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## Opinion

**Ahmed Al-Jarallah**

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

### Minister of Commerce: The government is harmonious

WHEN the opportunity arises to meet with Minister of Commerce and Industry Khalifa Al-Ajeel for the first time, you experience firsthand how ministerial cooperation works under a cohesive government, and you realize the significance of the determination to advance and restore the leadership role of Kuwait in the current era.

In the past, matters proceeded on a knife-edge, especially for ministers who had to work according to the program of the government, while avoiding provoking the MPs.

Consequently, the most important executive position in the country was unstable, as each MP considered himself the ruler. This led to the freezing of many laws that are now being implemented in succession.

What matters now is that work is ongoing to accelerate development and avoid rushing forward, while the ruler monitors, orders and directs. This entails working hard to achieve the desired goal, which requires time, patience and correcting errors.

When the decision to raise the chalet fees was issued and the government realized it was a mistake, it reconsidered the matter. This should apply to all other matters in order to correct the path.

In this regard, Minister Al-Ajeel gives his interlocutors numerous signals, particularly on the need to unify the powers of ministries.

Previously, when a trade license is issued, the Kuwait Municipality would suspend it. If the media -- as the entity responsible for a certain activity -- works on a tourism issue, another entity would prevent it.

Today, efforts are underway to eliminate this overlap on one hand, and to ease procedures on the other hand, for the wheel of progress to move forward.

We are witnessing the stability of the ministerial position, while proceeding according to a steady development vision. This means that everyone must work, and those who work are the ones who make mistakes.

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## Kuwait Crown Prince receives Japanese FM



HH the Crown Prince receives Japanese Foreign Minister Takeshi Iwaya and his accompanying delegation.

### FM Iwaya lauds Kuwait's key role in advancing GCC-Japan ties

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 1, (KUNA): His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace on Monday Japanese Foreign Minister Takeshi Iwaya and his accompanying delegation.

The audience came on the occasion of the second Japan-GCC Foreign Ministers' Strategic Cooperation Meeting, which Minister Iwaya is attending.

Present at the meeting were head of His Highness the Crown Prince's Diwan Sheikh Thamer Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya and senior officials.

The State of Kuwait plays an important

leadership role in supporting closer GCC-Japanese relations amid ongoing regional and international challenges, Japanese Foreign Minister Takeshi Iwaya said on Monday.

In a statement to KUNA ahead of the second Japan-GCC Foreign Ministers' Meeting, Iwaya said, "We are deeply grateful to Kuwait for hosting... This valuable opportunity will allow us to engage in sincere and frank exchange of views with GCC countries on how to address the challenging issues in the regional and international situations."

The Foreign Minister further elaborated on the intention to extend cooperation and coordination with the GCC, stating, "We also aim

to steadily advance negotiations towards an early conclusion of the Japan-GCC Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) negotiations.

"We commend Kuwait for its energetic leadership and support of the vibrant activities of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) as is Chair this year," he stated.

He said, "In the long history of friendship between Japan and Kuwait, through this visit, we aim to set our sails high like the majestic dhow, a symbol of Kuwait, to achieve further progress not only in our bilateral relations but also in our cooperation with the GCC."

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# Afghan quake carnage kills over 800

Kuwait condoles as UN calls for global aid following Afghanistan tragedy

**KUWAIT CITY/KABUL, Sept 1, (Agencies):** Kuwait's Foreign Ministry on Monday expressed sympathy and solidarity with the people of Afghanistan after a powerful earthquake that struck the east of the country.

In a statement, the Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry offered sincere condolences to the Afghan people and the families of the victims, and wished a speedy recovery for the injured.

Meanwhile, desperate Afghans clawed through rubble in search of missing loved ones after a strong earthquake killed some 812 people and injured more than 2,800 in eastern Afghanistan, Zabihullah Mujahid, spokesman for the Afghan interim government, said on Monday.

The 6.0 magnitude quake late Sunday hit towns in the province of Kunar,



Left: A military helicopter carrying injured victims of an earthquake that killed many people and destroyed villages in eastern Afghanistan takes off in Mazar Dara, Kunar province, Afghanistan, Monday, Sept. 1, 2025. Right: Local residents walk by a house destroyed by an earthquake that killed many people and destroyed villages in eastern Afghanistan, in Mazar Dara, Kunar province, Afghanistan, Monday. (AP)

near the city of Jalalabad in neighboring Nangarhar province, causing extensive damage.

The quake at 11:47 p.m. was

centered 27 kilometers (17 miles) east-northeast of Jalalabad, the U.S. Geological Survey said. It was just 8 kilometers (5 miles) deep. Shallower



quakes tend to cause more damage. Several aftershocks followed.

Footage showed rescuers taking injured people on stretchers from col-

lapsed buildings and into helicopters as people frantically dug through rubble with their hands.

The Taliban government's chief

spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid, said at a press conference Monday that the death toll had risen to at least 800 with more than 2,500 injured. He said most of the casualties were in Kunar.

Buildings in Afghanistan tend to be low-rise constructions, mostly of concrete and brick, with homes in rural and outlying areas made from mud bricks and wood. Many are poorly built.

One resident in Nurgal district, one of the worst-affected areas in Kunar, said nearly the entire village was destroyed.

"Children are under the rubble. The elderly are under the rubble. Young people are under the rubble," said the villager, who did not give his name.

"We need help here," he pleaded. "We need people to come here and join us. Let us pull out the people who are buried. There is no one who can come and remove dead bodies from under the rubble."

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Photo by Mohammad Morsi  
Victory Day marked with a ceremonial cake cutting.

## Kuwait reaffirms defense partnership with Turkiye

**By Fares Ghaleb**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 1: Minister of Defense Undersecretary Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Al-Sabah expressed Kuwait's appreciation for the friendly and supportive ties that bind it to Turkiye, especially in the defense field, while affirming the readiness of Kuwait to strengthen and advance these relations in the future.

Continued on Page 5

## Kuwait airport sees back-to-school rush

**By Mohammad Al-Enezi**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 1: As the start of the new school year is fast approaching, Kuwait International Airport is witnessing heavy traffic with the return of thousands of travelers who spent their summer vacation abroad, particularly from Arab and foreign capitals.

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Photo by Samer Shiqr  
A joyous reunion as a returnee hugs a loved one at Kuwait airport.

## Kuwait greenlights GCC payment systems link

**By Najeh Bilal**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 1: The Council of Ministers issued Decree-Law No. 130/2025 approving the Agreement on the Interconnection of Payment Systems among the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Countries.

The explanatory memorandum of the decree states that the approval of this Gulf agreement is based on the objectives of the GCC Charter, which calls for strengthening ties between the GCC member states in various fields.

This is also in line with the GCC Economic Agreement, which aims to boost the economies of the GCC countries in light of global economic developments.

### Day by Day

WHEN a minister is aware of what is going on in his ministry, knows the methods of the corrupt, and how they handle things when their corruption is exposed, things proceed as they should.

However, if the corrupt are able to distract the official with false explanations, then this is the greatest disaster, as the winds blow against the direction that officials take in upholding justice for those dealing with State ministries and the public.

O Allah, we do not ask You to reverse the fate, but rather to be lenient with it.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

**Zahed Matar**

### Newswatch

**KUWAIT CITY:** The Amiri Diwan on Monday thanked all citizens and residents who offered condolences over the demise of Sheikh Ali Abdullah Al-Khalifah Al-Sabah. (KUNA)

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**DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip:** Israel launched strikes across the Gaza Strip on Monday, killing at least 31 people as it presses ahead with a major offensive in the territory's largest city, according to health officials. Leading genocide scholars, meanwhile, joined other rights groups in accusing Israel of genocide, allegations it vehemently rejects. (AP)



**NBK: Continuous leadership in supporting youth and enhancing sustainability**

## CBK sets 7 rules for fair bank draws

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 1: Following the circular issued in late March to postpone draws for re-evaluation, the Central Bank of Kuwait has set seven regulations for local banks to resume draws, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The daily obtained a copy of the circular, emphasizing that the regulations aim to enhance transparency and

ensure the integrity of procedures, especially since some of these prizes are offered to customers as part of certain banking products.

In the circular, the Central Bank stated that after reviewing the evaluation results submitted by banks following the decision to postpone the draws in March to guarantee the implementa-

tion of governance rules, resuming the draws requires obtaining authorization from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, in accordance with Law No. 2/1995 regarding the regulation and supervision of advertising and promotion of goods and services.

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Prayer Timings			
Fajr .....	04:03	Asr .....	15:22
Sunrise ..	05:25	Maghrib ..	18:11
Zohr .....	11:48	Isha .....	19:30

# Local

**Expected weather for next 24 hrs:**  
**By Day:** Hot and relatively humid over coastal areas with light to moderate northwesterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 08-35 km/h.  
**By Night:** Hot to rather hot and relatively humid over coastal areas with light to moderate north-

Weather			
westerly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 06-28 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.			
Station	Max Exp	Min Rec	
Kuwait City	46	34	
Kuwait Airport	45	34	
Abdaly	45	29	

Bubyan	45	25
Jahra	46	32
Salmiyah	42	34
Ahmadi	41	32
Nuwaisib	42	32
Wafra	45	31
Salmiyah	43	27

## Crown Prince receives PM



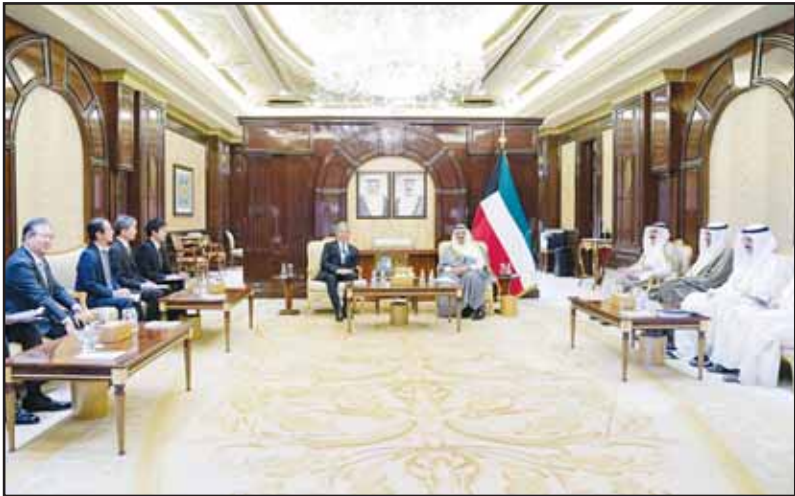
HH the Crown Prince

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 1, (KUNA): His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah re-



HH the Prime Minister

ceived at Bayan Palace on Monday His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.



PM Diwan photo  
His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace on Monday Japanese Foreign Minister Takeshi Iwaya and the accompanying delegation.

## PM receives Japanese FM and his delegation

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 1, (KUNA): His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace on Monday Japanese Foreign Minister Takeshi Iwaya and the accompanying delegation.

The meeting came on the occasion of the second Japan-GCC Foreign Ministers' Strategic Cooperation Meeting, which Minister Iwaya is discussing.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed ways to enhance ties and exchanged views on issues of mutual interest.

Present at the meeting were Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya, Head of His Highness the Prime Minister's Diwan Abdulaziz Al-Dakheel, and Assistant Foreign Minister for Asia Affairs Ambassador Sameeh Hayat.

## GCC FORGES AHEAD, TO COUNTER CHALLENGES SHOULDER-TO-SHOULDER

# Gulf, Japan cherish qualitative alliance

Trade exchange to hit \$115 billion

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 1: Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Jassim Al-Budaiwi affirmed the depth and strength of Gulf-Japanese relations, asserting that this relationship has become a model for a comprehensive strategic partnership that is continuously developing in various fields.**

Al-Budaiwi made the affirmation in a speech he delivered at the opening of the second joint ministerial meeting of the GCC-Japan Strategic Dialogue.

He welcomed Japanese Foreign Affairs Minister Takeshi Iwaya, while extending his gratitude and appreciation to 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 for Kuwait's generous hosting of this joint meeting and the capabilities and high-level organization it provided, reflecting its prestigious position in supporting the GCC and its international partnerships.

He also thanked Kuwait's Foreign Affairs Minister Sheikh Abdullah Al-Yahya for his tremendous efforts and tireless follow up to ensure the success of the meeting and build bridges of cooperation and partnership with friendly countries.

He expressed his pride in the development of Gulf-Japanese relations at all levels -- from political coordination, trade exchange and energy cooperation to high-level cultural and academic exchange, indicating the meeting is the best evidence of the steady growth of these relations.

He pointed out that the meeting was held amid international circumstances characterized by rapid political, economic and security transformations, which require solidarity and stronger partnerships to address common challenges like food security, climate change, energy security



Representatives of GCC countries pose for a picture.

Photos by Mohammad Morsi



Kuwait Minister of Foreign Affairs and Chair of the Ministerial Council Abdullah Al-Yahya



GCC Secretary General Jassim Al-Budaiwi



Japanese Foreign Minister Takeshi Iwaya

and digital transformation.

He said the partnership with Japan is emerging as a strategic choice that serves mutual interests. He disclosed that the achievements with Japan include the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding for Cooperation and Strategic Dialogue in 2012, launching the 2024-2028 Joint Action Plan, announcing the launch of negotiations for a free trade agreement with the signing of the joint statement on July 16, 2023 in Jeddah, and signing the terms of reference on Aug 19, 2024 in Tokyo.

He added the volume of trade exchange is expected to reach \$115 billion, and \$84 billion of which are Gulf exports, mostly oil, gas and petro-

chemicals, and \$31 billion are imports from Japan in the fields of automobiles, technology and advanced industrial products.

He cited the growth of Japanese investments in the GCC countries, exceeding \$15 billion in the renewable energy, digitalization and smart industries, which reflects Japan's confidence in the Gulf business environment.

He emphasized that what has been achieved so far is only one step on a long road, expressing his aspiration for enhancement of strategic consultations to ensure regional stability and the security of maritime routes, invest in the digital economy, artificial intelligence,

clean energy, and carbon capture technologies, develop cooperation in food security and sustainable agriculture, expand cultural and tourism exchanges, and work together to achieve net-zero carbon neutrality by the middle of the century.

He concluded by stressing that the GCC partnership with Japan is not based solely on economic and political interests, but rather on a shared vision for a future of peace and sustainable development. He reiterated his gratitude to the State of Kuwait for its generous sponsorship and sincere efforts, to Japan for its sincere cooperation, and to all participants for their valuable contributions.

He hopes that the discussions

will yield new practical steps that strengthen the strategic partnership and open broader horizons for the prosperity of the peoples of both sides.

On the number of Gulf students in Japanese universities, he pointed out the 25 percent increase in the number of Gulf students at Japanese universities since 2020, and the expansion of academic and research exchange programs to develop knowledge transfer and capacity building.

He went on to say that the meeting discussed different aspects of joint Gulf action and views exchanged between parties, in addition to holding a joint Gulf-Japanese ministerial meeting.

He clarified that the postponement of the Gulf-Ukrainian ministerial meeting, which was scheduled for Monday, was due to the Ukrainian Foreign Minister's inability to leave the capital, Kyiv. He stated this Gulf ministerial meeting is the last of the regular meetings hosted by Kuwait during its current presidency. He added that this month and the next two months will witness a significant number of meetings -- 14 specialized ministerial meetings.

He said "we are very proud of the achievements we made in the Gulf during the past period, which strengthened our blessed journey and have had a significant positive impact on the GCC countries and Gulf citizens."

He added that the two meetings addressed a number of regional and international issues at the political level, particularly the current situation in the Gaza Strip and the serious and brutal violations committed by the Israeli occupiers against the Palestinian people.

He stressed that these violations have exceeded the bounds of logic and reason and undermined international laws and treaties, significantly impacting global security and stability.

He also expressed his concern about the international community's inability to stop these practices and violations. He explained that the meeting with the Japanese Affairs Foreign Minister provided an opportunity to invite Japan to join the international coalition to recognize the State of Palestine, adding that the Gulf side received positive responses from Japan, with the Japanese Minister confirming that Tokyo will study this matter.

He pointed out that the meeting also touched on the distinguished and historical Gulf-Japanese relations. He added "we share common positions, as the two sides seek to strengthen these positions to reach broader horizons. It was also agreed to implement the joint action plan (2024-2028), which includes cooperation in the fields of energy, trade, investment, academic and cultural activity, in addition to proceeding with the free trade agreement between the two sides."

## Bid to promote transparency, integrity

# GCC nations review tools of measuring corruption, AI, technology role at meet

By Inass Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 1:** Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) affirmed that the recommendations presented at the annual event of the Committee of Experts on Combating Corruption in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) are considered a practical step towards advancing the efforts of GCC countries to promote integrity and transparency.

This is in light of the growing international interest and recent global initiatives in the field of measuring corruption, including the Statistical Framework for Measuring Corruption issued by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Global Initiative to Measure Corruption of the United Nations Development Programme, and the Global Programme to Measure Corruption of the International Anti-Corruption Academy.

In a press statement Sunday, Nazaha confirmed that these efforts are

within the context of the increasing attention that the issue receives at international conferences, specifically the Conference of the State Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption -- the 11th session of which will be held in Doha, Qatar in December.

Nazaha affirmed that the annual event of the committee concluded Monday at its headquarters in Kuwait with the theme, "Mechanisms for Measuring Corruption: International Experiences and National Applications."

The participants included experts and representatives of agencies concerned with promoting integrity and combating corruption in the GCC countries.

The sessions featured a review of pioneering Gulf experiences in measuring corruption, including presentations by the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Kingdom of Bahrain, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Sultanate of Oman, State of Qatar

and State of Kuwait.

The sessions focused on tools and methodologies for measuring corruption, societal awareness of its risks, and the role of technology and artificial intelligence in this field.

The recommendations presented at the event include developing scientific frameworks and methodologies for measuring corruption based on comprehensiveness, transparency and consistency with international standards, enhancing Gulf and international cooperation and integration in the field of measuring corruption through the exchange of experiences, best practices, and capacity building, benefiting from programs and tools developed by the United Nations and specialized international organizations.

Also, active participation in international conferences and forums concerned with improving the measurement of corruption rates, supporting national initiatives to

measure corruption through periodic surveys, statistical indicators and databases in accordance with international standards and methodologies, monitoring international indicators, encouraging government agencies, oversight bodies and national bodies to make data related to combating corruption available.

It also includes improving quality in terms of accuracy, reliability and comparability, using modern technology tools and artificial intelligence to monitor and analyze corruption patterns, raising community awareness, and enhancing cooperation with stakeholders such as civil society institutions, private sector, and academia in corruption measurement processes, and integrating continuous monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for measuring corruption into national anti-corruption strategies, allowing for tracking progress and ensuring the sustainability of measurement and combating corruption in the long term.

## 'Free till secondary in Kuwait'

# 'No true progress without education and knowledge'

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 1, (KUNA):** Compulsory education in Kuwait has been a cornerstone in building its society and investing in the country's human resources since the implementation of Law No. 11 of 1965, which stipulated that education would be compulsory and free for students from elementary school until the end of secondary school.

In this context, Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) interviewed several educational figures and officials who touted compulsory education and its various benefits.

Compulsory education is the cornerstone upon which all thriving societies are built, said Dr. Yaqoub Al-Ghunaim, a former Minister of Education in 1981 and retired Arabic language teacher at Shuwaikh High

School.

Dr. Al-Ghunaim stressed that history has shown the world that no true advancement could be achieved without proper knowledge and education, saying that countries that neglected education had suffered greatly.

He said that education was not only teaching subjects and moving on, but a process that instilled morals and ethics, which contributed to the rise of societies.

For her part, a member of the Board of Trustees at the Kuwaiti International Law School (KILAW) and Chairperson of the Kuwaiti National Society for the Protection of Children, Seham Al-Foraih, asserted that the first step to ensure human development came through bolstering education.

She cited in this regard the experiences of nations such as Singapore, which saw rapid progress by prioritizing education and academia.

Educational materials and curricula must be updated constantly to benefit all on the institutional and personal levels, she said.



Dr. Al-Ghunaim



diwaniya

حيوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

‘Mideast must wake up to avert a bleak future’

“THE Middle East, a region of strategic and geographical importance, is undergoing transformations that impact its political, economic and social stability. As the end of 2025 approaches, many analysts expect the region to witness radical changes, reflecting developments at the local and global levels.” Saudi writer **Saleh bin Abdullah Al-Muslim** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“Some countries are likely to move toward political stability as a result of efforts to resolve armed conflicts and reorganize their internal affairs, particularly in countries that experienced internal wars or regional conflicts.



Saleh Al-Muslim

“However, the threats of terrorism and security unrest will remain, especially with the continuation of conflicts between various factions, the increasing challenges related to the ruling regimes, and possibly public protests in some countries.

“The Middle East will continue its efforts to diversify its economy, away from heavy reliance on oil, especially in light of climate change and energy market challenges. Many countries will turn to investing in technology, renewable energy and modern technologies to create jobs and stimulate economic growth.

“The issue of foreign investment and economic incentives will also remain relevant, with the aim of attracting capital and achieving sustainable development.

“Expectations indicate the possibility of some improvement in relations between countries, with enhanced economic and political cooperation, particularly in the security and development fields.

“At the same time, new tensions or escalations may emerge as a result of competing geopolitical interests or simmering disputes, reflecting the complex and changing nature of the region.

“Social and cultural transformations are expected to continue, with more focus on human rights, women’s rights and education. Some countries will strengthen social reform programs, while others may face resistance.

“Furthermore, the importance of technology and communication media in shaping societal awareness and promoting local culture will increase.

“Environmental challenges will increase, particularly with the deterioration of water resources and rising temperatures, requiring effective strategies for adaptation and environmental conservation. Sustainability and clean energy projects will emerge as an essential part of sustainable development in the region.

“The future of the Middle East (only Allah knows) is uncertain, but it also holds opportunities for progress and development if countries can collectively manage their challenges and leverage their potential.”

Also:

“In a world where the pace of life accelerates and countries compete for economic and technological achievements, Kuwaiti women remain a symbol of noble values that combine ambition and humanitarian giving.” **Hanid Al-Hamli** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“Among the women who have engraved their names on the pages of contemporary Kuwaiti history, Khawla Mubarak Al-Hasawi stands out as a shining star in the sky of philanthropy.

“The daughter of a prominent man Mubarak Abdulaziz Al-Hasawi, a former member of the Kuwaiti National Assembly and a self-made businessman, Khawla inherited not only her father’s wealth, but also his spirit of giving and commitment to social responsibility.

“She earned a Bachelor of Laws from Cairo University and a Bachelor of Economics and Political Science from Kuwait University.

“She is a pioneer in the field of philanthropy, contributing to building a more just and compassionate society, inspired by the values of Islam and the rich Kuwaiti heritage of generosity and benevolence.

“Her family roots are built on giving and national heritage, with her father, Mubarak Abdulaziz Al-Hasawi, a living example of a self-made man who built his economic empire from scratch.

“This legacy is not just about money, as it includes the educational values he instilled in his children, including Khawla, who is the sixth of seven daughters and two brothers.

“This personal effort reflects her strong character, which rejects laziness or indolence, inspired by her father’s saying: ‘Money comes, but morals and knowledge bring respect and money’.

“The most prominent aspect of her career is her commitment to charitable work, a natural extension of her father’s legacy.

“In 2014, Khawla became the first Kuwaiti woman to join the Board of Directors of the Zakat, Charity and Endowment House — the independent government body responsible for collecting and developing zakat and charitable donations and disbursing them locally and internationally in accordance with Islamic law.

