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## Stiffer punishment on cards in rights breach

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 17, (KUNA): Minister of Justice Dr. Mohammad Al-Wasmi has affirmed the State of Kuwait's keenness on harmonizing national legislation with commitment toward international human rights treaties.

Al-Wasmi, also the Minister of Al-Awqaf (endowments) and Islamic Affairs, alluded in particular to the convention Kuwait has joined in the field of human rights, renouncing torture and other accords that condemn cruel and inhumane treatment and penalty, as stipulated in the Decree-into-Law 93/2024.

The minister, in a press statement, indicated that substituting provision 53 of Law 31/1970, amending some articles of the penal code 16/1960, aimed at boosting human rights and basic rights, as enshrined by the State of Kuwait Constitution. Moreover, he indicated that the modification was the fruit of coordination between the ministries of justice and foreign affairs.

An amended provision stipulates punishment for torture to get confessions under duress, in addition to five-year imprisonment and increasing the fine from KD 500 to KD 5,000 maximum and not less than KD 1,000.

Minister Al-Wasmi has confirmed penalties will be taken against officers responsible for the illegal acts and others who abstain from preventing them. Stiffer action will be taken against those who discriminate among the detainees.



Dr Al-Wasmi



Students at a boys school on the first day assembly after summer break.

KUNA photo

## Elementary, middle, high school students return to classes

The Ministry of Education opened its doors to elementary, middle, and high school students on Tuesday as the new academic year began efficiently after summer break, while kindergarten schools are set to welcome their students tomorrow, Wednesday.

According to official figures, a total of 497,206 students have enrolled in public education and private Arabic schools, including 29,637 kindergarteners, 149,316 elementary students, 127,548 middle schoolers, and 92,564 high school students attending government schools. (KUNA)



KUNA photo

Dr. Ammar Al-Sayegh

## Patient Safety Day marked

Director of the Medical Department at the Kuwait Center for Mental Health Dr. Ammar Al-Sayegh said that the World Patient Safety Day would be a great opportunity to raise awareness and improve patient safety.

Dr. Al-Sayegh explained, in a statement to KUNA on Tuesday, that this year's celebration focuses on the theme (Improving Diagnosis for Patient Safety) and aims to highlight the importance of correct and appropriate diagnosis to ensure patient safety and improve public health.

He pointed out that the celebration confirms the commitment of the Ministry of Health to develop patient safety policies and procedures in all health institutions, based on the ministry's vision that seeks to ensure that all members of society receive safe and high-quality health care. Dr. Al-Sayegh noted that diagnostic safety can be greatly improved by using advanced health technology and addressing structural problems and human error factors that can lead to diagnostic errors, pointing out that the development of laboratory tests may help in diagnosing mental illnesses. (KUNA)

## Filipinos' remittances witness 2.1% decline

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 17: During the first seven months of 2024, remittances sent by Filipino workers from Kuwait fell by \$7 million, or 2.1 percent, totaling \$317 million compared to \$324 million in the same period of 2023, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Despite this decline, the overall remittances from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries increased by 4 percent annually during the same period.

The total remittances from Filipino workers in the GCC amounted to approximately \$3.20 billion from January to July 2024, up from \$3.08 billion during the first seven months of 2023.

This growth was driven by increases in remittances from five GCC countries, with the UAE showing the highest growth rate of 5.90 percent, while Oman had the lowest at 2.76 percent. Notably, Kuwait saw a 2.15 percent decrease in remittances.

Among the GCC countries, Saudi Arabia continued to hold the largest share of remittances, contributing \$1.17 billion, while Bahrain recorded the lowest remittances at \$158.80 million.

Filipino workers' remittances from the GCC represented 16.55 percent of the total global remittances, which amounted to \$19.33 billion in the first seven months of 2024.

Within the Asian continent, Filipino workers' remittances totaled \$7.67 billion, with the GCC contributing 41.70 percent of this amount.

The Middle East as a whole saw remittances of \$3.32 billion, with 96.22 percent coming from the GCC countries.

The World Bank has projected a 2.3 percent growth in remittances to low- and middle-income countries for 2024, although this growth is expected to vary across different regions.



KUNA photo

Chief of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) Sheikh Humoud Mubarak Al-Sabah leading the Kuwaiti delegation.

## Joint aviation body mulled

DOHA, Sept 17, (KUNA): Head of Kuwait's Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), Sheikh Humoud Mubarak Humoud Al-Sabah, stressed on Tuesday the importance of the 20th meeting of GCC Executive Committee of Civil Aviation, in Doha, Qatar.

Sheikh Humoud told KUNA that the meeting discussed, among other topics, the establishment of the Gulf Civil Aviation Authority and the unified program for assessing the safety

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## CSC automates end-of-service dues for non-Kuwaiti workers

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 17, (KUNA): The Civil Service Commission (CSC) announced on Tuesday the successful automation of the end-of-service dues settlement process for non-Kuwaiti employees through the interface between their employers' systems and the relevant departments in CSC without the need for any paperwork.

On its official X account, CSC explained that this automation process is part of its efforts to simplify procedures, expedite transaction processing, and save time and effort.

The new system will also enhance the monitoring and auditing the ac-

curacy of the data approved by CSC, making the process simpler and more efficient.

It will also facilitate the implementation of the replacement policy in all government agencies, in line with the Civil Service Council's decision. It will ensure that all financial obligations owed to the state by non-Kuwaiti employees are met before disbursing their dues.

CSC affirmed its keenness to train government agency employees on how to implement and complete the end-of-service settlement procedures for non-Kuwaiti employees using the integrated system, starting today.

# Around half million students return to schools after break

Minister lauds management, securitymen

By Abdulrahman Al-Shammari  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 17: About half a million students in various educational stages returned to school on Tuesday, as academic year 2024/2025 started in an atmosphere of optimism and excitement with the Ministry of Education's confirmation that it is fully prepared for the new academic year.

Police and security patrols were stationed in front of the schools and on the streets leading to the schools.

Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research and acting Minister of Education Dr. Nader Al-Jalal inspected several schools on the first day of the new academic year in order to track the advancement of the educational process. He greeted the students, while pointing out that "the start of the academic year is a fresh chance for success and greatness, when aspirations are rekindled and scientific and knowledge-based seeds are sown to eventually bear fruit in the form of a bright future for all of our students."

He stressed the importance of exerting effort and utilizing the available capabilities for exploration and learning to develop the students' skills and abilities, since they are the pillar of the future and the hope of the nation.

He praised the efforts exerted by the sectors in charge of preparations for the new academic year; stressing they worked tirelessly to ensure the schools are ready to welcome students in a safe and stimulating educational environment, in addition to members of the educational and administrative bodies, school administrations and all employees.

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## Kuwait hosts UN-led talks on migrant, refugee safety

By Fares Al-Abdan  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 17: A three-day panel discussion on the protection measures for migrants and individuals under international protection began on Monday, September 16 at the United Nations House in Kuwait.

The event was organized by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

The panel featured representatives from relevant government departments, including those responsible for managing deportations, overseeing residency violations, enforcing court orders, and monitoring border crossings.

The workshop's multiple sessions covered several basic principles related to international migration and asylum law, as well as international human rights and humanitarian law.

Topics of discussion included the principles of non-refoulement, international solidarity in burden-sharing, voluntary return to one's country of origin, durable solutions, and the legal procedures and

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KUNA photos

Commandant of the NATO Defense College in Rome, Lieutenant General Max Nielsen speaks during the panel discussion.

Gulf region security pivotal: Lt Gen Nielsen

## NATO-Kuwait 20-year alliance going strong

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 17, (KUNA): Commandant of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Defense College in Rome Lieutenant General Max Nielsen spoke on Tuesday the successful and strong 20-year partnership with Kuwait.



Nielsen

In a statement for KUNA on the sidelines of the discussion seminar organized by NATO's regional center and Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) titled 'Adapting Defense Education to Challenging Security Environments'.

Lieutenant General Nielsen expressed NATO's aspiration to continue strengthening the pivotal partnership that enhances security and stability in the Arabian Gulf region and ways to develop it in various areas of bilateral cooperation within the framework of mutual respect

and trust gained between the two sides.

He pointed out that Kuwait has established with NATO a positive concept of effective international cooperation in facing regional and international challenges and threats over a period of 20 years since Kuwait joined as the first member of the (Istanbul Cooperation Initiative) in June 2004.

He mentioned that his visit to Kuwait was to conduct a discussion seminar in the center over the questions related to defense education and his support for missions and main NATO policies.

He added that as part of his tasks is to facilitate political discussion between member states and their partners in the Arabian Gulf region through discussion seminars over security challenges on the international and regional levels and to develop mutual understanding between all sides.

Notably, Kuwait has created NATO-Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) Regional Centre on in 2017 with the aim to strengthen the partnership between NATO and Gulf partners.

### NewsWatch

**KUWAIT CITY:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable to the President of the Union of the Comoros, Azali Assoumani, expressing relief over the President's safety following a heinous attack during a funeral ceremony for a tribal leader.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir strongly condemned and denounced the criminal act that violates all humanitarian principles and values, and expressed wishes for President Assoumani's continued safety, good health, and success. (KUNA)

**AMMAN:** Jordan will host tomorrow (Wednesday) a meeting of the Arab-Islamic Ministerial Committee tasked with international action to stop the war on Gaza, said the Jordanian Foreign Ministry in a press statement.

The committee will discuss the joint Arab-Islamic action during the 79th session of the UN General Assembly (High-Level Week), set to be held in New York this month, as part of its efforts to stop the Israeli occupation's aggression on the Gaza Strip and end this unprecedented humanitarian crisis. (KUNA)

**GAZA:** The Palestinian Ministry of Health announced on Tuesday that 23 Palestinians were killed and more than 50 others injured following an Israeli airstrike on a residential block in the Al-Bureji refugee camp in Gaza.

According to the Palestinian Civil Defense spokesman, Mahmoud Bassal, at least 23 people died in a massacre after the Israeli occupation's warplanes targeted homes in the camp.

Medical teams transported many of the injured to Al-Awda Hospital in the neighboring Al-Nussierat camp. Bassal called the scene tragic and catastrophic. (KUNA)





# Al-Mishari sets urban renewal in motion

Municipal Council's role vital to future development: minister

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 17:** Minister of State for Municipal and Housing Affairs Abdullatif Al-Mishari has stressed the importance of the Municipal Council, as it is an integral part of the urbanization process in the country.

In a press statement on the sidelines of his first meeting with the chairman and members of the council on Monday, Al-Mishari praised the incumbent council members, their expertise and capabilities; while affirming that he is happy to work with them in order to advance the wheel of urban development in the country.

He disclosed: "We discussed ways to cooperate in dealing with diverse issues and topics concerning the country and its citizens, most notably updating the regulations on buildings, gardens and canopies; in addition to addressing issues related to the State's structural plan and comprehensive urbanization vision."

He revealed that he is arranging other meetings with members of the council to discuss some important issues in detail. He touched on the housing issue and ways to find effective solutions, emphasizing its importance to him as State Minister for Housing Affairs. He said "a plan to solve the housing issue will be announced soon".

Regarding the priority files in the State Ministry for Municipality Affairs, Al-Mishari cited the need to lay down a clear architectural vision as his top priority; indicating the connection between the architectural vision and the behavior of citizens. He asserted such vision reflects the behavior and orientations of citizens,



Minister of State for Municipal and Housing Affairs Abdullatif Al-Mishari poses for a group photo with the Chairman and the members of the Municipal Council.

so it is vital in updating the regulations and systems in this regard. He explained that a clear and accurate architectural vision will lead to a positive change in the behavior and orientations of citizens. He then affirmed his aspiration to work with the council to address all issues.

On the other hand, Chairman of the council Abdullah Al-Mahri stated "we congratulate the minister for gaining the trust of the political leadership in assuming two ministerial portfolios. We ask Almighty Allah to grant him success and assistance."

He lauded the minister's visit to the council and his meeting with the members; as a clear indication of the latter's interest in the council, and his respect for the laws and regulations.

He affirmed that he discussed many issues and topics with Al-Mishari, the most important of which are ways to expedite the action of

Kuwait Municipality regarding the council members' proposals, as well as the speedy completion of laws to support fruitful cooperation between the two parties for the benefit of the country and its people.

He said the council is keen on completing the new regulations that support urban development; indicating the council completed many regulations in the previous sessions, such as the regulations for communication towers, canopies and construction of private houses.

