



Soccer
Page 16



stc
Page 9

Opinion

We don't want to fix a mistake with another mistake

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

HONESTY is the best policy and the most effective way to correct a mistake. I hence express my opinion the way I see things and the way the majority does as well.

It is imperative for us to evaluate the negative aspects of the last 50 years, which outweigh the positives and cannot be relied upon to build a strong state.

As we have been saying for a while, Kuwait is ruled by 51 leaders. The National Assembly comprises 50 of them, while the real leader resides in the Seif Palace. These 50 leaders have overshadowed everything. They have infiltrated the judiciary and the executive authority, and fearlessly undermined the balance of power, which is essential for modern governance. They even turned the entire government into something akin to a "Friday market", where values are traded.

They have planted their cronies in every institution, perpetuating injustice to such an extent that a competent individual who is not loyal to them is labeled corrupt, while the incompetent thrive due to tribal, sectarian, regional, or partisan ties, or self interest.

As a result, due to the widespread corruption, capable officials have been removed, and projects have been suspended or canceled simply because certain lawmakers did not receive their due share, or because they failed to promote the party's agenda or protect the interests of powerful profiteers. They enacted laws that were tailored to serve their narrow financial and social interests.

They have severely harmed Kuwait's relations with its neighbors and beyond. For example, they offended leaders in Gulf and Arab countries, presenting themselves as the sole holders of connections and solutions.

Also, when the leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council approved to support Egypt following its liberation from the Muslim Brotherhood Group, MPs who were aligned with the group

Continued on Page 5

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Kuwait security tops UK priorities: envoy

By Paulo Francisco X. Fernandes
Arab Times/Al-Seyassah Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: The British Ambassador to Kuwait, HE Belinda Lewis hosted the local media representatives at her residence Thursday during which she gave a brief account on developments surrounding the Kuwait-UK Joint Steering Group (JSG) and cultural exchange initiatives. The discussions emphasized the strengthening of diplomatic, defense, and economic ties between the two nations.



Lewis

The key highlights included the formation of new defense and political subgroups to tackle mutual security challenges and international development, along with significant humanitarian efforts in Gaza, Yemen, and Sudan. The event also celebrated cultural collaborations, marking 125 years of diplomatic relations between Kuwait and the UK.

Her excellency disclosed on Sept 3 and 4, the Kuwait-UK Joint Steering Group held vital discussions, marked by the formation of two new subgroups – Defense and Political – the defense subgroup for the purpose of tackling mutual security challenges and exploring more efficient procurement mechanisms to streamline military collaboration.

The political subgroup, co-chaired by Kuwait's Assistant Foreign Minister for Europe Affairs, HE Ambassador Sadiq Marafi, and Melinda Bohannon from the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office, concentrated on international development and humanitarian efforts.

Continued on Page 5

Gaza school hit, 22 dead

37 killed in Israeli air raid on Beirut suburb

BEIRUT, Sept 21, (AP): The death toll from an Israeli airstrike on a Beirut suburb rose to 37, including seven women and three children, Lebanon's health minister said on Saturday, as Israel and Hezbollah traded fire.

Among those killed were Ibrahim Akil, who was in charge of Hezbollah's elite Radwan Force, and Ahmed Wahbi, another senior commander in the group's military wing.

Firas Abiad told reporters 68 people were also wounded of whom 15 remained in hospital, adding that search and rescue operations were still ongoing, with the number of casualties likely to rise.

The rare strike hit an apartment block in a densely populated south Beirut neighborhood on Friday afternoon during rush hour as people returned home. It was the deadliest strike targeting the Lebanese capital since the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war.

Continued on Page 5



Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah poses for a picture with the members of Kuwait's permanent mission to the UN.

Amir Rep meets members of Kuwait's mission to UN

NEW YORK, Sept 21, (KUNA): Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received members of Kuwait's permanent mission to the UN and the delegation participating in the 79th session of the UN General Assembly in New York late Friday, with the presence of Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya.

The meeting was attended by Director General of Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority Sheikh Dr. Meshal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Kuwaiti Ambassador to the US Sheikha Al-Zain Sabah Al-Nasser Al-Sabah and Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Tareq Al-Banna.

Ambassador Tariq Al-Banna affirmed that the noticeable increase of participation in the 79th UN General Assembly represents the true position of the organization in facing difficult challenges.

Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah will head the Kuwaiti delegation in the assembly.

Continued on Page 5

Jail time, fines for cash vehicle sales in Kuwait

Sales offices to remain closed till case decided

MoH launches virtual office for patients abroad

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi declared on Saturday the launch of a virtual office to deal with overseas patients.

This service is a quantum leap and unique in health system, Al-Awadhi told reporters in a statement following the launch.

The step aims to accelerate the pace, and facilitate communication with patients abroad and measures with Kuwait's embassies, through positive cooperation with other countries' foreign ministries, he noted.

The office will lessen cost through minimizing overseas health offices, he said, noting that downsizing staff and closing some offices are being considered.

Al-Awadhi pointed out that programs were implemented after being approved by the Civil Service Commission.

Al-Awadhi revealed that the ministry is considering expanding virtual offices working around the clock.

He referred that communication with patients abroad and accelerating their treatment are the ministry's top priority.

He further underlined the importance of moving to digital system, in accordance with a well-studied plan.

In addition, the minister affirmed that several projects would be inaugurated through the launch of the ministry's strategic plan.

He finally reiterated eagerness to develop health system in a way that serves citizens, the statement noted.



Minister of Health, Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi, listens to an explanation about virtual health offices for treatment abroad.

92.8% Kuwaitis granted Schengen visas in 2023

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: In 2023, a total of 12,069 Schengen visa applications from Kuwaiti citizens were rejected, despite a total of 166,598 visas being granted, resulting in an impressive acceptance rate of 92.8 percent, reports Al-Seyassah daily quoting reliable sources.

France, Germany, and Italy remained the top destinations for Kuwaitis, receiving a combined 107,465 applications as France accounted for 40,712 applications, Germany 35,611, and Italy 31,142.

Italy led in visa approvals with a 97.10% acceptance rate, followed by Germany at 95%, and France at 94.9%. Meanwhile, the statistics showed that Norway had the lowest acceptance rate at 72.2%.

Germany also issued the highest number of multiple-entry visas to Kuwaitis, granting 153,608 visas in 2023, followed by Italy and France with 85,005 and 53,106, respectively.

Despite ongoing efforts to secure a Schengen visa exemption for Kuwaiti citizens -- a process first raised in December 2015 -- the issue remains unresolved.

Continued on Page 5

Kuwait global partner in using nuke science for development

VIENNA, Sept 21, (KUNA): Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Rafael Grossi hailed Kuwait as an important partner in the global efforts to harness the atom for peace and development.

Speaking at an event, organized by Kuwait and the IAEA at the UN headquarters in Vienna Thursday to celebrate the 60th anniversary of Kuwait's membership in the IAEA, Grossi commended Kuwait's efforts and active role, through its contributions to the agency's initiatives, in using nuclear energy for promoting peace and achieving sustainable development worldwide.

He affirmed the IAEA determination to continue fruitful cooperation with Kuwait.

IAEA chief highlighted Kuwait's role and firm commitment to applying nuclear science and technology to achieve the UN sustainable development goals.

Continued on Page 5

Social insurance laws unchanged

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21, (KUNA): Kuwait's Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS) said on Saturday that the current social insurance laws remain unchanged. In a statement, the institution said retirement measures are still untouched without any change, mainly end-of-service indemnities, and retirement age for both males and females.

It urged people to follow its official media accounts and website for relevant news, according to the statement.

Continued on Page 5

Kuwaiti investments in Egypt estimated to be 20 bln dollars

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

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: The Egyptian Ambassador to Kuwait Osama Shaltout says the Egyptian-Kuwaiti Joint Higher Committee will convene in Cairo on September 12 under the patronage and presence of the foreign ministers of both countries.

During a press conference held at the embassy yesterday morning, he affirmed that this meeting is one of the most prominent outcomes of the state visit by His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad to Egypt last April/May.

The ambassador stressed that the visit played a pivotal role in convening the joint

committee for the first time since 2018, affirming the commitment of both the Egyptian and Kuwaiti sides to strengthen their long standing fraternal relationship and to advance it in the coming stage.

He also affirmed the commitment of both countries to the directives issued by their leaders to strengthen and develop relations for the mutual benefit of Egypt and Kuwait.

Ambassador Shaltout highlighted the meeting between Kuwait's Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya, Egyptian President Abdul Fattah el-Sisi, and Prime Minister Dr. Mustafa Madbouly, which reflects the depth of relations between the two countries.

Continued on Page 5

'Sahel' back to work

PACI slashes addresses of 624 from civil record

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: The Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) has announced through the 'Kuwait Al-Yaum' newspaper that the residential addresses of 624 individuals have been removed from its records. This action was taken either based on the property owner's declaration or because the building in question no longer exists.

The Authority has urged these individuals to visit its offices to register a new address, providing the necessary supporting documents within 30 days of the report. Failure to comply within this time-frame will result in penalties as outlined in Article 33 of Law No. 32.

Meanwhile, the Sahel application returns to work after conducting periodic maintenance, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The application had announced that it would be stopped for periodic maintenance starting at 12:15 midnight on Friday.

NewsWatch

KUWAIT CITY: The Amiri Diwan on Friday mourned the passing away of **Sheikh Meshal Abdulaziz Al-Malek Al-Sabah** at the age of 76.

The funeral service took place Friday afternoon after Asr prayers. (KUNA)

RABAT: The Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) on Friday called for unifying efforts to promote the culture of peace in a bid to build more resilient and prosperous societies amid peace and security challenges.

The Rabat-based Islamic bloc made the call in a press release marking the International Day of Peace, which falls on September 21. (KUNA)

Prayer Timings

Fajr	04:16	Asr	15:08
Sunrise ..	05:35	Maghrib ..	17:47
Zohr	11:41	Isha	19:03

Local

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

Weather

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Hot with light variable wind to light to moderate southeasterly wind, with speeds of 08-28 km/h.

By Night: Rather hot and relatively humid over coastal areas

with light to moderate southeasterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 08-28 km/h.

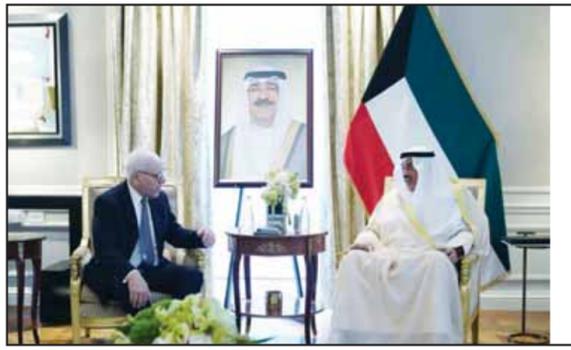
Station

Max Exp

Min Rec

Abdaly

Bubyan	35	23
Jahra	42	29
Failaka Island	38	24
Salmiyah	36	31
Ahmadi	39	24
Jal Aliyah	41	27
Nuwaisib	40	27



Left: The Rep of HH the Amir receives Jonathan Gray, David Rubenstein (center) and David Solomon at HH's residence in New York.

HH Amir's Representative receives leaders of major US firms in New York

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21, (KUNA): Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah discussed the economic and investment cooperation with representatives of major US corporations and agencies.

He received at his residence in New York Jonathan Gray - president and chief operating officer of Blackstone; David M. Rubenstein - co-founder and co-chairman of the board of Carlyle Group; David M. Solomon - Chairman and CEO of Goldman Sachs Group; Mohammad Al-Derbas - Goldman Sachs executive; and Judson Althoff - chief commercial officer at Microsoft.

His Highness the Crown Prince also re-

ceived Vice President of the US Chamber of Commerce for Middle East Affairs Steve Lutes and a number of representatives of major US firms.

He conveyed to his guests the greetings of His Highness the Amir, voicing a desire to strengthen the presence of the global firms in Kuwait to enhance experience sharing and investment cooperation.

The meetings were attended by Kuwait Foreign Minister Abdullah Ali Al-Yahya, Director General of Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority Sheikh Dr. Meshal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Ambassador to the United States Sheikhha Al-Zain Sabah Al-Nasser Al-Sabah and Permanent Representative to the United Nations Tareq Mohammad Al-Banai.

HH Amir congratulates Malta & Belize on national days

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Saturday a cable of congratulations to Malta's President Myriam Spiteri Debono on her country's National Day. In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished the president well-being, and Malta and its friendly people further progress and prosperity. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations to President Myriam Spiteri

Debono on her country's National Day, wishing her everlasting well-being.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations to President Myriam Spiteri Debono on her country's National Day.

Also, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad sent on Saturday a cable of congratulations to Froyla Tzalam, Governor General of Belize, on her country's National Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished

Governor General Tzalam good health and wellbeing, and more progress and prosperity for Belize and its friendly people.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled sent a cable of congratulations to Froyla Tzalam, Governor General of Belize, on her country's National Day.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah sent a cable of congratulations to Governor General Froyla Tzalam on her country's National Day.

Other Voices

Indian story... and a beautiful celebration of Onam festival

By Ahmed alsarraf

The situation in India, marked by severe oppression and attacks on the Muslim minority -- and to a lesser extent, other minorities such as Christians -- is deeply troubling, especially given the apparent indifference of the Indian government.

However, I believe this is a temporary phase that will pass, as long as external forces do not interfere and fuel divisions. India's rich heritage of tolerance, which spans thousands of years, will ultimately be the true test and will play a decisive role in preserving civil peace.

I have previously written about how my relationship with the Indian community spans more than seventy years. It was solidified in 1964 when I found myself working closely with them in banking, and later in 1989, when I established one of my most important business ventures alongside several Indian citizens from various religious backgrounds.

Over the years, as the company grew and I made frequent visits to India, these professional connections deepened into lasting friendships with a large group of Indians.

A few days ago, my employees informed me that they were preparing to celebrate Onam, a significant festival for the people of Kerala, which is also appreciated by others across India.

Onam is a rice harvest festival and a beautiful annual occasion that holds cultural importance. It symbolizes the return of King Mahabali to his former kingdom once a year, according to the ancient Indian calendar. Typically, Onam is celebrated between August and September and dates back to the third century AD.

During the celebrations, homes are adorned with yellow and red roses, and the festivities span eight days. People wear new clothes, with men donning a white loincloth and women wearing the traditional Kerala saree.



alsarraf

The celebrations include various competitions, dances, and vibrant banquets. Food plays a central role, with nine different types of dishes served on wide green banana leaves to tens of thousands of people.

In hotels and temples, the variety of curries offered can reach up to 30 types. As the saying goes, everyone must have an "Onam" lunch, even before going to sleep. It's also customary during this time to replace all crockery with new ones, marking the fresh start symbolized by the festival.

The Indian employees of the company were delighted when I accepted their invitation to join in the Onam celebration, and they politely requested that I wear a traditional loincloth, which I gladly did.

Upon entering the venue, I was immediately struck by the pure, spontaneous joy on everyone's faces -- about a hundred people in total. Their happiness grew even more as I participated in the special Kerala lunch. The event began with a beautiful ceremony where we stood in front of a small fire, placed near a carefully drawn circle on the ground, decorated with flower petals and vibrant roses, while we took souvenir photos.

I offered to cover the cost of the food for this wonderful occasion, but they informed me that the company manager, a Bohra, had already promised to pay before leaving on a business trip.

They also mentioned that the restaurant providing the Kerala cuisine was owned by a Sunni Muslim, and the food had been delivered by a Christian driver from Bombay.

I was truly moved by the spirit of the celebration, which was held in a modest space, free from any animosity or prejudice, and full of love and selflessness.

I couldn't help but wish we had a bit more of their tolerance, where people come together harmoniously, regardless of cultural, religious, or sectarian differences.

That day, I witnessed the pinnacle of tolerance and the beauty of human co-existence. I saw the greatness of India, a nation that I am confident will soon return to being a safe haven for all its people.

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SAB highlights non-compliance in CAIT's change order process

CAPT to set date for opening bidding envelopes

By Mohammed Al-Muslih, Mohammed Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: According to informed sources, the State Audit Bureau (SAB) rejected the request of Central Agency for Information Technology (CAIT) to issue change orders that would add KD 1.9 million to the contract for renting Microsoft programs and licenses, as well as for maintenance, technical support, and other services required for government agencies.

After reviewing the documentation, SAB stated that CAIT did not adhere to the provisions outlined in SAB's circular No. 6/2018, which specifies the controls and rules that entities under its oversight must follow when submitting documents for prior review, including the guidelines for preparing tender papers, draft contracts, and agreements.

CAIT also did not provide SAB with the approval from the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) to issue the change orders.

In addition, SAB discovered that the total percentage of change orders issued on the contract, including the one under investigation, amounted to 12.59 percent of the total contract value.

The sources explained that law No. 49/2016 regarding public tenders states that the relevant authority may not issue change orders in contracts subject to this law that exceed the total non-mandatory value - either by increasing or decreasing - by more than five percent of the total contract value, except with the approval of the Board of the Central Agency for Public Tenders.

SAB returned the matter to CAIT, requesting that it fulfill the necessary requirements and resubmit the request without delay for further review and a prior opinion.

Meanwhile, the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) will soon set the date for opening the bidding envelopes for the construction of the new building of the State Audit Bureau (SAB), which was originally scheduled for Sept 24, say sources from the Ministry of Public Works.

Sources pointed out that if there is no further postponement, the bidding envelopes will be opened and forwarded to the Construction Projects Sector in the ministry to be evaluated by the Technical Committee. Sources said the committee will then prepare a recommendation regarding the offers and refer it to CAPT, which will award the contract to the bidder with technical and financial merits.

Sources confirmed that the ministry has completed the study and design of the building that will be established in Shuwaikh Administrative Area on land measuring 10,000 square meters with a building area of 80,000 square meters.



Jahra Governor Al-Habashi visits health and education facilities.

Annahar photo

Committed to improve essential services: Jahra governor

The Jahra Governor Hamad Jasim Al-Habashi has emphasized the state's commitment to improving essential services that directly affect citizens' well-being, particularly in the areas of health and education, reports Annahar daily.

He highlighted the importance of the concerned authorities fulfill-

ing their responsibilities to ensure these services are provided effectively.

During an inspection visit to the health and education facilities in Jahra, Al-Habashi said, "Kuwait's health and education services are a source of pride for both citizens and residents.

"However, we continually call

for improvements in quality, given their significant impact on people's lives and the importance of building a strong infrastructure."

He further noted that the political leadership places great importance on these sectors, fully believing in the need for their development to benefit the nation and its people.

Symposium dedicated to poetic works of Dr Suad Al-Sabah

'Kuwait beacon of cultural influence in region'

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: The Iraqi critics and academics have lauded Kuwait's significant contributions to the cultural and literary landscape during the 25th session of the Baghdad International Book Fair on Thursday. The discussions highlighted Kuwait as a beacon of cultural influence in the region, reports Annahar daily.

The praise came during a symposium dedicated to the poetic works of Dr. Suad Al-Sabah, where Iraqi scholars emphasized Kuwait's advanced status in literary fields, which has enabled its people to achieve success.

Dr. Sadiq Rahma, Executive Director of the UNESCO Baghdad City of Literary Creativity Project, noted that the symposium was part of a broader cultural diplomacy effort aimed at enhancing Iraq's ties with neighboring countries, particularly Kuwait.

The event, which was moderated by critic Hamza Aliwi, featured insights from notable speakers, includ-



A photo from the symposium.

Annahar photo

ing poet and academic Dr. Hamad Al-Dokhi, critic Dr. Moj Al-Youssef, and Professor Dr. Zainab Al-Khafaji.

They explored the creative dimensions of Al-Sabah's poetry, emphasizing her focus on humanitarian issues and advocacy for women's rights, alongside significant Arab causes, particularly the Palestinian

struggle.

Dr. Al-Youssef highlighted Al-Sabah's enduring commitment to major humanitarian concerns, crediting her as a pivotal figure in Arabic literature and poetry. He pointed out that her work symbolizes the fraternal ties between Kuwait and Iraq, reinforcing cultural unity.

Move aims to enhance user security, speed up browsing

Nazaha & Finance collaborate to enhance integrity, oversight

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: The Anti-Corruption Commission (Nazaha) recently met with representatives from the Ministry of Finance to discuss the activation of the Inspection and Audit Office at the Ministry, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This collaboration aims to advance the support project focused on strengthening integrity and com-

bating corruption.

During the meeting, both sides discussed strategies to implement and enhance standards and mechanisms of accountability within the public sector.

This initiative includes improving accounting, auditing, and oversight processes. The outcomes of this collaboration will be shared with the Public Authority for Ap-

plied Education and Training to support business development and ensure the highest levels of integrity and governance.

The activation of the Inspection and Audit Office is part of a broader effort to bolster transparency and accountability within government institutions, reflecting a commitment to upholding strong ethical standards and effective oversight.

'Quick action needed to address violence and bullying in schools'

"I RECEIVED a voice message on my phone from a mother – who mentioned her name – stating that her son studying at a private school was assaulted by ten students at the end of the school day outside the school walls and the school security guards present near the gate did nothing. They just stood by as spectators," columnist, Prof. Dr. Bahija Behbehani, wrote for Al-Qabas daily.

"They failed to take the initiative to rescue the student who was mercilessly beaten under the pretext the incident was happening outside the school, and it was not their responsibility.

"Had it not been for the two mothers who happened to be there and helped to resolve the dispute and protect the student, something unfortunate might have happened.

"The United Nations World Report (2006) on Violence against Children states that "victims of corporal punishment, whether at school or at home, may develop into passive or aggressive adults. The involvement in bullying at school can be a predictor of future antisocial and criminal behavior."

"Bullying in educational settings includes hostile intent, harassment, and provocation. School bullying can have several negative effects on the bullied student, including anger and depression, and may even lead to suicide.

"Bullying is a threat to the physical and emotional safety of students at school and has a negative impact on their understanding and learning ability.

"The best way to reduce bullying is to train teachers, learners, students, and school staff to prevent bullying.

"Violence and bullying by teachers and other students can make learners afraid to go to school and weaken their ability to concentrate in class or participate in school activities.

"However, one of the most serious consequences of bullying is the death of the bullied student due to being severely and violently beaten by several bullies!

"This is what almost happened to this student, whose mother contacted me and also mentioned that her son's case is currently being considered by the Public Prosecution Office?"

"Who do we hold responsible for what happened to this bullied student? Is it the responsibility of the private school that confirms that it is not responsible for what happens outside the school walls?"

"In my personal opinion, the school should assign school guards near the gate to monitor students after school hours and resolve disputes between them if they are near them.

"The Ministry of Interior should also assign two police cars to stand for 30-60 minutes while students are leaving the school gate to force them to respect the law, and certainly to prevent them from quarreling with each other in order to preserve the lives of our sons and daughters."

Also:

"Cleaning Kuwait of past issues like backwardness, corruption, and negligence requires sacrifices and, importantly, visible improvements in public services that citizens and residents can feel. The call is for a swift and effective execution of development plans, especially as Kuwait has signed various agreements with China to enhance infrastructure," columnist **Walid Ibrahim Al-Ahmed**, wrote for Al-Rai daily.

"The Chinese ambassador highlighted the involvement of around 60

Chinese companies in over 80 projects in Kuwait, emphasizing the economic ties between the two countries.

"Given that Kuwait is a major oil supplier to China, there's a strong push for the government to expedite stalled projects and improve services, particularly in problematic areas like Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh, which faces significant corruption issues.

"The urgency for progress is underscored by the need to complete critical projects like road repairs and the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port, which promises substantial economic returns.

"On a lighter note, the recent national concerns include the lackluster performance of the Kuwaiti football team in a World Cup qualifying match against Iraq, which raises questions about organizational capabilities for upcoming sporting events like the Gulf Cup.

"Overall, the message is clear: to achieve real improvement, there must be prompt action and accountability in government projects and services."

"To keep it brief, a dedicated Kuwaiti doctor worked tirelessly to achieve her goals, earning a degree in anatomy. Although her true calling lies in forensic medicine or criminal evidence, she was nominated by the Civil Service Commission (CSC) for a secretarial position in the Ministry of Education. After initially being rejected, she was nominated again for the same position. On the third attempt, she was offered the same secretary role instead of a position as a science teacher, despite her qualifications," columnist **Talal Al-Saeed** wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"No one questions what CSC is doing; the situation is far more complex than most ordinary Kuwaitis realize. If you search for an expatriate advisor on the eighth floor in CSC, you might uncover the truth.

"It appears that some are intentionally killing the ambitions of Kuwaiti youth to ensure that expatriates in CSC retain their positions. There seems to be a deliberate policy aimed at discouraging citizens and convincing decision-makers that Kuwaitis are unwilling to work, thereby allowing expatriates to maintain control over the situation.

"The replacement policy that they are fighting against has not been implemented. Unfortunately, they have succeeded in this effort, as evidenced by the forensic doctor being assigned to a secretarial position in the Ministry of Education. Is this really convincing?"

"The leaders in CSC seem unaware of the situation. They have entrusted their authority to an advisor who appears to be pursuing a calculated agenda aimed at undermining the country's infrastructure and stifling the ambitions of its citizens, allowing the status quo to persist.

"This is a reality that some choose to ignore, while expatriate advisors work to diminish the potential of national youth, and manipulate the appointment system to their advantage. This strategy seeks to alienate Kuwaitis and crush their aspirations. It is important to recognize that this is not a simple plan; it is a comprehensive strategy that deserves our attention.

