



# PUBLIC WORKS MINISTER SIGNS 18 ROAD MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS

## Kuwait roads getting major upgrade



Photos by Samer Shiqer

Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan, Minister of Public Works, signs 18 major contracts for road maintenance across Kuwait during a signing ceremony attended by officials, marking a significant step toward infrastructure improvements.

Kuwait gears up for historic GCC summit

Public urged to brace for road closures

## PM's GCC-EU speech gets Cabinet praise

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 23, (KUNA): The Cabinet held on Tuesday the regular weekly session under the chairmanship of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Following the session, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheridah Al-Mousherji stated that the ministers lauded the State of Kuwait statement, addressed by the Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, at the

first GCC-EU Summit, held in Brussels last Wednesday.

Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah, the Cabinet statement noted, had stated that the summit constituted an extraordinary opportunity to promote the bilateral relations, manifest the joint serious and sincere desire to broaden mutual cooperation and press ahead with comprehensive strategic partnerships, based on the vision of Their Highnesses the leaders of GCC states.

The Representative of His Highness the Amir had expressed hope to make progress in the negotiations for free trade between the GCC and the EU,

work out a framework accord for cooperation and find alternative formulas for investing the abundant resources of the Gulf and EU countries, affirming that Kuwait as chair of the GCC in 2024 aspires for full coordination with the European partners on all issues of common concern.

He had also affirmed keenness on aiding Iraq to restore its regional status, urging Baghdad to take tangible steps and tackle the sticking issues with Kuwait, namely the demarcation of the marine borders beyond Point 162 according to international conventions and law.

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**By Mohammed Ghanem**  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Oct 23: Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan signed 18 contracts on Wednesday for comprehensive maintenance of roads in Kuwait.**

In a state issued on the sidelines of the contract signing ceremony, Minister Al-Mashaan expressed her optimism that all roads will be modified and maintained through these contracts.

She urged all citizens and residents to cooperate with relevant authorities

as some roads will be closed for maintenance work in the near future.

The minister explained that all of Kuwait's roads, from the First Ring Road to the Seventh Ring Road, including Salmi Road, Abdali Road, and the internal roads will undergo maintenance. The work will be carried out by international, Gulf, and local companies, with immediate efforts focused on the most affected areas, followed by others.

Meanwhile, the acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Public Works Eid Al-Rashidi revealed in a statement issued yesterday that six contracts were signed for expressways and 12 contracts for internal roads.

Al-Rashidi extended his congratulations to His Highness the Amir Sheikh

Meshal Al-Ahmad, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah, and the people of Kuwait on the signing of these contracts.

He affirmed that these contracts will lead to a qualitative shift in the State of Kuwait and will push forward the wheel of economic development, within the framework of the directives of the country's political leadership.

Al-Rashidi indicated that the ministry has launched an electronic system to monitor road repair work in real time, which will allow ministry leaders to ensure safety and quality as well as deal with any challenges that may arise.

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Kuwait leads UN agenda for peace, security

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Warba Bank achieves 14.9 million dinars in 9 months

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Al Tijari declares net profit of KD 88.5 million for the first nine months of '24

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Capital Governor Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali to participate in NBK Run 2024

## Biometric services ongoing daily: Mol

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 23, (KUNA): The Ministry of Interior announced on Wednesday that it continues to provide biometric fingerprint services to residents daily, from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

In a statement, the ministry advised that an appointment must be made in advance through the "Meta" portal, or the government application "Sahel," before heading to the designated centers, noting that the deadline would be on December 31.

TUNIS: The Arab States Broadcasting Union's (ASBU) standing committee awarded Kuwaiti Television Wednesday two awards during its annual programs competition.

An ASBU statement said that Kuwait Television came in second in the two union events, adding that the prizes would be handed during the 25th ASBU festival, which would be scheduled later.

The first event, concerned with the number of television programs and other activities within the same country, saw Iraq Television winning the top spot with Saudi Television coming in third. In the second competition, featuring annual programs and activities, Iraq also came on top with Qatar Television taking third place. (KUNA)

## Israel must answer for crimes in Palestine, Lebanon: Kuwait

NEW YORK, Oct 23, (Agencies): The State of Kuwait called on the international community to unify efforts to hold Israeli occupation accountable for its gruesome crimes committed in Palestine and Lebanon.

Delivering the speech of Kuwait permanent mission to the United Nations before the sixth political committee of legal affairs, Kuwait's diplomatic attaché Zeina Al-Dalloum stressed that Israeli crimes are genocide and crimes against humanity against Palestinian and Lebanese peoples.

The international community has been silent while Israeli occupation has been committing crimes against humanity in the Gaza Strip for more than one year, Al-Dalloum said.

The Israeli occupation also launched its brutal aggression on Lebanon, she said, expressing Kuwait's condemnation of Israeli occupation continued ignorance of international legitimacy resolutions, which call for the full withdrawal from Palestinian territories.

Israeli occupation forces violates Lebanon's sovereignty and threaten its security through their brutal attacks that killed several civilians, she added.

Al-Dalloum stressed the need of ensuring Palestinians' rights to self-determination, and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state on June 4, 1967 borders and East Jerusalem as its capital, as a main step for maintaining international peace and security.

Kuwait has been boosting justice and combating all forms of injustice, violence and corruption, out of its belief in the rule of law, she stated.

She referred to Kuwait's speech before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) regarding the legal impacts of Israeli occupation policies and practices on the occupied Palestinian territories, in-



KUNA photo

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, left, meets Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Wednesday Oct. 23, 2024.

cluding Al-Quds Al-Sharif.

Kuwait affirmed that abiding by the rule of law on international and local levels is essential for sustainable development and economic growth, and combating poverty and starvation as well as

protecting human rights and freedom, she pointed out.

Kuwait's Constitution respects the rule of law and separation among authorities, she said.

On empowering women, Al-Dalloum said Kuwait trusts women's position and their key role in making decisions and raising the country's status, internationally, pointing to women's occupation in judicial, executive and legislative authorities.

Kuwait has been proceeding with digitization as it launched "Sahl" app, to facilitate services.

Al-Dalloum emphasized Kuwait's commitment to all laws and international charters that enhance the rule of law, on a basis of justice and equality.

Elsewhere, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan explored on Wednesday with the US Secretary of State Antony Blinken the latest developments in Gaza, Lebanon and the region.

This came in a meeting between the Saudi Foreign Minister and Blinken during his visit to Riyadh as part of Middle East tour, the Saudi Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

Both sides discussed the bilateral relations between the two countries, and efforts to achieve an end to the war in Palestine and Lebanon.

Meanwhile, Israeli jets struck multiple buildings in Lebanon's southern coastal city of Tyre on Wednesday, sending large clouds of black smoke into the air.

The state-run National News Agency reported that an Israeli strike on the nearby town of Maarakeh killed three people. There were no reports of casualties in Tyre, where the Israeli military had issued evacuation warnings prior to the strikes.

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Proactive mindset drives real estate success

## Housing costs eat up 50% of expat incomes

**By Abdulrahman Abdulhamid Al-Hamoud**  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 23: The real estate sector plays a crucial role in Kuwait's economy, ranking second only to the oil sector in some years when measuring its contribution to the gross domestic product (GDP).

This sector encompasses more than just the buying and selling of buildings,

apartments, and lands; it also includes construction, materials, rental markets, real estate asset management, and engineering services.

Among these, investment real estate stands out as one of the most significant areas of investment in Kuwait, with investment construction percentages reaching up to 250 percent outside the capital and as high as 400 percent within it.

Current landscape of investment

buildings, particularly those not overlooking Gulf Street, often reflect traditional architectural styles.

Most residents of these buildings are expatriates with limited incomes, leading to a general lack of construction quality. Typically, the apartments in these buildings do not exceed 80 square meters, creating cramped living conditions.

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## DGCA chief looks to strengthen ties with Saudi, Swiss

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 23, (KUNA): President of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), Engineer Sheikh Humoud Mubarak Al-Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, met with his Swiss counterpart Abdulaziz Al-Duailij and representatives from the Swiss Federal Office of Civil Aviation on Wednesday to discuss enhancing cooperation in the aviation sector.

In a statement to KUNA, Sheikh Humoud Al-Sabah noted that the meetings took place during the third day of the Air Services Negotiation (ICAN-2024) event in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

He emphasized the strong historical ties between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia and highlighted their shared perspectives on regional and international issues.

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## Kuwait bans Black Ops 6

DUBAI, Oct 23, (AP): Kuwait has banned the release of the video game "Call of Duty: Black Ops 6," which features the late Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein and is set in part in the 1990s Gulf War.

Kuwait has not publicly acknowledged banning the game, which is a tentpole product for the Microsoft-owned developer Activision and is set to be released on Friday worldwide.

However, it comes as Kuwait still wrestles with the aftermath of the invasion and as video game makers more broadly deal with addressing historical and cultural issues in their work.

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### Day by Day

SUCCESS is the ultimate victory, and in times of stagnation or hardship, nations often struggle with a lack of progress and positive mindset.

It is in such moments that God Almighty may send a leader to guide and uplift them. History shows us that, just like a full moon eventually wanes, life follows a cycle of highs and lows.

However, the key to sustained progress lies in the commitment to follow the visionary directives of such a leader.

Senior officials must prioritize implementing these directives with dedication and integrity, ensuring that the nation continues to grow and rebuild over time.

With this perseverance, the future holds the promise of continued advancement.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

**Zahed Matar**

## Kuwait and Saudi unite to boost medical cadre skills

RIYADH, Oct 23, (KUNA): Kuwait Institute for Medical Specializations signed an agreement with the Saudi Commission for Health Specialties to enhance training and skills of medical cadres.

The deal, signed on the sidelines of the Institute's participation in the Global Health Exhibition, hosted by Riyadh from October 21-24, aims to boost coordination between the two sides and share expertise in health education and training in a manner that contributes to raising the efficiency of medical staff,

Kuwait's Health Ministry said in a statement.

It also covers bolstering joint coordination for professional license tests of medicine and dentistry fields to improve health services in both countries, it noted.

The agreement was signed by Dr. Abdurrahman Al-Mutairi, Undersecretary of Kuwait's Ministry of Health and Acting Secretary General of the Institute, and Aws Al-Shamsan, Secretary General of the Saudi commission, according to the statement.



KUNA photo

Dr. Abdurrahman Al-Mutairi, Undersecretary of Kuwait's Ministry of Health and Acting Secretary General of the Kuwait Institute for Medical Specializations, alongside Aws Al-Shamsan, Secretary General of the Saudi Commission, during the signing of a landmark agreement to enhance medical training and coordination between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.



Prayer Timings

Fajr ..... 04:35    Asr ..... 14:45  
Sunrise .. 05:54    Maghrib .. 17:10  
Zohr ..... 11:32    Isha ..... 18:28

# Local

**Expected weather for next 24 hrs:**  
**By Day:** Mild and partly cloudy to cloudy with light to moderate northerly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 10-38 km/h with a chance for scattered rain.  
**By Night:** Mild and partly cloudy with light to moderate freshening

Weather

at times over coastal areas north-erly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 12-40 km/h with a chance for scattered rain.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	24	16
Kuwait Airport	29	21

Abdaly	28	13
Bubyan	27	15
Jahra	28	19
Failaka Island	25	17
Salmiyah	27	21
Ahmadi	24	15
Jal Aliyah	27	14
Nuwaisib	28	-

# Kuwait leads UN agenda for peace, security



KUNA photos

Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya with other dignitaries at the commemoration of UN Day.

## 40 % suffer from water shortage globally : Kuwait

## UN Day celebrated

## ‘UN always in forefront helping people in distress’

### Amir congratulates Vietnam leader

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 23, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent Wednesday a congratulatory cable to Vietnamese President Luong Cuong on being elected as president by the Vietnamese Parliament and oath-taking.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished the President the best of luck, success and good health and his country more progress and prosperity.

His Highness the Crown Prince

Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent Wednesday a congratulatory cable to Vietnam’s newly elected President Luong Cuong on taking the oath, wishing him success and his country further progress and prosperity.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent Wednesday a congratulatory cable to Vietnam’s newly elected President Luong Cuong on taking the oath.

NEW YORK, Oct 23, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait affirmed, Tuesday, on the importance of the prominent role of the United Nations through multilateral action to help and support afflicted peoples in all ways, which translates collective humanitarian action in its most beautiful form.

The Permanent Delegation of the State of Kuwait made the remarks in a speech to the United Nations, which was delivered by Diplomatic Attache Abdullah Bu Abbas before the Second Committee of the United Nations for Economic and Financial Affairs under the item (Eradicating Poverty and Development Issues).

Bu Abbas said, “Today we are addressing sensitive issues related to eradicating poverty, agricultural development, food security and nutrition, due to their great importance in the lives of peoples and their sustainability” in light of the tragedies witnessed by the world.

Bu Abbas referred to the reports issued by the United Nations regarding the water crisis, which indicate that 40 percent of the world’s population today suffers from water scarcity, and that up to 700 million people will be at risk of displacement due to severe water scarcity by 2030.

He added that the report warned that 80 percent of sewage is pumped untreated into the environment, and water-related disasters represent 90 percent of the most destructive natural disasters since 1990.

The diplomatic attaché also referred to the report issued by the International Committee of the Red Cross, which stated that there are about 346 million people in Africa suffering from severe food insecurity, meaning that a quarter of the continent’s population does not have enough food.

Bu Abbas stated that about 96 percent of the population of Gaza (2.1 million people) face high levels of severe food insecurity, according to a report issued by the United Nations on the high risks of famine in the State of Palestine.

In this context, the diplomatic attaché pointed to the role of the State of Kuwait and its efforts to help affected countries by establishing external mechanisms to help those countries and alleviate their suffering.

The diplomatic attaché cited the prominent role of the Kuwait Fund for Economic Development, which provides grants and soft loans without regard to any political or religious considerations to 105 countries around the world, so that the humanitarian concern is the highest and the fixed line on which it proceeds.



Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya



Ghada Hatim Al-Tahir

date in 1945.

The UN Day celebration, themed “sustainable peace and security,” coincides this year with formidable and unprecedented challenges facing the world, including highly complicated conflicts, which made the UN role in resolving the conflicts and restoring stability more important than ever, he noted.

Recalling the historic role of the UN in helping Kuwait restore its sovereignty and liberty in 1991, Al-Yahya said this was one of the most important and most successful examples of the UN role in protecting the international peace and security.

On her part, United Nations Resident Coordinator to the State of Kuwait Ghada Hatim El-Tahir said that Kuwait, through commitment to the international conventions, continued to be an essential partner of the UN in the journey to peace and development.

The State of Kuwait and the UN work together for realizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and promoting sustainable peace and collective action worldwide, she noted.

The UN agencies have genuine partnerships with the government and people of Kuwait in various areas such as economic diversification, empowerment of youth, promotion of health, education and employment, environment protection, and promotion of human rights and governance, El-Tahir stated.

The 2024 global peace index ranked the State of Kuwait ranked first among the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) countries and 25th on the world level, which signals Kuwait’s leading role in peace building, she added.



KUNA photo  
Director General of Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) Dr. Fatima Al-Salem receives Tajikistan's Ambassador to Kuwait Zubaydullo Zubaydzoda.

## Tajik envoy seeks boost in media ties

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 23, (KUNA) : Director General of Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) Dr. Fatima Al-Salem and Tajikistan’s Ambassador to Kuwait Zubaydullo Zubaydzoda discussed Tuesday enhancing media co-operation.

During the meeting at KUNA headquarters , Dr. Al-Salem pointed out the vital role of media in boosting bilateral relations and cooperation.

For his part, Ambassador Zubaydzoda praised strong bilateral relations between Tajikistan and Kuwait, stressing his country’s desire to enhance media cooperation with KUNA, one of the most important media institutions in the region.

He added that cooperation would contribute to enhancing mutual understanding and conveying a positive image of the two countries.

## Project to cost over KD 2 million

## Gulf Street to light up with new energy-saving decorative poles

By Mohammad Ghanem  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 23: Director of the Street Lighting Department at the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy Eng. Ayman Al-Omani has announced the implementation of a project to replace the Arabian Gulf Street lighting network with decorative poles.

At a press conference in Subhan Street Lighting Department on Wednesday, Al-Omani revealed the project includes the installation of environmentally friendly and energy-efficient LED spotlights, beautification of Arabian Gulf Street in accordance with the most recent technical specifications, and enhancing the aesthetic appearance of the street by utilizing three different types of decorative poles.

Al-Omani revealed the contract value is KD 2,466,000 and the implementation period is 24 months, starting from Dec 5, 2023 – when the first job order was issued. “We encountered some challenges in carrying out the infrastructure works by using the services of other State agencies, but these were resolved through the cooperation of all parties. The infrastructure works were completed within the first year of im-

plementing the project,” he explained. “According to the timetable, the replacement and operation of the entire network will be done within a year. The first batch of decorative poles was installed opposite the Ministry of Oil on Oct 20, 2024. These poles were manufactured by a local factory after passing all tests and inspections, as well as meeting the requirements of the ministry. Kuwaiti engineers working in the department designed the shapes and colors of the poles,” he added.

He affirmed that during the design phase, the shapes and colors were chosen based on the country’s heritage, culture and national identity.

He added the department’s next projects include six maintenance contracts that cover all governorates, installation of street lighting equipment on dark roads, and replacement of sodium spotlights with LED spotlights, which are more environmentally friendly and energy-efficient and will help reduce energy consumption by 50 to 60 percent.

He also unveiled a 10-year plan to expand the installation of decorative poles throughout the country and replace the entire lighting network with an environmentally friendly and energy-efficient LED system.

## Kuwait pioneer in protecting children’s rights: Al-Huwailah

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

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 23: Minister of Social, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah has confirmed that Kuwait, with its visionary leadership, always stands at the forefront of countries keen on protecting children’s rights.

In her speech during the Supreme Council for Family Affairs’ celebration of Arab Children’s Day with the theme, “Today’s Children, Tomorrow’s Leaders”; the minister stressed that “protecting children and developing their skills are on top of our priorities. We believe that children are the foundation for building societies and the future of nations.”

Al-Huwailah acknowledged that Kuwait has made significant progress in this area and is dedicated to international laws on protecting children’s rights. She also commended the council for its leading role in providing children with a safe environment, which is conducive to their development and shields them from all types of abuse and violence.

She appreciated the effective partnership between government agencies and civil society institutions, affirming the importance of such partnership in supporting initiatives on child care and everyone’s commitment to shoulder the responsibility of protecting

the future of the country.

Meanwhile, acting Secretary General of the council Eman Al-Enezi said Kuwait is emulated in the field of child care, considering it has had remarkable achievements in promoting the well-being of children for decades. She added the country has been exerting tremendous efforts to become a land that nurtures talents and ambitions based on a strategic vision to guarantee a safe environment for children.

She pointed out that due to these policies, Kuwait topped the Arab world in the United Nations’ 2024 World Happiness Index, which was released in collaboration with the Oxford Center and the Gallup Foundation.

According to the index, Kuwaiti children are the “happiest” in the Arab and Gulf regions in terms of social support, well-being, health and the ability to make their own decisions in life.

She asserted this is made possible through the issuance of integrated policies that improve the protection of children’s rights. She said the council played a crucial role in the implementation of national initiatives; thereby, positioning Kuwait as a regional and global leader in the field of child protection.

She added the council’s role reflected its commitment to advance the protection of children’s rights and implement integrated strategies to help them develop their skills, improve their mental health and receive care in all facets of life.

She stressed that mental health is an essential component of children’s healthy growth and overall development, and that it is a critical first step in creating a well-rounded society that can overcome obstacles.

She attributed the accomplishments of the council to the astute and motivating leadership of the ministry who plays a significant role in developing policies on improving Kuwaiti childhood and supports the council’s action and procedures aimed at creating a stable, safe and violence-free environment that fosters children’s development.



Dr. Al-Huwailah

## Citizens urged to follow rules

## Camps put up before Nov 15 will be uprooted, warns Municipality

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 23: The Public Relations Department of Kuwait Municipality has emphasized that inspection teams from the General Cleaning and Road Occupancy Departments in both Jahra and Ahmadi Governorates have intensified their efforts. The teams are conducting field inspections to ensure that designated spring camping sites are clear of obstacles in preparation for processing camp license applications starting mid-November, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In this context, Faisal Al-Otaibi, Chairman of the Committee for Studying and Updating Spring Camp Sites, stressed the importance of adhering to the official camping period, which runs from November 15 to March 15, 2025. He warned that inspection teams will not hesitate to remove any camps set up before the official start date.

Nawaf Al-Mutairi, Director of the General Cleaning and Road Occupancy Department in Jahra Governorate, reported that field teams conducted inspections at 10 camping sites in northern Kuwait. As a result, they removed obstacles, cleared 11 storage containers, and placed 23 large containers for waste management at the approved camping sites.



Municipality trucks removing part of a temporary residence in the desert.

Meanwhile, Saad Al-Khreinej, Director of the General Cleaning and Road Occupancy Department in Ahmadi Governorate, confirmed that field teams have begun cleaning and preparing eight camping sites in the southern region, ensuring that these areas are obstacle-free and equipped with waste containers of various sizes.

The municipality urged citizens planning to camp this year to refrain from setting up their camps before the official camping period begins. They reiterated that inspection teams will remove any unauthorized camps and called for full compliance with the established regulations and conditions for setting up spring camps.



## ‘Gov’t transparency vital for combating misinformation’

“THE spread of rumors on social media, especially concerning sensitive regional issues like potential military developments and their impact on Kuwait, underscores the need for government transparency and proactive communication,” **Dr. Mohammed Hussein Al-Dallal** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

“In recent times, there have been exaggerated claims about precautions, such as government instructions in the event of a potential attack on the Bush-eir nuclear reactor and its implications for Kuwait.

“Such rumors have sparked public anxiety, particularly when the government remains silent, allowing misinformation to spread unchecked. In these circumstances, people often resort to the saying, ‘No smoke without fire’, leading to unwarranted fear and over-preparation for crises that may not materialize.

“The key to managing public perception in such situations lies in effective crisis communication. The government must prepare its citizens by maintaining open and transparent dialogue, especially during times of heightened regional tension.

“Past experiences, like the COVID-19 pandemic, demonstrate the effectiveness of transparent communication. During the health crisis, Kuwait’s government, particularly the Ministry of Health, maintained regular and clear updates, resulting in strong public co-operation and support. This helped the government successfully manage the crisis and maintain public trust.

“To avoid the negative consequences of rumors and misinformation, the government must adopt similar strategies of transparency in the current context.

“For instance, while the recent Cabinet session addressed regional crises like the ongoing conflict in Palestine and the potential spread of hostilities to neighboring countries, the information shared with the public was vague and lacked detail about specific emergency preparations.

“It is crucial for the government to outline the roles of its agencies in crisis management and ensure coordination among them.

“Moreover, the government should clearly communicate its plans to handle any potential crises, including worst-case scenarios, so that the public is informed and reassured.

“A lack of transparency leaves a void, which is quickly filled by rumors, potentially harmful misinformation, or unverified news that can disrupt the state’s crisis preparedness efforts.

“In Kuwait, both citizens and residents, need to remain vigilant by seeking reliable information from official sources.

“The state should also take the initiative in educating the public on crisis management and preparedness, ensuring that misinformation does not lead to panic or disorganized responses.

“In a broader context, as the region continues to witness military and political upheavals, including the ongoing conflicts involving Palestine, Lebanon, and Syria, the public’s support for the government’s crisis management plans will be crucial.

“Recent developments, such as the one-year anniversary of Operation Flood of Al-Aqsa, serve as a reminder of the persistent challenges in the region.

“The Israeli occupation and its expansionist agenda, as highlighted by statements from extremist figures like Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, emphasize the continuing threat to the Arab world. These statements, advocating for the annexation of lands from six Arab countries, reflect a broader strategy of domination.

“In this context, the resilience of the Palestinian resistance is a source of pride and strength for Arabs and Muslims. Despite the devastation faced by Gaza and the broader Palestinian population, the resistance movement continues to serve as the first line of defense against Zionist and Western expansionist ambitions.

“Their sacrifices are not only about defending Palestinian land but also about protecting the entire Arab world from further destabilization.

“It is therefore vital for Arab and Islamic nations to support the Palestinian and Lebanese resistance. This support is not only a moral imperative but a strategic one, aimed at preventing the Zionists from advancing their plans across the region.

“By strengthening the resistance, Arab countries can also safeguard their political, security, and economic stability. As the Palestinian resistance continues to restore hope for the Arab

nation, the question remains: will the Arab world recognize the critical role it plays and rally behind it in the struggle for liberation and regional stability?”

### Also:

“October marked a significant period of steadfastness mixed with pain, as the conclusion, despite the immense suffering, was tinged with both sadness and the ecstasy of victory,” columnist **Khawla Matar** wrote for **Al-Jarida** daily.

“Leaders across various struggles set examples, standing with their soldiers, embodying the sentiment of preferring to die on the battlefield rather than in bed.

“This sentiment resonates deeply, as the toll of sorrow is felt not just emotionally but physically, with pain coursing through the very veins of those enduring it.