“She heads three main committees: Resource Development, Media, and Supervising the Implementation of Law 38/2014.

“Under her leadership, Zakat House contributed to developing the salary schedule, activating branches, and increasing the number of Hajj pilgrims in 2015, in addition to launching awareness campaigns in universities and colleges.

“She proposed collaboration with the Execution Department to assist Kuwaiti debtors by deducting a portion of their donations to reschedule their debts, aiming to achieve a ‘Kuwait free of debtors’.

“She played a vital role in establishing the Mubarak Al-Hasawi Foundation for Helping Female Prisoners, the first center of its kind in the Arab world for the re-

habilitation of female inmates after their release from prison.

“This project provides psychological and professional support, recognizing the need for these women to be given a second chance to reintegrate into society.

“She contributed to other projects such as the Al-Rukn Al-Mubarak Center and supported various charitable campaigns in and outside Kuwait, including giving assistance to those in need in neighboring countries.

“Khawla Mubarak Al-Hasawi is a living example of a Kuwaiti woman who combines professional success with social commitment.

“In a rapidly developing society, she has proven that giving is not limited to men, women can also be leaders within it.

“Khawla Al-Hasawi is not just the daughter of a national icon, but a pioneer in her own right, embodying the values of piety and giving instilled by her father.

“Through her work at Zakat House and her charitable causes, she has contributed to building a more equitable society and inspired a generation of young people to participate in volunteer work at a time the world needs more humanity.”

□ □ □

“A few days ago, Kuwait bid farewell to the great national and Arab figure and symbol, my teacher and mentor, the virtuous Uncle (Abu Bader) Ahmad Yousef Al-Nafisi.” **Sinjar Mahfoudh** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“May Allah have mercy on him, grant him His vast mercy and reward him abundantly for what he offered and gave, and make his abode in the highest paradise.

“With this painful departure and with deep sadness, the Kuwaiti and Arab arena lost an irreplaceable intellectual, political, media and humanitarian symbol. No matter how much we talk about him, we will not give him his due right in my eyes and in the eyes of all who lived with him and knew him closely.

“Personally, I had the honor of knowing the deceased in the early 1990s, when I joined the ‘Al-Tali’aa’ newspaper, the voice of the free Kuwaiti democratic platform... and the voice of the Arab nationalists.

“May Allah have mercy on him, he was not only the editor-in-chief of ‘Al-Tali’aa’, but its leader, father and beacon, with his noble and authentic values, high morals and sublime principles. With his free and bold pen, he wrote in defense of his country’s sovereignty, the values of freedom, and the approach of democratic political and societal reform in the Gulf and Arab world.

“Whatever little I can say about him by virtue of my work under his management for 14 years, and my relationship and communication with him for more than 34 years, it means to me and others -- even those who differed with him in opinion, value, status, love and the depth of relationship, deeper than words can describe.

“He, may Allah have mercy on him, was truly the voice of truth, the message of a nation, the message of his mother, and an exceptional person bearing all the praiseworthy human qualities, noble characteristics and good qualities that made him close to all hearts.

“He was the beacon of political and cultural enlightenment, and one of the most prominent pioneers of the Kuwaiti



Mahfoudh

national democratic and nationalist list. He is credited, after Almighty Allah, with shaping public opinion on many national and Arab issues, defending rights, freedoms and public funds, and confronting all forms of corruption and favoritism.

“Many young men and women in Kuwait and our Arab brothers were intellectually and media-savvy disciples at his hands. Among his many personal stances that are etched in my memory, for example, but not limited to it, was his generosity towards me when he granted me his great trust as he entrusted me with many tasks including the editing of many highly confidential, sensitive and responsible news items, in addition to the interest and love he showed me and the way he kept saying to me: Where are you? Do not interrupt. You are our son, we are your family.

“He contacted me during the COVID-19 pandemic that had serious repercussions to check on me and my family. He was surprised that I was sitting around without work during that period and reprimanded me for not informing him about my circumstances and not being able to help me. He asked about all the Arab colleagues, men and women, who previously worked at ‘Al-Tali’aa’. He asked for their phone numbers to check on them, stand by them, help them and provide their needs.

“This is in addition to his humanitarian stance towards a false allegation made by an official against one of the editors who worked at the newspaper for less than two months, requesting the termination of his services, he quickly responded: Who gave you the authority to take such action and say this? We at ‘Al-Tali’aa’ open doors. We do not work to cut off livelihoods. We work here for all the people.”

“Most of those interested in Kuwaiti, Gulf and Arab public affairs waited for his honorable stances and whatever he wrote with his pen, heart and blood through ‘Al-Tali’aa’, in addition to what Abu Bader would write under his real name or pseudonym.

“With his departure, we implore Almighty Allah to have mercy on him and to grant him a place in His spacious gardens and to grant his great wife, his righteous children and his honorable family with patience and solace... To Allah we belong and to Him we shall return.”

— Compiled by Mohammad Wangengi/Simi K. Kutty



KUNA photo  
First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah meets the President of the Qatari and the Arab Police Sports Federations Major General Khalid Al-Attayah in his office.

Kuwait, Qatar discuss ways to boost ties in police sports field

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 1, (KUNA): First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah received on Monday President of the Qatari and the Arab Police Sports Federations Major General Khalid Al-Attayah, along with Chairman of Kuwait’s Police Sports Federation, Brigadier General Mubarak Ali Yousef Al Sabah.

Sheikh Fahad Yousef Al-Sabah praised Al-Attayah in a statement released by the ministry and acknowledged the Federations role in supporting and organizing

sports activities between Arab policing bodies.

During the meeting, the officials discussed ways to develop cooperation in the police sports field, the statement continued.

Sheikh Fahad Yousef Al-Sabah also received acting Head of the Liaison Department of the Arab and International Police Union First Lieutenant Alyaa Meshal Fahad, who presented her book on military training and development for female trainees in Kuwait.

PAI shuts down industrial plots

‘Rectify situation in month’

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 1: The Public Authority for Industry (PAI) has shut 47 industrial plots and imposed 19 administrative penalties on companies and entities that violated industrial regulations and laws, utilized the plots for purposes other than those designated for them, and constructed buildings without a license.**

PAI gave violators only one month from the date of closure to regularize their status and remove the violations, stressing it will impose more severe penalties in the event of non-compliance.

This step is in compliance with the political leadership’s directive to not tolerate any violation or illegal exploitation of State lands.

PAI affirmed its unwavering commitment to take legal action against violators and manipulators, indicating that it is continuing its approach to protect State-owned industrial lands. It warned that it will not hesitate to take legal action against anyone proven to have tampered with or violated regulations. It explained that these measures do not target

any specific individual, as it is rather a way of supporting law-abiding entities and to protect the vigorous industrial sector.

It added that the next phase will witness the issuance of more deterrent decisions to ensure the creation of a committed industrial environment capable of supporting the national economy, boosting investor confidence in the transparency and fairness of the industrial environment, and contributing to the achievement of Kuwait Vision 2035, which encompasses numerous pillars and objectives aimed at developing the country’s economic sectors, especially the industrial sector.

Meanwhile, in light of Kuwait Vision 2035 and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, the industrial vision of the country marks the beginning of a new industrial era based on development, partnership and a future-oriented outlook, and sound planning for the industrial sector.

The national industrial strategy that the country is developing will focus on positioning Kuwait as a global center for competitive, innovative and sustainable industries. This will be achieved by increasing capital invested in the industrial sector from KD5.2 billion to KD11 billion.

The strategy also aims to increase the number of specialized jobs for nationals in the industrial sector from 11,000 to 25,000, increase industrial sector exports from KD1.67 billion to KD3 billion, increase the added value of the manufacturing sector from KD1.8 billion to KD2.4 billion, and increase spending on research and development from KD14.5 million to KD55 million.

Biker dies in mishap

House worker commits suicide, reports sponsor

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 1: A citizen, in his 50s, informed police that his domestic worker committed suicide by hanging in West Abdullah Al-Mubarak, reports Al-Anba daily.

The body of the domestic worker was referred to the Forensic Medicine Department, while the Farwaniya Investigation Department has been assigned to submit a report on the circumstances leading to the suicide.

A security source stated that the citizen informed the Operations Unit at the Interior Ministry that his domestic worker was missing and searched for him to no avail. When he went to his room and called the worker’s phone, he heard the phone ringing without an answer. He opened the door and found the worker with a rope tied around his neck.

He confirmed that no signs were observed indicating that the worker was planning to end his life.

A suicide case was registered.

□ □ □

**Biker killed in mishap:** An expatriate man, born in 1984, died of injuries and fractures after being hit by a vehicle while riding a motorcycle in Abdally Agricultural Area, reports Al-Anba daily.

A security source said the authorities received a report about an accident on Al-Falah Street in Abdally Agricultural Area. When the ambulance arrived at the scene, it was discovered that the motorcycle driver died.

The driver of the vehicle was referred to the police station in the area where a case of vehicular accident leading to death was filed.



PAM officially ends mid-day work ban.

3-mth ban on working in mid-day sun is over: PAM

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 1: The Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) announced the end of the midday outdoor employment ban from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm, which was implemented from June 1 to Aug 31 as part of its awareness and inspection campaign under the slogan, “Their Safety Matters”.

In a press statement Monday, acting Director General of PAM Marzouq Al-Otaibi disclosed that the authority launched a media campaign and field inspections throughout the ban period to ensure compliance with Administrative Resolution No. 535/2015.

He revealed the campaigns resulted in the seizure of 63 violating sites and 68 workers, in addition to registering 37 reports.

He emphasized that the decision aims to protect workers from harsh weather conditions and regulate working hours without compromising project progress, emphasizing its compliance with international labor standards.

In a related development, PAM announced that its inspection teams found four workers violating the decision to ban outdoor work at noon last month. This was part of its regular monitoring of the implementation of the decision and the protection of workers’ rights.

In a recent statistical report, PAM revealed that its field teams inspected four sites, during which violations were recorded against two companies for the first time. A re-inspection revealed that two companies complied with the requirements, confirming that no violations were uncovered during the re-inspection. It added that within the same month, it received 11 reports regarding midday work violations.

Burglary at home

‘Pay man KD6,000 comp for luxury car’s damage’

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 1: The Court of First Instance obligated an insurance company to pay KD6,000 to a citizen as compensation for the damage of his luxury car when he was involved in a traffic accident caused by a woman who harassed him while driving, resulting in significant damage to the vehicle.

Lawyer for the citizen, Attorney **Enaam Haider**, disclosed that the court rejected the insurance company’s arguments and procrastination, and ordered it to bear the full cost of the repairs.

Haider considers the ruling a victory for the rights of those affected by the arbitrariness of some companies that delay in fulfilling their obligations.

She said the compensation amount of KD6,000 is proportionate to the extent of the losses and cost of the restoration of the vehicle to its original condition. She added that through such rulings, the judiciary establishes the principle of “justice for all” and the protection of those affected by traffic accidents.

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**Cash stolen from home:** A citizen reported to Farwaniya Police Station that an unidentified person broke into his house in the area, and stole money and official documents, reports Al-Anba daily.

The citizen told police that while he and his family were outside, an unknown person broke into the house, stealing money and official documents.

The case was referred to the Criminal Investigations Department at the Interior Ministry to arrest the culprit.

□ □ □

**Mutla’a towers on fire:** Fatima Hayat, official spokesperson of the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, said that fire broke out recently at the under construction Al-Mutlaa water towers, indicating this project is part of ongoing efforts to develop the water network in Al-Mutlaa Residential City, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Hayat confirmed that the fire incident did not result in injuries, but it caused minor material damage.

She revealed the project site is under the responsibility of the contractor, adding that Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) firefighters controlled the fire immediately after receiving a report about the incident.

She stressed that the project is proceeding according to the approved timetable to ensure the water network is developed and meet the needs of new residential areas.

She disclosed an investigation has started to determine the cause of fire and take measures to prevent such incidents from recurring.

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Photos during the closing ceremony of the Hoot Academy Web Hackathon.

Future tech talent shines

KU hosts Hoot Academy Hackathon

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 1: Under the patronage and in the presence of acting Dean of the College of Engineering and Petroleum at Kuwait University Dr. Osama Al-Yousef and acting Deputy Director General of the Youth Sector at the Public Authority for Youth (PAY) Waleed Al-Ansari, the College hosted the closing ceremony of the Hoot Academy Web Hackathon. This competition lasted 12 days and covered

three technical tracks: cybersecurity, artificial intelligence and website development. It concluded with a skills test for the registered participants -- high school students and fresh graduates. Al-Yousef emphasized that the College's hosting of the competition is an affirmation of the commitment of the university to empower the next generation of technology leaders.

Cleaning firms call for environmental reform

Association eyes school drives, landfill cuts

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 1: Sager Al-Rashoud, Chairman of the Cleaning Companies Association, confirmed that the association is in the process of contacting the Ministry of Education to contribute to organizing awareness campaigns and workshops in schools to raise environmental awareness among students, especially in the primary stage, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Al-Rashoud told the daily that achieving environmental sustainability requires inten-

sifying joint efforts between the public and private sectors, thereby, ensuring a reduction in the number of waste landfills in the country in the coming years. He pointed out this will contribute to ongoing efforts to protect the soil, environment and overall air safety, while providing space for better investment. He explained that environmental sustainability contributes to reducing air, water and soil pollution by adopting sustainable measures in the industrial, agricultural and transportation sectors, which positively impact environmental quality and human health. He underscored the need to reduce the area of waste landfills in the country, similar to neighboring countries, warning that these landfills pose a threat to the environment and public health.

MoCI launches digital link with MoH

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 1: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry on Sunday announced the launch of an electronic link with the Ministry of Health -- represented by the Drug and Food Control Sector, as part of efforts to develop the business environment and push for digital transformation. In a press statement, the ministry disclosed that the new service will facilitate the issuance

and renewal of licenses for activities under the sector, thereby, improving the quality of services provided to investors and business owners. The ministry affirmed that this step is within its strategy to expedite transactions, reduce paperwork, and ease the burden of business owners and entrepreneurs, stressing that the electronic link contributes to raising the efficiency of government services by enhancing integration between relevant entities and supporting a more transparent and effective business environment.

350 warnings issued

Coastal crackdown cites 70 violations

By Inaas Awadh  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 1: The Public Relations Department at Kuwait Municipality announced that the safety inspection team in Ahmadi Governorate conducted a field inspection campaign in Sabah Al-Ahmad Coastal Area as part of its efforts to intensify inspection tours to ensure compliance with safety regulations. The department explained that the campaign aimed to uncover violations and take legal action against non-compliant individuals and institutions, stressing that the inspection team will not be lenient in enforcing safety regulations and monitoring the implementation of applicable controls and systems.

The campaign resulted in the issuance of 70 violation citations and 350 warnings for various violations such as failure to remove unlicensed structures, failure to remove construction debris, and failure to comply with safety requirements.

The Municipality called on individuals and institutions to strictly abide by its regulations and laws, indicating that the safety departments in various governorates will continue to intensify inspection campaigns to uncover violations, ensure public safety and enforce the law.

Ministry, Ahmadi committee push urban greening

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 1: Minister of Endowments and Islamic Affairs Dr. Mohammad Ibrahim Al-Wasmi recently met with Governor of Ahmadi and Chairman of the Green Urban Development Initiatives Committee Sheikh Hamoud Jaber Al-Ahmad at the headquarters of the Secretariat General of Endowments, reports Al-Seyassah daily. During the meeting, both sides

discussed ways to strengthen cooperation between the ministry and the committee on a number of development projects. They also explored initiatives to enhance the urban landscape through beautification programs, in addition to studying mechanisms for greening mosques in line with the plans of the State for sustainable development and improving the quality of life in residential areas.



Governor of Ahmadi, Sheikh Hamoud Jaber Al-Ahmad with Minister of Endowments and Islamic Affairs Dr. Mohammad Ibrahim Al-Wasmi.

Other Voices

Viet Nam marks 80 years of national pride and progress

By Dr. Duc Thang Nguyen  
Viet Nam Ambassador to Kuwait

Viet Nam has made a moment for the people to be proud of and admire their nation 80 years ago. On 2nd September 1945, President Ho Chi Minh read the Declaration of Independence, giving birth to the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and marking a new chapter in the history of our beloved nation.

The contemporary history of Viet Nam since then has been a long journey that Vietnamese people have gone through many hardships and sacrifices, including the resistance wars required by the blood, sweat and tears of millions of compatriots and soldiers, the lingering years coping with plenty of challenges and difficulties in security, politics, economy and diplomacy, so as to resolutely affirm and protect the justice, independence and reunification of the country.

Today, with all the will and efforts, Viet Nam has been recognized as a model of national innovation and successful development. Our country has currently gained the GDP ranking 32nd in the world, the total trade volume of over 800 billion USD among the group of 20 countries having the world largest commercial scales, and received more than 500 billion USD of foreign direct investment (FDI) at an average growth rate of nearly 10% per year.

In the years after the Covid pandemic, our economy has grown steadily 6-7% annually and is forecast to continue increasing over 8% in 2025. Viet Nam has turned to be an important link of the regional and world economy and effectively positioned itself into the global supply chain by participating in 17 free trade agreements (FTAs), signing more than 500 bilateral and multilateral trade agreements with partners. At the same time, Viet Nam has been achieving many socio-economic Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) set by the United Nations as well as giving a strong commitment to implementing green development, combating climate change, and reducing to net zero emission by 2050 (COP26).

In terms of foreign affairs, Viet Nam has established diplomatic relations with 194 countries, of which 13 are Comprehensive Strategic Partners that including all world powers, 10 Strategic Partners and 15 Comprehensive Partners. On the multilateral plane, Viet Nam is an active member of more than 70 major political, economic, socio-cultural organizations in the world and the region, while getting more and more involved in peacekeeping and humanitarian relief missions in important overseas areas.

As a country of beautiful nature, vibrant cultural identity, inhabited by friendly and benevolent people, Viet Nam wins lots of love from international friends that shown by the increasing number of tourists from all continents. In 2024, Viet Nam welcomed 19 million foreign visitors, and this number has been estimated to reach 23 million this year.

In order to accomplish these impressive achievements in the cause of national construction, along with the strong will and righteous policy of the Party and the Government, Viet Nam has also enjoyed supports of friends from all over world to maintain the national independence and realize the aspiration of freedom and development.

Looking at the Gulf region in particular and the Middle East in general, Viet Nam views Kuwait with special emotion and appreciation at all times. We have cherished the precious friendship since Kuwait was the first country in the region to establish diplomatic relations with Viet Nam in January 1976 -- a significant time right after Viet Nam came out of the war with a resounding victory and reunified the country.

Towards the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between

Viet Nam and Kuwait, the Embassy of Viet Nam in Kuwait is utmost grateful for the merits of previous leaders and would like to express sincerest thanks to His Highness the Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah; His Highness the Crown Prince, Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Sabah; and His Highness the Prime Minister, Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah. We also highly appreciate all ministries and agencies in the Government and all good friends of Kuwait, who have supported Viet Nam impartially and enthusiastically in the past challenging times as well as today's period of peace and development.

Viet Nam-Kuwait relations have so far bloomed in many fields of cooperation with substantive results compared to other countries in the region. Leaders of our two countries have made exchanged official visits and regularly maintained contacts to promote bilateral relations and coordination in supporting each other at international forums. In terms of economic cooperation, the total export-import turnover between Viet Nam and Kuwait in 2024 reached 7.3 billion USD,

the highest level of bilateral trade of Viet Nam in the Middle East, in which the proportion of non-petroleum products such as food, seafood, fresh fruits, textiles and garments, electronics, equipment, machinery, etc. is obviously improving. The large investment of Kuwait, Japan and Viet Nam in Nghi Son Refinery and Petrochemical Joint Venture has yielded fruits since the factory got higher efficiency than many others, running at 120% capacity and earning profits recently. The two countries have just celebrated the 30th anniversary of the signing of the Bilateral Trade Agreement (May 3, 1995 - May 3, 2025), reaffirming more favorable conditions for the two sides' businesses to strengthen connection and expansion in each other's market. In terms of culture, education and tourism cooperation, Viet Nam and Kuwait share similarities and complements to each other. Many Vietnamese students now come to study at Kuwait University annually, and Kuwaiti students also receive many opportunities going to Viet Nam to experience through practical projects of educational and training institutions. Kuwaiti people attracted by Viet Nam's unique natural sceneries, rich cuisines and wonderful services have been increasingly choosing our country as the top tourist destination in Southeast Asia. Some provinces of our two countries have already established relations to promote local cooperation and people exchanges, such as the 2 pairs of Ahmadi Governorate - Ho Chi Minh City and Farwanjia Governorate - Thanh Hoa Province, bringing about better understanding and cohesiveness for our people and entrepreneurs.

After half a century of friendship and partnership, Viet Nam and Kuwait still have a lot of room to develop bilateral cooperation. Many key areas that the two sides should focus in the coming years are the further facilitation of trade in goods, financial investment, and extensive cooperation in the energy sector, digital transformation, agriculture, fishery, food security and tourism. We also put forward discussion with Kuwait on the possibility of opening direct flight route; this will be a decisive factor for more exchanges, contacts and engagement activities between the governments, enterprises and people of Viet Nam and Kuwait.

Celebrating the 80th Anniversary of Independence Day, Viet Nam is once again steadfast on the chosen path, realizing the "Era of Rising" and setting to reach higher socio-economic development goals. And thanking to practical cooperation for mutual development, Viet Nam and Kuwait will bring real benefits to the people, help building the bridge between Southeast Asia and the Gulf, thus contributing to stability, peace and prosperity for both countries and the two regions.



# SEPTEMBER

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LOCAL

Nearly 3,700 divorces registered in 6 months

Kuwait's divorce soars, sparks push for premarital guidance

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

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 1: Day after day, family statistics in Kuwait demonstrate the urgent need for premarital guidance and the importance of pre-marriage counseling.

Official statistics showed that divorces accounted for nearly half of all marriages in Kuwait during the first half of this year, with a success rate of one marriage out of every two.

The newspaper obtained a copy of the statistics issued by the Ministry of Justice, indicating that 6,968 marriage contracts were registered in the first half of this year, compared to 3,661 divorces, in addition to 478 remarriage cases (return of wife).

The statistics also revealed that marriage between Kuwaitis reached 5,112 or 73.4 percent of the total, while 588 marriages were registered between Kuwaiti men and non-Kuwaiti women, 230 between non-Kuwaiti men and Kuwaiti women and 1,038 between non-Kuwaitis.

On divorce, the statistics revealed that divorce between Kuwaiti men and Kuwaiti women topped the list with 2,198 or 60 percent of the total, followed by 553 between Kuwaiti men and non-Kuwaiti women, 676 between non-Kuwaitis and 234 between non-Kuwaiti men and Kuwaiti women.

The statistics indicated that among the divorce cases, 535 or 14.6 percent involved a man still married to one or more wives, in addition to 330 cases of divorce before consummation.

The statistics indicated that 74.2 percent of divorce cases were documented by ratification without the need for a court ruling — a total of 2,717 cases, compared to 18.5 percent by court ruling with 679 cases, and 7.2 percent were 'conditional'.

As for the types of divorce, the number of first revocable divorce is the highest with 2,013 cases, followed by the first irrevocable divorce with 1,063, second revocable divorce with 376, second irrevocable divorce with 78, and major irrevocable divorce with 131.

Commenting on the statistics, Attorney Enaam Haider stated that "premarital guidance must be intensified and counseling sessions must be made mandatory before marriage, especially in mixed marriage. This is a necessary step, along with the need to document their attendance in the marriage contract file."

