsmann for Germany in Monday's 0-0 draw with Ukraine.

Also Friday, Poland beat neighbor Ukraine 3-1 with three goals in the opening 30 minutes and Scotland drew 2-2 with Finland after giving up a 2-0 lead. Romania failed to beat one of Europe's smallest nations, Liechtenstein, in a 0-0 draw. The Czech Republic cruised to a 7-1 win over Malta. Albania beat Azerbaijan 3-1.

## 'We can come back in the next couple of yrs'

## Hurricanes reach semifinals and end Rebels' tenure in Super Rugby Pacific

WELLINGTON, New Zealand, June 8, (AP): The top-ranked Hurricanes beat the Melbourne Rebels 47-20 Saturday to qualify for the Super Rugby Pacific semifinals and to end the Rebels' 14-year tenure in the Southern Hemisphere tournament.

The Rebels will no longer be able to participate in Super Rugby which they joined in 2011. Rugby Australia decided not to renew their participation license due to financial difficulties, leaving Australia with four teams in an 11-team competition from next season.

"I want to acknowledge the Rebels as a franchise," Hurricanes captain Jordie Barrett said after the match at Wellington, New Zealand. "Since joining Super Rugby they're always been a joy to play against, players, staff and fans. We wish all their coaches and players all the best in whichever direction they go."

The Auckland-based Blues beat the Fijian Drua 36-5 and will host one semifinal while the Hurricanes will host the other. The Hamilton-based Chiefs qualified for the semis on Friday with a 43-21 win over the Queensland Reds.

The eighth-seeded Rebels were playing in the quarterfinals for the first time and put up a brave fight in their last match.

The Hurricanes led 35-6 after 57 minutes. But the Rebels still were determined to go down fighting and scored twice in as many minutes through winger Lachie Anderson, making the score 35-20.

But the Hurricanes clinched the match with a try to Du'Plessis Kirifi and another to Kini Naholo. Brett Cameron converted and finished with six goals from seven attempts.

"We got disrupted a little bit in the first half but we were under no illusion that the challenge was going to come from the Rebels this week," Hurricanes captain Jordie Barrett said.

"They're an emotional side, they had a lot to play for and were always going to be up for it in that first 20 or 30 minutes. It was just pleasing we managed to wrestle back a bit of momentum after halftime and got into the games."

The Hurricanes took 25 minutes to score their first points of the match, a try to prop Pasilio Tosi, which was longer than in any other match this season.

They previously have always scored in the first 10 minutes.

They were frustrated Saturday by tenacious defense from the Rebels who twice held up the Hurricanes over the goalline, preventing tries to Xavier Numia and Brandon Iose.

Iose, hooker Asafo Aumua and prop Numia had run the ball strongly early in the match but the finishing polish was missing. That started to come just before halftime when winger Josh Moorthy scored, making the score 14-6 at the break.

The Rebels still left a mark on the match and on the season, winning five matches.

"At the start of the year we talked about being the greatest Rebels team ever," captain Rob Leota said. "To make the finals was great. Obviously losing, we're not happy with that. We had high hopes to go further."

"I'm proud of the team, all our coaches and staff back home and all the coaches and supporters in Melbourne."

## RUGBY

Hopefully we can come back in the next couple of years."

The Blues used their strong set piece to dominate possession and territory in the first half against the Drua, scoring tries through backrower Dalton Papali'i, scrumhalf Finlay Christie and winger Caleb Clarke. They led 22-0 at halftime.

But the Drua got their hands on the ball more often at the start of the second half and scored a brilliant try through winger Selestino Ravutaumada, who dashed from halfway and finished with a flamboyant dive.

The Blues couldn't add to their lead until the 64th minute when replacement hooker Kurt Eklund scored their fourth try. Clarke then scored his second to seal the match.

"You knew what you were going to get from the Drua, that's fast-paced footy and they certainly showed that tonight," Papali'i said. "I don't think the scoreboard reflects how tough a game that was."

The Blues lost captain Patrick Tuipulotu in the first half to what seemed a serious knee injury.