He revealed the council's vision is in line with that of the minister who has vast experience in urban development. He hopes the consensus on visions will greatly contribute to the ongoing efforts to address development issues.

He added the council will focus on completing its plan, considering its role as a development council; especially in terms of quickly making

decisions and laws that serve major development projects like the housing file, specifically approving the allocation of South Qairawan within one day.

Moreover, council member Munira Al-Amir congratulated the minister and implored Allah to grant him success in whatever he does for the sake of the country, armed with determination and strong faith in institutional work. She said the council will fully support him, and that the council members will efficiently play their role in achieving this goal.

Council member Fahad Al-Khanin praised the constructive meeting with the minister; during which viewpoints were exchanged, and the minister shared his ideas and vision for developing the Municipality in line with the New Kuwait vision under the directives of the political leadership.

## Virtual sessions start Sept 22

### PADA to address complaints, suggestions of beneficiaries

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 17:** Wafaa Al-Muhanna, Acting Director General of the Public Authority for the Disabled Affairs, announced that every Thursday will be dedicated to receiving visitors with disabilities at the Authority's main headquarters in Hawally, reports Al-Jarida daily.

This initiative aims to address complaints, suggestions, and remove any obstacles they face.

Moreover, weekly meetings have been scheduled with key sector rep-

resentatives: Sundays with Dr. Khalifa Al-Hilaa, Deputy Director of Medical, Psychological, and Social Services; Mondays with Khaled Al-Harbi, Deputy Director of Administrative and Financial Affairs and Tuesdays with Afnan Al-Hussaini, Deputy Director of Educational and Rehabilitation Services.

These meetings will be conducted through the "Tawasul" platform from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm, starting from Sept 22.

## PAHW delivers 673K services via Sahel

### MPW approves sewage tender for South Abdullah Al-Mubarak

By Mohammed Al-Misleh  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 17:** Head of the South Abdullah Al-Mubarak Residents Committee Khaled Al-Daihani says the Ministry of Public Works has approved the flotation of the sewage tender, which will alleviate the difficulties faced by 3,200 families in the area.

In a press statement, Al-Daihani praised the Ministry of Public Works' employees for their efforts in advancing the sewage project.

He stressed that addressing this issue is important, as it has been one of the most pressing problems for the South Abdullah Al-Mubarak area over the past two years.

Al-Daihani explained that representatives from the relevant ministries had previously approved the area and dimensions of the project. The treatment facility will be temporary and designed to address sewage issues in the city. There are no obstacles to designating a site for the treatment units, which will cover an area of 7,500 square meters.

Kuwait Municipality has stipulated that the site path be established with service pathways and that it requires a comprehensive study to



Al-Daihani

assess the environmental and social impact of the temporary facility. Once the need for the facility has been met, it must be removed, with the ministry responsible for the removal costs and restoring the land to its original state.

Meanwhile, the Deputy Director General for Public Relations and Development Affairs at the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) Omar Al-Ruwaih revealed that PAHW has provided 673,287 services through the Sahel government application from September 2021 until mid of this month, including 29 electronic services.

He said PAHW was among the first government agencies to embrace digital transformation, affirming that the unified services available through the Sahel app have significantly eased the process for citizens interacting with PAHW.

Al-Ruwaih revealed that PAHW issued 509,000 certificates to citizens through the Sahel application, indicating that this service is one of the most frequently requested by users.

He stressed that approximately 72,000 citizens had their phones updated without needing to visit the PAHW office.

Al-Ruwaih added that PAHW issued 19,583 electronic building permit certificates via the Sahel app.

Regarding allocation requests, Al-Ruwaih indicated that PAHW received 20,113 requests for plots in existing housing projects over the past three years through the application. Also, 13,587 files for housing welfare were opened during the same period.

## Dr Al-Saeed named KU acting director

### PAAET kicks off academic year with new programs and student support

By Abdulrahman Al-Shammari  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 17:** Director General of the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) Dr. Hassan Muhammad Al-Fajjam extended his congratulations to students at the start of the 2024/2025 academic year.

In a press statement, he affirmed the importance of adhering to lecture schedules and following educational and behavioral regulations.

Dr. Al-Fajjam encouraged students to maintain regular communication with their lecturers and seek guidance on study materials to achieve academic success and complete their required courses for graduation.

He highlighted the importance of the teaching and training staff to commit to building strong relationships with students and enhancing their academic and cognitive awareness.

Dr. Al-Fajjam stressed the need for staff to instill knowledge and a sense of patriotism in students, highlighting their important role in Kuwait's future progress and development.

He wished the students continued success and achievement.

Dr. Al-Fajjam indicated that PAAET has exerted efforts this year to support the educational process and students.

He highlighted the introduction of new specializations, including Anesthesia Technician and Respiratory Therapist in the Faculty of Health Sciences, Renewable Energy specialization in the College of Technological Studies, and additional specializations

in the College of Business Studies such as Management Information Systems, Financial Management, Logistics Management, Human Resource Management, and Marketing.

Dr. Al-Fajjam stressed that these new programs are designed to meet labor market demands and are complemented by special training courses across various institutes,

leading to employment opportunities.

He highlighted the PAAET administration's commitment to supporting scientific activities and events that enhance the educational process and contribute to its development.

Dr. Al-Fajjam said these efforts align with the PAAET's vision and strategy for 2023/2028, which aims to elevate the standards of education and training in Kuwait.

Meanwhile, the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, the acting Minister of Education, and the Chairman of the Council of State Universities Dr. Nader Al-Jalal has appointed a professor in the Department of Radiology at the Faculty of Medicine and Deputy Director of Kuwait University for Medical Sciences Dr. Osama Mahout Al-Saeed as the Acting Director of Kuwait University.

This appointment is effective as of Monday and will continue until further notice.



Dr Al-Saeed

# September

## Room Promotion

Weekdays (Saturday - Wednesday)	
Queen Cabana (2 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.	2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.
<b>NOW</b>	<b>NOW</b>
<b>BHD 57.173 net</b>	<b>BHD 128.000 net</b>
Weekends (Thursday & Friday)	
Queen Cabana (2 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.	2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.
<b>NOW</b>	<b>NOW</b>
<b>BHD 65.000 net</b>	<b>BHD 145.000 net</b>

Promo period from 1<sup>st</sup> September to 20<sup>th</sup> September 2024    Terms & conditions apply\*



## World News Roundup

## Europe

## MSF closes ops in Russia

## EU's Von der Leyen unveils 'new' team

BRUSSELS, Sept 17, (AP): European Union chief Ursula von der Leyen put women in many of the top roles on her new team for her next five-year tenure at the head of the bloc on Tuesday, despite the reluctance of many EU member states to give in to her demand for gender parity.

Von der Leyen put only two men in her top echelon with four women as vice presidents, including Kaja Kallas as foreign policy chief. Kallas was already agreed on by government leaders.

Von der Leyen on Tuesday added Spanish Socialist Teresa Ribera to lead the green transition, along with Ribera also becoming the competition czar. Finland's Henna Virkkunen was her pick for rule of law and digital leader, and Roxana Minzatu of Romania for social affairs leader.

The appointments of the Commission team - which veers to the right after the June elections saw a surge of far-right parties - still have to be confirmed.

The appointment as executive vice president of Raffaele Fitto of Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni's hard right Brothers of Italy party is bound to cause controversy during the parliamentary confirmation hearing in the coming weeks.

Also on Tuesday, von der Leyen gave French Foreign Minister Stéphane Sejourne the industrial portfolio, after French heavyweight Thierry Breton resigned and openly criticized the EU chief for allegedly "questionable governance" on Monday.

## Shock

It left France with a strong voice in the Commission, and many saw Breton's shock resignation more as a removal by von der Leyen of one of her most open internal critics after exerting pressure on French authorities.

Compounding such problems was the defiance of many of the 27 member states as von der Leyen struggled to get anywhere close to gender parity on her Commission team - they staunchly refused to give her a choice between a male and a female candidate.

She said that originally, EU nations only proposed 22% female candidates before she started to push for more.

"So I worked with the member states and we were able to improve the balance to 40% women and 60% men. And it shows that - as much as we have achieved - there is still so much more work to do," von der Leyen said.

If she could not get full gender parity in numbers, von der Leyen made sure they were more than well represented in the top jobs.



**MSF closes operations in Russia:** Doctors Without Borders said Tuesday it has closed its operations in Russia after 32 years, citing a Justice Ministry letter that said the medical aid group had been removed from a register of foreign nongovernmental organizations.

The aid group, also known by its French language name Médecins Sans Frontières and acronym MSF, said it will retain its branch office in Moscow, but operations - run by its Dutch affiliate - have stopped. It was MSF Netherlands whose registration was withdrawn, a group spokesman said in an email.

MSF has been in Russia since 1992, and has operated programs that provided aid for homeless people and migrants, tuberculosis treatment, and general health care including for infectious diseases like HIV.

The aid group said it had provided assistance to more than 52,000 people who either crossed into Russia from Ukraine or internally displaced people in Russia since Moscow's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

MSF said it recently had been planning to respond to the humanitarian and medical needs of the internally displaced people in the Kursk region in Russia, where Ukrainian forces have recently made inroads.

Norman Sitali, the operations manager for MSF programs in Russia, said the aid group was "very sad" to end the programs, "as many people in need of medical and humanitarian assistance will now be left without the support we could have provided to them."



**CDU taps Merz as candidate for chancellor:** Germany's opposition center-right Christian Democratic Union announced Tuesday that it has chosen its leader, Friedrich Merz, to be its candidate for chancellor in next year's national election.

The decision sets the stage for a possible challenge of Chancellor Olaf Scholz in the federal election scheduled for September 2025.

Germans are looking ahead to next year's vote at a critical time, as the country's struggles to integrate large numbers of refugees and migrants and as the major European economy weakens. Recent extremist attacks have fueled a backlash against migration that is leading to a surge in support for the far right.

The fate of Ukraine will also be influenced by Germany's political direction. Berlin under Scholz has been one of the largest weapons donors to Kyiv, but many German voters are growing tired of the 2 1/2-year war against Russian invasion, and have turned their support to far-right and far-left parties that oppose arms deliveries to Ukraine.

The choice was announced at a news conference in Berlin with Merz and Markus Soeder, the leader of the CDU's smaller Bavarian counterpart, the Christian Social Union, who had also been a contender for the role.



**Budapest, Wroclaw reinforce river banks:** Soldiers dropped sandbags from military helicopters to reinforce river embankments and evacuated residents as the worst flooding in years spread Tuesday to a broad swath of Central Europe, taking lives and destroying homes.

Heavy flooding has affected a large part of the region in recent days, including the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Austria. There have been at least 16 deaths reported in the flooding, which follow heavy rainfall across the region.

Other places are now bracing for the flood waves to hit them, including two central European gems: Budapest, the Hungarian capital on the Danube River, and Wroclaw, a city in southwestern Poland on the Oder River, its old town filled with architectural gems.

Hungary's government of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán deployed soldiers to reinforce barriers along the Danube, and thousands of volunteers assisted in filling sandbags in dozens of riverside settlements.



A pipeline carrying liquefied natural gas burns near Spencer Highway and Summertown on Sept 16 in La Porte, Texas. Inset: Firefighters take a break from battling a fire at a pipeline carrying liquefied natural gas near Spencer Highway and Summertown on Monday. (AP)

## Flames from massive pipeline fire near Houston subside but continue burning

A flame that towered over a southeast Houston suburb had subsided Tuesday, but continued to burn following a massive pipeline explosion after a vehicle drove through a fence and struck an above-ground valve, officials said.

"Progress has been made as first responder crews worked through the night. The fire is significantly smaller," according to a statement from the city of Deer Park.

City officials have said investigations by police and local FBI agents have found no preliminary re-

ports that would suggest a coordinated or "terrorist" attack and that "this appears to be an isolated incident."

The investigation included efforts to learn more about the driver of a vehicle that was incinerated by the pipeline explosion as flames scorched the ground across a wide radius, severed adjacent power transmission lines and ignited homes at a distance.

An evacuation area included nearly 1,000 homes and initial shelter orders included schools.

The City of La Porte said it has slightly reduced the evacuation area south of the pipeline fire, but did not say how many people were affected.

Operators shut off the flow of natural gas liquids in the pipeline, but so much remained in the miles of tubing that firefighters could do nothing but watch and hose down adjacent homes.