She added that with ratification cases reaching 74 percent of all divorces, it is necessary to codify this system and improve its tools by tightening conditions for written or digital proof, while reducing reliance on mere testimony, which constitutes around 17.3 percent of divorce transactions, to ensure the protection of financial and custodial rights."

Attorney Israa Al-Haddad said "the powers of family reconciliation offices must be expanded, with clear deadlines set for amicable efforts before the divorce is finalized. These offices must be authorized to conduct immediate executive settlements for alimony, housing and custody."

Education Minister approves work centers for national teaching staff

Teachers allocated based on residence

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

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 1: Minister of Education Jalal Al-Tabtabaei approved the ministerial decision on the regulations for determining the work centers of nationals appointed as members of the teaching staff in academic year 2025/2026.

Al-Tabtabaei explained in his decision that the approval of these regulations was made after studying the expected numbers of na-

tional graduates from teacher training colleges and comparing them with the academic manpower needs of educational districts in various subjects, in a manner that serves public interest and ensures the smooth flow of the educational process.

The newspaper obtained a copy of the decision, which stipulates the



Al-Tabtabaei

following:

First: The work centers of Kuwaiti teaching staff with the specializations specified in the decision will be determined according to the work centers indicated next to each specialization for the academic year 2025/2026.

Second: Residents of Sabah Al-Ahmad Residential City, Khairan Residential City and Wafra Residential Area will work in the schools in these areas.

Third: Those with specializations other than those specified in the decision will be distributed to the educational districts affiliated with their areas of residence.

Fourth: The Assistant Undersecre-

tary for Educational Affairs shall issue an internal bulletin for the distribution of national staff, other than fresh graduates and non-educational staff, provided that the plan adheres to the general framework of the decision.

Fifth: The decision shall be effective as of the 2025/2026 academic year.

Sixth: The competent authorities shall be tasked with implementing the provisions of the decision.

The decision includes the identification of work centers for several specializations, according to the needs of various educational district, thus, achieving balance between outputs and the requirements of the educational field.

Capital Governor ensures school readiness

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 1: Governor of the Capital and acting Governor of Farwaniya Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali visited Al-Daiya Primary and Secondary School for Girls, during which he affirmed that preparations for the new academic year are proceeding as planned, while stressing the importance of achieving an ideal start of the school year from day one, reports

Al-Seyassah daily.

The Governor met with a number of officials at the Capital Educational District, where he was briefed on the schools' preparations and equipment provision. He appreciated the efforts exerted by the Ministry of Education and educational administrations in creating a suitable environment for students

and teachers.

He affirmed that the Governorate is closely following up everything that supports the educational process, asserting that cooperation between various parties provides a guarantee for a smooth and organized start of the school year to achieve the desired educational goals.

Continued from Page 1

Minister of

Therefore, in every country throughout the world, when a minister possesses the competence and energy, and works according to a systematic plan, the government adheres to the plan to prevent instability. It affects the ministry and the government as a whole.

This is especially true if the minister is highly competent like Khalifa Al-Ajeel who has held various positions in development and finance, is well-versed in the intricacies of executive work, and is committed to maximizing the gross domestic product.

In the past, influential MPs viewed ministers as enemies if they did not perform as intended. Thus, we would sometimes see ministers appointed in the evening and then dismissed in the morning, because this or that MP did not like their 'looks', or because an influential person 'felt sorry' for them.

Competence is never taken into account, as what matters is 'how to win', not the greater good of the State. This corrupt habit made Kuwait regress at every level.

The minister must "follow the example of the deceased," otherwise, may Allah have mercy on him politically.

The efforts of Minister Khalifa Al-Ajeel are beginning to bear fruit, especially since the ministries of Commerce, Finance and Tourism bear the burden of implementing development projects and enhancing the gross domestic product. As a result, no step will be out of place, as evident in the words of Minister Al-Ajeel.

This man listens to the people and their perception of the relationship between the public and private sectors, so that the vision is complete, because the goal is Kuwait and its future.

When Minister Al-Ajeel explains the path that the government is taking, you feel reassured that someone is developing the relationship between the buyer and seller, not disrupting it.

You feel even more reassured when you hear the Minister of Commerce talk about the harmony within the government. It is evident and comforting.

Kuwait greenlights

to perform their duties in accordance with the laws and regulations in force in each country.

Articles Eight and Nine stipulate the confidentiality of information and the settlement of disputes arising from this agreement.

Articles 10 and 11 are on withdrawal from the agreement and the termination or suspension of the membership of a party in the event that it violates any of the provisions or regulations of the agreement.

Article 12 stipulates interpretation, whereby the Governors Committee shall be the competent authority to interpret the provisions of this agreement, and its decisions shall be binding.

Articles 13 and 14 are about the amendment of the agreement and its implementation, stating that the agreement takes effect from the date of depositing the second country's ratification document with the GCC Secretariat General.

Kuwait reaffirms

Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Al-Sabah made the statement when he attended the celebration organized by the Turkish Embassy on the occasion of Victory Day.

Also present at the event were Commander of the Saleh Al-Mohammad Mechanized Brigade 94 Brigadier General Barak Al-Farhan, heads of diplomatic missions, and representatives of various international organizations.

He asserted that Kuwaiti-Turkish relations are solid, especially in the military aspect, indicating that his par-

ticipation in such a national occasion "embodies the political leadership's commitment to strengthen cooperation with Turkiye and support strategic partnerships with friendly countries."

Meanwhile, Turkish Ambassador to Kuwait Tuba Nur Sönmez expressed her pride in the level of brotherly relations between Kuwait and Turkiye, stressing that the visit of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah in May last year marked an important milestone, as the protocol for implementing defense industry procurement contracts between the two governments was signed then, opening the door for further cooperation in this field.

She said Turkiye has achieved self-sufficiency in the defense industry at a rate exceeding 80 percent, as reflected in the capabilities and progress of the Turkish Army. She stressed that her country has become a reliable supplier of defense equipment to its partners around the world.

She revealed the Turkish Army continues to develop through reforms, intensive training, and investment in technology, thereby, remaining "a strong bulwark for the defense of the nation and a force for stability and peace in the region in light of current geopolitical developments."

On Gaza, the Turkish ambassador underscored the need to stop the Israeli attacks against civilians in Gaza. She said "this is tantamount to a horrific genocide", confirming the support of Turkiye for the humanitarian aid provided by the State of Kuwait and its ongoing efforts to help the Palestinian people.

The ceremony included a video presentation of the latest Turkish defense products and scenes from Turkish military training, followed by Ambassador Sonmez reading the message of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan on the occasion of Victory Day.

CBK sets

The circular obligates banks to follow these regulations:

1. Rotate the external audit office responsible for examining the draws conducted on customer accounts.

2. The external audit office shall review all draws conducted on customer accounts by the bank, regardless of the value of the draw prize.

3. The work of the external audit office shall include monitoring the software used to select winners, and standardize the technical requirements of these programs through the appointment of a technical consultant for these requirements.

4. An external audit office, other than the one assigned by the bank, shall be assigned to supervise the draw process, taking into account that it shall be rotated periodically in accordance with the vision of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

5. The internal audit department shall conduct an independent audit and examination of all draw operations conducted by the bank, including the annual internal audit plan for these operations.

6. Live automated coverage of the draw process, and publish the names of the winners of all draws on the website, social media and various media outlets.

7. Detailed records of the draw results should be maintained for reference when needed.

Kuwait airport

Congestion is gradually increasing as students and teachers return in preparation for the school year.

The staff of the newspaper recently visited the airport, during which they noticed that the agencies operating at the airport continue to intensify their efforts to ease the movement of departing and arriving passengers.

Estimates by the operating agencies

revealed that the total number of passengers in August reached about 1.6 million on 10,800 flights to and from the airport. On Monday, around 170 flights from several Arab and foreign capitals arrived. Egypt topped the list of destinations with 23 flights, followed by India with 21 flights, Dubai with 14 flights and Jeddah with 13 flights.

An official source from the airport confirmed that all operational teams and relevant agencies are working continuously to ensure the smooth flow of passenger traffic and speedy completion of entry and departure procedures at passport control counters or the transit and customs halls.

He said the summer season extends until the end of October, but the current period is witnessing the peak of the return of families and students in preparation for the start of the school year. He indicated that the multiple airport terminals significantly contributed to preventing congestion and regulating passenger traffic. He added the action plan focuses on improving the efficiency of operational and support services, equipping the arrival and departure halls, operating additional counters during peak times, and doubling the number of staff at the gates, checkpoints and transit areas.

He stated that support field teams have been tasked to address obstacles that passengers might face, in addition to coordinating with the Ministry of Interior and Kuwait General Administration of Customs (KGAC) to streamline the arrival and departure procedures.

He added "a special operational plan has been laid down based on the operational density of airlines and the increase in the number of passengers. On-duty controllers have been instructed to intervene immediately in the event of any emergency or flight delay, and to implement rapid solutions in coordination with the relevant authorities."

He pointed out that there are ongoing meetings between civil aviation officials and employees to guarantee the provision of all facilities to passengers and airlines. He emphasized that the existing cooperation between entities operating at the airport reflects a positive image of the level of coordination, which contributes to strengthening the position of Kuwait International Airport locally and globally.

He confirmed that civil aviation teams are ready to deal with various operational conditions through the Operations Department, which distributes employees according to the volume of traffic in the arrival and departure halls, ensuring the continuity of services with high efficiency and smoothness.

Kuwait Crown

On Kuwaiti-Japanese relations, Iwaya expressed "sincere gratitude to the Government of the State of Kuwait and the people of Kuwait for their warm welcome," affirming that the proverb "A friend in need is a friend indeed" well describes relations between Japan and Kuwait.

In this turbulent international environment, it is even more important for Japan and Kuwait, sharing common values, to uphold principles such as the rule of law, multilateralism, and the peaceful resolution of disputes, said Iwaya.

"Both Japan and Kuwait are maritime nations, making maritime security extremely important to both countries. The freedom and openness of the seas that connect us is crucial for the peace, stability, and prosperity of the region and the rest of the world. Based on this idea, Japan consistently advocates for a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)."

"The rule of law is crucial to ensure that everyone can benefit from the sea without oppression. We aim to further strengthen our coordination with Kuwait to maintain the freedom and security of navigation, which support the

global supply chain," he reiterated.

On the situation in the Middle East, the Foreign Minister affirmed that tensions "remain high," adding that Japan was "deeply concerned about the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza."

He added, "Japan has been making various efforts, including the delivery of humanitarian assistance, to alleviate the suffering of the people on the ground as quickly as possible. We also strongly urge all parties to work steadily towards the release of all hostages and the realization of a sustainable ceasefire."

"True peace in the region cannot be achieved without settling the Palestinian issue," said Iwaya, affirming Japan's support for the two-state solution remains steadfast.

"We will continue to promote confidence-building measures, Palestinian economic self-reliance, and reform of the Palestinian Authority, which form the foundation of the peace process," stated the minister.

"Through the Conference on Cooperation among East Asian Countries for Palestinian Development (CEA-PAD), Japan actively engages in this issue, receiving support from its partners in the East Asia region," he affirmed.

He said that Japan and Kuwait shared a common stance on prioritizing dialogue toward "a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East region, and on calling on all parties to abide by international law and ensure humanitarian assistance regarding the situation in Gaza."

Back to Kuwaiti-Japanese ties, Minister Iwaya stated, "Kuwait and Japan are friends who supported each other during historic challenges such as the Gulf War for Kuwait and the Great East Japan Earthquake for Japan."

"The Sanriku Railway, which was able to purchase new train cars after receiving Kuwait's financial aid following the disaster in 2011, operated specially designed trains to express appreciation for Kuwait's reconstruction support, in commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake, in 2021."

In May of this year, His Highness the Crown Prince of the State of Kuwait Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah made "a historic visit" to Japan, and together with Japan's Prime Minister Ishiba Shigeru, announced the upgrading of Japan-Kuwait relations to a "Comprehensive Strategic Partnership."

"We will further strengthen our coordination in both bilateral relations and the international arena," the Foreign Minister affirmed.

"Japan is now hosting the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai. Kuwait's pavilion, designed with wings symbolizing progress and tolerance, has been very popular among visitors. Many Japanese people are visiting the pavilion every day and are experiencing firsthand Kuwait and its charms, through the displays such as sand actually brought in from Kuwait," said Iwaya, adding, "On June 19th, the National Day event of Kuwait was held (there) with great success."

He went on to say that the Expo "provides opportunities to further stimulate international cultural exchanges."

"Tange Kenzo, an architect who designed the overall master plan for the 1970 Osaka Expo, contributed significantly to the deepening of Japan-Kuwait friendship, through designing the Kuwaiti Embassy in Tokyo and Kuwait International Airport."

"Through the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, we hope to further promote people-to-people exchanges and mutual understanding between our two countries, opening a new chapter in our shared history. Simultaneously, the Japanese government intends to leverage this momentum to advance concrete projects in areas such as decarbonization, energy, and cultural exchange."

"Kuwait is Japan's third-largest oil supplier and an important partner for our energy security. We hope Kuwait will continue to play a significant role in the global energy market. Japan will support Kuwait's efforts on the stable supply of energy resources and transition to clean energy," said the minister.

Afghan quake

Eastern Afghanistan is mountainous, with remote areas.

The quake has worsened communications. Blocked roads are forcing aid workers to walk four or five hours to reach survivors. Dozens of flights have operated in and out of Nangarhar Airport, transporting the injured to hospitals.

One survivor described seeing homes collapse before his eyes and people screaming for help.

Sadiquallah, who lives in the Maza Dara area of Nurgal, said he was woken by a deep boom that sounded like a storm approaching. Like many Afghans, he uses only one name.

He ran to where his children were sleeping and rescued three of them. He was about to return to grab the rest of his family when the room fell on top of him.

Filippo Grandi, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, said the earthquake intensified existing humanitarian challenges in Afghanistan and urged international donors to support relief efforts.

"This adds death and destruction to other challenges including drought and the forced return of millions of Afghans from neighbouring countries," Grandi wrote on the social media platform X. "Hopefully the donor community will not hesitate to support relief efforts."

A magnitude 6.3 earthquake struck Afghanistan on Oct. 7, 2023, followed by strong aftershocks. The Taliban government estimated at least 4,000 people perished in that quake.

The U.N. gave a lower death toll of about 1,500. It was the deadliest natural disaster to strike Afghanistan in recent memory. The latest earthquake was likely to "dwarf the scale of the humanitarian needs" caused by the disaster of 2023, according to the International Rescue Committee.

Entire roads and communities have been cut off from accessing nearby towns or hospitals and 2,000 casualties were reported within the first 12 hours, said Sherine Ibrahim, the country director for the aid agency.

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Annual spending battle to dominate September agenda

# US government shutdown looms as Congress returns after monthlong August recess

WASHINGTON, Sept 1, (AP) Congressional Republicans scored a massive victory this summer when they passed President Donald Trump's "big beautiful bill" of tax and spending cuts without a single Democratic vote. But as they return to Washington this fall after a monthlong August recess, they will have to find a way to work with Democrats - or around them - as a government shutdown looms.

The annual spending battle will dominate the September agenda, along with a possible effort by Senate Republicans to change their chamber's rules to thwart Democratic stalling tactics on nominations. The Senate is also debating whether to move forward on legislation that would slap steep tariffs on some of Russia's trading partners as the US pressures Russian President Vladimir Putin on Ukraine.

In the House, Republicans will continue their investigations of former President Joe Biden while Speaker Mike Johnson navigates a split in his conference over whether the Trump

administration should release more files in the Jeffrey Epstein investigation.

A look at what Congress will be doing as lawmakers return from the August break:

The most urgent task for Congress is to avoid a government shutdown on Sept. 30, when federal funding runs out. And it's so far unclear if Republicans and Democrats will be able to agree on how to do that.

Congress will have to pass a short-term spending measure to keep the government funded for a few weeks or months while they try to finish the full-year package. But Republicans will need Democratic votes to pass an extension, and Democrats will want significant concessions. Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer's vote with Republicans to avoid a shutdown in March prompted furious backlash within his party.

The Trump administration's efforts to claw back previously approved spending could also complicate the negotiations. Republicans passed legislation this summer that rescinded about



A US Capitol Police officer walks in front of the US Capitol on Aug 22, in Washington. (AP)

\$9 billion in foreign aid and public broadcasting funds and Trump notified Congress again on Friday that he will block \$4.9 billion in congressionally approved foreign aid.

Senators are expected to return to Washington right where they left off in early August - fighting over Trump's nominees.

Exasperated Republicans fled Washington for the month after making little headway with Senate Democrats over their nominations blockade, which has forced delays in confirmations and angered Trump as many of his administration's positions remain unfilled. Republican leaders called it quits after a rare Saturday session that ended with a breakdown in bipartisan negotiations and Trump posting on social media that Chuck Schumer could "GO TO HELL!"

Republicans now say they're ready to try and change Senate rules to get around the Democratic delays, and they are expected to spend the next several weeks discussing how that might work.

Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, one of Trump's closest congressional allies, has pushed the president for months to support his sweeping bipartisan sanctions bill that would impose steep tariffs on coun-

tries that are fueling Russia's invasion of Ukraine by buying its oil, gas, uranium, and other exports. The legislation has the backing of 85 senators, but Trump has yet to endorse it, and Republican leaders have so far said they won't move without him.

Graham has stepped up his calls after Trump met with Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy last month in hopes of a peace deal. Since then, Russia has continued to step up attacks on Ukraine.

"If we don't have this thing moving in the right direction by the time we get back, then I think that plan B needs to kick in," Graham said of his bill in an interview with The Associated Press last month.

Health and Human Service Secretary Robert F. Kennedy will appear before the Senate Finance Committee to discuss his health care agenda on Thursday, less than a week after he ousted Susan Monarez as director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Several other top officials also resigned in protest.

## Party struggling to address it

# Democrats see crime as major problem

WASHINGTON, Sept 1, (AP): Democrat Eric McWilliams doesn't approve of Donald Trump sending National Guard troops to cities like Washington, DC. And he's certainly not supportive of most of the president's policies.

But the 63-year-old retired handyman and US Navy veteran does praise Trump for one thing. "When it comes to crime," he said, "He's alright. He's doing pretty good. How he's doing it is another matter."

"Crime is a big problem," he went on. "At least he is doing something."

McWilliams' views reflect the thinking of a lot of Democrats, according to a recent poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. It finds that while most disapprove of how Trump is handling the issue, a large majority, 68%, see crime as a "major problem" in large cities. That's despite the fact that statistics show crime, overall, is down across the nation, with some cities reporting 30-year lows.

The findings underscore the challenge facing Democratic leaders. They must thread the needle between criticizing Trump's policies, which are deeply unpopular among their base, while at the same time not dismiss-



Members of the Louisiana National Guard, top, patrol the passengers area in Union Station on Aug 30, in Washington. (AP)

ing widespread concerns about safety, which are amplified in many news sources and in online forums like Facebook and the popular Nextdoor app.

That could create a vulnerability for the party heading into next year's mid-term elections.

While Trump remains unpopular overall, the new poll finds his approach to crime has earned him high

marks compared to other issues like the economy and immigration. About half of US adults, 53%, say they approve of his handling of crime.

The vast majority of Americans, 81%, also see crime as a "major problem" in large cities. That includes nearly all Republicans, roughly three-quarters of independents and nearly 7 in 10 Democrats.



A boat rides through a frozen sea inlet outside of Nuuk, Greenland on March 6. (AP)

## French foreign minister visits Greenland

French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot insisted that Greenland "is not for sale," and criticized the US for its intentions to take control of the strategic Arctic territory during a visit Sunday to its capital, Nuuk.

Barrot spoke in a news confer-

ence following a working meeting with Greenland's prime minister and foreign minister.

"Greenland is not for sale," he said, echoing French President Emmanuel Macron's similar comments during a June visit to the vast, semi-

autonomous territory of Denmark.

US President Donald Trump has repeatedly said he seeks US jurisdiction over Greenland. He has not ruled out a military force to take control of the mineral-rich, strategically located Arctic island. (AP)

# Norway agrees to buy fleet of British-made frigates for its navy

LONDON, Sept 1, (AP): Norway has agreed to buy at least five new British anti-submarine ships in a deal valued at 10 billion pounds (\$13.5 billion) as the two nations deepen their cooperation to counter Russian operations in the seas along NATO's northern flank.

They said Sunday that Britain will supply Norway with the Type 26 frigates, creating a joint force of eight British and at least five Norwegian ships that will operate jointly in Northern Europe. The ships are built by a group of companies led by UK-based BAE Systems.

"Our navies will work as one, leading the way in NATO, with this deal putting more world-class warships in the North Atlantic to hunt Russian submarines, protect our critical infrastructure, and keep both our nations secure," British Defense Secretary John Healey said in a statement.

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 has spurred the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's European members to increase defense spending amid concerns that they could be Moscow's next target.

The Type 26 frigate is designed for anti-submarine warfare and high-intensity air defense, according to BAE. Australia and Canada have already agreed to buy variants of the Type 26



for their navies.

The deal is expected to support 4,000 jobs and 400 companies in Britain.

Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Store said the NATO member needed the frigates because it "is facing its most serious security situation since World War II."

Norway also considered ships made by the US, Germany and France, but chose the UK because of the countries' historic links, Store said.

"Norway and Great Britain are close allies with common interests and very close ties," Store said.

## America

**'Giuliani injured in car crash':** Rudy Giuliani is recovering from a fractured vertebra and other injuries following a car crash in New Hampshire in which he was a passenger, a spokesperson for the former New York City mayor said Sunday.



Giuliani

Giuliani was being driven in a rented Ford Bronco by his spokesperson Ted Goodman when their vehicle was struck from behind by a Honda HR-V driven by a 19-year-old woman late Saturday evening, New Hampshire State Police said in a statement.

Troopers witnessed the crash, which caused both vehicles to hit the highway median and left them "heavily damaged," state police said. Goodman and the 19-year-old suffered "non-life-threatening injuries" and were taken to hospitals for treatment, the agency added.

State police said they are investigating the crash and no charges have been filed.

Giuliani, 81, was taken to a nearby trauma center and was being treated for a fractured thoracic vertebra, multiple lacerations and contusions, as well as injuries to his left arm and lower leg, according to a statement posted on X by Michael Ragusa, Giuliani's head of security.

Giuliani "sustained injuries but is in good spirits and recovering tremendously," Ragusa said, adding: "This was not a targeted attack."

Prior to the accident, Giuliani had been "flagged down by a woman who was the victim of a domestic violence incident" and contacted police assistance on her behalf, Ragusa said. After police arrived, Giuliani continued on his way and his vehicle was hit shortly after pulling onto the highway in a crash that was "entirely unrelated" to the domestic violence incident, Ragusa told The Associated Press in an emailed statement.

State police said troopers were investigating a domestic violence report on the southbound Interstate 93 highway shortly before 10 p.m. and observed the crash, which occurred on the northbound lanes. Troopers and fire personnel quickly crossed to provide help.

New Hampshire State Police declined to comment on

whether Giuliani had contacted the agency regarding the account of a domestic violence incident.

Goodman did not respond to requests for comment and Giuliani's team did not provide additional details about the circumstances surrounding the crash.. (AP)

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**Tropical storm forms in eastern Pacific Ocean:** A new tropical storm formed Sunday in the eastern Pacific Ocean, more than a thousand miles (kilometers) off the coast of Mexico. There was no immediate threat to land.