“As the year passed, many found themselves overwhelmed with thought, searching for understanding in the midst of confusion, loss, and reactions from others.

“Some were distant acquaintances, while others were part of virtual or real-life paths. At a certain point, questions of identity and purpose arose, echoing a sentiment of, ‘Who are you?’ -- a question that, despite its seeming triviality, gained relevance as events unfolded rapidly.

“Throughout the year, the world witnessed atrocities on a global scale, broadcast live for the first time in modern history. Massacres and horrific events unfolded before the eyes of a world that, at times, seemed indifferent.

“Images of children suffering and dying were broadcast while the world looked away, or, in some cases, remained silent.

“The memories of these images remain ingrained in the minds of those who witnessed them, while questions of where the civilized world stands in the face of such horrors echoed in the silence. Where is the world that once pledged to defend human rights and uphold international norms?

“Even amid the devastation, people continued to live, spreading hope and faith. The resilience of those affected became evident, especially as they faced bombings, displacement, and unimaginable loss.

“Children who survived multiple attacks, losing family members or limbs in the process, stood as symbols of endurance. Yet, even as they persevered, intelligent bombs continued to target the innocent, striking those whose only crime was holding onto their land and vowing to stay until the last tree, wave, or breath.

“Throughout the year, some voices claimed that these people loved death, yet their actions and responses told a different story.

“They sang, joked, and smiled in the face of adversity, showing a love for life that few could understand. These people taught the world what it truly means to cherish life, far removed from the materialistic portrayals often presented by analysts and commentators.

“This past year also exposed many individuals and groups. At first, some expressed pity, thinking that they had not understood the messages of political leaders like Netanyahu.

“Friendships were maintained, despite growing disagreements over land, rights, and justice. However, it became increasingly clear that disagreements over such fundamental issues did, in fact, spoil friendships. The truth became evident -- there can be no disagreement over what is right and just, as it shines as clearly as the sun, even in the darkest of times.

“As the year progressed, the lies and narratives spread by certain groups, including those who spoke Arabic but did not represent its essence, became harder to ignore.

“Despite warnings to stop spreading Zionist falsehoods, many continued, buoyed by a sense of euphoria that baffled scholars and researchers alike. The question arose: How could someone rejoice in the face of death, especially when it was the result of a cowardly assassination?

“As October arrived, it brought a year of steadfastness mixed with pain to a close. The final chapter, though marked by immense sorrow, also carried the ecstasy of victory.

“Leaders and fighters stood as models of courage, refusing to abandon their comrades and choosing to face death on the battlefield rather than in the comfort of their homes.

“While some sought power and wealth, others sacrificed everything for the greater good, leaving behind legacies that will endure through the ages.

“Their heroism and sacrifices will be recorded in books and history, and future generations will learn their names, ensuring that their memory lives on.”

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes



Dr. Al-Dallal



A photo from the meeting between the KU and the National Guard.

Mol photo

## KU, Guard enhance co-operation in scientific, cultural fields

The Kuwait University recently held a meeting with the Follow-up and Supervision Committee for the Implementation of Protocols from the General Presidency of the National Guard, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

The meeting was attended by the Acting

Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Fahd Al-Fadhli, and Brigadier General Adel Al-Adwani, representing the National Guard.

The meeting aimed to enhance bilateral relations in the scientific, cultural, and technical fields, reflecting the mutual interest in coopera-

tion between the two institutions. Key topics included delegating National Guard members to teach at the university, offering lectures, training courses, and workshops, and fostering media collaboration through participation in conferences, exhibitions, and public events.

# Court imposes KD 1,000 bail & good conduct pledge on top media figure

## 19 expatriates nabbed in Jahra security campaign

By Jaber Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

**KUWAIT CITY, Oct 23: The Criminal Court has issued a verdict in a State Security case involving a well-known media figure who was accused of insulting the Amir.**

The court decided to refrain from issuing a punishment, instead the defendant is ordered to pay a bail of 1,000 dinars and sign a pledge of good conduct for two years.

Earlier, the court had sentenced the man in absentia to two years imprisonment. However, upon his return to Kuwait, he was taken into custody at the Kuwait Airport and referred to the court to enforce the sentence. The accused then filed an objection to the verdict, leading to the recent decision.

□ □ □

**19 expats arrested in raid:** A security campaign was launched recently in Jahra as part of Jahra Security Directorate’s efforts to apprehend violators of the Residency and Labor laws, as well as individuals wanted by law, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

This security campaign resulted in the arrest of 14 expatriates of various nationalities who violated the Residency and Labor laws, along with five others who are wanted by the authorities for committing different crimes.

□ □ □

**Drunk found sleeping in car:** A man, in his 50s, was referred to a police station in Hawally Governorate after the securitymen found him sleeping in his car, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

A security source said the Hawally security patrols noticed a vehicle parked in a suspicious manner. Upon investigating, they discovered that a man was inside. When they knocked on the window, the man showed signs of confusion as he got out of the vehicle. It turned out that he was drunk, so he was referred to the concerned authorities.

□ □ □

**Several injured in public brawl:** Some Arabs engaged in a public brawl in front of a building at an undisclosed location, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

The parties involved in the fight sustained injuries, so they were rushed to Amir Hospital.

A case was registered and investigations are ongoing to determine the reasons behind the fight.

□ □ □

**No casualties in road accident:** Farwaniya rescue patrols and Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) teams dealt with an accident involving a truck that rammed into the barrier on Ghazali Bridge, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

A security source said the rescue patrols were dispatched to the location immediately after receiving a report on the accident, indicating the truck’s cabin got stuck in the barrier.

No injuries or casualties were reported.

## Minister appoints key GTD officials

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 23: The First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef, has issued a decision appointing several key leaders in the General Traffic Department, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

Brigadier Munif Sari has been appointed as Assistant Director General for Violations, while Brigadier Mishaal Al-Suwaiji takes on the role of Assistant Director General for Education, Coordination, and Follow-up.

Additionally, Brigadier Saud Al-Jalal has been named Assistant Director of Indirect Violations, Brigadier Fahad Al-Ajmi as Assistant Director of Direct Violations, Brigadier Ahmed Al-Nimran as Director of Technical Inspection, and Brigadier Mishari Al-Rawdan as Assistant Director of Technical Inspection.



Mol photo

Two members of the gang with the subsidized foodstuff.

# Mol seizes 22 tons of subsidized foodstuff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 23: The Ministry of Interior announced that, as part of its intensified efforts to combat illegal activities, the Criminal Security Sector, through the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate Investigations Department, has taken into custody several members of a gang involved in the illicit trade of state-subsidized food supplies, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

Following a raid, the authorities have seized a significant quantity of these supplies, totaling approximately 22 tons.

The individuals involved have been referred to the relevant authorities for necessary legal action.



Major-General Al-Roumi visiting the injured Colonel Najm.

KFF photo

## Maj-Gen Al-Roumi visits injured Colonel Najm

Major-General Talal Al-Roumi, head of the Kuwait Fire Force, visited Colonel Najm Ibrahim Najm at Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital Tuesday morning to inquire about his health, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

During the visit, Major-General Al-

Roumi conveyed the greetings and appreciation of Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef, the First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior and wished him swift recovery.

According to hospital doctors, Colonel Najm’s condition is currently stable.



A photo from the training course.

Mol photo

## Training course on cybercrime awareness

The Public Relations and Security Media Department of the Ministry of Interior, in cooperation with the Criminal Investigations Department, organized a training course to raise awareness of cybercrime dangers and prevention methods, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

The course, titled “Preparing min-

utes to raise awareness of cybercrime dangers and prevention,” was attended by officers and non-commissioned officers.

Lieutenant Colonel Ammar Al-Sarraf, Acting Head of the Support Services Department in the Cybercrime Combating Department, led the session.

# Dubai Judicial Institute, Kuwait’s AMR mull boosting co-operation

DUBAI, Oct 23, (KUNA): President of Kuwait’s Authority for Medical Responsibility (AMR) Sheikh Dr. Salman Khalifa Al-Sabah and Director General of Dubai Judicial Institute Dr. Ebteessam Al-Badwawi discussed on Tuesday means of sharing knowledge and expertise in the legal field.

The two sides also focused on boosting collaboration in domains related to administrative work, procedures and issues pertaining to medical malpractice.

Such meetings and visits with brothers

aim to exchange experience and bolster cooperation to improve administrative and legal services, and implement the best practices and experiments in judicial development and training processes, UAE’s news agency (WAM) reported, citing **Al-Badwawi**.

Established in 2020 under the law 70 of 2020, the authority is an independent governmental entity tasked with the practice of medicine and allied health professions, patient’s rights, and healthcare facilities.

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# Kuwait solidifies commitment to child welfare at nat’l conference

Experts push for stronger measures

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 23: Kuwait Lawyers Association has launched a conference entitled, “Child Protection: Criminal, Civil and Psychological Aspects,” under the patronage of Minister of Social, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah, reports Al-Anba daily.

Participants in this conference included various specialists who discussed cases of violence against children and proposed solutions to these issues.

Deputy Head of the Court of First Instance Counselor Faisal Al-Hassan confirmed Kuwait’s commitment to child welfare and rights, as stipulated in the Constitution and penal laws that impose severe penalties on those who commit crimes against children. He also cited international treaties, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Al-Hassan enumerated several manifestations of crimes against children; warning that such offenses can lead to anxiety, depression and aggressive behavior; thereby, affecting a child’s educa-



Al-Anba photo  
Assistant Undersecretary for Social Welfare Affairs at the Ministry of Social Affairs Dr. Jassim Al-Kandari during his participation in the conference.

tion and future. He presented alarming statistics; revealing that the Public Prosecution has recorded 226 cases of crimes against children since the beginning of this year, 356 cases in 2023, and 289 cases in 2022.

Juvenile Prosecution Director Nouf Al-Saeed discussed the role of the Public Prosecution in investigating crimes against children. She explained that the

prosecution specializes in serious offenses against children; while misdemeanors are typically handled by the General Investigations Department, except some misdemeanors like domestic violence cases. She stressed the importance of promptly providing protection to child victims upon receiving reports and during the initial investigation phase.

Assistant Undersecretary for Social Welfare Affairs at the Ministry of Social Affairs Dr. Jassim Al-Kandari shed light on the efforts of Kuwait in protecting children’s rights and understanding the different forms of violence they encounter. He mentioned several contributing factors; including family-related issues such as abuse, neglect, domestic violence and psychological problems, not to mention the broader social and economic factors like poverty and unemployment. He also cited cultural influences, lack of awareness about children’s rights, exposure to media violence, chronic health issues, absence of positive role models, and inadequate monitoring of children’s exposure to media content.

He added the Juvenile Care Department recorded 553 cases of violence against children in June alone; with a total of 1,245 cases in 2023; 1,595 in 2022; 1,629 in 2021 and 1,318 in 2020.



Al-Seyassah photo  
Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Al-Nasser with Nadia Al-Yassin, head of the Kuwait Team for the Disabled.

## Governor endorses initiatives for people with special needs

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 23: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Al-Nasser emphasized Kuwait’s commitment to supporting people with special needs, while acknowledging their vital role in society, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

He expressed his full backing to help overcome the challenges they

face. During his meeting with Nadia Al-Yassin, head of the Kuwait Team for the Disabled, Al-Nasser highlighted the governorate’s dedication to participating in initiatives aimed at creating an inclusive environment for the disabled, fostering their creativity, and tapping into their potential and innovative ideas.



Al-Rai photo  
Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governor Sheikh Sabah Bader Sabah Al-Salem with members of the Municipal Council.

Governor addresses key issues with Municipal Council

## Mubarak Al-Kabeer pushes for new hospital

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 23: Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governor Sheikh Sabah Bader Sabah Al-Salem met with several members of the Municipal Council to discuss issues of interest to the residents of the governorate, reports Al-Rai daily.

The main topics of discussion included the allocation of a plot for the establishment of a public sector hospital and an ambulance center for the emergency medical department serving local residents.

The meeting took place at the governo-

rate’s general office on Monday and was attended by Municipal Council members Fahad Al-Ajmi, Naser Al-Azmi, Eng. Farah Al-Roumi, Eng. Sherifa Al-Shalfan, and Eng. Abdul Latif Al-Da’i.

They discussed appropriate solutions to various issues relevant to the residents of the governorate, including the allocation of a plot for establishing a sports club and dealing with traffic congestion in different areas of the governorate.

Governor Sheikh Sabah also reviewed

the landfill problem in Adan, stressing the need for a comprehensive solution to the issue.

Furthermore, issues related to cafes in Abu Al-Hasaniya area were discussed, along with plans to allocate land for parks and a sports walkway.

Each participant contributed their expertise on the proposals presented by the Governor Sheikh Sabah, and explored ways to resolve the challenges facing both residents and visitors to the area.

# October

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## Minister of Commerce appoints five new deputies to national SME Fund

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 23: Well-informed sources have revealed that the Minister of Commerce and Industry, Khalifa Al-Ajeel, has issued a decision appointing five new deputies to the Director General of the National Fund for Small and Medium Enterprises Development, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Hiba Al-Rifai, serving as Director of the Financial Department and temporarily acting as General Manager since October 3, has been assigned the post of Deputy Director General of the Credit Department.



Al-Ajeel

Muhammad Al-Farih, Director of the Credit Department, will now take on the role of Deputy Director General of the Finance and Investment Sector in addition to his current duties.

Arwa Al-Abdulrazzaq, Director of the Risk Department, has been appointed Deputy Director General of the Business Development and Growth Sector while retaining her original responsibilities.

Faisal Al-Saffar, Director of the Incubators and Growth Accelerators Department, was appointed as Deputy Director General of the Entrepreneurship Services Sector.

Lastly, Basma Al-Jassim, Director of the Engineering Affairs Department, was reassigned as Deputy Director General of the Lands and Facilities Sector, with both continuing in their original roles.



Participants of the training program.

Safeguarding investment strategies

## UIC hosts risk management training

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 23: The Union of Investment Companies (UIC), represented by the Investment Studies Center, organized a training course titled “Importance of Risk Management and Hedging Investment Studies”, which was led by the CEO of Advisory and Business Company Alaa Ghanim through interactive sessions held at the UIC headquarters.

According to a press release issued by UIC, Fadwa Darweesh, the Secretary General of UIC, highlighted the significance of the training course in light of the current risks that threaten the success and stability of companies, whether financial, strategic, operational, or related to commercial changes.

She explained that it is necessary for companies to identify and accurately assess these risks to ensure effective management and implement necessary precautionary measures for supporting sustainable economic development. With strong and efficient management, companies can minimize potential risks and ensure sustainable success in a competitive business environment.

Darweesh went on to explain that the training program was carefully designed to address important factors related to risk assessment, equipping participants with essential skills for evaluating risks, finding solutions, and conducting financial analysis. It also aims to enhance the ability for critical thinking, which is necessary for making correct decisions that protect companies from potential risks.

The training course covered multiple topics, including administration and operations, with a focus on enhancing administrative processes and analyzing expansion strategies. It also covered financial aspects such as calculating costs and revenues, managing available cash and assets, and capital management.

### Better collection

### State firms boost investment focus

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 23: The government companies are set to adopt a more precise and proactive regulatory approach in their financial and investment activities, with a focus on maximizing returns through strategic use of opportunities and addressing issues in troubled investments, reports Al-Rai daily quoting reliable sources.

The same sources said, 100 percent government-owned companies, or those under government control, have been directed to expedite the follow-up on their strategic investments to ensure better returns.

This includes updating investment plans and policies to avoid financial surpluses sitting idle and improving the efficiency of operations.

Moreover, companies are urged to improve the collection of overdue receivables, coordinate with the Ministry of Finance where necessary, and enhance the accuracy of project studies to align with strategic goals.



Acting Director General of KISR highlights need for Gulf research cooperation on sustainability

KISR and Bahraini society sign MoU on water research

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

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 23: Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) and the Bahraini Gulf Water Science and Technology Society signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to cooperate in conducting research and studies about water resources in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries at the institute’s main headquarters in Shuwaikh on Wednesday.

Acting Director General of KISR Dr. Mishaan Al-Otaibi pointed out that since the Arab Gulf countries have similar environmental conditions and face similar challenges in protecting natural resources and ensuring their sustainability, the institute is keen on building bridges of cooperation with Gulf institutions in the field of research in order to conduct specialized studies and adopt scientific activities related to the protection of natural resources.

“The MoU signed with the Bahraini society constitutes a scope of joint cooperation in the field of conducting research

and studies related to water resources in the GCC countries; as well as organizing and holding conferences, seminars, scientific workshops and training programs o develop the skills of workers in the water and sanitation sector in the GCC countries, in addition to other training programs developed by KISR,” Al-Otaibi explained.

On the other hand, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the society Abdulrahman Al-Mahmoud said the society works with experts, activists, researchers and specialists in the water sector to find sustainable solutions and achieve water security.

He confirmed that the society continues its pioneering voluntary role to serve the Gulf community.

He added the MoU aims to build bridges of cooperation with a Gulf house of expertise that plays an important role in the field of research and development, including water research.

“KISR has distinguished and pioneering achievements in water desalination, and its experience in this field has inspired the Gulf countries to implement desalination projects and develop their technologies,” he added.

3 agenda items sent for executive review

Municipal Council tackles urban issues

By Inaas Awadh  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 23: The Municipal Council’s Technical Committee held its tenth meeting of the third term yesterday chaired by Munira Al-Amir.

During the meeting, the committee referred three out of four items on its agenda to the executive body for detailed studies. These included a proposal to amend decree No. 119/2010 concerning the system for sorting and merging plots in private, investment, commercial, coastal, industrial, and residential areas,



Al-Seyassah photo  
Munira Al-Amir, Municipal Council member.

proposals received from citizens for establishing a new law focused on “environmental care,” aimed at improving the cleanliness, landscaping, and overall services surrounding buildings, and a proposal from a Kuwaiti citizen regarding the creation of parking spaces for boats.

Meanwhile, member Alia Al-Farsi proposed forming a joint committee to oversee the implementation of conditions for people with disabilities and the Kuwait Code for Accessibility in line with general design principles.

Kuwait roads

Continued from Page 1

In a similar statement, Acting Director General of the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART) Eng. Khaled Al-Osaimi announced that, for the first time in Kuwait, 18 contracts have been signed for road maintenance across all six governorates, with two contracts for each governorate, and six contracts for expressways.

He revealed that the total value of these contracts is approximately KD 400 million, distributed among the 18 contracts for expressways and internal roads, adding that the duration of each contract is three years.

Eng. Al-Osaimi stressed that the specifications for the asphalt mixture and materials to be used have been established, adding that neutral laboratories will be activated for all contracts to ensure quality control over the materials utilized in the asphalt mixtures. He affirmed the importance of determining the sources of the materials used

He explained that a memorandum has been signed with the United Arab Emirates to ensure the concrete is thoroughly examined and all aspects are covered. The contracts include an initial five-year warranty and a ten-year warranty.

The Salmi Road contract will be executed by the Turkish Company “Limak” and a Qatari company in two governorates. The remaining contracts will be executed by local companies.

A committee has been established to select the engineers supervising these contracts based on assessments to ensure their capability in managing these projects.

PM’s GCC-EU

Continued from Page 1

He had also demanded that Iraq abide by bilateral agreements regarding the technical and security aspects of the maritime waterway at Khor Abdullah for these accords boost the concepts of marine conservation, regulating navigation, combating terrorism, illegal trade of arms, narcotics and humans. He had also affirmed the necessity to pursue the dialogue, based on mutual understanding and respect.

The Cabinet statement, read by Minister Mousherji, noted that the Representative of His Highness the Amir, at the EU-GCC Summit, called for instant cessation of the air strikes waged by the Israeli occupation on Gaza, sparing the region and the world further hazards and jitters.

He had renewed the State of Kuwait’s principled, unwavering and historic stand in support of the Palestinian people and their just cause for establishing an independent state to the June 4, 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, acclaiming a decision by a number of European states to recognize the State of Palestine and urging other countries in the European continent to follow suit.

Also in the proceedings of the session, the ministers were briefed about the meetings that had been held by the Representative of His Highness the Amir on the summit’s margins, namely with the Spanish and Greek premiers and chair of the European Council.

They were also informed about preparations for hosting the 45th GCC Summit due in Kuwait on December 1. In this respect, the ministers welcomed the coming leaders of GCC countries, affirming significance of the planned event that depicts the deep-rooted and historic relations among the council member countries.

They noted that the summit would be held to manifest the GCC countries’ advocacy of the joint destiny, goals and actions for cementing the march of cooperation, the brotherly bonds for sake of pushing forward the process of development in all spheres for meeting aspirations of the GCC leaders and peoples.

Housing costs

Continued from Page 1

The prices for investment lands vary significantly, with rates between 3,000 and 4,000 Kuwaiti dinars per square meter in the capital. In areas like Ha-

walli, Farwaniya, Mangaf, and Abu Halifa, prices drop to around 1,200 to 1,500 dinars per square meter.

This disparity contributes to rising rents that do not align with the income of residents. For expatriates -- who often work as teachers, employees, or small business owners -- average monthly incomes hover between 500 and 700 dinars. With rental prices at approximately 250 dinars, housing costs consume about 40-50 percent of their income, posing a significant financial burden.

Investment in residential buildings constitutes a substantial portion of real estate portfolios for both individuals and companies.

There is a clear inverse relationship between interest rates and real estate demand; higher bank interest rates tend to reduce interest in real estate investments.

When the average return on real estate investment hovers around 7 percent after deducting management and maintenance expenses, the demand for investment buildings remains robust, particularly when interest rates are low.

According to the “Baytak” report on investment returns for the second quarter, opportunities for returns range from 6.80 percent to 7.8 percent.

However, it’s important to note that these figures do not include penalties imposed by the Kuwait Municipality for violations, such as unauthorized basement rentals or constructing residential units smaller than permitted sizes.

By the end of the second quarter, average returns on investment properties were recorded at 6.24 percent in the Capital Governorate, with varying returns in other regions: 7.35 percent in Hawalli, 7.39 percent in Farwaniya, 7.49 percent in Ahmadi, 7.21 percent in Mubarak Al-Kabeer, and 7.39 percent in Jahra Governorate.

Despite the potential for growth, several challenges need addressing:

Rental Prices vs. Income: The increasing prices of rental lands translate to rental values that often do not correspond with residents’ incomes. There is a pressing need for the state to either increase construction rates or provide land for investment housing at reasonable prices.

Parking Issues -- Many buildings lack adequate parking spaces, leading to congestion and parking crises. Unfortunately, basements intended for parking are often misused as storage, creating safety risks for residents.

Construction Quality -- The municipality must closely monitor construction materials, as low-quality materials can significantly affect building longevity and maintenance needs.

Improper Utilization of Residential Lands -- High land prices and limited space have led some individuals to convert residential buildings into multiple rental units, degrading services in established residential areas.

Regulation of Residential Sales -- While the sale of residential apartments has gained traction, establishing a regulatory framework and a property owners’ association law is essential to uphold the rights and responsibilities of property owners.

Investing in real estate in Kuwait requires a proactive approach to addressing these challenges. Expanding the creation of specialized property management companies is crucial, as reliance on property owners for management can hinder effective oversight and maintenance.

A qualified property manager can ensure properties are well-maintained, thereby increasing their return on investment and enhancing the overall real estate landscape in Kuwait.

DGCA chief

Continued from Page 1

The discussions also included measures to facilitate increased aviation traffic between the two nations.

Additionally, Sheikh Humoud Al-Sabah expressed interest in further collaboration with the Swiss Federal Office of Civil Aviation, urging Swiss aviation companies to begin operations at Kuwait International Airport to meet the growing demand for flights between Kuwait and Switzerland.

Kuwait bans

Continued from Page 1

The video game, a first-person shooter, follows CIA operators fighting at times in the United States and also in the Middle East. Game-play trailers for the game show burning oil-fields, a painful reminder for Kuwaitis who saw Iraqis set fire to the fields, causing vast ecological and economic damage. Iraqi troops damaged or set fire to over 700 wells.

There also are images of Saddam and Iraq’s old three-star flag in the footage released by developers ahead of the game’s launch. The game’s multiplayer section, a popular feature of the series, includes what appears to be a desert shootout in Kuwait called Scud after the Soviet missiles Saddam fired in the war. Another is called Babylon, after the ancient city in Iraq.

Activision acknowledged in a statement that the game “has not been approved for release in Kuwait,” but did not elaborate.

“All pre-orders in Kuwait will be cancelled and refunded to the original point of purchase,” the company said. “We remain hopeful that local authorities will reconsider, and allow players in Kuwait to enjoy this all-new experience in the Black Ops series.”

Kuwait’s Media Ministry did not respond to requests for comment from The Associated Press over the decision.

Israel must

Continued from Page 1

Lebanon’s Hezbollah militant group meanwhile fired another barrage of rockets into Israel, including two that set off air raid sirens in Tel Aviv before being intercepted. A cloud of smoke could be seen in the sky from the hotel where U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken was staying on his latest visit to the region to try to renew cease-fire talks.