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## Oly rings mounted on Eiffel Tower to mark 50 days until Paris Games

PARIS, June 8, (AP): The Paris Olympics organizers on Friday unveiled a display of the five Olympic rings mounted on the Eiffel Tower as the French capital marks 50 days until the start of the Summer Games.

The structure of rings, made of recycled French steel, was displayed on the south side of the 135-year-old landmark in central Paris, overlooking the Seine River. Each ring is 9 meters (30 feet) in diameter.

Thousands of athletes will parade through the heart of the French capital on boats on the Seine along a 6-kilometer (3.7-mile) route in the opening ceremony at sunset on



The Olympic rings are seen on the Eiffel Tower Friday, June 7, 2024, in Paris. The Paris Olympics organizers mounted the rings on the Eiffel Tower on Friday as the French capital marks 50 days until the start of the Summer Games. The 95-foot-long and 43-foot-high structure of five rings, made entirely of recycled French steel, will be displayed on the south side of the 135-year-old historic landmark in central Paris, overlooking the Seine River. (AP)

July 26. There will be no shortage of iconic venues at the Paris Olympics.

The tower, nicknamed La Dame de Fer (The Iron Lady), will feature prominently in the July 26-Aug. 11 Paris Games and the

## OLYMPICS

following Paralympics.

Men's and women's volleyball players will compete at the foot of the 330-meter (1,083-foot) monument. They will be watched by nearly 13,000 fans at the temporary Eiffel Tower Stadium on the nearby Champ de Mars, where Parisians and tourists like to have picnics on

the grass or watch July 14 fireworks displays.

The Olympic and Paralympic medals in Paris are being embedded with pieces from a hexagonal chunk of iron taken from the tower.

The hugely popular landmark in central Paris has seen soaring visitor numbers in the leadup to the 2024 Games.

Two huge cranes were used to lift the 30-ton structure and mount it between the first and second floors of the tower.

The Olympic rings will be illuminated every night with 100,000 LED bulbs through the Paralympic Games that start Aug. 28, 17 days after the Olympics' closing ceremony.

The Paralympics will bring together 4,400 athletes from 180 countries in 549 events and 22 sports. Many sports will take place near landmarks including the Eiffel Tower, Versailles and the Grand Palais.

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Tighter financial oversight recommended

Setting the bar: Barjas urges high standards for Kuwait sports leaders

KUWAIT CITY, June 8: Dhari Barjas, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Basketball Association, emphasized the urgent need for an integrated package of sports legislation to address deficiencies in the sports sector. This would create a competitive sports environment and a new model system, approved by the general assemblies of clubs and federations, capable of keeping pace with the sports development seen in other countries in the region.

He stated, "The ambitions among young athletes are always high, which is both good and necessary. However, reality does not always align with these aspirations, leading to severe disappointment for many. Therefore, the highest priority should be the implementation of modern sports laws that consider development. These laws should guide sports and youth forward, hold everyone accountable, reward diligence, and address negligence."

Barjas highlighted that the sports renaissance we aspire to requires essential components. He emphasized the need to establish new clubs and sports centers in various governo-



Dhari Barjas, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Basketball Association.

rates to accommodate the increasing population and engage youth in new areas. Additionally, there should be increased financial support for clubs and federations, coupled with stringent administrative and financial oversight to evaluate performance and hold under-performers account-

able.

Barjas also pointed out the necessity of developing regulations that control the outcomes of the general assemblies in clubs and federations. He suggested that there must be high standards for those applying for membership on the boards of directors of clubs and federations. This

BASKETBALL

would ensure that the most qualified individuals occupy leadership positions, free from temporary electoral considerations and the immediate interests of candidates and voters.

He stressed the importance of cooperation between clubs and federations for the public good, noting, "Clubs are the primary and sole financiers of players at various age levels. It is essential for them to cooperate with each other to exchange experiences, develop the sports system, and coordinate with federations to achieve common goals." Barjas also pointed to the necessity of contracting the best technical and administrative per-



Special Olympics Athletes Council.