Tropical Storm Kiko developed early in the day and is expected to become a hurricane later this week, according to the US National Hurricane Center in Miami. The hurricane center did not issue any coastal watches or warnings.

"Strengthening is expected during the next couple of days, and the system is forecast to become a hurricane by Tuesday," the hurricane center said.

The storm's center was located about 1,090 miles (1,760 kilometers) west-southwest of the southern tip of Baja California.

Its maximum sustained winds were clocked at 40 mph (65 kph). It is moving west at a speed of 9 mph (15 kph).

Tropical storms have wind speeds of between 39 mph (about 63 kph) and 73 mph (about 117 kph). It becomes a hurricane when the wind speed reaches 74 mph (about 119 kph). (AP)

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**Boy killed after doorbell prank:** An 11-year-old boy was fatally shot in Houston after a prank in which he rang the doorbell of a home and ran away, police said Sunday.

The boy had been ringing doorbells as a prank late Saturday evening, the Houston Police Department said in a statement. Commonly referred to as "ding dong ditching," the prank involves fleeing before someone inside the home opens the door.

The boy, who has not yet been identified, died of his wounds Sunday, police said.

Police spokesperson Shay Awosiyani said that officers were still investigating and had not arrested anybody in connection with the boy's death as of Sunday evening.

Other "ding dong ditch" pranks have turned deadly in the past. In 2023, a Southern California man was convicted on three counts of first-degree murder for killing three teenage boys by intentionally ramming their car after they rang his doorbell as a prank. (AP)

## Suspect arrested in murder of politician

# 'Peace can't come at Ukraine's expense'

BERLIN, Sept 1, (AP) German Chancellor Friedrich Merz said Sunday that the war in Ukraine could still last for a long time and ending it quickly at the country's expense was not an option.

In an interview with German public broadcaster ZDF, Merz, when asked whether a ceasefire might be possible this year, said he hasn't lost hope but "harbors no illusions," and emphasized that supporting the country to defend itself against Russia was an "absolute priority."

"We are trying to end it as quickly as possible. But certainly not at the price of Ukraine's capitulation. You could end the war tomorrow if Ukraine surrendered and lost its independence," Merz said.

"Then the next country would be at risk the day after tomorrow. And the day after that, it would be us. That is not an option," the chancellor said.

Germany is a key backer of Ukraine and has delivered or pledged military support worth around 40 bil-



German Chancellor Friedrich Merz attends a joint news conference with French President Emmanuel Macron after a Franco-German cabinet meeting and a meeting of the Franco-German Defense and Security Council (CFADS) in Toulon, southern France on Aug 29. (AP)

lion euros (\$47 billion) since Russia launched its full-scale invasion in February 2022.

Also:

**KYIV, Ukraine:** President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Sunday that Ukrainian officials arrested a suspect in the shooting death of former parliament speaker and prominent pro-Western politician **Andriy Parubiy**.

Zelenskyy said in a statement on X that a person was taken into custody after shooting Parubiy in the city of **Lviv** on Saturday. No details about the suspect or a motive for the killing were released.

"The necessary investigative actions are ongoing. I have instructed that the available information be presented to the public," Zelenskyy said.

Parubiy, 54, was a lawmaker from the Lviv region who participated in Ukraine's Orange Revolution in 2004 and led self-defense volunteer units during the Maidan protests of 2014, which forced pro-Russian President Viktor Yanukovych from office. He was parliament speaker from 2016 to 2019.

# Russia suspected of jamming navigation on EU leader's plane above Bulgaria: official

BRUSSELS, Sept 1, (AP): A plane carrying European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen was hit by GPS jamming over Bulgaria in a suspected Russian operation, a spokesperson said Monday.

The plane landed safely in Plovdiv airport and von der Leyen will continue her planned tour of the European Union's nations bordering Russia and Belarus, said the commission's spokesperson Arianna Podesta.

"We can indeed confirm that there was GPS jamming," said Podesta. "We have received information from the Bulgarian authority that they suspect that this was due to blatant interference by Russia."

Von der Leyen, a fierce critic of Russian President Vladimir Putin and Moscow's war in Ukraine, is on a four-day tour of the EU nations bordering Russia and its ally Belarus.

"This incident actually underlines the urgency of the mission that the president is carrying out in the front-line member states," Podesta said.

She said that von der Leyen has seen "firsthand the everyday challenges of threats coming from Rus-



President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen gets out of the helicopter after inspecting the Lithuanian-Belarusian border at the Border Guard School near Lithuanian-Belarusian border, near the village Medininkai, some 25 km (16 miles) east of the capital Vilnius, Lithuania on Sept 1. (AP)

sia and its proxies."

"And, of course, the EU will continue to invest into defense spending and in Europe's readiness even more after this incident," she said.

Bulgaria issued a statement saying that "the satellite signal used for the

aircraft's GPS navigation was disrupted. As the aircraft approached Plovdiv Airport, the GPS signal was lost."

Von der Leyen was scheduled to address a news conference at 1430 GMT in Romania.





Chinese President Xi Jinping and his wife, Peng Liyuan, pose for a group photo with international guests before a welcoming banquet at the Meijiang Convention and Exhibition Center in Tianjin, north China on Aug 31. (Xinhua)

Summit backs ‘Tianjin Declaration,’ rejects external interference and supports Palestine

## China’s Xi calls for forging ahead with solid steps as SCO convenes largest-ever summit

TIANJIIN, Sept 1, (Agencies): Chinese President Xi Jinping on Monday called on Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) members to forge ahead with solid steps for a better future as the organization convenes its largest-ever summit in China’s port city of Tianjin.

Addressing the 25th Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the SCO, Xi called on the member states to carry forward the Shanghai Spirit in a world fraught with challenges and changes, and better tap into the organization’s potential.

Founded in Shanghai in June 2001, the SCO has expanded from six founding members into a 26-nation family of 10 members, two observers and 14 dialogue partners spanning Asia, Europe and Africa, with cooperation covering more than 50 areas and a combined economic output of nearly 30 trillion US dollars.

“Its international influence and appeal are increasing day by day,” Xi said, hailing “groundbreaking and historic achievements” in SCO development and cooperation.

The organization was the first to set up a military confidence-building mechanism in border areas and launch Belt and

Road cooperation. “We were the first to conclude a treaty on long-term good-neighbordness, friendship and cooperation, proclaiming our commitment to forging lasting friendship and refraining from hostilities,” he said.

The member states were also the first to put forth the vision of global governance featuring extensive consultation and joint contribution for shared benefit as an effort to practice true multilateralism.

“We should advocate an equal and orderly multipolar world and a universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalization, and make the global governance system more just and equitable,” he added.

Xi called on SCO member states to stay true to the organization’s founding mission, and promote its sound and sustained development with greater resolve and more practical measures.

SCO member states should seek common ground while putting aside differences, pursue mutual benefit and win-win results, champion openness and inclusiveness, uphold fairness and justice, and strive for real results and high efficiency, according to Xi.

“SCO member states are all friends and partners,” he said, calling on them to respect their differences, maintain strategic communication, build up consensus, and strengthen solidarity and collaboration.

Xi said the member states should leverage the strengths of their mega-sized markets and economic complementarity between them, and improve trade and investment facilitation.

He expected cooperation to be enhanced in areas such as energy, infrastructure, green industry, digital economy, sci-tech innovation and artificial intelligence.

He urged putting into use the SCO Universal Center for Countering Security Threats and Challenges and the SCO Anti-drug Center, and setting up an SCO development bank as soon as possible to provide stronger underpinnings for security and economic cooperation among member states.

To ensure better development of the SCO with real actions, Xi announced that China will provide 2 billion yuan (about 281 million US dollars) in grant to SCO member states within this year, and issue an additional 10 billion yuan in loan to

the member banks of the SCO Interbank Consortium over the next three years.

In addition, China plans to implement 100 “small and beautiful” livelihood projects in the member states with such need. In the next five years, China will establish 10 Luban Workshops in the countries and provide 10,000 human resources training opportunities.

China’s investment stock in other SCO member states has exceeded 84 billion US dollars, and its annual bilateral trade with other SCO member states has surpassed 500 billion US dollars.

“China always aligns its development with that of the SCO and with the aspiration of the people of member states for a better life,” Xi said.

**Also:**

**BEIJING:** Leaders of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) met Monday in **Tianjin** for the largest summit in the groups history, as they signed the Tianjin Declaration, reaffirming their stance on global tensions and geopolitical challenges.

The declaration emphasized the fundamental principles of non-intervention

in internal affairs, respect for state sovereignty, and the rejection of the use of force as foundations for stable international relations and sustainable development.

The final statement underlined the SCO’s commitment to a development path that rejects bloc politics and confrontation, stressing that multilateral cooperation remains the optimal approach to ensuring security and stability.

The Summit outcomes included the establishment of an SCO Development Bank and the adoption of a 10-year development strategy through 2035, setting the organization’s priorities and key areas of cooperation. Additionally, member states signed an agreement to establish a global center aimed at addressing threats and challenges to their collective security.

The declaration strongly condemned the Israeli and US military attacks on Iran, warning that targeting nuclear infrastructure during conflicts poses a serious threat to regional and international security. The SCO also expressed its rejection of efforts to reimpose United Nations Security Council sanctions on Tehran through the European Troika initiative.

On the Palestinian issue, the SCO stressed that a comprehensive and just resolution remains the only path to achieving lasting peace in the Middle East.

The organization called for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, guaranteed humanitarian access, and condemned actions resulting in civilian casualties and the catastrophic humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip.

The SCO further expressed readiness to enhance military and security cooperation in combating terrorism, separatism, and extremism, while also addressing risks posed by developments in artificial intelligence. The declaration warned that the unilateral deployment of missile defense systems undermines strategic balance and international stability, and called for the preservation of outer space as a weapons-free zone.

The SCO also reaffirmed the importance of preserving the historical memory of heroic sacrifices and the lessons of World War II as essential pillars for building mutual trust and preventing the repetition of past tragedies.

## Indonesia president vows to uphold public order and security in accordance with law

JAKARTA, Sept 1, (Agencies): Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto has issued a press statement regarding the recent demonstrations that have continued in several regions across the country, stressing that the state will uphold public order and security in accordance with the law.

He said on Sunday that political parties had taken firm action against their members in parliament who committed misconduct, including the revocation of membership, allowances, and overseas working visits, in response to public concerns. He also called on the House of Representatives to open dialogue with community leaders and civil society groups to strengthen communication channels.

Addressing incidents of unrest in some regions, the president underlined that the state must not remain silent if demonstrations degenerate into anarchy.

He instructed the Indonesian National Police and the Indonesian National Armed Forces to act firmly and in accordance with the law to protect members of the public and safeguard public facilities.

Prabowo urged citizens to remain calm, not be provoked, and to uphold the spirit of mutual cooperation to safeguard national unity and stability.

Flanked by leaders of eight Indonesian political parties, Subianto told a televised news conference in the capital, Jakarta, that they had agreed to cut the housing allowance and suspend overseas trips for members of parliament.



Army soldiers are deployed following days of violent protests against lawmakers’ perks and privileges, in Jakarta, Indonesia on Sept 1. (AP)

ment. It was a rare concession in response to mounting public anger.

By Monday, “lawmakers will see certain allowances scrapped and overseas work trips suspended under a new moratorium,” Subianto said.

**Also:**

**JAKARTA, Indonesia:** A helicopter carrying eight people lost contact in a forest in Indonesia’s tropical island of **Borneo** eight minutes after takeoff, officials said Monday.

The Airbus BK117 D-3, owned by Eastindo Air, departed from the airport in **Kotabaru** district in Indonesia’s **South Kalimantan** province at 08:46

## North Korean leader Kim Jong Un inspects new missile factory

SEOUL, South Korea, Sept 1, (Agencies): North Korea said Monday leader Kim Jong Un inspected a new weapons factory that’s key to his plan to accelerate mass production of missiles in a weekend visit before he departs for a major military parade in China.

North Korea’s official Korean Central News Agency did not disclose the location of the factory Kim visited Sunday, but it may be in Jagang province, a hub of the country’s munitions industry that borders China.

Both China and North Korea confirmed last week that Kim will make his first visit to China in six years to attend a military parade in Beijing on Wednesday, which marks the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II and China’s resistance against Japanese wartime aggression.

The 26 foreign leaders invited by Chinese President Xi Jinping also include Russia’s Vladimir Putin, who has received major wartime support from Kim in his invasion of Ukraine, making the Beijing event a show of three-way alignment against US efforts to strengthen security cooperation with South Korea and Japan.

South Korean media speculated Kim could depart for China by train sometime Monday, pointing to heightened security measures at the



This photo provided on Sept 1, 2025, by the North Korean government, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un inspects a new weapons factory in undisclosed location, North Korea, on Aug 31. (AP)

Chinese border town of Dandong, where rail traffic was reportedly halted and hotels stopped receiving foreign guests.

KCNA said the factory had assembly lines to speed missile production and reported that Kim praised scientists and workers and ratified plans for improvement.

South Korean officials say Kim has pushed to accelerate munitions production as he supplies Russia with large quantities of military equipment, including artillery and ballistic missiles. Kim

has also sent thousands of troops since last fall to fight alongside Russian forces against Ukraine, as he prioritizes Moscow as part of a foreign policy aimed at expanding ties with nations confronting the United States.

Since aligning with Russia, North Korea has become more vocal in international affairs beyond the Korean Peninsula, issuing diplomatic statements on conflicts in the Middle East and in the Taiwan Strait, while portraying itself as a part of a united front against Washington.

### Emergency workers use drones

#### Pakistan copter crash kills 5

QUETTA, Pakistan, Sept 1, (AP): An army helicopter on a routine flight crashed on Monday in northern Pakistan, killing two pilots and three technicians on board, a government spokesman said.

The helicopter apparently went down in the Gilgit-Baltistan region due to a technical fault and then caught fire, **Faizullah Faraz**, the regional government spokesman, said. He provided no further details, and said authorities are investigating.

Such crashes are not uncommon in Pakistan. Last month, a helicopter carrying relief supplies to the flood-hit northwestern Bajaur region crashed in bad weather, killing all five people on board. And in September 2024, six people were killed when another helicopter went down in the northwest due to engine failure.



Faraq

**Also:**

**JHANG, Pakistan:** Emergency workers in Pakistan’s **Punjab** province used drones to find people stranded on rooftops by massive floods as the government expanded what it called its largest rescue operation, with more than 700,000 evacuated, officials said Monday.

The Pakistan Meteorological Department warned of more heavy rain in Punjab’s flood-hit districts and elsewhere in the country, where weeks of above-normal rainfall and the release of huge volumes of water from dams in neighboring India last week caused rivers to overflow into low-lying regions.

In **Multan** and Jhang districts, residents on Monday waded through floodwaters carrying their belongings to roadsides and higher ground. They said they had waited for rescuers before crossing on their own nearly 5-foot (1 1/2-meter) -deep water to reach safety, while many others remained stranded.

### Africa

#### Massive explosion rocks Libya’s industrial zone:

A powerful explosion shook the Skeerat area near the industrial zone of Misrata, about 200 km east of the Libyan capital Tripoli, on Sunday, Libya’s Al-Masara TV reported, with no official word yet on the cause.

Mohamed Al-Nihoum, spokesperson for Misrata Medical Center, told Libya Al-Ahram TV that six people with minor to moderate injuries have been sent to hospital for treatment.

The blast sent burning shells and shrapnel raining down on nearby residential neighborhoods, prompting authorities to evacuate surrounding areas. Ambulances and civil defense teams rushed to the scene, while security forces sealed off roads leading to the site.

Libya’s National Safety Authority and Misrata Medical Center declared a state of emergency. (Xinhua)

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**Nigerian troops kill 12 suspected terrorists:** At least 12 suspected terrorists were killed over the weekend by Nigerian troops in raids targeted at hide-outs in the country’s northeastern states of Borno and Yobe, local media reported Sunday.

The military raids hit some identified enclaves of the Islamic State West Africa Province terror group in Borno and Yobe, between Friday and Saturday, the state-owned News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reported, citing an official source at the army headquarters.

The operations followed intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance from the Nigerian Air Force, as ground troops swooped on the suspected terrorists in their locations, engaging them in a “heavy gun battle,” NAN reported, quoting the source.

“This operation reflects renewed vigor in ongoing counter-terrorism efforts,” said the source, adding that arms and ammunition were also recovered from the suspected terrorists. (Xinhua)

## Venezuela prepared for ‘any attack’ from US, says Defense Minister Padrino Lopez

CARACAS, Sept 1, (Xinhua): Venezuela is prepared for “any attack” from the United States, Venezuelan Defense Minister Vladimir Padrino Lopez said on Sunday.

“We will fight if you dare to set foot in Venezuela,” Padrino Lopez warned the US government in a statement released by state-run media.

Venezuela is under a siege that aims to provoke internal chaos and undermine the nation’s political leadership, said the defense chief.

“The announcement of these naval deployments in Caribbean waters is nothing more than a show of force, a way of marking territory, so that other powers will not take control of the Caribbean Sea,” he said, referring to US military maneuvers in the region.

The Venezuelan Armed Forces are patrolling the country’s maritime borders and airspace in response to President Nicolas Maduro’s call to strengthen the Bolivarian National Militia, said the official.

Padrino Lopez added that 15,000 military personnel have been deployed to Venezuela’s western region.

The minister also highlighted the military’s domestic security efforts, noting that anti-drug operations have led to the destruction of over 30 criminal



Trucks transport tanks east from Valencia, Venezuela on Aug 27, after the government announced a military mobilization following the US deployment of warships off Venezuela. (AP)

outposts and illegal boat-building facilities.

Tensions in the Caribbean Sea have escalated after the United States deployed warships near the coast of Venezuela earlier this month, which Washington describes as part of its strategy

to fight the international drug cartels.

Several leaders in the region, including Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum and Colombian President Gustavo Petro, criticized US military maneuvers near Venezuela in the Caribbean Sea.



## Dollar steady, euro inches up

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 1, (KUNA): The US dollar exchange rate remained stable against the Kuwaiti dinar on Monday at KD 0.305, according to the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK). Meanwhile, the euro edged up 0.17 percent to stand at KD 0.357 compared to Sunday's rate. Other major currencies were unchanged, with the British pound at KD 0.412, the Swiss franc at KD 0.381, and the Japanese yen at KD 0.002.

# Business



Group photo at the conclusion of the Aspire program.



The Rafa Nadal Academy junior team during their participation in the Ten Pro Tennis Championships in Antalya, Turkey.



Sponsoring the Green Adventure Program in cooperation with LOYAC.



A strategic partnership with LOYAC to support sustainability for a better future for Kuwait.



Group photo at the 'Kilma' program.



National Bank of Kuwait continues its support for the 10th edition of the 'Kon' Social Entrepreneurship Program.

Having launched and sponsored several diverse programs that invest in human capital

## NBK: Continuous leadership in supporting youth and enhancing sustainability

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 1: National Bank of Kuwait continues to support and empower Kuwait's youth and develop society through comprehensive and diverse programs and initiatives that aim to enhance their skills and instill in them principles of environmental, social and institutional governance.

During the year 2025, the bank has upscaled its pivotal role in developing youth competencies and equipping them with the skills necessary to face future challenges and effectively contribute to building a sustainable economy and thriving society. These efforts come under the bank's overall strategic direction towards investing in human capital and dealing with it as a top priority, which stems from its strong belief that the youth are the future leaders.

### NBK Aspire Program

Aspire summer program is one of NBK's leading initiatives, and it's specifically designed for students whose ages range from 14 to 18 years. This program aims to give the youth an opportunity to gain valuable professional experience through theoretical and practical training sessions.

NBK has organized 4 training sessions for 133 Aspire students at the bank's headquarters from June 10th until August 7th in 2025, where they underwent a remarkable experience learning in depth about the bank's different divisions and departments and AI tools, which reflects NBK's commitment to preparing a new generation that enjoys the digital and professional skills needed for the future job market.

### Rafa Nadal Youth Program

In line with its continued support to athletic and future talents, NBK renewed its strategic partnership with Rafa Nadal Academy for two more years with the aim of granting all sorts of support for the unique sporting events organized by the academy, which confirms its commitment to growing young athletic talents in Kuwait and enabling them to reach their full potential in tennis.

NBK has sponsored several tennis tournaments for the juniors' team, whose ages range between 9 and 14 years, at the Rafa Nadal Academy. The team played 5 tournaments abroad with the participation of 39 athletes



Yaqoub Al-Baqer

in Cap d'Agde in France, Lisbon in Portugal, Mallorca in Spain twice, and finally Antalya in Turkey.

It is worth noting that NBK places health and sports at the forefront of its priorities, and it always strives to have a positive impact upon society and build a bright future by developing the youth, education, healthcare, and environmental sustainability.

### LOYAC Programs

Under the strategic partnership that joins the two institutions, NBK continued its sponsorship for LOYAC's purposeful programs that aim to enable the national youth to reach their goals and aspirations, as well as support them become future leaders.

### Kilma

NBK sponsored "Kilma" program, which aims to enable and empower the youth by equipping them with communication and public speaking skills. The program focused on developing essential skills including effective listening for deeper understanding and constructive interaction, critical thinking for analysis and enlightened decision making, communication and confident speaking skills

### Al-Baqer:

- We are committed to empowering the youth and supporting future generations in their path to achieving their goals and aspirations.
- We strives to establish a responsible and aware generation equipped with the necessary skills to face future challenges.
- We diligently work towards maintaining our leading position as a national role model in supporting sustainable development and building a thriving society.

for clear and persuasive expression, public speaking for preparing influential presentations and fluency in front of audiences, case study analyses and decision making for facing challenges and coming up with effective solutions, and research skills and data collection for better ability to access trusted sources and use them intelligently.

The participants were 33 students, who spent three extensive weeks and 5 hours daily from 27 July until 14 august 2025 at the bank's headquarters, which established a motivational and practical learning environment.

### Youth Leadership Program (YLP)

The Youth Leadership Program is a unique experience that aims to develop leadership and self-confidence skills for high school students whose ages range from 14 to 18 years. 12 students participated in this program from 13 until 19 July 2025.

In this program, the participants underwent a life-changing experience that lasted for one week in the charming nature of Bedfordshire, UK, where they participated in a group of outdoor activities including walking down the green fields and exploring charming villages, in addition to making relationships through a chain of friendly games.

The program focused on developing practical leadership skills based on Stephen R. Covey's The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, through which the students were able to gain valuable and useful tools to help them manage their ideas, thoughts, actions, and feelings so they can lead with perseverance and confidence.

ence.

### Green Adventure Program

On an environmental level, NBK sponsored the "Green Adventure" program, which is a unique environmental initiative that joins physical and theoretical education related to the topic of sustainability. It was held in Portugal with the participation of 9 students and lasted for 7 days from 13 until 20 July.

This program aims to instill values of environmental responsibility and sustainability, to enable students to become leaders of change in their communities. The program taught the students, through interactive theoretical sessions and practical field activities, how to design sustainable gardens and natural landscapes, as well as apply sustainable agricultural practices in daily life activities to make positive environmental change.

The participants also had the opportunity to explore Portugal's natural landscapes and diverse wildlife, and they visited the ancient Moorish Castle, in addition to building connections with same-interest individuals and experts from the field, which helped them establish a deeper understanding of the connection between nature and society.

### Kon Social Entrepreneurship Program

NBK continued its support and sponsorship to "Kon" social entrepreneurship program organized by LOYAC non-profit organization in collaboration with Babson College in the United States, which aims to instill entrepreneurial thinking for the youth and provide them with the skills needed to become change-makers in

society.