Deer Park Mayor Jerry Mouton Jr. described intense heat from the fire that has continued burning for nearly 24 hours as ladder trucks showered houses from above. (AP)

## Politics

## Vance, Kemp project Republican unity

## 'RFK's name to stay on Wisconsin ballot'

MADISON, Wis., Sept 17, (AP): A judge denied Robert F. Kennedy's request Monday to erase his name from the presidential ballot in swing state Wisconsin, ruling that state law requires candidates to remain on the ballot unless they die.

Dane County Circuit Judge Stephen Ehlke's decision marks the latest twist in Kennedy's push to remove himself from ballots in key battleground states where the race between Republican Donald Trump and Democratic nominee Kamala Harris is tight.

## Removed

Kennedy suspended his campaign in August and endorsed Trump. Kennedy said he would try to get his name removed from ballots in battleground states while telling his supporters that they could continue to back him in the majority of states where they are unlikely to sway the outcome.

Kennedy won a court order in North Carolina earlier this month to remove his name from ballots there. Michigan's Supreme Court ruled last week that he'll remain on that state's ballot, however.

Kennedy filed a lawsuit in Wisconsin on Sept 3 seeking a court order removing him from the ballot. He argued that third-party candidates are discriminated against because state law treats Republicans and Democrats running for president differently.

He pointed out that Republicans and Democrats have until 5 p.m. on the first Tuesday in September before an election to certify their presidential nominee but independent candidates

## Musk deletes post about Harris &amp; Biden assassination after criticism

WASHINGTON, Sept 17, (AP): Elon Musk has deleted a post on his social media platform X in which he said "no one is even trying to assassinate" President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris in the wake of an apparent assassination attempt on former President Donald Trump while he was playing golf.

Musk, who has nearly 200 million followers on the social media site he bought for \$44 billion in 2022, has increasingly embraced conservative ideologies in recent years and endorsed Trump for president.

## Also:

**ATLANTA:** A leading conservative group put on a show of Republican unity Monday, cementing the new détente between Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp and GOP nominee Donald Trump while vice presidential nominee JD Vance tried to smooth over differences on abortion policy across the evangelical community ahead of Election Day.

The Faith & Freedom Coalition, led by longtime evangelical politi-

can, has removed posts in the past, Musk has also kept up and even doubled down on other such inflammatory comments. Last week, he made a joke about impregnating Taylor Swift after the singer posted an endorsement for Harris.

Early Monday, after taking down the post about the apparent Trump assassination, the 53-year-old billionaire wrote on the platform: "Well, one lesson I've learned is that just because I say something to a group and they laugh doesn't mean it's going to be all that hilarious as a post on X."

like himself can only withdraw before the Aug. 6 deadline for submitting nomination papers.

can, has denounced the debunked rumors that spread online before Trump amplified them at last week's presidential debate, saying there is no evidence of it. He said at a news conference in Springfield on Monday that dozens of members of the Ohio State Highway Patrol will be stationed in city schools starting Tuesday following a series of threats across the city, sweeping each building every morning before the arrival of faculty or students. Security cameras have also been stationed at strategic spots in the city, and a bomb-sniffing dog will be in the city and available round-the-clock. (AP)

**Meadows request rejected:** A judge has rejected a bid by Mark Meadows, former chief of staff to President Donald Trump, to move his charges in Arizona's fake election case to federal court, marking the second time he has failed in trying to get his charges out of state court.

In a decision Monday, US District Judge John Tuchi said Meadows missed a deadline for asking for his charges to be moved to federal court, didn't offer a good reason for doing so and failed to show that the allegations against him related to his official duties as chief of staff to the president.

Meadows faces charges in Arizona and Georgia in what authorities allege was an illegal scheme to overturn the 2020 election results in Trump's favor. He had unsuccessfully tried to move charges in the Georgia case last year. (AP)



Former Independent candidate for president Robert F. Kennedy Jr., (left), and former Democratic Rep Tulsi Gabbard speak at a campaign event for Republican presidential nominee former US president Donald Trump on Sept 14 in Glendale, Ariz. (AP)



Meadows

DeWine

## America

**US tracks Russia vessels:** The US Coast Guard said Monday that it tracked a group of Russian naval vessels as they crossed into U.S. waters off Alaska in an apparent effort to avoid sea ice, a move that is permitted under international law and customs.

Crew of a US Coast Guard cutter witnessed the Russian military vessels cross the maritime boundary and venture 30 miles (48 kilometers) inside an area extending beyond US territorial waters known as the US Exclusive Economic Zone.

The Russian vessels consisted of two submarines, a frigate and tug boat, the Coast Guard said in a news release. The encounter took place nearly 60 miles (100 kilometers) northwest of Point Hope. (AP)

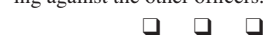


**'Nichols wasn't a threat':** Tyre Nichols posed no threat to police when he was snatched out of his car during a traffic stop that preceded a fatal beating by five Memphis officers, according to testimony Monday by a former officer who has pleaded guilty in the case, which led to national protests and sparked renewed calls for police reform.

Emmitt Martin III took the stand in the federal trial of former colleagues Tadarrius Bean, Demetrius Haley and Justin Smith. The three officers have pleaded not guilty to charges that they deprived Nichols of his civil rights through excessive force and failure to intervene, and obstructed justice through witness tampering.

The four men, along with fellow officer Desmond Mills Jr., were fired after the January 2023 death of Nichols. The beating was caught on police video, which was released to the public. The officers were later indicted by a federal grand jury. Martin and Mills have taken plea deals and are testifying against the other officers. (AP)

Ohio police to protect schools: Ohio state police will help protect schools in a city at the center of a political furor over



Haitian migrants, the governor announced Monday, while local officials canceled an annual celebration of cultural diversity in the fallout over former President Donald Trump's false claims about pet-eating.

Ohio Gov Mike DeWine, a Republi-



Trucks wait to enter Germany near Slubice, Poland on Sept 16. Germany tightened border controls on Monday. The new measures affected Germany's borders with France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, Austria, Switzerland, the Czech Republic, and Poland. (Xinhua)









## In collaboration with Ministries of Interior, Education and Information

## Zain partners with joint awareness campaign for new school year

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 17: Zain announces a community partnership with the joint awareness campaign for the new school year 2024-2025. This initiative comes in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Information, and Center for Government Communication. The campaign aims to instill national identity, promote the values of education, and raise students' awareness of security and traffic safety across all grade levels.

The campaign represents a successful collaboration between public and private sector organizations, aimed at achieving shared community goals. This is especially evident in its focus on supporting education, a key driver of societal growth and prosperity, and a vital contributor to building Kuwait's future.

Zain is committed to aligning with national plans and initiatives to promote social development, recognizing the private sector's crucial role in supporting public institutions to ensure sustainable growth across various essential sectors. This commitment is reflected in the numerous partnerships Zain has formed with public institutions over the years, which have led to many successful



Zain's team with Mol officials during a school visit.

joint initiatives.

The campaign seeks to deliver a range of positive messages to students, including fostering national identity, expressing love and loyalty

to Kuwait, respecting the national flag, promoting the importance of education, highlighting the role of teachers and valuing their efforts, encouraging discipline and adher-

ence to laws, preparing students mentally for the school year, and enhancing security and traffic awareness to ensure student safety.

As part of this initiative, during

the first week of the new school year, Zain visited several elementary, middle, and high schools across various governorates. The visits aimed to welcome students, distribute gifts

and school supplies, and motivate them to approach the academic year with a positive mindset, aligned with the campaign's core values.

This campaign will run throughout the academic year, targeting not only students but also engaging parents and teachers to maximize its positive impact. It includes awareness seminars, distribution of educational materials, training programs, and the use of social media and other channels to amplify the campaign's messages and values.

As a key partner, Zain will build on its previous initiatives, particularly those focused on child protection, children's rights, and online safety, to add value to the campaign's content. This aligns with Zain's broader efforts to support and protect children.

Zain firmly believes that children and youth are the foundation of society. To safeguard them in the digital age, the company has developed strategies to mitigate risks associated with technology, integrating this focus into its operations. As part of its commitment to meaningful connectivity, Zain continues to raise public awareness on critical issues such as online child safety.

## Bank aligns with Kuwait Vision 2035

## Gulf Bank reveals SMEs banking solutions &amp; future growth strategy in 'GB Talks' series

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 17: As part of the GB Talks series, Mr. Mohammad Bujbarah, Corporate Banking Portfolio Officer at Gulf Bank, outlined the banking services and facilities available to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). These services aim to enhance the continuity, sustainability, growth, and competitive edge of SMEs.

Mr. Bujbarah emphasized that Gulf Bank offers a wide range of services and transactions tailored to SMEs, available either directly or through a dedicated online platform. This includes the ability to apply for both cash and non-cash credit facilities, without needing an existing Gulf Bank account.

Services available include electronic payroll transfers, ATM card issuance, registration for point-of-sale systems, payment gateways, logistics, consulting services, and more. All of these can be accessed and registered for via the bank's website.

He explained that clients interested in financing for their SME can visit the bank's website, go to the SME section, fill out the application on the small and medium-sized business financing solutions page, and submit it. After submission, they will receive an email requesting audited financial statements for the past three years and a recent management report. Following an initial review, the bank will contact the client if the business is deemed economically viable.

Mr. Bujbarah also highlighted Gulf Bank's dedication to improving non-banking services for SMEs, assisting them in operating efficiently without the need to invest in or manage their own warehouses or specialized teams for customs clearance and inventory transport.

He stressed that Gulf Bank's 2025



Mohammad Bujbarah speaking during the GB Talks series.

## Mohammad Bujbarah

- Gulf Bank offers a wide range of services and transactions tailored to SMEs, available either directly or through a dedicated online platform.

strategy is centered on supporting SMEs by expanding its range of products and banking services to promote their growth and development.

It is important to note that SMEs eligible for Gulf Bank financing are independent businesses with assets approximately valued at KD 500,000, annual sales up to KD 1.5 million, and at least 150 employees.

Gulf Bank aims to be Kuwait's leading bank, fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace to deliver exceptional customer service while contributing sustainably to the community. Through

its extensive branch network and innovative digital services, the bank empowers customers to conduct banking transactions conveniently and efficiently, ensuring a seamless experience.

In alignment with Kuwait Vision 2035, "New Kuwait," and its commitment to fostering collaborative partnerships, Gulf Bank is dedicated to driving robust sustainability initiatives across environmental, social, and governance (ESG) dimensions. The bank is committed to implementing strategically selected and diverse sustainability programs both internally and externally.

## Over 30 Kuwaiti medical students visit London

## Warba Bank sponsors Kuwait medical students' educational visit to London

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 17: Warba Bank has announced its sponsorship of the Kuwait Medical Students Association's educational visit to London, which includes over 30 students aiming to enhance their expertise. The program features visits to the Kuwait Health Office and the Embassy of Kuwait in the UK, along with tours of several hospitals to learn about the latest treatment methods and medical advancements. This experience will help students apply cutting-edge technologies in their academic studies and future careers. The itinerary also includes visits to Kuwaiti patients in various London hospitals to monitor their health and follow up on their treatment plans.

Ayman Salem Al-Mutairi, Director Marketing & Corporate Communication at Warba Bank, emphasized the importance of sponsoring and supporting Kuwaiti students at Kuwait University as part of the bank's commitment to empowering young talents across scientific, cultural, and sports fields, both domestically and internationally. This sponsorship underlines Warba Bank's belief in the power of education as a cornerstone for achieving economic growth, aligning with Kuwait's broader vision of national advancement.

Al-Mutairi reiterated Warba Bank's conviction that Kuwait's true strength lies in its promising youth, who strive for the highest levels of academic achievement to serve their nation and propel the wheels of development forward.

He stressed that supporting education across various sectors is integral to the bank's mission, aligning with its social responsibility and commitment to fostering educational success, particularly at the university level, which serves as a gateway to the job market.

Warba Bank aims to be a leader in social responsibility, aspiring to be close to its customers and the younger generation through meaningful initiatives that support and serve the community at large.

Al-Mutairi emphasized Warba Bank's dedication to supporting the community, particularly young graduates entering the healthcare field, reflecting the bank's commitment to education and social responsibility. He expressed gratitude for academic professionals who play a crucial role in nurturing students and building Kuwait's future workforce.