"The most troubling aspect of the court's response to the anatomist's case is the claim that she is a "zoology" graduate who later changed her degree. Is zoology truly compatible with the Ministry of Education? This excuse is even worse than the sin.

"Oh God, grant them the strength and wisdom to navigate these challenges successfully."

— **Compiled by PFX Fernandes and Mahmoud Ateyieh**



Dr. Behbehani

Interior Ministry denies news reports on adopting new uniforms for its personnel



Contraband seized from the women's salon.

Al-Jarida photo

Women's salon closed, 7 workers detained

The Public Authority for Manpower, in collaboration with a joint committee from the Ministry of Commerce, the Ministry of Health, and the Residence Affairs Investigations, has announced the administrative closure of a women's salon engaged in unlicensed medical procedures, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The salon was found offering services such as laser treatments, Botox injections, and fillers, using unauthorized equipment and medications of unknown origin.

Authorities discovered that these procedures were being carried out by seven unqualified workers. All medical supplies and devices were confiscated, and the violators have been referred to the appropriate legal bodies for further action.

The Public Authority for Manpower emphasized that protecting public health is a top priority and vowed to continue monitoring and addressing illegal practices that endanger public safety or violate labor laws.

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21, (KUNA): The Ministry of Interior denied on Friday that it was adopting a new uniform for its personnel, including officers, non-commissioned officers and individuals. The ministry clarified in a press statement that the recent meetings were coordination sessions, during which several proposed designs and colors for the police uniform were reviewed.

It said the designs are still being under study, and the final decision on adopting the new uniform will be made after presenting it to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, who has the power to approve the official uniform for the Ministry of Interior personnel.

The ministry called on the media and the public to verify accuracy and obtain information from official sources to avoid spreading incorrect news, stressing that the General Department of Security Relations and Media of the Ministry's Interior is reachable round the clock to answer any inquiries related to security matters.

Kuwait drops to 66th in UN e-government index

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: Kuwait has ranked 66th globally and 20th in Asia in the 2024 United Nations E-Government Development Index, slipping five positions from its previous ranking in 2022, reports Al-Rai daily.

In the Gulf region, Kuwait stands sixth, following Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, Oman, and Qatar.

Saudi Arabia made significant progress, leaping 25 places to secure the sixth spot globally, making it the top-ranked country in the region and the second among G20 nations.

The UAE ranks 11th globally, while Bahrain follows closely at 18th. Oman is positioned at 41st, and Qatar at 53rd.

This ranking reflects a broader trend, with several Gulf nations advancing: Qatar and the UAE moved up 25 and 19 places, respectively, while Bahrain improved by 36 spots and Oman by 9.

Smart traffic cameras 'capture' speeding violations in real-time

GTD arrests 116 minors for driving without license

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff & Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: Despite repeated warnings from the General Traffic Department to parents not to allow their children to drive vehicles, the department arrested 116 minors for driving without a license and referred them to Juvenile Prosecution. This marks the highest number of minors arrested in a single week.

According to weekly statistics from the General Traffic Department, 48,973 traffic violations were recorded, 96 vehicles and 67 motorcycles were seized, and 85 individuals wanted by police were arrested. Also, 72 wanted vehicles were confiscated, and 20 persons were apprehended.

The statistics revealed that 1,408 traffic accidents, which had resulted in 208 injuries, were dealt with.

According to a security source, traffic police have launched extensive campaigns targeting youths who gather at camps following the improved night weather, particularly in areas like Kabd, Subiya, Wafra farms, and others. These security campaigns will be intensified in the coming period to address these violations, and the violators will be referred to Public Prosecution.

□ □ □

Smart mechanism cameras: The smart mechanism in a traffic surveillance camera captures the plate number of the vehicle and records a serious violation if a motorist speeds up when passing by such a camera, reports Al-Shahed daily quoting sources from the General Traffic Department (GTD) in the Interior Ministry.

600 MW lost ... grid remains stable

Emergency outage at N. Shuaiba power station

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: Sources from the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy reported an emergency outage of three production units at the North Shuaiba power station, resulting in a loss of around 600 megawatts, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Despite the outage, the ministry's overall power output remained sufficient, and electricity loads were unaffected.

The failure was attributed to the relatively low temperature of 40°C, which eased the strain on the

grid, keeping the load index below 14,000 megawatts. The ministry plans to commence its annual maintenance program for these units in early October, preparing for the 2025 summer season when energy consumption is expected to surpass 18,000 megawatts.

The current energy purchase contracts with the Gulf Interconnection Authority will expire by the end of this month, with negotiations for new energy purchases from Gulf countries anticipated to start early next year.

stallation of several mobile surveillance cameras and about 400 fixed surveillance cameras.

□ □ □

Cleaning works monitored: The Public Relations Department at the Kuwait Municipality has announced that the inspection teams of the Public Sanitation and Road Occupancy departments in the governorates continue their campaigns to monitor the cleaning works and roads throughout the country, reports Al-Shahed daily.

Director of the Public Sanitation and Road Occupancy Department at the Municipality branch in Jahra Governorate Nawaf Al-Mutairi revealed that the inspection team in his department removed 42 abandoned and scrap cars in different parts of the governorate.

He stressed the need for the public to fully cooperate with the inspection teams that are keen on implementing the Municipality regulations and laws, indicating the violations and encroachments on State properties will never be tolerated as the Municipality will not hesitate in punishing those proven to have committed violations.

Public Prosecution extends football officials' detention

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: The Public Prosecution ordered the detention of Kuwait Football Association Chairman Haif Al-Daihani, his deputy Ahmed Aqla and Secretary General Salah Al-Qanaei until Sunday; pending investigation into the unfortunate turn of events in the match between the Kuwaiti and Iraqi teams that was held at Jaber Stadium as part of the Asian qualifiers for the 2026 World Cup, reports Al-Anba daily.

The prosecution investigated Al-Daihani, Aqla and Al-Qanaei on various charges; such as harming the country's interests, broadcasting false news about the internal situation and exposing Kuwait to the risk of severing relations with a friendly country, against the backdrop of the poor organization of the match, which resulted in the resignation of the chairman and members of the board of directors of the association.

Advert licenses checked

Municipality issues 40 citations

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: The Public Relations Department at the Kuwait Municipality has announced that the Audit and Municipal Services Follow-up departments in the Municipality branches in various governorates launched intensive inspection campaigns to check the validity of health and shop advertising licenses; as well as uncover violations of shop and market regulations, which will continue throughout the month of September, reports Al-Anba daily.

Director of the Audit and Municipal Services Follow-up Department at the Municipality branch in Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate Iman Al-Kandari said the aim of the intensive inspection campaigns is to track down violators. He revealed the supervisory team in his department carried out the inspection that resulted in the issuance of 40 citations for different violations like advertising a commercial activity without a license, displaying goods in the store without a license, and non-renewal of the advertisement license.



Sheikha Sheikha Al-Abdullah and Major General Walid Ahmed Al Shehab during the honoring of Tariq Al-Qallaf.

Police Fencing Championship concludes

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: The Police Fencing Championship for the Healthy and Determined People at the Police Officers Club concluded recently, reports Al-Anba daily.

Within the framework of the support provided by the security institution to different segments of society, especially people with determination;

the club organized the championship, in cooperation with fencing world champion Tariq Al-Qallaf.

Chairman of the Board of Directors of the club Major General Attorney Walid Ahmad Al-Shehab and a number of security officials attended the closing ceremony, during which the winners were honored.



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52.2 pct of plots in South Abdullah Al-Mubarak Housing Project ready

Fresh water concerns remain as new transformer deals move forward

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

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: The Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) has confirmed that 52.2 percent of plots in the South Abdullah Al-Mubarak Housing Project are completed.

According to sources, the project consists of 3,260 plots and substations.

PAHW recently contacted the Ministry of Electricity and Water for the delivery of fresh water to the project and to coordinate the cleaning and sterilization of the freshwater network.

Approximately 52.23 percent of the plots have reached the finishing stage. However, many citizens complained about the lack of fresh water delivery.

Meanwhile, PAHW has signed a contract for the supply, installation, implementation, and maintenance of ten main transformer stations with a voltage of 132/11 kV in the South Sabah Al-Ahmad Residential City Project.

The acting Director General of the authority Rashid Al-Enezi explained that the contract was awarded to a local company for a total value of KD 44 million, with a work duration set at 730 days.

The stations will serve the N5, N6, N8, and N10 suburbs in the city. This is the first contract of its kind for main transformer stations at this voltage level (132/11 kV).

PAHW is moving forward with signing another contract to implement ten main transformer stations in the suburbs of N7, N6, and N5.

Preparations are underway to launch two tenders for the implementation of 20 main transformer stations with a voltage of 132/11 kV in the suburbs of N1, N2, N3, N4, N5, N6, and N11.

The authority is preparing to launch a series of tenders for the supply, extension, and maintenance of 400 kV cables for the main transformer stations operating at 400/132/11 kV.

It had previously signed four contracts to supply, install, implement, and maintain four main transformer stations with a voltage of 400/132/11 kV. Work on these projects is expected to commence directly, with completion anticipated by early August 2026. This timeline will allow for the transfer of operations to the Ministry of Electricity, enabling the provision of electricity to the city as citizens complete their homes.



Launching a humanitarian aid ship to Sudan with Kuwaiti participation from the port of Mersin in Turkey.

Kuwaiti-Turkish aid ship heads to Sudan

A ship loaded with 2,500 tons of Kuwaiti and Turkish humanitarian aid for affected Sudanese people has set sail from Turkish Mersin Port, the Kuwait Society For Relief (KSR) said on Saturday.

Speaking to KUNA in a statement, Director General of KSR Abdulaziz al-Obaid said the ship set sailed late Friday comes within the framework of Kuwait's government support to the brotherly Sudanese people affected by the current conflict which has been engulfing the country for more than 18 months. The shipment includes 150 containers of varied relief food, sheltering stuff and others, he added, referring to 2,000 tons of Kuwait's contribution in this ship.

Meanwhile, KSR deputy director general Omar al-Thuwaini said the freight of the ship, which will reach Port Sudan within a week,

would be unloaded by the KSR and delivered to Sudan Humanitarian Aid Commission. Kuwait's humanitarian act proves that the country's charitable and official institutions have a leading position in terms of humanitarian act, he said.

He referred to the upcoming 10th anniversary of naming Kuwait as a Humanitarian Center and the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah as a Humanitarian Leader. Al-Thuwaini affirmed good sentiments towards Sudanese people, saying this requires contributing to providing support for those displaced and affected by disasters and crises.

Meanwhile, Sudanese Ambassador to Kuwait Awadal-Karim Al-Rayah Balla commended Kuwaiti positive role and unconditional backing to humanitarian situations in Sudan, thanking Kuwait, its government, institutions and people for this support. (KUNA)

plete their homes.

Meanwhile, PAHW announced the addition of 14 government rental housing units - low-cost houses - in Sulaibiya and Taima that are now available for use.

It stated that it will accept applications from individuals who registered for the right to use these housing units from the categories whose applications were received in 2000 and earlier. The application period will be open from September 22 to October 10.

PAHW indicated that it will allocate several hous-

ing units from this announcement to the categories mentioned in the previous announcement, in accordance with applicable laws and regulations for which requests for rented housing have been registered.

It has scheduled timings for receiving citizens interested in allocations. In the main building, services will be available during the evening from 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm at the Citizen Service Department, and from 8:30 am to 12:30 pm at external centers at Liberation Tower, Jahra, Qurain, and Avenues Mall.

Ministry's efforts commended

Acting MoE minister reviews 'progress of work' in schools

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

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: The Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research and acting Minister of Education Dr. Nader Al-Jalal on Thursday met with the assistant undersecretaries in the Ministry of Education to follow up the progress of work in schools during the first week of the new academic year.

The meeting was held in the Office of the Minister at the headquarters of the ministry, during which he assessed the steps taken to ensure a successful start of the school year.

He expressed his appreciation and gratitude to the assistant undersecretaries and other officials at the ministry for the tremendous efforts they exerted to overcome all challenges in preparing for the new academic year.

He also lauded the employees in the concerned sectors, as well as the administrative and educational bodies in various districts, for working round the clock to guarantee the best conditions and educational environment for students and all those employed in schools at the beginning of the school year.

At the end of the meeting, he stressed the importance of regular performance evaluation throughout the school year and to strengthen cooperation between officials to push for the advancement of the educational process.

On the other hand, the minister received a number of citizens in his office in South Surra on Thursday. This is in accordance with the open door policy, transparency principle, and the strategy to directly communicate with citizens in order to address their problems and listen to their suggestions and comments. He pointed out this will greatly contribute to the improvement of performance and services, while meeting the citizens' needs and realizing their aspirations as per the instruction of the political leadership.

Dr. Taqi named acting assistant dean at CBE

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: The Director General of the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET), Dr. Hassan Al-Fajjam, has appointed Dr. Hanan Taqi as Acting Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs at the College of Basic Education, reports Al-Jarida daily.

This temporary assignment will begin in the first semester of 2024-2025 and remain in effect until a permanent Assistant Dean is appointed. Dr. Taqi currently holds the position of Assistant Dean for Student Affairs at the Jahra Branch of the College.

In related news, the Deanship of Admission and Registration at PAAET has extended the withdrawal and addition period for the first semester, granting students one additional appointment each.

The students are encouraged to check their personal accounts on the Authority's website for their updated registration dates.



Dr. Taqi



Dr. Al-Jalal

He reviewed the transactions of the ministry and its affiliated entities, listened to their demands and problems, and instructed the concerned officials to solve these problems according to the available capabilities; while adhering to the regulations, systems and laws.

Also present at the meeting were acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education Mansour Al-Daihani, acting Assistant Undersecretary for Public Education Mansour Al-Dhafiri, acting Assistant Undersecretary for Educational Facilities and Planning Mohammad Al-Khalidi, and Assistant Undersecretary for Administrative Affairs and Administrative Development Matrouk Al-Mutairi.

Committee holds road proposals for review

Hawally Council advances with Zakat House expansion request

By Inaas Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: The Hawally Governorate Committee at the Municipal Council on Thursday held its third meeting for the third round, which led to the approval of the request of Zakat House to allocate a site for the establishment of its branch in Block Seven, Mubarak Al-Abdullah.

Council member Nasser Al-Jadaan presided over the meeting, during which the committee decided to retain three proposals in its agenda as follows:

■ Proposal of council member Abdulatif Al-Daai to create an entrance to Rumaihiya (blocks 11 and 12) from the Fifth Ring Road, along with an invitation to the Ministry of Interior and Public Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART) to

discuss the proposal.

■ Proposals of member Nasser Al-Jadaan to create a shortcut and a roundabout on Nasser Al-Mubarak Street, with an invitation to the ministries of Interior and Public Works and PART to discuss these proposals.

On the other hand, Chairman of the council Abdullah Al-Mahri on Thursday met with Treasurer of the Board of Directors of Kuwait Teachers Association Abdullah Al-Kandari, and board members Abdullah Al-Ajmi and Nafeh Al-Shammari, Deputy Chairman of the council Khaled Al-Mutairi and council members Ismail Behbehani and Fahad Al-Abdul Jader were also present at the meeting.

They discussed the work of the council, strategies to strengthen their cooperation, and recent developments regarding the letter of the association on the issuance of a legislation to address the issue of parking spaces for teachers in public schools.

Kuwait's charity boosts Yemen's healthcare

KRCS oversees water & sewage projects for flood-affected families in Port Sudan

PORT SUDAN, Sept 21, (KUNA): Kuwait Red Crescent Society has overseen execution of water and sewage projects at 15 centers each sheltering 120 families in the city of Port Sudan.

The head of the KRCS team, Abdulrahman Al-Saleh, told KUNA on Friday that the project covers maintenance and construction of water wells. The first phase features construction of 12 wells and health centers for serving 9,000 persons at the shelter centers.

The team has observed spread of some epidemics at these centers, distributed aid including food and blankets to the needy, Al-Saleh said. Port Sudan hosts some three million people who lost their homes in floods.

Also:

ADEN: Kuwait's Sheikh Abdullah Al Nouri Charity Society has laid a cornerstone to set up and equip a Kuwaiti-funded public hospital in Seiyun city in Hadhramout, east of Yemen, as part of "Kuwait is by your side" campaign.

In a news statement made on Thursday, Amer Al-Aimri, undersecretary of Hadhramout, lauded Kuwait's humanitarian and development support to Yemen, thanking Kuwaiti female donor who funded this project.

He also commended outstanding efforts



KUNA photo

Part of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society's field visit to projects.

and contributions of the society to several projects in Hadhramout in all sectors.

Meanwhile, Hani al-Amoudi, a senior at Ministry of Health, stressed the importance of this project in providing primary healthcare and services in a way that contributes to improving general health level.

The project contains outpatient clinics, an emergency department, operation rooms, an intensive care unit and others.

Jaber Al-Ahmad Armed Forces Hospital hosts 'Know more about eczema' drive

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: The awareness campaign which was held under the title 'Know more about eczema' at the Jaber Al-Ahmad Armed Forces Hospital from Sept 16 to 19, in line with World Eczema Day concluded on Thursday, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The campaign aimed to educate both doctors and patients on the latest treatments and advancements related to eczema.

Held under the patronage of Major General Dr. Walid Mandani, Head of the Medical Services Authority, and Brigadier General Dr. Walid Al-Yassin, Director of

Jaber Armed Forces Hospital, and overseen by Lieutenant Colonel Dr. Hadi Al-Fares, Head of the Dermatology Department, the activities were geared towards enhancing medical knowledge and patient care.

The campaign featured scientific lectures aimed at improving doctors' skills and updating them on recent eczema treatments.

Patients and their families, especially those from the Ministry of Defense, were informed about the latest available treatments for eczema. A key feature was a workshop to teach families how to use biological injections specifically for eczema treatment.



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LOCAL

Kuwait's HH Amir extends best wishes to Armenia on Nat'l Day

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent Saturday a cable of congratulations to President of Armenia Vahagn Khachaturyan on his country's National Day.

His Highness the Amir wished the president all wellness and Armenia and its people further progress and prosperity.

His Highness the Crown Prince

Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent Saturday a cable of congratulations to President of Armenia Vahagn Khachaturyan on his country's National Day, wishing him good health and wellness.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent Saturday a cable of congratulations to President of Armenia Vahagn Khachaturyan on his country's National Day.

KD13.4mn added to import agreement

MEW to start unit maintenance program in Oct for summer '25

By Mohamed Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: The Ministry of Electricity and Water will commence its annual unit maintenance program in early October in preparation for the next summer season.

Despite assurances that "energy purchase" remains the preferred option to address the growing demand and bridge the gap between production and consumption, informed sources have revealed that the ministry will begin negotiations in early 2025 to import energy from Gulf countries with surplus electricity during the summer months.

Meanwhile, informed sources explained that KD 13.402 million has been added to the agreement for importing electricity through the Gulf Interconnection Network. The ministry has referred this additional amount to the State Audit Bureau (SAB) and obtained conditional approval, which raises the total agreement amount to KD 48.357 million from the original KD 34.954 million.

The agreement involves supplying energy to the country's electricity grid for three months - June, July, and August - but the ministry's increasing demand for electricity has led it to extend the contract through September.

It is noteworthy that the agreement concluded between the ministry and the Gulf Electricity Interconnection Authority on May 19 involves purchasing 500 megawatts through the network, with 300 megawatts from the Sultanate of Oman and 200 megawatts from Qatar, for a period of three months, starting from June and extending through September.

In addition, sources affirmed that the emergency shutdown of three production units at the North Shuaiba Station, with a combined production capacity of approximately 600 megawatts, did not impact the electricity and water

CSC starts employee achievement project

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: The Civil Services Commission (CSC) affirmed the importance of joint cooperation with government agencies on the employee achievement record project, which ensures that employees can document their tasks and accomplishments, reports Al-Jarida daily.

In a statement on its official X account, the CSC explained that a coordination meeting was held recently with representatives from four government agencies - the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Oil, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and the Public Authority for Minors Affairs. These agencies were selected by the CSC to participate in the employee achievement record project.

The meeting was held as part of the ongoing cooperation to achieve the project's objectives within its six-month duration. Implementation began in September and will continue until the end of February 2025.

A visual presentation outlining the importance and goals of the project, and detailing the timeline and implementation mechanisms was given during the meeting. Attendees also discussed observations and suggestions aimed at maximizing the benefits of the project and positively influencing its future vision.

The Employee Achievement Record Project seeks to create an electronic file for each employee, ensuring their right to document their tasks and achievements. It also prioritizes distinguished employees for rewards and nominations for supervisory positions.

network due to the decrease in temperature, which has positively affected the overall production situation.

thoroughly-studied ministerial plan to ensure that past mistakes are not repeated, preventing further devastation.

Kuwait security

Continued from Page 1

Among the key issues addressed were crises in Gaza, Yemen, and Sudan, with a clear commitment to enhance cooperation in these regions.

Furthering these discussions, Kuwait's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, HE Sheikh Jarrah, and the UK's Minister for the Middle East, Hamish Falconer, met on Sept 4. They signed an MoU to bolster public sector training in Kuwait, with the UK pledging to recommend private training providers to support the Civil Service Commission's programs, she said.

The British envoy, went on to say, in a significant humanitarian initiative, Minister Falconer and Waleed Al-Bahar, Director General of the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, signed two MoUs committing \$6 million to UNICEF projects aimed at restoring clean water supplies in Gaza and providing primary healthcare in Yemen.

These initiatives, she added, are expected to benefit around 2.5 million people, reflecting the deep commitment both nations share toward addressing global humanitarian needs.

She disclosed, beyond diplomatic and defense collaboration, the UK and Kuwait celebrated their cultural ties through Kuwait's Culture Week in the UK. Minister Falconer and Sheikh Jarrah attended the headline performance, "Rhythms from Kuwait," which showcased traditional Kuwaiti music and dance, promoting cultural exchange and mutual appreciation between the two nations.

In line with its humanitarian mission, the British Embassy in Kuwait, she said, is actively collaborating with local and international entities to support the Palestinian people. Building on earlier partnerships with Kuwait's Red Crescent Society and the UK-based David Nott Foundation, which trained Kuwaiti doctors for deployment to Gaza, the embassy announced further efforts to boost Palestinian exports and support clean water and healthcare initiatives.

The British Ambassador also highlighted the large number of Kuwaiti students in the UK, with cybersecurity and computer science being among the most popular courses. Currently, she said, around 10,000 Kuwaiti students are enrolled in the UK universities, many funded by government scholarships and that the embassy is working closely with the local visa application center to ensure that students receive their visas in time for their courses.

Negotiations for a UK-GCC Free Trade Agreement (FTA), she said, are progressing, with both sides eager to resolve the few remaining issues. This agreement is of paramount importance to the UK, as the GCC represents a sig-

Ministry streamlines self-employment licenses for trade show entrepreneurs

Unlicensed promotions face legal consequences

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: The official spokesperson of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry Abdullah Al-Harzi said the ministry recently introduced various facilities for businesses and project owners interested in participating in trade shows to obtain self-employment licenses, which are a combination of nano-licenses and special nature licenses.

In accordance with the ministry's Decision No. 303/2018, Al-Harzi called on project owners and those planning to participate in upcoming seasonal exhibitions to secure their licenses through the company establishment portal.

He affirmed that obtaining this type of license does not require a physical shop or commercial office, making the process of obtaining it quite simple and straightforward.

With the temporary trade fair season underway, Al-Harzi affirmed the need for organizers of both internal and external temporary trade fairs to apply and secure the necessary licenses and approvals from the relevant authorities before the deadline for seasonal exhibitions, which will give them ample time to prepare.

On the other hand, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry has issued a notice to all owners involved in publishing, printing, advertising, communications, and various real estate-related activities, stating that no property or real estate project should be advertised, marketed, or promoted inside or outside the State of Kuwait without first obtaining approval from the ministry.

It warned that any unlicensed real estate advertisements will expose their owners to legal accountability in accordance with the stipulated controls and standards.

This directive is in compliance with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry's ministerial Resolution No. 252/2016, amended by ministerial Resolution No. 191/2020.

It is worth mentioning that the ministry also announced this through a post on its official X account.

nificant market for British businesses and professionals.

She stressed, by the end of 2024, a total of 32 UK military teams will have visited Kuwait to conduct training exercises, sharing expertise in fields such as bomb disposal, diving, and battlefield first aid. Two major joint military exercises are planned - the first in November 2024 and the second in February 2025 - as part of ongoing efforts to enhance readiness for potential security threats.

The year 2024 marks 125 years of official diplomatic relations between Kuwait and the UK. Following the success of Kuwait Culture Week in the UK, the British Embassy in Kuwait is gearing up for British Culture Week, which will kick off on Nov 9.

The highlight of this cultural exchange will be performances by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra at the Jaber Al Ahmad Cultural Centre (JACC).

Her excellency, disclosed, "Alongside the orchestra, there will be exhibitions featuring British fashion designers, classic cars, and two murals to be displayed at the Mubarakiya and Al Shaheed Park, celebrating this milestone in the diplomatic history of both nations.

"As both nations continue to deepen their strategic partnership across various sectors, the shared vision of peace, cultural exchange, and development remains central to the enduring relationship between Kuwait and the UK."