This year's edition of the program joined 45 students whose ages range from 12 to 16 years, and it lasted for 5 extensive weeks where they had the opportunity to communicate and exchange experiences among different generations of social entrepreneurs.

The program's schedule was filled with training and educational activities, as well as specialized sessions, interactive discussions, online lectures, and virtual workshops all tailored to enhance and develop pioneering social entrepreneurship programs in Kuwait.

### Eco Quest Program

This program is focused on the environmental challenges in Kuwait, through which each school is delegated to present an innovative social and environmental plan that addresses one of the important environmental issues. 30 students from 7 schools participated in this program, where they came up with innovative solutions under teamwork schemes, guided by their passion for achieving a sustainable future.

### A Strong Commitment

On this occasion, Yaqoub Al-Baqer, Assistant Vice President, Public Relations and Event Management at NBK commented: "This wide array of programs reflects NBK's deep commitment to its social responsibility and its vital role in establishing an aware generation equipped with the necessary skills to face future challenges. By investing in the youth, not only does NBK develop and upskill individuals, but it also instills the principles of environmental, social, and institutional governance, which further confirms its role in supporting sustainable development in Kuwait".

Al-Baqer emphasized that these initiatives are well in line with NBK's strategy, which sees the importance of investing in human capital to make future leaders, further highlighting that the bank is committed to empowering the national youth and helping them to achieve their goals and aspirations.

Due to its strong belief in their positive impact, NBK will continue to support all society segments and non-profit organizations, especially the ones that care for the youth and their needs, aiming to secure a better future.

All Share Index at 8,510.30

## Boursa Kuwait closes positive

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 1, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait closed Monday's session with gains, as the All Share Index added 11.09 points (0.13%) to settle at 8,510.30 points.

Trading activity saw 303.3 million shares change hands through 19,687 deals, with a total value of KD 69.4 million (USD 211.6 million).

The Main Market Index inched up 3.02 points (0.04%) to 7,826.50 points, with 162.9 million shares traded via 11,263 deals, amounting to KD 28 million (USD 85.4 million).

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The Premier Market Index gained 13.65 points (0.15%), reaching 9,101.37 points, on 140.4 million shares traded through 8,424 transactions, valued at KD 41.3 million (USD 125.9 million).

The Main 50 Index was the strongest performer, advancing 39.59 points (0.50%) to close at 8,013.45 points, driven by 123.6 million shares exchanged in 6,643 transactions, worth KD 21.9 million (USD 66.7 million).

### For credit and prepaid cardholders

## KFH launches exclusive 20% discount at Landmark Stores

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 1: To mark the start of the new academic year, Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has launched special discount of up to 20% for KFH credit and prepaid cardholders at Landmark Group stores, including Centrepoint, Max and Home Centre. The initiative is part of KFH's ongoing efforts to enhance customer experience and provide exclusive benefits.

Valid until 15 September, the campaign is offered across all participating store branches, as well as through online shopping channels.

Through this initiative, KFH reaffirms its commitment to meeting customer aspirations during key occasions. The Bank also continues its annual efforts to enhance customer experience by offering exclusive benefits during the back-to-school season. This effort



KFH cards.

underscores KFH's role as a leading supporter of students and education, which are considered key pillars of

comprehensive development, community progress and sustainability.

Launched in collaboration with

the renowned Landmark Group, the campaign complements KFH's extensive portfolio of exclusive offers for credit and prepaid cardholders of various types. These include exceptional deals covering restaurants, fashion, furniture, electronics, hotels, travel, healthcare, gifts, and more.

It is worth noting that KFH customers can instantly issue virtual prepaid cards directly through the KFHOnline app. This service is available 24/7 with the highest levels of security and convenience. It also delivers a faster and more flexible banking experience, enabling customers to manage their digital purchases with ease. The cards can also be added immediately to digital wallets, providing freedom, control, and enhanced security when shopping at POS terminals or online, both locally and internationally.



## Crude imports dip 0.3% y-o-y

# Kuwait's oil exports to Japan fall for 4th month

TOKYO, Sept 1, (KUNA): Kuwait's crude oil exports to Japan edged down 1.0 percent in July from a year earlier to 4.93 million barrels, or 159,000 barrels per day (bpd), marking a decline for the fourth consecutive month, government data showed.

As Japan's fourth-biggest oil provider, Kuwait supplied 7.8 percent of the Asian nation's total crude imports, compared with 7.9 percent in the same month of last year, the Japanese Natural Resources and Energy Agency said in a preliminary report.

Japan's overall imports of crude oil in July declined 0.3 percent year-on-year to 2.03 million bpd, down for the second month in a row.

Shipments from the Middle East accounted for 87.6 percent of the total, down by 10.0 percentage points from the year before.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) remained Japan's No.1 oil supplier, although imports from the country slid 12.8 percent from a year earlier to 872,000 bpd, followed by Saudi Arabia with 702,000 bpd, down 3.5 percent.

The US ranked third with 191,000 bpd and Qatar fifth with 47,000 bpd, respectively. Japan is the world's third-biggest oil consumer after China and the US.

## G20 organizes 1st-ever meeting outside member states in Cairo

CAIRO, Sept 1, (KUNA): The first official meeting of the G20 held outside member states convened on Monday in the Egyptian capital, Cairo, with participation from G20 member countries, invited states, as well as various international organizations and financial institutions.

In his address to the third meeting of the G20 food security committee, Egyptian Minister of Finance Ahmad Kouchouk emphasized that national efforts alone are not sufficient to achieve food security objectives.

He underlined the indispensable role of the international community, noting that such cooperation is crucial to enhancing resilience against shocks, mobilizing investment in sustainable agriculture, and expanding the role of the private sector as a partner in sustainable development.

Kouchouk further noted that Egypt's hosting of this meeting underscores its role in ensuring that the voices and priorities of food-importing developing countries are reflected in global venues, and for reinforcing the African perspective within the G20 framework.

He stressed that food security is not merely a humanitarian concern, but also a matter of economic and social stability, warning that rising food prices and shortages may erode social cohesion, strain public finances, and hinder progress toward sustainable development.

The minister pointed out that the meeting comes at a time of complex global challenges, with ongoing geopolitical tensions, conflicts, and disruptions in supply chains continuing to impact global economies.

He added that soaring energy costs, climate-related issues, and currency fluctuations have driven food prices to record highs, negatively affecting nutrition, livelihoods, and social stability.

The three-day meeting in Cairo will review reports and studies prepared by the G20 food security committee and work towards drafting the ministerial communique, which will be presented later this month in South Africa.

This communique is expected to be central in shaping G20 policy priorities on food price stability and resilience-building.

This meeting marks a historic milestone, as it is the first official G20 congregation to be held outside of the member countries since the group's inception, reflecting appreciation for Egypt's continued efforts.



ABK and LOYAC volunteers in a group photo.

Albenali: Education support key, LOYAC partnership backs students' school start

# ABK sponsors LOYAC 'back-to-school' initiative for the 2nd consecutive year

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 1: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) announced its sponsorship of the back-to-school initiative with LOYAC for the second consecutive year, as part of its corporate social responsibility (CSR) program and its ongoing commitment to supporting students and education in Kuwait.

As part of the initiative, ABK and LOYAC volunteers prepared and distributed school bags and essential supplies to students across several areas in Kuwait. The effort reflects the Bank's dedication to fostering teamwork, volunteerism, and community engagement, while also spreading joy among students and helping them start their academic year with confidence.

On this occasion, Sager Albenali, Chief Communications Officer at ABK, said, "Education plays a vital role in our CSR program. For this reason, we renewed our partnership with LOYAC to support this unique initiative at the start of the school season. By providing students with essential school supplies, we aim to spread happiness and help them begin the new academic year successfully."



Sager Albenali, Chief Communications Officer

He added, "We take pride in our ongoing collaboration with LOYAC on this annual educational initiative, which highlights our leadership in social responsibility. Through our CSR program, we continue to support the education sector and develop impactful initiatives that benefit the community."

Albenali further emphasized ABK's longstanding commitment to education, demonstrated by its participation in numerous student-



Part of preparing school bags and supplies.

focused activities throughout the year, including school and university events, graduation ceremonies, and Ramadan celebrations. He highlighted the Bank's dedication to embedding the values of volunteerism and social contribution, while ensuring that its initiatives reach all segments of society and address their daily needs.

Additionally, Albenali noted that ABK organizes school visits across

Kuwait under its financial literacy program, where workshops are conducted to educate students about the banking sector, encourage saving, and raise awareness on avoiding financial fraud. He concluded by commending the efforts of all volunteers who contributed to the success of this initiative, affirming that ABK will continue to launch impactful activities to support students in their educational journey at all levels.

New digital platform offers 3% cashback, prepaid Visa

# Warba Bank launches 'Wave Banking': A fully integrated digital banking experience for young customers under the slogan 'Your Wave, Your Way'

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 1: In a significant milestone underscoring its leadership in banking innovation, Warba Bank, one of Kuwait's leading Islamic financial institutions, announced the launch of its youth account "Wave Banking" with an advanced digital platform, designed specifically for the younger generation under the slogan "Your Wave, Your Way", offering a fully digital experience tailored to their lifestyle and financial needs. This initiative comes as part of Warba's comprehensive digital transformation strategy and its vision "Let's Own Tomorrow", aimed at empowering young Kuwaitis to manage their finances with confidence and independence through smart, digital-first solutions.



Ahmad Faisal Al-Qatami, Chief Retail Banking Officer

Speaking on the launch, Mr. Ahmad Faisal Al-Qatami, Chief Retail Banking Officer at Warba Bank, stated: "The launch of Wave Banking marks a strategic milestone in Warba's digital transformation journey, reaffirming our commitment to developing innovative banking solutions that meet the expectations of the new generation. We believe youth are the driving force of change and progress in society, which is why we designed this comprehensive digital platform to give them the independence and confidence to manage their money, while enjoying exclusive benefits that suit their modern lifestyle. This initiative is fully aligned with our vision 'Let's Own Tomorrow', as we work to build a sustainable financial future for coming generations."

One of the key features of Wave Banking is a Prepaid Visa Card with cashback rewards of up to 3% on all personal transactions in Kuwait and abroad, capped at KD 150 per month, making it one of the strongest cashback programs among local banks.

Al-Qatami added: "Wave Banking is more than just a new service; it is a forward-looking model of engagement with the digital generation. Through offerings like the Imtiyaz Program for outstanding students, the unique Wave Wednesday feature, and an exclusive youth digital marketplace, we provide a holistic banking experience that encourages academic excellence, promotes financial planning and savings, and enhances the youth lifestyle. We are proud to pioneer this kind of specialized banking service in the Kuwaiti market."

### A Comprehensive Digital Platform for the New Generation

Wave Banking represents a leap in youth-centric digital banking, offering a wide range of carefully designed services and exclusive benefits. The platform allows young customers to manage their finances intelligently and efficiently through a seamless, modern digital experience that combines simplicity with advanced technology.

"Developing Wave Banking was the result of in-depth research into the needs and aspirations of Kuwaiti youth," Al-Qatami explained. "We designed a fully digital experience that aligns with their lifestyle and tech preferences, with unique features like a prepaid card and cashback up to 3%, making it the ideal choice for young customers looking for rewarding and modern banking services. We remain committed to continuously evolving our digital offerings to stay ahead of market expectations."

Al-Qatami pointed out that "the bank continues its investments in financial technology and innovative digital solutions, within the framework of its comprehensive digital transformation strategy. Wave Banking reflects our ability to innovate and develop banking products that keep pace with global technical developments and meet local market needs. We are committed to providing the best digital banking experiences for our customers and look forward to expanding the scope of our specialized services to include more categories and sectors."

### Imtiyaz Program: Rewarding Academic Excellence

In line with Warba's commitment to education and student success, Wave Banking includes the innovative Imtiyaz Program, which offers up to KD 50 in rewards per semester for students who maintain a GPA of 3.5 or above. In addition, students receive 5,000 Mokhbha points each semester as an instant reward redeemable through the app.

The program is fully digital, requiring no branch visits or paperwork. Students can apply directly via the Warba app by selecting their university from a growing list of participating institutions, ensuring broader accessibility across Kuwait's academic community.



Warba Bank launches 'Wave Banking' for youth.

### Wave Wednesday and the Exclusive Youth Marketplace

Every Wednesday, Warba designates Wave Wednesday as a rewards day for Wave Banking customers. Each week, 20 winners receive valuable prizes, including shopping vouchers from key partners such as Talabat and Oula Fuel, with 10 winners per partner weekly. The bank also continues to expand the scope of exclusive offers, with plans to add more surprises in the coming days.

The platform also features an exclusive youth-focused digital Marketplace, offering curated discounts and deals unavailable to other customer segments. This marketplace reflects Warba's deep understanding of youth needs, providing a unique shopping experience that blends convenience, value and variety.

### Smart Financial Planning Tools

Wave Banking includes an interactive financial dashboard that helps users set monthly budgets, track expenses and monitor progress in real time. Designed to build awareness and smarter decision-making, the tool encourages saving, planning and financial literacy.

The platform also supports electronic disbursement of student allowances, ensuring a seamless, cashless experience.

### Strategic Importance of Wave Banking

The launch of Wave Banking reflects Warba Bank's broader growth strategy to deliver innovative solutions that align with demographic shifts and the increasing demand for advanced digital services that meet the needs of various customer segments. This initiative reflects the bank's deep understanding of demographic transformations in Kuwaiti society and the growing need for advanced digital banking services that keep pace with the aspirations of the new generation.

It introduces a new model of youth-focused banking that reshapes how the sector engages with the younger generation while strengthening Warba's role in education and financial empowerment in alignment with global technical developments and meet local market needs.

### Aligning with Warba's Slogan "Let's Own Tomorrow"

Wave Banking aligns with Warba Bank's vision "Let's Own Tomorrow," which aims to empower individuals and communities to build a sustainable and prosperous financial future through designing innovative digital services that meet youth needs and providing financial tools that help them make informed decisions. The platform reflects the bank's values of empowerment, innovation and social responsibility.

The platform contributes to achieving several important strategic objectives, including empowering youth to plan financially with confidence, promoting a culture of saving and smart spending, providing advanced digital banking experience, and supporting social responsibility through education and academic incentive programs. All these elements contribute to achieving the "Let's Own Tomorrow" vision and enhance the bank's role as a partner in building a better future for Kuwaiti society.

### Strategic Partnerships and Ecosystem

Warba has partnered with leading local and regional brands, including Talabat for food deliveries, Oula Fuel and other prominent local retailers, to provide a rich ecosystem of exclusive benefits and discounts to young customers.

These partnerships ensure added value across shopping, entertainment, transport and daily needs, underscoring Warba's holistic approach to serving the youth lifestyle.

### Advanced Technologies and User Experience

Wave Banking was built using the latest digital banking technologies, with a focus on delivering a seamless and intuitive user experience that meets the expectations of today's digital generation. It features a youthful, modern interface designed to be both visually appealing and easy to navigate, with customization options that allow users to tailor the experience to their personal preferences.

Key advanced features include a multi-layered security system that safeguards data and financial transactions, artificial intelligence tools that analyze spending patterns and provide personalized financial advice, and advanced financial analytics that enable users to better understand their financial habits and make more informed investment decisions.

### Competitive Advantages and Value Creation

With standout features like 3% cashback, a digital-first journey (account opening to daily banking), specialized products like the Game Edition card for esports enthusiasts, and the Imtiyaz Program, Wave Banking redefines digital banking for youth. It sets new benchmarks in customer value, convenience, and lifestyle integration.

### Competitive Advantages and Added Value

Wave Banking is unique by a set of competitive advantages that make it the optimal choice for Kuwaiti youth seeking advanced digital banking services. The first of these advantages is the distinguished cashback program that reaches up to 3%, which is considered one of the strongest programs among local banks, providing real financial value to customers.

The platform provides a completely integrated digital experience, from account opening to managing daily transactions, without the need to visit branches or deal with papers, saving time and effort and aligning with the digital generation's lifestyle. The platform provides unique benefits such as the "Game Edition" card for esports and the Imtiyaz program for outstanding students, reflecting a deep understanding of contemporary youth interests and priorities.

### Enhancing Financial Inclusion Among Youth

The launch of Wave Banking is expected to have a significant positive impact on the Kuwaiti banking sector, setting new standards for digital banking services dedicated to youth and encouraging other banks to develop similar solutions. This development contributes to enhancing competitiveness in the sector and drives toward more innovation and development in financial technology.

The platform also contributes to enhancing financial inclusion among youth and encouraging them to engage in the formal banking system, supporting financial stability and economic growth in the long term. The Imtiyaz program for outstanding students reflects the banking sector's commitment to supporting education and human development, contributing to building a financially aware generation capable of contributing to the country's economic development.

### Looking Ahead

Wave Bank plans to continuously develop Wave Banking and add more innovative features and services in response to customer needs and market developments. Future plans include expanding the scope of commercial partnerships to include more brands and services, developing new features for financial planning and investment, and adding more options for customization and control of the banking experience.

The bank is also working on expanding the Imtiyaz program to include more universities and educational institutions and developing training and educational programs in financial planning and investment aimed at youth. These plans reflect the bank's commitment to sustainable growth and developing banking solutions that keep pace with technical developments and meet customers' growing expectations.

### About Warba Bank

Wave Bank continuously strives to develop its products and services to meet the diverse needs of its customers and is committed to the highest standards of quality and transparency in all its dealings. The bank has received numerous local and regional awards and recognitions in appreciation of its excellence in Islamic banking services and innovation in products and services.

Wave Bank is considered one of the banks that achieved great success in a short period, occupying a leading position in the field of Islamic digital banking services, and is one of the local banks with the most shareholders, making it close to all segments of society. This achievement comes to confirm once again the bank's position as a trusted banking partner that combines innovation and social responsibility in providing the best financial services and products.

It is worth noting that Warba Bank is one of the leading banks in Islamic banking services in the State of Kuwait, established by Amiri Decree in 2010. The bank provides a comprehensive range of banking and investment services compliant with Islamic Sharia principles and is distinguished by an extensive network of branches and service centers, advanced technical infrastructure, and a qualified and highly experienced team in Islamic banking services.



Labor Day bookings hit 15-year high despite foreign drop

A downturn in international travel to the US may last beyond summer, experts warn

LAS VEGAS, Sept 1, (AP): For a few hopeful weeks this summer, a bright billboard on the major highway linking Toronto to New York greeted Canadian drivers with a simple message: “Buffalo Loves Canada.” The marketing campaign, which included a \$500 gift card giveaway, was meant to show Buffalo’s northern neighbors they were welcome, wanted and missed.

At first, it seemed like it might work, said Patrick Kaler, CEO of the local tourism organization Visit Buffalo Niagara. More than 1,000 people entered the giveaway. But by the end of July, it was clear the city’s reliable summer wave of Canadian visitors would not arrive this year.

Buffalo’s struggle reflects a broader downturn in international tourism to the U.S. that travel analysts warn could persist well into the future. From northern border towns to major hot spots like Las Vegas and Los Angeles, popular travel destinations reported hosting fewer foreign visitors this summer.

Experts and some local officials attribute the trend that first emerged in February to President Donald Trump’s return to the White House. They say his tariffs, immigration crackdown and repeated jabs about the U.S. acquiring Canada and Greenland alienated travelers from other parts of the world.

“To see the traffic drop off so significantly, especially because of rhetoric that can be changed, is so disheartening,” Kaler said.

The World Travel & Tourism Council projected ahead of Memorial Day that the U.S. would be the only country among the 184 it studied where foreign visitor spending would fall in 2025. The finding was “a clear indicator that the global appeal of the U.S. is slipping,” the global industry association said.

“The world’s biggest travel and tourism economy is heading in the wrong direction,” Julia Simpson, the council’s president and CEO, said. “While other nations are rolling out the welcome mat, the U.S. government is putting up the ‘closed’ sign.”

Travel research firm Tourism Economics, meanwhile, predicted this month that the U.S. would see 8.2% fewer international arrivals in 2025, an improvement from its earlier forecast of a 9.4% decline but well below the numbers of foreign visitors to the country before the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The sentiment drag has proven to be severe,” the firm said, noting that airline bookings indicate “the sharp inbound travel slowdown” of May, June and July would likely persist in the months ahead.

Deborah Friedland, managing director at the financial services firm Eisner Advisory Group, said he U.S. travel industry faced multiple headwinds - rising travel costs, political uncertainty and ongoing geopolitical tensions.

Since returning to office, Trump has doubled down on some of the hard-line policies that defined his first term, reviving a travel ban targeting mainly African and Middle Eastern countries, tightening rules around visa approvals and ramping up mass immigration raids. At the same time, the push for tariffs on foreign goods that quickly became a defining feature of his second term gave some citizens elsewhere a sense they were



Travelers make their way to and past a security checkpoint at Terminal D before boarding for or arriving from their international flights at Dallas Fort Worth International Airport, Friday, Aug. 29, 2025, in DFW Airport, Texas. (AP)

unwanted.

“Perception is reality,” Friedland said.

Organizers of an international swing dancing said an impression of America’s hostility to foreigners led them to postpone the event, which had been scheduled to take place this month in the Harlem area of New York City.

About three months into Trump’s second term, international competitors began pulling out of the world finals of the International Lindy Hop Championships, saying they felt unwelcome, event co-producer Tena Morales said. About half of attendees each year come from outside the U.S., primarily from Canada and France, she said.

Contest organizers are considering whether to host the annual competition in another country until Trump’s presidency ends, Morales said.

“The climate is still the same and what we’re hearing is still the same, that (dancers) don’t want to come here,” she said.

The nation’s capital, where the Trump administration in recent weeks deployed National Guard members and took over management of Union Station, also has noticed an impact.

Local tourism officials have projected a 5.1% dip in international visitors for the year. Marketing organization Destination DC said last week it planned to “counter negative rhetoric” about the city with a campaign that would feature residents and highlight the “more personal side” of Washington.

U.S. government data confirms an overall drop-off in international ar-

rivals during the first seven months of the year. The number of overseas visitors, a category that doesn’t include travelers from Mexico or Canada, declined by more than 3 million, or 1.6%, compared to the same period a year earlier, according to preliminary figures from the National Travel and Tourism Office.

As a tourist generator, Western Europe was down 2.3%, with visitors from Denmark dropping by 19%, from Germany by 10%, and from France by 6.6%. A similar pattern surfaced in Asia, where the U.S. data showed double-digit decreases in arrivals from Hong Kong, Indonesia and the Philippines. Fewer residents of countries throughout Africa also had traveled to the U.S. as of July.

However, visitors from some countries, among them Argentina, Brazil, Italy and Japan, have arrived in greater numbers.

Neither did all U.S. destinations report sluggish summers for tourism.

On eastern Wisconsin’s Door Peninsula, which straddles Lake Michigan and Green Bay, a steady stream of loyal Midwest visitors helped deliver a strong summer for local businesses, according to Jon Jarosh, a spokesperson for Destination Door County.

Many business owners reported a noticeable uptick in foot traffic after a quieter start to the season, Jarosh said, and sidewalks were bustling and restaurants were packed by midsummer.

Executives from the major U.S. airlines said last month that American passengers booking premium airfares helped fill their international flights and that demand for domestic flights was picking up after a weaker than expected showing in the first half of 2025.

The Federal Aviation Administration said it was gearing up for what is expected to be the busiest Labor Day weekend in 15 years. Bookings for U.S. airlines were up about 2% compared to 2024 for the long holiday weekend that started Thursday, aviation analytics firm Cirium said.