Moudi Naif Al-Hassawi, Chair of the Research Committee at the Kuwait Medical Students Association, highlighted that the committee organized a summer workshop in London from July 27 to August 1, 2024. "The workshop focused on emergency response (suture) skills at Imperial College - London." She continued, "in addition to the workshop, we, as students, visited a group of Kuwaiti patients at Cleveland Hospital (London) and learned about some cases, and this is



Musaed Alghareeb with Al-Hassawi

## Al-Mutairi:

- Supporting and nurturing national medical talents is a top priority and social responsibility for Warba Bank.
- Our sponsorship reflects our deep appreciation for education and its vital role in driving economic development.

based on the social responsibility of students."

Al-Hassawi mentioned that the students also visited Kuwait Embassy's in London, where they were warmly welcomed by the embassy staff, reinforcing the importance of supporting Kuwaiti youth abroad and highlighting the positive reception from the diplomatic community.

She added that the experience was highly beneficial, equipping students with practical knowledge and skills, presenting a model of diligent Kuwaiti university student.

Al-Hassawi concluded by expressing gratitude to Warba Bank for their generous sponsorship, which significantly contributed to the workshop's success which demonstrates Warba's commitment to supporting education and social development.

It is important to note that, Warba Bank continues to achieve remarkable success, earning recognition for its innovative digital banking services aligned with Sharia principles. As one of Kuwait's leading banks, Warba remains committed to serving the community and enhancing its outreach to all segments of society.

## Company invests in Kuwaiti youth through CODED Academy

## Agility hosts entrepreneurship and technology workshop at Academy X

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 17: Agility, a supply chain services, infrastructure and innovation company, held an educational workshop on entrepreneurship and technology for students at Academy X, part of the CODED Academy for programming.

The workshop, led by Agility Chairperson Henadi Al-Saleh, is part of the company's ongoing investment in youth education and commitment to building Kuwait's future.

The workshop highlighted the strong connection between entrepreneurship and technology. Al-Saleh walked the students through practical concepts, drawing from Agility's extensive expertise as a technology developer and investor. The session also provided a detailed overview of how to pitch business ideas and secure support for innovations. The workshop sparked lively discussion among the students, concluding with conversation about promising future opportunities and innovation likely to arise in Kuwait.

Al-Saleh said women entrepreneurs and innovators are playing a larger role in society and business in Kuwait and the Gulf.

"Empowering women has always been at the heart of Agility's strategic partnerships. We have chosen to support initiatives that help young women develop technical skills and foster entrepreneurship. Academy X is part of that model, and this workshop reflects our commitment to developing a new generation of innovative Kuwaiti women," Al-Saleh said.

In August, Agility Corporate Ventures executive Lamia Hayat led an Academy X session on the basics of venture capital and its role in tech innovation. Hayat shared real-world challenges, case studies, and interactive pitch sessions, encouraging them to think critically about their tech-foc-



Chairperson Henadi Al-Saleh during the student workshop.

used business ideas.

This year, Agility is funding coding skills programs for more than 1,300 school students in Kuwait through CODED Academy. Agility has sponsored the launch of the Academy X program, which will teach 300 female students modern programming basics. The curriculum includes building applications using AI; lessons on leveraging technology in entrepreneurship; and other vital skills that equip students for the job market. Academy X was piloted last year by 100 female students and is now in its first full year.

## About Agility

Agility is a global leader in supply chain services, infrastructure, and innovation with 54,000+ employees across six continents. Listed in Kuwait and Dubai, Agility specializes in growing and scaling operating businesses. Agility's portfolio of companies include the world's largest aviation services company (Menzies Aviation); a global fuel logistics business (Tristar); and a leading logistics parks developer and operator across the Middle East, South Asia, and Africa (Agility Logistics Parks). Other Agility companies



Chairperson Henadi Al-Saleh applauding the students.

offer customs digitization services, remote-site infrastructure services, defense and government services, ecommerce-enablement and digital logistics, and waste management and recycling. Agility invests in supply chain innovation, sustainability, and resilience, and has minority holdings in a portfolio of listed and non-listed companies.

## Best account of its kind offering highest monthly returns

## KIB unveils winners of Al Dirwaza account's draw

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 17: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced the winners of the weekly draw held under the Al Dirwaza account's 2024 campaign, which is distinguished by the highest number of winners throughout the year. The third weekly draw, based on customers' August deposits, recently took place in the presence of representatives from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, as well as representatives from the Bank. The KD 1,000 prize was awarded to Fahad Aoda Halil Albadali, Nasrin Mohammad Hossein Nasab, Nada Abdulrahman Murekhan Alrashidi, Harbi Mosaad Alharbi, and Ibrahim Abdelmajid Alkaddah, whilst the KD 500 prize was awarded to Latifah Muhail Mohammad Al-sallal, Rana Said Abdel hamid Abdeltawab, Ahmed Ewida Mahmoud Ewida, Atallah Hameed Shahab Nazal, Abdulaziz Ateyah Eid Sagheer, Salah Ahmad Rashed Alkhalaf, and Mahdi Abdulghaffar Mohammad Atash.

It serves to note that Al Dirwaza account is a savings account for individual customers, based on the Wakala investment principle, launched by KIB as one of its banking products for individuals. The account is currently the best of its kind in the sector, with annual expected profits of up to 2% disbursed on a monthly basis, where the customer gets an expected profit of 2% for the first 3 months from the account opening date and up to 1% expected rate onward. The expected profits are automatically deposited into the customer's account within the first day of the beginning of each month.

Al Dirwaza account holders are eligible to enter the weekly, monthly and annual draws on the condition of maintaining at least KD 100 in their account. For the weekly and monthly draws, each KD 1 that has completed a full month's cycle in the account will count for one chance, and chances are calculated based on the lowest monthly balance preceding the draw. As for the mega draw, chances are calculated for each KD 1 that completes a two-month cycle in the account – based on the lowest two monthly balances prior to the draw.

Al Dirwaza account is also in compliance with the provisions of Islamic Sharia and approved by the KIB's Sharia Supervisory Board. Furthermore, the account comes with a wide range of benefits, including the ease of opening the account, which does not require a salary transfer, and the customer's ability to open it remotely without visiting a branch through KIB Online on the Bank's website or KIB Mobile application on smartphones.

Additionally, Al Dirwaza account automatically grants customers instant issuance of an ATM card, with a KD 2,000 ATM daily withdrawal limit, as well as the ability to issue credit cards against the cash collateral in the account.



KIB's Al Dirwaza account.

To open the account and participate in its draws, a minimum of KD 100 is required and can only be withdrawn upon account closure.

## About KIB

Kuwait International Bank (KIB) is a bank that operates according to the Islamic Shari'ah, based in the State of Kuwait. Incorporated in 1973, and originally known as Kuwait Real Estate Bank, KIB made the transition to its current Islamic operating model in 2007. In 2018, KIB embarked on a new phase of its journey full of innovation and development. As part of its new strategic direction, the Bank focuses on offering a next-level customer experience under the slogan: "Bank for Life".

Through a network of branches spread across the State of Kuwait, KIB offers a broad range of banking products and services, as well as innovative digital banking solutions in line with international best standards. As part of its duty towards the community, the Bank also encompasses a leading social responsibility program that aims at positively impacting all members of the community through a wide range of impactful initiatives and activities.

Today, KIB has taken concrete steps in implementing its new strategic objectives. The Bank has cemented its role as a key player in the local banking industry and has continued to maintain its strong financial performance; enabling it to be globally recognized for its strong credit rating and financial position.

Film

## In 'The Critic,' McKellen's critic takes his job very seriously

By Lindsey Bahr

The arts rarely have anything good to say about critics. That they're not generally the hero of many stories is, at the very least, understandable. More often they're portrayed as joyless, cruel and a little pathetic; themselves failed artists who live to take down others, or, worse, sycophants in search of a famous friend.

Without getting into any sort of philosophical, or even factual debate about the nature of the kind of person drawn to criticism (besides perhaps a staunch antipathy to either job security or amassing wealth), it is safe to say that the drama critic of "The Critic" takes all the worst stereotypes to hysterical heights.

Set in the 1930s in London, Ian McKellen is Jimmy Erskine, a veteran theater critic whose reviews can make or break a play or a performer. He has a monastic devotion to telling the truth, as entertainingly as he can, and knows what he must sacrifice to do so.

"The drama critic is feared and reviled for the judgement he must bring," McKellen says in an ominous voiceover. "(He) must be cold and perfectly alone."

When one woman dares to chat him up after a play, offering her take on the material and performances, he swiftly tries to have

her removed from the restaurant claiming he must be protected from the general public. When an actress, Nina Land (Gemma Arterton), confronts him about his wildly inconsistent criticisms of her (how can she be both plump and emaciated, she wonders), he refuses to apologize. And he scoffs when the new boss at the newspaper, David Brooke (Mark Strong), implores him to tone it down: "Be kinder," he says. "More beauty, less beast."

Satire

But what starts as satire spirals into a wildly messy tragedy with contrivance upon contrivance. This is a film that could have listened to its anti-hero's advice to the flailing actress: Do less. That someone as great as Lesley Manville, as Nina's mother, gets a mere handful of scenes and is only minimally consequential to it all is telling. It strives to be an intricate spider-web of compelling, intersecting stories, but few characters are fleshed out enough for us to care.

"The Critic," handsomely directed by Anand Tucker ("Hilary and Jackie," "Leap Year") and written by Patrick Marber ("Closer," "Notes on a Scandal"), is very loosely based on Anthony Quinn's novel "Curtain Call," itself more a murder mystery than

this ever allows itself to be. Instead, the film is about the desperate lengths a man will go to when his job and freedom are threatened. Erskine is the kind of gentleman critic whose power and authority have gone unchallenged for so long, he's become delusional beyond recognition. His words don't just destroy, though. They've also inspired. Even the actress he obliterates time and time again admits as much: She tells him it was his writing that made her fall in love with the theater.

There are some fun ideas here, and good performances. McKellen is having a wonderful time living inside this charismatic monster who you are with until you're really not. Erskine is an open secret that becomes a liability with his new boss and the rise of fascist thought around him. But none of it really adds up to anything poignant or enormously entertaining; its darkness is both lopsided and superficial, as most become casualties of Erskine's aims. Theater critic as tyrant is a juicy premise; "The Critic" just can't live up to the promise.

"The Critic," a Greenwich Entertainment released in select theaters recently, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for "some language and sexual content." Running time: 100 minutes. Two and a half stars out of four. (AP)

Variety



This image released by Greenwich Entertainment shows Ian McKellen in a scene from 'The Critic.' (AP)

People

### Legal troubles escalate after music mogul's arrest

## Combs charged with sex trafficking

NEW YORK, Sept. 17, (AP) — Sean "Diddy" Combs has been indicted on federal sex trafficking and racketeering charges. The indictment against the music mogul was unsealed Tuesday. He had been arrested late Monday in Manhattan, roughly six months after federal authorities conducting a sex trafficking investigation raided his luxurious homes in Los Angeles and Miami. Over the past year, Combs has been sued by people who say he subjected them to physical or sexual abuse. He has denied many of those allegations, and his lawyer, Marc Agnifilo, said outside the courthouse Tuesday morning that Combs would plead not guilty.

Combs was expected to appear before a federal judge in New York on Tuesday after his indictment on undisclosed criminal charges.

The music mogul was arrested late Monday in Manhattan, roughly six months after federal authorities conducting a sex trafficking investigation raided his luxurious homes in Los Angeles and Miami.

The indictment detailing the charges was expected to be unsealed Tuesday morning, according to US Attorney Damian Williams.

Over the past year, Combs has been sued by people who say he subjected them to physical or sexual abuse. He has denied many of those allegations, and his lawyer, Marc Agnifilo, said outside the courthouse Tuesday morning that Combs would plead not guilty. Agnifilo said he would "fight like hell" to try and get his client released from custody.

Agnifilo said he didn't have details on the indictment, but that Combs knew it was coming and had relocated to New York two weeks ago in anticipation. Of Combs, he said, "His spirits are good. He's confident."

Combs, 54, was recognized as one of the most influential figures in hip-hop before a flood of allegations that emerged over the past year turned him into an industry pariah.

In November, his former girlfriend and R&B singer Cassie, whose legal name is Casandra Ventura, filed a lawsuit saying he had beaten and raped her for years. She accused Combs of coercing her, and others, into unwanted sex in drug-fueled settings.

The suit was settled in one day but months later CNN aired hotel security footage showing Combs punching and kicking Cassie and throwing her on a floor. After the video aired, Combs apologized, saying, "I was disgusted when I did it."

Combs and his attorneys, however, denied similar al-

legations made by others in a string of lawsuits.

Douglas Wigdor, a lawyer for Cassie, said in a statement Tuesday that "neither Ms. Ventura nor I have any comment."