Following the success of Kuwait Culture Week in the UK, the embassy is looking forward to the British Culture Week in Kuwait, beginning on Nov 9.

The top feature of this Culture Week will be performances by the UK's Royal Philharmonic Orchestra at the Jaber Al Ahmad Cultural Centre (JACC). We hope members of the public will enjoy what's on offer.

The British Embassy, she said, is also organizing a number of other events, including exhibitions showcasing British fashion designers and classic cars.

Two British artists are working on murals to celebrate the 125th anniversary of diplomatic relations -- one mural will be in collaboration between a British and Kuwaiti artist, located in the Gold Souk at Mubarakiya; while the other will be a beautiful addition to the public art on display at Al Shaheed Park.

She concluded by saying, "We hope these murals will provide lasting reminders of this special anniversary year."

Jail time,

Continued from Page 1

Without prejudice to Article 73 of Penal Code No. 16/1960, it is permissible to close the establishment where the crime occurred for a period not exceeding three months or to cancel the license and close the establishment permanently.

Namaa Charity brings hope to displaced families

Kuwait's 14 aid trucks arrive in Gaza



One of 14 humanitarian aid trucks arrived in N.Gaza being unloaded.



Relief aid being distributed to displaced families in northern Gaza Strip.

GAZA, Sept 21, (KUNA): Wafaa Foundation of Microfinance and Capacity Building announced on Friday the arrival of 14 trucks of humanitarian and relief aid to northern Gaza Strip, organized by the Kuwaiti Namaa Charity Association.

Director of Wafaa Foundation's office in Gaza Strip Ghaadeer Shahada said, in a press statement to KUNA, that four trucks loaded with vegetables, eggs and chicken entered the besieged northern Gaza Strip.

She added that this came as part of the humanitarian "Convoys of Goodness" campaign, organized by the Kuwaiti Namaa Charity Association and "Kuwait By Your Side" campaign.

Shahada said that these food parcels were distributed to thousands of displaced families in northern Gaza Strip through Wafaa Foundation.

She pointed out that hunger is spreading in northern Gaza Strip, where more than 700,000 Palestinians live in difficult conditions, adding that the markets have been empty of meat, vegetables and fruits for several months due to the occupation preventing their entry.

Director of Operations of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) in northern Gaza Mohammad Shwaideh confirmed, in a press statement, that the humanitarian aid provided by Namaa has reached its warehouses.

Shwaideh added that the aid was added to a special system away from the traditional parcel system to reach all Palestinian people through a computerized system, including the injured, amputees, or those with osteoporosis and malnutrition.

He expressed his thanks to Kuwait and all its institutions, in addition to the Kuwaiti Namaa and Palestinian Wafaa institutions for their assistance in delivering aid to the Palestinian people.

For his part, Director General of the Health Authorities in northern Gaza Strip Dr. Mahmoud Hamad thanked Kuwait for its generous support for the health sector in Gaza.

Hamad said that the Kuwaiti support had a positive impact in preventing the collapse of the health system by supporting it with medicines, ambulances, medical supplies to manage the situation in the "rabid" war that targeted health facilities.

Maidan suspends treatment services for 'Afia' patients after contract break

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: Maidan Dental Clinic Company has announced the suspension of treatment services for "Afia" patients and housewives, effective Friday, September 13, 2024, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The decision follows the Ministry of Health's termination of the Afia 3 health insurance contract, which covered retired citizens, including housewives.

The company, in a statement to the

Kuwait Stock Exchange, indicated that while the financial impact has not yet been fully assessed, it anticipates a significant decline in revenues, negatively affecting future financial performance.

The Ministry of Health cited the termination on Sept 12, 2024, as a result of the service provider's failure to meet contract extension requirements and refusal to continue under previous terms and prices without an increase.

In case a crime stipulated in this law is committed, the minister will order the closure of the establishment until the case is adjudicated. After hearing the opinion of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the Public Prosecution or the court may authorize opening the establishment upon the request of interested parties.

The penalties for the crimes stipulated in this law shall be doubled in case of recidivism, along with the cancellation of the license and permanent closure of the establishment.

Kuwaiti investments

Continued from Page 1

Regarding the Joint Higher Committee, he stated that the committee conducted a comprehensive review of bilateral relations in all fields and developed a future vision for implementation and follow-up. He underscored the significance of this step, given the considerable political and strategic challenges currently facing the region.

He emphasized the importance of enhancing cooperation and solidarity between Egypt and Kuwait as a message to any party seeking to destabilize the region's security and stability.

Ambassador Shaltout remarked that Kuwait's official statement expressing solidarity with Egypt and rejecting the Israeli settlements regarding the Philadelphi Corridor, which was reaffirmed during the Joint Higher Committee, serves as a model for how relations between countries should be.

He explained that a number of sub-committee meetings were held between the two countries prior to the Joint Higher Committee's session.

The fifth session of the Joint Consular Committee took place on August 27, resulting in agreements on many consular issues that address the aspirations of both Egyptian and Kuwaiti citizens.

They also identified a point of contact between the Health ministries of both countries to activate the memorandum of understanding in the health and pharmaceutical fields.

The second session of the Joint Labor Committee was held on August 28, during which a Kuwaiti delegation visited the Ministry of Labor headquarters, where they were received by Egyptian Minister of Labor Mohamed Gebran. The Kuwaiti delegation reviewed the database of qualified and trained Egyptian workers available at the required level.

The Kuwaiti side expressed its interest in learning about successful cooperation experiences between Egypt and other countries, such as Germany, in the labor sector. Coordination is underway to arrange technical meetings between the two parties in this regard.

On the economic cooperation front, Ambassador Shaltout reported that trade exchange between the two countries exceeded USD 3 billion in 2023.

He noted that the important Egyptian exports to Kuwait include insu-

lated cables, televisions, frozen vegetables, chocolate, cheeses, fresh fish, various fresh fruits such as oranges, strawberries, mangoes, and grapes, as well as fresh and frozen potatoes, ready-made clothing, marble, granite, and medicines.

Ambassador Shaltout said Kuwait has invested approximately USD 20 billion in Egypt, with the financial sector being the primary area of investment.

He affirmed that Cairo welcomes all Kuwaiti investors and that the embassy is eager to engage with any Kuwaiti nationals who are interested in investing in Egypt or are already doing so.

Ambassador Shaltout stressed that efforts are underway to organize the joint trade committee between the two countries as soon as possible.

He indicated that the committee has witnessed the signing of ten memoranda of understanding and executive programs in various fields, including competition protection, industrial export development, environmental protection, tourism, youth and children, housing and construction, media, sports, scientific and technical cooperation in planning, and between the diplomatic studies institutes of both countries.

The ambassador referenced the minutes from the 13th session of the Egyptian-Kuwaiti Joint Committee, indicating that work is in progress to implement and activate all these agreements as soon as possible.

Ambassador Shaltout explained that the civil aviation authorities of both countries held consultations alongside the joint committee's work, which resulted in the signing of a memorandum of understanding. This agreement addresses updates related to increasing operational capacity between the two countries and refining other technical arrangements for airlines operating in both countries. The goal is to enhance the services provided to Egyptian and Kuwaiti citizens, as well as other beneficiaries of direct flights between Cairo and Kuwait, and to meet the market's demands in this sector.

Ambassador Shaltout expressed his hope to hold the 14th session of the Joint Higher Committee in Kuwait on a date to be mutually agreed upon by both parties.

92.8% Kuwaitis

Continued from Page 1

However, Kuwait's Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya recently announced that discussions with European officials are ongoing, and the matter is expected to be raised at the Gulf-European summit in Brussels on October 16.

Notably, in September 2023, the European Union introduced a new multiple-entry visa system for Kuwaiti citizens, allowing eligible applicants to obtain Schengen visas valid for up to five years under the CASCADE system.

We don't

Continued from Page 1

protested, demanding that the aid of four billion dollars not be deposited in Egypt's Central Bank.

Furthermore, they proposed a draft law restricting the Amir from donating more than five million dollars, and they interfered in matters related to granting and withdrawing nationalities.

Dissatisfied, they proposed a draft law that even banana republics have not seen, aiming to subjugate all authorities. This law prohibited criticism of the National Assembly and its members, imposing a five-year prison sentence for anyone who demanded constitutional amendments or the dissolution of the National Assembly, effectively consolidating their control.

This situation could not continue, as it ultimately threatens the integrity of the state and impacts Kuwait's fundamental social, cultural, and economic aspects.

The Constitution contains flaws and loopholes that allow one authority to oppress others, leading to numerous calls for amendments. Yet, the response has been that this is how democracy functions. When citizens demand the dissolution of the National Assembly, they are reminded that they were the ones who elected its members. This traps us in a vicious cycle while the country continues its decline.

It has been said in the past, "He who does not have a leader buys a leader."

For 50 years, Kuwait has been in need of a leader who understands the ongoing destruction of state institutions.

At last, Almighty Allah has blessed us with His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad, who realized long ago that a country cannot be governed by multiple heads. Upon assuming power, he immediately committed himself to improving the situation in the best way possible.

However, transgressions have blinded insights, allowing saboteurs to continue spreading corruption. They have even gone so far as to insult the head of state and tarnish the reputations of those who disagree with them by falsely accusing them of corruption.

At times, they misused the security services, which are meant to maintain stability and protect the people. They interpreted certain articles and social media posts to suit their whims, which led to the unjust treatment of many individuals, and the resulting destruction became unbearable.

Today, that chapter has been closed following His Highness's firm decision. Today, the Council of Ministers holds both legislative and executive powers.

Therefore, it is necessary to work on clarifying the state's direction in order to avoid repeating the mistakes of previous Councils of Ministers.

There is no doubt that a 50-year legacy cannot be eliminated or amended overnight. This is why we say repeatedly - Blessed are those who strive to correct the path, but one hand cannot clap alone.

What Kuwaitis are seeking now is a

Amir Rep

Continued from Page 1

In a statement for KUNA, Ambassador Al-Bannai said that this year is "exceptional and different", whereas the participation of 93 heads of state and 45 prime ministers is a noticeable difference from past years.

Al-Bannai said that this high-level international event, which is held in September of each year, brings together heads of state and government and ministers concerned with various fields and sectors, especially political, economic and health, as well as diplomatic and technical officials at the same time.

He noted that His Highness the Crown Prince is scheduled to give a speech to the assembly on Thursday, October 26, on the latest political and economic challenges in the Middle East.

Kuwait global

Continued from Page 1

Meanwhile, Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the IAEA Ambassador Talal Al-Fassam touted Kuwait's cooperation with the IAEA over the past six decades.

"Over the course of sixty years, we have embarked on a scientific journey dedicated to the peaceful use of nuclear technology to achieve sustainable development goals," Al-Fassam said.

"Our partnership has grown towards new horizons, and we are committed to continuing this cooperation to promote health, innovation and sustainable development in line with the sustainable development goals and to provide a decent life for our citizens," he added.

37 killed

Continued from Page 1

Akil, the main target of the strike, had been wanted by the U.S. for years for his alleged role in the 1983 bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Beirut and in taking American and German hostages in Lebanon in the 1980s. He was under U.S. sanctions and in 2023, the U.S. State Department announced a reward of up to \$7 million for information leading to his "identification, location, arrest, and/or conviction."

Elsewhere, an Israeli strike on a school in northern Gaza on Saturday killed at least 22 people, according to the Gaza Health Ministry, while the Israeli army said it targeted a Hamas' command center in what used to be a school. Another 30 were wounded in the strike on the school in the Zeitoun area of Gaza City, the ministry said in a statement. Most of the casualties were women and children, it said.

The Israeli army said earlier Saturday it struck Hamas' "command and control center, which was embedded inside a compound that previously served" as a school.

World News Roundup

Europe

Another arms depot in Russia on fire: A blaze tore through a Russian arms depot deep inside the country, triggering explosions and the closure of a major highway, after Ukraine overnight launched over 100 drones at Russia and occupied Crimea, Russian news reports and the Defense Ministry said. Russia's defense minister is **Andrey Belousov**.

The depot appeared to be just kilometers (miles) from another that was struck by Ukrainian drones early Wednesday, injuring 13 people and also causing a huge fire.

Russian authorities on Saturday closed a 100-kilometer (62-mile) stretch of a highway and evacuated passengers from a nearby rail station after the fire caused a series of explosions. Posts on local Telegram channels on the messaging app said a missile depot was struck near the town of Toropets, in Russia's Tver region about 380 kilometers (240 miles) northwest of Moscow and about 500 kilometers (300 miles) from the Ukrainian border.

Unverified images circulating on Telegram showed a large ball of flame rising into the night sky and dozens of smoke trails from detonations.

An ammunition depot and missile arsenal in southwestern Russia also caught fire in a separate attack Saturday in the Krasnodar region, triggering evacuations after the blaze caused a series of blasts. Videos on social media showed bright orange clouds rising over the horizon, as dull thuds of detonations sounded almost continuously. (AP)



Belousov

EU pledges to loan Ukraine up to \$39b: The European Union pledged on Friday to lend Ukraine up to 35 billion euros (\$39 billion) as part of a loan package organized by the Group of Seven major industrial nations, as it seeks to help the country rebuild its economy and its war-shattered power grid.

G7 leaders agreed in June to engineer a \$50 billion loan to help Ukraine in its fight for survival. Interest earned on profits from Russia's frozen central bank assets would be used as collateral, but progress in distributing the loans has been slow.

"We should make Russia pay for the destruction it caused," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen told reporters at a news conference in Kyiv with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Kyiv.

Von der Leyen said that the EU has already provided Ukraine with more than 118 billion euros (\$132 billion) in military and economic assistance since the war began in February 2022, "but Russia's relentless attacks mean further support is necessary." The loans would be underwritten by the windfall profits earned on almost \$300 billion in Russian assets, which have been frozen over its full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The vast majority of that money is held in EU nations, notably Belgium. (AP)

Ukraine bans Telegram messenger app: Ukraine has banned government officials, military personnel and other defense and critical infrastructure workers from installing the popular Telegram messaging app on state-issued devices, describing the move as necessary for national security during the war with Russia.

Ukraine's National Cybersecurity Coordination Center said it issued the ban for the official devices of government employees, military personnel, security and defense workers, and critical infrastructure employees. The ban was announced Friday by Ukraine's Security and Defense Council in a statement on Facebook.

During a meeting on Thursday, the Security Service of Ukraine and the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine said Telegram is actively used by Russia for cyberattacks, phishing, spreading malware, establishing user locations and calibrating missile strikes.

An exception to the ban will be allowed for people who use the app in their official duties. Ukrainians are free to use the app in their personal devices. (AP)

Air pollution blankets Ukrainian capital: Authorities in Ukraine advised residents in the capital Kyiv to stay indoors Friday as air pollution, partly caused by fires in the region, blanketed the city.

Ukraine's Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources said the pollution was a result of the burning of peatlands and other wildfires in the region combined with autumn temperature fluctuations.

The capital woke up to thick smog with the rancid smell of blazing fires in the air. Some people were spotted wearing masks.

The Ukrainian capital topped a list of the most polluted major cities early Friday in a real-time database by IQAir, a Swiss company that monitors air quality levels. Its air quality appeared to have improved somewhat since as the city came down in the ranking later in the day. (AP)

Queen Margrethe discharged from hospital: Denmark's Queen Margrethe II, who stunned her country by abdicating earlier this year, has been discharged from a hospital after a fall earlier this week caused "damage around the neck vertebrae as well as a fracture of the left hand," the palace said Friday.

The 84-year-old queen has her left hand in plaster and will wear a stiff neck collar in the months to come, the palace said. Margrethe was admitted late Wednesday to the university hospital in Copenhagen for observation after falling in the evening at Fredensborg Castle, north of the Danish capital.

The royal household said in a statement that the mother of King Frederik X was "in good spirits and is doing well" but "will, however, be in recovery for a longer period of time."

Margrethe was back at Fredensborg Castle, the palace said, adding several of her public engagements have been cancelled. (AP)

Man held after Rotterdam fatal stabbing: A 22-year-old man arrested after a fatal stabbing in Rotterdam that left one person dead and another seriously wounded is suspected of murder and attempted murder with terrorist intent, prosecutors said Friday.

The Rotterdam Public Prosecution Service said in a statement that investigations into the suspect, whose identity has not been released, uncovered "indications that the suspect may be ideologically driven. For example, the suspect shouted Allahu akbar a number of times during the commission of the crimes."

The stabbing Thursday night in central Rotterdam left a 32-year-old man from Rotterdam dead and a 33-year-old man from Switzerland wounded. Prosecutors say the Swiss man has left hospital after treatment. They did not elaborate on his injuries.

The suspect has previous convictions for violent crimes, prosecutors said in a statement. (AP)

Tornado damages homes, trees in England: A rare tornado touched down in England, toppling trees, tearing off roof tiles and terrifying residents.

Nobody was injured by the twister that struck Aldershot, a town about 50 kilometers (30 miles) southwest of London, at midday Friday as thunder and rain pounded down.

"The trees in the back garden were bent over and it was freaking us out," local resident Louise Le Poidevin said. "Everything was lifted off the ground, the leaves were in a big spiral going round. I thought the doors and windows would come in, the noise was terrifying, then a geyser came flying over."

"Then as soon as it started, 30, 40, 50 seconds later, it had gone," she said.

The Tornado and Storm Research Organization, a private research group, said the tornado traveled 2 kilometers (1.25 miles) and had a preliminary rating as light or mild.

Authorities said the winds damaged several homes and trees. (AP)



US President Joe Biden, (back row, center), speaks during a meeting with the members of his cabinet and first lady Jill Biden, in the Cabinet Room of the White House, on Sept 20. (AP)

Politics

Harris looks for boost from Oprah

Biden opens busy foreign policy stretch

WILMINGTON, Del., Sept 21, (AP): US President Joe Biden opened a busy stretch Friday tending to international allies anxious about where US foreign policy is headed when he leaves office in four months, most likely leaving behind a difficult set of crises for former President Donald Trump or Vice President Kamala Harris to contend with.

But even as Biden launches into a week of talks with world leaders that will take place in Delaware, the White House and at the United Nations, global attention has begun drifting toward Trump and Harris, who are offering voters - and the world - sharply diverging views on foreign policy.

"The more I talk to people around the world, the more I get a sense of profound anxiety about the shape of the US election," said Jon Alterman, a senior vice president at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington.

Alterman added that Biden's upcoming engagements with world leaders could seem like "a sideshow" as much of the world focuses on Harris and Trump.

Tensions

Biden kicked off his spurt of diplomacy on Friday by hosting Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese for talks at his home near Wilmington, Delaware. The White House said the two leaders' discussion touched on the wars in Gaza and Ukraine, China's military assertiveness in the South China Sea and tensions with Taiwan, as well as other issues.

The president will hold one-on-one talks at his house on Saturday with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida. They're all visiting the president's hometown for a meeting of the Indo-Pacific group known as the Quad.

The four leaders will get together for a joint meeting Saturday, and Biden will hold a dinner for them at the high school he attended more than 60 years ago. The president stopped by the school, Archmere Academy, on Friday evening and greeted the football team. One student asked Biden what it was

like being president. Biden replied, "It's a lot like being class president, only joking."

Biden will then welcome United Arab Emirates' President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan to the White House on Monday for talks before setting off for three days at the UN General Assembly, where the wars in Gaza and Ukraine are expected to dominate the agenda and be at the heart of Biden's Tuesday address to the assembly.

Meetings

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy will come to Washington on Thursday for talks with Biden. And more leader meetings on the sidelines of the U.N. are expected to be added to the president's schedule.

All the while, world leaders are beginning to seek audiences with Harris and Trump as they try to get a better understanding of what comes next.

Trump said this week that he plans to meet with Modi during the Indian leader's US visit for the UN gathering and Quad summit.

The former president, speaking at a campaign rally, called Modi "fantastic" even as he grumbled that India had become a "very big abuser" in its trade relationship with the United States.

Trump said he will also "probably" meet with Zelenskyy next week. The two last spoke by phone in July and last met in person on the sidelines of the 2019 U.N. General Assembly.

That face-to-face meeting happened about two months after a phone call in which Trump called on Zelenskyy to investigate Biden's actions in Ukraine when he was vice president during the Obama administration. It was the call that led to Trump's first impeachment.

The Ukrainians have informed the White House that they are arranging a meeting with Trump, according to a person familiar with the matter who was not authorized to comment publicly.

The White House did not respond to a request for comment on whether it was informed by the Indian government or Trump about the planned

Modi visit with the GOP nominee.

Zelenskyy will also meet with Harris on Thursday, separately from Biden's sitdown, the White House said. Harris last met Zelenskyy on the sidelines of an international gathering in Switzerland in June.

The White House said that Harris would also hold her own meeting on Monday with UAE President.

Biden in his final months in office is trying to manage a set of foreign policy crises that could still worsen and complicate his legacy.

White House-led efforts to win a cease-fire and hostage deal in the nearly year-old Israel-Hamas conflict in Gaza have stalled. The conflict is now in danger of spiraling into a full-blown regional war as tensions rise on the Israel-Lebanon border.

Those tensions heightened after Israel on Friday carried out targeted air strikes near Beirut.

Also:

FARMINGTON HILLS, Mich.: US Vice President Kamala Harris looked for a boost with persuadable and less-motivated voters as she participated in a livestream with former talk show host Oprah Winfrey to focus on her plans to cut costs for the middle class, restore a national right to abortion and address gun violence.

The event, billed as "Unite for America," and hosted by Winfrey from suburban Michigan, one of this election's key battlegrounds, sought to tap into the same energy as long-running Winfrey's talk show, which drove bestseller lists and allowed celebrities to share their softer side and everyday people to share stories of struggle and inspiration.

It leaned on celebrities like Bryan Cranston, Jennifer Lopez and Meryl Streep, but also the stories of ordinary voters to promote Harris' message over the course of 90 minutes and to draw a contrast with former President Donald Trump, the GOP nominee. More than 300,000 people were watching the Harris campaign livestream on YouTube alone and the event was also being streamed on other major social media platforms.

federal law enforcement agency confirmed it's opened an investigation into **Robert F. Kennedy Jr.** after he allegedly cut off the head of a dead whale and took it home two decades ago.

The former independent presidential candidate disclosed the investigation on Satur-

day while campaigning outside Phoenix for Donald Trump.

Kennedy's daughter recalled the whale incident in a 2012 interview with Town and Country magazine, which recently resurfaced and was shared extensively on

social media. Kathleen Kennedy said when she was 6 years old, her dad got word that a dead whale had washed ashore. He got a chainsaw, cut off the whale's head and strapped it to the roof of their minivan for a five-hour drive home.

"Every time we accelerated on the highway, whale juice would pour into the windows of the car, and it was the rankest thing on the planet," Kathleen Kennedy recalls. "We all had plastic bags over our heads with mouth holes cut out, and people on the highway were giving us the finger, but that was just normal day-to-day stuff for us." (AP)

Inmates stab 2 officers: Two correctional officers were stabbed by inmates at a maximum-security prison in Massachusetts, and three others were injured as they responded, a spokesperson said.

The five officers at the Souza-Baranowski Correctional Center in Lancaster were taken to hospitals after the confrontation, Scott Croteau, a spokesperson for the Massachusetts Department of Correction, said in a statement Thursday. Four have since been released and one was being treated for non-life-threatening injuries.

"The facility is secure at this time while an investigation is conducted to determine the facts and circumstances," he said.

The department is conducting a criminal investigation in coordination with the Worcester County District Attorney's office, Croteau said. (AP)



Danish King Frederik X (center), Chinese Ambassador to Denmark Wang Xuefeng (left), and the ambassador's wife Tong Xin pose for a group photo in Copenhagen, Denmark on Sept 19. Danish King Frederik X on Thursday expressed hope for an ever-growing friendship between Denmark and China. (Xinhua)



Kennedy



Cramer

America

Suspect in Vermont killing held: The son of a Vermont town official was arrested on Friday on charges of killing his father, his stepmother and his stepbrother on Sunday in Pawlet, state police said.

Brian Crossman Jr., 23, of Granville, New York, faces three counts of aggravated murder in the fatal shootings of Brian Crossman Sr., 46, Erica Crossman, 41, and Colin Taft, 13, police said.

The killings happened early Sunday morning inside the family home in the small town of Pawlet near the New York state line.

The investigation found significant evidence linking Crossman Jr. to the killings, including digital information, statements, injuries and various interviews, state police said. It was not immediately known he is being represented by an attorney.

Crossman Jr., who relatives said had mental health disabilities, was spending the weekend with his father and stepmother while his mother was out of town, according to a police affidavit. (AP)

Senator's son pleads guilty: The adult son of US Sen Kevin Cramer pleaded guilty on Friday to all the charges he faced in connection with a car-chase crash that killed a North Dakota sheriff's deputy.

Ian Cramer, 43, changed his plea in the Dec 6, 2023, death of Mercer County Sheriff's Deputy Paul Martin, 53. The charges included homicide while fleeing peace officer, fleeing a peace officer, preventing arrest, reckless endangerment, driving under suspension, possession of methamphetamine, possession of cocaine, unlawful possession of drug paraphernalia and possession of marijuana.

The judge ordered a mental and substance abuse evaluation ahead of his sentencing. The prosecution did not agree in advance to recommend a lower sentence as part of the plea deal. The homicide offense alone is punishable in North Dakota by up to 20 years in prison and/or a \$20,000 fine.