Khalil elected president of Kuwaiti Special Olympics athletes' council

KUWAIT CITY, June 8: The local leadership council for Kuwaiti Special Olympics athletes concluded its inaugural session with elections to appoint the council's leaders for the next four years. Youssef Khalil was recommended as president of the council, Sheikh Al-Hindi was elected as the first vice president, and Ali Al-Shayea was elected as the second vice president. The conclusion of the council's first session was attended by Rehab Bouresli, National Director of Special Olympics Kuwait, Dirar Al-Rabah, Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors of Al-Ambuh Club, and Siddiq Al-Ansari, Secretary of the Club and Chairman of the Families Council.

Rehab Bouresli expressed her happiness with the positive outcomes of

the council's work and workshops, held over more than a month, which empowered leading athletes with intellectual disabilities, boosting their self-confidence and providing them with skills to enhance their independence. These efforts aimed to help them manage their personal affairs, discuss and present their issues, and rehabilitate them for better societal integration and effective participation in the country's development process.

Bouresli praised the athletes' level of awareness and engagement with the workshop topics, which included self-confidence and leadership skills, confronting bullying, healthy nutrition, the importance of sports, the safe use of social media, and public speaking skills.

Al-Qadisiya to release 10 players

Al-Arabi's Salama 'avoids' surgery, undergoes two-month knee rehab



A file photo of Bandar Al Salama challenging for the ball.

By Hassan Musa  
Al-Seyassah/ArabTimes Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 8: Al-Arabi Club has announced that first team player Bandar Salama will not require surgery. Following an assessment by his German doctor, it was confirmed that Salama needs a specialized knee-strengthening program lasting two months, after which he will resume regular training.

Salama sustained a severe injury during a match against Kuwait in the Zain Premier League, resulting in a partial tear of the lateral ligament in his knee. Consequently, he traveled to Germany for medical examinations, which determined that a 60-day physical therapy program would suffice for his recovery.

Salama is set to commence knee-strengthening exercises under the German doctor's supervision this week. He aims to be fully prepared for the new season, ready to support both Al-Arabi and the Kuwaiti national team, from which he has been absent due to his injury.

Previously, Salama suffered a cruci-

ate ligament injury in the season before last and also endured a collarbone fracture. Despite these setbacks, he made a strong comeback last season.

On the local club front, 10 players are likely to leave Al-Qadisiya before the new season starts. Their chances of remaining with the team have diminished, especially following the new regulation reducing the team roster to 25 players.

Among those expected to be released are Nayef Zuwaid, Abdulaziz Nassari, Dhari Saeed, Sultan Salbukh, Talal Al-Ansari, and Abdullah Al-Shamali. Additionally, several players are set to be loaned out for the season, including Ahmed Shabib, Meshal Khaled, Khaled Sabah, and Muhammad Khalil.

Abdullah Mawi was the first to leave, joining Al-Fahaheel immediately after the end of the past season.

Al-Nasr's goalkeeper and captain, Mohamed Hadi, bid farewell to his club. Hadi announced his departure from "Al-Annabi" after the conclusion of the past season. The former international goalkeeper has not yet revealed his next destination.

Afghanistan rout New Zealand

Canada, Bangladesh win at Twenty20 World Cup

PROVIDENCE, Guyana, June 8, (AP): Rahmanullah Gurbaz and Ibrahim Zadran shared a second consecutive century stand which led Afghanistan to an 84-run win over New Zealand on Friday and put it in charge of Group C at cricket's Twenty20 World Cup.

Gurbaz and Ibrahim put on 154 in a 125-run win over Uganda in Afghanistan's opening match and made 103 for the first wicket in a total of 159-6 as Afghanistan batted first after New Zealand won the toss.

Fazalhaq Farooqi and Rashid Khan both took 4-17 as New Zealand was bowled out for 75 in the 16th over, its fourth-lowest T20 total.