"We appreciate your understanding and if that changes, we will certainly let you know," he added.

A woman said Combs raped her two decades ago when she was 17. A music producer sued, saying Combs forced him to have sex with prostitutes. Another woman, April Lampros, said Combs subjected her to "terrifying sexual encounters," starting when she was a college student in 1994.

Abused

The AP does not typically name people who say they have been sexually abused unless they come forward publicly, as Cassie and Lampros did.

Combs, the founder of Bad Boy Records, has gotten out of legal trouble before.

In 2001, he was acquitted of charges related to a Manhattan nightclub shooting two years earlier that injured three people. His then-protégé, Shyne, was convicted of assault and other charges and served about eight years in prison.

A day after the raids, his attorney Aaron Dyer called them "a gross use of military-level force," said the allegations were "meritless."

Combs, then known as Puff Daddy, was at the center of the East Coast-West Coast hip-hop battles of the 1990s as the partner and producer of the Notorious B.I.G., who was shot and killed in 1997. But like many of those who survived the era, his public image had softened with age into a genteel host of parties in Hollywood and the Hamptons, a fashion-forward businessman, and a doting father who spoiled his kids, some of whom lost their mother in 2018.

But a different image began emerging in November, when his former protégé and girlfriend, the R&B singer Cassie, became the first of several people to sue him for sexual abuse with stories of a steady stream of sex workers in drug-fueled settings where some of those involved were coerced or cajoled into sex.

In her November lawsuit, Cassie alleged years of abuse, including beatings and rape. Her suit also alleged Combs engaged in sex trafficking by "requiring her to engage in forced sexual acts in multiple jurisdictions" and by engaging in "harboring and transportation of Plaintiff for purposes of sex induced by force, fraud,

or coercion."

It also said he compelled her to help him traffic male sex workers Combs would force Cassie to have sex with while he filmed.

The suit was settled the following day, but its reverberations would last far longer. Combs lost lingering allies, supporters and those reserving judgment when CNN in May aired a leaked video of him punching Cassie, kicking her and throwing her on the floor in a hotel hallway.

The next day, in his first real acknowledgement of wrongdoing since the stream of allegations began, Combs posted a social media video apologizing, saying "I was disgusted when I did it" and "I'm disgusted now." Cassie's lawsuit was followed by at least a half-dozen others in the ensuing months.

In February, a music producer filed a lawsuit alleging Combs coerced him to solicit prostitutes and pressured him to have sex with them.

Another of Combs' accusers was a woman who said the rap producer raped her two decades ago when she was 17.

Another woman who filed a lawsuit, April Lampros, said she was a college student in 1994 when she met Combs, and a series of "terrifying sexual encounters" with Combs and those around him began that lasted for years.

Combs and his attorneys denied nearly all of the lawsuits' allegations.

While authorities did not publicly say that the lawsuits set off the criminal investigation, Dyer said when the warrants were served that the case was based on "meritless accusations made in civil lawsuits."

The AP does not typically name people who say they have been sexually abused unless they come forward publicly as Cassie and Lampros did.

As the founder of Bad Boy Records, Combs became one of the most influential hip-hop producers and executives of the past three decades. Along with the Notorious B.I.G., he worked with a slew of top-tier artists including Mary J. Blige, Usher, Lil Kim, Faith Evans and 112.

Combs' roles in his businesses beyond music - including lucrative private-label spirits, a media company and the Sean John Fashion line - took major hits when the allegations arose.

The consequences were even greater when the leaked beating video emerged. Howard University cut ties with him, and he returned his key to the city of New York at the request of the mayor.

**LOS ANGELES:** The Emmys telecast on ABC reached nearly 7 million viewers, a jump of more than 50% from the record low of the last ceremony in January and the biggest audience since 2021, according to numbers released Monday by the network.

Sunday night's 76th Primetime Emmy Awards, in which "Sho-

gun," "Hacks" and "Baby Reindeer" won top awards, was back in its traditional mid-September spot after the rare January ceremony that was delayed four months by Hollywood's strikes.

That show, which aired on Fox, reached a record low audience of 4.3 million viewers.

ABC said Monday that the



Eugene



Murdoch

Sunday night show hosted by Eugene and Dan Levy reached 6.87 million viewers, a jump of 54% despite competition from NFL football. (AP)

**AMMAN:** Located in northeast from Amman, Umm Al-Jimal ruins -- built using black basalt

blocks supported with similar rectangular blocks -- is considered home to almost 2,000 years of fascinating history and culture.

Umm Al-Jimal was first established in the first century A.D. as a rural suburb of the ancient Nabataean capital of Bostra.

The ruins also houses an ancient village constructed exclusively

with dark, volcanic basalt rock, referred by archaeologists as the "Black Gem of the Desert."

UNESCO announced earlier this year the inclusion of Umm Al-Jimal as the seventh Jordanian sites on the list of World Heritage along with Petra, Quseir Amra, Umm Al-Rasas, Wadi Rum, Al-Maghtas and Salt. (KUNA)

## People &amp; Places

## People

## Letterman's tryout

## Haley unveils weekly SiriusXM radio show

NEW YORK, Sept 17, (AP) - Former Republican presidential candidate **Nikki Haley** is launching her own radio talk show next week on SiriusXM that's set to air once a week at least through the inauguration of a new president.

She'll do interviews, take listener calls and talk politics on the show, which will be carried Wednesdays from 8 to 9 a.m. ET on the satellite radio system's Triumph channel. Expect some talk mixed in about Clemson football, her passion for running and music - maybe even Taylor Swift.

The former UN ambassador's own politics won't be a secret, but she said she wanted to get away from some of the tribalism that dominates the media.

"My kids, they don't watch the news, because they think both sides are crazy," she told The Associated Press. "And they're not wrong about that. I think we have to take the craziness out. I think we have to take the noise out and I think we have to break things down in a way that people feel empowered."

Haley was former President Donald Trump's last opponent left standing for the GOP nomination this year. She endorsed Trump and supported him at the convention, but until the last two weeks, Trump hadn't sought her help on the general election campaign trail.

But she said Tuesday that Trump's team had reached out to hers in the past two weeks to discuss some options for joint appearances, though none have been scheduled. Her radio show, however, "is not going to be about campaigning for a particular candidate," she said.

She said she'd been approached by some partisan news outlets about doing some work for them but wasn't interested. She didn't identify them. Her campaign, she said, taught her how the media is tainted and partisan outlets are predictable.

## Family

"I think that's what Americans are tired of," Haley said. "They don't want to go on and watch a news show and know exactly which candidate they're pushing and exactly what politics are pushing. They want to know the issues. They want to know exactly how it's going to affect their family. I want to take all of the politics out and really break it down on a policy level."

Haley said she's open to continuing the show past January "if Americans like what they hear."

The longtime host of "The Late Show with David Letterman" found himself answering questions rather than asking them when a federal judge in New York City put the entertainer through an audition of sorts on Monday for a possible role as a juror in a criminal trial.

It was the serious setting of a criminal trial over a cryptocurrency fraud when Judge P. Kevin Castel confronted the famous bearded comedian, identified in court only as "Juror 16," with questions just as he did three dozen other potential jurors to determine who would be on a panel of 12 jurors and four alternates.

The prospective jurors had already survived a general round of questioning in which individuals are dismissed for hardship reasons, such as medical issues or jobs from which they cannot be spared. The trial is expected to last less than two weeks.

When Letterman, who stepped down from his show in 2015, made it to what would be the final round for admittance on the jury, the judge lobbed a softball: "Where do you live?"

"Hartford," Letterman responded, proving that he couldn't make it through a single word without delivering a joke.

"No, it's a joke," Letterman quickly let the judge know. Hartford is in Connecticut, which would have disqualified him from the jury because it is outside the area where jurors are drawn from.

"Nice try," the judge responded, adding, "You figured you would forgo Queens," another location outside the area covered by the Southern District of New York. Queens is located in the Eastern District of New York.

After Letterman revealed his true area of residence - Westchester County - the pair began a volley of questions and answers totaling nearly three dozen exchanges.

## Degree

Along the way, the judge, lawyers and three dozen or so prospective jurors learned a lot that the world already knows about Letterman. He was born in Indianapolis, obtained a degree from Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana, and has a 20-year-old son in college in Massachusetts.

Asked what he does for a living, Letterman said he was currently "working for a company called Netflix."

"Spouse or significant other?" Castel asked.

"I've had both. Currently I just have the spouse," Letterman responded.

Asked how he gets his news, Letterman gave a nod to the past, saying: "Every morning I used to pick up the paper off the front porch. Now, I turn on the computer and it's an aggregation of news sources from all over the United States and around the world."

Asked what he likes to watch besides any Netflix programs he's involved with, Letterman said, "I like sports."

"I'm happy football is here. I'm happy it's this time in the baseball season. I like motor sports. I like pretty much what most Americans watch on TV," he said.

The judge asked him if he's an Indianapolis Colts football fan.

"Big Colts fan. 0 and 2, but still a fan," he said, referring to the fact that the Colts have lost their first two games this season.

For hobbies, Letterman said he likes to fish, ski and be outdoors.

"Ever called as a juror?" the judge asked.

"Been called many times. Just couldn't make it happen," Letterman answered.

"You know, this may be the charm," Castel said, aware that Letterman had a 50-50 chance to make it onto the panel.

"It would be a pleasure," Letterman said.

In the end, shortly before the jury was sworn in, Letterman was ejected when a prosecutor exercised what is known as a "strike," which allows lawyers on either side to release a certain number of potential jurors from the panel for any reason at all. It was the third of four strikes exercised by prosecutors. No reason was given.



Haley



Lily Donaldson wears a creation for the Burberry Spring Summer 2025 fashion show on Monday, Sept. 16, in London. (AP)



Lil Tecca poses for a portrait on Tuesday, Sept. 10, 2024, in New York. (AP)

## Music

## 'It's never a plan B'

## Tecca's album 'Plan A' highlights his journey

NEW YORK, Sept 17, (AP) - There's the story everyone knows about Lil Tecca, and then there is Tyler Sharpe, the rapper-producer with big aspirations and the dedication to see it through. His fourth studio album, appropriately titled "Plan A," out Friday, isn't a culmination of his career to date - but it does reflect the journey.

"Plan A" summarizes my plan for life," he told the Associated Press. "It's never a plan B."

The popular narrative goes a little something like this: Five years ago, a then-teenage MC from New York released "Ransom," introducing the world to his singsong-y, AutoTune-inspired flow and hook-heavy melodies. People loved it, and quickly. As of last month, the Recording Industry Association of America has accredited it eight-times platinum.

A hit at the start of a career is usually a sure-fire way to kneecap it, to burn bright and fast, but Lil Tecca managed to avoid the cliché. He has a loyal and fervent fanbase, and he never let the hype overwhelm him. The music was always first. It's why his last album, "Tec," which arrived almost exactly a year before "Plan A," was celebrated in hip-hop circles, with tracks like "500 lbs" and an inspired collab with Kodak Black, "Hvn on Earth."

For this album, Tecca enlisted the producers he's been working with since day one - like Rio Leyva, Taz Taylor and the like - to evolve the sound he's spent the last few years cultivating.

three counts of making indecent images of children, a charge related to photos sent to him on the WhatsApp messaging service



Farrell



Edwards

"My most favorite people to collaborate with are producers," he says. "We mainly create with no expectations."

Their process hasn't changed much from the early days: Tecca picks a beat and freestyles or writes to it. "Sometimes I might just rap on the loop. No beat, no drums, no nothing," he says. "The only difference is just sharpening the craft."

There's only one listed feature on the album - Don Toliver on the futuristic trap-rock, "I Can't Let Go."

## Perfect

"Don Toliver is fire," he says, simply. "When it came to having the Don song on there, it just felt like the perfect moment, honestly, for what I was trying to achieve in that first half of the project."

Part of that goal is transparency.

"This one is definitely way more personal. I'm speaking about things I've never spoken (about) like my mom and stuff like that," he says, referring to the smooth throwback, "MAMA."

"So I kind of just wanted to let people take another step closer to me, on the personal side."

It's found in songs about relationships and miscommunication, too, like the single "Taste."

Tecca says the many elements that make up "Plan A" manifest in a few different ways, fashion among them. He's been wearing a lot of leopard print lately; it appears on the album cover, the single artwork for "Bad Time," and elsewhere.

by a man convicted of distributing images of child sex abuse.