As the summer winds down, though, the absence of foreign visitors in Buffalo was still visible, according to Kaler, the head of Visit Buffalo Niagara.

Canada sent over 20.2 million visitors to the U.S. last year, more than any other country, U.S. government data showed. But this year, residents of Canada have been among the most reluctant to visit.

In a major U-turn, more U.S. residents drove into Canada in June and July than Canadians making the reverse trip, according to Canada’s national statistical agency. Statistics Canada said it was the first time that happened in nearly two decades with the exception of two months during the pandemic.

In July alone, the number of Canadian residents returning from the U.S. by car was down 37% from the year before, and return trips by plane fell 26%, the agency said.

As a result, Visit Buffalo Niagara shifted its marketing efforts this summer to cities like Boston, Philadelphia and Chicago. Amateur children’s sporting events also helped fill the void left by Canadian tourists.

“We will always welcome Canadians back when the time is right,” Kaler said. “I don’t want Canadians to feel like we see them as just dollar signs or a transaction at our cash registers. They mean more to us than that.”

Other Voices

ECB cautious on cuts

Eurozone wage growth & economic resilience

By Hassan F. Beidas

Eurozone wages saw a slight increase in the second quarter this year, rising at a faster rate as unemployment remained at record lows. This development is likely to keep the European Central Bank (ECB) cautious about further interest rate cuts. The ECB reported that wages negotiated between employers and unions were 3.95% higher than a year ago.



Hassan F Beidas

The Broader Economic Context:

Despite the recent 15% tariff baseline imposed by the U.S. on European Union exports, business activity has remained resilient. According to S&P Global, the composite purchasing index for the eurozone, a key measure of private sector activity, rose to 51.1 this month, indicating continued growth.

While recent trade deals have helped reduce global uncertainty, the eurozone’s growth has been primarily bolstered by strong domestic factors. This includes robust domestic investment and consumption, as well as a resilient labor market.

In real terms, adjusted for inflation, many euro area countries returned to pre-pandemic posted wage growth rates in 2024. However, even though posted wages

were growing faster by the end of 2024 than the annual rate of inflation in most countries analysed, most countries have still experienced notable real wage declines over the longer term, reflecting an incomplete recovery in purchasing power. This longer-term trend is different from trends in both the UK and US, where real posted wages have risen since 2019 despite long periods of high inflation.

Labor Market Dynamics and External Pressures:

Although overall employment in the eurozone has risen, there are variations across sectors. The manufacturing sector, for instance, continues to see a decline in employment. This is partly due to competition from Chinese manufacturers, which has led to significant job losses in recent years. This pressure is expected to intensify as higher U.S. tariffs on Chinese goods may force Chinese businesses to seek out new customers in the European market.

Inflation and Wage Developments:

In conclusion, wage growth is a critical factor for central banks as it has the potential to fuel inflationary pressures. The Indeed Wage Tracker shows a gradual easing of wage growth across the euro area, though with some country-specific differences. Forecasts suggest that the growth in Compensation per Employee (CPE) decelerated in late 2024. This aligns with ECB expectations and supports the view that wage-driven inflationary pressures will moderate as we move further into 2025.

**TIANJIN, Sept 1, (AP): Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin met on the sidelines of a regional summit in China on Monday in a show of deepening ties when New Delhi’s relations with Washington are strained over the purchase of Russian oil.**

The two leaders held talks after attending the key session of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization gathering in the port city of Tianjin, where discussions focused on regional stability, bilateral trade and energy cooperation.

In his remarks to open the talks, Modi termed the partnership with Moscow as “special and privileged.” Putin addressed Modi as a “dear friend” and hailed Russia’s ties with India as special, friendly and trusting. “Russia and India have maintained special relations for decades. Friendly, trusting. This is the foundation for the development of our relations in the future,” Putin said.

Putin plans to travel to India in December for the 23rd India-Russia annual summit, according to his foreign affairs adviser, Yuri Ushakov.

Modi used the SCO meeting to welcome the initiatives aimed at halting the conflict between Russia and Ukraine and called on the stakeholders to move forward constructively.

“To end the conflict soonest and establish peace permanently, we need to find out a way. It’s a call of the entire humanity,” Modi said.

Putin was accompanied by a large delegation that included top government officials. Russian state media reported that before sitting down for their formal meeting, Putin and Modi spoke one-on-one for almost an hour in a Russian-made limousine that Putin regularly takes on foreign trips.

Moments before the leaders lined up



Russian President Vladimir Putin, second left, and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi walk to attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit in Tianjin, China, on Monday, Sept. 1, 2025. (AP)

for a group photo, Modi was seen clasping Putin’s hand with the gusto of an old friend, bursting into his trademark hearty laughter. The moment was infectious as Putin grinned and chuckled, while Chinese President Xi Jinping gave a measured smile. The trio, ringed by watchful interlocutors, chatted animatedly for a few seconds.

Modi met Xi ahead of the opening of the summit Sunday and the two leaders pledged to resolve their border differences and bolster cooperation.

Monday’s bilateral meeting between Modi and Putin carried added significance by coming days after U.S. President Donald Trump imposed an additional 25% tariffs on Indian imports, raising the total duties to a steep 50%, in retaliation for India’s continued purchases of discounted Russian oil.

Washington has repeatedly warned New Delhi against buying Russian crude, which it said was partly keeping Moscow’s revenues afloat to fund the Ukraine war. India has defended its imports as essential for meeting the growing energy needs of its 1.4 billion people.

Analysts said Trump’s steep tariffs

and the tone coming from the White House have pushed New Delhi closer to China and Russia.

“While India-China reengagements started much before Trump, his policies are accelerating a process whereby India seems to be working much more closely with China and Russia to push back against economic unilateralism it is witnessing from the U.S.,” said Harsh Pant, vice president of foreign policy at New Delhi based think tank the Observer Research Foundation.

Modi travelled to Russia twice last year. The first was a visit to Moscow for talks with Putin in July, which was his first trip to Russia since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Kremlin’s forces in February 2022. He then traveled to Kazan in October for the summit of the BRICS bloc of developing economies.

As Xi, Putin and Modi showed extraordinary unity, Trump on Monday continued to jab at New Delhi.

As the summit wrapped up, Trump charged in a social media post that historically the U.S.-India trade relationship “has been a totally one sided

disaster!” Trump also bristled about India surging its Russian oil purchases and signaled no trade deal with New Delhi is in sight.

“They have now offered to cut their Tariffs to nothing, but it’s getting late,” Trump said in the posting on his Truth Social platform. “They should have done so years ago. Just some simple facts for people to ponder!!!”

Russia has had strong ties with India since the Cold War, and New Delhi’s importance as a key trading partner has grown since the war between Moscow and Ukraine.

China and India have become key buyers of Russian oil after the West shunned Russian exports to punish Moscow.

India historically bought most of its crude from the Middle East, but the world’s third-largest crude importer after China and the U.S. has started buying Russian oil available at discounted rates. Russia now accounts for around 37% of India’s total oil imports, according to analysts and Indian officials.

Trade between India and Russia has sharply increased in recent years, reaching a record \$68.7 billion in the 2024-25 financial year. Imports from Russia reached around \$64 billion and exports from India totaled about \$5 billion, according to Indian government data.

The two nations aspire to bolster trade to \$100 billion by 2030.

Modi’s meeting with Putin underscored New Delhi’s stance that India prized its old and reliable strategic partners and has sufficient strategic autonomy in its foreign policy to maintain and strengthen its multi-dimensional partnership, said Sreeram Sundar Chaulia, an international affairs expert at New Delhi’s Jindal School of International Affairs.

At the same time, the Indian government hopes the present rough weather between India and the U.S. is a temporary aberration, Chaulia said.

“Then, India can return happily to having the Russian cake and eating the American pie as part of its multi-alignment strategy,” Chaulia said.

Consumer confidence remains low, spending under pressure

Britain’s retail struggles amid rising costs and inflation

LONDON, Sept 1, (Xinhua): Britain’s retail industry is limping into the second half of 2025, squeezed by rising costs, stubborn inflation, and wavering consumer confidence.

More than 60 chief executives from Britain’s biggest retailers have written to the Chancellor, urging assurance that no further tax rises will be imposed on retail this autumn.

The country’s retail price inflation hits an 18-month high in August, driven by 4.2-percent food price jump year on year, according to the British Retail Consortium (BRC).

The latest price increases have added pressure to families already grappling with the cost of living, said BRC chief executive Helen Dickinson.

“Retailers continue doing everything they can to limit price rises for households, but as the Bank of England acknowledged, the 7 billion pounds in new costs flowing through from last year’s Budget has created an uphill battle for retailers,” Dickinson noted.

Britain’s annual consumer price inflation (CPI) rose to 3.8 percent in July, the highest since January 2024, when it was 4 percent, data from the Office for National Statistics showed earlier.

Guy Leman, spokesman for the BRC, told Xinhua that as inflation has been on the rise over the past few months, retailers, who operate in an

industry with tight margins, have to pass on some additional costs from last year’s budget in the form of higher prices although they tried hard to absorb higher costs.

Consumer confidence is in the doldrums, according to the BRC. Dickinson said with prices rising, and food inflation predicted to hit 6 percent by the end of the year, households are expected to spend more on retail goods in the coming months.

“Belief in the economy has stayed stubbornly below -30 for six of the last seven months, a far cry from the net positive sentiment in July 2024,” she added, noting that consumers see rising prices, gap-toothed high streets, and reports of large businesses falling into administration.

“The pandemic really hit retail hard. But right now there are the worst vacancy rates ever for shop units in our towns and cities,” Lyndon Simkin, professor of strategic marketing at Manchester Metropolitan University, told Xinhua.

The COVID-19 pandemic hit the retail industry and it never fully picked up after the pandemic. Huge supply chain hold-ups reduced product availability, Brexit removed some consumers and reduced access to cheaper labor, and the government’s taxation and regulations have been the most recent problem, said Simkin.

According to Leman, the increase of tax and national insurance contribution particularly hit industries like retail and hospitality, lowering by about half the threshold that employers have to pay national insurance for their employees, which led to rises in hiring costs and consequent job losses. In the next three years, retail could lose over 150,000 part-time roles.

“We still need citytown centers with shops and services, both to serve the functional needs of certain segments and consumers and to provide a social hub for residents in these communities,” said Simkin, noting that measures should be taken in helping with the retail sector in multiple fields, including tax, business rates, national insurance costs, interest rates on capital investment and access to non-UK employees.

Neil Carberry, chief executive of the Recruitment & Employment Confederation noted that action is needed in the Autumn Budget since the fear of further costs, worries about the impact of the Employment Rights Bill and new tax rules are all on employers’ minds.

It’s vital that policymakers ease the cost pressures on business, said Stuart Morrison, research manager at the British Chambers of Commerce, noting that firms cannot drive forward economic growth if they are continuing to face cost pressures from several directions.



## China's summer box office reaches almost 12 bln yuan

## 'Weapons' returns to No. 1 as summer box office slows

LOS ANGELES, Sept 1, (Agencies): "Weapons" found its way back on top during the Labor Day weekend, culminating a summer box office that's likely to fall right below meeting last year's earnings.

Zach Cregger's horror proved its staying power as a late-summer viral success and regained the top spot after last weekend saw "Kpop Demon Hunters" give Netflix its first box-office win. "Weapons" generated \$10.2 million during its fourth weekend in theaters.

Universal's 50th rerelease of "Jaws" also made a splash in theaters, securing the second spot. Steven Spielberg's 1975 film took "a bite out of the box office," said Paul Dergarabedian, senior media analyst for the data firm Comscore, earning \$8.1 million in 3,200 North American theaters.

"How appropriate that a movie that's celebrating its 50 years, an all-time classic, Jaws, should be as relevant today as it was when it opened," Dergarabedian said. "It's so great because we need every dollar to contribute to the bottom line for this summer."

The rerelease helped boost a summer with earnings likely coming in at \$3.7 billion, just under last summer. Still, this year will miss the typical pre-pandemic summer box office benchmark of \$4 billion, Dergarabedian said.

"There were casualties this summer. It's a very crowded summer, very competitive," Dergarabedian said. "At the end of the day, you can't get to that four billion mark unless every movie just clicked and is performing at or above expectations."

This summer's earnings were front-loaded, with May

releases like "Thunderbolts" and "Lilo & Stitch" becoming box office wins. However, the latter half of the summer struggled despite the success of movies like "Weapons."

Dergarabedian said the summer succeeded in provided high-quality movies and marketing, but it's "kind of limping a bit to the finish line in terms of the summer movie season."

The crime caper "Caught Stealing," starring Austin Butler, generated \$7.8 million domestically and snatched third place its debut weekend. Set in 1998 and directed by Darren Aronofsky, the film follows Butler as a New York City bartender who is unexpectedly wrapped up in the city's crime world.

"Freakier Friday," which debuted alongside "Weapons" early this month for a successful humor/horror double feature, took fourth place, earning \$6.5 million domestically. "The Roses," another newcomer, came in fifth with \$6.4 million.

"The Fantastic Four: First Steps" landed in sixth place with \$4.8 million. The Marvel superhero film hit box office gold during its late July entry, debuting at \$118 million. The film, however, experienced a downward trend in earnings since its release.

"The Bad Guys 2" came in just below "First Steps," with \$4.7 million, followed by "Superman," an early July entry that generated \$2.6 million during the Labor Day weekend.

With final domestic figures being released Monday, this list factors in the estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at US and Canadian theaters, according to Comscore:

1. "Weapons," \$10.2 million; 2. "Jaws (1975)," \$8.1 million; 3. "Caught Stealing," \$7.8 million; 4. "Freakier Friday," \$6.5 million; 5. "The Roses," \$6.4 million; 6. "The Fantastic Four: First Steps," \$4.8 million; 7. "The Bad Guys 2," \$4.7 million; 8. "Superman," \$2.6 million; 9. "Nobody 2," \$1.8 million and 10. "The Naked Gun," \$1.8 million.

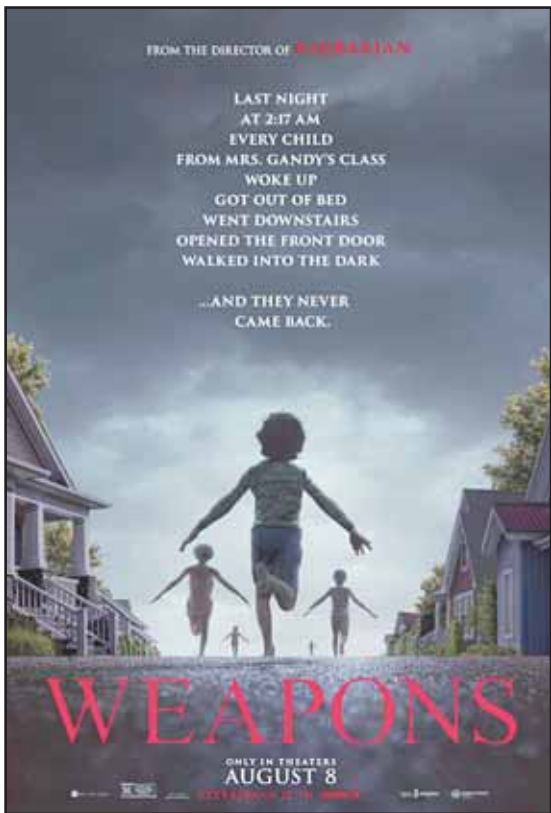
Meanwhile, China's 2025 summer box office reached just over 11.96 billion yuan (around 1.68 billion U.S. dollars), surpassing last year's summer total, the China Film Administration (CFA) announced on Monday.

More than 100 films spanning a diverse range of genres, including history, animation, comedy, action and suspense, were released in China this past summer, attracting a total of 321 million moviegoers, according the CFA.

China's summer movie season runs from June 1 through Aug. 31 and is traditionally one of the country's most lucrative film periods.

The top-grossing title of the summer is "Dead to Rights," a film about the 1937 Nanjing Massacre in east China during World War II -- which raked in 2.89 billion yuan since its July 25 release.

Drawing on verified historical photographs, the story depicts a group of Nanjing residents who hide inside a photography studio and are compelled to help a Japanese military photographer develop his film. When they realize the negatives reveal damning evidence of atrocities across the city, they secretly keep possession of them and smuggle the images to the outside world.



This image released by Warner Bros. Pictures shows promotional art for the film 'Weapons.' (AP)

## Film

## Dwayne Johnson, Oscar contender?

## 'The Smashing Machine' starts buzz at Venice

VENICE, Italy, Sept 1, (AP): Dwayne Johnson takes a serious turn as UFC fighter Mark Kerr in "The Smashing Machine," which has its world premiere Monday at the Venice Film Festival.

"I have for a long time wanted this," Johnson said before the premiere. "The transformation part was something I was really hungry to do. I've been very fortunate to have the career that I've had and make the films that I have, but there was just this voice inside of me, this little voice, like what if I can do more."

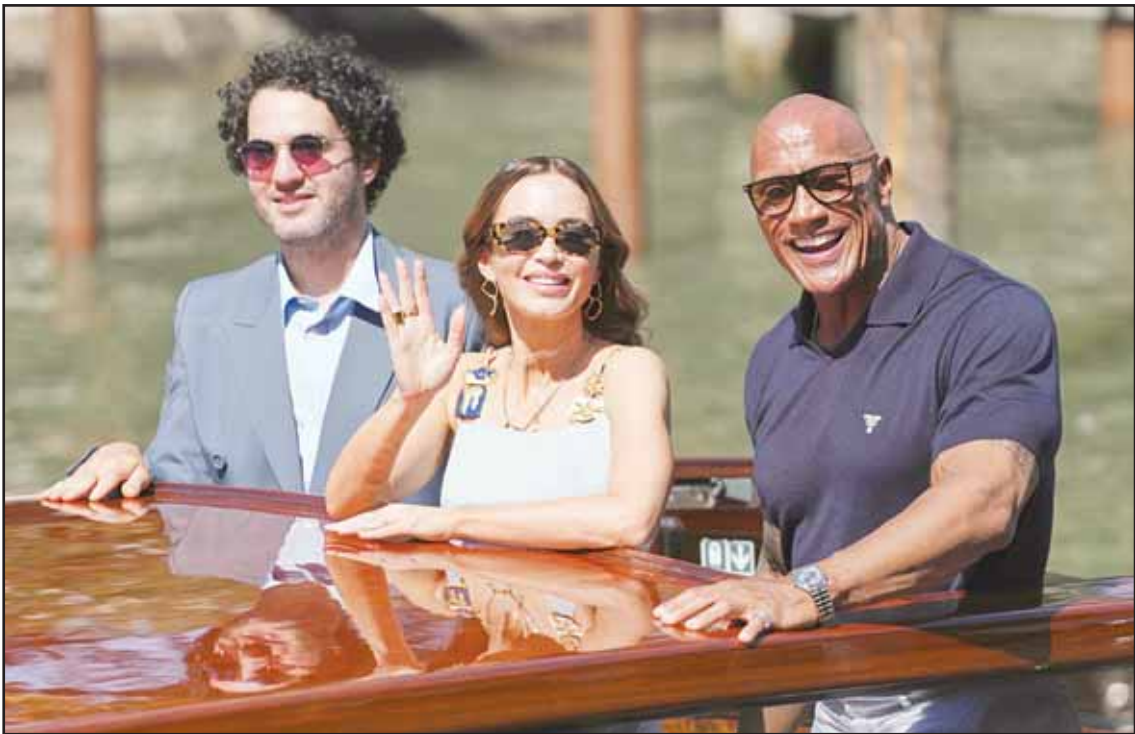
The actor, best known for big budget action movies and comedies, is already sparking Oscar buzz for his transformation in the film from Benny Safdie. The festival has launched several recent best actor Oscar winners, from Brendan Fraser in "The Whale" to Adrien Brody in "The Brutalist." Like both of those films, "The Smashing Machine" is being released by A24.

"The box office in our business is very loud," Johnson said. "And it can push you into a category and into a corner: This is your lane, this is what you do, this what people want you to be in and this is what Hollywood wants you to be. And I understood that. And I made those movies, and I like them and they were fun. And some were really good and did well and some not so good."

But he felt like he had more to give, not to prove something to Hollywood, but to himself. The push to take on a new challenge came in part from his co-star and friend Emily Blunt, who he worked with in "Jungle Cruise," and who encouraged him to draw on everything he'd gone through in life and put it into his work.

"When you've been pigeonholed into something it's hard to know, wait, can I do that?" he said. "Sometimes it takes people you know and love, like Emily and Benny, to say you can."

Johnson was joined in Venice not only by Safdie and Blunt, but also the man he's portraying in the film. Kerr is a two-time UFC heavyweight tournament winner and MMA fighter who retired in 2009. Known as "The



Director Benny Safdie, (from left), Emily Blunt and Dwayne Johnson arrive at the 82nd edition of the Venice Film Festival in Venice, Italy, on Monday, Sept. 1. (AP)

Smashing Machine," Kerr also struggled with addition to painkillers and opioids, overdosing twice.

Before Johnson was best known as the star of franchises like "Jumanji" and the "Fast & Furious" series, as well as a producer and business owner, he made his name in wrestling. A third-generation wrestler, he won eight WWE championships. "I loved wrestling and I had such a great time, but it's very bombastic," Johnson said.

He remembered meeting Kerr in the late 1990s and said how much he looked up to him. This film, he said, feels like a full circle moment.

"The Smashing Machine" takes place between the years 1997 and 2000, a tumultuous time in both Kerr's professional and personal life. His relationship with then girlfriend Dawn Staples was particularly volatile.

Blunt got to know and spend time with her counterpart as well. She said she was excited to show the "full weather system" of a relationship.

"I've been part of a lot of relationships that are essentially more curated to a movie, a movieified relationship," Blunt said. "This felt like the full spectrum of what a relationship really looks like. Because humans change within the hour. I think we got to show that."

She said it was extraordinary and a little "spooky" to see Johnson fully disappear into this role. The prosthetics were designed by master makeup artist Kazu Hiro, who helped Bradley Cooper turn into Leonard Bernstein and Gary Oldman into Winston Churchill.

Venice's artistic director Alberto Barbera said last week he wouldn't be surprised to see Johnson, who he called "absolutely amazing" in the film, and Blunt, who plays Kerr's wife, among the Oscar nominees next year.

"I've been scared to go deep and go intense and go raw until now, until I've had this opportunity," Johnson said. Both Johnson and Safdie said that Kerr had changed their lives.

"It's such a beautiful thing to shine a light on him and learn from his experiences," Safdie said.

Safdie is also an actor, who recently appeared in "Oppenheimer" and "Happy Gilmore 2," and filmmaker who, along with his brother Josh, codirected "Uncut Gems."

Telegraph's basic "Queen fought off sex attacker" to the Sun's tabloid-style "Camilla whacked groper in goolies." Whatever the approach, the tale is sure to add to Camilla's reputation as a no-nonsense woman who has brought a bit of grit to the royal family. (AP)

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**NEW YORK:** New York City's West Indian American Day Parade, one of the world's largest celebrations of Caribbean culture, is set to step off Monday with increased security after a fatal shooting at last year's event.

The police department is sending thousands of officers plus helicopters and drones and using barricades to create a "moat" between marchers and the many spectators lining the nearly 2-mile (3.2-kilometer) Brooklyn parade route, NYPD Commissioner Jessica Tisch said.