CRICKET

Earlier Friday in Dallas, Nicholas Kirton scored 49 off 35 balls to help Canada earn its first win at a T20 World Cup by 12 runs over Ireland. In the third match Friday in New York, Bangladesh beat Sri Lanka by two wickets with six balls remaining in a tense match, consigning Sri Lanka to its second consecutive loss in Group D.

Gurbaz and Ibrahim are only the third pair and first openers to post back-to-back century partnerships at a Twenty20 World Cup. They stayed together until the 15th over Friday when Ibrahim was out for 44 from 41 balls.

Gurbaz finally was out in the 20th over, having made 80 from 56 balls with five fours and five sixes. The Afghanistan innings contained nine sixes and 10 fours.

"We were waiting for this match for the last three years," Gurbaz said. "We played them at the World Cup three years ago and they beat us. Finally we beat them. We had the trust and belief in ourselves from the very start." New Zealand came into the tournament as one of the favorites after reaching at least the semifinals at the last six white-ball World Cups - 50-over one-day internationals and Twenty20 matches.

But it also came into its opening match with no local warm-up match and with most players having been inactive for some time. That showed in the field where their performance featured dropped catches, overthrows and misfields.

"Afghanistan outplayed us in

League concludes

Honoring a legend: Retirement ceremony for Siwan

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/ArabTimes Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 8: Today marks the conclusion of the 2023-2024 handball season, with the final round of the Premier League taking place at the Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah Complex



Faisal Siwan



Bangladesh's Towhid Hridoy hits a six during the men's T20 World Cup cricket match between Sri Lanka and Bangladesh at Grand Prairie Stadium, Grand Prairie, Texas. (AP)

all facets of the game," New Zealand captain Kane Williamson said. "From our perspective it wasn't good enough in terms of starting a tournament. Very frustrating." Nicholas Kirton helped Canada score 137-7 in 20 overs after it was put into bat. Shreyas Movva also contributed 37 runs. In reply, Ireland was restricted to 125-7 with medium pacers Jeremy Gordon and

Hall. The matches kick off with Al Salmiya facing Al Arabi at 4:30 p.m., followed by Burgan taking on Kazma at 6 p.m., and the evening wraps up with Kuwait playing against Al-Qadisiya at 7:30 p.m.

Al-Abyad secured the league title for the 12th consecutive time and the 14th in

its history since the seventh round. They currently lead the team standings with 38 points, while Kazma and Al-Qadisiyah, with 32 and 31 points respectively, and vie for third and fourth places. Al-Arabi and Al-Salmiya each have 25 points, and Burgan has 20 points.

The league's conclusion will feature a retirement ceremony for Faisal Siwan, a former star of the national team and Sulaibkhat Club. The event, under the patronage of Ahmed Al-Shahoumi, former Vice President of the National Assembly and honorary president of the Al-Qurain Club, includes an exhibition match between veteran players

HANDBALL

of the "Blue Hand."

Siwan, currently serving as the director of national teams in the Handball Federation, began his career at Sulaibkhat Club in 1992. He represented the national junior and youth teams in 1997 and played for the First Blue from 1999 to 2014. Siwan boasts a decorated career, winning multiple league and cup titles with various clubs and international tournaments.

In the Handball League, Kazma will face Al-Salmiya, and Al-Qadisiya will play against Sulaibkhat in the 13th and final round.

Additionally, the senior and the junior teams, have commenced training as part of preparations for upcoming international competitions, including an international tournament in Croatia and Slovenia.

tant to get set and bounce back from defeat in the first game." Kirton hit three fours and two sixes, following on from the 51 he scored against the U.S. He put on 75 off 63 balls with Movva for the fifth wicket - a partnership that turned the game for Canada.

Bangladesh opened its campaign with its two-wicket win over Sri Lanka in a match which became much closer than it should have been.

Sri Lanka posted 124-9 batting first but lost its last seven wickets for 54 runs in just over 11 overs. Opener Pathum Nissanka top-scored with 47 from 28 balls.