Chief Magistrate **Paul Goldspring** sentenced Edwards to a six-month prison term suspended for two years. He will be listed on a sex offenders register for seven years.

"It is not an exaggeration to say your long-earned reputation is in tatters," Goldspring said.

Edwards' fall from grace over the past year has caused turmoil for the BBC after it was revealed the publicly funded broadcaster paid him about 200,000 pounds (\$263,000) for five months of his salary after he had been arrested in November while on leave. The BBC has asked him to pay it back. (AP)

## Tradition

## Timeless craft

## Dedicated artists preserve 'temari'

KAWARAMACHI, Japan, Sept 17, (AP) - Time seems to stop here. Women sit in a small circle, quietly, painstakingly stitching patterns on balls the size of an orange, a stitch at a time.

At the center of the circle is **Eiko Araki**, a master of the Sanuki Kagari Temari, a Japanese traditional craft passed down for more than 1,000 years on the southwestern island of Shikoku.

Each ball, or "temari," is a work of art, with colorful geometric patterns carrying poetic names like "firefly flowers" and "layered stars." A temari ball takes weeks or months to finish. Some cost hundreds of dollars (tens of thousands of yen), although others are much cheaper.

These kaleidoscopic balls aren't for throwing or kicking around. They're destined to be heirlooms, carrying prayers for health and goodness. They might be treasured like a painting or piece of sculpture in a Western home.

## Beauty

The concept behind temari is an elegant otherworldliness, an impractical beauty that is also very labor-intensive to create.

"Out of nothing, something this beautiful is born, bringing joy," says Araki. "I want it to be remembered there are beautiful things in this world that can only be made by hand."

The region where temari originated was good for growing cotton, warm with little rainfall, and the spherical creations continue to be made out of the humble material.

At Araki's studio, which also serves as head office for temari's preservation society, there are 140 hues of cotton thread, including delicate pinks and blues, as well as more vivid colors and all the subtle gradations in between.

The women dye them by hand, using plants, flowers and other natural ingredients, including cochineal, a bug living in cacti that produces a red dye. The deeper shade of indigo is dyed again and again to turn just about black. Yellow and blue are combined to form gorgeous greens. Soy juice is added to deepen the tints, a dash of organic protein.

Outside the studio, loops of cotton thread, in various tones of yellow today, hang outside in the shade to dry.

The arduous process starts with making the basic ball mold on which the stitching is done. Rice husks that are cooked and then dried are placed in a piece of cotton, then wound with thread, over and over, until, almost magically, a ball appears in your hands.

## Graceful

Then the stitching begins. The balls are surprisingly hard, so each stitch requires a concentrated, almost painful, push. The motifs must be precise and even.

Each ball has lines to guide the stitching - one that goes around it like the equator, and others that zig-zag to the top and bottom.

These days, temari is getting some new recognition, among Japanese and foreigners as well. Caroline Kennedy took lessons in the ball-making when she was United States ambassador to Japan a decade ago.

Yoshie Nakamura, who promotes Japanese handcrafted art in her duty-free shop at Tokyo's Haneda airport, says she features temari there because of its intricate and delicate designs.

"Temari that might have been everyday in a faraway era is now being used for interior decoration," she said.

"I really feel each Sanuki Kagari Temari speaks of a special, one-and-only existence in the world."

Araki has come up with some newer designs that feel both modern and historical. She is trying to make the balls more accessible to everyday life - for instance, as Christmas tree ornaments. A strap with a dangling miniature ball, though quite hard to make because of its size, is affordable at about 1,500 yen (\$10) each.

Another of Araki's inventions is a cluster of pastel balls that opens and shuts with tiny magnets. Fill it with sweet-smelling herbs for a kind of aromatic diffuser.

Araki, a graceful woman who talks very slowly, her head cocked to one side as though always in thought, often travels to Tokyo to teach. But mostly she works and gives lessons in her studio, an abandoned kindergarten with faded blue paint and big windows with tired wooden frames.

She started out as a metalwork artist. Her husband's parents were temari masters who worked hard to resurrect the artform when it was declining in the modern age, at risk of dying out.



Araki



This undated image provided by OceanGate Expeditions in June 2021 shows the company's Titan submersible. (AP)

### 'Titan unsafe' testimony

## 'All good here:' Final text from doomed Titan sub

NEW YORK, Sept. 17, (AP) — A key employee who labeled a doomed experimental submersible unsafe prior to its last, fatal voyage testified Tuesday that he frequently clashed with the company's co-founder and felt the company was committed only to making money.

David Lochridge, OceanGate's former operations director, is one of the most anticipated witnesses to appear before a commission trying to determine what caused the Titan to implode en route to the wreckage of the Titanic last year, killing all five on board. His testimony echoed that of other former employees Monday, one of whom described OceanGate head Stockton Rush as volatile and difficult to work with.

"The whole idea behind the company was to make money," Lochridge said. "There was very little in the way of science."

Rush was among the five people who died in the implosion. OceanGate owned the Titan and brought it on several dives to the Titanic going back to 2021.

His testimony began a day after other witnesses painted a picture of a troubled company that was impatient to get its unconventionally designed craft into the water. The accident set off a worldwide debate about the future of private undersea exploration.

#### Implosion

The company, based in Washington state, suspended its operations after the implosion.

OceanGate's former engineering director, Tony Nissen, kicked off Monday's testimony, telling investigators that he felt pressured to get the vessel ready to dive and refused to pilot it for a journey several years before Titan's last trip.

"I'm not getting in it," Nissen said he told Rush.

When asked if there was pressure to get Titan into the water, Nissen responded, "100%."

But asked if he felt that the pressure compromised safety decisions and testing, Nissen paused, then replied, "No. And that's a difficult question to answer, because given infinite time and infinite budget, you could do infinite testing."

OceanGate's former finance and human resources director, Bonnie Carl, testified Monday that Lochridge had characterized the Titan as "unsafe." Lochridge is expected to provide more perspective on what caused the implosion.

Coast Guard officials noted at the start of the hearing that the submersible had not been independently reviewed, as is standard practice. That and Titan's unusual design subjected it to scrutiny in the undersea exploration community.

During the submersible's final dive on June 18, 2023, the crew lost contact after an exchange of texts about the Titan's depth and weight as it descended.

The support ship Polar Prince then sent repeated messages asking if the Titan could still see the ship on its onboard display.

One of the last messages from Titan's crew to Polar Prince before the submersible imploded stated, "all good here," according to a visual re-creation presented earlier in the hearing.

When the submersible was reported overdue, rescuers rushed ships, planes and other equipment to an area about 435 miles (700 kilometers) south of St. John's, Newfoundland. Wreckage of the Titan was subsequently found on the ocean floor about 330 yards (300 meters) off the bow of the Titanic, Coast Guard officials said.

Scheduled to appear later in the hearing are OceanGate co-founder Guillermo Sohnlein and former scientific director, Steven Ross, according to a list compiled by the Coast Guard. Numerous guard officials, scientists, and government and industry officials are also expected to testify. The US Coast Guard subpoenaed witnesses who were not government employees, said Coast Guard spokesperson Melissa Leake.

Among those not on the hearing witness list is Rush's widow, Wendy Rush, the company's communications director. Asked about her absence, Leake said the Coast Guard does not comment on the reasons for not calling specific individuals to a particular hearing during ongoing investigations. She said it's common for a Marine Board of Investigation to "hold multiple hearing sessions or conduct additional witness depositions for complex cases."

#### Investigation

OceanGate has no full-time employees at this time but will be represented by an attorney during the hearing, the company said in a statement. The company said it has been fully cooperating with the Coast Guard and NTSB investigations since they began.

The time frame for the investigation was initially a year, but the inquiry has taken longer. The ongoing Marine Board of Investigation is the highest level of marine casualty investigation conducted by the Coast Guard. When the hearing concludes, recommendations will be submitted to the Coast Guard's commandant. The National Transportation Safety Board is also conducting an investigation.

OceanGate, based in Washington state, suspended operations after the implosion. The company's former finance and human resources director, Bonnie Carl, testified Monday that she was aware of safety concerns about the Titan, and that the company's operations director, David Lochridge, had characterized it as "unsafe." Lochridge is scheduled to testify on Tuesday. Tym Catterson, a contractor who worked with the company, told the marine board on Monday that "training and operations at sea could have been better."

## Australia sees 46% rise in dementia prescriptions

# COVID study holds promise for new therapies

SYDNEY, Sept. 17, (Xinhua) — A type of white blood cell that fights off viral infections could help produce new vaccines and treatments for COVID-19, according to a long-term study in Australia published on Tuesday.

In the study, a team from the Peter Doherty Institute for Infection and Immunity in Melbourne investigated how memory T cells are established and develop as part of the immune system's defense against long COVID.

The study found that memory T cells that recognize SARS-CoV-2 -- the virus that causes COVID-19 -- can fight subsequent infections for up to two years.

T cells are a type of white blood

cell that fight viral infections by killing off infected cells. They are a key part of the body's immune response because they can remember an encounter with a virus and become long-term memory T cells for protection against subsequent infections.

Researchers from the institute, a joint venture between the University of Melbourne and Royal Melbourne Hospital, found that T cells in 31 participants with long COVID from Australia and China's Hong Kong maintained their protection for two years following SARS-CoV-2 infection.

Peter Doherty, an author of the study and founder of the institute, said the research could lead to break-

throughs in treatments.

"Applying the lessons learned and technologies developed to study the cellular immune response in human influenza has allowed us to move fast on analyzing this aspect of our immune response in COVID-19," he said in a media release. "That opens an important portal for understanding where we need to go with future therapies and vaccines."

#### Also:

**CANBERRA:** The number of dementia medication prescriptions dispensed in Australia has increased by almost 50 percent in 10 years, a government report has revealed.

According to the report, published on Friday by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), nearly 688,000 dementia medication prescriptions were dispensed to 72,400 Australians aged 30 and over in 2022-23.

It marks an increase of 46 percent from 472,000 prescriptions for 50,800 people in 2013-14 as more Australians seek treatment for dementia, which is an umbrella term for several diseases that destroy nerve cells and damage the brain.

Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia, accounting for 60-70 percent of cases globally, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

Over 80% of regions show gray matter loss

# Scientists show how pregnancy changes brain in endless ways

## Hormonal changes harm your gums

## Menopause may trigger dental issues but you can protect your 'oral' health

NEW YORK, Sept. 17, (AP) — Neuroscientist Liz Chrastil got the unique chance to see how her brain changed while she was pregnant and share what she learned in a new study that offers the first detailed map of a woman's brain throughout gestation.

The transition to motherhood, researchers discovered, affects nearly every part of the brain.

Although the study looks at only one person, it kicks off a large, international research project that aims to scan the brains of hundreds of women and could one day provide clues about disorders like postpartum depression.

"It's been a very long journey," said Chrastil, co-author of the paper published Monday in Nature Neuroscience. "We did 26 scans before, during and after pregnancy" and found "some really remarkable things."

#### Reductions

More than 80% of the regions studied had reductions in the volume of gray matter, where thinking takes place. This is an average of about 4% of the brain - nearly identical to a reduction that happens during puberty. While less gray matter may sound bad, researchers said it probably isn't; it likely reflects the fine-tuning of networks of interconnected nerve cells called "neural circuits" to prepare for a new phase of life.

The team began following Chrastil - who works at the University of California, Irvine, and was 38 years old at the time - shortly before she became pregnant through in vitro fertilization.

During the pregnancy and for two years after she gave birth, they continued doing MRI brain scans and drawing blood to observe how her brain changed as sex hormones like estrogen ebbed and flowed. Some of the changes continued past pregnancy.

"Previous studies had taken snapshots of the brain before and after pregnancy, but we've never witnessed the brain in the midst of this metamor-

phosis," said co-author Emily Jacobs of the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Unlike past studies, this one focused on many inner regions of the brain as well as the cerebral cortex, the outermost layer, said Joseph Lonstein, a professor of neuroscience and psychology at Michigan State University who was not involved in the research. It's "a good first step to understanding much more about whole-brain chang-

es that could be possible in a woman across pregnancy and postpartum," he said.

Research in animals has linked some brain changes with qualities that could be helpful when caring for an infant. While the new study doesn't address what the changes mean in terms of human behavior, Lonstein pointed out that it describes changes in brain areas involved in social cognition, or how people interact with others and under-

stand their thoughts and feelings, for example.