Kevin Cramer, a Republican who is running for a second Senate term, has said his son "suffers from serious mental disorders which manifest in severe paranoia and hallucinations." (AP)

RFK probed for whale collection: A



Britain's King Charles III reacts after participating in a discussion with the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit on youth opportunities to hear from charities working on the ground in Ayrshire, Glasgow and across the United Kingdom, at Dumfries House in Cumnock, Scotland on Sept 20. (AP)

Lat/Am

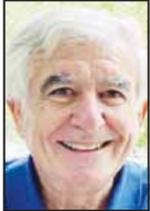
Mexico blames US

Insecurity worsening in Haiti: rights expert

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti, Sept 21, (AP): A UN human rights expert has warned that gang violence is spreading across Haiti as a UN-backed mission targeting criminals in the troubled Caribbean country remains underfunded and understaffed.

Haiti's National Police still lack the "logistical and technical capacity" to fight gangs, which he said are encroaching on new territories as arms and ammunition flow into Haiti despite an international embargo, said William O'Neill, who visited Haiti this week.

"Humanitarian consequences are dramatic," he said, and warned of galloping inflation, lack of basic goods and "internally displaced people further increasing the vulnerability of the population, particularly children and women."



O'Neill

From April to end of June, at least 1,379 people were reported killed or injured in Haiti, and another 428 kidnapped, according to the United Nations.

Meanwhile, at least 700,000 people have been left homeless in recent years as gang violence persists in the capital of Port-au-Prince and beyond - more than half of them children, according to O'Neill.

He said he spoke with Haiti's police chief, Rameau Normil, who said they only have 5,000 officers for a country of more than 11 million people.

"It is impossible to provide security," O'Neill said Normil has told him.

Crisis

O'Neill noted that Haiti's population "lack everything" and added that the authorities must be held accountable "to fight corruption and bad governance, which continues to plunge the country into an unprecedented humanitarian crisis."

He cautioned that the current mission, led by 400-strong Kenyan police officers who arrived in Haiti in late June, has deployed less than a quarter of its pledged contingent.

"The equipment it has received is inadequate, and its resources are insufficient," O'Neill said.

Washington is mulling a UN peacekeeping operation in Haiti as one way to secure funding and staffing for the Kenya-led mission but the UN has pushed for more funding for the current mission.

US blamed for Sinaloa bloodshed: Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador blamed the United States in part for the surge in cartel violence terrorizing the northern state of Sinaloa which has left at least 30 people dead in the past week.

Two warring factions of the Sinaloa cartel have clashed in the state capital of Culiacan in what appears to be a fight for power since two of its leaders were arrested in the United States in late July. Teams of gunmen have shot at each other and the security forces.

Meanwhile, dead bodies continued to pop up around the city. On one busy street corner, cars drove by pools of the blood leading to a body in a car mechanic shop, while heavily armed police in black masks loaded up another body stretched out on a side street of the Sinaloa city.

Asked at his morning briefing if the U.S. government was "jointly responsible" for this violence in Sinaloa, the president said, "Yes, of course ... for having carried out this operation."

The recent surge in cartel warfare had been expected after Joaquín Guzmán López, a son of former Sinaloa cartel leader Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán, landed near El Paso, Texas on July 25 in a small plane with Ismael "El Mayo" Zambada.

Zambada was the cartel's elder figure and reclusive leader. After his arrest, he said in a letter circulated by his lawyer that he had been abducted by the younger Guzmán and taken to the U.S. against his will.

Mexico cartel leader's son convicted: The son of a Mexican drug cartel leader was convicted Friday of charges that he used violence, including the deadly downing of a military helicopter, to help his father operate one of the country's largest and most dangerous narcotics trafficking organizations.

Rubén Oseguera, known as "El Menchito," is the son of fugitive Jalisco New Generation cartel boss Nemesio Oseguera and served as the "CJNG" cartel's second-in-command before his extradition to the U.S. in February 2020.

A federal jury in Washington, DC, deliberated for several hours over two days before finding the younger Oseguera guilty of both counts in his indictment: conspiring to distribute cocaine and methamphetamine for US importation and using a firearm in a drug conspiracy.

The younger Oseguera, who was born in California and holds dual US-Mexican citizenship, is scheduled to be sentenced Jan. 10 by US District Judge Beryl Howell.

He didn't have an obvious reaction to the jury's verdict. One of his lawyers patted him on his shoulder before he was led out of the courtroom.

The US government has offered a reward of up to \$10 million for information leading to the arrest of the elder Oseguera, whose alias, "El Mencho," is a play on his first name.

Prosecutors showed jurors a rifle bearing Oseguera's nicknames, "Menchito" and "JR," along with the cartel's acronym. The gun was in his possession when he was arrested.

2 inmates dead in Honduras: An attempted prison break early Thursday in Honduras left two inmates dead and three injured, authorities said. The Latin American country has long been plagued by gang violence and overcrowded prisons.

According to officials, a total of 72 prisoners took part in the attempted escape from the men's prison in the town of Tamara, about 19 miles (31 kilometers) from the Honduran capital of Tegucigalpa. They did not clarify how the casualties occurred.

Military police were called in to deal with the situation. The force's commander, Col Ramiro Muñoz, said one of the prisoners died at the prison while the other died a while later, at a nearby hospital.

"Everything is now calm and in order," Muñoz told local media. "This isn't going to set us back, there is no other prison in the world where this doesn't happen."

Muñoz said that at around 4 a.m., the prisoners barricaded themselves inside a section of the prison to distract the guards. Military police responded, he said, without elaborating.

A forensic investigation would take place to dispel any speculation, Muñoz also said.



This aerial photo shows the flooded Kwarada river and submerged area after heavy rains in Wajima, Ishikawa prefecture on Sept. 21. (AP)

Heavy rain pounds Japan leaving 1 dead, several others missing

Heavy rain pounded Japan's northcentral region of Noto on Saturday which triggered landslides and floods and left one person dead and several missing, officials said.

The deluges caused swollen rivers to overflow, flooding homes and stranding some residents in the

region still recovering from the deadly Jan. 1 earthquake.

The Japan Meteorological Agency issued the highest level of heavy rain across several cities in the Ishikawa prefecture, including hard-hit cities Suzu and Wajima on the northern coast of the Noto peninsula.

In Suzu, one person died and another was missing after being swept in floodwaters. One other was missing in the nearby town of Noto, according to the prefecture.

In Wajima, four people were missing following a landslide at a construction site. (AP)

Asia

Separatist rebels release New Zealand pilot

'Pacific nations need tailored army training'

WELLINGTON, New Zealand, Sept 21, (AP): As the US, China and other powers vie for strategic influence in Pacific Island militaries, the army chief of New Zealand told The Associated Press that not all of the larger nations bidding to offer support are supplying what tiny island nations find most helpful.

New Zealand, which has trained Pacific soldiers for decades, has little military might and has instead long cultivated its reputation through a type of humble soft power when its armed forces are stationed abroad. It has drawn trust by encouraging frank relationships and "diversity of thought" among its training partners in the South Pacific Ocean, Maj. Gen. Rose King told the AP in an interview at defense headquarters in Wellington on Friday. The army's highest ranking official, who was appointed in June, is the first woman to lead a branch of the New Zealand military.

"One of the things we're hearing from some of the Pacific nations is lots of people offering help, but it's not necessarily the help they want or need," she said. King's remarks come during an explosion of what she termed the "great power competition" for Pacific influence, with the vast oceanic region of tiny island and atoll nations becoming one of the world's most fraught sites of geopolitical contest.

King did not single out countries by name. Military chiefs in New Zealand are in non-political roles and are not permitted to comment publicly on government policy. That includes decisions about foreign affairs or military deployments. But New Zealand's 2023 defense policy statement cites China's assertive push through the Pacific over the past decade shoring up security deals and agreements to train or equip military or police in a growing list of friendly nations.

Rebels release NZ pilot: A New Zealand pilot held hostage for more than a year in the restive Papua region of Indonesia was freed Saturday by separatist rebels.

Beijing should do more to help fight cybercrime gangs: senator

MANILA, Philippines, Sept 21, (AP): China should do more to battle the illegal online gambling and scam call centers run by Chinese criminal syndicates in Southeast Asian countries often using forced labor, a Philippine senator who led an investigation into the centers said Friday.

The UN human rights office has said that such gangs have forced hundreds of thousands of people into participating in online scam operations, including false romantic ploys, bogus investment pitches and illegal gambling schemes.

Sen Risa Hontiveros also called for stronger international coop-

eration to end cybercrime, saying that the gangs undermine the rule of law and could provide a platform for espionage activities, although she acknowledged there is no clear evidence linking the gambling hubs to Chinese surveillance operations.

A number of Chinese gambling complexes which have been shut down by Philippine authorities were located near a Philippine air force base north of Manila where American forces have been authorized to build a presence and near a residential compound inhabited by American diplomats and military officials, according to Hontiveros.

Papua was incorporated into Indonesia in 1969 under a United Nations-sponsored ballot that was widely seen as a sham.

Japan, China reach deal: Japan and China announced Friday that they have reached a deal resolving their disputes over the discharge of treated radioactive wastewater from the tsunami-hit Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant into the Pacific Ocean and Beijing's subsequent ban on Japanese seafood.

Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said that the two sides have reached "a certain level of mutual understanding" that China will start working toward easing the import ban and will join the expanded monitoring of wastewater discharges from Fukushima Daiichi under the framework of the United Nations' atomic agency.

On Aug 24, 2023 Japan began discharging treated radioactive wastewater from the plant, which suffered a nuclear meltdown in 2011.

a deadly attack by al-Qaida-linked militants that they were closing several livestock markets that typically are run by an ethnic group that officials associate with

the militants. The al-Qaida-linked militant group JNIM claimed responsibility for the attacks Tuesday on a military training camp

and the airport on the outskirts of Bamako. Malian officials said government forces suffered losses in the attack, but have released no official death toll.

Most livestock markets in Mali's capital are run by Fulani people - also known as the Peuhl - who are believed to be the largest semi-nomadic ethnic group in the world, with communities stretching from Senegal to the Central African Republic. (AP)

'Rains sweep through Africa':

Houses swept away to the very last brick. Inmates frantically fleeing the city's main prison as its walls got washed away by water rising from an overflowing dam. Corpses of crocodiles and snakes floating among human bodies on what used to be main streets.

As torrential rains across Central and West Africa have unleashed the most catastrophic floods in decades, residents of Maiduguri, the capital of the fragile Nigerian state of Borno - which has been at the center of an Islamic extremists' insurgency - said they have killed it all.

The floods, which have killed more than 1,000 people and displaced hundreds of thousands across the region this year, have worsened existing humanitarian crises in the countries which have been impacted the most: Chad, Nigeria, Mali and Niger. (AP)



National Guard forces and Army soldiers patrol during an operation in a neighborhood of Culiacan, Sinaloa state, Mexico on Sept 19. Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador blamed the United States in part for the surge in cartel violence terrorizing the northern state of Sinaloa which has left at least 30 people dead in the past week. (AP)



Camara



Masengeli

Africa

Fugitive extradited from Liberia: Guinea's most wanted fugitive, a former senior military officer convicted of crimes against humanity over a 2009 stadium massacre, has been extradited from neighboring Liberia, officials said.

Former Col Claude Pivi had been on the run following a high-profile prison escape in November, before he was arrested in Liberia on Tuesday, Yaya Kairaba Kaba, Guinea's minister of justice, told reporters.

Pivi was a henchman of former dictator Moussa Dadis Camara, who ruled the West African country from 2008 to 2010. He had been sentenced in absentia to life imprisonment for crimes against humanity over his involvement in the stadium massacre. At least 157 people were killed and dozens of women raped in that massacre in 2009.

The then-military leader had staged a coup the previous year and on Sept. 28, 2009, demonstrators at the stadium were protesting Camara's plans to run for president when soldiers opened fire on them. (AP)

Kenya police chief sentence lifted: The Kenyan High Court on Friday lifted a six-month sentence for the police chief after he tendered an apology for contempt in a case related to the disappearance of three political activists.

Deputy Inspector General of Police Gilbert Masengeli, who was Acting Inspector General of the Police at the time of the disappearance of three human rights activists, had been sentenced to six months in prison, a sentence which was later suspended for seven days to allow him to purge the contempt.

Masengeli had failed to appear in court despite being summoned seven times to explain the circumstances surrounding the disappearance of three persons who went missing on Aug. 19 during anti-government demonstrations. (Xinhua)

Mali closes livestock markets: Authorities in Mali's capital announced after



Election officials carry ballot boxes a day before the presidential election in Colombo, Sri Lanka on Sept 20. Sri Lankans began voting on Sept 21 in a presidential election that will determine the course of the country's recovery from its worst economic crisis and resulting political upheaval. (Xinhua)

gold prices soar to new record high of 2,609 dollars per ounce

In a remarkable surge, gold prices reached a new record high of approximately \$2,609 an ounce on Friday, fueled by the anticipation of further US interest rate cuts that have heightened demand for the precious metal, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This milestone comes just two days after the Federal Reserve implemented its first rate cut since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, signaling potential additional cuts in the near future.

Earlier on Friday, gold prices had hovered near record levels, reflecting an upward trend for the week following the significant US interest rate cut. Spot gold was reported at \$2,592.17 an ounce, marking a 0.2 percent increase, and an overall rise of about 0.6 percent for the week, according to Reuters.

The catalyst for this rally was the Federal Reserve's decision to reduce

interest rates by half a percentage point, paving the way for more cuts anticipated by the end of the year.

The analysts expect a cumulative reduction of a full percentage point by next year, with an additional half percentage point projected for 2026. Following this announcement, gold prices had already climbed to \$2,599.92 on Wednesday.

Kyle Rodda, a financial markets analyst at Capital.com, stated, "The current trends are very positive for gold. If these favorable market conditions persist, we could see prices reach between \$2,600 and \$2,800 in the next 12 months."

He noted that the combination of lower US interest rates and rising geopolitical tensions has made gold an increasingly attractive asset. In the Middle East, escalating conflict has also contributed to gold's

appeal. Israeli warplanes conducted their heaviest strikes on southern Lebanon in nearly a year, intensifying the ongoing conflict with Hezbollah. Such geopolitical instability typically drives investors toward safe-haven assets like gold.

Market analysts from BMI noted that gold prices are expected to remain well-supported in the coming months due to a weaker US dollar and lower bond yields, compounded by the rising geopolitical tensions.

In addition to gold, other precious metals saw positive movement as well. Silver prices rose approximately 1 percent to \$31.09 per ounce, while palladium increased by 0.6 percent to \$1,086.75.

The overall climate in precious metals markets appears to be bullish, with many investors keeping a close eye on forthcoming economic developments.

Market Movements

20-09-2024

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts		
DUBAI	-	DFMGI	+14.85	BRITAIN	-	FTSE 100	-98.73
JAPAN	-	Nikkei 225	+568.58	EUROPE	-	EURO Stoxx 50	-71.84
PHILIPPINES	-	PSEI	+50.16				4,871.54
PAKISTAN	-	KSE 100	+615.16				

Business

Other Voices

Kuwait considers borrowing, asset sales

Gulf countries face budget deficits amid low oil prices

By Kamel Al-Harami
Independent Oil Analyst

It appears that the oil prices are currently lower than the levels needed by most oil-producing countries to balance their annual budgets. With the barrel prices in the low \$70s, they are far from the desired \$90 per barrel. This situation is problematic for Gulf states, which rely heavily on oil revenues.



Al-Harami

It is a must for these states to balance their annual budgets; otherwise they may need to consider short-term solutions such as borrowing or selling off valuable assets, including natural resources or cash reserves. However, the timing for such measures is not favorable, which leaves the governments in a state of uncertainty. The pressing question remains - How long will they have to wait for oil prices to recover?

Oil prices are currently between \$72 and \$74 per barrel, which are far below the minimum desired price of \$90 per barrel for most oil-producing countries, including Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Iran.

Some countries in the region and in Africa want the oil prices to be above \$120 per barrel. For these countries, oil is the primary source of income. At the same time, they face heavy burdens from international debts and must comply with international regulations to secure further borrowing. This situation increases their financial strain amid the rising do-

mestic inflation.

In contrast, the Arabian Gulf states are not yet under such external regulatory pressures and interferences. They can use their oil reserves as collateral, which is a positive aspect. However, these nations need to invest in value-added assets to enhance their economies and generate additional revenue.

In Kuwait, we are facing the reality of budget deficits that make it challenging to balance our budget. While we have explored many solutions, our focus must be on the most efficient and cost-effective alternatives. Options such as borrowing or selling parts of our international investments are on the table, but the worst-case scenario would be selling our "jewel in the crown," which is our crude oil assets. This should be our last resort.

A simpler solution is to privatize some government-owned companies in various sectors, including oil services and petrochemicals. Also, some foreign oil companies can be invited to participate in our market, which could provide valuable expertise and benefits from their long-term experience.

Kuwait has not yet reached such a critical position of acute shortages or deficits in our annual budgets, as we have several cash solutions available. However, it is important to consider both immediate and long-term strategies. We should remain prepared and have potential solutions ready for implementation.

While we hope for an improvement in oil prices, it is important to note that expenses in Kuwait and other Gulf states continue to rise, creating instability.

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Successful integration creates major financial entity in Islamic finance

KFH completes historic merger with formerly AUB-Kuwait in record time

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) Chairman, Hamad Abdulmohsen Al Marzouq, said that KFH has successfully completed the merger steps between Kuwait Finance House and the formerly Ahli United Bank - Kuwait. With the successful integration of both banks' operations into a single, unified system, a new chapter of success, achievement, and industry leadership unfolds for the combined entity.

He pointed out that the integration of operations was completed in a record time with high efficiency. This affirms KFH's position as the benchmark for banks in Kuwait and the region. Following its landmark cross-border acquisition of Ahli United Bank - Bahrain, one of the largest deals in the region, KFH has concluded the largest-ever merger in Kuwait's banking sector. This historic merger paved the way for the creation of a giant financial entity within the Islamic finance industry, with a reach spanning local, regional, and global markets.

Al Marzouq explained that the success of this strategic step hinges on the sincere efforts of everyone involved in this project. He expressed his pride that the merger and integration of the two institutions has been a resounding success and facilitated a smooth transition for its valued customers, employees, and shareholders.

Following the integration, Al Marzouq said that customers will benefit from a wider range of Sharia-compliant financial products and services. Employees will also have access to expanded opportunities for growth and development within a larger, more diversified financial institution. Moreover, the strategic expansion into key regional and global markets would enhance profitability, leading to stronger financial performance for shareholders.

He went on to say that the merger solidifies KFH's standing as a leader in the Islamic banking industry, positioning it for inclusion on the list of the world's 100 largest banks within the next decade. He also noted that by combining KFH's experiences and resources, it is well-positioned to drive the future of Islamic finance, not just in Kuwait, but on a global scale.

Al Marzouq affirmed that KFH re-



Hamad Abdulmohsen Al Marzouq



Abdulwahab Iesa Al Rushood

Al Marzouq

■ The Operational Integration is a New Chapter in KFH's Success and Achievements

■ The integration of operations benefits shareholders, customers and employees

■ By combining KFH's experiences and resources, it is well-positioned to drive the future of Islamic finance

■ KFH is the benchmark for completing the largest-ever merger in Kuwait's banking sector

■ Converting the conventional operations of AUB in Bahrain, UK and Egypt is a significant milestone for the Islamic banking industry in Europe and globally

Al Rushood

■ KFH strengthened its position as a leading global banking group and a prominent brand

■ Over 250 phases were completed comprising more than 2,000 tasks

■ Accounts and products of over 280,000 formerly AUBK customers were migrated

ties.

Acting Group Chief Executive Officer, Abdulwahab Iesa Al Rushood

Meanwhile, KFH Acting Group Chief Executive Officer, Abdulwahab Iesa Al Rushood expressed pride in the successful completion of the largest merger project in the Kuwaiti banking sector. He attributed the achievement to the dedication and commitment of KFH's employees, who ensured a smooth transition on Operational Day One.

He noted that a massive, cross-

mains firmly committed to delivering excellence in Islamic banking services and moving forward towards creating exceptional value for all its stakeholders. This allows the Bank to contribute meaningfully to the growth and prosperity of the Kuwaiti banking sector.

Conversion to Islamic banking

Al Marzouq noted that KFH Group's expertise and high professionalism in Islamic finance led to the successful conversion of Ahli United Bank's conventional operations in Bahrain, the UK, and Egypt into Shariah-compliant entities in record time. This achievement aligns with KFH's strategy of expanding the Islamic finance industry locally, regionally, and globally.

He added that this step is a significant milestone for the Islamic banking industry in Europe and globally, presenting promising growth opportuni-

functional team has successfully completed over 250 phases, comprising more than 2,000 tasks. During this period, the accounts and products of over 280,000 formerly AUBK customers were migrated. The team also successfully integrated more than 80 systems across all bank departments in addition to unifying all services and products.

Al Rushood added: "Despite facing difficulties and challenges, we were able to overcome them and achieve this accomplishment. Our success would not have been possible without the guidance of Allah and the dedicated efforts of employees. KFH will solidify its position as a global leader in Shariah-compliant finance, becoming the most reliable, sustainable, and technologically advanced bank of its kind worldwide."

He highlighted that KFH has strengthened its position as a leading global banking group and a prominent brand that enjoys credibility, high solvency, sustainable profits and competitive performance in addition to a global reach with around 640 branches across 12 countries, notably Kuwait, Bahrain, Türkiye, Egypt, UK and Germany. KFH also tops all banks and companies listed on Boursa Kuwait in terms of market capitalization which exceeds KD 12 bn and reports the highest profit rates in the banking sector. In 2023, KFH reported a record net profit of KD 584.5 million attributable to the shareholders of the bank, an increase of 63.4%. The historic profits are the highest-ever recorded in the Kuwaiti banking sector.



Brent, WTI crude prices also decline

Kuwait oil price down to \$75.55 pb

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21, (KUNA): The price of Kuwaiti oil plummeted 53 cents to USD 75.55 per barrel (pb) on Friday, compared with USD 76.08 pb the day before, said the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC)

on Saturday.

The price of the Brent crude and West Texas Intermediate fell respectively by 39 cents and three cents to settle each at USD 74.49 per barrel and 71.92 pb.

Saudi ranks 14th globally in AI, first in Arab world

RIYADH, Sept 21, (KUNA): Saudi Arabia has achieved the 14th place globally and the first in the Arab world in the Global Artificial Intelligence Index approved by the United Nations, represented by the Advisory Board for Artificial Intelligence.

The Saudi Press Agency (SPA) reported, on Thursday, that the Kingdom is the fastest advancing country in the world in artificial intelligence, advancing 17 ranks in the index on the standard of trading in AI. "This confirms the

Kingdom's commitment to adopting and developing the field of artificial intelligence, investing in its technologies, and building national capabilities in this field", SPA added.

This index, launched in 2019, classifies the artificial intelligence landscape through seven main indicators, government strategy, operating environment, infrastructure, research and development, competencies, and trade, from which 122 criteria branch out, with 83 participating countries.

Bank aims for monetary stability

Saudi Central Bank cuts Repo rate by 50 basis points to 5.5%

RIYADH, Sept 21, (KUNA): The Saudi Central Bank, in line with its objective of preserving monetary stability, decided Wednesday to reduce the rate of Repurchase Agreement (Repo) by 50 basis points to 5.5 percent.

The rate of Reverse Repurchase Agreement (Reverse Repo) was also brought down by 50 basis points to five percent, according to a statement from the bank carried by the Saudi Press Agency.

Turkey maintains interest rate at 50% for sixth consecutive month

ISTANBUL, Sept 21, (Xinhua): The Turkish Central Bank decided on Thursday to keep the interest rate at 50 percent for the sixth month in a row declaring vigilance vis a vis the inflation but stopping short of indicating whether it would ultimately stiffen the monetary policy.

The central bank said in a statement that it had decided to maintain the in-

terest rate at 50 percent noting that tools of the monetary policy would be effectively employed in case the inflation drastically rose.

The central bank had stated in previous statements that it would stiffen the monetary policy in the face of forecast inflation rise, while the lira rate continued trading at USD 02.34.

Kuwait real estate sector reacts 'positively' to interest rate cuts

Interest rate reductions to boost borrowing and investment

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: Chairman of Kuwait Real Estate Association Ibrahim Al-Awadhi confirmed that the US Federal Reserve's reduction of interest rates by 0.50 percent to range between 4.75 and 5 percent, and the announcement of the Central Bank of Kuwait to reduce interest rates in Kuwait by 0.25 percent -- 4 percent instead of 4.25 percent -- will whet the appetite of investors (companies and individuals) to buy and will encourage borrowing and investment; thereby, moving the investment and commercial real estate markets forward.

In a statement to the newspaper, Al-Awadhi asserted "there is no doubt that reducing the interest rates will have repercussions on the economic sector in general, and the real estate sector in particular; as it is generally known

that reducing the interest rates encourages borrowing and investment. Whenever the Central Bank reduces the interest rates, borrowing for companies and individuals becomes cheaper, which preserves investment in new projects and drives the wheel of economic growth."

He explained there is a general rule and a well-known equation in the real estate sector in and outside Kuwait -- a decrease in interest rates is always accompanied by an increase in real estate prices, while an increase in interest rates is accompanied by a decrease in real estate prices.