Hezbollah began firing rockets, missiles and drones into Israel, drawing retaliatory airstrikes, after Hamas’ Oct. 7, 2023 attack out of Gaza triggered the war there. All-out war erupted in Lebanon last month, and Israeli strikes killed Hezbollah’s top leader, Hassan Nasrallah, and most of his senior commanders. Israeli ground forces invaded southern Lebanon at the beginning of October.

The Israeli military said Tuesday that one of its airstrikes in recent weeks killed Hashem Safieddine, a senior Hezbollah leader and cleric who was widely expected to succeed Nasrallah.

Tyre, a provincial capital, had largely been spared in the Israel-Hezbollah war, but strikes in an around the city have intensified recently.

The 2,500-year-old city, about 80 kilometers (50 miles) south of Beirut, is known for its pristine beaches, ancient harbor and imposing Roman ruins and hippodrome, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is among Lebanon’s largest cities and a vibrant metropolis popular with tourists.

The buildings struck on Wednesday were between several heritage sites, including the hippodrome and a cluster of seaside sites associated with the ancient Phoenicians and the Crusaders.

The Israeli military issued evacuation warnings a couple hours prior for dozens of buildings in the heart of the city. It told residents to move north of the Awali River, dozens of kilometers (miles) to the north.

Avichay Adraee, an Israeli military spokesman, said on the platform X that there were Hezbollah assets in the area of the evacuation warning, without elaborating or providing evidence.

The city is in southern Lebanon, where the Shiite Muslim Hezbollah has a strong presence, and its legislators are members of the group or its allies. But Tyre is also home to civilians with no ties to the group, including a sizable Christian community.

First responders from Lebanon’s Civil Defense used loudspeakers to warn residents to evacuate the area and helped older adults and others who had difficulty leaving. Ali Safieddine, the head of the Civil Defense, told The Associated Press there were no casualties.

Teachers society seeks clarity on co-op clause

Educators raise concerns over extra tasks

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

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 23: According to educational sources, the cooperation clause is a crucial provision in school work, as it highlights the importance of collaboration between teachers and school administration.

The Kuwait Teachers Society has reaffirmed its commitment to coordinating with the Ministry of Education to establish a clear framework for this clause and to define teachers’ responsibilities in line with their fundamental job descriptions.

However, the “elasticity” in the interpretation of this clause poses challenges for many teachers, as it often leads to the delegation of excessive administrative duties under the guise of collaboration. Many educators have voiced their concerns, arguing that these responsibilities exceed their job descriptions.

Taking into consideration the significant role that the Kuwait Teachers Society can play in collaborating with the Ministry of Education to clarify this clause, rather than leaving it to individual school administrations, the sources indicated that the educational community is actively discussing the school “cooperation” clause. They believe its vague wording allows for varying interpretations by school administration as it sees fit.

They explained that many teachers fear that refusing to perform administrative tasks that are not included in their job descriptions may lead to administrative arbitrariness, including a decline in their annual evaluations. This concern makes some teachers hesitant to voice their objections, even though they feel these tasks fall outside their core responsibilities.

Clear guidelines

The Kuwait Teachers Society can serve as a mediator between the Ministry of Education and teachers by establishing clear guidelines for the cooperation clause. This would ensure it is not misused to compel teachers to take on additional responsibilities outside their educational roles and help define tasks fairly and transparently in line with their job descriptions. Such measures could enhance the efficiency of school operations and improve the relationship between teachers and administration.

The solution to canceling unjustified administrative tasks assigned to teachers lies in clearly defining the cooperation clause’s responsibilities, and ensuring they are in line with the basic educational duties. This would allow teachers to focus on their primary role of teaching and interacting with students without being burdened by unrelated tasks.

In this context, Head of the Kuwait Teachers Society Hamad Al-Holi affirmed that the society has prepared a memorandum outlining its vision and proposals for activating the administrative department in schools and addressing the teaching burdens placed on teachers in various educational stages.

In a press statement, Al-Holi indicated that the comprehensive memorandum aims to reduce administrative burdens on teachers, allowing them to focus more on their educational responsibilities.

He highlighted several key points in the memorandum, particularly the benefits of activating the administrative department, which would enable teachers to dedicate themselves fully to their teaching tasks.

He explained that the memorandum referred to previous ministerial decisions that were not fully implemented, such as ministerial resolution No. 594/2001, which outlines specific tasks for the administrative department. This resolution was not implemented in most boys’ schools due to administrative and financial challenges.

The memorandum includes the society’s vision for activating these decisions by redistributing personnel and providing material and administrative incentives for staff in administrative departments. It also advocates for the feminization of certain departments in schools to solve staffing shortages.

Al-Holi said the society stressed the need for the Ministry of Education to collaborate with it for defining a clear framework for the cooperation clause, so that administrative tasks are not left vague, which could lead to teachers being burdened with additional responsibilities that may negatively impact their job performance and annual evaluations.



KUNA photo  
Kuwait’s Major Muhammad Jassim Al-Amir and Major Ali Jamal Al-Kharaz attend Arab conference on counterterrorism in Tunisia.

Kuwait joins Arab conference on ‘counterterrorism’ in Tunisia

TUNIS, Oct 23, (KUNA): The 27th Arab Conference of Officials Responsible for Combating Terrorism kicked off Wednesday, at the General Secretariat of the Council of Arab Interior Ministers in Tunisia, with the participation of counterterrorism officials from interior ministries of Arab countries, including Kuwait.

In his opening speech, Secretary-General of the Council, Mohammad Koman, stressed the need to strengthen Arab security cooperation in confronting terrorism, which is a transnational crime that requires enhanced collaboration not only among Arab countries but also between them, neighboring countries, and the international community.

He explained that extremism is one of the primary drivers of terrorism. Therefore, the updated 2022 Arab Counterterrorism Strategy addresses the conditions leading to the spread of terrorism, stressing in its second pillar the need to address these circumstances and prevent extremism that fosters terrorism.

Koman said that workshop will be held Thursday in collaboration with the EU-funded Counter-Terrorism and Criminal Justice Project on joint threat analysis, particularly coming from sea and desert, with participation from Arab Interior Ministers Council members and several international bodies such as Interpol, the United Nations, and regional organizations.

Kuwait earns ISO certificate

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 23, (KUNA): Kuwait Capital Market Authority declared on Wednesday that it had earned the international standardization certificate (ISO/IEC) in the realm of information technology services.

The authority said in a statement that this achievement would contribute to bolstering its status as a “semi-judicial oversight authority,” committed to

applying top international applications in the IT field.

It indicated that the honoring came for the authority’s supervision, maintenance and overhaul of the IT services systems, in addition to providing high quality services.

The authority was established, according to Law 7/2010, for regulating securities’ operations.

IFRC General Assembly kicks off in Geneva with Kuwaiti participation

GENEVA, Oct 23, (KUNA): The General Assembly of the International Federation of Red Cross (IFRC) and Red Crescent Societies kicked off, Wednesday, with representatives of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society and representatives of 191 countries.

In her opening speech, the President of the International Federation of Red Cross, Kate Forbes, urged for promoting the language of dialogue and peace, especially during such times the world is witnessing.

Forbes noted that humanitarian aid requires a favourable environment free of pressures to ensure that it reaches

all those in need without exception, stressing the importance of “giving priority to dialogue and peace,” especially for those living under the burden of wars, conflicts, and crises.

The General Assembly will witness, in the coming days, extensive discussions on the priorities of the International Federation for the next two years, as well as pressing humanitarian challenges, including international humanitarian law, the protection of civilians and humanitarian workers, the impact of digital technologies in war, and the protection of humanitarian access.



MoE photo  
School buses equipped with tracking cameras.

MoE launches student tracking camera project on school buses

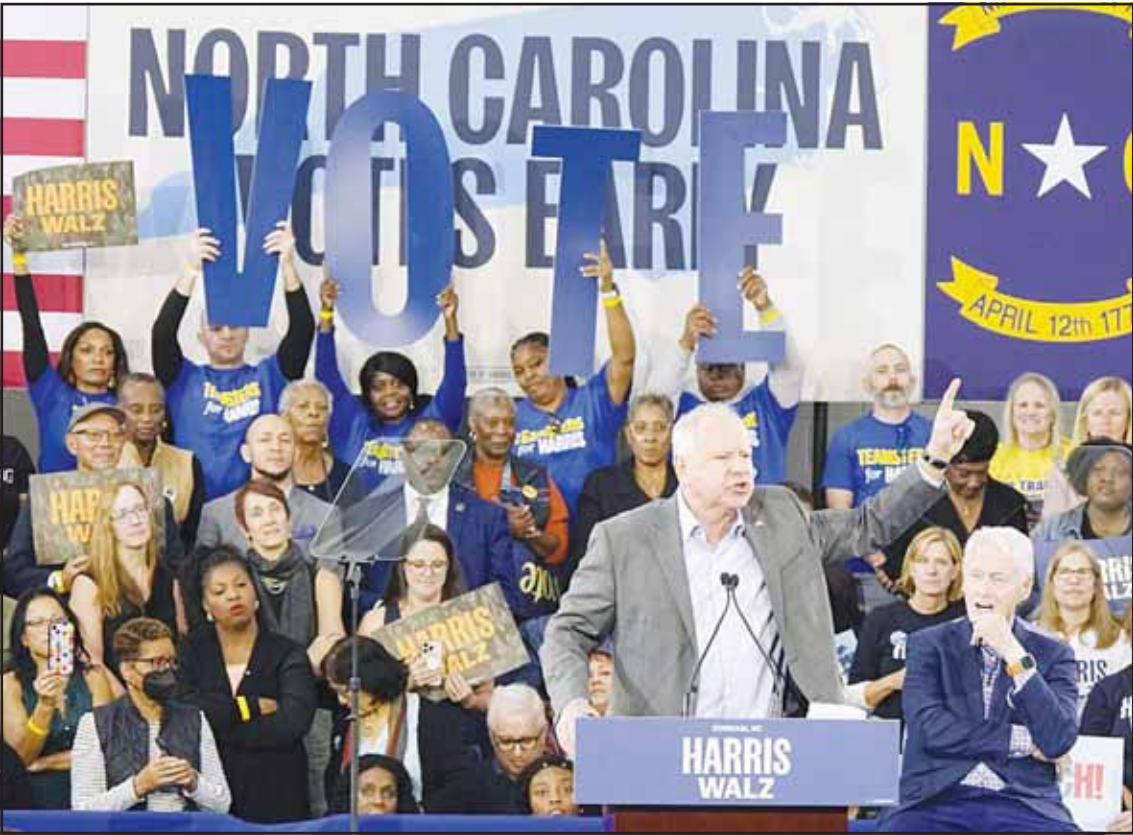
KUWAIT CITY, Oct 23: In line with technological advancements and the Ministry of Education’s commitment to improve services for students and their parents, the ministry will implement a student tracking camera project on school buses starting Sunday in collaboration with a specialized company, reports Al-Anba daily

According to educational sources, the project will be implemented on trial basis for two months on 10 buses

serving schools under the Special Education Department. If successful, it will be expanded to all schools. This initiative is a manifestation of community partnership with the private sector, as the company has agreed to offer the two-month trial period free of charge. The system will allow parents to monitor their child’s journey on the bus and at school through their mobile phones.

The registration is open to interested parents, sources explained.





Democratic vice presidential nominee Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz appears with former President Bill Clinton at a campaign rally in Durham, NC on Oct 17. (AP)

US president campaigns in New Hampshire

Global leaders terrified of Trump & quietly tell him, ‘He can’t win’: Biden

CONCORD, NH, Oct 23, (AP): US President Joe Biden tore into his predecessor, suggesting that global leaders are terrified of what Donald Trump’s return to the White House could do to democratic rule around the world.

“Every international meeting I attend,” Biden said, specifically referencing his whirlwind trip to Germany last week, “They pull me aside - one leader after the other, quietly - and say, ‘Joe, he can’t win.’ My democracy is at stake.”

His voice rising, Biden then asked if “America walks away, who leads the world? Who? Name me a country.”

The comments came during what was supposed to be a rather staid speech on health care in New Hampshire. They were a dose of unfiltered politics at an event otherwise focused on Biden’s policy legacy with the race to replace him just two weeks from concluding. And they made clear that the president also sees not having Trump succeed him as an important piece of how he might go down in history.

After the speech, Biden went to a campaign office to support New Hampshire Democratic candidates and continued his broadsides against

Trump, even saying at one point, “We’ve got to lock him up.” Some supporters of Vice President Kamala Harris - who replaced Biden at the top of the Democratic ticket in July - have yelled that during her rallies, though such chants actually have their origin with Trump supporters demanding jail time for his 2016 opponent, Democrat Hillary Clinton.

Biden evoking it drew applause from those assembled at the campaign office, but Biden quickly added: “Politically lock him up. Lock him out, that’s what we have to do.”

Trump campaign spokesperson Karoline Leavitt said Biden “just admitted the truth: he and Kamala’s plan all along has been to politically persecute their opponent President Trump because they can’t beat him fair and square.”

Biden didn’t mention Harris much during his comments, though he noted that she’d been endorsed by some high-profile Republicans. That includes former Rep. Liz Cheney, the GOP’s onetime No. 3 in the House and daughter of ex-Vice President Dick Cheney. Instead, Biden continued to focus on Trump, slamming him for being proud about being friends with



US President Joe Biden visits a New Hampshire Democratic coordinated campaign office in Concord, NH on Oct 22. (AP)

Russian President Vladimir Putin, and joking that Trump “believes in the free press like I believe I can climb Mt. Everest.”

He said Trump and supporters of his “Make America Great Again” movement have “anti-democratic” attitudes toward the way the Constitution func-

Digital researchers linked video to Moscow

‘Russia behind viral disinformation targeting Walz’

WASHINGTON, Oct 23, (AP): Groups in Russia created and helped spread viral disinformation targeting Democratic vice presidential candidate Tim Walz, a senior US intelligence official said Tuesday.

The content, which includes baseless accusations about the Minnesota governor’s time as a teacher, contains several indications that it was manipulated, said the official with the Office of the Director of National Intelligence.

Analysts identified clues that linked the content to Russian disinformation operations, said the official, who briefed reporters on the condition of anonymity under rules set by the office of the director.

Digital researchers had already linked the video to Russia, but Tuesday’s announcement is the first time federal authorities have confirmed the connection.

The disinformation targeting Walz is consistent with Russian disinformation seeking to undermine the Democratic campaign of Vice President Kamala Harris and Walz, her running mate. Russia also has spread disinformation

aimed at stoking discord and division ahead of voting, officials said, and may seek to encourage violent protests after Election Day.

Last month, analysts at Microsoft revealed that a viral video that baselessly claimed Harris left a woman paralyzed in a hit-and-run accident 13 years ago was Russian disinformation. More recently, a video surfaced featuring a man claiming to be a former student of Walz’s who accused the candidate of misconduct years ago. Private researchers at firms that track disinformation, including NewsGuard, already have concluded the video was fake and that the man in the footage isn’t who he claimed to be.

The Associated Press contacted a former employer of the man whose identity was used in the video. The employer, Viktor Yeliohin, confirmed the man shown in the video was an impostor.

Some researchers have also suggested the video may contain evidence that it was created using artificial intelligence, but federal officials stopped short of the same conclusion, saying only that the video contained multiple

indications of manipulation.

China and Iran also have sought to influence the US election using on-line disinformation. While Russia has targeted the Democratic campaign, Iran has gone after Republican Donald Trump with disinformation as well as hacking into the former president’s campaign. China, meanwhile, has focused its influence efforts on down-ballot races, and on general efforts to sow distrust and democratic dissatisfaction.

There is no indication that Russia, China or Iran are plotting significant attacks on election infrastructure as a way to disrupt the outcome, officials said Tuesday.

Jen Easterly, director of the U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, has said improvements to election security mean there is no way any other foreign adversary will be able to alter the results.

Russia, China and Iran have all rejected claims that they are seeking to meddle with the U.S. election. Messages left with the Russian Embassy seeking comment on the Walz video were not immediately returned Tuesday.



US President Joe Biden visits a New Hampshire Democratic coordinated campaign office in Concord, NH on Oct 22. (AP)

Russian President Vladimir Putin, and joking that Trump “believes in the free press like I believe I can climb Mt. Everest.”

He said Trump and supporters of his “Make America Great Again” movement have “anti-democratic” attitudes toward the way the Constitution func-

tions and “virtually no regard” for it.

“Think about what happens if Donald Trump were to win this election,” Biden said, adding, “He’s not joking about it, he’s deadly earnest” and “It’s a serious, serious problem.”

“We must win,” Biden said.

Biden was in New Hampshire’s

capital of Concord with Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, the last candidate he beat to win the 2020 Democratic presidential primary. They both appeared at Concord Community College to trumpet the Department of Health and Human Services finding that almost 1.5 million Medicare enrollees saved nearly \$1 billion on prescription drugs during the first half of the year.

Much of those savings came as a result of a cap on out-of-pocket drug costs created by the sweeping climate and health care law that the Biden administration helped carry through Congress in 2022. It put an annual maximum of \$3,500 that recipients of Medicare, the government’s health insurance coverage plans for seniors, pay for their prescriptions while making recommended vaccines for older Americans, like immunization for shingles, free.

Biden said that seniors aren’t the only ones benefiting from the savings: “It’s also saving taxpayers billions of dollars.”

Next year, the drug cost cap for Medicare recipients falls to \$2,000 per year, which will save some of the sickest Americans more. But the change has come at a price for others - it’s con-

tributed to rising drug plan premiums that the government has tried to keep down by paying insurers billions of dollars from the Medicare trust fund. Still, some insurers have raised plan prices significantly - or pulled plans from markets.

The legislation is expected to deliver major savings in other ways, though, for taxpayers and Medicare enrollees in the long term.

For the first time ever, the federal government will negotiate the price of 10 of Medicare’s costliest drugs. The negotiated list prices, announced in August, will take effect in 2026. Taxpayers spend more than \$50 billion yearly on the 10 drugs, which include popular blood thinners Xarelto and Eliquis and diabetes drugs Jardiance and Januvia.

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimates that Medicare drug pricing negotiations will save taxpayers \$3.7 billion in the first year.

But his championing of lower drug prices was overshadowed by the warnings Biden offered about Trump.

“No president has ever been like this guy. He’s a genuine threat to our democracy.”

Some Liberals prepare to confront Trudeau

Canada’s Cabinet voices support for prime minister

TORONTO, Oct 23, (AP): Canada’s deputy prime minister said she believes Justin Trudeau has the support of a majority of Liberals in Parliament as some prepare to confront him Wednesday in the hopes of convincing him to step down.

Chrystia Freeland and other Cabinet members voiced support for the prime minister on Tuesday ahead of a broader meeting with colleagues.

A number of Liberals have signed a letter hoping to persuade Trudeau to step down before the next election. It was unclear how many signed.

“The vast majority of Liberal Members of Parliament support the prime minister, support him as leader of our government, support him as leader of our party and support him as the guy who is going to lead us into the next election,” Freeland said.

Freeland said she is more confident of that after meetings in the last 36 hours.

The Liberal recently suffered upsets in special elections in districts the

party has held for years, raising doubts about Trudeau’s leadership. Losing a district in Canada’s largest city of Toronto, a traditional Liberal stronghold, does not bode well.

A number of Liberal lawmakers have said they will not run again.

Trudeau has said he will lead the party into the election, which come any time between this fall and October, 2025. His Liberal party must rely on the support of at least one major party in Parliament as the Liberals do not have the majority in the House of Commons.

The opposition leader of the Bloc Québécois said his party will work with the Conservatives and NDP parties to bring the Liberals down and force an election if the government doesn’t boost old age security payments for seniors.

“The whole story is now: what will Justin Trudeau, superstar, do in the coming days,” Bloc Leader Yves-François Blanchet said.

Trudeau’s Liberals have been in

power since 2015 but Canadians have been frustrated by the cost of living coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Trudeau reasserted the country’s liberal identity in 2015 after almost 10 years of Conservative rule. His legacy includes opening the doors wide to immigration. He also legalized cannabis and brought in a carbon tax to fight climate change.

“Anybody who has ever bet against Justin Trudeau is sorry they made that bet the next day,” said Employment Minister Randy Boissonnault.

Some Cabinet ministers acknowledged some colleagues don’t agree.

“Any time there are voices of dissent we have to deal with them, we have to listen to them carefully,” Labor Minister Stephen Mackinnon said.

“We have to deal with them and present a unified face to Canadians.”

Opposition Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre goaded the prime minister about the potential revolt.



Canada’s Prime Minister Justin Trudeau pays tribute on the 10th anniversary of the attack on Parliament following the Question Period in Ottawa, Ontario on Oct 22. (AP)

US & Cyprus officials launch strategic dialogue to bolster security, stability

NICOSIA, Cyprus, Oct 23, (AP): US and Cypriot officials on Wednesday launched a strategic dialogue they said would bolster security and stability in a crisis-wracked region through initiatives including counterterrorism training of personnel from Middle Eastern countries and fighting sanctions evasion.

“It is a big moment in the relationship between our countries and to be part of this feels like being part of an historic occasion,” U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs James O’Brien said at a news conference.

Cyprus’ clear policy shift toward deepening US relations after decades of walking a tightrope between Washington and Moscow gained added steam after Russia’s 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

The US official pointed to a US-funded center on the island nation under the acronym CYCLOPS that trains personnel from Cyprus and neighboring countries on maritime and cybersecurity as well as counterterrorism techniques.

Cyprus’ Foreign Minister Constantinos Kombos said his government remains committed to a partnership between local law enforcement, the US Department of Justice and the FBI in combating illicit finance and the evasion of sanctions against Russia and other countries.

The FBI is helping train Cypriot police in identifying and prosecuting cases of illegal financing and attempts to evade US, European Union and UN sanctions imposed on any third country.

“It’s dealing with crises like we

see from the instability in the region,” O’Brien said. “It’s law enforcement cooperation on the sanctions enforcement and other cooperation so that we keep our people safe.”

Kombos said the start of the dialogue affords Cyprus the opportunity to demonstrate that it’s a credible strategic partner to the US regarding humanitarian initiatives including the establishment earlier this year of a Cyprus-Gaza maritime corridor for the shipborne delivery of humanitarian aid to the Palestinian territory.

Last month, Cyprus and the US signed a defense cooperation framework agreement that outlines ways the two countries can enhance their response to regional humanitarian crises and security concerns.

Cyprus said Sunday that it has successfully thwarted a digital attack aimed at blocking access to the government’s central online portal, the latest in a string of similar attacks over a three-day period against state-run utilities and the Cypriot subsidiary of a Greek energy company.



Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs James O’Brien, (left), and Cyprus’ foreign minister Constantinos Kombos shake hands after a meeting at the presidential palace in Nicosia, Cyprus, on Oct 23. (AP)

Europe

**Poland alleges Russia sabotage:** Poland’s foreign minister said Tuesday that he is ordering the closure of one of three Russian consulates in the country in response to acts of sabotage including arson attacks that he said were sponsored by Moscow.

Radek Sikorski demanded that Russia stop what he called hybrid war actions against Poland and its Western allies, warning that Poland reserves the right “to take further decisive action” if they don’t stop.

“As the minister of foreign affairs, I have information that the Russian Federation is behind attempts at sabotage, both in Poland and in allied countries,” Sikorski told reporters in Warsaw.

He said he was withdrawing consent for the Russian Consulate in Poznan, and that its personnel would be unwelcome in Poland. Russia also has consulates in Gdansk and Krakow. (AP)

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**Nehammer asked to form govt:** Austria’s president on Tuesday tasked incumbent Chancellor Karl Nehammer with forming a new government after all other parties refused to work with the leader of the far-right Freedom Party, which last month won a national election for the first time.

Traditionally, the head of state has asked the leader of the strongest party to form a government. But President Alexander Van der Bellen dispensed with that tradition this time after the Sept. 29 parliamentary election produced a stalemate.

Whoever leads the next government will need to build a coalition to have a parliamentary majority. But Nehammer’s conservative Austrian People’s Party has said it wouldn’t work with the Freedom Party under its leader, Herbert Kickl. The other three parties in the new parliament said they wouldn’t work with the Freedom Party at all. (AP)



A group of Kurdish migrants from Iran and Iraq who failed in their attempt to reach the United Kingdom by boat after being discovered by the police refuse to return to shore on the beach of Ambleteuse, northern France, on May 19. (AP)

2 migrant deaths in English Channel

French maritime authorities pulled the bodies of two migrants from the English Channel on Wednesday, pushing the count of dead and missing in French waters so far this year above 50.

Authorities said 46 other people were rescued, after a failed attempt to cross the treacherous waterway between France and England aboard a heavily overloaded inflatable boat.

The French maritime prefecture that oversees French waters in the Channel said this year is proving to be the deadliest for migrants’ crossing attempts aboard small boats since they started surging in 2018.

Before the latest incident, the prefecture had counted 49 dead or missing at sea so far in 2024. It said the new deaths pushed its total to 51.