Bangladesh seemed to be coasting to victory at 109-5 in the 17th over, needing 16 runs from 28 balls. Towhid Hridoy made 40 from 20 balls and Litton Das 30 from 38 to set Bangladesh up for what seemed likely to be an easy win.

Mystery pitch awaits crestfallen Pakistan against India

WESTBURY, New York, June 8, (AP): A crestfallen Pakistan goes into its grudge game against archrival India at cricket's Twenty20 World Cup on Sunday with still-painful memories of its huge upset defeat by the United States.

The U.S. beat Pakistan in Group A game with a historic win in the Super Over at Dallas on Thursday to register its second successive victory in its debut World Cup.

Pakistan captain Babar Azam cannot afford another loss that might put his team's progress to the Super 8 playoff stage in serious danger.

Nothing seems to have gone right for Pakistan since the Babar-led team lost the T20 World Cup final against England in 2022. Pakistan lost T20 internationals against Afghanistan, understrength New Zealand, Ireland and England before losing to the U.S in the shock upset on Thursday.

The reaction back home in Pakistan was predictable.

"USA grounded Pakistan in their

opening game," wrote former Pakistan fast bowler Waqar Younis on the social media site X. "History's been registered. Pakistan looked exhausted and helpless in the field. Congrats USA for a thumping victory."

Fellow former Pakistan fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar added: "Unfortunately Pakistan never deserved to win."

And the struggles for Pakistan might continue.

A set of mystery drop-in pitches that has a variable bounce at the purpose-built 34,000-capacity stadium on Long Island in Westbury, New York awaits Babar's struggling batters against the likes of Indian fast bowlers Jasprit Bumrah and Mu-



Azam

hammed Siraj.

Former Zimbabwe captain Andy Flower criticized the pitches in New York, saying they were bordering on dangerous.

"I've got to say that is not a good surface to play an international match on," Flower said, "It's bordering on dangerous. You saw the ball bouncing from a length both ways, skidding low occasionally ... and striking people on the thumb,

CRICKET

on the gloves, on the helmet and making life very very difficult for any batsman."

Former Indian cricketer Sanjay Manjrekar said there's something not quite right with the preparation of the pitches.

"Either the pitch has been under-prepared or something that is beyond their control," he said. "I'm sure it's not a lack of effort. At the most what they can do is keep rolling that drop-in

pitch. But they have a problem on their hands. Inherently there's something wrong with the pace of the surface."

Sri Lanka was bowled out for 77 by South Africa and India dismissed Ireland for 96 in its opening group game.

Babar has reunited with his tried and tested opening partner Mohammad Rizwan but it's the middle-order that has not given any sort of momentum for Pakistan, except for Fakhar Zaman.

The pace quartet is off-color too and failed to provide early breakthroughs. And Haris Rauf conceded 15 off the last over against U.S. during the regulation game and Mohammad Amir, who ended his retirement to play in the World Cup, bowled a costly 18-run Super Over against the U.S.

India looks like a more settled side with the experience of Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli up front and have an added advantage of experiencing the conditions in New York. They played a warm-up game against Bangladesh and then thumped Ireland by seven wickets.



Canada's captain Saad Zafar bowls against Ireland during an ICC Men's T20 World Cup cricket match at the Nassau County International Cricket Stadium in Westbury, New York. (AP)





Italy's Jasmine Paolini plays a shot against Poland's Iga Swiatek during the women's final of the French Open tennis tournament at the Roland Garros stadium in Paris, France. (AP)

# Sports

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Blues sweat on fitness of Ibrahim

## Kuwait resume training as Afghans arrive for decisive qualifier

By Khaled El Anzi  
Al-Seyassah/ArabTimes Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 8: Kuwait resumed training at the sub-field of Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium after returning on Friday from its goalless draw against India in Kolkata at Salt Lake Stadium last Thursday in the fifth round of Group A in the joint Asian qualifiers for the 2026 World Cup in the USA, Mexico, and Canada, and the 2027 Asian Cup in Saudi Arabia. Al-Azraq is preparing to host the

Afghanistan Tuesday, at Ali Sabah Al-Salem Stadium, in the sixth and final round of the group qualifiers. Kuwait needs to win, while hoping

### SOCCER

for India to draw or lose to Qatar on the same day. Kuwait currently ranks fourth with 4 points, behind India and Afghanistan (5 points each), and group leader Qatar (13 points), who has already secured the first qualifying spot.