"However, we have noticed that in the State of Kuwait; the recent general increases in interest rates were not accompanied by a decrease in real estate prices in the investment and commercial sectors. We have noticed decreases in the residential sector, but this sector ultimately has a specificity that is isolated from the investment and commercial sectors, especially since it is designated for individuals, not companies. The recent laws prevented financing entities from mortgaging guarantees related to residential real estate, so the Kuwaiti market was not accompanied by a correction in market prices in the past stage," he clarified.

He expects the investors' appetite to increase in the coming period, considering the decrease in

the interest rates on purchases by companies and individuals. He said this appetite was not cut in the past period, even with stable prices and high interest rates.

He added: "I believe the decrease in interest rates in the long term will lead to greater movement in the real estate, investment and commercial markets. There will be an increase in demand that will increase deals. In the long term, this may contribute to increasing prices; but in a simple way, because prices were not corrected during the increase in interest rates."

On the other hand, Chairman of Real Estate Appraisers Association Qais Al-Ghanem confirmed that the decrease in interest rates has positive effects on various types of economy. He stated these effects will be the engine for the rotation of stagnant capital in the previous period due to the increase in interest rates.

He added that with the decrease in interest rates, there will be a driving force to motivate the real estate investor, as well as the investor dealing in the stock exchange, to invest more broadly.

"This has a positive impact on the national economy and will move the wheel of the economy after the stagnation that struck us. We had a negative economic experience with it," he concluded.

Crown Prince directs investment via public investment fund for Egypt

Saudi to invest \$5 bln in Egypt as phase one of partnership

CAIRO, Sept 21, (Xinhua): Saudi Arabia will pump 5 billion U.S. dollars into Egypt as a first phase of investment, the Egyptian cabinet said on Monday.

Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud directed the Saudi Public Investment Fund (PIF) to make the investment, the cabinet said in a statement.

The statement did not provide further details.

The announcement came hours after the crown prince met with Egyptian Prime

Minister Mostafa Madbouly in Riyadh. The Saudi crown prince praised Egypt's efforts to address the concerns of Saudi investors and emphasized the importance of resolving remaining trade disputes to attract more Saudi investment.

Madbouly said that Egypt had resolved most challenges facing Saudi investors, with only 14 disputes remaining to be settled.

The PIF, established in 1971, has grown into one of the world's largest sovereign wealth funds.

stc wins ICT – Telecommunications Award – Kuwait at the Middle East Technology Excellence Awards

Recognized for its role as an ICT and digital pioneer in the local market

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: Kuwait Telecommunications Company – stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, announced that it has won the 'ICT - Telecommunications Award – Kuwait' for the entry 5G at the Middle East Technology Excellence Awards – a distinguished platform devoted to acknowledging and celebrating the pioneers of technological innovation.

The country level award reflects stc's strategic approach to enhancing its connectivity network, especially through various upgrades and solutions related to 5G technology.

stc was honored with the prestigious recognition following a rigorous and comprehensive evaluation by the elected judges from renowned auditing and accounting firms such as Crowe UAE, Baker Tilly Middle East, BDO UAE, and RSM AE Technology. To be nominated for the award, stc submitted a detailed report that highlighted its pioneering initiatives and significant milestones achieved in 2024 within the ICT category. Entries submitted to the judging panel were reviewed based on their uniqueness and innovation, effectiveness and impact, as well as dynamism. stc was announced as the winner of the ICT award at the award ceremony held at the Grand Hyatt Convention Centre in Dubai, UAE. Nasser Al Hamlan – General Manager of Net-



Nasser Al-Hamlan – General Manager of Network Planning and Design at stc Kuwait, receiving the award.

AI Ali:

■ We are proud to receive this award which reflects our ongoing efforts to enable digital transformation in Kuwait

work Planning & Design at stc attended the ceremony in Dubai and accepted the award on behalf of stc.

As a telecom pioneer, stc progressively evolves its business model and operations to cater to the latest technology and trends in the telecom market. The award recognizes stc's pioneering "One Core" 5G solution, which integrates 2G, 3G, 4G, and 5G networks into a unified system. This innovative approach simplifies network operations, enhances user experiences, and significantly reduces operational costs. With stream-

lined multiple network generations into a single platform, stc demonstrated its capability of providing cutting-edge solutions that cater to the evolving needs of its growing customer base.

Commenting on the award, Fahad Al Ali, Chief Technology Officer of stc, said, "We are proud to receive the 'ICT - Telecommunications Award - Kuwait' at the Middle East Technology Excellence Awards, which reflects our ongoing efforts to enable digital transformation in Kuwait. Our 'One Core' solution is a major milestone in our journey to pro-

vide innovative, efficient, and sustainable telecom services that benefit both our individual customers and businesses. Aside from our 'One Core' solution, stc has invested heavily in strengthening its 5G infrastructure over the years. This included integrating various solutions to provide our customers with a seamless and highly efficient experience."



ICT-Telecommunications Award

and user satisfaction. The solution has increased the handover success rate to 99%, reduced latency, and provided a more consistent user experience across voice and data services. This approach also simplified the upgrade to 5G Standalone (SA) through software updates, eliminated the need for extensive new hardware investments required for faster deployment of new digital services.

In addition to its advancements in 5G technology, stc introduced a Mobile

VPN solution, providing secure access to both public and private networks without the need for manual logins or extra authentication. This innovative solution enhances security and connectivity for businesses and organizations, enabling seamless and secure communication. With Mobile VPN, users can seamlessly connect to networks without the hassle of changing cards or numbers, fostering enhanced collaboration, heightened security, and seamless connectivity. This marks a significant step towards a new era of digital transformation and productivity, further solidifying stc's position as a leader in the telecom industry.

Additionally, stc continues to push the boundaries of innovation with its telecom cloud platform, which supports the future evolution of its 5G network. The platform incorporates ARM-based CPU architecture, providing high computing efficiency and reducing power consumption, aligning with stc's commitment to sustainability and cutting-edge technology.

Al Ali added, "stc would like to thank the organizers for creating a platform that recognizes evolutions and innovations within the industry, commending those who truly push the boundaries of the digital world. Additionally, the Company would like to extend its appreciation to the judges for their diligent approach to assessing each nominee and thoroughly going through all submissions. On behalf of stc's management team, I would also like to thank and commend our internal teams for all their hard work and efforts which led to this favorable outcome. Having said that, we remain focused on delivering advanced telecom solutions that empower our customers and Kuwait's Vision 2035."

EU to compel Apple to open up operating system to 'rival tech'

LONDON, Sept 21, (AP) – The European Union said Thursday it will outline steps to compel Apple to open up its iPhone and iPad operating systems to competing technologies under the bloc's tough new digital rulebook, which threatens hefty fines for breaches.

The EU's executive branch, the European Commission, said it has opened two "specification proceedings" that will spell out what Apple needs to do under the 27-nation bloc's Digital Markets Act.

The DMA is designed to prevent Big Tech "gatekeepers" from dominating digital markets, including by breaking up closed tech ecosystems. It requires tech companies to make their systems operate with rivals, allowing consumers to switch more easily between platforms.

One proceeding will focus on how connected devices like smartwatches and headphones will have "effective interoperability" with Apple's operating system. The other will look at how Apple deals with interoperability requests from software developers

for iOS and iPadOS, which should be done in a "transparent, timely and fair" way, the commission said.

During this process, which will take up to six months, the commission will send its findings to Apple. It's the first time the commission has used this process since the DMA took effect earlier this year. The bloc is already investigating Apple over its App Store rules for developers.

The commission's executive vice president in charge of competition policy, Margrethe Vestager, said in a press release that the process will "provide clarity" for developers and Apple.

Apple said it has "created ways for apps in the European Union to request additional interoperability with iOS and iPadOS while protecting our users."

"Undermining the protections we've built over time would put European consumers at risk," the company said, adding it will continue to "work constructively" with the commission.



People wait in front of the Apple store in Munich, Germany, on Sept. 25, 2015. The European Union's top court has rejected Apple's final legal challenge against an order from the bloc's executive commission to repay 13 billion euros in back taxes to Ireland, bringing an end to the long-running dispute (AP)

ASEAN officials vow to promote sustainable urban development

VIENTIANE, Sept 21, (Xinhua): Officials from member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) have reaffirmed their commitment to advance sustainable urban development.

"We reaffirm the commitment of ASEAN capitals and cities to foster innovations and to mobilize resources in driving sustainable urban development in line with the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement, and New Urban Agenda global goals," Ardsaphangthong Siphandone, mayor of Vientiane, said at a press conference on Thursday following the ASEAN Capitals and ASEAN Mayors Forum.

A key outcome of the forum was the adoption of the Vientiane Declaration, a document that charts the path for ASEAN capitals to collectively address urban development challenges.

The declaration called for bolstering regional connectivity by enhancing transport networks and digital infrastructure. Strengthening these systems is essential for promoting

economic growth, fostering cultural exchanges and facilitating closer cooperation among ASEAN cities.

The declaration also underscored the need to address climate resilience. With urbanization and climate change increasing risks to cities, the officials agreed to prioritize sustainable urban planning and environmental protection measures.

ASEAN capitals were committed to empowering local populations, especially vulnerable groups, by ensuring better access to education, healthcare and essential social services. The officials stressed that fostering a sense of ownership among citizens is vital for long-term sustainable urban growth.

The officials agreed to embrace digital transformation, smart city technologies and green innovations as drivers of urban solutions.

The preservation of cultural heritage was also a priority, with the officials pledging to promote cultural exchanges and safeguard the rich diversity of ASEAN's traditions and identities.

Rate cuts should, over time, lead to lower borrowing costs on mortgages

US home sales fell in August despite easing mortgage rates, more homes on the market

LOS ANGELES, Sept 21, (AP) – Sales of previously occupied U.S. homes fell in August to the slowest annual pace in nearly a year even as mortgage rates eased and the supply of properties on the market continued to rise.

Existing home sales fell 2.5% last month, from July, to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 3.86 million, the National Association of Realtors said Thursday.

Sales fell 4.2% compared with August last year. The latest home sales were short of the 3.9 million pace economists were expecting, according to FactSet.

Home prices increased on an annual basis for the 14th consecutive month. The national median sales price rose 3.1% from a year earlier to \$416,700. That's the highest median price for the month of August on records going back to 1999.

"Home sales were disappointing again in August, but the recent development of lower mortgage rates coupled with increasing inventory is a powerful combination that will provide the environment for sales to move higher in future months," said Lawrence Yun, the NAR's chief economist.

The Federal Reserve cut its main interest rate for the first time in more than four years Wednesday. Fed officials also signaled they expect further cuts this year and in 2025 and 2026. The rate cuts should, over time, lead to lower borrowing costs on mortgages.

Mortgage rates have been mostly easing since July as signs of waning inflation and a cooling job market raised expectations of a Fed cut. The average rate on a 30-year home loan fell this week to 6.09%, the lowest level since early February 2023, according to mortgage buyer Freddie Mac.

Despite more attractive mortgage rates, home sales likely declined last month in part because many prospective homebuyers were holding out for the Fed to cut rates.

"So far, those buyers who waited, may be glad that they did," said Danielle Hale, chief economist at Realtor.com. "Not only have mortgage rates continued to fall into early September, but we're also nearing a seasonal sweet spot for homebuyers, when competition usually wanes, home prices ease, and time on market tends to grow."

Economists are generally projecting that the average rate on a 30-year mortgage will remain above 6% this year.

Existing home sales have been in a deep sales slump dating back to 2022, when mortgage rates began to climb from pandemic-era lows. They sank to a nearly 30-year low last year as the average rate on a 30-year mortgage surged to a 23-year high of 7.79%.

Elevated mortgage rates, home



A housing development in Cranberry Township, Pa., is shown on March 29, 2024. (AP)

Trump Media plummets to new low

NEW YORK, Sept 21, (AP) – Shares of Trump Media & Technology Group slumped to their lowest level ever Friday, the first trading day that its biggest shareholder, former President Donald Trump, is free to sell his stake in the company behind the Truth Social platform.

Shares of Trump Media, commonly called TMTG, tumbled almost 8% to close at \$13.55, putting the value of the company at less than \$3 billion. Trump owns more than half of it.

Trump and other insiders in the company have been unable to cash in on the highly volatile stock due standard lock-up agreements that prevent big stakeholders from selling stakes for a set period after a company becomes publicly traded. TMTG began trading publicly in March.

prices near all-time highs and a chronic shortage of homes on the market have put off many would-be homebuyers.

In addition to the prospect for lower mortgage rates, more homes are hitting the market, giving home shoppers a wider selection to choose from.

All told, there were about 1.35 million unsold homes at the end of August,

Trump owns nearly 115 million shares of the company, according to filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission. Based on TMTG's share price early Friday, Trump's holdings are worth, at least on paper, about \$1.6 billion. It's usually not in the best interest of big stakeholders to even attempt to sell large tranches of their stock because it could risk a broader sell-off.

Since going public, shares in Trump Media have gyrated wildly, often depending on news related to Trump, the Republican presidential nominee.

One week ago, the company's shares jumped nearly 12% after Trump said he wouldn't sell shares when the lock-up period lifted. The stock dipped more than 10% following the debate earlier this month between Trump and the Democrats'

nominee, Vice President Kamala Harris. In mid-July, shares climbed more than 31% in the first day of trading following the first assassination attempt on Trump.

Trump Media & Technology Group Corp. is now worth considerably less than several months ago. When the company made its debut on the Nasdaq in March, the shares hit a high of \$79.38. Friday's closing price represents a decline of 83% from that peak.

Truth Social came into existence after he was banned from Twitter and Facebook following the Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol riot. Based in Sarasota, Florida, Trump Media has been losing money and struggling to raise revenue. It lost nearly \$58.2 million last year while generating only \$4.1 million in revenue, according to regulatory filings.

current sales pace, up from a 3.3-month pace at the end of August last year.

Traditionally, a 5- to 6-month supply is considered a balanced market between buyers and sellers.

"Maybe the favorable backdrop - lower mortgage rates, more inventory -- will have an impact in coming months," Yun said.

Bank of Japan keeps interest rates unchanged

TOKYO, Sept 21, (Xinhua): The Bank of Japan (BOJ) decided to keep its key interest rate unchanged at around 0.25 percent on Friday, as its chief said the central bank still has time to assess when it needs to raise borrowing costs further.

At the end of a two-day monetary policy meeting, BOJ board members voted unanimously to hold steady the central bank's target of guiding the uncollateralized overnight call rate to

around 0.25 percent.

BOJ Governor Kazuo Ueda told a press conference after the meeting that economic indicators have so far met with the BOJ's expectations, saying that the bank will increase interest rates if the economy and prices move on track.

Ueda also said the risk of rising inflation due to a weak yen is waning and that "we now have more time to assess" if further monetary tightening is neces-

sary, a comment that weakened the yen by tempering market speculations about another possible rate hike within the year.

The BOJ ended negative interest rates in March and hiked short-term rates to 0.25 percent in July, in a landmark shift away from a decade-long monetary stimulus aimed at spurring inflation and economic growth.

The July decision, together with follow-up remarks by Ueda about a pos-

sible further rate hike within the year, led the benchmark Nikkei 225 stock average to mark its biggest single-day fall in early August.

The BOJ's cautiousness toward additional rate hikes highlights the tough balance it must strike between normalizing policy after years of unorthodox monetary easing measures and minimizing negative impacts on the economy in the process of doing so, local media reported.



Nepal envoy addressing the gathering.



A group photo of Nepal citizens with artists who performed at the event posing for a photo.

Ambassador expresses gratitude for Kuwaiti support at celebratory event

Nepal celebrates 10th Constitution Day and National Day in Kuwait

By Paulo Francisco X. Fernandes
Arab Times/Al-Seyassah Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: The Embassy of Nepal in Kuwait, Thursday, celebrated the Tenth Constitution Day and the National Day at the Crowne Plaza, Hotel.

The chief guest at the event – which was attended by ambassadors of countries accredited to Kuwait, a large crowd of dignitaries and invited guests and members of the media fraternity – was H.E. Sameeh Essa Johar Hayat, Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs.

Speaking on the occasion the Ambassador of Nepal to Kuwait, H.E. Ghana Shyam Lamsal, expressed Nepal's sincere gratitude to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince, and His Highness the Prime Minister for their continued support in strengthening the bond between Nepal and Kuwait.

He said, it was on Sept 20, 2015, that Nepal adopted its new constitution, marking the successful conclusion of the peace process initiated in 2006.

This historic moment, he said, fulfilled the long-held aspiration of the Nepali people to have a constitution drafted by their own elected representatives, transforming the country into a federal, multi-ethnic, and inclusive democracy.

As the new constitution is in place, Nepal is all set to embark on acceler-

ated economic development. The government is making every possible effort to create conducive environment, including through necessary policy and institutional reforms, for attracting foreign investments. We are resolute to do more to make our country a better place for doing business and unleash the potential of our people.

"We warmly invite Kuwaiti friends and travelers from around the world to experience our country's stunning landscapes, rich culture, and warm hospitality," he said.

Nepal's tourism sector is flourishing, offering breathtaking landscapes and rich cultural heritage. We invite Kuwaiti friends and world travelers to discover our country's natural wonders -- from the majestic Himalayas to serene valleys and enjoy vibrant local cultures, historic sites, and warm hospitality.

Nepal and Kuwait have shared excellent diplomatic relations since 1972. Over the past 52 years, our ties have grown stronger, with increasing cooperation in trade, investment, tourism, and cultural exchanges, he added.

He went on to say, "We are grateful to Kuwait for hosting over 123,000 Nepali nationals who continue to enhance our people-to-people relations."

He concluded by saying, "We believe and we are confident that our bilateral relations will grow to new heights and will keep expanding and deepening particularly in the areas of trade, investment, tourism, culture and people to people relations."

Top students recognized at Founder's Day celebration

FAIPS DPS Kuwait celebrates thirtieth Founder's Day with vibrant ceremonies

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: For the last 29 years, FAIPS DPS, Kuwait has upheld its reputation as a prestigious institution committed to shaping and inspiring young minds. The legacy of unwavering dedication and focused commitment has been instrumental in creating the exceptional environment that FAIPS fraternity celebrates today.

On Wednesday, 11th September 2024, FAIPS DPS marked its 30th Founder's Day with a vibrant and enthusiastic event in the school auditorium, reflecting its rich history and achievements. To accommodate the large number of awardees, the celebration was organized into two sessions. His Excellency Dr. Adarsh Swaika, Ambassador of India to Kuwait, served as the chief guest for the first session, with Mr. Meshal Ali, Chairman of Al Aryan Holding Co., as the Guest of Honour.

The Chief Guest for the second session was Ms. Futouh Nasser Al Sabah, Chairperson and CEO of Al Futtooh Holding Company, and Ms. Lana Othman Al Ayyar, CEO of Al Rayan Holding Company, was the Guest of Honour. Mr. Arun Choudhary, CFO & Head - Strategy at Al Rayan Holding Company, graced both the sessions as a special guest.

The event began with the recital of the Holy Quran, followed by "Tabe-El-Kuwait" and the Kuwait National Anthem. The Principal, Mr. Ravi Ayanoli, then led the dignitaries in lighting the ceremonial lamp, symbolizing the triumph of good over evil and the dispelling of darkness.

The opening ceremony featured introductions of the guests by the Head Boys & Vice Head Boys of the senior school council followed by the Principal's welcome address to the esteemed guests with bouquets. In his speech, he highlighted the importance of human values in today's technology-driven world and urged parents to support their children in adapting to future changes, as majority of current jobs are expected to disappear.

The audience enjoyed a series of captivating performances, starting with classic musical pieces from the talented School Band. The kindergarten students then presented a charming musical showcase, followed by a vibrant performance by primary school students that illustrated the transformative power of love. A thought-provoking mime show on women's empowerment by grades 9 and 11 left a significant impact on the

audience. The program also featured a lively welcome song by the FAIPS nightingales, a beautifully synchronized Sri Lankan Kandyan dance, and a dynamic fusion dance by IGCSE students, all of which dazzled the audience.

A compelling slideshow displayed the school's extraordinary achievements and growth followed by the unveiling of the fifth edition of the school magazine, FAIPS PANORAMA, by Guest of Honour Mr. Meshal Ali, with the Principal and members of the school magazine committee.

The highlight of the event was the award ceremony, where His Excellency Dr. AdarshSwaika and Principal Mr. Ravi Ayanoli presented scholar badges to deserving students in recognition of their dedication and hard work throughout the academic year. It was a moment of pride for the parents as they saw their children being honored for their achievements. The event continued with an inspiring address by His Excellency Dr. Swaika, who shared his insights and words of wisdom, offering positivity and encouragement while providing feedback on the ceremony. He stressed the importance of education, self-confidence, and pursuing one's passions.

Top performers in CBSE Grade 12, Grade 10, and Cambridge examinations were recognized along with their mentors with cash awards and trophies for achieving centum and A* in various subjects by Ms. Lana Al Ayyar, CEO of Al Rayan Holding Co. Additionally, long service awards were presented to employees who have completed 15, 20 & 25 years of service.

Mr. Arun Choudhary, CFO & Head of Strategy at Al Rayan Holding Company, distributed cash awards to CBSE National Sports Award winners and certificates to winners of various interschool quiz competitions and their mentor teachers. In his remarks, Mr. Choudhary praised the exceptional intellect, competitive spirit, and dedication of the students and their teachers, highlighting their role as exemplars of excellence.

The Head Girls & the Vice Head Girls of the senior council, expressed their heartfelt gratitude to the dedicated teachers, supportive parents, and hard-working team members whose efforts made the event a success.



Photo during the event.

Seminar features insights on AI, building commissioning

IEI Kuwait Chapter hosts successful technical seminar

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: The Institution of Engineers India (IEI), Kuwait Chapter, successfully organized a technical seminar at the Millennium Hotel and Convention Centre, focusing on key themes in Facilities Management, Building Commissioning, and Financial Engineering. The seminar attracted engineering professionals from across Kuwait, fostering insightful discussions on emerging industry trends and financial engineering.

The event commenced with the national anthems of Kuwait and India, setting a tone of collaboration and unity. IEI Kuwait Chapter Chairman, Eng. Sam Ananth Kumar, formally opened the seminar with a warm welcome, acknowledging the presence of the chief guest, sponsors, keynote speakers, and attendees.

The keynote address was delivered by Mr. Elie Emile Khalife, Group CEO of EcovertFM Middle East. He emphasized the growing importance of facilities management, lauding the contribution of EcovertFM across the Middle East and particularly in Kuwait. He also praised the IEI Kuwait chapter for its unwavering commitment to advancing the engineering community in Kuwait.

The seminar featured three highly engaging technical sessions:

AI-Based Facilities Management – Presented by Eng. Ershad Mohammed, Facilities Manager of Al Hamra Tower. He explored the revolutionary role of Artificial Intelligence in facility management and how it addresses the challenges posed by the ever-evolving construction industry.

The Importance of Building Commissioning – Eng. V. Arunselvan Veerapan, Technical Director of EcovertFM Middle East, detailed the critical process of inspecting, test-

ing, and commissioning building systems to ensure they meet design standards, a key factor in delivering functional and efficient facilities.

Financial Engineering: Design Your Own Financial Freedom – Mr. V.R. Aiyappan, a renowned Chartered Financial Analyst, Director – EVA Merafunds offered an insightful session on financial independence, discussing the role of insurance, mutual funds, and strategies to manage inflation, offering strategies to attain financial independence.

The presentations ignited vibrant discussions during the Q&A session, where participants engaged with the speakers on the challenges and opportunities within their fields.

As a token of appreciation, mementos were presented to the chief guest and speakers by the Chairman and the Executive Committee members. Former Chairman, Dr. Mahendran, also recognized the IEI Treasurer, Eng. Karthikeyan, for his efforts in expanding IEI membership.

The event concluded with a vote of thanks by Eng. Sudhir Menghani, General Secretary of IEI Kuwait Chapter, followed by a networking dinner, offering attendees the opportunity to connect and collaborate.

The Master of Ceremonies, Eng Anu Kurian and Eng Mythili Rajamannar hosted the event and engaged the speakers, audience and guests, contributing to the great success of the event.

Overall, the seminar was a resounding success, providing attendees with valuable knowledge and professional networking opportunities, while highlighting IEI Kuwait Chapter's pivotal role in supporting the engineering community in Kuwait.

The Conversation

Strategies proposed to reduce student uncertainty

New book examines challenges for students in public higher education

By Blake R. Silver
George Mason University

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



In his new book, "Degrees of Risk: Navigating Insecurity and Inequality in Public Higher Education," sociology professor Blake R. Silver examines some of many ways that college students can slip through the cracks at public colleges and universities. In the following Q&A with The Conversation U.S., Silver expounds on what he discovered while doing research for his book - and how higher education leaders can better serve their students.

Colleges don't set out to make life complicated for their students, but they often play a direct role in creating and amplifying uncertainty. This is one of the central findings of my new book.

Following a period of comparable economic security during the mid-20th century, public colleges in the U.S. experienced steep funding cuts. The result was that many of them instituted policies and practices that appealed to affluent students and families. For example, they created flexible programs of study and organized an array of optional resources like a buffet of opportunities.

While these characteristics generally appeal to socioeconomically advantaged students, for many others - especially first-generation, low-income, and working-class students - they produce uncertainties that complicate college journeys. Though abundant choices and flexibility may seem broadly appealing, research shows that they can make it difficult to anticipate next steps, and it's easy for students to get lost. This most directly impacts students whose families are less familiar with navigating college and those with few economic resources to recover from missteps.