The rescue operation Wednesday was launched after a life vest was found at sea, and it prompted a temporary halt to some of the commercial ferry services that ply the busy route between ports in northern France and the southern coast of the U.K., the prefecture said.

Two French rescue vessels dispatched to the area and backed by a navy helicopter picked up 48 people “in difficulty” in the waters, a statement from the prefecture said. (AP)





In this photo provided by the Tunisian Presidency, Tunisia’s President Kais Saied is applauded after taking oath on Oct 21 in Tunis following his re-election. (AP)

Tunisia’s president inaugurated for second term

Tunisia’s President Kais Saied has been inaugurated for a second term, following a monthslong crack-down and string of arrests against his political opponents.

Weeks after winning reelection with a 90.7% share of the vote, the 66-year-old former law professor in his inauguration speech Monday called for a “cultural revolution” to combat unemployment, fight terrorism and root out corruption.

“The aim is to build a country where everyone can live in dignity,” Saied said in a speech addressing members of Tunisia’s parliament.

Saied’s Oct. 7 reelection came after a turbulent first term during which he suspended the country’s parliament, rewrote its post-Arab Spring constitution and jailed dozens of his critics in politics, media, business and civil society. He has justified elements of the crackdown as necessary to fight corruption and enemies of the state, using

populism to appeal to Tunisians disillusioned with the direction that those who preceded him took the country after nationwide protests led to the 2011 ouster of Zine El Abidine Ben Ali.

He promised to target the “thieves and traitors on the payroll of foreigners” and blamed “counter-revolutionary forces” for obstructing his efforts to buoy Tunisia’s struggling economy throughout his first term in office. (AP)



Uganda forensic officials inspect the site where a fuel truck exploded, on the outskirts of Kampala, Uganda on Oct 22. (AP)

Fuel truck overturns, explodes near Uganda capital; 11 dead

At least 11 people were killed Tuesday after a fuel truck exploded next to a highway in Uganda, police said. Two children were among the dead.

The truck overturned after an accident and later exploded in a town just outside Kampala, the capital, police spokesman Patrick Onyango said.

“The victims were burnt beyond recognition,” he said in a statement. A cloud of dark smoke rose from the scene.

A video shared online by an on-looker appeared to show people scooping up fuel from the truck before the blast. The dangerous scene echoed a similar incident in Nigeria last week that killed more than 140 people, including children.

People who rush to collect fuel from stricken trucks hope to sell it, despite warnings to stay away.

“This tragic incident serves as a reminder of the risks associated with fuel tanker accidents and the importance of exercising caution when dealing with hazardous materials,” Onyango said.

There have been similar incidents over the years across East Africa. At least 62 people were killed in Tanzania in 2019 as they attempted to siphon fuel out of a damaged truck.

In South Sudan, at least 183 people were killed in 2015 when hundreds of villagers gathered around a fuel truck to collect fuel. (AP)



South Korean mechanized unit personnel parade with their armored vehicles during the media day for the 76th anniversary of Armed Forces Day at Seoul air base in Seongnam, South Korea, on Sept 25. (AP)

US Defense Secretary Austin confirms North Korea has sent troops to Russia

SEOUL, South Korea, Oct 23, (AP): US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said there is evidence that North Korea has sent troops to Russia on Monday, and South Korea’s spy chief told lawmakers that 3,000 North Korean troops are in the country receiving training on drones and other equipment before being deployed to battlefields in Ukraine.

Austin told reporters Wednesday “What exactly they are doing? Left to be seen. These are things that we need to sort out,” according to a video posted by the Washington Post.

If the troops join the war in Ukraine on Russia’s side, it will be “a very, very serious issue,” Austin said, adding it would have an impact in Europe and in the Indo-Pacific region.

South Korean intelligence first publicized reports that the Russian navy had taken 1,500 North Korean special warfare troops to Russia last week, while Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy had earlier said his government had intelligence that 10,000 North Korea soldiers were being prepared to join the invading Russian forces.

The U.S. and NATO had not previously formally confirmed North Korea’s reported troop dispatch, but have warned of the danger of such a development if true. Russia and North Korea have so far denied the troop movements.

South Korean National Intelligence Service Director Cho Tae-yong told lawmakers that said another 1,500 North Korean troops have entered Russia in a closed-door meeting, according to lawmaker Park Sunwon, who attended the briefing.

Cho told lawmakers that his agency assessed that North Korea aims to deploy a total of 10,000 troops to Russia by December, Park told reporters.

Park cited Cho as saying the 3,000 North Korean soldiers sent to Russia have been split among multiple military bases and are in training. Cho told lawmakers that NIS believes they have yet to be deployed in battle, according to Park.

Speaking jointly with Park about the NIS briefing, lawmaker Lee Seong Kweun said that the NIS found that the Russian military is now teaching those

North Korean soldiers how to use military equipment such as drones.

Lee cited the NIS chief as saying Russian instructors have high opinions of the morale and physical strength of the North Korean soldiers but think they will eventually suffer a heavy casualties because they lack an understanding of modern warfare. Lee, citing Cho, said Russia is recruiting a large number of interpreters.

Lee said NIS has detected signs that North Korea is relocating family members of soldiers chosen to be sent to Russia to special sites to isolate them.

The NIS chief told lawmakers that North Korea hasn’t disclosed its troop dispatch to its own people. But there are rumors that the news is spreading to local residents, including those whose loved ones have been assigned Russian tours, Lee said, citing the NIS.

Ukraine’s Military Intelligence Directorate head, Kyrylo Budanov, told the online military news outlet The War Zone that North Korean troops will arrive to Russia’s Kursk region today to help Russian troops fighting off a Ukrainian incursion.

Government shut down public schools

Floods in Philippines kill 9, trap others on roofs as storm approaches

MANILA, Philippines, Oct 23, (AP): Torrential rain set off by an approaching tropical storm swamped the eastern Philippines with widespread flooding that killed at least nine people, trapped others on their roofs and sparked frantic appeals for help, officials said Wednesday.

The government shut down public schools and government offices - except those urgently needed for disaster response - on the entire main island of Luzon to protect millions of people as Tropical Storm Trami blew closer from the Pacific.

At least nine people died in five northeastern provinces and in the hard-hit city of Naga before the storm’s expected landfall on the northeastern Philippine coast. Most of the deaths were caused by drowning and landslides, police and local officials said, adding that about seven were missing.

“People have been stuck on roofs of their houses for several hours now,” former vice president Leni Robredo, who lives in the northeastern city of

Naga, said in a post on Facebook early Wednesday. “Many of our rescue trucks have stalled due to the floods.”

Coast guard personnel have been rescuing residents in flooded villages in the eastern provinces of Sorsogon, Albay, Camarines Sur, Catanduanes and outlying regions since Tuesday, but provincial authorities said the number of rescue boats and personnel was not enough.

The storm was last tracked about 175 kilometers (109 miles) east of Echague town in the province of Isabela. It had strengthened with sustained winds of 95 kph (59 mph) per hour and gusts of up to 115 kph (71 mph).

The storm was forecast to hit Isabela’s coast Wednesday night to early Thursday, then barrel across northern Luzon before exiting to the South China Sea late Thursday.

Its wide rain band could dump up to 20 centimeters (8 inches) of rainwater in one day of intense downpours in the most vulnerable provinces on its path, according to state forecasters.



In this photo provided by the Philippine Coast Guard, residents who were staying on top of their roofs to avoid floods caused by Tropical Storm Trami, locally named Kristine, are rescued at Libon, Albay province, Philippines on Oct 23. (AP)

Thousands of villagers have evacuated to emergency shelters in northeastern provinces. Storm warnings were raised in more than 30 northern and central provinces, including in the densely populated capital of Manila, which was not in the storm’s direct path but could be lashed by its pounding rains.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr canceled all his appointments Wednesday and convened an emergency meeting to discuss disaster mitigation efforts, Communications Secretary Cesar Chavez said.

“The worst is yet to come, I’m afraid, so let’s all prepare,” Marcos said.

During the meeting, Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro said the military’s aircraft and ships would be used for evacuations and disaster response. He said additional airlift power could be provided by friendly countries, including Singapore, if needed.

Thousands of passengers and cargo workers were stranded in several seaports after the coast guard said it sus-

pended inter-island ferry services and barred fishing boats from venturing into the increasingly rough seas.

“We need national intervention,” Rep Luis Raymund Villafuerte of Camarines Sur province told DZRH radio network, saying his flood-prone province has about 50 rescue boats but needs about 200.

In Quezon province, Gov. Angelina Tan said floods in some areas reached up to 3 meters (nearly 10 feet) and at least 8,000 villagers have evacuated.

About 20 storms and typhoons batter the Philippines each year. The archipelago also lies in the “Pacific Ring of Fire,” a region along most of the Pacific Ocean rim where many volcanic eruptions and earthquakes occur, making the Southeast Asian nation one of the world’s most disaster-prone.

In 2013, Typhoon Haiyan, one of the strongest recorded tropical cyclones in the world, left more than 7,300 people dead or missing, flattened entire villages, swept ships inland and displaced more than 5 million in the central Philippines.



Rescue workers remove the debris to look for the trapped survivors of an under-construction building that collapsed on Tuesday, following heavy rains in Bengaluru, India, on Oct 23. (AP)

India building collapse kills 5

A seven-story building under construction collapsed in southern India during heavy monsoon rains, killing at least five workers and trapping three others, police said Wednesday.

Police said in a statement that 13 people have been rescued so far by fire and disaster response teams. The entire building collapsed Tuesday in the Babusapalya area of Bengaluru, one of

India’s information and technology hubs.

The cause of the collapse is still being investigated.

Such accidents are common in India during the monsoon season from June to September. Regulations are poorly enforced, and some builders cut corners, use substandard materials, or add unauthorized extra floors, leading to structural collapses. (AP)

Lat/Am

**Storm Oscar disintegrates:** Tropical Storm Oscar disintegrated Tuesday as it headed toward the Bahamas after making landfall in Cuba as a Category 1 hurricane, killing at least seven people and unleashing heavy rains on an island also hit by an unrelated massive power outage.

Oscar’s remnants were located some 75 miles (115 kilometers) east-southeast of Long Island in the Bahamas on Tuesday afternoon. The maximum sustained winds dropped to 35 mph (55 kph) as the remnants moved northeast at 12 mph (19 kph), according to the National Hurricane Center in Miami. (AP)

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**‘Gangs escalate violence’:** Gangs in Haiti have escalated their violence and expanded operations outside the capital, even attacking small boats and kidnapping personnel from cargo shipping companies, the top UN official in the country said Tuesday.

Special representative Maria Isabel Salvador told the U.N. Security Council that the situation has worsened in the last three months, with more than 700,000 people now displaced in the country and the political process facing “significant challenges.”

She said Haitians across the country continue to suffer as gang activities escalate and expand, “spreading terror and fear, overwhelming the national security apparatus” and worsening an “extremely dire” humanitarian situation. (AP)

Tension grips Bangladesh as student protesters demand prez resignation

DHAKA, Bangladesh, Oct 23, (AP): Political tension in Bangladesh was growing anew on Wednesday after a leading student group called for the country’s figurehead president to resign over comments he made that appeared to call into question former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina’s resignation in August.

The interim government was expected to hold a Cabinet meeting to discuss the issue on Thursday.

The student group, known as the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, set a two-day deadline for President Mohammed Shahabuddin to step down. Hundreds of protesters rallied in the capital, Dhaka, on Tuesday while hundreds of others attempted to storm the presidential palace, Bangabhaban.

Police and witnesses said security officials charged at protesters with batons and used stun grenades to disperse people late Tuesday. Media reports said at least two protesters were injured by bullets.

The new political turmoil began after Shahabuddin told a Bengali-language newspaper earlier this week that he had not seen Hasina’s resignation letter as she fled to India in August amid a student-led uprising. An interim government led by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus took power and formed a government after Hasina stepped down on Aug. 5.

Shahabuddin said in his interview with the Manab Zamin daily that he only heard about Hasina’s resignation but had not seen the actual letter, a statement that infuriated the Yunus-led government and student activists, prompting them to call for his resignation.

Protesters gather to demand the resignation of President Mohammed Shahabuddin after his comments that he had no documents proving that former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had resigned before fleeing the country, in Dhaka, Bangladesh on Oct 22. (AP)





Market Movements				23-10-2024			
		Change	Closing pts			Change	Closing pts
↑	PAKISTAN	-	KSE 100				
			+706.90				87,309.25
↓	SAUDI	-	TASI			-55.22	11,901.77
	DUBAI	-	DFMGI			-3.16	4,464.19
	JAPAN	-	Nikkei 225			-307.10	38,104.86
	PHILIPPINES	-	PSEi			-45.50	7,367.66
	EGYPT	-	EGX 30			-13.30	30,414.05

# Business

Main market index falls 24.92 points

## Boursa general index drops 0.44 pct, closing at 6,982.69

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 23, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait closed Wednesday with the general index down 31.16 points (0.44%) at 6,982.69. A total of 389.13 million shares were traded through 18,067 transactions, with a value of KD 65.5 million (USD 199.7 million). The main market index dropped 24.92 points (0.39%) to 6,383.92, with 321.12 million shares traded through 11,943 transactions, worth KD 38.9

million (USD 118.6 million). The premier market index declined by 34.32 points (0.46%) to 7,478.54, with 68 million shares traded through 6,124 transactions, valued at KD 26.6 million (USD 81.13 million). The Main 50 index fell by 31.41 points (0.50%) to 6,289.68, trading 260.19 million shares through 8,221 transactions, worth KD 31 million (USD 94.5 million).

## KIPCO recognized by Forbes for ‘sustainability leadership’

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 23: KIPCO – Kuwait Projects Company (Holding) – was recognized by Forbes Middle East for its continued commitment to advancing sustainable practices. KIPCO’s Group CEO, Sheikha Dana Naser Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah, was listed on the publication’s ‘Sustainability Leaders 2024’ list in the category of investment and holding companies.

The recognition took place at the ‘Forbes Sustainability Leaders Awards 2024’ ceremony, held in Abu Dhabi at the closing of the second annual ‘Sustainability Leaders’ Summit: Shaping a Sustainable Future’. The ceremony was held under the auspices of the UAE’s Minister of State for Foreign

Trade, HE Dr Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi.

Receiving the award on behalf of KIPCO, Ms Eman Al Awadhi, Group Senior Vice President – Corporate Communications and Investor Relations at KIPCO, said:

“We are delighted to be receiving this recognition by a renowned publication like Forbes Middle East. We believe this to be a testament to the efforts that KIPCO continues to make in advancing sustainability practices not only at the parent level, but also across the key Group companies. Upholding responsible business practices is one of the ways through which we ensure that we remain committed to preserve and grow stakeholder value.”



Ms Eman Al Awadhi receiving the award on behalf of KIPCO from UAE's Minister of State for Foreign Trade, HE Dr Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi.

### UAE leads in trade with Kuwait

## Kuwait's trade deficit with GCC soars by 65.5 percent in Q1 '24

By Mahmoud Shendi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 23: In a revealing update from the Central Bank of Kuwait, the nation's trade deficit with Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries has surged dramatically, marking a 65.5 percent increase in the first quarter of 2024.

The deficit reached 427.2 million dinars, a significant jump from 258 million dinars in the previous quarter (Q4 2023). This alarming trend is also reflected on an annual basis, with a rise of 125.1 million dinars from 302.1 million dinars in the first quarter of 2023.

The data highlights a decline in Kuwaiti exports to GCC countries, which fell by 6.9 percent to 196.9 million dinars in Q1 2024, down from 203.8 million dinars in the last quarter of 2023. In stark contrast, imports experienced a sharp increase, climbing by 162.3 million dinars to 624.1 million dinars in Q1 2024, compared to 461.8 million dinars in Q4 2023.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) maintained its position as the leading recipient of Kuwaiti exports, totaling 102.3 million dinars. Meanwhile, Oman and Bahrain received 7 million dinars and 6.4 million dinars, respectively. The UAE also topped the list for goods exported to Kuwait, valued at 398.6 million dinars, while Qatar lagged behind with just 15.4 million dinars in exports.

Additionally, the trade balance with Saudi Arabia reflected a substantial

deficit of 98.3 million dinars, with Saudi exports to Kuwait reaching 160.8 million dinars, while Kuwaiti imports from the Kingdom amounted to about 62.5 million dinars.

Despite these challenges, Kuwait managed to record a trade surplus of 6.76 billion dinars (approximately \$22.19 billion) from January to June 2024.

However, this figure represents a slight decline of 0.88 percent compared to the 6.82 billion dinars surplus during the same period in 2023.

The overall trade surplus was pressured by a 2.85 percent decrease in total exports, which reached 12.29 billion dinars compared to 12.65 billion in the first half of the previous year.

Oil and its derivatives, which comprise 91.8 percent of Kuwait's total exports, also saw a drop, with revenues falling to 11.29 billion dinars from 11.78 billion dinars in the previous year. Conversely, the value of imports in the first half of 2024 amounted to 5.54 billion dinars, down 4.97 percent from 5.83 billion dinars in the same timeframe in 2023.

Overall, Kuwait's trade exchange in the first half of this year reached 17.83 billion dinars, representing a decrease of 3.52 percent from 18.48 billion dinars in the first half of 2023.

This complex economic landscape underscores the pressing need for Kuwait to reassess its trade strategies and bolster its export capabilities to navigate these turbulent times effectively.

### At 6.12 fils per share and 335 million dinars in total shareholders' equity

## Warba Bank achieves 14.9 million dinars in 9 months

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 23: Warba Bank announced the achievement of 14.9 million dinars during the first nine months ending in September 2024, with a return of 6.12 fils per share, compared to 14.3 million dinars for the same period in the previous year 2023, with a growth rate of 4%.

In a press statement, the bank indicated that it achieved net profits amounting to 5.5 million dinars, equivalent to 2.53 fils per share during the third quarter ending on September 30, 2024, compared to 4.1 million dinars, equivalent to 1.86 fils per share, for the same period in the previous year 2023, with a growth rate of 35.7% on an annual basis.

Net financing income increased by the end of the third quarter to 40.2 million dinars, growing by 28.8%, compared to the same period in the previous year 2023, with net operating income reaching 53.2 million dinars by the end of the third quarter, a growth rate of 7.2% compared to the same period in the previous year 2023. Total comprehensive income for the period also increased by 43.2% compared to the same period in the previous year 2023.

Shareholders' equity reached 335.3 million dinars by the end of the third quarter this year, and total assets grew to 4.94 billion dinars, marking an increase of 2.2% compared to the year end of 2023. The financing portfolio saw an increase of 3.59 billion dinars, growing by 4.1% from the year end of 2023.

Similarly, customer deposits increased by the end of the third quarter to reach 2.98 billion dinars, growing by 2.5% from the same period in the previous year 2023.

In the context of his comments on the bank's financial results for the first nine months of the current year 2024, Chairman of the Board of Directors at Warba Bank, Mr. Hamad Musaed Al-Sayer, stated that Warba Bank maintained its strong performance during the first nine months of this year 2024, registering net profits of 14.9 million dinars during the first nine months of this year 2024, these results reflect Warba Bank's sound policies and prudent management practices in addition to the bank's established strategy to maximize the value for its shareholders.

Al-Sayer also added that Warba Bank was able to maintain its growth momen-



Hamad Al-Sayer, Chairman



Shaheen Al-Ghanim, CEO

#### Significant figures:

- 28.8% increase in net financing income to 40.2 million dinars.
- 7.2% increase in net operating income to 53.2 million dinars.
- 4.1% increase in Finance receivables balances to reach 3.59 billion dinars.
- 2.5% increase in depositors' accounts to reach 2.98 billion dinars.
- 2.2% growth in total assets to reach 4.94 billion dinars

tum in 2024, achieving strong results that reflect the bank's ability to diversify its business and adapt to changing operating environments. He stressed that despite global geopolitical and economic tensions, the bank has continued to reap the fruits of its strategic focus on product diversification and strengthening its asset base and operational efficiency.

He continued: "The bank is on the right track towards achieving the strategic objectives set, which aim to enhance customer satisfaction and create added value for them." Al-Sayer emphasized that the bank's plans are based on expanding its business base, with a deeper focus on main banking activities, which include services, products, and financing solutions that meet the needs of all customer segments.

The bank also made remarkable progress in improving its liquidity structure, enhancing its financial capabilities, and addressing financial challenges. Warba's investment in technological innovation and digital products, combined with strategic investments in growth sectors, underscores the bank's focus on long-term growth.

Al-Sayer pointed to Warba's leadership in sustainability, noting the success

of the bank's issuance of the first-ever sustainable sukuk of 500 million dollars, with demand exceeding 4 times the target as investor requests reached \$1.8 billion. The issuance of the Sukuk represents an important strategic step in strengthening the financial framework, as this issuance is in line with Warba's strategic initiatives to enhance financial flexibility and supports the ongoing efforts to improve the liquidity structure and enhance the bank's ability to face financial challenges. This issuance also reflects the great confidence that investors have in Warba's ability to meet the financial obligations, which enhances the strength of its financial position and confirms its leadership in good governance practices.

Al-Sayer also mentioned the effectiveness of Warba in sukuk issuance compared to many local and international banks. He stated that Warba Bank was involved in leading several sukuk issuances and arranged many local and international deals this year in collaboration with various local and regional banks, which contributed to Warba's remarkable financial position through its participation in these deals. The bank's strategy was enhanced based on sup-

porting major projects and deals with positive economic development returns, in addition to strengthening its role and expanding the scope of its financing activities locally, regionally and internationally, in regional and global markets.

Al-Sayer concluded by stating: "On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to the Central Bank of Kuwait and the Capital Markets Authority for their continuous efforts and support to the Kuwaiti banking sector. I would also like to thank our dear shareholders, valued customers and the Board of Directors for their valuable contribution."

For his part, Shaheen Hamad Al-Ghanim, CEO of Warba Bank, said that the bank's strong financial results during the first nine months of 2024 reflect its success in moving forward with its strategy towards achieving sustainable growth and providing long-term added value to its shareholders and customers.

He explained that the bank's ability to continue recording growth in profits, and in various economic cycles, clearly reflects its flexible business model and prudent approach to risk management, noting that net operating income increased by 7.2% year-on-year during the first nine months of 2024, to reach KWD 53.2 million.

Al-Ghanim stressed the distinction of Warba Bank's efforts in investing in sustainable financing products and implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), and establishing the principles of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) sustainability in all its operations, noting that it launched the first-of-its-kind carbon footprint report in the Kuwaiti banking sector, and the sustainability report, and continues the (Keep it Green) campaign that resulted in many sustainability initiatives.

Al-Ghanim pointed out that in the context of enhancing customer awareness and protection, Warba Bank continues to support the "Let's Be Aware/Diraya" campaign launched by the Central Bank of Kuwait and the Kuwait Banking Association, and Warba Bank's efforts come as a result of its commitment to enhancing customer awareness of their banking rights in addition to awareness of cybersecurity and the role of the banking sector as a whole in developing the economy.

# Kuwait real estate market faces price decline amid speculation

### Interest rate cuts fuel hopes for real estate recovery

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 23: As the local real estate market experiences a recent decline in residential property prices, experts are raising concerns over the reliability of analyses not rooted in scientific studies, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

While many agree on the downturn, opinions vary significantly regarding the extent of the decline, with some predicting a staggering drop of up to 50 percent.

This uncertainty comes as hopes rise for a market recovery, fueled by recent interest rate reductions. Real estate analysts note the inverse relationship between interest rates and real estate demand -- when rates decrease, demand typically increases.

These discussions follow statements from the US Federal Reserve, which indicated potential interest

rate cuts five times through the end of the year.

Experts like Abdulaziz Al-Dughaisheem liken investment to a "purebred Arabian horse," suggesting that once it rises, it's challenging to catch up. Abdulrahman Al-Hussain emphasizes the necessity of comprehensive studies to predict market movements accurately, while Ahmed Bou Abbas points out that multiple factors influence the market, with financing being the most critical, and geopolitical concerns having a limited impact.

Saud Sahoud Al-Mutairi identifies taxation and restrictions on residential mortgages as significant contributors to the decline in property prices.

Collectively, the experts assert that the local real estate market is subject to various influences, from macroeconomic factors to political dynamics and legislative changes. They criticize analyses not grounded in systematic research, labeling such statements as mere speculation and reflecting a "moody" rather than an "institutional" market.

In light of these concerns, experts are calling for

more rigorous, officially sanctioned studies to inform predictions about real estate market trends. They urge government agencies to impose regulations similar to those of the Capital Markets Authority, which oversees the Kuwait Stock Exchange, in order to safeguard the economy from arbitrary statements and prevent manipulation of the real estate sector.

Real estate expert Abdul Aziz Al-Dughaisheem has affirmed that investment properties currently hold the strongest position in the sector due to sustained demand. He likened this dynamic to an "Arabian horse" that, once it rises, leaves competitors in the dust. Looking ahead, Al-Dughaisheem predicts that investment real estate prices could increase by 15 to 20 percent in 2025.