Khaled Ibrahim

Kuwait put on a convincing performance against India and was close to winning, but haste and bad luck plagued the attackers. The team also missed the efforts of center-back Khaled Ibrahim in the last minutes due to injury, who is scheduled to undergo medical examinations to ensure his readiness to participate against Afghanistan. The Afghans arrived yesterday and will train at the sub-field of Ali Sabah Al-Salem Stadium. Portuguese coach Rui Pinto expressed satisfaction with Kuwait's

performance against India, emphasizing that the team was the better side, which gives reason for optimism. On the other hand, India coach Igor Stimac stated that the draw was a logical result, despite his disappointment. "The match was difficult," he said. "The draw was a realistic result. The Kuwaiti team started with more confidence, and it took us some time to create danger in front of the goal. However, our passing speed was effective in penetrating their defense." Stimac concluded, "We don't

have time to feel sorry because our chance still exists. I need to make the players believe in their ability to face the Asian Cup champions in the next five days." Afghanistan's English coach, Ashley Westwood, commented on the scoreless draw with Qatar last Thursday, saying, "Getting a point against the Asian Cup champions is always difficult." He added, "The players are excited, and we believe that we have a chance to make history for Afghan football by qualifying."

## Swiatek overwhelms Paolini for third straight French Open title

Pole stretches winning streak to 21 matches in Paris

PARIS, June 8, (AP): For a few minutes, anyway, it seemed as if Iga Swiatek was a bit off in the French Open final against Jasmine Paolini. Swiatek kept making mistakes and got broken early to trail Saturday at Court Philippe Chatrier. Might a true surprise be in the offing? Could Paolini not only make a match of this, but actually win it? Um, no. Not even close. The top-seeded Swiatek recalibrated her wayward strokes and simply overwhelmed Paolini, grabbing 10 games in a row en route to a 6-2, 6-1 victory that gave her a third consecutive championship at Roland Garros and fourth in five years. "I love this place, honestly," Swiatek said. "I wait every year to come back here." She stretched her French Open winning streak to 21 matches, and her career record at the place is now 35-2. The 23-year-old from Poland is the first woman with three trophies in a

row in Paris since Justine Henin from 2005 to 2007. "I have to say congratulations to you, Iga," said the 12th-seeded Paolini, a 28-year-old from Italy appearing in her first Slam final. "I think to play you here is the toughest challenge in this sport." Swiatek also won the French Open in 2020 and the U.S. Open in 2022 and is now 5-0 in major finals. After a scare in the second round last week against Naomi Osaka, when Swiatek needed to save a match point, this represented a fifth straight lopsided win. Swiatek took every set in that span and only ceded a total of 17 games. "I was almost out of the tournament in the second round, so thank you guys for kind of staying behind my back and cheering for me," Swiatek told a crowd dotted by red-and-white Polish flags. "I also needed to believe that this one is going to be possible. It's been a really emotional tournament." Here's just one other indication of how dominant Swiatek is on clay: She added this triumph to those on the slow surface at Madrid and Rome last month, becoming the first woman to win all three events since Serena Wil-

liams did it in 2013. During Saturday's postmatch ceremony, Swiatek was flanked by a pair of women who each won 18 Grand Slam singles titles, Chris Evert and Martina Navratilova. Evert said before this French Open that she thinks Swiatek could eventually surpass her women's record of seven championships in Paris. TENNIS Paolini had never been past the second round at one of the four most important tennis tournaments until getting to the fourth round at the Australian Open in January. Paolini will play in the French Open women's doubles final on Sunday with partner Sara Errani against 2023 U.S. Open singles champion Coco Gauff and Katerina Siniakova. "The best days of my life, I think," said Paolini, who will rise to a career-best No. 7 in the WTA rankings next week. "It's been a very intense 15 days. I'm really happy and I'm proud of me and my team." Before the final began, a loud chant of "Let's go, Jasmine! Let's go!" arose