That's right. On average, early adulthood is more secure - in terms of career, family, health and a host of other outcomes - for college graduates. What we often miss, though, is the insecurity that confronts students within college, long before they arrive at graduation.

The high costs of college and the uncertainties of the contemporary labor market mean that for many students, tasks like taking out loans, choosing majors, selecting courses and deciding whether to pursue an internship or stick with a part-time job feel high-stakes. And in many ways, they are. The payoff of a college degree, for example, varies significantly by field of study. And we shouldn't forget that nearly 1 in 3 students who enroll at four-year public institutions don't graduate with a degree.

In my book, I describe specific strategies colleges can employ to reduce uncertainty for students. Institutions can begin by weaving structured guidance throughout programs of study. Instead of emphasizing flexibility, many students benefit from focused choices. Flexibility doesn't have to go away, but students can start with a clearer map of their routes through college and modify their paths when needed.

I also recommend that colleges organize support resources to make them visible, interconnected and proactive. This can be achieved when resources like academic advising, tutoring and career services are integrated within the curriculum, so students don't need preexisting knowledge of these resources or how to find them.

It also helps to house these services in centralized locations. To proactively boost security, staff should identify specific moments when students need support, rather than waiting for individuals to reach out for help. These are just a few places to start.

Though the responsibility for change lies primarily with colleges and policymakers, there are things students do to alleviate uncertainties. Researching my book, students told me about strategies like avoiding opportunities they perceived as risky, such as working unpaid internships, studying abroad or taking private loans. (AP)



Photos during the event.

New Delhi band Peter Cat captivates global audience

WEST HOLLYWOOD, Calif., Sept. 21. (AP) — There's an unspoken reverence emanating from the crowd as Peter Cat Recording Co. begins to play the blend of disco and jazzy psychedelic melodies that intro "People Never Change."

All of a sudden, singer and guitarist Suryakant Sawhney launches into the melancholy, self-aware lyrics that contrast the upbeat track. Cheers erupt from the sea of fans packed like tinned fish inside the intimate West Hollywood, California, venue, swaying back and forth as Sawhney's crooning, Frank Sinatra-esque vocals wash over them.

It's an August night at the Troubadour, and music lovers have gathered for a seemingly spiritual experience in the form of an album release party. Phones are out for only a few songs. "BETA" has been out for less than 72 hours at this point and already fans are singing along to almost every word.

"I think ultimately the kind of people who come to the shows end up being people who have actually had deeper connection with the music itself," said Sawhney. "It (the music) requires people to know them, have heard them, internalize them, know the lyrics so then they can enjoy themselves."

The New Delhi-based band has quickly risen from its status as an indie band popular among South Asian audiences to embarking on a 77-stop headlining world tour through December. The tour titled "Good Luck Beta '24," is hitting North America, Europe and India, while Peter Cat is also opening for Khruangbin during select dates.

"It felt like a good place to start," Sawhney said of the West Coast choice. "I mean, at least in the US, really, it was very organic," he said with respect to the band's rise in popularity. Peter Cat Recording Co. was born on New Year's Day 2011 and emerged onto the music scene

with their debut album, "Sinema." They're named after the Peter Cat restaurant in Kolkata and Sawhney's "desire to be a businessman rather than just a musician."

After a 2012 tour through India, their first show outside of the country was in Berlin, in 2015. Four years later, the album "Bismillah" launched them onto the radar of global audiophiles, generating a new strain of fans.

Performance

Sawhney and his bandmates - Karan Singh on drums, Dhruv Bhola on bass, Rohit Gupta on keys and wind instruments and Kartik Pillai on guitar and various instruments - have a self-proclaimed "laidback energy as a group," creating an atmosphere similar to a theatrical performance. As the band transitioned from song to song with very little banter, fans listened to hits from "Bismillah" and 2018's "Portrait of a Time: 2010-2016," along with newer tracks from "BETA," like "Suddenly" and "Flowers R. Blooming."

Their synergy is evidence of the current band members' dynamic. Since its inception, Peter Cat Recording Co. has had members come and go, but the current lineup has been working together since 2018.

"I think if you want to stick together as a band, there are some things that would seem to be fundamental where you have to be able to split a lot of your success equally, regardless of how it works," Sawhney said. "So, sometimes you need to operate more like a family, just in order for it to work, actually, because I think all this stuff gets complicated."

While Sawhney's vocals can be heard throughout most of the album, "BETA" also highlights the voices of Bhola and Pillai on "I Deny Me" and "Foolmuse." During their performances, each band member gets

the spotlight as they shuffle throughout the stage, playing different instruments depending on the track.

Sawhney says the group aims to transcend labels like "band" or "collective."

"They're just terms. They mean nothing. In reality, you just at each step, assess whether working together is mutually benefiting everybody. And you're all moving ahead in some form," says Sawhney.

When recording, the band says they all take part in production. The band describes the 13-track "BETA" in a press release as "a collection of stories about the future told 50 years in the past to make sense of the present on our only home, planet earth." It transitions from genre to genre, ranging from alt-rock to disco. The band prefers to avoid being boxed in.

"Sometimes it's nice to not be easily reducible," said Sawhney.

The album was recorded in various locations from Goa, India to Joshua Tree, California. Its title is Hindi for "son" and was announced by Singh's six-month old son. In an Instagram post, Singh is shown laying out folded pieces of white paper in front of the crawling baby, who grabs one of the pieces, unveiling the title for the album. The other titles were in the running?

"They weren't good enough, I guess, to even share," Singh said.

When first crafting "BETA," Sawhney and Singh said that "Flowers R. Blooming" was the track that cemented the beginning of the album and the first they completed while recording during their last US tour.

"I think it sums up that little trip we took, starting from India and going all the way through America," said Sawhney. "The spaces we chose to record these songs just naturally lend themselves to be those spaces to record that song, whether it was because of the acoustics, whether it was because of the surrounding environment or just general vibe, for lack of a better word."

Variety

Features



This image released by A24 shows Adam Pearson in a scene from 'A Different Man.' (AP)

Film

Genre-bending film raises questions about authenticity

'Different Man' provokes deep reflection

By Jocelyn Noveck

Imagine you could wake up one morning, stand at the mirror, and literally peel off any part of your looks you don't like - with only movie-star beauty remaining.

How would it change your life? How should it change your life?

That's a question - well, a launching point, really - for Edward, protagonist of Aaron Schimberg's fascinating, genre-bending, undeniably provocative and occasionally frustrating "A Different Man," featuring a stellar trio of Sebastian Stan, Adam Pearson and Renate Reinsve.

The very title is open to multiple interpretations. Who (and what) is "different"? The original Edward, who has neurofibromatosis, a genetic disorder that causes bulging tumors on his face? Or the man he becomes when he's able to slip out of that skin? And is he "different" to others, or to himself?

When we meet Edward, a struggling actor in New York (Stan, in elaborate makeup), he's filming some sort of commercial. We soon learn it's an instructional video on how to behave around colleagues with deformities. But even there, the director stops him, offering changes. "Wouldn't want to scare anyone," he says.

On Edward's way home on the subway, people stare. Back at his small apartment building, he meets a young woman in the hallway, in the midst of moving to the flat next door. She winces visibly when she first sees him, as virtually everyone does.

But later, Ingrid (Reinsve) tries to make it up to him, coming over to chat. She is charming and forthright, and tells Edward she's a budding playwright.

Edward goes for a medical checkup and learns that one of his tumors is slowly progressing over the eye. But he's also told of an experimental trial he could join. With the possibility - maybe - of a cure.

So Edward, spurred at least partly by frustration at not being able to get closer to Ingrid, joins the trial. These scenes take on the sudden feel of a sci-fi fantasy film - not awkwardly, but somehow quite smoothly shifting genres for a bit.

As for the medication, it starts working even sooner than anyone had hoped. Soon, Edward's skin is starting to come off in clumps. It's terrifying. And then he finds himself at the mirror, disintegrating before his eyes. But suddenly, Edward looks like - well, he looks like Sebastian Stan.

Naturally, life changes, and radically. When he goes back to the same bar in which he'd been stared at and left alone, he becomes everyone's buddy. A woman even wants to get intimate with him. He catches his own eye in the mirror, as if to say: "What's happening to us?"

Choice

Edward now makes a momentous choice. He simply disappears from his former life and becomes a "different" person entirely. Now his name is Guy, and he lives in a nicer place. He also has a job as a real estate agent - the ultimate face-forward career, making use of his silky good looks.

But Guy is not, shall we say, comfortable in his own skin. Then one day, he sees Ingrid walking into a theater. She's holding auditions for the play she's written - about a man just like Edward. In fact, it IS about Edward. And he becomes obsessed with playing the role.

In the course of auditions, Edward runs into another actor with deformities who says, poignantly, "I was born to play this." Guy of course cannot say why he disagrees - which is that HE is Edward. Here Schimberg is tapping into the thorny discussion over casting, and whether disabled roles should only be filled by disabled actors, trans roles by trans actors, and so on. Adding layers of complexity to his film, Schimberg

does both, in a way.

Or should we say, Ingrid does both. As playwright - and here, the superb Reinsve acquires an edge that her initial, sweeter incarnation of Ingrid lacked - she seems to understand instinctively that Guy, despite his dashing looks, has a connection to the character. She even lets him try rehearsing with a mask of his earlier self.

Enter Oswald.

It's shame we can't say too much about Oswald without veering into spoiler territory, because Oswald (Pearson) is the indispensable part of the last act here. Oswald is (as is Pearson) an actor who has neurofibromatosis, but in all other ways he's extremely different from Edward. He's outgoing, engaging, brimming with effortless wit - British, too - and interacts with the world in ways Edward could only have dreamed of.

Obviously, this will throw Edward/Guy for a loop. Early scenes exploring the dynamics of this unlikely trio crackle with possibility, discomfort, sometimes comedy, sometimes tragedy.

What is Schimberg ultimately trying to say? Here's where it gets tricky. He throws out some tantalizing questions about authenticity in life and art, not to mention how the way we look charts our destiny. Then, he doesn't so much answer them as shock us with head-spinning developments that feel, even for these wholly unique circumstances, as if they come out of nowhere.

But it's an absorbing ride, and Schimberg works with confidence and brio. On top of that his cast is so darned good, you want the story to go on and on - how about a trilogy, with everyone returning for sequels based on Oswald and Ingrid?

"A Different Man," an A24 release, has been rated R by the Motion Picture Association "for sexual content, graphic nudity, language and some violent content." Running time: 112 minutes. Three stars out of four. (AP)

WASHINGTON: With President Joe Biden away from the White House, it was left Friday to another man with Oval Office experience to stand at the front of the Rose Garden and give a rousing call to service.

Martin Sheen and others from the cast of "The West Wing," the hit drama about a liberal president and his staff, were invited by first lady Jill Biden for an event to mark the 25th anniversary of the show.

Sheen exhorted the crowd to find something worth fighting for, "something deeply personal and uncompromising, something that can unite the will of the spirit with the work of the flesh."

His voice and hands rose, his cadence matching perfectly that of President Jed Bartlet, the character Sheen played for seven seasons.

"When we find that, we will discover fire for the second time, and then we will be able to help lift up this nation and all its people to that place where the heart is without fear, and their head is held high," Sheen said.

"The West Wing" remains a favorite of many who now work in Washington, both liberal and conservative. Among those spotted in the Rose Garden were House Foreign Affairs Chairman Michael McCaul, R-Texas, and Joe Walsh, once a tea party-aligned Illinois congressman who is now a sharp critic of former President Donald Trump and supporting Vice President Kamala Harris.

Asked to name his favorite character, Walsh replied, "I'm partial to Martin Sheen because I want to be president one day."

It was clear in the speeches and the party's touches that at least a few "West Wing" fans work in the White House.

Walters passed out bourbon-and-ginger ale cocktails called "The Jackal," a reference to press secretary C.J. Cregg's dance and lip sync routine in one iconic episode. (AP)

NEW YORK: The Federal Bureau of Prisons says it has increased

staffing in recent months to make up for staggering shortfalls at the troubled New York City jail where Sean "Diddy" Combs is awaiting trial after pleading not guilty Tuesday to sex trafficking charges.

The agency's push to fix the Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn comes as detainees, advocates and judges have continued



Sheen



Combs

to raise alarms about "dangerous, barbaric conditions," rampant violence and multiple deaths. Some judges have refused to send people to the jail, the only federal lockup in the nation's biggest city.

Combs' lawyers are pushing to have him moved to a jail in New Jersey, arguing that the Brooklyn jail, known as MDC Brooklyn, is

unfit for pretrial detention. Combs, 54, is being kept in the facility's special housing unit, confined to his cell up to 23 hours a day with around-the-clock monitoring. His lawyer, Marc Agnifilo, said that's routine for high-profile new arrivals.

MDC Brooklyn is getting needed attention thanks to a group of senior Bureau of Prisons officials

known as the Urgent Action Team, which is focusing on bringing the facility back to adequate staffing levels and ensuring it is in good repair. The agency said Friday that it has increased staffing at the jail by about 20%, bringing its total number of employees to 469. Even so, there are still 157 vacant positions. (AP)

People & Places

Fashion

Versace's caution

Gucci unveils looks of casual grandeur

MILAN, Sept 21, (AP) — The fashion palate cleanser of the season: white. Milan fashion houses, more often than not this season, are opening their runway preview shows for next spring and summer with all-white looks.

Tod's put the emphasis on white with tables of artisans constructing white driving shoes inside the showroom, and followed by opening the show with a crisp white look, as did a host of other fashion houses this week, including Moschino, Alberta Ferretti, Del Core and Cavalli.

The fashion crowd arriving at the highly anticipated Gucci show passed through a white tunnel that burst into the colors of a sunset along the length of the runway.

Highlights from mostly womenswear previews for next spring and summer on the fourth day of Milan Fashion Week on Friday:



Dunst

Sabato De Sarno starts a new fashion cycle a year after debuting his first Gucci collection, focusing on some of his self-described obsessions: tailoring, lingerie, leather and a 1960s silhouette.

In its simplest form, a white tank with Gucci-stripe piping was paired with dark trousers with a hemline slit over sneakers.

In its most elaborate, Gucci-monogram overcoats dragged imperially on the runway, and lingerie peeked out of glossy, textured leather.

A blouse slinked insouciantly off the shoulder. Sequined dresses rustled. Crepe dresses were anchored with bamboo-shaped hardware. Mini-skirts bubbled slightly. Floral headscarves or big sunhats finished the looks.

De Sarno dubbed the collection "casual grandeur." "Moment after moment, I have built my ideas for Gucci," he said in notes. "A casual grandeur that takes shape through my obsessions ... and always with an irreverent attitude."

Gucci's front-row glistened with Jessica Chastain, Kirsten Dunst, Nicola Coughlan - who stopped to take a selfie with fans - and Italy's own tennis hero, Jannick Sinner, a Gucci ambassador. A crowd of K-pop fans chanted in anticipation of the arrival of Jin from BTS, another brand ambassador.

Conservative

The opening movement of Beethoven's Fifth signaled the start of the Versace runway show inside a courtyard of the medieval Sforza Castle.

But as soon as the models hit the runway, the tempo shifted to contemporary house music as a drone recorded the scene from overhead.

The Spring-Summer 2025 collection was conservative by Donatella Versace standards, looks for good girls mixing and matching satiny pencil skirts, polos and demure cardigans, easily tied together by a car coat. The silhouette and the mod hairstyles suggested an inspiration at the cusp of the 1960s and 1970s.

The most daring ensembles comprised short-shorts with tights and platform heels, or a chiffony dress left open from the belly button to reveal a pair of wavy-patterned panties. Gigi Hadid modeled an off-shoulder floral midi dress, that was pretty without being in any way provocative. A metallic-finish dress with a plunging cowl projected the most sensuality.

The menswear was very much a companion to the women's looks: the same wavy knits in a trio of colors, and satiny floral prints as shirts or pajama suiting. That is, many pieces to mix and match, light on the attitude.

In a world abuzz over artificial intelligence, Tod's highlighted artisanal intelligence.

Dozens of craftspeople flanked the showroom, hand-stitching the brand's trademark Gommio driving shoe. Models emerged from beneath a pair of sculptor Lorenzo Quinn's oversized white hands, grasping a spiral of leather.

"Artisanal intelligence goes against what everyone is talking about," creative director Matteo Tamburini said before the show. "The focus is on a very elevated product, which is the cornerstone of Made in Italy."

The Spring-Summer 2025 collection started with crisp cotton pairings: trousers or skirts with oversized shirts. The looks were reproduced in a soft leather, intentionally fluid for the warmer months, while a leather overcoat was more sturdily vintage. Asymmetrical cuts and wraps gave the collection a touch of casual elegance. Looks were finished with barely there criss-cross sandals, the new Gommio in glove leather or a clog version.

Tamburini said the only thing he uses AI for is to craft talking points for journalists. "I am not a writer," he said, laughing.

The Sunnei fashion brand marked its 10th anniversary questioning the very notion of "growing up," and casting aspersions on the idea of "maturing."

With a dose of irony and fob for diversity, brand founders Simone Rizzo and Loris Messina, both in their mid-30s, cast only older models, mostly graying, and most probably falling into a demographic of over 65s that the show notes say make up a quarter of Milan's population.

The pace of the show, spanning two floors, was kept slow, which the notes suggested was due to the stairs, but could also have been in consideration of the colorful platform flip-flops the brand has created in collaboration with Camper.

Youthful

In any case, the collection retained the brand's winning, youthful jubilation, depicted in oversized garb like billowing bubble tops gathered at the waist, a striped T-shirt so big it became a tunic, and a blouse that tented over an A-line pleated leather skirt.

The trouser of the season for men and women gathered at the ankle with fanning pleats. A more simply tailored pant has a built-in apron, over which to layer a utility belt full of zippered pockets.

Prada led the charge with a collection that served as a review of its past, offering updated elements for the Prada woman to create her own power. A much newer Milan player, Maccapani, is making the mixing of the old and new the hallmark of the brand, now in its third season.

Call it the Prada Eras Tour. The Spring-Summer 2025 womenswear collection featured a review of Prada era past, reinterpreted with a surreal, sometimes sci-fi eye.

"It was finding ways of being Prada today," Miuccia Prada said backstage.

Prada, with her co-creative director Raf Simons, said the collection aims at finding humanity in an era when information overload is driven by algorithms. Instead of exploring themes on the runway, the designers created individual looks, playing up to the strengths of each character they created.



Versace



Gucci



Versace



Emporio Armani



Versace

Models wear creations as part of the Versace, Gucci and Emporio Armani's Spring Summer 2025 collections, that were presented in Milan, Italy, on Sept. 19 and 20. (AP)

Television

Talk show's new season promises comfort, fun

Clarkson opts for 'safe' interviews

NEW YORK, Sept 21, (AP) — Kelly Clarkson says she's learned a thing or two about interviewing after being in the spotlight as a recording artist since 2002. So, she's created a safe space for guests on season six of her talk show which launches Monday. Burned by media stories in the past, the Grammy-winning singer-songwriter says she takes a different approach with guests on her daytime show.

Fans of the show - based in New York for its second year - can expect more celebrity interviews, human interest stories, and Clarkson's signature "Kellyoke" musical performances. Clarkson says she likes to make guests feel comfortable, often playing games and infusing humor into her segments.

Clarkson is also an executive producer on the show, which has won 22 Daytime Emmy Awards, including Outstanding Daytime Host and Talk Show last year. She spoke to The Associated Press recently about how she approaches interviews, covering new artists and staying incognito on the subway. Answers have been edited for clarity and brevity.

AP: What are you most excited about in the new season?

Clarkson: By season six, people kind of trust our show more. I think a lot of times some actors or artists - especially in the limelight - they get a little nervous about going on shows because they're like, "Are they going to try and angle something? Or get some sort of soundbite or clickbait?" That's not what I'm about. I've obviously had that happen to me in my career, so I don't want to do that to anyone. I think people by now feel safe there, and they're willing to like, you know, play a dumb game that's

just fun or they're willing to talk about things that maybe they don't normally talk about.

AP: What have you learned from being on the other side of interviews?

Clarkson: I know what the receiving end feels like. You just want to promote something that you're proud of, and then having to shadowbox your way through an interview so somebody is not trying to make their career off something they try and get you to say - it's just gross and it's hurtful. There's been certain things, like where I help navigate the interview in a way that I'm comfortable. I never ask someone something that I wouldn't mind answering. I definitely have been on the receiving end of that in a positive way and in a very negative way. I just want people to feel safe and comfortable because it's supposed to be a good time, you know?

AP: Who are your dream guests?

Clarkson: Everything is a cherry on top at this point. I've had the most amazing bookers for my show. I hung out with Dolly Parton and Cher and Heart and Alanis Morissette and Babyface and like all these artists that I love musically. And then I got to hang out with Josh Brolin, who was like in "The Goonies" and he's Thanos, and it's like, so cool! Meeting people that you love in their movies or for their work and then, you know, getting to see a sneak peek of who they are as a human is very fun. I always say Meryl Streep - she is one of my favorites in the industry, whether it's singing or acting or whatever.

AP: Your "Kellyoke" segment is a fan-favorite, and you cover many popular songs. Which new artists are you listening to now?

Clarkson: I'm a big fan of Chappell (Roan). I'm actually covering her quite a bit this season. I love Fletcher. I've always been covering this generation, like Billie (Eilish) or Olivia Rodrigo, there's a lot of them. There's a lot of talent - Sabrina Carpenter I'm a big fan of. I'm like 42, but I love it. Music is music. That's the cool thing about it. There is no specific culture, specific age, specific, whatever you have to be - it's for everyone. I cover 180 songs a season, which is awesome. It's just a lot of work, so to be able to sing songs and be so excited about like these new up-and-coming artists. It's exciting covering these songs and then challenging you a bit but I love this. It's a great generation of artists right now.

AP: Is it true you ride the New York City subway? Don't you get recognized?

Clarkson: Not at all! Girl, I don't look like this - (motions to made-up face) - this is not how I woke up! (laughs) I usually am in a mom bun, or a hat and I get away with it. It's only when I speak - as soon as I open my mouth to speak is when people will go, "what?" And then that's what gives me away. I have a very talented (hair and makeup) team named Harry and Potter - that's what I call them (laughs) - and I'm very lucky. I realize that. On "The Voice," like I remember, any time I'd ever go out with Blake (Shelton) anywhere or John (Legend) they just look like them all the time. They can't get away with it and they can't go anywhere. I'm very blessed. I get away with leading a pretty normal average life, and I don't think a lot of people in the limelight get that. But yeah, the subway's just faster! So, we're on it all the time.



Kelly Clarkson appears at the 51st Daytime Emmy Awards on Friday, June 7, 2024, at the Westin Bonaventure in Los Angeles. (AP)



Baldwin



Roy

Variety

SANTA FE, N.M.: Alec Baldwin urged a New Mexico judge on Friday to stand by her decision to scuttle his trial and dismiss an involuntary manslaughter charge against the actor in the fatal shooting of a cinematographer on the set of a Western movie.

State District Court Judge **Mary Marlowe Sommer** dismissed the case against Baldwin halfway through a trial in July based on the withholding of evidence by police and prosecutors from the defense in the 2021 shooting of cinematographer **Halya Hutchins** on the set of the film "Rust."

The charge against Baldwin was dismissed with prejudice, meaning it can't be revived once any appeals of the decision are exhausted. (AP)

NEW YORK: Booker Prize winner **Arundhati Roy**'s first memoir is coming out next fall, a book inspired by the death of her mother.

Scribner announced Friday that the Indian author and activist's new memoir will be released in September 2025. Roy, best known for her Booker-winning novel "The God of Small Things," said in a statement that she began working on the book after her mother's death in September 2022. **Mary Roy**, whose life was fictionalized in "The God of Small Things," was a renowned educator to whom her daughter dedicated the book and who was eulogized by the author as "one of the fiercest, most fabulous" people she ever knew.

"I have been writing this book all my life," Arundhati Roy said in Friday's statement. (AP)

NEW YORK: New York magazine says that its highly regarded Washington correspondent, **Olivia Nuzzi**, is on leave after disclosing that she violated the publica-

tion's standards by having a personal relationship with a former reporting subject.

The newsletter Status, which broke the story, and The New York Times

both cite unnamed sources in identifying **Robert F. Kennedy Jr.** as the other person involved with Nuzzi. She has not confirmed Kennedy's involvement, and Kennedy said in a statement that he had only met her once.

David Haskell, New York magazine editor in chief, said in a note to staff members on Friday that Nuzzi told them the relationship began last December, "after we had published her November profile." (AP)

LONDON: As gray seals go, Sheba is grayer than most.

The grand dame of the Cornish Seal Sanctuary is being celebrated Saturday for her 50th birthday, far surpassing the lifespan of a seal in the wild and possibly being the oldest in captivity.

"Reaching 50 is a huge milestone, not just for Sheba but for everyone here who has been part of her journey," said **Tamara Cooper**, curator at the facility in southwest England.

Things weren't looking bright for the young pup when she was rescued from a **Cornwall** beach in September 1974.