While he anticipates a decline in trading within the residential sector by 15 to 20 percent, and chalets by as much as 30 percent, he challenges more extreme forecasts of a 50 percent drop in residential real estate trading. Such a drastic decline, he argues, would equate to a collapse of the market, which he does not believe will happen.

### New mentorship module enhances Burgan's Ro'ya development program

## Burgan Bank launches Mentorship Program for Visionary Leaders

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 23: In continued efforts to uphold its commitment to human capital development across all employment grades, Burgan Bank announced the launch of the Mentorship Module for Visionary Leaders, the latest addition to Burgan's flagship learning and development program.Ro'ya. The new module is designed specifically to prepare emerging senior leaders on the personal and professional fronts with the guidance of Burgan's senior executives. This addition comes on the heels of the Bank receiving the Brandon Hall Group Human Capital Management (HCM) Gold Award of Excellence in the "Learning and Development" category for the "Best Use of Social Collaborative Learning".

The program launch was announced during a special ceremony in the presence of Mr.



Al-Qattan

of the Ro'ya Mentorship Module.This program is the latest in Burgan Bank's efforts to constantly develop its human capital and build a strong internal talent pipeline for long-term success, as part of its overarching commitment to advancing Kuwait's top professional calibers.

"A central factor to our success in retaining the best talents in the market is creating a long-term development plan that suits each employee's aspirations and ambitions, including emerging lead-



Mr. Tony Daher, Group CEO at Burgan Bank, with the program mentors from Burgan's top management and mentees.

ers," said Mr. Bashar Al-Qattan, Executive Manager – Learning and Talent Development at Burgan Bank. "Stemming from Burgan's robust human capital development strategy and commitment to employee growth and leadership development, we designed the Mentorship Module to nurture our internal local talents and prepare the next generation of leaders using innovative research-based approaches that have proven to be very impactful."

The Mentorship Module, designed to span six months, was developed with

the active involvement of a number of the Bank's top senior leaders who will be directly guiding the seven select mentees throughout the program's duration.

In addition to the mentorship learning style, which takes a personalized approach and follows a tailored learning path, the program will incorporate various development tools, such as on-line learning, psychometric assessments and debriefings, individual development plan discussions, group coaching by seasoned industry experts, and one-on-

one monthly mentorship sessions. To guarantee the success of the program, an individual development plan (IDP) will be set for each mentee to guide their development and assess their progress.

It serves to note that Burgan's leading human capital development strategy has earned the Bank numerous accolades, including the Great Place to Work® certificate, two consecutive Brandon Hall Group Human Capital Management (HCM) Awards of Excellence, and the GCC Excellence Award in Recruitment and Development of Nationals.

### Brent crude up by \$1.75

## Oil price down to \$73.67 pb

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 23, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti oil price fell by 1 cent to USD 73.67 per barrel on Tuesday, compared to USD 73.68 pb on Monday, announced Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on Wednesday.

On the global scale, Brent crude went up USD 1.75 to reach USD 76.04 pb, and West Texas Intermediate crude rose by USD 1.53 to reach 72.09 pb.

Data released by the American Petroleum Institute (API) on Tuesday showed crude inventories rose 1.64 million barrels last week,

while gasoline and distillate inventories combined fell by 3.5 million barrels.

In China, commercial banks on Monday cut base interest rates on one-year loans by 3.1 percent and 5-year interest rates by 3.6 percent by 25 basis points, according to the People's Bank of China.

The cuts are part of an economic stimulus package announced by Chinese authorities in September aimed at supporting slowing economic growth.



# Al Tijari declares net profit of KD 88.5 million for the first nine months of '24

Amount higher by 3% as compared to the same period last year

**KUWAIT CITY, Oct 23: Commercial Bank of Kuwait announced a net profit of KD 88.5 million for the nine months period ended 30 September 2024. Operating profit before provisions at KD 89.1 million compared to KD 86.4 million for the same period of last year is higher by 3%. Earnings per share for the current period is 49.4 fils (September 2023: 53.1 fils). -Regulatory Ratios:**

Regulatory ratios remained strong and continue to be above the Central Bank's statutory requirements. Capital Adequacy Ratio is at 17.6%, Liquidity

Coverage Ratio 310.3%, Net Stable Funding Ratio 112.9% and Leverage ratio 10.1%.

**Operational Performance:**

Sheikh Ahmad Duaij Al Sabah, the Bank's Chairman, is pleased to present the Bank's results for the first nine months of 2024. Operating profit before provisions reflects a healthy year-on-year growth of KD 2.6 million (3.0%) driven by growth in loans by KD 361 million and 8.3% increase in fee income. Net Profit at KD 88.5 million is lower by KD 10.6 million (10.7%), as last year included higher recoveries resulting from a non-recurring event.

**Performance Ratios:**

Sheikh Ahmad emphasised that Al-Tijari continues to report healthy performance ratios relative to its history and this stems from the strategic initiatives taken in the previous years. Net interest margin 2.78% (Ytd Sep 2023: 2.80%), Return on Equity 17.7% (Ytd



CBK Chairman

Sep 2023: 20.0%) and Return on Assets 2.7% (Ytd Sep 2023: 3.2%). Cost to income ratio 33.1% continues to be one of the lowest amongst Kuwaiti banks.

**Business updates:**

Sheikh Ahmad added that the Bank is equipped with the latest technology and digital services, enabling it to con-

tinue its successful digital transformation journey by improving its digital platforms and introducing new customer services.

Sheikh Ahmad further added during Q3, Moody's ratings had upgraded Bank's long and short-term deposit ratings to A2/P-1 from A3/P-2 and changed the outlook on the Bank's long-term deposit ratings to stable from positive. Long-term Counterparty Risk Assessment (CR Assessment) was also upgraded to A1(cr) from A2(cr) and long-term Counterparty Risk Ratings (CRR) to A1 from A2. The rating upgrades were driven by Moody's decision to upgrade the bank's Baseline Credit Assessment (BCA) and Adjusted BCA to baa3 from ba1.

This ratings upgrade decision reflects the impact of successful strategy implementation by the Bank, improved asset quality, strong profitability supported by higher margins and sound

fee income, strong capitalisation and high reserves to absorb credit losses and significant liquidity buffers.

During Q3, Al-Tijari successfully completed KD 100 million subordinated Tier 2 bond program post issuance of KD 50 million second tranche bond for a tenor of 10 years, callable after 5 years. The KD denominated bond was priced at a floating interest rate of 3% over the Central Bank discount rate. Proceeds from bond issuance helped to increase

the Tier 2 capital and enhanced Bank's capacity to finance bigger projects.

**Thank You Note**

Sheikh Ahmad concluded by extending his sincere appreciation to the Central Bank of Kuwait and other regulatory authorities for their supervision and support to the Banking sector and to the Bank's Shareholders, Executive Management as well as all staff for their dedication and rigorous efforts to make Al-Tijari as Bank of Choice.

Financial highlights:	(KD Million)		Change
	Nine month 2024	Nine month 2023	
Operating profit before provisions	89.1	86.4	3.0%
Net Interest Income	88.6	84.6	4.8%
Fee and Commission Income	35.1	32.4	8.3%
Total Assets	4,617.2	4,097.2	12.7%
Loans and advances	2,747.2	2,386.5	15.1%
Net profits attributable to Shareholders of the Bank	88.5	99.1	-10.7%
Non-Performing Loans	0	0	-

## 'Kuwaiti professional with extensive practical experience'

# Warba names Fakhro as Executive Director of Sharia Management

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 23: Warba Bank announced the appointment of Abdullah Abdul Rahim Fakhro as Executive Director of Sharia Management at the Bank after obtaining the approval of the Central Bank of Kuwait.

The Bank said in a press release that Fakhro is considered one of the Kuwaiti professionals with extensive practical experience. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Islamic Sharia, specializing in the principles of jurisprudence, with a high distinction recognition from Kuwait University. He obtained the Certified Sharia Auditor Certificate from the Central Bank of Kuwait, which is offered by the Kuwait Institute of Banking Studies. He also obtained the Certified Sharia Auditor Certificate from the Accounting and Auditing Organization for Islamic Financial Institutions. He also ob-

tained a diploma and then a professional master's degree from the General Council for Islamic Banks and Financial Institutions, which includes a group of professional certificates, including: Certified Islamic Specialist in Financial Markets, Certified Islamic Specialist in Takaful Insurance, Certified Islamic Specialist in International Trade, Advanced Islamic Specialist in Sharia Auditing and Accounting Treatments for Banking Operations. He obtained a Fellowship Certificate of Sharia Advisor in Islamic Financial Transactions and Dispute Resolution from the Saudi Judicial Scientific Association, which includes a group of professional certificates, including: Islamic Finance Advisor in Islamic Finance Contracts, Islamic Sukuk Applications, Bank Treasury Transactions, Sharia Supervision Applica-

tions, Sharia Consulting Applications, International Trade Financing, and Financial Dispute Resolution Specialist in Arbitration. Mediation in settling financial disputes, the foundations of advocacy, consulting and drafting contracts, applications of disputes in securities, applications of banking and financing disputes. Fakhro is also a certified Zakat Accountant from the Zakat House Kuwait and a certified trainer in Islamic finance who has presented many specialized courses.

The Bank explained that Fakhro has sufficient experience that qualified him to obtain this position, as he held the position of internal Sharia auditor in one of the largest investment companies from March 2015 until May 2018, and provided most of his experience in this position, as he conducted Sharia audits during this period on the



Abdullah Fakhro

parent company and more than 10 affiliated and subsidiary companies. He is registered with the Capital Markets Authority as a Sharia audit officer in this company for that period, and was the Secretary of the Fatwa and Sharia

Supervision Board, Acting Director of the Sharia Supervision Department, and a representative of the members of the Fatwa and Sharia Supervision Board in many general assemblies of the subsidiary companies.

The Bank continued: In May 2018, he held the position of Sharia Supervisor with the rank of specialist in Sharia management at Warba Bank, and progressed through the positions until he was promoted to Senior Manager of Sharia Audit and Follow-up and then to the position of Executive Director of Sharia Management at the Bank. Fakhro participated in many tasks, most notably as an advisor to the committee concerned with issuing products, an advisor to the committee concerned with automating the Bank's management systems, and the internal Sharia audit officer for the investment

funds launched by the Bank. He is also responsible for auditing the Bank's zakat calculation and its investment funds.

Warba Bank wishes Fakhro success in his new position to be among the Kuwaiti staff who have proven their presence and left a clear mark at Warba Bank.

Warba Bank is one of the banks that have achieved great successes in a short period of time, as it has occupied a leading position by providing innovative digital banking services in accordance with Islamic Sharia for individuals and companies, and is one of the local banks with the largest number of shareholders, and these are among the most prominent elements that make the Bank close to all members of society.

## Emissions-fighting moves by Agility's Menzies Aviation, Tristar units cited

# Agility again named sustainability leader

ABU DHABI, Oct 23: Forbes Middle East has named Agility, a supply chain services, infrastructure and innovation company, as one of the region's top leaders in sustainability for the second consecutive year.

Agility is the No. 3 sustainability leader in the region's Transport & Logistics sector, according to Forbes' 2024 Middle East Sustainability 100 list. Agility is one of only five Kuwait-based organizations on the Forbes list.

Forbes cited work by Agility's UK-based Menzies Aviation business, the world's largest aviation services provider. Menzies, which has committed to net zero by 2045, aims to convert 25% of its motorized ground support equipment to electric power by next year. The company also is working with industry partners to prepare for the transition to Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAFs).

In addition, Agility's Tristar business, a global fuels and liquid logistics specialist, was singled out for investment in solar energy at its Dubai headquarters and in the UAE's first hybrid-powered fuel bunker barge.

In 2023, Forbes recognized Agility for pioneering use of sustainable materials, designs and systems in development of industrial infrastructure in the Middle East and Africa. A warehouse at the Agility Logistics Park in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia was the first warehousing facility in the Middle East and North Africa to receive EDGE Advanced "green building" certification. The company's warehousing complex in Cote d'Ivoire is the first in West Africa to receive EDGE Advanced certification, an IFC-backed standard for buildings that at least more 40% energy-efficient than the market.

Agility Vice Chairman Tarek Sultan said: "Sustainability has underpinned our business strategy and success. It continues to be core to how we operate. That's only possible if we maintain a focus on long-term investments, supply chain innovation, and building a diverse workforce with the skills to deliver cleaner, safer more efficient services and infrastructure."

The company's venture capital



Group photo of Forbes Sustainability Leaders Awards.

arm, Agility Ventures, has invested in startups and technology companies with innovations or disruptive business models that have a primary focus or quantifiable positive impact on the environment and social conditions. Among the technologies it has

invested in: EV charging networks and infrastructure; efficiency-enhancing load-matching platforms for the trucking industry; clean-energy generators for transport, marine or stationary use; and solar thermal energy systems.



Agility official receives the Sustainability Leaders Award.

In addition to environmental sustainability, Agility invests in the communities where it operates. Over the past decade, its programs have reached more than 2.3 million people in need by deploying resources in the aftermath of natural disasters and complex humanitarian emergencies, and investing in youth education, entrepreneurship, employment, and digital skilling. Agility supports education and training initiatives for young people in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, India and Egypt, among other countries.

Agility has assisted more than 12,000 refugees through its eight-year partnership with UNHCR, and an estimated 50,000 refugees total. In addition, the company has partnered with the World Food Program for 15 years. Over the past year, Agility's support for the WFP has enabled the organization to provide more than one million meals to people in Gaza and the West Bank.

Forbes recognized Agility and others leader at the Forbes Middle East Sustainability Leaders' Summit 2024 held Oct. 17-18 in Abu Dhabi.

## Eyes on vote by workers

# Boeing expected to make a big third-quarter loss

EVERETT, Wash., Oct 23, (AP): Wednesday is shaping up as one of the most significant days in a volatile year for Boeing, which is expected to report a huge third-quarter loss, introduce its new CEO on his first earnings call, and learn if machinists will end a strike that has crippled the company's aircraft production for more than a month.

The strike is an early test for Kelly Ortberg, a Boeing outsider who became CEO in August.

Ortberg has already announced large-scale layoffs and a plan to raise enough cash to avoid a bankruptcy filing. He needs to convince federal regulators that Boeing is fixing its safety culture and is ready to boost production of the 737 Max - a crucial step to bring in much-needed cash.

Boeing can't produce any new 737s, however, until it ends the five-week-old strike by 33,000 machinists that has shut down assembly plants in the Seattle area.

Ortberg has "got a lot on his plate, but he probably is laser-focused on getting this negotiation completed. That's the closest alligator to the boat," said Tony Bancroft, portfolio manager at Gabelli Funds, a Boeing investor.

Boeing hasn't had a profitable year since 2018, and the situation is about to get worse before it gets better.

Analysts expect Boeing to announce Wednesday that it lost about \$6 billion in the third quarter, including \$3 billion in charges related to airline jets and \$2 billion in losses for its defense and space programs.

Investors will be looking for Ortberg to project calm, determination and urgency as he presides over an earnings call for the first time since he ran Rockwell Collins, a maker of avionics and flight controls for air-

line and military planes, in the last decade.

The biggest news of the day, however, is likely to come Wednesday evening, when the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers reveals whether striking workers are ready to go back to their jobs.

They will vote at union halls in the Seattle area and elsewhere on a Boeing offer that includes pay raises of 35% over four years, \$7,000 ratification bonuses, and the retention of performance bonuses that Boeing wanted to eliminate.

Boeing has held firm in resisting a union demand to restore the traditional pension plan that was frozen a decade. However, older workers would get a slight increase in their monthly pension payouts.

At a picket line outside Boeing's factory in Everett, Washington, some machinists encourage co-workers to vote no on the proposal.

"The pension should have been the top priority. We all said that was our top priority, along with wage," said Larry Best, a customer-quality coordinator with 38 years at Boeing. "Now is the prime opportunity in a prime time to get our pension back, and we all need to stay out and dig our heels in."

Best also thinks the pay increase should be 40% over three years to offset a long stretch of stagnant wages, now combined with high inflation.

"You can see we got a great turnout today. I'm pretty sure that they don't like the contract because that's why I'm here," said another picketer, Bartley Stokes Sr., who started working at Boeing in 1978. "We're out here in force, and we're going to show our solidarity and stick with our union brothers and sisters and vote this thing down because they can do better."



Boeing 737 Max aircraft are seen behind fences, Tuesday, Sept. 24, 2024, at the company's facilities in Renton, Wash. (AP)

# Asian markets feel pressure from strong dollar

HONG KONG, Oct 23, (AP): Asian stocks were mixed on Wednesday under pressure from a rising U.S. dollar and the uncertainties over the U.S. election.

U.S. futures and oil prices fell due to escalating geopolitical tensions after Israel announced that an airstrike outside Beirut earlier this month killed a Hezbollah official who had been expected to succeed the group's longtime leader after he died in an Israeli strike last month.

In Asia, Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 slipped 0.8% to close at 38,104.86 as the dollar rose against the Japanese yen.

Tokyo Metro Co.'s stock surged 43% during its trading debut on early Wednesday. The company raised 348.6 billion yen (\$2.3 billion) in its initial public offering, making it Japan's largest IPO since SoftBank Corp. went public in 2018.

Chinese markets rose for a second day after the central bank cut

its one-year and five-year Loan Prime Rates on Monday. Hong Kong's Hang Seng added 1.4% to 20,786.78, and the Shanghai Composite gained 0.5% to 3,302.80.

State media have reported that a state-backed think tank has proposed issuing 2 trillion yuan (\$281 billion) in special government bonds to create a market stabilization fund aiming to further ease the hidden debt pressures and inject confidence into the market.

"Yet, despite the bold proposal, there's a sense that Beijing remains in reactionary mode, playing catch-up rather than getting ahead of the game," Stephen Innes, managing partner at SPI Asset Management, said in a commentary.

Elsewhere, Australia's S&P/ASX 200 edged 0.1% higher to 8,216.00. South Korea's Kospi was 1.1% higher at 2,599.62. Taiwan's Taiex slipped 0.9%, while the Sensex in India gained 0.4%.





Rasha Othman



Ms. Rasha Othman, Executive Vice President of Investment Banking (Capital Markets and Fixed Income), Mr. Ahmad Al-Falah, Managing Director of Investment Banking, and Mr. Abdulrazzaq Razooqi, Senior Vice President of Investment Banking (Advisory, Mergers, and Acquisitions).



Abdulrazzaq Razooqi

### As part of its partnership with Boursa Kuwait's 'Al-Jaras' Financial Literacy Program

## Markaz hosts workshop on role of investment banking in empowering companies

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 23: As part of its collaboration with Boursa Kuwait and the “Al-Jaras” Financial Literacy Program during World Investor Week, Kuwait Financial Centre “Markaz” hosted a workshop titled “The Role of Investment Banking in Supporting Companies”. Held at Boursa Kuwait’s headquarters on 22 October, the session was led by Ms. Rasha Othman, Executive Vice President of Investment Banking (Capital Markets and Fixed Income), and Mr. Abdulrazzaq Razooqi, Senior Vice President of Investment Banking (Advisory, Mergers, and Acquisitions). This initiative aligns with Markaz’s commitment to fostering financial awareness as part of its social responsibility efforts.

The workshop commenced with Ms. Othman’s presentation, which provided an in-depth exploration of bonds, explaining the key differences between bonds and equities, various bond types, Islamic sukuk, and the critical role that bonds play in corporate growth and capital market evolution. She also delved into the factors companies should consider when issuing bonds,

offering insights into global and regional bond markets and credit rating methodologies.

Building on this, Mr. Razooqi’s presentation focused on mergers and acquisitions (M&A), shedding light on the different types of M&A transactions, the strategic steps required before developing an acquisition plan, how to identify suitable target companies, and the intricacies of structuring M&A deals. He also discussed the advantages and challenges of such transactions, common pitfalls in the M&A process, and key risks, with a highlight on notable M&A deals within Kuwait and the broader region.

Markaz’s initiatives in this regard stem from its deep belief that financial literacy is essential to empowering individuals and creating a more sustainable society. As part of the “Al-Jaras” program, Markaz’s research subsidiary, Marmore MENA Intelligence, has also produced a comprehensive report titled “Sustainable Finance in the GCC”, which will be published on Boursa Kuwait’s Academy platform. The report offers valuable insights into the sig-

nificance of sustainable finance, emerging trends, and the degree of adoption among companies and financial institutions in the region. It also outlines the potential challenges to its expansion, showcases successful case studies, and provides strategic recommendations for further growth.

In addition, Markaz participated in the Union of Investment Companies’ initiative by producing a series of educational videos as part of the “Al-Jaras” program. In its featured video, Markaz highlighted the long-term benefits of investing in the stock market and underscored the importance of a well-diversified investment portfolio.

Markaz remains unwavering in its commitment to fostering financial literacy and empowering individuals across the market. Through its ongoing initiatives, Markaz continues to contribute to the growth and development of Kuwait’s financial sector. By organizing educational workshops and producing valuable research, Markaz aims to equip the community with the tools and knowledge needed to navigate the dynamic changes in the markets.

### AlOmar highlights digital transformation in panel discussion

## KFH participates in ATD Summit to enhance talent development

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 23: As part of its ongoing commitment to supporting and developing human talent, Kuwait Finance House (KFH) participated in the Association for Talent Development (ATD) Summit Kuwait, organized by ATD over two days at the Jumeirah Hotel. Local and International experts led panel discussions and lectures at the conference, discussing innovative talent development strategies for the digital workplace.

During his participation in the panel discussion titled “Deciphering Digital Transformation: Gaining Benefits, Overcoming Challenges,” KFH Group Chief Human Resources and Transformation Officer, Zeyad Abdullah AlOmar, stated that KFH fosters a digital-friendly environment. He added that before implementing the digital environment, KFH, in collaboration with a global company, conducted a comprehensive digital readiness assessment within the Bank. The purpose of this process was to ascertain KFH’s current state and assess employee preparedness for digitalization.

“Based on the assessment results, KFH developed a strategic plan, commencing with senior management, to design comprehensive programs for all employees. This required a thorough evaluation of the bank’s infrastructure and the formulation of a clear digitalization strategy,” AlOmar elaborated, “KFH approached digitalization as a change management process. Digital transformation at KFH has become a fundamental methodology guiding all of its programs.”

He pointed out that KFH has taken initiatives to embrace a digital-friendly environment and emerging technologies such as Digital Print System Management.

“This aligns seamlessly with our broader digital transformation efforts and provides our employees with valuable data analytics insights. It tracks and reports the quantity of black-and-white as well as color pages printed. It also shows the total cost on a monthly or yearly basis, enhancing employee experience by promoting digital literacy and transparency that contribute to operational efficiency and cost optimization,” AlOmar explained.

Speaking about the digital HR operations at the Bank, AlOmar noted that KFH is the first Kuwaiti bank to implement Oracle Fusion HCM Cloud. By leveraging AI-powered data analytics, KFH can enhance efficiency, productivity, and business agility.

Meanwhile, he expressed his pride that the HR depart-

ment at KFH was awarded with the Best Approach to HCM Innovation (Bronze) and Best HR Data Analytics (Bronze) from the prominent Brandon Hall Group in recognition of its efforts and unwavering commitment to fostering a digital-friendly workplace.

### Digital Literacy

From the outset of its digital transformation strategy, KFH prioritized digital literacy. To achieve this, AlOmar emphasized that KFH invested in leadership training, employed structured methodologies, and fostered a culture of continuous improvement. These efforts significantly enhanced KFH’s digital adoption and positioned it for long-term success in the digital era.

He highlighted KFH’s efforts in promoting digital literacy, pointing out that KFH continues to identify individual capabilities and offers dedicated “Digital Transformation” programs. These programs provide tailored training for digital tools and connect them to real jobs. Moreover, KFH ensures that the digital transformation concept is integrated into all training programs, fostering its adoption within the organizational culture.

Additionally, AlOmar indicated that KFH has also made other efforts to promote digital literacy. These include the new branded edition of its Forssah program titled Forssah Tech, enabling fresh graduates to build a career in the Islamic Banking industry through an Intensive 6-month bootcamp. Since launched, more than 40 hired employees graduated from this program.

KFH has also signed a MoU with Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity, becoming the first bank in Kuwait to conclude an agreement fostering innovation and digital efforts among the youth.

It is worth noting that the ATD summit, which took place on October 14 and 15 in Kuwait, hosted panel discussions and presentations by globally renowned speakers and prominent HR professionals in Kuwait.

With more than 30,000 members, the Association for Talent Development (ATD) is the world’s largest association dedicated to professionals in the field of talent development. Founded in 1943 as the American Society for Training and Development, in 2014 the organization was rebranded the Association for Talent Development to reflect the broadening scope of the profession.



Zeyad AlOmar speaking during the panel discussion.

### Free gold coins on gold jewellery purchase

## Malabar Gold & Diamonds enhances festive offers

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 23: Malabar Gold & Diamonds, the 6th largest jewellery retailer globally with over 360 showrooms across 13 countries, has ramped up their festive season offers ahead of Dhanteras and Diwali by providing free gold coins on gold jewellery purchase.