It will be the department's largest deployment of the year, Tisch said, with more officers assigned to safeguard the event than New Year's Eve in Times Square or the July Fourth fireworks on the East River.

"We are not going to allow one or two individuals to spoil the festivities," Mayor Eric Adams said at a Friday press briefing, noting that there were no specific or credible threats against the parade.

The annual Labor Day event fills Eastern Parkway from Crown Heights to the Brooklyn Museum with vibrant costumes, colorful flags, and the sounds of soca and reggae music.

In his director's statement for "The Smashing Machine," Safdie called the title, "a perfect onomatopoeia for something visual, conjuring images of domination and destruction with ease."

The film is playing in the main competition, with titles like "Frankenstein," "Bugonia," "The Voice of Hind Rajab," "La Grazia" and "No Other Choice" also vying for the top prizes, including acting and directing awards. Winners will be announced on Sept. 6.

"The Smashing Machine" will open in North American theaters on Oct. 3.



Viola Prettejohn poses for photographers at the 82nd edition of the Venice Film Festival in Venice, Italy, Sept. 1. (AP)

Along with crowds of hundreds of thousands of people, it's also a magnet for local politicians, many of whom have West Indian heritage or represent members of the city's large Caribbean community. (AP)

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**NEW YORK:** A recent cultural event at the Chinese Consulate General in New York gathered an audience of some 200 people to revisit the deep friendship forged between the Chinese and American people during the World Anti-Fascist War.

To commemorate the 80th anniversary of the victory in the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War, "Experience China -- A Symphony of Stories on China-US People-to-People Friendship" was hosted on Friday night.

Blending symphony with narration by descendants of eyewitnesses, the event recounted how Chinese and American people fought side by side against fascism -- from American missionary John Magee risking his life to film the Nanjing Massacre, to the Flying Tigers, a group of American volunteers, creating "The Hump" airlift to transport much-needed supplies to China over the Himalayas, and villagers rescuing U.S. pilots who took part in the Doolittle Raid.

"To remember the past is to safeguard the future. To reflect on war is to affirm our duty to peace and justice," China's Consul General in New York Chen Li said at the event. (Xinhua)



Lady Gaga performs during a campaign rally for Democratic presidential nominee Vice President Kamala Harris outside the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Nov. 4, 2024, in Philadelphia. (AP)

## Performance roster

## Lady Gaga extends 'VMA' dominance

LOS ANGELES, Sept 1, (AP): Lady Gaga is extending her dominance of this year's MTV Video Music Awards and has been added as a performer, show organizers announced Saturday.

The Grammy-award winning musician leads this year's VMA nominations with 12 nods, including artist of the year and best album for "Mayhem," which was released earlier this year.

Gaga has a long-standing history with the VMAs, with 57 total nominations throughout her career. Mother Monster, as she's known, last took the stage in 2020, singing various hits from her album, "Chromatica," including a performance of "Rain on Me" with Ariana Grande.

She joins a slate of other seasoned VMAs performers confirmed for this year's roster, including Doja Cat, who will give the first ever televised performance of her new single "Jealous Type." Jelly Roll will also perform and is competing for the first time in four categories. Post Malone, a six-time VMA winner, is also set to take the stage.

Pop singers Conan Gray and Tate McRae will each make their performance debut on the VMAs stage next month.

Here's everything you need to know about this year's MTV VMAs.

This year's MTV Video Music Awards is shaking things up, handing out two new awards to decorated artists in the rap and Latin music genres.

Rapper Busta Rhymes will receive the first ever MTV VMA Rock the Bells Visionary Award and Ricky Martin will be honored with the inaugural Latin Icon Award.

The Rock the Bells Visionary Award celebrates the hip-hop star's "boundary-breaking cultural impact and an indomitable musical career," the announcement read. Rhymes, who has taken the VMAs stage various times since his first performance in 1997, will also perform during the ceremony.

## Mainstream

Martin, whose long VMAs history began with his first performance in 1999, will also perform, and be honored for a "four-decade career that launched Latin music and culture into the mainstream," according to the announcement.

Gaga joins a growing list of confirmed performers for this year's VMAs, including Gray, McRae, Jelly Roll, Doja Cat, Post Malone and more.

Rhymes and Martin will both perform, as well as a slew of other artists, including Alex Warren, J Balvin, Sabrina Carpenter and sombr.

Warren, who's nominated for best new artist, best pop and song of the year, will take the VMA stage for the first time, performing his breakout hit, "Ordinary." Newcomer sombr, a singer-songwriter and producer, will also be making his award show debut.

Balvin will perform "Zun Zun" with Latin singers Justin Quiles and Lenny Tavarez, and "Noventa" with producer DJ Snake.

Carpenter, who offered a debut performance at the VMAs last year, taking home song of the year, will return to perform "Manchild."

McRae is also up for four first-time nominations, including song of the year and best pop artist.

The 2025 VMAs will air on Sept. 7 at 8 p.m. Eastern, live from the UBS Arena on New York's Long Island.

LL Cool J has snagged wins, co-hosted and performed at the MTV Video Music Awards stage. Now, the Grammy-winning rapper-actor-author is going solo to host the 2025 awards ceremony.

He's retaking the stage, this time without Nicki Minaj and Jack Harlow, with whom he co-hosted in 2022. He's also up for the best hip-hop award for his single "Murdergram Deux" featuring Eminem. The single is part of his most recent album, "THE FORCE," which released in September and was his first album in 11 years.

LL Cool J is a longtime champion of the VMAs, having won his first Moon Person in 1991. He became the first rapper to receive the Video Vanguard Award, in 1997.

## Variety

**LONDON:** Britain's **Queen Camilla** fought off an incident attack when she was a teenager by taking off her shoe and bashing the assailant in the groin, according to a new book on the royal family.

Camilla was on a train to London's Paddington Station in the mid-1960s when the man next to her reached out and attempted to touch her, according to an excerpt from "Power and the Palace" by Valentine Low, a former royal correspondent for the Times of London. She told former Prime Minister Boris Johnson about the attack when he was mayor of London.

"Camilla said, 'I did what my mother told me, I took my shoe off and whacked him in the shins with the heel,'" Low told the BBC. "When she got to Paddington, this in a way is the crucial bit of the story, she found a man in uniform and told him what had happened and the man was arrested. ... She did the responsible thing."

The story drew widespread coverage in the British media on Monday, with headlines ranging from the Daily



Thomasin McKenzie poses for photographers at the photo call for the film "The Testament of Ann Lee." (AP)



Camilla



Tennis courts become a stage for high fashion

Tennis fashion booms at US Open as luxury labels join

NEW YORK, Sept 1, (AP): Before New York Fashion Week kicks off in Manhattan, some of the incoming brands are making an early first stop elsewhere - out in Queens, on the blue hard courts of the US Open, where play continues through next weekend.

Just four days separate the two crosstown spectacles, which are beginning to have more in common than ever before.

In a sport where brands like Nike and Adidas were once the only players, the logos of Gucci and Miu Miu have started to weave their way in. Tennis fashion has been surging, and the luxury fashion industry doesn't want to feel left out.

Luxury fashion partnerships in the tennis world historically have been somewhat sparse. They've been testing the waters in recent years, and lately, the deals have been flowing - Bottega Veneta with Lorenzo Musetti, Burberry with Jack Draper, Canali with Stefanos Tsitsipas and Dior with Zheng Qinwen have all come since January.

Coco Gauff wore tennis dresses partially designed by Miu Miu for three tournaments this summer - "Fashion helps bring casual fans to the sport," she said - and top-ranked Jan-nik Sinner often has carried a Gucci tennis bag onto the court since their partnership began in 2022.

The collaborations are multiplying. And they're causing

a buzz.

When Musetti debuted as a Bottega Veneta ambassador, the brand's first athlete, by wearing their white jacket at Wimbledon this summer, both the sports and fashion worlds were taken.

"It was really cool because every magazine, every fashion magazine was talking about it," Musetti said with a smile a few days before he started play in New York. "I think the tennis courts can also be a stage."

Tennis' increasing cultural capital has made the sport just that - a stage - for players and fans alike. But luxury fashion brands are flocking in for more than just its recent popularity.

"Tennis is a marketer's dream, because it crosses so many demographics and still has prestige," said Meeta Roy, an associate professor of fashion business at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York who previously worked in the luxury fashion industry.

"That (is) the challenge of the luxury brand business model as it exists today: How do you keep your core high net worth individuals? But also, so much of the revenue is driven by those that are interested in accessible luxury. Oftentimes, you have a two-tiered marketing strategy for the different groups. ... But tennis is this place where it can all

exist together," she said.

The sport's historical association with the wealthy, coupled with its skyrocketing general popularity, is making its courts the perfect marketing opportunity for the luxury space.

It doesn't hurt that the pro tour runs through many major cities across the globe, and there's also the simple fact of "quite a lot of sex appeal," according to Stuart Brumfitt, editor of tennis lifestyle magazine Bagel and a former associate editor at British GQ.

"With this younger era (of players), they've all got huge social media followings. ... They've got a lot of reach," he said. "Because it's an individual sport, they don't get lost in the team. If (a brand) backs that person, they get all of their audience."

It's that diverse reach that makes the US Open rival the other big show in town - New York Fashion Week, which begins on Sept. 11 - from a marketing perspective.

"Anyone who's looking at content from a brand's runway shows, they're already a fan of the brand. But when Musetti is busting out the (Bottega Veneta jacket) for the world, that's a completely different audience," Roy said. "It's all about attracting the nontraditional fashion customer."

In her words: "Everyone loves a good show."



United States' Coco Gauff reacts as she plays Britain's Emma Raducanu during their tennis match at the Italian Open at the Foro Italico in Rome, May 12, 2025. (AP)

Museum



The Beirut Museum (Beit Beirut) in the Sodeco area from one angle, showing visible bullet marks from the Lebanese Civil War.



One corner of Beit Beirut, showing the arches that reflect the Neo-Ottoman style on which the house was built.

‘Beit Beirut’... A museum of war and peace

In the heart of Beirut's Sodeco district, the Barakat Building, constructed in 1924 with its distinctive yellow stone and arched balconies, now stands as "Beit Beirut," a museum dedicated to preserving the memory of the Lebanese capital.

Once used as a sniper's nest on the Green Line during Lebanon's civil war (1975-1990),

the building became a powerful symbol of division, survival, and resilience.

Its bullet-scarred walls and partially preserved interiors serve as a stark reminder of the city's turbulent past.

The structure underwent careful restoration and was reopened to the public in 2003 as a

cultural and historical landmark.

Today, Beit Beirut hosts art exhibitions, educational workshops, and cultural events, attracting both Lebanese citizens and international visitors. The museum serves as a platform for dialogue on identity, coexistence, and the pursuit of peace. (KUNA)



One of the halls in Beit Beirut, where leaders of rival factions used to meet during the Lebanese Civil War.



KUNA photos  
The damage and bullet marks on the walls of Beit Beirut tell the story of a painful era the city endured.

Obituaries

CBS' Mark Knoller dies at 73

Charles Bierbauer, former CNN journalist, dies at 83

CHAPIN, S.C., Sept 1, (AP): **Charles Bierbauer**, former CNN correspondent and a past president of the White House Correspondents Association who later became dean of the University of South Carolina's journalism program, has died. He was 83.

Bierbauer died Friday at his home in Spruce Pine, North Carolina, where he had been living in retirement, according to university spokesman Jeff Stensland. No direct cause was given, but the family's obituary said "his generous heart gave out after a good, long life."

Bierbauer's journalism career began in his native Pennsylvania, where early on he was a weekend reporter for media outlet WKAP. After a year as a reporter for The Associated Press in Pittsburgh, Bierbauer worked for several other outlets, winning an Overseas Press Club Award in 1973 for his reporting on the Yom Kippur War.

According to his family, Bierbauer was once detained in Moscow's Red Square while filming an anti-Soviet demonstration. While covering Muhammed Ali's 1978 travels in the Soviet Union, Bierbauer was denounced by the Soviet press for "asking impertinent questions."

After four years with ABC News, Bierbauer began two decades at CNN, starting just a year after the network's inception. Over the next 20 years, Bierbauer would cover the Pentagon, White House, the US Supreme Court and an array of political stories and presidential campaigns. He also hosted the weekly current events show "Newsmaker Saturday" for a decade and regularly traveled with presidents across the country and to dozens of foreign nations.

Afterward, Bierbauer moved to South Carolina, where he became the first dean of the state flagship university's College of Information and Communications, a merger of the mass communications and library science programs. Launching Cocky's Reading Express, a childhood literacy initiative, Bierbauer also led a multimillion-dollar fundraising and renovation effort that moved the school from the outdated Carolina Coliseum to a state-of-the-art building on South Carolina's historic



Bierbauer

Horseshoe.

While in academia, Bierbauer continued his passion for broadcasting by hosting a weekly current events program and moderating scores of debates among political candidates vying for offices in the state, through a partnership with SCETV.

Jay Bender, a former attorney for the South Carolina Press Association and retired professor who served under Bierbauer, remembered him as a distinguished broadcaster and educator.

"His contributions to the USC Journalism School as dean were significant," Bender said, specifically mentioning the project that modernized the school and moved it to its current location.

Tom Reichert, who succeeded Bierbauer as communications dean, echoed Bender's sentiments, recalling his predecessor's "profound impact on the program."

"He is fondly remembered for many achievements, including fundraising and supporting students who went on to win Pulitzer Prizes," Reichert said in a statement to The Associated Press. "He will be deeply missed."

Bierbauer was married to Susanne Schafer, a longtime military affairs reporter for the AP. He earned degrees in journalism and Russian from Penn State University and is survived by Schafer, as well as four children and several grandchildren and a great-grand-

child.

In a statement to the AP, a network spokesperson remembered Bierbauer as "a cherished member of the CNN family" and "tireless reporter and wonderful colleague."

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**Mark Knoller**, a longtime White House correspondent for CBS News, has died, according to the network. He was 73. A cause of death was not disclosed, but he had reportedly suffered from diabetes and was in poor health.

"Mark Knoller was the heart and soul of the White House press corps, bringing unmatched passion to a beat he loved," said White House Correspondents Association President Weijia Jiang. "He wasn't just one of the most trusted voices covering the presidency - he was also the colleague you could always count on for help, perspective, or a bit of good humor."

Countless former colleagues described Knoller as a world class journalist with an unrelenting work ethic who was committed to simply reporting the facts for his audience.

He was known in Washington as the unofficial presidential archivist thanks to his encyclopedic knowledge of the White House and the presidency, chronicling details such as how many times a president had gone golfing or had answered questions from the press.

"Mark represented the best of the White House press corps," said AP Executive Editor Julie Pace, who worked alongside Knoller as the AP's chief White House correspondent. "He demanded the same level of accountability and transparency from every president he covered, regardless of party. He carried out his work in the spirit of true public service, sharing his meticulous records of the presidency with any colleague who asked for a data point."

Pace recalled how she "took advantage of his record keeping numerous times as a reporter" and was "always grateful for both his generosity and dedication to his craft."

Nancy Benac, the AP's former White House editor, recalled that "you could go to Mark with any question, and he had the answer."

Mark Smith, who worked with Knoller at AP Radio and for nearly two decades as an AP White House correspondent, described their relationship as "competitors/comrades." He said that Knoller "was famous for keeping brutal hours" and on foreign trips "was almost always the last person in the filing center - and there again to open it in the morning."

Smith continued: "As a result presidents got used to seeing him and familiar with his booming voice asking questions. He was blunt and to the point, persistent but not hectoring."



Knoller

Music labels test AI-song creators as lawsuits mount

AI hits ignite debate over music's future

LONDON, Sept 1, (AP): When pop groups and rock bands practice or perform, they rely on their guitars, keyboards and drumsticks to make music. Oliver McCann, a British AI music creator who goes by the stage name imoliver, fires up his chatbot.

McCann's songs span a range of genres, from indie-pop to electro-soul to country-rap. There's just one crucial difference between McCann and traditional musicians.

"I have no musical talent at all," he said. "I can't sing, I can't play instruments, and I have no musical background at all."

McCann, 37, who has a background as a visual designer, started experimenting with AI to see if it could boost his creativity and "bring some of my lyrics to life." Last month, he signed with independent record label Hallwood Media after one of his tracks racked up 3 million streams, in what's billed as the first time a music label has inked a contract with an AI music creator.

McCann is an example of how ChatGPT-style AI song generation tools like Suno and Udio have spawned a wave of synthetic music. A movement most notably highlighted by a fictitious group, Velvet Sundown, that went viral even though all its songs, lyrics and album art were created by AI.

It fueled debate about AI's role in music while raising fears about "AI slop" - automatically generated low quality mass produced content. It also cast a spotlight on AI song generators that are democratizing song making but threaten to disrupt the music industry.

Transform

Experts say generative AI is set to transform the music world. However, there are scant details, so far, on how it's impacting the \$29.6 billion global recorded music market, which includes about \$20 billion from streaming.

The most reliable figures come from music streaming service Deezer, which estimates that 18% of songs uploaded to its platform every day are purely AI generated, though they only account for a tiny amount of total streams, hinting that few people are actually listening. Other, bigger streaming platforms like Spotify haven't released any figures on AI music.

Udio declined to comment on how many users it has and how many songs it has generated. Suno did not respond to a request for comment. Both have free basic levels as well as pro and premium tiers that come with access to more advanced AI models.



This photo provided by Hallwood shows British AI music creator Oliver McCann, on Aug. 7, 2025, in West Hollywood, Calif. (AP)

"It's a total boom. It's a tsunami," said Josh Antonuccio, director of Ohio University's School of Media Arts and Studies. The amount of AI generated music "is just going to only exponentially increase" as young people grow up with AI and become more comfortable with it, he said.

Yet generative AI, with its ability to spit out seemingly unique content, has divided the music world, with musicians and industry groups complaining that recorded works are being exploited to train AI models that power song generation tools.

Record labels are trying to fend off the threat that AI music startups pose to their revenue streams even as they hope to tap into it for new earnings, while recording artists worry that it will devalue their creativity.

Three major record companies, Sony Music Entertainment, Universal Music Group and Warner Records, filed lawsuits last year against Suno and Udio for copyright infringement. In June, the two sides also reportedly entered negotiations that could go beyond settling the lawsuits and set rules for how artists are paid when AI is used to remix their songs.

GEMA, a German royalty collection society, has sued Suno, accusing it of generating music similar to songs like "Mambo No. 5" by Lou Bega and "Forever Young" by Alphaville.

More than 1,000 musicians, including Kate Bush,

Annie Lennox and Damon Albarn, released a silent album to protest proposed changes to UK laws on AI they fear would erode their creative control. Meanwhile, other artists, such as will.i.am, Timbaland and Imogen Heap, have embraced the technology.

Some users say the debate is just a rehash of old arguments about once-new technology that eventually became widely used, such as AutoTune, drum machines and synthesizers.

People complain "that you're using a computer to do all the work for you. I don't see it that way. I see it as any other tool that we have," said Scott Smith, whose AI band, Pulse Empire, was inspired by 1980s British synthesizer-driven groups like New Order and Depeche Mode.

Smith, 56 and a semi-retired former U.S. Navy public affairs officer in Portland, Oregon, said "music producers have lots of tools in their arsenal" to enhance recordings that listeners aren't aware of.

Like McCann, Smith never mastered a musical instrument. Both say they put lots of time and effort into crafting their music.

Once Smith gets inspiration, it takes him just 10 minutes to write the lyrics. But then he'll spend as much as eight to nine hours generating different versions until the song "matches my vision."

Lyrics

McCann said he'll often create up to 100 different versions of a song by prompting and re-prompting the AI system before he's satisfied.

AI song generators can churn out lyrics as well as music, but many experienced users prefer to write their own words.

"AI lyrics tend to come out quite cliché and quite boring," McCann said.

Lukas Rams, a Philadelphia-area resident who makes songs for his AI band Sleeping With Wolves, said AI lyrics tend to be "extra corny" and not as creative as a human, but can help get the writing process started.

"It'll do very basic rhyme schemes, and it'll keep repeating the same structure," said Rams, who writes his own words, sometimes while putting his kids to bed and waiting for them to fall asleep. "And then you'll get words in there that are very telling of AI-generated lyrics, like 'neon,' anything with 'shadows'."

Rams used to play drums in high school bands and collaborated with his brother on their own songs, but work and family life started taking up more of his time.



Kuwait expands specialized pediatric care

Health minister launches phase 3 pediatric ICU at Amiri Hospital

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 1: Minister of Health Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi inaugurated the third operational phase of the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) at Al-Amiri Hospital, along with the opening of the new central kitchen.

Ministry of Health Undersecretary Dr. Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, a number of ministry officials and hospital staff attended the inauguration ceremony.

Al-Awadhi affirmed this project is in line with the strategy of the ministry to develop specialized healthcare services, increase the efficiency of response to critical cases for children under 14 years old, and expand the capacity of the hospital to meet growing needs.

He said the ministry is keen on ensuring the continuity of advanced care round the clock, while reducing complication rates through rapid and effective

intervention.

On the opening of the new central kitchen, he revealed this project is a vital step towards improving nutritional services provided to patients and visitors. He stressed that the opening of the kitchen is in line with the efforts of the ministry to raise the efficiency of the health sector and develop its operational environment in accordance with the highest international standards.

He confirmed that increasing production capacity is in line with the commitment of the ministry and the hospital to provide high-quality nutritional and health services, thereby, supporting the comprehensive vision to improve the quality of healthcare and guarantee patient satisfaction.

Meanwhile, Assistant Undersecretary for Engineering Affairs at the ministry Ibrahim Al-Naham explained that the two projects are considered qualitative achievements for the Engineering

Affairs Sector. He disclosed that the development of the PICU proceeded in stages, starting with four beds in the first phase until it reached 15 beds, along with the provision of the most advanced equipment.

He said the central kitchen underwent the largest renovation process that started in 1992, indicating it has the latest international equipment and technologies which enhanced service efficiency and increased production capacity by 114 percent.

Acting Director of the Capital Health District and Director of Al-Amiri Hospital Dr. Aref Al-Kandari stressed that these achievements are qualitative additions to the progress of the hospital and its pioneering role as a major hospital in the country.

She pointed out that the inauguration of the PICU and central kitchen reflect the concerted efforts of the medical, engineering and administrative staff.



KUNA photo  
Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi inspects the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit at Amiri Hospital.

She added these steps are manifestations of the commitment of the hospital to provide a safe treatment environment

and comprehensive care that puts patient's interest on top of its priorities, and guarantees the satisfaction of pa-

tients and their families.

Head of the Pediatric Department at the hospital Dr. Wafaa Al-Atiqi revealed the unit focuses on the care of children under 14 years old whose conditions require intensive care. "They are supervised by a specialized medical and nursing team working round the clock, supported by specialists in physical therapy, swallowing and speech therapy, nutrition, respiratory technicians and pharmacists," she added.

She stated that the bed capacity increased in the third phase to 15 beds, along with the provision of the latest medical equipment, indicating the unit began operating in October 2023 with only four beds.

She said the unit served 274 patients since its opening until August 2025, with a recovery rate of 98.2 percent – a testimony to the competence of the medical staff and the quality of services provided.

Trump eyes hefty tax on imported drugs

US drug tariff sparks price, supply fears

WASHINGTON, Sept 1, (AP): President Donald Trump has plastered tariffs on products from almost every country on earth. He's targeted specific imports including autos, steel and aluminum.

But he isn't done yet.

Trump has promised to impose hefty import taxes on pharmaceuticals, a category of products he's largely spared in his trade war. For decades, in fact, imported medicine has mostly been allowed to enter the United States duty free.