Ken Jones found Sheba with a head injury and nasty eye infection and took her home where he and his wife, **Mary**, rehabilitated seals in a pool. (AP)



From left: Rohit Gupta, Kartik Pillai, Karan Singh, Suryakant Sawhney, and Dhruv Bhola of Peter Cat Recording Co. pose for a photograph in Mumbai, India, Friday, Aug 2, 2024. (AP) — **Details Page 11**

New iPhone 16 models bring advanced AI features

Apple testing AI software aiming to improve Siri for iPhone 16

NEW YORK, Sept 21, (AP) — Apple is giving more people the chance to test a software update that will implant artificial intelligence into its virtual assistant Siri and automate a variety of tedious tasks on the latest iPhone out on Friday.

The free update was made available Thursday to an audience that has signed up to test Apple's software before it's released to all iPhone owners next month. As of Thursday, only two premium iPhones that came out last year contain the souped-up processor required to power the AI features included in the update, but that changed Friday when four new iPhone 16 models hit store shelves.

All the iPhone 16 models, with starting prices ranging from \$800 to



The Apple iPhone 16 is on display at the Apple Fifth Avenue store, Friday, Sept. 20, in New York. (AP) \$1,200, are equipped to handle the new technology, which the company

is marketing as "Apple Intelligence." That branding is part of an effort to distinguish the iPhone's AI from similar technology already available in smartphones released earlier this year by Samsung and Google.

The AI features are being promoted as one of the main reasons to buy an iPhone 16, so releasing a test version of the software powering the technology now may prod more consumers to splurge on one of the new models as soon as possible.

The AI technology is coming out in US English only for now, but will expand into localized English in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, and the UK in December. Apple plans to expand into other languages and countries next year. The

testing of the AI software is beginning just a few days after Apple released its latest mobile operating system, iOS 18, to all its earlier iPhones.

Once the iOS 18.1 upgrade is installed, the often bumbling Siri is supposed to become more conversational, versatile and colorful, with a glowing light that will rotate around the iPhone's screen as it responds to requests. While Apple is promising Siri will be able to perform more tasks and be less prone to becoming confused, it won't be able to interact with other apps installed on the iPhone until another software update comes out at a still-undefined date.

Other AI features in the software update will handle a variety of writing and proofreading tasks, summa-

rize the content of emails and other documents. The AI also will provide a variety of editing tools to alter the appearance of photos and make it easier to find old pictures.

But the initial update doesn't include other AI tricks still to come, such as the ability to create customized emojis on the fly or conjure other fanciful imagery upon request. Apple also plans to eventually enable its AI suite to get a helping hand from OpenAI's ChatGPT when users want it.

Besides the new iPhone model, Apple's AI features also will work last year's iPhone 15 Pro and iPhone 15 Pro Max because they have the special computer chip that's required. The update will also bring

the ability to record spatial video on those two iPhone 15 models that can be watched on Apple's \$3,500 Vision Pro headset.

But the AI won't work on hundreds of millions of other iPhones that are still in use, a drawback that investors are betting will juice Apple's recently slumping sales of the ubiquitous device.

That expectation is the main reason that Apple's stock price has climbed by more than 15% since the company previewed its AI strategy in June, creating \$500 billion in shareholder wealth. Some analysts believe the demand for new iPhones could propel Apple's market value above \$4 trillion for the first time within the next year.

New evidence points to wildlife as origin

New genetic analysis of Wuhan market animals may help find COVID-19 origin

LONDON, Sept 21, (AP) — Scientists searching for the origins of COVID-19 have zeroed in on a short list of animals that possibly helped spread it to people, an effort they hope could allow them to trace the outbreak back to its source.

Researchers analyzed genetic material gathered from the Chinese market where the first outbreak was detected and found that the most likely animals were raccoon dogs, civet cats and bamboo rats. The scientists suspect infected animals were first brought to the Wuhan market in late November 2019, which then triggered the pandemic.

Michael Worobey, one of the new study's authors, said they found which sub-populations of animals might have transmitted the coronavirus to humans. That may help researchers pinpoint where the virus commonly circulates in animals, known as its natural reservoir.

Evolution

"For example, with the raccoon dogs, we can show that the raccoon dogs that were (at the market) ... were from a sub-species that circulates more in southern parts of China," said Worobey, an evolutionary biologist at the University of Arizona. Knowing that might help researchers understand where those animals came from and where they were sold. Scientists might then start sampling bats in the area, which are known to be the natural reservoirs of related coronaviruses like SARS.

While the research bolsters the case that COVID-19 emerged from animals, it does not resolve the polarized and political debate over whether the virus instead emerged from a research lab in China.

Mark Woolhouse, a professor of infectious diseases at the University of Edinburgh, said the new genetic analysis suggested that the pandemic "had its evolutionary roots in the market" and that it was very unlikely COVID-19 was infecting people before it was identified at the Huanan market.

"It's a significant finding and this does shift the dial more in favor of an animal origin," Woolhouse, who was not connected to the research, said. "But it is not conclusive."

An expert group led by the World Health Organization concluded in 2021 that the virus probably spread to humans from animals and that a lab leak was "extremely unlikely." WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus later said it was "premature" to rule out a lab leak.

An AP investigation in April found the search for the COVID origins in China has gone dark after political infighting and missed opportunities by

S. Africa investigates

Experts identify first known outbreak of rabies in seals

CAPE TOWN, South Africa, Sept 21, (AP) — Scientists in South Africa say they have identified an outbreak of rabies in seals that is believed to be the first time the virus has spread in sea mammals.

At least 24 Cape fur seals that were found dead or euthanized in various locations on South Africa's west and south coast had rabies, state veterinarian Dr. Lesley van Helden said.

Rabies, which affects mammals and can be passed to people, is almost always fatal once symptoms appear. Rabies spreads via saliva, usually through bites but also sometimes when animals lick and groom each other.

The virus has long been seen in wild animals such as raccoons, coyotes, foxes, jackals and in domestic dogs. But it had never been recorded spreading among marine mammals, van Helden and other experts said this week.

Evidence

The only other known case of rabies in a sea mammal was in a ringed seal in Norway's Svalbard islands in the early 1980s. That seal had likely been infected by a rabid arctic fox, researchers said, and there was no evidence of rabies spreading among seals there.

Authorities in South Africa first discovered rabies in Cape fur seals in June after a dog was bitten by a seal on a Cape Town beach. The dog became infected with rabies, prompting rabies tests on brain samples from 135 seal carcasses that researchers had already collected

since 2021. Around 20 new samples also were collected and more positives have come back on subsequent tests.

Scientists are trying to work out how rabies was passed to the seals, whether it is spreading widely among their large colonies and what can be done to contain it.

"It's all very, very new," said Greg Hofmeyr, a marine biologist who studies seals in South Africa. "A lot of research is required ... there are a lot of unknowns here."

There are approximately 2 million seals migrating back and forth between South Africa, Namibia and Angola along Africa's south and west coast. The most likely possibility, van Helden said, is that rabies was first passed onto seals by jackals in Namibia, where the wolf-like animals hunt seal pups on the coastline.

The genes of the rabies virus found in the seals matched the rabies in black-backed jackals in Namibia. It also showed rabies was being transmitted between seals, because most of the virus sequences were closely related, she said.

"So, it's basically established itself in the seal population and it's being maintained by them biting each other," van Helden said.

The seals live in close proximity to people in places in South Africa, especially on beaches around the city of Cape Town. The city has issued warnings to locals, said Gregg Oelofse, Cape Town's head of coastal and environmental management.

local and global health officials to narrow the possibilities.

Scientists say they may never know for sure where exactly the virus came from.

In the new study, published Thursday in the journal Cell, scientists from Europe, the U.S. and Australia analyzed data previously released by experts at the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention. It included 800 samples of genetic material Chinese workers collected on Jan. 1, 2020 from the Huanan seafood market, the day after Wuhan municipal authorities first raised the alarm about an unknown respiratory virus.

Chinese scientists published the genetic sequences they found last year, but did not identify any of the animals

possibly infected with the coronavirus. In the new analysis, researchers used a technique that can identify specific organisms from any mixture of genetic material collected in the environment.

Worobey said the information provides "a snapshot of what was (at the market) before the pandemic began" and that genetic analyses like theirs "helps to fill in the blanks of how the virus might have first started spreading."

Woolhouse said the new study, while significant, left some critical issues unanswered.

"There is no question COVID was circulating at that market, which was full of animals," he said. "The question that still remains is how it got there in the first place."

Rwanda starts monkeypox vaccination

WHO boosts mpox surveillance in Sudan as cases rise in Africa

JUBA, Sept 21, (Agencies) — The World Health Organization (WHO) on Friday announced that it has ramped up mpox surveillance efforts in South Sudan as the number of cases continues to rise across Africa.

Despite global measures to contain the outbreak, mpox remains a significant public health threat, particularly for individuals with compromised immune systems, the UN health agency said.

Humphrey Karamagi, WHO representative for South Sudan, emphasized the importance of quick and reliable testing in staying ahead of evolving health crises. "These advanced testing kits make diagnosis easier and are strong tools in the fight against mpox and other viral threats," Karamagi said in a statement issued in Juba, the capital of South Sudan.

With support from donors, the WHO has supplied the National Public Health Laboratory with advanced polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing kits, which will enhance the country's capacity to rapidly detect the virus.

"The kits enhance our ability to promptly detect and respond to outbreaks, thereby strengthening preparedness and response and ultimately saving lives," Karamagi said.

The WHO underscored that this investment in high-performance PCR kits is not only a reactive measure but also a proactive strategy to enhance the response to viral outbreaks. "It is essential for individuals and communities to actively protect themselves by seeking testing and care if they show symptoms or suspect exposure to the virus," it said.

Since the beginning of 2024, Africa has recorded 29,152 mpox cases, in-

cluding 6,105 confirmed cases and 738 deaths, according to the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC).

Africa CDC Director-General Jean Kaseya said during a special online media briefing Thursday that the continent reported 2,912 new cases in the past week alone, with 374 confirmed cases and 14 deaths. The outbreak has affected 15 African countries across all five regions of the continent, with cross-border movement, malnutrition, and unsafe sexual practices identified as key risk factors.

Movement

Zambia has intensified surveillance measures against mpox, which has broken out in some neighboring countries.

While the country has not recorded any cases, Zambian Minister of Health Elijah Muchima said on Thursday that the government is not sitting idly by, but has intensified surveillance areas, especially at border entry points, to prevent an outbreak of the disease.

According to Muchima, there have been 37 suspected cases so far, but none of them tested positive.

"With the increase in mpox cases being recorded in neighboring countries, accompanied by the high (level of) cross-border trade and movement of people in this global village, Zambia stands at a higher risk of importing the disease," he said while addressing the parliament.

Meanwhile, Rwanda has started a vaccination campaign against mpox with 1,000 doses of the vaccine it obtained from Nigeria under an agreement between the two countries, the African health agency said Thursday.

The vaccinations started Tuesday targeting seven districts with "high risk populations" who neighbor Congo, Dr. Nicaise Ndembi from the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) said. Nigeria donated the 1,000 doses to Rwanda from an allotment of 10,000 it had received from the United States.

Congo has been at the epicenter of an outbreak on the African continent, where 2,912 new mpox cases and 14 new deaths have been recorded in the last one week, bringing the total number of cases to 6,105 with 738 deaths since the beginning of the year.

"This outbreak must be stopped very quickly," Africa CDC director-general Dr. Jean Kaseya said Thursday.

Rwanda and other countries are now requesting more doses than they originally indicated that they needed, Kaseya said. African experts have estimated the continent might need about 10 million vaccines to stop the ongoing outbreaks.

The Japanese government has signed an agreement with the government in Congo to provide 3 million doses of the mpox vaccine.

The World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus on Thursday urged more countries to contribute to the response.

"International collaboration and support are needed to stop the spread of the virus," he wrote on X social media platform.

Congo is expected to start its vaccination campaign in the first week of October. Some 165,000 doses have so far been delivered to Congo, with hundreds of thousands more pledged by European countries.

SpaceX launches 20 Starlink internet satellites

2 Russians set record for longest single stay on ISS

MOSCOW, Sept 21, (Agencies) — Two Russians on Friday set a record for the longest continuous stay on the International Space Station, according to Russia's space agency.

Roscosmos said Oleg Kononenko and Nikolai Chub broke the old record of 370 days, 21 hours and 22 minutes, which was set in September 2023 by Russians Sergei Prokopyev and Dmitry Petelin and American Francisco Rubio.

Chub and Kononenko will add several days to their total before their scheduled return to Earth on Monday.

The 59-year-old Kononenko holds other space duration records, including the most cumulative time in space - 1,110 days over the course of five missions by the time he lands in Kazakhstan next week.

Meanwhile, US private space company SpaceX launched 20 Starlink satellites into orbit on Friday.

According to SpaceX, the satellites were launched aboard a Falcon 9 rocket from Vandenberg Space Force Base in

California at 6:50 a.m. Pacific Time.

Shortly after the launch, Falcon 9's first-stage booster returned and landed on the "Of Course I Still Love You" dromeship stationed in the Pacific Ocean.

SpaceX later confirmed the deployment of the 20 satellites, including 13 with Direct to Cell capabilities.

In other news, astronomers using NASA's Chandra X-ray Observatory have found a galaxy cluster that has two streams of superheated gas crossing one another, NASA said on Friday.

Researchers have discovered an enormous, comet-like tail of hot gas -- spanning over 1.6 million light-years long -- trailing behind a galaxy within the galaxy cluster called Zwicky 8338, according to NASA.

This tail, spawned as the galaxy had some of its gas stripped off by the hot gas it is hurtling through, has split into two streams.

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Hamilton has his best qualifying result since British GP

Norris beats Verstappen for pole at Singapore Grand Prix

SINGAPORE, Sept 21, (AP): Advantage Lando Norris, but not by much.

Formula 1's two main title contenders will start together on the front row at the Singapore Grand Prix as Norris edged ahead of his title rival Max Verstappen in qualifying on Saturday.

The session turned into a one-lap shootout for the top positions when a

crash for Carlos Sainz Jr. interrupted the final session on a troubled day for Ferrari.

"I was finding it a little difficult to pro-

MOTOR RACING

gress much and to get a lot of lap time and more of the guys around seemed to get quicker and quicker," Norris said.

"So it put me under a little bit more pressure, especially with just one lap at the end, but it was good enough for pole and I'm happy with that."

The McLaren driver was .203 of a second ahead of Verstappen to start on pole, with Lewis Hamilton third for Mercedes, .316 off Norris' time.

Pole position for Norris was a contrast

to qualifying in Azerbaijan last week, when he was 15th on the grid after a yellow flag warning ruined his lap, but recovered to finish fourth, ahead of Verstappen.

Verstappen, who said he was happy with second after struggling for grip in practice in his Red Bull, leads Norris in the standings by 59 points. There are seven rounds of the championship remain-

ing, including Sunday's race. A front-row start means Verstappen could limit the damage to his lead even if Norris wins.

Verstappen has never won in Singapore, which was also the only track where the all-conquering Red Bull team didn't win last season.

Hamilton had his best qualifying result since the British Grand Prix in July

- which he went on to win - in a season where the seven-time champion has struggled for single-lap pace.

"Qualifying has been a disaster for me all year long and I've just been working and working and working, trying to get myself back up there," he said. "All of a sudden the car came alive in qualifying for the first time in a long time."

All Blacks retain Bledisloe Cup



New Zealand celebrate with the Bledisloe Cup after their win over Australia in rugby union test match in Sydney. (AP)

NZ holds on with 13 men to beat Wallabies 31-28

SYDNEY, Sept 21, (AP): The All Blacks led 21-0 after 15 minutes but faltered badly in the second half, only just holding on with 13 men at one point to beat Australia 31-28 in the first Bledisloe Cup test on Saturday.

By halftime, the All Blacks were ahead 28-14 and early in the second half 31-14 as they ran in four tries in front of a crowd of 68,000. But the Wallabies rallied with tries to Hunter Paisami and Tom Wright to also score four tries and cut the lead to three points as the All Blacks failed again to build on a first-half lead.

The teams will meet again in Wellington next weekend but the All Blacks have retained the Bledisloe Cup for the 22nd season by taking the first match of the two-test series.

New Zealand hasn't scored a point in the final quarter of all four of their matches in the Rugby Championship this season, of which the Bledisloe Cup is a part. They lost twice to the world champion Springboks after leading at the start of the fourth quarter.

RUGBY

With Anton Lienert-Brown and Caleb Clarke dispatched to the sin-bin in the 65th and 72nd minutes and their lead slashed to three points the All Blacks were only just able to deny the Wallabies a morale-building win.

Two breakdown turnovers near the goalline in the dying moments and a further turnover from the last kickoff were just enough to save the game.

Australia's confidence would have been low when Will Jordan scored for the All Blacks after only two minutes, then Rieko Ioane and Clarke scored to make it 21-0. But they fought back with tries to Fraser McReight and Matt Faessler while the All Blacks scored through Ardie Savea to make the lead 28-14 at halftime.

The All Blacks had been dominant with Cortez Ratima providing speedy ball from scrumhalf and Damian McKenzie and Jordan running onto the ball from depth. Wallace Sititi and Tupou Vaa'i were outstanding among the New Zealand forwards.

The Wallabies were coming off a 67-27 loss to Argentina which was their heaviest-ever in terms of points conceded and the All Blacks' lightning start might have been their worst nightmare.

But the game began to tighten in the second half as New Zealand's discipline lapsed and they were unable to

Fiji wins Pacific Nations Cup after thrashing Japan 41-17 in Osaka

OSAKA, Japan, Sept 21, (AP): Fiji overwhelmed Japan from a 10-10 halftime deadlock to win an energetic Pacific Nations Cup final 41-17 at Hanazono Stadium on Saturday.

Fiji wore down the fast-starting Japanese with weight and speed and with impact off the bench, scoring five tries - two more were disallowed - for a record-extending sixth PNC title, and first since 2018. The defense was also special. For the only time in five PNC matches, Fiji conceded points in a second half, less than three minutes from fulltime, to wing Malo Tuitama who scored Japan's second try.

"We just had to stay in there, work really hard to set ourselves up in the second half by maintaining really good pressure in that first half," first-year Fiji coach Mick Byrne said.

After early penalty kicks, Japan center Dylan Riley scored a brilliant solo try by cutting inside three defend-

ers and collecting his own chip.

Counterpart Inia Tabuaou then had a try chalked off by a knock-on in the buildup, but Fiji eventually tied the score against the run of play when Harumichi Tatekawa's grubber kick rebounded off Eroni Mawi, Tabuaou hacked ahead, and wing Vuate Karawalevu won the race to the ball.

RUGBY

Fiji started the new half with a man advantage while Japan hooker Mamoru Harada was sin-binned. Standout fly-half Caleb Muntz had a try disallowed because of obstruction but his 56th-minute penalty gave Fiji the lead for the first time.

The Fijian pack was on a roll and Japan was struggling to contain it. With defenders dragged in by Fiji's pick and goes, there was space out wide and Fiji

used it.

Replacement and Olympic sevens silver medalist Ponepati Loganimasi finished a try on his test debut then Tabuaou was tackled into touch in the right by Tuitama. But a minute later, Fiji was in again through replacement forward Albert Tuisue.

Fiji crossed twice more in the next eight minutes, Loganimasi's offload released Karawalevu for his second try, then Loganimasi broke from a midfield ruck and stepped the last defender for try number two.

Muntz, the player of the tournament, kicked six from six and let Isaiah Armstrong-Ravula convert their last try.

Tuitama gave Japan some consolation with the last converted try but the hosts lost to Fiji for the sixth time in their last seven contests.

For third place, Samoa beat the United States 18-13 with a 77th-minute try by Melani Nanai.

keep the ball from Australia as they had down in first spell. With faster breakdown possession, the Wallabies were a much different team.

"It's probably a bit of a relief to be honest," All Blacks captain Scott Barrett said. "In the last 15 minutes we found ourselves in a bit of a hole but with a bit of scrambled defense we managed to hold on."

"It's the nature of the Aussies that they don't line and they showed how desperate they were to get a hold on the Cup and I'm proud of the boys to hold on."

Jordan was named to start on the

right wing but moved back to fullback when Beauden Barrett, named at fullback, withdrew with a late injury.

The All Blacks forced a lineup from the kickoff, held possession through several phases and Tupou Vaa'i flicked the ball up to Jordan who cut through the Australian defense to score under the posts.

Six minutes later Ratima broke from scrumhalf and linked with Ioane who scored. Then, after winning a turnover, Clarke finished after being given space by Sititi and Jordie Barrett. New Zealand led 21-0 after 15 minutes.



New Zealand's Will Jordan, center, races past Australia's Nic White, left, and Tom Wright to score a try during their rugby union test match in Sydney. (AP)

Mexico boss Aguirre leaves door ajar for Vela, Ochoa

MEXICO CITY, Sept 21, (Xinhua): Mexico manager Javier Aguirre has left open the possibility of recalling veterans Carlos Vela and Guillermo Ochoa ahead of the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

Vela, 35, has not played for his country since the 2018 World Cup in Russia while 39-year-old goalkeeper Ochoa last represented El Tri in March this year.

"I do not close the door to anything or anyone," Aguirre told reporters. "They are footballers and are eligible to play for Mexico. I do not look at other things, only that they are in good form and want to be a part of the team." Vela, who returned from a nine-month hiatus to rejoin Los Angeles FC this month, began his career at Arsenal, where he scored a hat-trick

on his full debut as a 19-year-old. But his career has largely been marked by disciplinary problems, injuries and inconsistent form.

The forward has been capped 72 times for Mexico, scoring 19 goals.

"I'm glad that Carlos is back," Aguirre said. "He has given us a lot of joy, he has a lot of talent. I repeat, the doors are open for him and for everyone."

Aguirre had similar words of encouragement for Ochoa, who is currently contracted to Portuguese side AVS Futebol.

"The door is open and his experience is a plus," Aguirre said. "I don't focus on age, but on quality. I focus a lot on desire. They need to be proud and comfortable about being a part of the national team."

Pachuca edges past Puebla

Union keeps alive title hopes

BUENOS AIRES, Sept 21, (Xinhua): Union Santa Fe recovered from a goal down to keep its title hopes intact with a 3-1 home victory over Godoy Cruz in Argentina's Primera Division.

Salomon Rodriguez put the visitors ahead just before the half hour, but Franco Pardo equalized five minutes later before Lionel Verde and Gonzalo Morales added late goals.

The result at Estadio 15 de Abril leaves Union second in the 28-team standings, three points behind lead-

SOCCER

ers Velez Sarsfield, who has a game in hand. Godoy Cruz is 14th, nine points further back.

"It was an almost perfect match except for their goal, which came because we didn't close them down as we should have," Union manager Kily Gonzalez told reporters.

"Conceding an early goal was a test of character but I was very calm. The boys knew that we had to win this game to show our fans that

we are still alive [in the title race]. We played with high intensity and showed that we can fight for this championship." In Friday's only other fixture, Gimnasia was held to a goalless home draw by Deportivo Riestra.

Nelson Deossa scored twice as Pachuca snapped a five-game winless run with a 3-2 victory at Puebla in Mexico's Liga MX.

Veteran Venezuelan striker Salomon Rondon gave the visitors an early lead before Emiliano Gomez equalized with a 19th-minute strike.

Deossa then netted either side of Gomez's second goal as Pachuca clinched their second win of the campaign.

Los Tuzos are now 13th in the 28-team standings, two points behind 12th-placed Puebla.

The top six teams will advance automatically to the playoff rounds while those ranked from 7th to 10th will vie for the remaining two quarterfinal places.

In Friday's only other Liga MX fixture, Queretaro won 1-0 at Atlas thanks to Federico Lertora's fourth-minute goal.

6,130 doping control samples collected at the Paris Games

BEIJING, Sept 21, (Xinhua): A total of 6,130 samples were collected in the doping control program during the Paris Olympic Games, covering 39% of all participating athletes and nearly all the delegations, the International Testing Agency (ITA) announced.

The number of samples collected in Paris was a four percent increase compared to Tokyo 2020 and ten percent higher than Rio 2016.

Up until Thursday, five anti-doping rule violations were reported based on results from samples the ITA collected during Paris 2024 where the vast majority of doping controls implemented were targeted based on risk assessment.

The ITA also carried out an extensive pre-Games testing program conducted in the six months leading up

to the event in which nearly 90 percent of all participating athletes underwent testing at least once before the start of the Games. The ITA can also report over 40 anti-doping rule violations.

The ITA sent a team of over 30 anti-doping experts to oversee the execution of the anti-doping program which was carried out by the national anti-doping organization Agence Francaise de Lutte contre le Doping.

All samples collected during Paris 2024 will be kept in ITA's Centralised Long-Term Storage Facility (CLTSF) for up to ten years and will be selected for re-analysis by the ITA at a later point in time if and when technological or scientific developments allow for more advanced analytical methods.

Ronaldo helps Al-Nassr claim win in new coach's first game

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia, Sept 21, (AP): Cristiano Ronaldo opened the scoring as Al-Nassr defeated Ettifaq 3-0 and gave Stefano Pioli victory in his first game as coach of the Saudi Arabian club on Friday.

The Italian, who led AC Milan to the Serie A title in 2022, was appointed on Wednesday to succeed Luis Castro. The Portuguese coach was dismissed the previous day due to Al-Nassr's slow start to the season with just one win in three Saudi Pro League games.

Ronaldo, who missed Al-Nassr's 1-1 draw in the AFC Champions League Elite with Al-Shorta of Iraq on Monday due to a viral infection, fired home from the penalty spot after 33

minutes for his third goal of the season.