The limited period offers, which is valid across all Malabar Gold & Diamonds showrooms across Kuwait from 25th October to 29th October, will provide customers with the opportunity to get Free Gold coins on the purchase of gold jewellery worth KWD250.

As part of the ongoing offer that has been running across Malabar Gold & Diamonds showrooms, customers are eligible for free gold coins on the purchase of diamond

and precious gem jewellery worth KWD250 and above. As the auspicious occasion of Dhanteras draws near, the assured gold coin offer that has been extended to cover gold jewellery purchase as well, is sure to be great news for jewellery buyers.

“The rise in gold price that the market has witnessed over the past week is further testament to the incredible position that Gold has as a safe haven asset. As Dhanteras approaches, a time when many of our customers choose to invest in gold as a symbol of prosperity and good fortune, we are excited to provide free gold coins with every gold jewellery purchase. This is our way of enhancing the value of their purchase and adding extra joy to their festive

moments,” commented Shamlal Ahamed, MD – International Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds.

On Dhanteras Day (Tuesday, 29th October), all showrooms of Malabar Gold & Diamonds in Kuwait will be open from 8:00 am, to be able to serve the high customer footfall that is expected at the showrooms.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds’ Pay 10% advance offer, introduced ahead of the festive season, has been a significant benefit for customers, with thousands taking advantage of the opportunity to secure the best rates on their jewellery purchases. The brand has also announced that this advance payment option will remain available until Dhanteras, on 29th October.



Gold jewellery on display.



KIB signing sponsorship of Stadium 2025.

### In its preparations for the third edition of KIB | The Stadium

## KIB renews partnership with Suffix Events for 2025 sports tournament

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 23: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced the renewal of its strategic partnership with Suffix Events in preparation for the third season of the KIB | The Stadium tournament, set to take place in 2025. Featuring numerous local and international teams, the tournament aims to strengthen Kuwait’s status as a sports destination, while also spotlighting emerging young Kuwaiti talent and celebrating their diverse athletic achievements.

Commenting on the occasion, Marwa Marafie, Manager of Marketing and Corporate Communications at KIB, said: “We are pleased to announce our sponsorship of the third season of the KIB | The Stadium tournament, which has proven to be a tremendous success in its previous two editions and has garnered significant audience engagement. This third edition reflects our unwavering commitment to social responsibility and our ongoing support for youth and sports in Kuwait. It also underscores our dedication to enhancing our role as an active community partner and reinforces our position as a leading bank supporting comprehensive development in the country.”

Marafie added: “We are proud to sponsor this tournament, which has become a highly anticipated annual sporting event, and we look forward to even greater achievements in this new edition with the support of the Bank’s executive management, represented by Vice Chairman and CEO Raed Jawad Bukhamseen and General Manager of the Retail Banking Department Othman Tawfeeq. We would like to extend our sincere thanks to all the participants, athletes, partners, and supporters who have contributed to the success of this major event over the past years.”

From his side, Ahmed Al-Majed, the Chief Operations Officer of Suffix Events, expressed his excitement over the renewal of the strategic partnership with KIB to organize the innovative KIB | The Stadium sports tournament. He also highlighted the importance of this partnership in supporting sports and community events, noting that the collaboration reflects both parties’ commitment to enhancing Kuwait’s position in this field.

Al-Majed said: “After a successful journey in organizing sports events in Kuwait and the region, we return in 2025 with the largest and most diverse edition of KIB | The Stadium yet. We will host top local and international athletes, bringing back

the long-awaited atmosphere of international competition to Kuwait. This achievement is the result of our continuous efforts since 2008, during which we have contributed to elevating Kuwaiti sports. KIB | The Stadium is a true reflection of our shared vision to support and advance sports in Kuwait.”

It is worth noting that sports are a key component of KIB’s comprehensive social responsibility program. The Bank organizes and sponsors a variety of sports activities and events in Kuwait and consistently strives to promote a sports culture within the community. KIB is also committed to supporting young athletes who have achieved remarkable success and elevated Kuwait’s name and flag on the international stage.

By launching a wide range of initiatives and events, KIB reaffirms its commitment to supporting and developing the community. The Bank aims to make a positive and tangible impact on all segments of society, with a special focus on showcasing Kuwaiti achievements in various fields, particularly in sports.

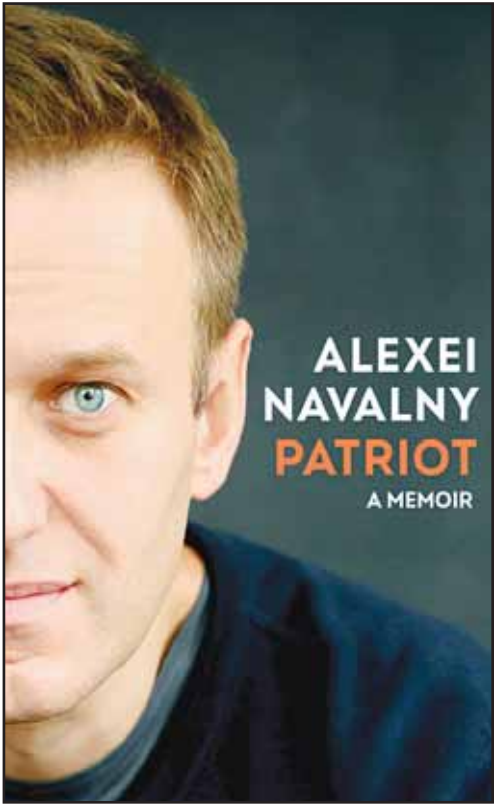
### About KIB

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

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

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





This cover image released by Knopf shows 'Patriot: A Memoir' by Alexei Navalny. (AP)

## Variety

**LONDON:** Musicians from ABBA, Radiohead and The Cure have joined actors and authors in signing a protest letter against the mining of their artistry to build artificial intelligence tools.

Thousands of artists signed the letter released Tuesday - the latest public warning about AI tools that can spit out synthetic images, music and writings after being trained on huge troves of human-made works.

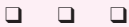
"The unlicensed use of creative works for training generative AI is a major, unjust threat to the livelihoods of the people behind those works, and must not be permitted," says the petition.



Bacon

Among the signatories are Björn Ulvaeus of the Swedish super-group ABBA, The Cure's Robert Smith and Thom Yorke and his Radiohead bandmates. Also signing were writers including Nobel-winning novelist Kazuo Ishiguro and actors Julianne Moore, **Kevin Bacon** and Rosario Dawson.

Bestselling novelist James Patterson signed Tuesday's letter and another open letter last year organized by the Authors Guild, which later brought a lawsuit against AI companies that is still proceeding in a New York federal court. (AP)



**ATLANTA:** Georgia's highest court on Tuesday reversed a judge's contempt ruling against a lawyer for rapper Young Thug who refused to tell the judge how he found out about a meeting between the judge, prosecutors and a prosecution witness.

Defense attorney Brian Steel represents the rapper, who is currently on trial in Atlanta on numerous charges including violation of Georgia's anti-racketeering and gang laws. Fulton County Superior Court Chief Judge Ural Glanville in June found Steel in contempt and ordered him to spend the next 10 weekends in jail, an order that was put on hold pending Steel's appeal.

Steel argued that his information was subject to attorney-client privilege, that he didn't interfere with the court's proceedings and that Glanville was required under due process to recuse himself from the contempt proceeding since Steel was accusing the judge of wrongdoing.

The Supreme Court justices agreed with Steel that due process required Glanville to remove himself from the handling of the contempt issue. (AP)



**LOS ANGELES:** A film production company that helped make "Blade Runner 2049" has sued Tesla and its CEO Elon Musk for using an AI-generated image resembling a scene from the science fiction movie to market Tesla's new robotaxis.

Alcon Entertainment said it refused all permissions but Tesla allegedly used artificial intelligence to "do it all anyway" when the carmaker unveiled its long-awaited robotaxi on Oct. 10 during a live-streamed event at a Warner Bros. studio lot in Burbank, California.

After pulling up to the stage in one of the company's "Cybercabs," Musk gave a speech that included a brief reference to the movie franchise. As he spoke, a screen showed an image of a man in a long coat looking over an orange-tinted ruined city. Alcon claims it resembles a key scene in which star Ryan Gosling arrives by "quasi-sentient flying car" to an abandoned Las Vegas.

"I love Blade Runner, but I don't know if we want that future," Musk said. "I think we want that duster he's wearing, but not the bleak apocalypse." (AP)



**HONG KONG:** Over 500 photographs taken in the late Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) and early 20th century will be on display at the Hong Kong Museum of History from Wednesday, selected from over 24,000 photographs in a collection donated by the Moonchu Foundation on Tuesday.

The exhibits captured moments of major historical events such as the Second Opium War (1856-1860) and the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895), and provided records of the urban landscapes, historic buildings and people's livelihood in those days. Most of the exhibits have never been publicly displayed before.

Highlights include a picture taken 180 years ago of Nam Van in Macao, which is one of the earliest photographs of China in existence today. Notable works like stereoscopic photos taken by American photographer James Ricalton in 1900 and landscape photographs taken by famous Chinese photographer Lai Fong are on display.

Exhibition goers can also find photos known as "Cartes de visite" in the size of a calling card, which were popular for exchanges in social gatherings during the 19th century.

The donation provides excellent materials for studying modern Chinese society and increasing the public's understanding of Chinese history from a century ago, said Kevin Yeung, secretary for culture, sports and tourism of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) government when addressing Tuesday's opening ceremony. (Xinhua)

## 'Patriot's' final words on freedom and resistance

# Navalny's memoir is a testament to resilience

NEW YORK, Oct 23, (AP): In a memoir released eight months after he died in prison, Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny never loses faith that his cause is worth suffering for while also acknowledging he wished he could have written a very different book.

"There is a mishmash of bits and pieces, a traditional narrative followed by a prison diary," Navalny writes in "Patriot," which was published Tuesday, and is, indeed, a traditional narrative followed by a prison diary.

"I so much do not want my book to be yet another prison diary. Personally I find them interesting to read, but as a genre - enough is surely enough."

The final 200 pages of Navalny's 479-page book do, in some ways, have the characteristics of other prison diaries or of such classic Russian literature as Alexander Solzhenitsyn's "One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich." He tracks the boredom, isolation, exhaustion, suffering and absurdity of prison life, while working in asides about everything from 19th century French literature to Billie Eilish. But "Patriot" also reads as a testament to a famed dissident's extraordinary battle against despair as the Russian authorities gradually increase their crackdown against him, and even shares advice on how to confront the worst and still not lose hope.

"The important thing is not to torment yourself with anger, hatred, fantasies of revenge, but to move instantly to acceptance. That can be hard," he writes. "The process going on in your head is by no means straightforward, but if you find yourself in a bad situation, you should try this. It works, as long as you think everything through seriously."

In recent years, Navalny had become an international symbol of resistance. A lawyer by training, he started out as an anti-corruption campaigner, but soon turned into a politician with aspirations for public office and eventually became the main challenger to Russia's longtime president, Vladimir Putin.

### Completion

Navalny's widow, Yulia Navalnaya, oversaw the book's completion. In a promotional interview for "Patriot," she told the BBC that she would run for president if she ever returned to Russia -- an unlikely move with Putin in power, Navalnaya acknowledged. She has been arrested in absentia in Russia on charges of involvement with an extremist group. Putin "needs to be in a Russian prison, to feel everything what not just my husband, but all the prisoners in Russia" feel, Navalnaya said during an interview on CBS' "60 Minutes."

Navalnaya has vowed to continue her late husband's fight. She has recorded regular video addresses to her supporters and has been meeting with Western leaders and top officials, advocating for Russians who oppose Putin and his war in Ukraine. She had two children with her husband, who in his book writes of his immediate attraction to her and their enduring bond, praising Navalnaya as a soulmate who "could discuss the most difficult matters with me without a lot of drama and hand-wringing."

### Disenchantment

During the first section of his book, Navalny reflects on the fall of the Soviet Union, his disenchantment with 1990s Russian leader Boris Yeltsin, his early crusades against corruption, his entry into public life, and his discovery that he did not need to look far for a politician "who would undertake all sorts of needed, interesting projects and cooperate directly with the Russian people."

"I wanted and waited, and one day I realized I could be that person myself," he wrote.

His vision of a "beautiful Russia of the future," where leaders are freely and fairly elected, official corruption is tamed, and democratic institutions work -- as well as his strong charisma and sardonic humor -- earned him widespread support

across the country's 11 time zones. He had young, energetic activists by his side - a team that resembled "a fancy startup" rather than a clandestine revolutionary operation, according to his memoir. "From the outside we looked like a bunch of Moscow hipsters," he writes, and together they put out colorful, professionally produced videos exposing official corruption. Those garnered millions of views on YouTube and prompted mass rallies even as the authorities cracked down harder on dissent.

The authorities responded to Navalny's growing popularity by levying multiple charges against him, his allies and even family members. They jailed him often and shut down his entire political infrastructure -- the Foundation for Fighting Corruption he started in 2011 and a network of several dozen regional offices.

In 2020, Navalny survived a nerve agent poisoning he blamed on the Kremlin, which denied involvement. He describes it in great detail in the very beginning of the book, recounting, "This is too much, and I'm about to die." His family and allies fought for him to be airlifted to Germany for treatment, and after recovering there for five months, he returned to Russia, only to be arrested and sent to prison, where he would spend the last three years of his life.

## Film



This image released by IFC Films shows the character Pinky, voiced by Jacki Weaver, in a scene from 'Memoir of a Snail.' (AP)

## Charming stop-motion film

# Tears and triumphs in 'Memoir of a Snail'

LOS ANGELES, Oct 23, (AP): It's not your typical stop-motion film when characters name pets after Sylvia Plath and read "The Diary of Anne Frank" - or when the story's inspired by a quote from existentialist thinker Søren Kierkegaard.

And it's certainly not your typical stop-motion film when you find yourself crying as much as the characters do - in their case, with huge droplets leaking from bulging, egg-shaped eyes so authentic-looking, you expect the screen to get wet.

But those are just a few of the unique things about Adam Elliot's "Memoir of a Snail," a film that's as heart-tugging as it is technically impressive, a work of both emotional resonance and great physical detail using only clay, wire, paper and paint.

One thing Elliot's film is not, though, is for kids. So please take note before heading to the multiplex with family in tow: this film earns its R rating, as you'll discover as soon as young Grace, voiced by Sarah Snook, tells us she thought masturbation was about chewing your food properly. Sex, nudity, drunk driving, a fat fetish - like we said, it's R-rated for a reason.

But let's start at the beginning. In this, his seventh "clayography" (for "clay" and "biography"), the Australian writer-director explores the process of collecting unnecessary objects. Otherwise known as hoarding, it's something that weighs us down in ways we can't see, for all the clutter. Elliot also argues that it helps us build constrictive shells around ourselves - like snail shells, perhaps.

Our protagonist is Grace Pudel, voiced with a quirky warmth and plenty of empathy by the wonderfully ag-

ile Snook. We first encounter Grace as a grown woman, telling her long, lonely life story to her pet garden snail, Sylvia (named after Plath), at a moment of deep sadness.

Then we flash back to childhood. Grace is born with a twin brother, Gilbert (Kodi Smit-McPhee). Their mother dies in childbirth, leaving the twins with their father, a film animator. Grace needs surgery to correct a cleft palate, and doctors ask young Gilbert to donate blood; he thinks that means he'll have to die to let her live, and still says yes. (Those tears we mentioned? They start here.)

### Collision

The two siblings endure a sad life with their father, a life that becomes sadder yet when a collision with a drunk driver renders him a paraplegic. It won't be long before their father dies in his sleep, making them orphans. And nobody wants a full set of twins, so Grace and Gilbert are forcibly separated and sent to opposite sides of Australia.

Grace is sent to Canberra, a city so boring and safe that people drive cars with helmets on. And Gilbert is sent to a farm, with a cruel family of evangelists. The two exchange letters and pray they'll meet again. Grace's parents are swingers (this is the '70s), and they end up leaving her for a nudist colony. Her only companions are her snails, which she loves, just like her mother did - both the live and ornamental versions.

Pinky comes along five years later. The elderly woman - raspiily voiced by longtime Australian star Jacki Weaver - has quite the past. She lost her finger dancing on a bar in Barcelona. She played ping pong with Fidel Castro. She's outlived two husbands. Her friendship eases Grace's sadness.



Poster art for 'Memoir of a Snail.' (AP)

But still, there's a deep hole where brother Gilbert should be. Grace adds kleptomania to her "list of hobbies." She also starts hoarding in earnest. Finally, she meets Ken, a microwave repairman. She believes she has found love.

Life has more cruel twists in store, though, and you won't see them coming in this cleverly constructed - though unabashedly odd - screenplay. But Elliot served here not only as writer-director but as production designer, and his biggest achievement is a rich visual world dominated by varying shades of brown, and populated by 7,000 handmade objects. Some 135,000 photographs taken on 200 sets were used to create the film.

Yet all that technical prowess would be rather useless without the emotional core that resonates throughout. Elliot has given wise Pinky, in her huge red spectacles, the aforementioned Kierkegaard line (with only the slightest edit): "Life can only be understood backwards, but we've got to live it forwards," she tells Grace. And snails, she adds, never go backwards. Nor should Grace - and nor should we.

Who would have thought an R-rated stop-motion film about mollusks could pack such a universal lesson?

"Memoir of a Snail," a IFC Films release, has been rated R by the Motion Picture Association "for sexual content, nudity and some violent content. " Running time: 94 minutes. Three stars out of four.



Singer showcases her versatility on new album

GloRilla conquers self-doubt on her rise in hip-hop

LOS ANGELES, Oct 23, (AP): GloRilla burst onto the hip-hop scene, lighting up the rap world a couple years ago with breakout tracks like “ Tomorrow ” and “ F.N.F. (Let’s Go) ” - even snagging a Grammy nomination. But as her name skyrocketed, so did the pressure.

With critics predicting GloRilla’s career would fizzle, she found herself overthinking every move. The noise shook her confidence, leading her to pause and reassess before getting back in the game.

“They started downing me. It was kind of getting to me,” said the Memphis-born rapper, who recently released her debut studio album, “Glorious,” which features several popular performers including Megan Thee Stallion, Latto, Sexyy Red, Kirk Franklin, T-Pain, Kierra Sheard and BossMan Dlow. On her album, she wanted to showcase her versatility blending romance, gospel and crunk-infused melodies.

But before GloRilla could bring her new project to life, she had to rediscover her rhythm as an artist.

“Anytime I would put out a song, they weren’t really feeling it,” said the 25-year-old rapper, whose Hitkidd-produced song “F.N.F. (Let’s Go)” was nominated for best rap performance at the 2023 Grammys. “I lost a little confidence. But I knew I could get it back. That’s why I didn’t give up. ... I

took it as motivation.”

GloRilla, a choir girl turned husky-voiced rap queen, held onto her faith. She hit the studio more, made affirmations, cleared her mind, adopted a consistent workout routine and let the creativity flow. That combination led to the release of her mixtape “Ehhthang Ehhthang” with tracks like “ Wanna Be ” featuring Megan Thee Stallion and the breakout hit “ Yeah Glo!,” which had fans buzzing while catching the attention of LeBron James and even President Joe Biden.

“I was shocked,” she said. “I knew it was a good song. Every time I played it for people, they loved it. I didn’t know it would go as crazy as it did.”

GloRilla might’ve been surprised by the track, but Yo Gotti saw her potential as a hitmaker all along. He was captivated by her genuine character and rap flow, powered by her unmistakable Southern drawl.

“It’s the authenticity,” said the rapper-music executive who signed GloRilla to his Collective Music Group label in 2022. He’s known for rap anthems such as “Down in the DM,” “Rake It Up” with Nicki Minaj and “Act Right” featuring Jeezy and Y.G.

“Even when she talks about the struggles throughout this journey, it’s refreshing,” said Yo Gotti, a fellow Memphis native. “I don’t think many artists do

that. Everybody wants to play perfect. I think that’s why so many people gravitate to her. She relates to real people.”

Through Yo Gotti’s mentorship, GloRilla found someone she can trust.

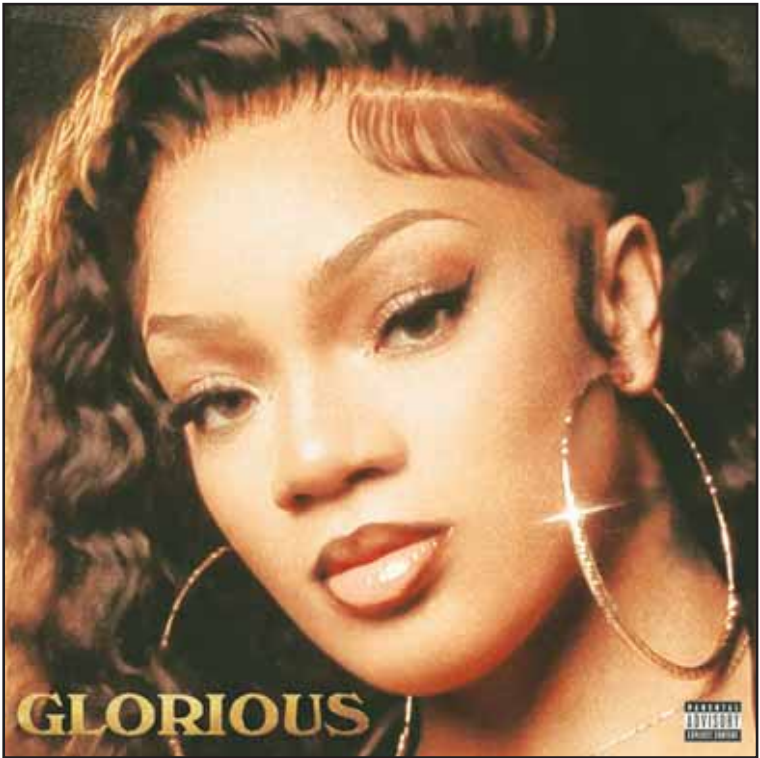
“Anytime I have problem, he’s always giving me great advice,” she said. “He’s already been through the mistakes, so he tries to steer me away from that. He’s always telling me the right thing to do.”

Last year, GloRilla was met with devastation after a deadly stampede toward the end of her concert in upstate New York killed three women. She said the deaths left her “heartbroken” and investigators found no criminal wrongdoing.

GloRilla’s public reputation seemed untarnished following the tragedy, and her profile has grown in recent months to make her one of rap’s most promising new voices.

“She’s a star,” Yo Gotti said. “Not just the creation of music. She understands how to work, the honesty and dedication to the art. Sometimes you want to be a star, but don’t understand what it takes. You got to have it all, and she does.”

So far this year, GloRilla has served as a guest performer on the domestic leg of Megan Thee Stallion’s Hot Girl Summer Tour, where she gained more confidence performing in sold-out arenas.



This album cover image released by Interscope Records/Collective Music Group shows ‘Glorious’ by GloRilla. (AP)



This image released by the Washington National Opera shows Bass David Leigh as Rocco the jailer in a new production of Beethoven’s ‘Fidelio,’ opening Oct. 25 at the Washington National Opera. (AP)

Journalists dismissed

AI presenters take over Polish radio

WARSAW, Poland, Oct 23, (AP): A Polish radio station has triggered controversy after dismissing its journalists and relaunching this week with AI-generated “presenters.”

Weeks after letting its journalists go, OFF Radio Krakow relaunched this week, with what it said was “the first experiment in Poland in which journalists ... are virtual characters created by AI.”

The station in the southern city of Krakow said its three avatars are designed to reach younger listeners by speaking about cultural, art and social issues including the concerns of LGBTQ+ people.

“Is artificial intelligence more of an opportunity or a threat to media, radio and journalism? We will seek answers to this question,” the station head, Marcin Pulit, wrote in a statement.

Creative

The change got nationwide attention after Mateusz Demski, a journalist and film critic who until recently hosted a show on the station, published an open letter Tuesday protesting “the replacement of employees with artificial intelligence.”

“It is a dangerous precedent that hits us all,” he wrote, and argued it could open the way “to a world in which experienced employees associated with the media sector for years and people employed in creative industries will be replaced by machines.”

More than 15,000 signed the petition by Wednesday morning, Demski told The Associated Press. He said he has also gotten calls from hundreds of people, many of them young people who do not want to be the subject of such an experiment.

Demski worked at OFF Radio Krakow from February 2022, carrying out interviews with Ukrainians fleeing war, until August, when he was among about a dozen journalists who were let go. He said the move was especially shocking because the broadcaster is a taxpayer-supported public station.

Pulit insisted that no journalists were fired because of AI but because its listenership “was close to zero.” On Tuesday the station broadcast an “interview” conducted by an AI-generated presenter with a voice pretending to be Wislawa Szymborska, a Polish poet and winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature who died in 2012.

Opera

Mitch Leigh’s legacy lives on in David’s voice

Leigh achieves ‘impossible dream’

NEW YORK, Oct 23, (AP): When David Leigh sang “The Impossible Dream” at his father’s funeral, the moment was both a testament to his past and a harbinger of his future.