The researchers have partners in Spain and are moving forward with the larger Maternal Brain Project, which is supported by the Ann S. Bowers Women's Brain Health Initiative and the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative. Eventually, they hope scientists can use data from a large number of women for things like predicting postpartum depression before it happens.



A dentist holds a model of teeth and a toothbrush in Seattle on Aug. 3, 2018. (AP)

When the saliva flow slows, it can cause dry mouth, which brings a greater risk of mouth sores, oral yeast infections and cavities. Those risks are even higher when people take medicines for high blood pressure or diabetes that can also cause dry mouth, Hister-Cockrell said.

Less saliva also means less of its bacteria-killing enzymes and tooth-strengthening minerals, said Dr. Sally Cram, a periodontist in Washington, D.C.

When your mouth is dry, she said, "those bacteria are proliferating and

you're more prone to get tooth decay." And if decay festers, tooth loss is possible.

Decreasing bone density and receding gums exacerbate these problems. If the socket that holds the tooth is less dense, Sollecito said, it's more vulnerable to bone loss. And gum recession can leave some tooth surfaces without the enamel that protects them from cavities.

Women in this phase of life are also more likely to develop periodontal disease, when plaque and bacteria collect under gums and around teeth.

"Gum tissue starts to get red and swollen," said Cram, a spokesperson for the American Dental Association. "It bleeds and it starts pulling away from the teeth, creating deeper crevices around the teeth that are clearly harder to keep clean."

Some people experience "burning mouth syndrome." Hister-Cockrell said a burning sensation can extend to the tongue, palate and lips.

"As you could well imagine," Sollecito added, "this could all really spiral out of control."

# Global call for more funds for child malnutrition

NEW YORK, Sept. 17, (Xinhua) — The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation urged world leaders Tuesday to increase global health spending where it is needed most to boost children's health and nutrition, especially in the face of the global climate crisis.

In its eighth annual Goalkeepers report, "A Race to Nourish a Warming World," the foundation projected that

without immediate global action, climate change will condemn an additional 40 million children to stunting and 28 million more to wasting between 2024 and 2050. Scaling up solutions now can avoid this outcome while building resilience to climate change and spurring much-needed economic growth.

In 2023, the World Health Organization estimated that 148 million children

experienced stunting, a condition where children don't grow to their full potential mentally or physically, and 45 million children experienced wasting, a condition where children become weak and emaciated, leaving them at much greater risk of developmental delays and death. These are the most severe and irreversible forms of chronic and acute malnutrition.

At the same time, the total share

of foreign aid going to Africa has decreased sharply, from 40 percent in 2010 to just 25 percent, the lowest percentage in 20 years. This trend leaves hundreds of millions of children at serious risk of dying or suffering from preventable diseases and threatens the unprecedented progress the world made in global health across Africa between 2000 and 2020.

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### Al-Hajraf expresses gratitude to the minister for his prompt response

## Al-Mutairi to meet Al-Jahra Club former presidents over ongoing crisis



Former Jahra Club presidents during the meeting.

By **Khaled Al-Enezi**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 17: Mohammed Haif Al-Hajraf, the former president of Al-Jahra Club, announced that the Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, has agreed to meet with a delegation of former club presidents to address the ongoing crisis at the club. This crisis, which has persisted for nine months, has resulted in the suspension of the club's activities due to a management dispute involving three parties.

Al-Hajraf expressed gratitude to the minister for his prompt response and for scheduling a meeting with the delegation next Sunday. He commended Al-Mutairi's dedication to resolving not only the issues facing Al-Jahra Club but also broader challenges in Kuwaiti sports.

The former presidents convened at Al-Hajraf Diwaniya to discuss the club's predicament. They outlined several action items, including meeting with the Minister of Youth, the head of the Kuwaiti Olympic Committee Sheikh Fahad Al-Nasser, and officials from the Public Authority for Sports. Their goal is to

find a resolution to the ongoing crisis, which has severely impacted the club's games and teams. The lack of an official board of directors has hindered the club's ability to register players and manage employee and player salaries.

They also advocated for activating the General Assembly's role and forming a transitional committee to oversee the club's affairs in the interim. They called for new elections to elect a fresh board of directors to end the club's current troubles.

The presidents urged the three disputing parties to prioritize the club's interests and work together to overcome the challenges that have plagued Al-Jahra Club. They agreed to transfer the club's management to any of the parties involved if they secure an execution ruling from the Kuwaiti courts. The meeting was attended by nine former club presidents: Muhammad Al-Hajraf, Badr Al-Thabet, Lafi Manshed Al-Dhafiri, Khaled Al-Jarallah, Saoudoun Rafe Al-Hussaini, Mujbil Gharbi Al-Shammari, Hassan Al-Busairi, Awad Al-Sahou, and Dhaham Al-Shammari. The current head of the Basketball Federation, Dhari Burjas, and former head of the Fencing Federation, Abdul Rahim Al-Sahib, were also present.

## Kuwait Club set for CL 2 opener vs Nasaf Qarshi

Whites currently enjoying a period of stability

By **Hassan Musa**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 17: Kuwait Club kicks off its AFC Champions League 2 campaign with a match against Uzbekistan's Nasaf Qarshi at 7:00 pm at Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium, marking the first round of Group 4 action. Simultaneously, Kuwait Club will face Shabab Al-Ahli from the UAE and Al-Hussein Irbid from Jordan at Rashid Stadium in Dubai, UAE.

**SOCCER**

Kuwait Club earned its spot in the AFC Champions League 2 after a 1-0 victory over Bahrain's Al-Ahli in the qualifying play-off match held at Khalifa International Stadium in mid-August.

The tournament features 8 groups (4 in the West Zone and 4 in the East), each consisting of 4 clubs. The group stage will be played in a two-legged format from September 17 to December 5.

The top two teams from each group will advance to the round of 16, scheduled for February 2025, followed by the quarterfinals in March and semifinals in April. The tournament will conclude with a single-match final on May 17, 2025.

The AFC has allocated substantial



A file photo of Kuwait Club players celebrating.

prizes for the tournament, with participating group stage teams receiving no less than \$300,000. The tournament champion will earn approximately \$3.28 million.

Kuwait Club has extensive experience in Asian competitions, having won the Federation Cup three times. However, it was eliminated in the group stage of recent editions.

Kuwait Club is currently enjoying a period of stability in domestic competition, leading the Zain Premier League with a perfect record after four rounds. The team is well on its way to retaining the league title for the fourth consecutive season, and the 20th time in its history (a record).

Under Montenegrin coach Nebojsa Jovovic, Kuwait Club boasts several standout players, including profession-

als Yahya Jabrane and Ayman Abu Al-Fath from Morocco, Tunisian Yassin Al-Khenisi, Bahraini Mohammed Marhoon (who scored the winning goal against Al-Ahli of Bahrain), and Arsen "Malik" Zola from Congo.

The team also has experienced local talent capable of delivering a strong performance, including Mishari Ghanam, Yousef Nasser, Sami Al-Sanea, Fahad Hamoud, Ahmed Al-Dhafiri, Ali Hussein, Reda Hani, Faisal Zayed, Fahad Al-Hajri, and Amr Abdel Fattah.

Last season, Kuwait Club exited the group stage of the AFC Cup after finishing third in its group, which included Iraq's Al-Kahraba, Jordan's Al-Wehdat, and Syria's Aleppo, accumulating seven points with a win over Al-Wehdat and five draws.

## Al Oyoun finishes 2nd in Fatima Bint Mubarak Academy Cup

ABU DHABI, Sept 17: The Kuwaiti Al Oyoun team secured second place in the Fatima Bint Mubarak Academy Women's Volleyball Cup after falling to the Lebanese Al Qalamoun team in the final match, held at the Academy's stadium in Abu Dhabi.

Al Qalamoun dominated the match, winning in straight sets (25-19, 25-22, 25-16), while Al Oyoun put up an honorable performance throughout the tournament, showcasing impressive skills and determination, earning praise from the fans.

**VOLLEYBALL**

In the third-place playoff, the Fatima Bint Mubarak Academy team clinched victory, defeating Egypt's 6th of October team in a thrilling five-set match (22-25, 25-11, 25-22, 23-25, 15-10).

The Fatima Bint Mubarak Academy Women's Volleyball Cup began on September 12 at the Academy's headquarters in Abu Dhabi, featuring four teams: Fatima Bint Mubarak Academy, Al Oyoun Girls from Kuwait, the 6th of October team from Egypt, and Al Qalamoun from Lebanon.

### Dashti crowned champ in Egypt

CAIRO, Sept 17: Ahmed Dashti continued to shine on the tennis courts, recently securing the top spot in the Egyptian Tennis Federation's rankings after winning the Republic Pioneers Championship held on the clay courts of Alexandria Sporting Club.

Dashti claimed the gold medal following a series of marathon matches against seasoned players, including Wissam Farouk, Ahmed El-Qarsh, Ahmed Abou Gabal, Khaled Abdel Rahman, and El-Sayed El-Asrawy. Despite the tough competition, he managed to turn the tide in his favor and secure victories across multiple categories. He also teamed up with Egyptian champion Moataz Mabrouk, who, despite recovering from an injury, delivered an outstanding performance to clinch the gold alongside Dashti. Their partnership has garnered admiration from spectators, and they remain the top-ranked duo in Egypt for the third consecutive year, having previously won numerous titles in Cairo and Alexandria.



Ahmed Dashti



Al Oyoun players celebrate after finishing second.

### Best of the Rest

#### Stephens loses in 1st round:

Hailey Baptiste defeated fellow American and 2017 U.S. Open champion Sloane Stephens 7-6 (4), 6-2 in the first round of the WTA's Korean Open.

In other matches in Seoul, Amanda Anisimova had an upset 6-3, 7-6 (5) win over sixth-seeded Yulia Putintseva, Polina Kudermertova beat Priscilla Hon 7-5, 6-4 and Viktoriya Tomova beat Tatjana Maria 6-2, 1-6, 6-0.

Play at the WTA's Thailand Open was suspended due to rain and storms. One of the suspended matches included top-seeded Dayana Yastremska's first-round match against Mai Hontama, who led 4-3 in the first set when play was stopped. (AP)

**Cyprus FA criticized:** The Cyprus president called out the national soccer federation for shirking its responsibilities in helping to stamp out hooliganism and violence.

President Nikos Christodoulides said everyone must live up to their obligations in the fight against soccer violence but singled out the federation and its president George Koumas for "hiding behind" their own autonomy.

"They have responsibilities, we warned them about all of this but they continue to hide," Christodoulides said.

His remarks came after authorities called off a first-division match between crosstown rivals Apollon Limassol and AEL Limassol on Sunday when hundreds of AEL fans clashed with police and rushed the stadium gates without undergoing either a mandated search for concealed contraband or a check of their tickets, according to police. (AP)

**BAA lowers times:** Runners hoping to qualify for the 2026 Boston Marathon are going to have to pick up the pace.

The Boston Athletic Association has updated its qualifying times for the world's oldest annual marathon, asking most prospective competitors to run a 26.2-mile race five minutes faster than in recent years to earn a starting number.

"Every time the BAA has adjusted qualifying standards - most recently in 2019 - we've seen athletes continue to raise the bar and elevate to new levels," Jack Fleming, president and CEO of the BAA, said in a statement posted Monday. "In recent years we've turned away athletes in this age range (18-59) at the highest rate, and the adjustment reflects both the depth of participation and speed at which athletes are running." (AP)

**Olmo to miss 4 to 5 weeks:** Barcelona got some bad news a day after extending its perfect start to the season, with winger Dani Olmo being diagnosed with a leg injury that will sideline him for four to five weeks.

The club said tests conducted showed he sustained a right hamstring injury in the second half of the 4-1 win at Catalan rival Girona in the Spanish league on Sunday.

Olmo had to be replaced in the 61st minute, less than 15 minutes after he had scored the team's third goal in the match. (AP)

### Spin-friendly Galle favors the home team

## Sri Lanka changes batting lineup for New Zealand tests

GALLE, Sri Lanka, Sept 17, (AP): Sri Lanka has rewarded Kamindu Mendis for his profitable tour of England by moving him up the batting order for the two-test series against New Zealand starting on Wednesday in Galle.

Mendis reaped a century and two half-centuries from his fourth, fifth and sixth career tests over the past month in England, where he was Sri Lanka's player of the series lost 2-1. In his brief test career, he has three hundreds and four fifties.

It was time to move him from No. 7 to No. 5 in the lineup, Sri Lanka coach Sanath Jayasuriya said on Tuesday.