In the second half, Salem Al-Najdi and Anderson Talisca added to the scoreline.

The defeat was the first this season for Ettifaq but the team coached by Steven Gerrard stayed third. Al-Nassr moved to fourth.

Al-Ahli was in fifth after two goals from Ivan Toney helped the Jeddah club beat Damac 4-2.

Toney, signed from English Premier League club Brentford in August, made the opener for Gabri Veiga before scoring his first goals since the move to Saudi.

Former Liverpool forward Roberto Firmino scored the other.

Best of the Rest

Weng into final: China's Weng Hongyang continued his remarkable performance at the badminton China Open, advancing to the men's singles final after defeating Indonesia's Jonatan Christie on Saturday.

Weng, world No. 25, had a 2-2 head-to-head record against the seventh seed before this match, although he had lost their two most recent meetings, including a round of 32 loss at last year's China Open.

Despite a slow start, Weng scored four consecutive points midway through the first set to claim it 21-17. Christie regained his momentum in the second set and set up an 18-15 lead, but Weng rallied with a 6-0 run to secure a 21-18 victory, reaching his first-ever BWF World Tour Super 1000 final.

The 25-year-old will face Kodai Naraoka of Japan in the final, after Naraoka defeated Thailand's Kunlavut Vitidsarn in the other semifinal later on Saturday.

In the women's doubles, Li WenmeiZhang Shuxian defeated compatriots Jia YifanZheng Yu in straight sets, setting up an all-Chinese final against Li YijingLuo Xumin, who achieved a 2-0 victory over the South Korean duo Jeong Na-eunKim Hye-jeong.

In the women's singles, third seed Wang Zhiyi of China progressed to the final with a 21-15, 21-18 victory over seventh seed Aya Ohori of Japan. The 24-year-old will compete against Japan's Tomoka Miyazaki in

Sunday's final.

Elsewhere, China's mixed doubles pair Feng YanZheHuang Dongping, along with the men's doubles pair He JitingRen Xiangyu, both advanced to their respective finals with straight-set wins, giving host China a chance to sweep all five titles potentially. (Xinhua)

Maia reaches final: Beatriz Haddad Maia pulled double duty to beat the Kudermetova sisters in back-to-back singles matches at the Korea Open on Saturday, reaching the final to face top-seeded Daria Kasatkina.

The quarterfinals and semifinals were played on the same day because rain washed out all action Friday.

Haddad Maia beat Polina Kudermetova 6-2, 6-1 to reach the last four and then got past Veronika Kudermetova 6-4, 6-4.

The third-seeded Brazilian was the 2017 runner-up in the Seoul WTA 500-level tournament.

Veronika Kudermetova, at 27 the older of the sisters, had beaten Viktoriya Tomova 7-5, 6-3 to get into the semifinals.

Kasatkina advanced to the last four when 2021 U.S. Open champion Emma Raducanu retired with an apparent left foot injury after losing the first set 6-1.

She then beat fourth-seeded Diana Shnaider 6-3, 6-4 to reach Sunday's final. (AP)

Al-Tadamon pips Al-Nasr

Kuwait Club and Al-Arabi seek fifth straight win in Zain Premier League

Kuwait Camel Racing Club launches season with 'exciting' opening race

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: The Kuwait Camel Racing Club officially kicked off the local sports season (2024/2025) yesterday at the Martyr Fahad Al-Ahmad track, hosting the opening race. The event featured eight rounds, with camels of various age groups competing over different distances, attracting a crowd of fans and enthusiasts of this traditional sport.

Misfer Al-Ajmi, the club's secretary, commented after the first day's competitions, noting that this season's races will span 24 weeks and



A camel in action during the opening race.

CAMEL RACING

see widespread participation from camel owners across Kuwait. He highlighted that the opening rounds displayed a strong technical level, promising an exciting season ahead.

Al-Ajmi further explained that the club had thoroughly prepared for the races, ensuring the track and all facilities were ready to host the heritage sport. He also acknowledged the cooperation of the Public Authority for Sports and relevant state ministries in supporting the event's success.

He anticipated that this year's camel racing season would be highly

competitive, given the quality breeds owned by Kuwait's camel enthusiasts. Al-Ajmi wished the participants success both in local competitions and in international championships throughout the season, including the prestigious Kuwait International Championship.

In the eight-round competition, Saad Al-Rashidi's camel Makalaf claimed first place in the main round, securing the club's cup. The camels Brouq, Amal, Mutaib, Najla, Marou', Samha, and Khattal won the remaining rounds.



Al-Fatat coach draws a play.

Al-Fatat eyes final spot vs Al-Fuheis

FUHEIS, Jordan, Sept 21: Kuwait's Al-Fatat Club is set for a challenging encounter today against Jordan's Al-Fuheis Youth Club in the semi-finals of the Arab Women's Basketball Clubs Championship, currently being hosted in Jordan. This high-stakes match takes place within the semi-final stage, following strong performances from the qualifying teams.

The Arab Basketball Federation recently adjusted the team ranking system, now prioritizing head-to-head results to rank teams tied in points, instead of relying on point differentials. With this amendment, Saudi Arabia's Al-Ula team claimed the top spot with 9 points, fol-

lowed closely by Al-Fuhais Youth, also with 9 points. Al-Fatat Kuwait secured third place with 8 points, while Algeria's Kosider team ranked fourth with 7 points.

The top four teams advanced to the semi-finals, where Al-Ula (1st

BASKETBALL

place) will take on Kosider (4th place), and Al-Fuheis (2nd place) will face Al-Fatat (3rd place). The winner will move on to the final for a chance to claim the title, while the losing teams will battle for third place and the bronze medal.

Alaves tops Sevilla, fans protest

MADRID, Sept 21, (AP): Alaves fans ramped up their protest against inconvenient night-time games in Spain when they boycotted the first few minutes of Friday's La Liga match against Sevilla.

One of the club's biggest organized fan groups is angry at what it says are excessive Friday and Monday night games that make it hard for supporters to attend.

SOCCER

They called for fans to take their seats five minutes after kickoff so TV pictures would show empty stands and signs protesting the matches.

One enormous banner circulating on social media read: "Fans, Now or Never, No to Football During the Week."

Alaves will play two of its first 10 Serie A games on a Friday night.

Last season, it played 12 of its 34 league matches outside the more usual weekend spots, the highest in the league along with Granada, according to calculations in the Spanish press.

Football has traditionally been a sport played at weekends and mid-week but more and more European leagues have added games on Friday and Monday nights to satisfy TV audiences and cope with increasing fixture congestion.

Absent fans did not miss much in the opening minutes but they were seated in time to see Carlos Vicente give Alaves the lead after a quarter of an hour.

Carlos Martin doubled the home side's advantage on the hour mark and, although Dodi Lukebakio pulled one back for Sevilla seven minutes from time, the visitor never looked like preventing a comfortable 2-1 win for Alaves.

Best of the Rest

Malinovskyi sustains injury: Genoa midfielder Ruslan Malinovskyi sustained a horrific-looking lower-leg fracture during his team's match at Venezia on Saturday.

Malinovskyi attempted to clear a ball near his goal early in the second half when he caught his studs on the turf and his right ankle turned under him.

The 31-year-old Ukraine international was in clear agony as he lay on the field and he was immediately embraced by his goalkeeper.

Most of his other teammates also rushed over and the players had their heads in their hands after seeing the seriousness of the injury, with Malinovskyi's foot facing the wrong way. He received swift treatment and was stretchered off the field to applause from the whole stadium. (AP)

Nico doubtful for Europa: Athletic Bilbao hopes that Spain winger

Nico Williams will have recovered from an ankle bruise in time to face Roma at the start of their Europa League campaign, coach Ernesto Valverde said Saturday.

Williams took a knock to his left ankle and had to be substituted during a 2-0 win over Leganes in the Spanish league this week.

Athletic will kick off the Europa League's group stage at Roma next Thursday. Valverde said that Williams may be back for that away game, but that he will definitely miss Sunday's home game against Celta Vigo in La Liga.

"Let's see if we can have him back against Roma," Valverde said. "He is a fundamental player for us, I hope he can be with us."

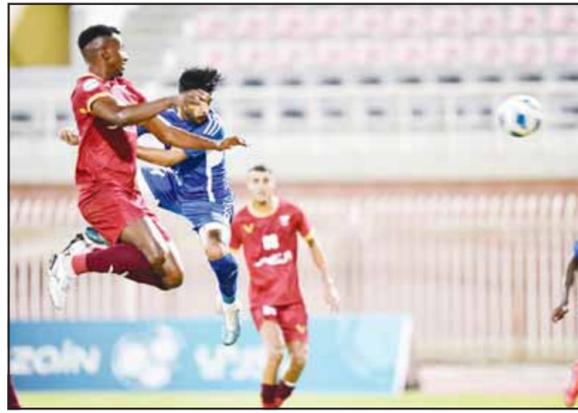
The 22-year-old Williams is coming off a breakout season when he helped Athletic win the Copa del Rey and starred for Spain as it won the European Championship in July. (AP)

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: Kuwait Club and Al-Arabi aim to extend their winning streaks in the Zain Premier League with both eyeing a fifth consecutive victory. Kuwait Club faces Yarmouk at 8:25 pm, while Khaitan visits Al-Arabi at 6:10 pm at Sabah Al-Salem Stadium, marking the conclusion of the fifth round of the competition.

Kuwait Club, the league leader with 12 points, is determined to maintain its momentum and solidify its place at the top before next Friday's highly anticipated clash with Al-Arabi. The team is coming off a goalless draw against Nasaf Qarshi of Uzbekistan in the AFC Champions League, and will be eager to return to winning form.

Meanwhile, Yarmouk, currently at the bottom of the standings with just two points, hopes to secure a positive result and claim its first win of the season, though the challenge will be formidable.

In the other fixture, Al-Arabi, also with 12 points, seeks another win to stay in title contention, continuing its quest for a new league



Players vie for the ball during Zain Premier League game.

championship. Its opponent, Khaitan (4 points), will aim to capitalize on the recent difficulties within the Al-Arabi squad.

Al-Arabi's Sultan Al-Enezi has joined teammate Abdulrahman Al-Dhafiri in skipping training recently.

Al-Enezi's absence stems from a dispute over unpaid wages, marking the second time he's missed team activities this season, following a similar situation last June. Sources indicate that despite being under contract with Al-Arabi until the end of next

season, Al-Enezi has signed with Dhofar in Oman, having unilaterally terminated his contract due to delayed payments.

Al-Dhafiri has been absent since last week, having received a contract offer from Al-Ta'ee in Saudi Arabia. Sources claim that Al-Arabi's management views the situation legally, and both players could face suspension and financial penalties if they

SOCCER

continue their absences.

Al-Tadamon delivered another strong performance, defeating Al-Nasr 1-0 in the "Farwaniya Derby" at Nasser Al-Osaimi Stadium. The decisive goal came from an own goal by Brazilian Bernardo Villar just before halftime, lifting Al-Tadamon's total to 7 points, while Al-Nasr remains with 3 points. In recognition of the victory, Al-Tadamon's football department head, Mufrej Al-Musailem, awarded 100 dinars to each player.

Pant's ton gives India edge over Bangladesh



India's Rishabh Pant plays a shot on the third day of the first cricket test match between India and Bangladesh, in Chennai, India. (AP)

Blues reduce tourists to 158-4 at stumps

CHENNAI, India, Sept 21, (AP): Rishabh Pant struck a century on his return to test cricket as India reduced Bangladesh to 158-4 (37.2 overs) at stumps on day three of the first test Saturday.

Pant scored 109 runs off 128 balls for his sixth test hundred as India finished its second innings at 287-4 declared in 64 overs. Shubman Gill also earned his fifth test hundred, scoring 119 not out, as India set a 515-run target.

In reply, Bangladesh lost four wickets after the tea break with skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto holding ground with 51 not out off 60 balls. Shakib al Hasan (5 not out) gave him company as play was stopped owing to bad light with Bangladesh needing 357 runs.

Earlier, Pant and Gill had put on 167 runs for the fourth wicket. They put on 124 runs in the wicket-less morning session.

Pant reached 50 off 88 balls, while Gill got there off 79 deliveries, as India went to lunch at 205-3.

After lunch, Pant equaled MS Dhoni's record for most test hundreds by an Indian keeper-batter in tests. Dhoni also scored six hundreds in 90 tests, with Pant reaching the landmark in only his 34th test.

Pant suffered career-threatening injuries in a car crash in December 2022, last playing test cricket against Bangladesh earlier that month. He was away from the game for 17 months recuperating from knee and back injuries before returning for the 2024 Indian Premier League, and then he was part of India's T20 World Cup campaign.

Pant reached 100 off 124 balls, and hit 13 fours as well as four sixes. Gill scored 100 off 161 balls and stayed unbeaten until the end.

Pant was dismissed after his century, out caught off Mehidy Hasan Miraz (2-103), while Lokesh Rahul made 22 not out until the declaration.

Bangladesh went to tea at 56-0 in 13 overs with openers Zakir Hasan (33) and Shadman Islam (35) putting on the highest opening partnership for the visitors on Indian soil.

Until then, only one wicket fell in two sessions as opposed to 23 wickets across the first two days.

Post tea, Jasprit Bumrah got the much-needed breakthrough, as Hasan was caught at gully. Yashasvi Jaiswal

CRICKET

took a low one-handed catch to his left.

Ravichandran Ashwin then picked 3-63 as he ran through the Bangladesh top order. He troubled the batters with bounce off the surface and induced the

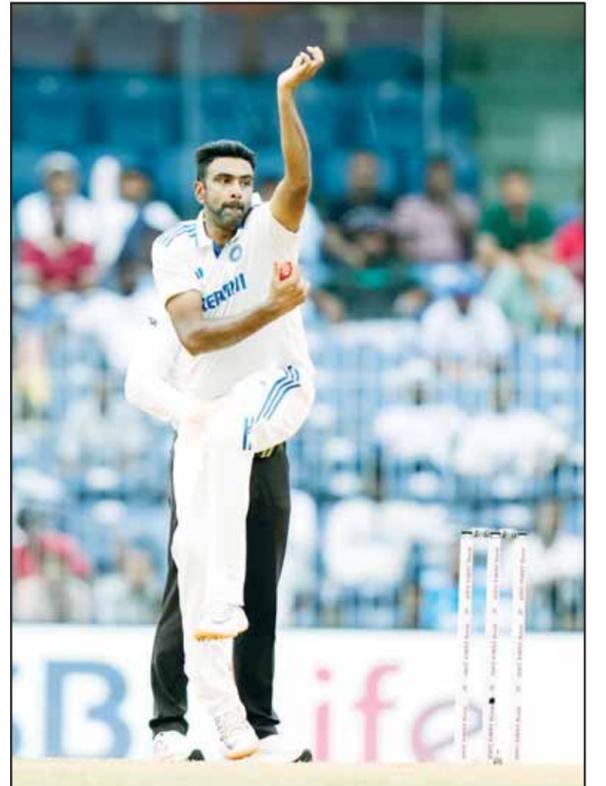
batters into false shots.

Shadman was out caught at mid-wicket with Gill taking a diving catch. Then, Mushfiqur Rahim was out for 13, again to a brilliant forward diving catch by Rahul at mid-on.

In between, Ashwin bowled Mominul Haque for 13 as Bangladesh was down to 146-4.

Skipper Shanto was the only batter who provided resistance, reaching his fourth half-century off 55 balls. He hit four fours and three sixes.

Play was then called off later in the session owing to bad light.



India's Ravichandran Ashwin bowls a delivery on the third day of the first cricket test match between India and Bangladesh, in Chennai, India. (AP)



Chelsea's goalkeeper Robert Sanchez blocks West Ham's Mohammed Kudus during the English Premier League soccer match between West Ham United and Chelsea at the London stadium in London. (AP)

Sports

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Promoted Holstein Kiel earned its first top-division point

Bayern routs Werder for latest big win under new coach Kompany

BREMEN, Germany, Sept 21, (AP): Michael Olise scored twice and Harry Kane scored his 10th club goal of the season as Bayern Munich brushed aside Werder Bremen 5-0 for its latest big win on Saturday.

Bayern has 20 goals in only its last three games after beating Holstein Kiel 6-1 last week and demolishing Dinamo Zagreb 9-2 in the Champions League on Tuesday.

It was Bayern's sixth win in six games in all competitions under new coach Vincent Kompany, and comes ahead of playing Bundesliga champion Bayer Leverkusen next week. Bayern has 16 goals and three conceded from its four Bundesliga games.

Also on Saturday, Vincenzo Grifo scored twice as Freiburg beat Heidenheim 3-0 for its third win in four league games. Union Berlin won 2-1 against Hoffenheim, which has lost three in a row.

Promoted Holstein Kiel earned its first top-division point when Shuto Machino's 89th-minute goal salvaged a 2-2 draw at Bochum.

Mainz got its first win in the Bundesliga when Philipp Mwene's crosses from the left proved pivotal



Bochum's head coach Peter Zeidler during the German Bundesliga soccer match between VfL Bochum and Holstein Kiel in Bochum, Germany. (AP)

in an eventual 3-2 win over home side Augsburg.

The victory came even though Mainz played most of the match with 10 men after Nadiem Amiri was sent off 10 minutes before halftime. Augsburg also had a man sent off with 20 minutes remaining.

Mainz started as the underdog and took the lead against the run of play

after 13 minutes when Armino Sieb nodded home Mwene's cross from the byline.

Two minutes later, Jonathan Burkardt glanced home a second from another of Mwene's crosses from the left.

Augsburg got back into the game in the 25th when Keven Schlotterbeck found space in the box and poked home from close in. A comeback looked on the cards after Amiri was shown two yellow cards in quick succession in the 33rd and 35th.

SOCCER

But Mainz was more resilient than its early season form suggested and it was the visitor which scored next, Burkardt extending the lead to 3-1 in the 49th.

Samuel Essende pulled a goal back but the Augsburg striker's joy was short-lived. He was shown a red card for violent conduct 13 minutes later, leaving both sides a man short for the last 20 minutes.

Augsburg pushed for an equalizer but could not make the breakthrough so it remains in 12th place. Mainz moves into 10th.



Werder's Felix Agu, left, and Bayern's Michael Olise, right, challenge for the ball during the German Bundesliga soccer match between SV Werder Bremen and Bayern Munich in Bremen, Germany. (AP)

Jackson marks 50th appearance for Chelsea with 'double' at West Ham

Lopetegui already under pressure

LONDON, Sept 21, (AP): Nicolas Jackson marked his 50th appearance for Chelsea with two early goals to inspire his team to a 3-0 win at West Ham in the Premier League on Saturday.

Jackson also added an assist for Cole Palmer at the start of the second half as Chelsea swept aside West Ham, which was booted at the end of the match by the remaining fans.

It was a third league win of the season for Chelsea - all of those have come away from Stamford Bridge.

New West Ham coach Julen Lopetegui is already under pressure after his third loss of the fledgling Premier League season.

It took Chelsea less than four minutes to take the lead and the West Ham defense was nowhere to be seen when Jackson played a one-two with Jadon Sancho and surged forward before cutting in from the left and firing between Alphonse Areola's legs from a tight angle.

SOCCER

It was Sancho's second assist in as many matches since joining from Manchester United and his first start since May 2023.

Jackson doubled his tally in the 18th minute as another sweeping move saw him burst clear onto a Moises Caicedo throughball and keep his composure to drill into the bottom left corner.

It was the Senegal forward's 21st goal in 50 appearances for Chelsea.

West Ham briefly appeared to get into the match halfway through the first period and had penalty appeals waved away before Mohammed Kudus had a goal ruled offside.

However, it went from bad to worse for the home team right at the start of the second half as Jackson turned provider to slip the ball through to Palmer, who fired in off the inside of the left post.

Pep Guardiola has told elite soccer players that they are the only ones who can force change in the face of a growing dispute over the number of games they are being asked to play.

Manchester City midfielder Rodri says players are close to going on strike because of an increasingly congested fixture schedule that will be added to with next year's expanded Club World Cup in the United States.

Guardiola said Friday that the game's stars might have to "take a voice and do something" if they want to make a stand.

"If something is going to change, always (it) must come from the players," the City manager said. "That business (soccer) can be without managers, can be without sporting directors, can be without media, can be without owners, but without the players (it) cannot be played."

"So the only (ones) that have the power to do it is them."

Players' unions have legally challenged FIFA over the expansion of the Club World Cup, which will be a



Wolverhampton Wanderers' Mario Lemina, left, and Aston Villa's Youri Tielemans battle for the ball during the English Premier League soccer match between Aston Villa and Wolverhampton Wanderers at Villa Park, Birmingham, England. (AP)

Perfect Kuwait Club tops Group A

Arab Clubs Championship quarter-final lineup set

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: The quarter-finalists in the 39th Arab Clubs Championship for League and Cup Champions, currently taking place at Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Complex Hall, were confirmed following the conclusion of the fourth round of the preliminary stage, held the. In this round, Qatar's Al-Ahly defeated Yemen's Al-Qoton 48-23,

World players' union FIFPRO has raised concerns about the increasing physical and mental demands on players, but the competition has been welcomed by the European Club Association, which represents the continent's top clubs, including City.

Unions in England and France filed a claim against FIFA at the Brussels Court of Commerce in June and challenged FIFA's "decisions to unilaterally set the international match calendar."

The Champions League has also been expanded this season with two more games in the new-look group stage.

Spain international Rodri played in 10 different competitions in 2022-23 when the campaign was further congested by a mid-season World Cup. He followed by up last year by playing 64 times for club and country, including a run to the final of the European Championship, which Spain won.

Egypt's Al-Ahly Bank won against the UAE's Maliha 34-23, and Kuwait Club triumphed over Iraq's Al-Karkh 33-28, while Al-Qadisiya and Iraq's Al-Hashd ended in a 28-28 draw.

With these results, and prior to the fifth and final round of the preliminary stage that took place yesterday, "Al-Abyad" topped Group A with a perfect score of six points from three matches. Al-Salmiya followed with four points, while Al-Ahly and Al-Karkh each had

three points, securing their spots in the quarter-finals. Al-Qoton finished last in the standings.

In Group B, Iraq's Al-Hashd topped the group with five points, followed by Al-Ahly Bank and Al-Gharafa, both with four points, and Al-Qadisiya with three points, all qualifying for the quarter-finals. The UAE's Maliha finished last and will face Al-Qoton of Yemen today for ninth and tenth place at 6 p.m.

In tomorrow's quarter-finals, the first-place team in Group A will face the fourth-place team in Group B, the second-place team in Group B will play the third-place team in Group A,

HANDBALL

the second-place team in Group A will meet the third-place team in Group B, and the first-place team in Group B will compete against the fourth-place team in Group A.

The semi-finals for the winners will be held on Tuesday, along with matches to determine positions from fifth to eighth. The tournament will conclude with the final match next Thursday.

CAIRO, Sept 21, (KUNA): Al-Tomoooh Kuwait Sports Club secured one gold and one silver medal in the table tennis competition for athletes over 21 at the fifth International Championship for People with Disabilities held

in Cairo.

In a statement to KUNA, Hoda Al-Khalidi, the director of Al-Tomoooh, expressed her heartfelt congratulations to the champion players and the administrative and technical teams for their unwavering support. Al-Khalidi noted that player Hassan Al-Mutawa advanced to the final after defeating a competitor from Port Fouad Al-Busaidi Club with a score of 2-0. Similarly, player Mohsen Al-Mashmoum reached the final by defeating a Zamalek Club player with the same score. The two Kuwaiti athletes will face each other in the final match.

TABLE TENNIS

Additionally, Al-Khalidi highlighted that Hassan Al-Mutawa, Mohsen Al-Mashmoum, and Mohammed Al-Otaibi are set to compete in athletics events next Saturday, focusing on the 100-meter and 200-meter races. She expressed confidence in the players' abilities to continue their success and increase Kuwait's medal count.

The fifth International Championship for People with Disabilities commenced last Thursday in Al-Shorouk, Cairo, with 244 athletes from 20 clubs, including Kuwait's Al-Tomoooh Club, participating in both table tennis and athletics competitions.

The tournament delegation is led by the club's assistant secretary, Fahd Al-Shali, and includes coach Bilal Al-Hammami alongside the competing players.

Nice demolishes 'hapless' Etienne

PARIS, Sept 21, (AP): Nice hammered Saint-Etienne 8-0 in an astonishing rout that marked the newly promoted side's heaviest French league defeat in 73 years.

Nice notched six in a scintillating first half display and overall equalled its record number of goals scored in a Ligue 1 game.

The writing looked on the wall for visiting Saint-Etienne as early as the fourth minute when Dylan Batubisika conceded an own goal.

Tanguy Ndombele made it 2-0 three minutes later when a poor clearance left him with a free shot at goal.

Most of the damage came down the right wing, where the Saint-Etienne defense was unable to cope with Nice's surging runs and crosses. Mohamed-Ali Cho was rampant and he scored the third in the 24th followed by Youssoufa Moukoko two minutes later.

Evan Guessand scored a beautiful individual goal in the 36th and Moukoko added his second and Nice's sixth three minutes later to leave Saint-Etienne reeling.

Franck Haise's men took their foot off the gas in the second half but substitute Sofiane Diop still tapped in a seventh with 15 minutes remaining. Pablo Rosario completed the rout with an 85th-minute penalty.

The result moved Nice into fifth place. Saint-Etienne was 16th.