from two rows of Paolini's supporters in the lower bowl of the stands, each one wearing a T-shirt in one of the colors of the Italian flag: green, white or red. They would reprise that song, in English, interspersing it with claps. After Swiatek got the match's first point, a fan yelled in French, "Jasmine, it's not over!" Swiatek briefly went through a shaky stretch, failing to convert a break point in the second game, then getting broken to trail 2-1 after 13 minutes when she flubbed a forehand, sending it way long. It was Swiatek's seventh unforced error of the afternoon; Paolini had made only one by then. But the rest of the way, those numbers were six unforced errors by Swiatek, 17 by Paolini. That's because Swiatek, who heard plenty of "Iga!" chants, immediately reset herself and began playing the sort of tennis that has kept her ranked No. 1 for nearly every week since April 2022. The instincts and footwork to get to almost any shot an opponent can offer. The intimidating, heavy-spin forehands. The prematch strategy and midmatch adjustments that can shift things her way.



Ball kids pose with Poland's Iga Swiatek who holds the trophy after winning the women's final of the French Open tennis tournament against Italy's Jasmine Paolini at the Roland Garros stadium in Paris, France. (AP)

### Resilience amidst suspension: Kuwaiti sports' road to redemption

## Athletes optimistic about the promising 'new era' ahead

By Khaled El Anzi  
Al-Seyassah/ArabTimes Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 8: Over the past two decades, Kuwaiti sports faced numerous challenges hindering its progress and growth. Among these, the most significant setback occurred in 2015 when the International Olympic Committee suspended Kuwaiti sports due to perceived government interference, stemming from a sports law deemed incompatible with Olympic principles. This suspension, initially temporary and then fully lifted in 2019, severely impacted Kuwaiti sports, setting it back decades. It deprived national teams and clubs of international participation, undermining the aspirations of generations aspiring to represent Kuwait in global competitions and relegating Kuwait to the bottom of world rankings. However, with the dawn of a new era under the leadership of His High-



Jaber Al-Zanki



Saleh Al-Asfour

ness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the appointment of His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad as Crown Prince, optimism surged among ath-

letes. Their commitment to overcoming obstacles and the government's renewed interest signaled a promising resurgence in Kuwaiti sports. Recognizing the need for systemic

change, national coach Saleh Al-Asfour emphasized the absence of sporting interest from officials over the years, particularly in youth sports. He underscored the urgency for a long-term plan to rejuvenate Kuwaiti sports, expressing optimism in the government's reform agenda. Jaber Al-Zanki, a member of the Board of Directors of Al-Shabab Club, echoed the call for government intervention to reclaim Kuwait's sports leadership in the Gulf and beyond. He emphasized the necessity of upgrading sports facilities and implementing professionalism to enable athletes to excel on regional and international platforms. Al-Zanki highlighted the need for continuity in leadership, lamenting the disruption caused by frequent changes in sports officials. He emphasized the importance of sustained, long-term planning to prevent stagnation and ensure continuous progress in Kuwaiti sports development.