Leigh, an operatic bass, is the son of Mitch Leigh, who wrote the score for the musical “Man of La Mancha,” one of Broadway’s biggest hits in the 1960s - long before David was born.

When Mitch died in 2014 at age 86, David was studying voice in the graduate program at Yale and still finding his way as a singer.

“My dad was very anxious for my career to get going so that he could still be alive to hear me have some success,” Leigh said.

Sadly, that didn’t happen. But now, at 36, Leigh is finding his dream of an operatic career is not so impossible. In fact, he’s fast establishing himself as a future star in the lowest-lying roles for male voices.

This month he’ll take on a major role as the jailer Rocco in a new production of Beethoven’s only opera, “Fidelio,” at the Washington National Opera, which opens Friday.

“He’s going to be the real deal,” said Francesca Zambello, WNO’s artistic director, who cast him in the part. “A bass that young with that powerful a stentorian quality is rare.”

Andreas Homoki, the outgoing Zurich Opera artistic director, recalled that last year he had been looking for “somebody

special, not one of the established artists” to sing the role of the villainous Hagen in the final opera in Wagner’s “‘Ring” cycle.

He cast Leigh - and was delighted with the results.

“Apart from his incredibly powerful voice and his noticeable physical stature, (Leigh stands 6-foot-5) he is able to transmit a very special vulnerability,” Homoki said. “Having in mind how relatively young he is compared to his colleagues in the same repertoire, it is hard to imagine him not having a brilliant career all over the world.”

**Career**

Gianandrea Noseda, music director of the Zurich Opera who conducted the “Ring,” was impressed with the “nobility, an aristocracy of singing” that Leigh brought to his role.

In many professions, 36 would not seem young, but some operatic voices, including basses, can take years to settle in. “It’s a longer fermentation process,” Zambello said.

For several years earlier in his career, Leigh said his relative youth actually counted against him. Many of the iconic roles for basses are characters who are no longer young men.

“When I was auditioning all the time, people would say ‘May I ask how old you are?’ And when I told them, they’d say, ‘Oh, you’ll get to sing this when you’re older.’

“Once a few gray hairs started coming in on my beard, I was very excited,” Leigh joked.

The tradeoff is that many basses go on singing well into their 60s or even later. Leigh cited the example of the great Soviet bass Mark Reizen, who famously performed Prince Gremin’s aria from Tchaikovsky’s “Eugene Onegin” at age 90.

Leigh said he always had an unusually low singing voice, but when he first enrolled at the Mannes College of Music in New York after Yale, he said, “I didn’t really know what I was doing.”

Joshua Greene, one of his coaches there, recalls that Leigh came to Mannes “with a totally unfinished voice, large but unrefined.

“The low notes were of a quality you don’t hear often, even on high-level professional stages,” Greene said, “but otherwise it wasn’t clear what was there. It has been very exciting to see David develop over the many years we have worked together.”

Now Leigh comfortably commands a range of nearly three octaves, from G above middle C down to A below low C.

Among the roles he most hopes to sing in the near future, Gurnemanz from Wagner’s “Parsifal” tops the list. In fact, he was scheduled to perform it with the Canadian Opera Company in the pandemic-canceled season of 2020-21.

Variety

**LOS ANGELES:** Glenn Close will be the next recipient of AARP The Magazine’s Movies for Grownups Awards career achievement honor.

The 77-year-old actor is known for films including “Fatal Attraction,” “101 Dalmatians” and “The Wife” over a career spanning nearly 50 years. She will receive the honor at the AARP’s annual Movies for Grownups Awards ceremony in January, the group announced Tuesday.

“I am so honored to receive the AARP Movies for Grownups Career Achievement Award even though I feel like I’m still 35, if not younger,” Close said in a statement. “I love making movies for grownups and everyone else, and I deeply appreciate the inspiration and support of the people I have worked with over 50 years. Thank you,

AARP, for this great honor.”

The AARP launched the Movies for Grownups initiative in 2002 to advocate for audiences over 50 years old and to fight ageism in Hollywood. The awards ceremony that celebrates movies “for grownups, by grownups” will be held in Beverly Hills, California, on Jan. 11, with Alan Cumming to host. The ceremony will be broadcast by “Great Performances” on Sunday, Feb. 23, at 7 p.m. Eastern on PBS. (AP)

**BEIJING:** The Beijing Academy of Artificial Intelligence (BAAI) on Monday re-

leased Emu3, a multimodal world model that unifies the understanding and generation of text, image, and video modalities with next-token prediction.

Emu3 successfully validates that next-token prediction can serve as a powerful paradigm for multimodal models, scaling beyond language models and delivering state-of-the-art performance across multimodal tasks, said Wang Zhongyuan, director of BAAI, in a press release.

“By tokenizing images, text, and videos into a discrete space, we train a single transformer from scratch on a mixture of multimodal sequences,” Wang said, adding that Emu3 eliminates the need for diffusion or compositional approaches entirely.

Emu3 outperforms several well-established task-specific models in both generation and perception tasks, according to BAAI, which has open-sourced the key technologies and models of Emu3 to the international technology community. (Xinhua)

Artefact

Treasure unearthed

1,000-year-old coins hoard fetches \$5.6m

LONDON, Oct 23, (AP): Adam Staples knew he’d found something when his metal detector let out a beep. And then another. And another.

Soon “it was just ‘beep beep, beep beep, beep beep,’” Staples said.

In a farmer’s field in southwest England, Staples and six friends had found a hoard of more than 2,500 silver coins that had lain in the ground for almost 1,000 years. Valued at 4.3 million pounds (\$5.6 million) and now bound for a museum, they will help shed light on the turbulent aftermath of the Norman conquest of England.

“The first one was a William the Conqueror coin - 1,000 pounds, 1,500 pounds value,” Staples said Tuesday at the British Museum, where the hoard will go on display in November. “It’s a really good find. It’s a find-of-the-year sort of discovery. And then we got another one, (we thought) there might be five, there might be 10.

“And it just got bigger and bigger,” he said - the biggest find in his 30 years of searching the fields and furrows of Britain as an amateur detectorist.

The hoard, discovered in 2019 and recently acquired by the South West Heritage Trust, totaled 2,584 silver pennies minted between 1066 and 1068, some showing conquering King William I and others his defeated Anglo-Saxon predecessor Harold II.

Michael Lewis, head of the Portable Antiquities Scheme - a government-funded project that records archaeological discoveries made by the public - said it is “one of the most spectacular discoveries” of recent years, especially because “its story is yet to be fully unraveled.”

Lewis said the coin hoard will help deepen understanding of the most famous date in English history: 1066, the year William, Duke of Normandy, defeated King Harold at the Battle of Hastings, replacing England’s Saxon monarchs with Norman French rulers.

“Most of us are taught about the Norman Conquest of England at school, probably because it was the last time that England was successfully conquered,” Lewis said. “But it a story based on certain myths,” such as the notion that the battle pitted “English versus French,” or “good” Saxons against “bad” Normans.

Monarch

In fact, the warring families were interrelated, and Lewis said the hoard “helps us to tell a different story, one that is more nuanced.”

Though the invasion marked a historic schism, the coins in the hoard are remarkably similar whether they were minted before or after the conquest. One side shows a monarch’s head in profile, the other an emblem: an elaborate cross for William, the somewhat ironic word “pax” -- peace -- for Harold.

Amal Khreisheh, curator of archaeology at the South West Heritage Trust, said the coins were likely buried for safekeeping as local rebellions erupted against Norman rule.

“We know that the people of Exeter rebelled against William in 1068 and that Harold’s sons, who were in exile in Ireland, came back and started mounting attacks along the River Avon down into Somerset,” she said. “So it’s probably against that background they were hidden.”

The Chew Valley Hoard, named for the rural area where it was found, has been bought for the nation with money from the charitable arm of Britain’s national lottery. After going on display at the British Museum and other museums around the UK, it will have a permanent home at the Museum of Somerset in Taunton, 130 miles (210 kilometers) southwest of London.

It has taken several years for the hoard to make its way through Britain’s system for handling amateur archaeological finds. The Treasure Act decrees that anyone who finds historic gold, silver or other precious items must inform the local coroner. If a coroner declares it treasure, the hoard will belong to the government, and museums can bid for funding to acquire it.

An expert committee sets a value on each find, with the money divided between the owner of the land and the finders. In this case, Staples and six fellow detectorists split half of the 4.3 million pound purse.

“It’s like winning the lottery,” said Staples, who plans to continue his treasure-hunting hobby. “I’m not going to give up now. I love it.”



An Edward the Confessor Pyramid coin (1065-1066), part of the Chew Valley Hoard of 2,584 coins, buried in the turmoil following the Norman Invasion of Britain in 1066, on display at the British Museum in London, Oct. 22, 2024. (AP)



New specializations first in Kuwait

AI, health management MBA programs align with Kuwait Vision 2035 at KMCM

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 23: Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Kuwait Maastricht College for Management (KMCM), Mr. Khalil Al Abdullah has announced, during the new MBA and MM intakes orientation evening at Holiday Inn, the offering of several MBA specializations for the first time in Kuwait. Mr. Khalil Al Abdullah stated that KMCM has achieved the promise to introduce MBA in Digital Economy.

This MBA program and the other new programs have attracted many

professionals from all sectors. He also stated that the MBA in Health Management, that was recently introduced, is offering doctors in the health sector with the most updated knowledge and skills they need to lead middle and senior managerial responsibilities. He promised to maintain an updated level of programs and wished every new student the best.

Mrs. Yasmeen Al Musallam, the Deputy Chairman and CEO has also announced during the event the collaboration with University of Maastricht

to accept our graduates who are interested in obtaining their PhD degree. Al Musallam stated that new programs and curricula in Artificial Intelligence and Dynamic Thinking have already been introduced in alignment with Kuwait vision 2035.

During the orientation evening, Danah Al Ghanim, a graduate and Assistant lecturer at KMCM, and senior student Weam Abo Rafeh a GM, have shared their experience and offered valuable advice to the new intakes.



Kuwait Maastricht College for Management announces new MBA specializations at orientation event.



Some photos from the ZainTECH booth at the GITEX Global 2024.



Eco-friendly booth welcomed hundreds of clients, visitors

ZainTECH presents AI-driven enterprise and sustainability solutions at GITEX Global 2024

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates, Oct 23: ZainTECH, the integrated digital solutions provider of Zain Group marked a highly successful participation at GITEX Global 2024, where for the second consecutive year, the company showcased how its innovative AI-powered enterprise solutions and digital transformation services are driving sustainability agendas across industries in the MENA region.

GITEX Global is the largest dedicated ICT and technology exhibition and conference in the Middle East, attracting over 100,000 visitors between October 14-18, 2024. The distinctive ZainTECH booth, which welcomed hundreds of clients and inquiring visitors, was built utilizing recycled material and designed for reuse, aligning with the company's commitment to sustainability principles.

A competitive advantage for ZainTECH is the depth and breadth of its operations and solutions, which now span eight markets in the Middle East and Africa, and cover the entire ICT stack including cloud, cybersecurity, big data, IoT, AI, smart cities, modern infrastructure, drones and robotics, enterprise licensing, and emerging technologies all under one roof.

Andrew Hanna, CEO of ZainTECH said, "Our growing portfolio of digital transformation services that were showcased during GITEX are helping enterprises achieve efficient and impactful returns from their technology investment. ZainTECH is strategically positioned to leverage AI-powered solutions with our end-to-end services to accelerate growth



ZainTECH's sustainability tunnel

for enterprises through monetization of data and digital assets in a sustainable manner."

Hanna added, "Sustainability is no longer just a nice-to-have aspect of modern enterprise activity; it is essential to the development and longer-term success of organizations."

**Technological agreements**

ZainTECH entered into a series of significant technology agreements at the show, reflecting the company's commitment to enhancing its sustainability-focused service offerings and driving innovation.

**Urbis:** A partnership with this developer of a cutting-edge geo-platform that integrates all the necessary data, algorithms,

and tools to address challenges in mapping, location data, navigation, and spatial analysis, aimed at merging Urbis's refined geospatial insights with ZainTECH's digital expertise. This collaboration will enhance ZainTECH's ability to tackle complex regional issues by integrating sophisticated mapping and analytics with cutting-edge digital technology.

**UL Solutions:** A strategic partnership facilitating ZainTECH becoming the first ICT company in the region to be designated as a SPIRE™ Qualified Company by UL Solutions. This achievement positions ZainTECH as a trusted provider and the go-to source of quality, verified smart building digital solutions, utilizing its own SPIRE™ Qualified Asses-

sors, thereby solidifying its leadership in the smart building sector. SPIRE is the world's first smart building assessment program that offers a holistic evaluation of a building's technology and operational performance.

**HTC Vive:** This strategic partnership will see ZainTECH offer HTC VIVE's industry leading XR hardware and VIVERSE, the platform for business spatial collaboration across the MEA region. Extended reality and virtual reality (VR) features are being demanded by a growing number of clients, and as networks have adapted to support the higher data streams necessary to provisionsuch features, ZainTECH sees demand for such services only growing.

**AI and Digital data driving sustainability**

Digital data has never been more valuable than it is in modern times, given advances in artificial intelligence (AI), which are driving significant predictive capabilities that enterprises can utilize to make their operations more efficient and impactful.

The fact that ZainTECH has a capability matched to every touchpoint with corporate data – from source to organization and computation, through to cybersecurity, storage and cloud solutions, makes the company perfectly positioned to support organizations with the AI-enhanced digital transformation. All of this ties into paving a sustainable future.

For more information on ZainTECH and its comprehensive digital and sustainable solutions, please visit [www.zaintech.com](http://www.zaintech.com)

Greece reports sheep pox

WHO warns Gaza's polio effort at risk amid conflict

GENEVA, Oct 23, (Agencies): The World Health Organization (WHO) and its partners stated on Wednesday that they have been compelled to postpone the third phase of the polio vaccination campaign, which was set to begin today due to intense bombardment by occupation forces and recent mass displacement orders.

In a statement, WHO warned that a large number of children missing their dose of vaccine would jeopardize efforts to stop the spread of polio in Gaza, stressing that this could also lead to further spread of poliovirus in the Gaza Strip and neighboring countries with the risk of more children being paralyzed.

According to the Polio Technical Committee of Gaza, including the Palestinian Ministry of Health, WHO, UN Children Fund (UNICEF), UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), this final phase of the ongoing campaign aimed to vaccinate 119,279 children across northern Gaza.

WHO also warned that the reduction of safe spaces designated for humanitarian campaigns between the first and second rounds of vaccination prevented many children in various areas from completing their doses.

A delay in administering a second dose of the novel oral polio vaccine type 2 (nOPV2) within six weeks could reduce the impact of two closely spaced rounds on concurrently boosting the immunity of all children and interrupting poliovirus transmission, the statement stressed.

WHO noted that the second round of the polio immunization campaign in Gaza, which began on October 14th successfully immunized 442,855 children under the age of 10 in central and southern Gaza.

WHO and its partners reiterated their call for respect for international humanitarian law and the protection of civilian health workers and infrastructure.

They also stressed the urgent need for a ceasefire to ensure the completion of the campaign and save children from the threat of paralysis.

□ □ □

**Sheep pox:** Greece is to implement a series of measures to contain the spread of the sheep and goat pox after an outbreak of the disease in several parts of the country, the Greek Agricultural Development and Food Ministry announced on Tuesday.

A total of 17,500 animals have already been culled after the confirmation of cases in 104 farms across the country this autumn, according to a press release by the ministry.

A nationwide ban on the transportation of goats and sheep for any reasons for 10 days as a preventive step has been introduced, as experts were trying to locate the origin of the contagious and deadly viral disease for animals, the ministry said.

Slaughterhouses will remain closed for 10 days, and experts will be conducting tests in surveillance zones around farms where positive cases were identified.

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Host takes 81-run lead over South Africa

# Mehidy 87 not out rescues Bangladesh from innings defeat

## LeBron, Bronny make history as NBA first father-son duo to play together



Los Angeles Lakers forward Anthony Davis (3) blocks a shot by Minnesota Timberwolves center Rudy Gobert (27) during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Los Angeles. (AP)

MIRPUR, Bangladesh, Oct 23, (AP): Mehidy Hasan’s 87 not out helped Bangladesh Host on Wednesday, ending fears of an innings defeat in the first cricket test against South Africa.

The battling Mehidy led his side to 283-7 at stumps, which represented a comeback from 112-6 during a third day interrupted by rain and bad light. Nayeem Hasan was also unbeaten on 16.

Mehidy shared a record 138-run stand with debutant Jaker Ali, who made 58 as the hosts wiped out a first-innings deficit of 202.

Bangladesh was bowled out for 106 in its first innings before South Africa replied with 308, thanks to Kyle Verreynne’s 114.

Fast bowler Kagiso Rabada (4-35) and left-arm spinner Keshav Maharaj (3-105) then shared seven wickets as South Africa put Bangladesh under even more pressure.

Rabada used the early moisture of the pitch expertly after Bangladesh began the day on 101-3. He pegged back the hosts with two wickets in three balls in the fourth over.

Opener Mahmudul Hasan edged to first slip on 40 after being undone by extra bounce.

Mushfiquur Rahim, who became the first Bangladesh batter to reach 6,000 test runs on Day 2, paid the price for a lack of foot movement as Rabada’s fuller length delivery skidded through to rattle the stumps when he was on 33.

Maharaj removed Liton Das for 7 and South Africa sensed a chance to wrap up an early victory. But Mehidy and Jaker then survived a probing spell from Maharaj and Rabada.

Mehidy hit Dane Piedt for a six over his head and drove Maharaj to deep mid-off for a single to raise his ninth test half-century from 94 balls.

Maharaj finally broke through by trapping Jaker lbw to end their partnership, which was Bangladesh’s highest against South Africa for any wicket.

Mehidy, who hit nine fours and one six in 171 balls, continued to frustrate South Africa with support from Nayeem before bad light brought a premature end to the day’s play.

### Mineiro eyes Copa final

## Atlanta eliminates Montreal

MONTREAL, Oct 23, (Agencies): Atlanta United eliminated CF Montreal 5-4 in a penalty-kick shootout on Tuesday night in the opening game of the MLS Cup playoffs after the two clubs played to a 2-2 draw.

Atlanta won its second road playoff game in club history and the first since Nov. 4, 2018 at New York City FC. United will start a best-of-three series on Friday against Supporters’ Shield winner Miami, which is hosting a playoff game for the first time in club history.

Atlanta goalkeeper Brad Guzan denied Tom Pearce on Montreal’s second attempt in the shootout. Saba Lobjanidze sealed it for United.

Atlanta led 2-0 at halftime before former United star Josef Martinez scored two second-half goals to tie it.

Brooks Lennon scored his first goal of the season when he headed in a beautiful cross from Pedro Amador in the 29th minute. Atlanta defender Stian Gregersen made it 2-0 in the 44th by heading in Alexey Miranchuk’s free kick.

Martinez pulled Montreal within 2-1 in the 63rd with an easy tap-in after Guzan spilled a long shot.

Montreal was awarded a penalty kick in the 87th and Martinez converted for his eighth goal in the last six games. Martinez and his former goalkeeper Guzan exchanged a few words after the goal.

Atlético Mineiro took a major step toward reaching the Copa Libertadores final on Tuesday with a 3-0 home win over River Plate.

Deyverson Silva struck either side of halftime in the semifinal first leg before Paulinho Sampaio added a third goal 16 minutes from time at Arena MRV.

Despite the lopsided result, Atlético manager Gabriel Milito said his team had plenty of scope for improvement ahead of the return clash in Buenos Aires next Tuesday.

“I believe we can get better,” the former Barcelona and Argentina international defender said. “I understand that after today’s result, many fans feel confident in our team. But I have to analyze the team’s performance honestly, and not just the result.” He added: “We are happy to get the first win at home, but the defining match will be in Buenos Aires. I know how difficult it is to play against River at their ground and in front of their fans. We have to stay focused because the tie isn’t over yet.”



Atlanta United forward Daniel Rios (19) and CF Montreal defender George Campbell (24) battle during the second half of an MLS soccer wild-card playoff game in Montreal. (AP)

## Gasset steps out of retirement to help struggling Montpellier

PARIS, Oct 23, (AP): Veteran coach Jean-Louis Gasset is stepping out of retirement to try to get his hometown club, struggling Montpellier, back on track.

The 70-year-old Frenchman, who had retired in May, was hired Tuesday to replace Michel Der Zakarian as coach, the club said. Terms of the deal were not disclosed.

Der Zakarian lost his job after Montpellier was routed 5-0 at home by Marseille for its sixth loss in eight matches this season. The result left the 2012 French champions in last place, having conceded 26 goals already in a season marking the club’s 50th anniversary.

Although little known abroad, Gasset has vast experience in France, having spent time at various clubs including previous stints with Montpellier, Saint-Etienne, Bordeaux and Marseille. He was also assistant to Laurent Blanc when Blanc served as France manager and coach of Bordeaux and Paris Saint-Germain.

Before starting his coaching career, Gasset played for 10 years in Montpellier from 1975-85. He was born in the Mediterranean city and is the son of Bernard Gasset, who founded the club alongside Louis Nicollin.

Last season, Gasset guided Marseille into the Europa League semifinals after replacing Gennaro Gattuso in February amid a mediocre campaign for the French league powerhouse. But he was unable to improve the club’s poor record on the road and Marseille did not qualify for a European tournament.

“His most recent experience, on the Marseille bench last season, demonstrated his ability to revitalize teams losing momentum,” Montpellier said in a statement. “That is the challenge that now awaits him at Montpellier.”

Montpellier won the French league title once, in 2012. The club also won the second division title in 1987 and the French Cup in 1990 with a team featuring the likes of Blanc, Eric Cantona and Julio Cesar.

It’s not the first time that Gasset will lead a rescue mission at Montpellier. He succeeded in that task during the 2016-17 season when he saved the club from relegation.

LOS ANGELES, Oct 23, (AP): LeBron James and Bronny James became the first father and son to play in the NBA together during the Los Angeles Lakers’ 110-103 victory over the Minnesota Timberwolves on opening night .

The 39-year-old superstar and his 20-year-old son played almost 2 1/2 minutes together late in the first half of Bronny’s NBA debut. They are also the first father and son to play in the NBA at the same time, let alone on the same team.

LeBron scored 16 points, while Anthony Davis had 36 points and 16 rebounds in a dominant performance for the Lakers. Rui Hachimura added 18 points.

JJ Redick won his head coaching debut for the Lakers, who hired the 15-year NBA veteran for his first coaching job at any level.

Anthony Edwards scored 27 points for the Timberwolves, who are coming off their best season in 20 years.

Julius Randle had 16 points and nine rebounds, and Donte DiVincenzo had 10 points in their Timberwolves debuts after the trade sending Karl-Anthony Towns to New York three weeks ago.

Dalton Knecht scored five points in the Lakers’ first-round pick’s debut.



The Boston Celtics 2024 World Championship banner is raised prior to an NBA basketball game against the New York Knicks in Boston. (AP)

Timberwolves: There will be growing pains in the post-Towns era. Davis ran rampant against Randle and Rudy Gobert, and nobody stepped up to score alongside Edwards.

Lakers: Their largely unchanged roster showed the benefits of continuity, playing disciplined ball on both ends and getting organized defense led by Davis.

Davis was phenomenal down the stretch, either scoring or assisting on 13 of Los Angeles’ next 15 points after he returned to the game with 7:09 left. LeBron’s 3-pointer put it away.

LeBron officially joined Vince

Carter as the only players in NBA history to play in 22 seasons. James is sixth in career games played with 1,493 - not counting his NBA-record 287 playoff games. Jayson Tatum continued Boston’s Banner 18 celebration by scoring 37 points and making eight of the Celtics’ NBA record-tying 29 3-pointers as Boston ran away with a 132-109 victory over the New York Knicks .

Derrick White scored 24 points, Jaylen Brown added 23 and Tatum had 10 assists for the defending champions, who raised their NBA-most 18th championship banner to the rafters before the game. Boston led by as many as 35 points before missing its last 13 3-point attempts while trying to break the record.

Jalen Brunson scored 22 points for New York, and new addition Karl-Anthony Towns had just 12 points and seven rebounds.

With the Celtics leading by more than 20 points early in the third quarter, the TD Garden crowd’s attention strayed from the basketball game and it began chanting “Yankees Suck!”

The new-look Knicks were supposed to be the biggest threat to the Celtics in the Eastern Conference, but even after adding Towns and Mikal Bridges over the summer, they were no match for the team that finished 14 games in front last season.

On July 28, U.S. Olympic basketball coach Steve Kerr benched Tatum for a game against Serbia, guaranteeing Tatum would be motivated for the Celtics’ title defense.

The Celtics hit their 29th 3-pointer early in the fourth quarter, then fired up two long airballs and 13 misses in a row from beyond the arc as they went for the record set in 2020 by Milwaukee. The crowd chanted “One more 3!” in the final minutes, but on Boston’s last possession Payton Pritchard dribbled out the shot clock without making another attempt.

The Celtics visit Washington on Thursday and the Knicks play their home opener against Indiana on Friday.