"There was lot of discussion that

batth Jayasuriya and Ramesh Mendis.

"Our fast bowlers have done well, but it's horses for courses and we have to back spin in Galle," Jayasuriya said.

Spin-friendly Galle favors the home team, but New Zealand has done well in these contests. Sri Lanka last won a series against the Black Caps in 2009. The last two series in Sri Lanka in 2012 and 2019 ended 1-1.

New Zealand has retired Sri Lanka great Rangana Herath on its staff to help its spinners, but the weather might be a bigger influence. The forecast across the test is not good.

The visitors will be used to that. Rain and a soggy outfield washed out

all five days of New Zealand's scheduled one-off test against Afghanistan last week in Greater Noida, India. That was also to be New Zealand's warmup for this series.

"Disappointing, no doubt, but we cannot control the weather," New Zealand captain Tim Southee said. "It would have been nice to have a test match against an ever improving side. However, we have had some good training and have spent time together both in India and in Galle."

While New Zealand hasn't played a test since March, it won't be cold for long.

"Eight test matches between now

and December is lot of cricket. We are excited," Southee said. "We are ranked three in the World Test Championship and it's an opportunity for us to get some points and move forward."

He has another personal milestone in sight, too. Southee needs 20 more wickets to become the second New Zealander to take 400 in tests after Richard Hadlee's 431.

"I have played for a long time and when you do that you come closer to these milestones," said Southee, who has 100 caps. "We have a lot of tours ahead. Especially in this part of the world. Every game you are going out to do your role and take wickets for the side. It will be nice if I can achieve those milestones. But the focus is on winning games."

#### Lineups:

Sri Lanka squad: Dhananjaya de Silva (captain), Dimuth Karunaratne, Pathum Nissanka, Kusal Mendis, Angelo Mathews, Dinesh Chandimal, Kamindu Mendis, Sadeera Samarawickrama, Oshada Fernando, Asitha Fernando, Vishwa Fernando, Lahiru Kumara, Prabath Jayasuriya, Ramesh Mendis, Jeffrey Vandersay, Milan Rathnayake.

New Zealand squad: Tim Southee (captain), Tom Blundell, Michael Bracewell, Devon Conway, Matt Henry, Tom Latham, Daryl Mitchell, Will O'Rourke, Ajaz Patel, Glenn Phillips, Rachin Ravindra, Mitchell Santner, Ben Sears, Kane Williamson and Will Young.



Sri Lanka's Kamindu Mendis bats during day two of the Third Rothsay Men's Test match between England and Sri Lanka in London. (AP)

**CRICKET**

Kamindu has to move up the order when we were in England. Too often he was batting with the tail and we felt that we need to make the best use of him," Jayasuriya said.

Former captain Dinesh Chandimal, who occupied the No. 5 slot, has been moved to No. 3 and stripped of wicket-keeping duty. Kusal Mendis, no relation to Kamindu, will keep wickets and bat at No. 7.

Sri Lanka is expected to make two more changes from the side that beat England in the third test last week at the Oval. Seam bowlers Vishwa Fernando and Milan Rathnayake are expected to make way for spinners Pra-



Birmingham City co-owner Tom Brady meets the players before the Sky Bet League One soccer match in Birmingham, England. (AP)

# Sports

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Al-Gharafa hopes to continue strong form against Maliha

## Kuwait Club faces Al-Salmiya in high-stakes derby

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 17: Kuwait Club, defending champion and host of the 39th Arab Handball Clubs Championship, will face off against Al-Salmiya at 8:00 pm in a highly anticipated Kuwaiti Derby.

Earlier in the day, Al-Karkh of Iraq will play Al-Qoton of Yemen at 2:00 pm. In Group 2, Al-Gharafa of Qatar will take on Maliha of the UAE at 4:00 pm, followed by a 6:00 pm clash between Al-Qadisiya and Egypt's Al-Ahly Bank. All matches are being held at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Complex Hall in Sabah Al-Salem.

Kuwait Club opened its campaign with a dominant 44-13 win over Al-Qoton while Al-Qadisiya suffered a narrow 22-24 loss to Qatar's Al-Gharafa in a fiercely contested match. Despite Al-Qadisiya controlling much of the game, Al-Gharafa's experienced stars secured victory in the final moments.

### HANDBALL

The top four teams from each group will advance to the quarter-finals.

Today's first match is expected to favor Al-Karkh due to the relative inexperience of Al-Qoton, which is considered the weakest team in the tournament. In the second match, Al-Gharafa hopes to continue its strong form against Maliha, while Al-Qadisiya looks to bounce back from its opening loss. Al-Ahly Bank, which lost to Al-Hashd in the first round, also seeks to recover in its game against Al-Gharafa.

The day's final showdown is the highly anticipated derby between the reigning powerhouse of Kuwaiti handball, Kuwait Club and its rival Al-Salmiya. While Kuwait has had the upper hand in recent local encounters, the stakes and dynamics of the Arab Championship make this a different contest with higher stakes.

Meanwhile, Mubarak Amash Al-Daihani, Board Member of Kuwait Handball Federation, dedicated Kuwait's bronze medal win in the 10th Asian Junior Handball Championship and qualification for the 2025 Junior World Cup Finals to Kuwait's political leadership, represented by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaleel Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, as well as to the Kuwaiti people. He expressed gratitude for their continued support of Kuwaiti sports and handball.

## Birmingham City downs Wrexham

BIRMINGHAM, England, Sept 17: (AP) Tom Brady won bragging rights over Ryan Reynolds and Rob McElhenney when his Birmingham City side beat Wrexham 3-1 in a match dubbed a Hollywood derby.

The English third-tier match would not normally make a ripple but the profiles of both clubs' owners have changed that story in recent years.

Reynolds and McElhenney bought Wrexham in 2021, while Brady bought a small share in Birmingham through owner Knighthead Capital Management in 2023.

The BBC suggested the game was the biggest in the history of England's League One and it certainly brought new attention and glamour, as well as a smile to the face of Brady.

It took a while for that famous grin to emerge.

The seven-time Super Bowl champion watched from the stands alongside his friend David Beckham and must have squirmed when Jack Marriott put Wrexham ahead after just three minutes.

Birmingham, though, stormed back with record signing Jay Stansfield in fine form.

Stansfield equalized midway through the first half, then headed Birmingham ahead seven minutes into the second period.

Japanese midfielder Tomoki Iwata added a third nearly an hour in as Birmingham dominated in front of its own fans.

Birmingham's Krystian Bielik was issued a red card with four minutes remaining but it was too late for the Welsh side to react.



Kuwait Club players attempt to score against Al-Qoton during the opening match of the 39th Arab Handball Clubs Championship.

## Al-Nassr held by Al-Shorta in Champs League Elite opener

Kessie nets winner as Al-Ahli edges Persepolis

Better equipped to succeed

## PSG starts Champions League without a galactico

PARIS, Sept 17, (AP): For more than a decade, Paris Saint-Germain's Qatari owners have spent lavishly to attract big stars.

Their goal was to make the club profitable, to erase the amateurish image of a side often associated with hooligans, and to build a competitive team capable of winning the Champions League.

With unprecedented revenues surpassing 800 million euros (\$890 million) for the first time last year, they have managed to build solid growth.

They also succeeded in ridding their stadium of the violence that often made the atmosphere at the Parc des Princes so tense and hostile.

And they also managed to bring the biggest names in the game to Paris. The likes of Zlatan Ibrahimovic, Lionel Messi, Neymar and Kylian Mbappé at times offered a glimpse of the possibility of winning Europe's biggest tournament.

But the Champions League crown remained a distant dream.

The superstars have all now left the Parc des Princes, and it might sound paradoxical, but the club may be better equipped in its quest for continental glory.

Following the exits of Messi to Inter Miami and Neymar to Saudi Arabia team Al-Hilal in previous years, the departure of Mbappé to Real Madrid this summer marked the end of an era at PSG, where relying on the individ-



PSG's Ousmane Dembele runs with the ball watched by Lille's Thomas Meunier, left, during the French League 1 soccer match between Lille and Paris Saint-Germain, in Villeneuve-d'Ascq, France. (AP)

ual skills of star players and splashing money have been the norm since the 2011 Qatari takeover.

The big hole left by Mbappé was not filled by yet another superstar.

Instead, coach Luis Enrique insisted on moulding what he had. Enrique's project makes sense: Mbappé can't be duplicated but he could be replaced by a handful of attacking players capable of scoring as much, or more, than the France captain did.

"To me, this is the continuation of last season," said Enrique, who has

used 21 players in four French league games so far. "We are a young team, that is true. But we are full of desire and hunger, which is a wonderful thing. I'm so lucky to have this sort of squad."

Enrique asked for the recruitment of less known but excellent players in every sector to create competition and have second options at every position. It could be even more crucial this season as the Champions League's new format will see more teams playing more games. PSG starts on Wednesday against Spanish side Girona.

PSG signed goalkeeper Matvey Safonov, highly rated defender William Pachó and promising midfielder João Neves, as well as winger Désiré Doué. Pachó was impressive at Eintracht Frankfurt while the versatile Neves has already earned 11 caps with Portugal at the age of 19.

### SOCCER

Pachó and Neves have quickly gelled with the team and the new-look PSG has delivered immediately. They have won their first four matches to top the Ligue 1 standings.

"PSG is way stronger collectively than last year, everybody runs and defends." Brest coach Eric Roy said after his side lost to the French titleholder 3-1 over the weekend. "Especially when they lose the ball, they put a lot of pressure."

The biggest question mark going into the season was PSG's ability to maintain a potent attack without its best player. With two quick and powerful players on the wings - Ousmane Dembélé and Badley Barcola - partnering Marco Asensio in a false No. 9 role, PSG seems to have found the right answer.

The team has scored 16 goals, conceding just three, and boasts the best goal difference after four Ligue matches since Reims in 1952. Only Marseille forward Mason Greenwood has more goals than Barcola and Dembélé, while João Neves leads the league with three assists.

But for all of PSG's dominance of the French league - winning it in 10 of the last 12 seasons - it has reached just one Champions League final since being bought by Qatar Sports Investments. No surprise Enrique does not want to get carried away.

Asked about the perceived improvement, he said, "We will see at the end of the season what the team has achieved."

### 'Too many games'

Players close to going on 'strike'

MANCHESTER, England, Sept 17, (AP): Manchester City midfielder Rodri says top soccer players are close to going on strike because of the number of games they are having to play.

The Spain international said players are concerned about the way the game is headed as more games are added to the calendar in competitions like the Champions League, which starts on Tuesday.

Rodri was asked on Tuesday if players might start refusing to play because of the calendar.

"I think we are close to that," he said in a news conference ahead of City's Champions League opener against Inter Milan on Wednesday. "It's easy to understand. You ask any player, he will say the same - it's not the opinion of (just) Rodri or whoever. I think it's a general opinion of the players."

"If it keeps this way, it will be a moment when we have no other option. I really think. It's something that worries us because we are the guys who suffer."

Rodri is expected to start his first game for City this season when Inter visits Etihad Stadium, having been given an extended break by the club after winning the European Championship with Spain in July.

### SOCCER

City has two more games to play in the first stage of the Champions League and up to seven matches more in the Club World Cup, which is scheduled to take place in the United States at the end of the domestic season.

The introduction by FIFA of a 32-team Club World Cup, which will be played every four years, is regarded by global players' union FIFPRO as a tipping point for the expansion of international competitions. The union has started a legal challenge against FIFA over its expanded competitions, which include the first 48-team men's World Cup in 2026, because it believes too much is being asked of players without consultation.

Rodri said players can be expected to "perform at the highest level" if they play 40 to 50 games. Not 60 to 70 matches, a number Rodri might have to play if City goes far in all of the competitions it enters.

Julian Alvarez, who played for City the past two seasons before moving to Atletico Madrid, was picked in 83 match-day squads last season. Another City player, Phil Foden, played in 72.

"In my humble opinion, I think it is too much," Rodri said. "We have to take care of ourselves. Someone has to take care of ourselves because we are the main characters of, let's say, this sport or this business."

"Not everything is money or marketing. It is also the quality of the show. In my opinion, when I rest, when I'm not tired, I perform better. If people want to see better football, we need to rest."

Rodri said teammate Erling Haaland is demonstrating how a player can benefit from getting more of a break.

Norway did not qualify for Euro 2024 so Haaland had the summer off, and has started this season by scoring nine goals in City's first four games.

"It gives you a clue why we ask for this," Rodri said.



Rodri