Al-Adwani highlights the role of clubs

### Revitalizing Kuwaiti Sports: A new era of development & investment

KUWAIT CITY, June 8: Qayed Al-Adwani, the Secretary General of the Handball Association, discussed the challenging period Kuwaiti sports faced during the suspension, which significantly impacted the performance of clubs and national teams by preventing their participation in international competitions for nearly five years. This suspension "destroyed" the progress of Kuwaiti sports. He explained that when the ban was lifted, Kuwait found itself at the bottom of world rankings in all sports. Rebuilding teams to compete internationally will take many years, even to reach half the level they once were. Despite these challenges, handball has shown some improvement, and the recent hard work is beginning to yield results, albeit not completely. Al-Adwani emphasized that current efforts in Kuwaiti sports are due to individual diligence, and much depends on the response to these efforts. He stressed the need for sports specialization, noting that modern sports require a scientific approach, financial investment, and proper facilities to keep pace with global advancements. He pointed out that clubs are fundamental to sports development, as they attract players and young talents, establishing a scientific sporting foundation that enhances performance levels. Al-Adwani cited the Tennis Federation as an example of successful private sector investment, which created a world-class sports facility, hosted international championships, benefited local players, and generated significant investment income for Kuwaiti sports. Al-Adwani believes that involving the private sector in sports will lead to development, combining financial resources with sports science to create an advanced sports environment. This approach can form teams capable of representing Kuwait internationally. He argued that sports should be a "state project," built on scientific and sports foundations, with the private sector as a key partner. He highlighted the lack of dedicated facilities for the Handball Federation, one of the most successful collective federations, which currently relies on the outdated Daiya headquarters and the non-owned Sabah Al-Salem headquarters. He called for government involvement in sports projects, similar to developed countries, to attract commercial interest through international tournaments,



Qayed Al-Adwani

effectively marketing the country. Al-Adwani expressed optimism about the new era under the leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad. He hopes the government will show greater interest in sports, viewing it as an investment that can generate new financial income for the country. He believes that with the right resources, including privatization of sports, high-quality facilities, and private sector involvement, Kuwait can create a global sports presence and surpass previous achievements. Mishal Al-Qabandi, a member of the Association, highlighted the importance of developing sports from various aspects, including the technical, administrative, financial, and legal fields. He emphasized that successful sports facilities require specialized departments to ensure their effectiveness, positively impacting the overall level of the sport. Al-Qabandi also pointed out the need for modern communication between sports institutions and the government. He criticized the reliance on paper correspondence, which delays tournament preparations and deters Arab, Gulf, continental, and international federations from organizing tournaments in Kuwait. He advocated for the adoption of electronic correspondence to ensure timely tournament organization and readiness of sports facilities.

### Best of the Rest

#### Ivory Coast consolidate lead:

The Cote d'Ivoire national team consolidates its place at the top of Group F after its 1-0 home victory Friday in Korhogo against Gabon in the 2026 FIFA World Cup African qualifiers. The only goal of the game was scored in the 35th minute by midfielder Seko Fofana. With this victory, Cote d'Ivoire continued to lead Group F with nine points, followed by Gabon (six points), putting itself in a favorable position to secure a direct qualification to the finals of the 2026 FIFA World Cup in Canada, the United States and Mexico. In its new configuration, the 2026 FIFA World Cup will bring together 48 national teams compared to 32 previously. (Xinhua)

'Argentina Copa favorites': Argentina captain Lionel Messi has declared the Albiceleste frontrunners to win the upcoming Copa America in the United States. The reigning World Cup and Copa America champions will begin their title defense against Canada on June 20 before also facing Chile and Peru in the group stage.

"I think that Argentina is always the favorite," Messi said in an interview with Argentine news service Infobae. "Even before the current period [of success], Argentina was a candidate, just like Brazil. This Copa America will be no exception." The 36-year-old Inter Miami forward added: "I think all of the South American teams are very strong right now. Uruguay is very good, Colombia, Ecuador. Each game will be a tough contest and it's going to be a very even tournament." Argentina will finalize their preparations for the world's oldest continental football competition with friendlies against Ecuador and Guatemala on June 9 and 14. (Xinhua)

Infobae.

Ortega signs extension: Manchester City goalkeeper Stefan Ortega has signed a one-year contract extension, saying he feels "motivated and challenged" at the English champion. The 31-year-old German, who joined the club in 2022, extended his stay to the summer of 2026. Ortega is City's back-up goalkeeper but injury to Ederson meant he came on against Tottenham in a crucial Premier League match when he denied Son Heung-min with a fine save late on, featured in City's final league game and made his 20th appearance of the campaign in the FA Cup final defeat to Manchester United. (AP)