### Dragan expresses confidence in the team

## Al Arabi set for intense Asian Challenge Cup group stage

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 23: The teams set to compete in the second group of the Asian Challenge Cup, hosted by Al Arabi from October 26 to early November at Kuwait Club Stadium, have all arrived.

This group features Al Arabi, Abdish Atta from Kyrgyzstan, Arkadakh from Turkmenistan, and Mazia Sports from the Maldives.

Al Arabi will kick off its campaign this Saturday against Abdish Atta, followed by a clash with Mazia Sports on October 29, before concluding the group stage with a match against Arkadakh on November 1.

Al Arabi’s head coach, Nasser Al Shatti, and his technical staff are finalizing preparations to ensure the team is in top form for the tournament. The team resumed



Al-Shatti puts the finishing touches on the Challenge Cup.

training yesterday after a brief rest following their victory over Al Yarmouk in the Zain Premier

League.

Mishaal Al Abkal, the media coordinator for Al Arabi, stated that

the team is eager to represent Kuwait with distinction, acknowledging that the challenge will be tough as Al Arabi faces three matches in seven days. He emphasized the crucial role of fan support in advancing to the quarter-finals and praised the club’s management for their efforts in hosting the teams and creating a supportive environment.

Meanwhile, Dragan Juganovic, the Serbian coach of Mazia Sports, expressed confidence in his team’s readiness for the group matches, which he believes are the strongest among the three groups. He acknowledged Al Arabi’s strength as one of Kuwait’s top clubs, previously coached by notable figures from Croatia and Serbia. Juganovic also noted that with teams from Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan in the group, it is the most competitive in the western region.

### Change Name

I, Farooq Mohamed F/O Husain residing in Farwaniya block 3, street 30, Kuwait civil id no. 285021800156. Henceforth, I have added Farooq Mohamed as a surname in my son passport

## IOC President Thomas Bach in Uganda for official visit

ENTEBBE, Uganda, Oct 23, (Xinhua): The President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) Thomas Bach arrived in Uganda on Tuesday for an official two-day visit.

“I am very happy to finally be in Uganda. Uganda continues to produce champions, and it’s good to be here,” said Bach when speaking to the press at the Entebbe International Airport.

Bach was received by Uganda’s State Minister for Sports Peter Ogwang, President of the Uganda Olympic Committee (UOC) Donald Rukare and Paris

Olympic champion Joshua Cheptegei among others.

Bach also talked about countries having access to good facilities that helps athletes prepare better ahead of big competitions like the Olympics. Speaking about Uganda, he said the country is also advantaged to have good mountainous areas where top athletes like Cheptegei have continued to train and win medals.

“Not all countries have the advantage Uganda has. And some countries have different advantages on where athletes train,” he added.

He made it clear that the IOC is trying to bridge the gap for all members with the Olympic Solidarity Programme which has increased to 650 million U.S. dollars in terms of support. “Uganda Olympic Committee is very smart in using the Olympic Solidarity Programme for the benefit of the athletes,” added Bach.

William Frederick Blick, a member of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) from Uganda told Xinhua that it is great to have Bach come for a two-day visit to Uganda. “This visit is long overdue, but

we are glad that it has finally happened, and it comes with a lot of positives,” added Blick.

Cheptegei, fresh from winning the Vedanta Delhi Half Marathon last weekend, said it was an honor to be part of the team receiving the IOC president. “As a country, we are very happy to see Bach come to Uganda to also discover some of the challenges we have here,” added Cheptegei.

Bach’s visit to Uganda comes as part of his broader tour of African countries, which includes Senegal, South Africa, Lesotho, Uganda, and Rwanda.



‘The bank has actively cultivated positive values in the community over 30 years’

## Capital Governor Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali to participate in NBK Run 2024

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 23: Capital Governor Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah will participate in the NBK Run, scheduled to take place on December 14th, which is considered the largest sporting event in Kuwait of its kind in Kuwait given the massive participation and extensive media coverage.

During a visit by a team from NBK to the Capital Governorate headquarters to present the NBK Run race kit to Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali, the Capital Governor expressed his appreciation of NBK’s leading social responsibility contributions, and its constant dedication for 30 years, by organizing the NBK Run, to cultivate positive values promoting a healthy and sporting lifestyle being a prerequisite for building a healthy community.

The Governor praised NBK’s efforts in fostering national directions towards sustainable development in health and sports, in line with Kuwait Vision 2035, pointing out that NBK stands as a role model for delivering social responsibility and supporting sustainable development in all fields.

Al-Ali pointed out that NBK’s commitment to organize this race every year underscores deep historical ties with the Kuwaiti community, as the first and oldest homegrown bank in Kuwait, which was founded by a group of Kuwaiti merchants more than 70 years ago, and has now evolved to be Kuwait’s leading financial institution in and among the largest banks in the region.

On their part, NBK team stated that The NBK Run 2024 will be different from previous versions, as there will be greater collaboration from strategic partners who will provide valuable prizes for the winners, participants as well as spectators.

They also added that the new version of the NBK Run will witness a qualitative leap by adding the special needs category in 3 groups: “Wheelchairs, Blind and Prosthetics users”. This aims to mainstream those individuals to become active players in the future.

Commenting on this, Abdul-Mohsen Al-Rushaid, AGM,

Head of Digital Communications at National Bank of Kuwait, said, “We always aim to strengthen our position as Kuwait’s most socially responsible bank. NBK Run is an integral part of our growing contributions to advance sustainability in line with Kuwait’s economic plans and vision for the future.”

“We have long-standing solid relationships with major organizations and companies across all sectors, as we always strive to join efforts to serve the community and spread awareness about the importance of sports and its role in promoting public health,” he added.

“NBK seeks to magnify its social impact and always prioritizes investing in community development by supporting and sponsoring meaningful events and initiatives,” he noted.

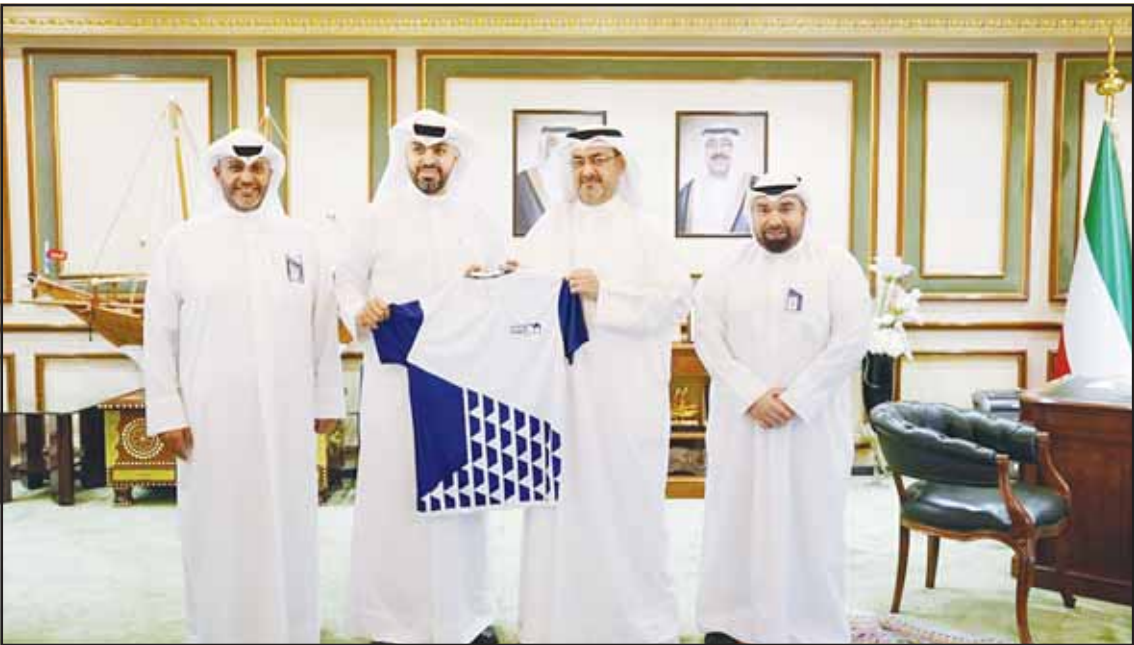
NBK has already opened early registration for the 2024 NBK Run starting from September 18th until all slots are filled.

The race will start at 8:30 a.m. on December 14th, featuring two distances, both beginning and ending at Kuwait Towers. The 10 km route will proceed towards Souq Sharq, then turn and follow the Gulf Road, reaching 200 meters before the intersection with Green Island, before returning to Kuwait Towers.

The second distance of the race is 5 km, starting from Kuwait Towers and heading towards Souq Sharq. Competitors will then turn and continue running until they reach the intersection at Kuwait Army Club.

The race will honor the top three winners in both the men’s and women’s 10 km categories with cash prizes of KD 1,000, KD 700, and KD 500, respectively. The top three winners in the men’s and women’s 5 km categories will receive KD 500, KD 400, and KD 300, respectively.

It is worth mentioning that NBK organizes a variety of social events and initiatives every year, demonstrating its prominent role and its consistent approach to community development. These initiatives include a wide range of social, humanitarian, charitable, educational, sporting and environmental events that aim to serve the community and contribute to its development.



Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali receives NBK Run race kit.

### Al-Ali

- NBK stands as a role model for delivering social responsibility and promoting sustainable development

### Al-Rushaid

- NBK places investing in community development by organizing and sponsoring meaningful events as a key priority

### Decision in May

## Azerbaijan and Spain competing to host Champions League final

NYON, Switzerland, Oct 23, (AP): Azerbaijan and Spain have declared an interest in hosting the men’s Champions League final in 2027 after bidding for European soccer’s biggest club match was reopened by UEFA.

The game is set to be staged at



Baku’s Olympic Stadium or the Metropolitano Stadium in Madrid after they were named by UEFA on Wednesday as the two interested bidders.

Their final proposals must be delivered by March 19, UEFA said, with a decision on who will host the final scheduled to be made in May.

The search for a new venue was opened after UEFA’s executive committee decided not to assign the final to Milan’s storied San Siro stadium.

UEFA had given extended time for the city of Milan to show the Stadio Giuseppe Meazza would be available during planned renovation work between staging ceremonies for the 2026 Winter Olympics and hosting games at the 2032 European Championship. City authorities ultimately could not give those guarantees.

Baku hosted games at the European Championship in 2021 and also staged the Europa League final between Chelsea and Arsenal in 2019.

The Metropolitano Stadium has hosted the Champions League final before, in 2019 when Liverpool beat Tottenham 2-0.

UEFA also announced Wednesday that there are four interested bidders for the Women’s Champions League final in 2027: Poland (Warsaw); Spain (Barcelona), Switzerland (Basel) and Wales (Cardiff).

## Laporte’s late goal gives Al-Nassr win in Asian Champions League

Gwangju FC of South Korea is still the only team with a perfect record

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates, Oct 23, (AP): A late Aymeric Laporte header gave Al-Nassr a 1-0 win over Iranian club Esteghlal in the group stage of the Asian Champions League Elite to maintain Saudi Arabia’s impressive start in the competition.

After three games in the group stage, the country’s three repre-

sentatives are all unbeaten. Al-Hilal and Al-Ahli are first and second as the only two teams with nine points while Al-Nassr move into fourth, just two points behind.

The game was moved from Tehran to Dubai in the United Arab Emirates due to the security situation in Iran.

“Al-Nassr fans came to support us in numbers and it was good to get the win for them,” coach Stefano Pioli said. “I am satisfied with the performance, it was a difficult game

in tough conditions but we were able to get the win.”

Chances were at a premium until the final stages. Cristiano Ronaldo, who had two shots saved and one that had gone wide, sent a powerful header toward the top corner and while it was saved, former Manchester City defender Laporte headed home the rebound from close range with nine minutes remaining.

Elsewhere in the western group, Dubai club Al-Wasl won 2-1 at Al-Gharafa of Qatar.

In the eastern zone, Gwangju FC of South Korea is still the only team with a perfect record after a 2-1 win over Malaysia’s Johor Darul Tazim.

Central Coast Mariners, Australia’s only participant, lost 3-2 at Shanghai Port and remains without a point.

Three-time champion Pohang Steelers of South Korea lost 1-0 to Thailand’s Buriram while the Chinese and Japanese clash between Shandong Taishan and Yokohama F.Marinos ended 2-2.



Denmark’s Holger Rune returns a ball to Chile’s Nicolas Jarry during their first round match at the Swiss Indoors tennis tournament at the St. Jakobshalle in Basel, Switzerland. (AP)

### Rune, Tsitsipas and Shelton advance at Swiss Indoors

Stefanos Tsitsipas and Holger Rune kept alive their slim hopes of reaching the ATP Finals with wins at the Swiss Indoors tournament on Tuesday.

Tsitsipas, ranked No. 11, outlasted Francisco Cerundolo 6-3, 6-7 (3), 7-6 (4), while 14th-ranked Rune beat Nicolas Jarry 6-4, 7-6 (3). The top-eight

Finals are next month in Turin.

The third-seeded Tsitsipas next plays qualifier Botic van de Zandschulp. Rune is seeded fourth and will face Swiss wild card Dominic Stricker. Also Tuesday, sixth-seeded Ben Shelton beat Tomas Martin Etcheverry 6-3, 6-4. (AP)

### Best of the Rest

**Cano ends goal drought:** Argentine striker German Cano scored just his third league goal of the season on Tuesday as Fluminense eased relegation fears with a 1-0 home win over Athletico Paranaense in Brazil’s Serie A championship.

The 36-year-old, who had not scored in the top-flight since May, broke the deadlock at the Maracana Stadium by bundling home from close range nine minutes from time.

The result lifted Fluminense to 11th in the 20-team standings with 36 points from 30 games, five points ahead of 18th-placed Athletico Paranaense.

“We know that it was very important to win this match because it allowed us to rise several places in the standings,” Cano said.

“I don’t know how I can express my gratitude to the club’s fans for the way they supported me and the patience they showed when I wasn’t scoring. I want to help to give them something to celebrate.” (Xinhua)

■ ■ ■

**Thiem ends career in Vienna:** Austria’s Dominic Thiem, the 2020 US Open champion, lost 7-6(6), 6-2 to Italy’s Luciano Darderi on Tuesday in a first-round match at the Erste Bank Open in Vienna, ending his professional tennis career in his home country.

Having built a 4-2 lead in the first set, the 31-year-old Austrian ran out of steam and lost the first set in a tiebreak. Darderi, the world No. 42, won the second set more comfortably by 6-2.

“I’ve had so many nice goodbyes in the last few months, but today, I want to say thank you for all the sensational years,” Thiem told the cheering crowds after the match. “I am only a part of this career. The whole journey has been an absolute dream, and I want this afternoon, this evening, to be yours. I couldn’t have imagined it any better.”

On Sunday, Thiem played an exhibition match against world No. 3 Alexander Zverev in an emotionally charged farewell party at the Erste Bank Open, attended by thousands of fans.

Video messages by Novak Djokovic, Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer were shown at the party, with the tennis legends praising Thiem for his achievement.

Earlier this year, the former world No. 3 Thiem announced that he would retire from professional tennis after years of struggle to recover from the wrist injury he sustained in 2021. (Xinhua)

## FIFA president confirms at least 9 African teams for 2026 World Cup

ADDIS ABABA, Oct 23, (Xinhua): FIFA President Gianni Infantino on Tuesday confirmed that at least nine African teams will compete in the 2026 World Cup that will take place in the United States, Mexico and Canada.

Infantino made the remarks when the 46th Confederation of African Football (CAF) Ordinary General Assembly opened on Tuesday in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia, bringing together leaders and delegates of member associations from across Africa.

“In World Cup 2026, there will be nine or ten African countries (and regions) participating in the World Cup,” said Infantino, noting that the increase is to be made in line with FIFA’s expanded World

Cup format.

Infantino urged African countries to further invest in and unleash the potential of the continent’s young football players.

“I encourage all of you to continue investing in youth football because those kids, those girls and boys, will be the stars of tomorrow,” he said.

The president said FIFA is also considering increasing the number of African teams participating in the FIFA Women’s World Cup to six.

He also noted that Morocco is set to host the FIFA World Cup in 2030, which would make the country the second-ever African nation to host the World Cup.

While addressing the opening



FIFA President Gianni Infantino, right, stands with Inter Miami managing owner Jorge Mas, left, during a ceremony for the team winning the Supporters’ Shield after an MLS soccer match against the New England Revolution in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. (AP)

session of the Assembly, Ethiopian President Taye Atske Selassie appealed to the CAF to endorse Ethiopia’s bid to host the 2029 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON 2029) tournament.

Atske Selassie also noted the need to bring the World Cup trophy to African soil, although many players with African roots are becoming instrumental for the victory of non-African nations to claim the prestigious football trophy.

“The key to elevating the football sport and nurturing young talent lies in the scaling up of the collective efforts. With this foundational talent in place, African football can thrive and occupy its rightful place on the global stage,” Atske Selassie said.

Expressing best wishes for Ethiopia’s bid to host AFCON 2029, CAF President Patrice Motsepe encouraged the government of Ethiopia and the football federation to work closely to make timely decisions regarding Ethiopia’s proposal submission.

“We are very excited about the intention of Ethiopia to submit a proposal to host the AFCON 2029,” he added. “The success of football is what happens in Ethiopia, what happens in other parts of the continent. We are successful in some countries. In others, we are not successful.” Former African football stars, including Samuel Eto’o, Jay-Jay Okocha, El-Hadji Diouf, among others, attended the 46th CAF Ordinary General Assembly.





AC Milan's Christian Pulisic, not seen, scores direct from the corner his side's first goal during the Champions League opening phase soccer match between AC Milan and Club Brugge at the San Siro stadium in Milan, Italy. (AP)

# Sports

## Madrid roars back against Dortmund

Villa enjoying dream start to first Champions League campaign

**MADRID, Oct 23, (Agencies):** Real Madrid came back from 2-0 down at home to Borussia Dortmund to win 5-2, while Girona beat Slovan Bratislava 2-0 to claim its first-ever points in the competition in Spain.

In a repeat of last season's final, Dortmund rocked Madrid with two goals in four first half minutes. The first goal came in the 30th minute when Donyell Malen side-footed past Thibaut Courtois after a magnificent pass from Serhou Guirassy.

Four minutes later, Jamie Gittens took advantage of a lack of upfield pressure to net the second for the German side after it was allowed to advance, and Donyell Malen crossed to the far post.

The goals woke Real Madrid up, with Jude Bellingham heading into Gregor Kobel's arms before he and Vinicius both hit the Borussia woodwork within a matter of seconds.

Real Madrid kept the pressure on at the start of the second half and got back into the game thanks to Antonio Rudiger's powerful header after 60 minutes.

It was level two minutes later

when Kylian Mbatpe and Vinicius Jr combined for the latter to have a simple tap-in.

Serhou Guirassy saw a shot saved by Thibaut Courtois' legs moments before Lucas Vazquez scored the winning goal for Real Madrid with a powerful right foot shot after the ball fell kindly for him in the penalty area off a defender.

Vinicius Jr added a fourth for Madrid in the 86th minute after a run from deep inside his half to then score with a right-foot shot and rounded off the scoring in injury time with another individual goal as he turned the Dortmund defense inside out.

Miguel Gutierrez put Girona ahead close to halftime with a left-foot finish after good work from Arnaut Danjuma down the left wing.

Juanpe doubled Girona's lead with a perfect free kick in the 73rd minute. The defender's shot went over the wall to leave Slovan goalkeeper Dominik Takac with no chance.

Crstian Stauni could have added a third from the penalty spot, but his effort was magnificently blocked by Takec. Three straight wins, no goals conceded and top of the league on maximum points.

Aston Villa's first ever appearance in the Champions League couldn't be going any better.

Villa's 2-0 home win over Bologna on Tuesday maintained the 100% start to the English team's



Dortmund's Nico Schlotterbeck, right, vies for the ball with Real Madrid's Kylian Mbatpe during the Champions League opening phase soccer match between Real Madrid and Borussia Dortmund at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium in Madrid. (AP)

first campaign in Europe's top club competition since 1983 - when it was called the European Cup, which

Villa won in 1982.

Villa opened with a 3-0 win at Swiss outsider Young Boys and then

beat German giant Bayern Munich 1-0 in its first home game of the revamped competition.

Halfway through the third round of league games, Villa is in first place and no other team has nine points.

Three games. One win. No goals from the forwards.

Judging by Paris Saint-Germain's performances so far, the revamped Champions League format could actually prove to be PSG's salvation because it may have struggled to qualify under the previous group format.

Tuesday's 1-1 home draw in the league stage against PSV Eindhoven, the Dutch league leader, exposed familiar weaknesses in defense while PSG no longer has galacticos like Kylian Mbatpe or Neymar to decide tight matches.

Christian Pulisic scored direct from a corner kick to set AC Milan on the way to its first victory in this season's Champions League.

But the United States international admitted it was an accident.

Pulisic surprised everyone when he curled in a kick from the left corner flag in the 34th minute to put Milan 1-0 up against Club Brugge.

Arsenal's problems are mounting ahead of a huge Premier League game against Liverpool at the weekend.

With key attacking players Martin Odegaard and Bukayo Saka and defender Jurrien Timber already on the injury list, Arsenal saw left back Riccardo Calafiori go off in the second half of the 1-0 win over Shakhtar Donetsk after twisting his right knee.

## 'Kuwait School Sports delegation ready for World Games in Bahrain'



Kuwait School Sports Federation and Higher Education delegation.

MANAMA, Oct 23: Faisal Abdullah Al-Maqseed, Chairman of the Kuwait School Sports Federation and Higher Education, expressed his hope that the athletes competing in the World School Games in Bahrain will secure top positions and win medals, contributing to the overall success of Kuwaiti sports.

Al-Maqseed made this statement upon his arrival in Manama, Bahrain, where the Kuwait School Sports Federation delegation is set to participate in the World School Games, held from October 23 to 31 under the patronage of King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa of Bahrain.

He highlighted the federation's ambition to continue achieving success, building on the positive outcomes of its strategic plan, "Our Talents in Our Schools 2021-2026." Al-Maqseed noted that the federation has already seen results, including its participation in the Arab School Sports Championship in Cairo 2023.

Al-Maqseed also emphasized that participating in the Bahrain tournament reflects the federation's commitment to reviving school sports after a long hiatus.

The federation's five-year plan, structured in a "5/5" system, aims to develop local talent in the first five years and focus on international success in the subsequent five years through participation in Arab, Asian, and global competitions.

He affirmed that the federation has worked diligently with technical and administrative teams to ensure the players are fully prepared, hoping their success will benefit both education and sports in Kuwait. Al-Maqseed extended his wishes for the prosperity of the nation under the leadership of His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Crown Prince, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

### Best of the Rest

**Morena appointed as coach:** Botswana Football Association (BFA) has announced appointment of South African Ramoreboli as interim senior men national team coach.

This appointment follows the sudden resignation of former coach Didier Gomes Da Rosa who has since joined Libyan side Al Ahli Tripoli. The Frenchman left his position over a week ago following back-to-back wins over Cape Verde in the qualifiers of the 2025 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON).

Ramoreboli is currently coaching reigning Botswana Premier League champions Jwaneng Galaxy and has had success as a coach in Botswana having clinched three league titles and lead Galaxy to the group stages of the Confederation of African Football (CAF) Champions' League. (Xinhua)

**Gordon signs 'long-term' deal:** Newcastle United on Tuesday confirmed that England winger Anthony Gordon has signed a new "long-term" contract with the club.

Gordon has scored 15 goals and given 11 assists in 74 appearances since joining Newcastle from Everton in January 2023, forcing his way into the England national team set-up in the process. (Xinhua)

## China registers second consecutive victory in U-17 Asian Cup qualifier

DALIAN, China, Oct 23, (Xinhua): China registered its second consecutive win in the U-17 Asian Cup qualifying campaign, as they humiliated Bhutan

6-0 in the third round of Group C.

China opened its campaign with a 2-0 victory over Bahrain last Saturday and got a second round bye, while Bhutan

picked up one draw and one defeat.

The home side dominated the game from the very beginning but could not break a well-organized Bhutan defense until the 34th minute when Wei Xiangxin rose to meet a Zhang Chengrui's cross. The floodgates opened, as Aibibula Nueraji and substitute Li Xiang made it 3-0 just three minutes into the second-half.

Aibibula bagged a brace as he unleashed a curler that beat the goalkeeper from a tight angle on the hour mark.

It was not finished yet, as Yang Qian-dong and Li scored again in the stoppage time to round out the scoresheet.

China will meet the Maldives in the fourth round on Friday.

A total of 43 teams were divided into ten groups to play the U-17 Asian Cup qualifiers, and the group winners along with the best five second-placed teams will join hosts Saudi Arabia for the finals, which are scheduled from April 3 to 20, 2025.



Atlanta United goalkeeper Brad Guzan (1) makes a save against CF Montreal defender Tom Pearce (46) during penalty shootout in an MLS soccer wild-card playoff game in Montreal. (AP) - See Page 14