That's starting to change. US and European leaders recently detailed a trade deal that includes a 15% tariff rate on some European goods brought into the United States, including pharmaceuticals. Trump is threatening duties of 200% more on drugs made elsewhere.

"Shock and awe" is how Maytee Pereira of the tax and consulting firm PwC describes Trump's plans for drugmakers. "This is an industry that's going from zero (tariffs) to the potentiality of 200%."

Trump has promised Americans he'll lower their drug costs. But imposing stiff pharmaceutical tariffs risks the opposite and could disrupt complex supply chains, drive cheap foreign-made generic drugs out of the U.S. market and create shortages.

"A tariff would hurt consumers most of all, as they would feel the inflationary effect ... directly when



Pharmaceuticals are seen in North Andover, Mass., on June 15, 2018. (AP)

paying for prescriptions at the pharmacy and indirectly through higher insurance premiums," Diederik Stadig, a healthcare economist with the financial services firm ING, wrote in a commentary last month, adding that lower-income households and the elderly would feel the greatest impact.

The threat comes as Trump also pressures drugmakers to lower prices in the United States. He recently sent letters to several companies telling them to develop a plan to start offering so-called most-favored nation

pricing here.

But Trump has said he'd delay the tariffs for a year or a year and a half, giving companies a chance to stockpile medicine and shift manufacturing to the United States - something some have already begun to do.

Leerink Partners analyst David Risinger said in a July 29 note that most drugmakers have already increased drug product imports and may carry between six and 18 months of inventory in the U.S.

Jefferies analyst David Windley said in a recent research note that tar-

iffs that don't kick in until the back half of 2026 may not be felt until 2027 or 2028 due to stockpiling.

Moreover, many analysts suspect Trump will settle for a tariff far lower than 200%. They also are waiting to see whether any tariff policy includes an exemption for certain products like low-margin generic drugs.

Still, Stadig says, even a 25% levy would gradually raise U.S. drug prices by 10% to 14% as the stockpiles dwindle.

In recent decades, drugmakers have moved many operations overseas - to take advantage of lower costs in China and India and tax breaks in Ireland and Switzerland. As a result, the U.S. trade deficit in medicinal and pharmaceutical products is big -- nearly \$150 billion last year.

The COVID-19 experience - when countries were desperate to hang onto their own medicine and medical supplies - underscored the dangers of relying on foreign countries in a crisis, especially when a key supplier is America's geopolitical rival China.

In April, the administration started investigating how importing drugs and pharmaceutical ingredients affects national security. Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962 permits the president to order tariffs for the sake of national security.

Experts sound alarm on 'cuts'

Most drugs lack data on pregnancy safety

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

By Almut Winterstein  
University of Florida and  
Sonja Rasmussen  
Johns Hopkins University

A panel convened in July 2025 by the Food and Drug Administration sparked controversy by casting doubt about the safety of commonly used antidepressants during pregnancy. But it also raised the broader issue of how little is known about the safety of many medications used in pregnancy, considering the implications for both mother and child - and how understudied this topic is.

In the U.S., the average pregnant patient takes four prescription medications, and more than 9 in 10 patients take at least one. But most drugs lack conclusive evidence about their safety during pregnancy. About 1 in 5 women uses a medication during pregnancy that has some preliminary evidence that it could cause harm but for which conclusive studies are missing.

We are researchers in maternal and child health who evaluate the safety of medications during pregnancy. In our work, we identify medications that might raise the risk for birth defects or pregnancy loss and compare the safety of different treatments.

While progress has been slow, researchers and federal agencies have built monitoring systems, databases and tools to accelerate our understanding of medication safety. However, these efforts are now at risk due to ongoing cuts to medical research funding - and with them, so is the knowledge base for determining whether sticking with a therapy or discontinuing it offers the safest choice for both mother and child.

ing is known about how it affects people during pregnancy. Even if animal studies or the medication's mode of action raised concerns, the drug can still be approved, though companies may be required to conduct studies observing its effects when taken during pregnancy.

Of 290 drugs approved by the FDA between 2010 and 2019, 90% contain no human data on the risks or benefits for pregnant patients. About 80% of some 1,800 medications in a national database called TERIS, which summarizes evidence on medications' risks during pregnancy, lack or have limited evidence about the risks for birth defects. Researchers have estimated that it takes 27 years to pin down whether a medication is safe to use in pregnancy.

As a result, many pregnant women stop treating their chronic diseases. In a U.S. study published in 2023, over one-third of women stopped taking a medication during pregnancy, and 36.5% of those did so without advice from a health care provider. More than half cited concerns about birth or developmental defects as the reason.

Seizures

Yet uncontrolled chronic disease comes with its own toll on both the mother's and the baby's health. For example, some medications used to treat seizures are known to cause birth defects, but stopping them may increase seizures, which themselves raise the risk of fetal death.

Women with severe or recurrent depression who abruptly stop their antidepressants risk their depression returning, which is in turn associated with increased risk of substance use, inadequate prenatal care and other negative effects on fetal development. Stopping the use of medications for treating high blood pressure also causes adverse effects - specifically, a greater risk of pregnancy-related high blood pressure that can cause organ damage, called preeclampsia; a condition called placental abruption, when the placenta detaches from the wall of the uterus too early; preterm birth; and fetal growth restriction. An online resource called Mother to Baby, created by a network of experts on birth defects, provides an excellent summary of the available data on medication safety during pregnancy.

The FDA in some cases requires drug companies to establish registries to track the outcomes of pregnancies exposed to certain medications. These registries can be useful, but they have shortcomings. For example, recruiting pregnant patients into them takes time and considerable effort, resulting in small sample sizes that may not capture rare birth defects. Also, registries typically follow a single medication and rarely include comparisons to alternative treatment approaches - or to no treatment. (AP)

**Response**

One big reason why so little is known about the effects of medications during pregnancy stretches back more than half a century. In the 1960s, a drug called thalidomide that was widely prescribed to treat morning sickness in pregnant women caused severe birth defects in over 10,000 children around the world. In response, in 1977 the FDA recommended excluding women of childbearing age from participating in early stage clinical trials testing new medications.

Ethically, there is long-standing tension between concerns about fetal harm and maternal needs. Legal liability and added complexities when conducting studies in pregnant women serve as additional barriers for drug manufacturers.

When drugs are approved, studies about whether they might cause birth defects are typically done only in animals, and they often don't translate well to humans. So when a new medication comes on the market, noth-

Bird flu in UK

2 die of brain fever in India

NEW DELHI, Sept. 1, (Xinhua): Primary Amoebic Meningoencephalitis (PAM), commonly known as brain fever, has claimed two lives in the southern Indian state of Kerala, officials said Monday.

The deaths, according to officials, have taken place on Sunday in Kozhikode district. The victims were identified as a 52-year-old woman and a newborn.

"Last night, a three-month-old newborn who has been undergoing treatment at the hospital for nearly a month succumbed to PAM. It is believed the patient had contracted the disease from the well water regularly used at home," an official said. "A 52-year-old woman who was undergoing treatment for the PAM also succumbed at the hospital on Sunday morning."

With these deaths, the toll from the Amoebic brain fever in the state has risen to three in August. So far, Kerala has reported about 42 cases and six deaths of PAM in 2025, according to reports.

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**Bird flu:** An outbreak of the highly pathogenic avian influenza H5N1 was confirmed in poultry at a premise in Exminster, a village in southwestern England, the British government said Sunday.

A 3 km protection zone and a 10 km surveillance zone have been set up around the site, said the government, adding that all poultry on the premises will be humanely culled.

Swedish site boosts Europe's space aspirations

EU races to build own space launch sites

KIRUNA, Sweden, Sept 1, (AP): Deep in the Swedish forest, where reindeer roam and scientists ski in winter, lies one of Europe's hopes for a spaceport that can ultimately compete with the United States, China and Russia.

For decades, Europe has relied upon the US for its security among the stars. But the Trump administration's "America First" policies, plus a commercial market that's growing exponentially, has prompted Europeans to rethink their approach.

The state-owned Esrange Space Center in Kiruna, Sweden, is among the sites building out orbital rocket programs to allow Europe to advance in the global space race and launch satellites from the continent's mainland.

"The gap is significant," said Hermann Ludwig Moeller, director of the European Space Policy Institute. "I would argue that Europe, to be anywhere relevant in the next five to 10 years, needs to at least double its investment in space. And saying that it would double doesn't mean that it would catch up by the same factor, because you can expect that other regions will also continue to step up."



A satellite antenna is pointing at the sky outside the Esrange Space Center, a base deep in the Swedish forest and a part of Europe's hope to compete in the space race in Kiruna, Sweden, Aug. 19, 2025. (AP)

Currently, Europe's only space base capable of launching rockets and satellites into orbit is in sparsely populated French Guiana, an overseas department of France in South America that's roughly 500 kilometers (310 miles) north of the equator. Otherwise, Europe borrows NASA's Cape Canaveral in Florida.

In March, Isar Aerospace launched the first test flight of its orbital launch vehicle from the Andøya Spaceport, another site that's part of Europe's efforts to expand its presence in space, on an island in northern Norway.

While the rocket crashed into the sea 30 seconds after liftoff, the private German aerospace company had largely ruled out the possibility of the

rocket reaching orbit on its first complete flight and deemed the short journey a success.

Moeller believes a successful orbital launch from continental Europe could occur within the next year, though he won't guess where.

Portugal, Spain, Italy, Germany and the United Kingdom also are among the countries seeking to be part of Europe's spaceport portfolio.

Elsewhere on Earth, India - active in space research since the 1960s - has launched satellites for itself and other countries and successfully put one in orbit around Mars in 2014. After a failed attempt to land on the moon in 2019, India became the first country to land a spacecraft near the moon's south pole in 2023 in a historic voyage to uncharted territory that scientists believe could hold reserves of frozen water. The mission was dubbed a technological triumph for the world's most popu-

lous nation.

New Zealand also has a growing and active launch industry, and Australia is working to develop its commercial space industry.

Esrange and Andøya date back to the 1960s and much of their space-bound appeal stems from their far-north geography on Earth.

Esrange, for example, is owned and operated by the Swedish Space Corporation and based more than 200 kilometers (120 miles) north of the Arctic Circle. The space center's 30-plus antennas can more easily communicate with satellites orbiting the North Pole compared to infrastructure that's near the equator.

Most important, perhaps, is its size. The base itself encompasses 6 square kilometers (2.3 square miles), where experts conduct Martian lander parachute tests, suborbital rocket launches and stratospheric balloon experiments.

'Super corals' offer hope for threatened reef systems

SYDNEY, Sept 1, (Xinhua): "Super corals" that naturally thrive in extreme environments could be used in restoration efforts to protect vulnerable reef systems, new Australian research has revealed.

The study offers evidence that these resilient corals can retain their heat tolerance even after being moved to more stable reef habitats, according to a statement released Monday by Australia's University of Technology Sydney (UTS).

Coral reefs, which support 25 percent of marine life and underpin economies worldwide through fisheries, tourism and coastal protection, face severe threats from climate-driven bleaching, but nature may offer a solution through coral species that have adapted to survive in extreme conditions,

according to the statement.

The study, published in Science Advances, examined corals from mangrove lagoons near Low Isles on Australia's Great Barrier Reef, with environments known for their harsh conditions such as fluctuating temperatures, low oxygen and low salinity.

Researchers found that when transplanted to a nearby reef one kilometer away with more stable conditions, these "super corals" retained their elevated heat tolerance after one year.

Gene expression analysis shows the transplanted corals activate pathways associated with DNA repair, metabolism and homeostasis, all key mechanisms that help them survive heat stress, said the study's lead author Christine Roper from the UTS

Climate Change Cluster.

"This suggests that their resilience is not just environmental but deeply embedded in their biology," she said.

The findings open the door to using these corals in restoration efforts, Roper said.

Similar to agricultural practices where drought-resistant crops are propagated to improve food security, stress-tolerant corals could be selected and outplanted to strengthen reef sites that are ecologically or economically significant, according to the researchers.

"By harnessing nature's own resilience, it's possible to buy time for coral reefs and the communities that depend on them," she said, stressing to drastically reduce carbon emissions to ensure reefs' long-term survival.



Minor bleaching is seen on an Acropora colony at Lagoon Reef in the northern Great Barrier Reef, far North Queensland, Australia, Dec. 18, 2024. (AP)



Lawrence triumphs in Switzerland

# Miranda Wang captures maiden LPGA title at FM Championship

NORTON, Mass., Sept 1, (AP): Miranda Wang lost the lead to the No. 1 player in women’s golf and then delivered the clutch shots over the final three holes for a 2-under 70 and a one-shot victory over Jeeno Thitikul on Sunday in the FM Championship for her first LPGA title.

Wang became the seventh LPGA rookie to win this year, extending a remarkable streak of no multiple winners through the tour’s first 23 tournaments of the year.

Thitikul, who took over the No. 1 ranking from Nelly Korda three weeks ago, was poised to end that streak and ruin Wang’s hopes when the Thai hit wedge to 2 feet at No. 9 for her fifth birdie to go out in 31 on the TPC Boston and tie for the lead. She shot 67.

Thitikul bogeyed the 17th hole, and Wang made a 6-foot birdie on the 17th to regain the lead and win it with a par.

Sei Young Kim (70) finished third, three shots behind. Andrea Lee also shot 70 and finished another shot back. Rose Zhang had to settle for a 72 to tie for fifth with Jin Hee Im, who had a bogey-free 62.

Thriston Lawrence of South Africa recovered from making bogey at his first three holes to shoot 4-under 66 and win the European Masters in Switzerland for his fifth title on the European tour.

Lawrence won by two strokes from three players - Matt Wallace (67), Sami Valimaki (65) and Rasmus Hojgaard (62).

Matt Fitzpatrick, who is hoping to secure a captain’s pick from Luke Donald on Monday to get into Europe’s Ryder Cup team alongside Hojgaard, was alone in fifth place, one shot further back after a 67.

Lawrence steadied himself after a sloppy start, driving the green and holing an eagle putt from 20 feet at the par-4 sixth hole and then making five birdies at picturesque Crans-sur-Sierre Golf Club. His most recent title was at the BMW International Open in June 2023.

Yuma Kosahihira atoned for losing in a playoff a year ago by closing with a 5-under 67 for a one-shot victory in the Sansan KBC Augusta Golf Tour for his first title on the Japan Golf Tour.

Suteepat Prateetienchai made two eagles in his round of 8-under 64 for a seven-shot victory in the Mandiri Indonesia Open, his fourth Asian Tour title.

Anders Emil Ejlersen won his first Challenge Tour event with birdies on three of his last four holes for a 6-under 65, giving the Dane a one-shot victory over Magnus Haraldur of Iceland. Haraldur closed with a 60.

Michael Brennan won his second PGA Tour Americas title when he close with an 8-under 63 and beat Derek Hitchner with a par on the first playoff hole in the CRMC Championship played in Minnesota.

Andrew Martin closed with an even-par 71 for a one-shot victory in the Tailor-Made Building Services NT PGA Championship on the PGA Tour of Australasia.

Markus Brier shot a 2-under 70 and won the Black Desert NI Legends by two shots on the European Legends Tour.

Ai Suzuki rallied with a 5-under 68 to win the Nitori Ladies on the Japan LPGA.

Dain Shin birdied the 18th hole for a 1-under 71, then made two birdies to win a three-way playoff in the KG Ladies Open on the Korea LPGA.



Miranda Wang, of China, holds the trophy after winning the FM Championship LPGA golf tournament at TPC Boston in Norton, Mass. (AP)

# Briscoe wins 2nd straight Southern 500, advances to NASCAR playoffs 2nd round



Chase Briscoe, center, celebrates with his son Brooks in Victory Lane after winning a NASCAR Cup Series auto race at Darlington Raceway in Darlington, S.C. (AP)

‘This is my favorite race of the year’

DARLINGTON, S.C., Sept 1, (AP): Chase Briscoe added his name to the history books Sunday night, becoming just the eighth driver to win back-to-back Southern 500s at Darlington Raceway. Now, the 30-year-old Indiana native has his sights set on an even bigger prize: his first NASCAR Cup Series championship.

Briscoe held off Tyler Reddick on the final lap to join a legendary list of repeat winners that includes Dale Earnhardt, Cale Yarborough, Jeff Gordon, and Bobby Allison.

“The expectation was to go and contend for wins,” Briscoe said of his debut season with Joe Gibbs Racing. “It definitely took more time than I expected, but tonight I feel like we showed what we’re capable of.”

Briscoe dominated the race, taking the lead early, sweeping both stages, and leading 309 of 367 laps. His victory not only secured a spot in the Round of 12, but also made him the first driver since Greg

Biffle (2005–06) to win consecutive Southern 500s.

“This is my favorite race of the year,” Briscoe said. “To win it two years in a row is just so cool.”

A year ago, Briscoe used a daring four-wide pass late in the Southern 500 to punch his playoff ticket. This time, he simply had the fastest car in the field. Even when Reddick briefly got past him on a restart, Briscoe quickly reclaimed the lead and controlled the race from there.

Reddick made one last move on the final lap, pulling alongside Briscoe’s door, but couldn’t complete the pass. Briscoe hung on for his second win of the season and the fourth of his Cup career.

“That was way harder than it needed to be,” Briscoe said with a laugh.

Team owner Joe Gibbs recalled greeting Briscoe in Victory Lane last year when he was still driving for Stewart-Haas Racing. After Martin Truex Jr.’s retirement, Gibbs tapped Briscoe as his successor and has been impressed ever since.

“Certainly, this wasn’t something we expected,” Gibbs said. “But Chase and (crew chief) James Smalls have had us right back contending for wins.”

Erik Jones, a two-time Southern 500 winner, finished third, with John Hunter Nemechek and AJ Allmendinger

rounding out the top five. Briscoe’s JGR teammate Denny Hamlin and 23XI Racing’s Bubba Wallace, both playoff contenders, were next across the line.

It was a rough night for much of the playoff field — only four postseason drivers cracked the top 10. Josh Berry spun out moments after the green flag and spent most of the race in the garage, while Alex Bowman battled pit-road issues that derailed his run. Defending champion Joey Logano also struggled, finishing 20th.

Ryan Blaney, fresh off a Daytona win, spun out on Lap 209 and saw his playoff momentum stall.

As a result, the four drivers below the cut line are Logano, Austin Dillon, Bowman, and Berry.

“It was not what we were expecting,” Logano admitted.

Toyota had a banner night, with six of the top seven finishers, including all four of its playoff drivers: Briscoe, Reddick, Wallace, and Hamlin.

“It was a good day for them and a great day for Toyota in general,” Hamlin said.

The Cup Series playoffs continue next Sunday at World Wide Technology Raceway near St. Louis — the second of three first-round races before the field is trimmed from 16 to 12 at Bristol on Sept. 13.

‘It’s rewarding for our team’

# Josef salvages IndyCar season with long-awaited win at home

LEBANON, Tenn., Sept 1, (AP): Josef Newgarden salvaged his miserable year by winning his first race of the season Sunday at Nashville Superspeedway - his home track - in the IndyCar finale.

He celebrated the recovery the exact same way he did after his two Indianapolis 500 victories - Newgarden climbed through a hole in the fence and entered the grandstands, where he triumphantly raised his arms in the air in front of a gaggle of friends and family.

“I am just glad we got one without anything going wrong,” Newgarden said. “It’s rewarding for our team.

It’s great for our team. Been a tough, tough year and good to get a win here at the end.”

His Team Penske crew sprinted from pit lane to celebrate with him on track. They had to pass Alex Palou, who clinched his fourth IndyCar title with two races remaining, as he did celebratory doughnuts in the infield grass following his second-place finish.

It was just the second win of the season for Team Penske, which along with Newgarden has had a horrific year, and it prevented Newgarden from going winless for the first time since 2014.

Newgarden benefited from issues to a multitude of drivers and took the lead for good with 21 laps remaining when teammate Scott McLaughlin slid up the track and brushed the wall as Newgarden sailed past him. IndyCar immediately threw the caution and McLaughlin didn’t seem to have any damage to his car, but he wasn’t even able to challenge Newgarden on the restart with 11 laps to go.

Newgarden came into the race 16th in the standings, lowest of the Team Penske trio of drivers, and had only two podium finishes through 16 races.



Josef Newgarden celebrates after winning an IndyCar auto race at Nashville Superspeedway in Lebanon, Tenn. (AP)

He ended the season with four total top-five finishes, one upside-down flip and - despite his win Sunday - what will likely go down as the worst of his 14 years in IndyCar.

The last nine wins of Newgarden’s career are all on ovals, and Sunday’s win moved him from 16th to 12th in the final season standings - still his lowest finish since 2014.

McLaughlin finished third. Pato O’Ward started from the pole and seemed headed toward a third victory until a tire failure caused him to

crash while leading.

O’Ward had already locked up second in the championship standings and wanted to give McLaren Racing a sweep of the day after Oscar Piastri won the Dutch Grand Prix. It would have been the first time in 49 years that McLaren won the IndyCar and Formula 1 races on the same day.

He said he’d had a previous tire failure at Nashville during a test and had concerns about the durability of the Firestones all weekend. Earlier in the race, Palou had a tire failure not long after a breathtak-

ing wheel-to-wheel fight with O’Ward for the lead.

“Hopefully Firestone can help us out for next year, because it sucks kind of knowing that (a tire failure) can be a possibility and multiple cars having that issue and then the guys hitting the wall at 200 mph are us,” O’Ward said. “I can tell you, you can really feel those hits, so I really hope that they can somewhat fix that and for that not to be a concern because we don’t like to go racing with that in the back of our heads.”

David Malukas has been widely rumored since the start of the season to be headed to Team Penske to replace Will Power, and if Nashville was his last race with A.J. Foyt Racing, it was rough.

Malukas crashed 83 laps into the race and was helicoptered out of the track for further medical evaluation. IndyCar and his race team said he was awake and alert and being transported to another facility for further evaluation.

Malukas was racing Louis Foster, who was one lap down, and refused to give Malukas any room. The contact between the cars sent Malukas spinning into the wall.

# Leverkusen fires Erik ten Hag as coach after 3 games in charge

LEVERKUSEN, Germany, Sept 1, (AP): Erik ten Hag lasted three games at Bayer Leverkusen.

The Dutch coach was fired on Monday after doubts emerged in Leverkusen over the former Manchester United manager’s ability to oversee the German team’s successful rebuild after a summer exodus of key players.

“This decision wasn’t easy for us,” Leverkusen sports director Simon Rolfes said in a statement. “Nobody wanted to take this step. But the last few weeks showed that building a new and successful team with this set-up could not be achieved effectively. We firmly believe in the quality of our team and will now do everything in our power to take the next steps in our development with a new constellation.”

Leverkusen was beaten 2-1 at home on Ten Hag’s Bundesliga debut by Hoffenheim, then squandered a two-goal lead to allow 10-man Werder Bremen grab a 3-3 draw on Saturday.

Kicker magazine had already reported on Thursday before that second league game that Leverkusen’s management were having second thoughts about Ten Hag’s work.

“A parting at an early stage of the season is painful, but it was necessary from our point of view,” Leverkusen chief executive Fernando Carro said.

The 55-year-old Ten Hag was appointed as Xabi Alonso’s replacement in May and was entrusted with managing a massive overhaul of the squad that had won the Bundesliga in 2024.

Ten Hag warned earlier this month that he was no magician and that it would take time to get Leverkusen performing as a true team again after its summer of changes.

“You can’t force the process. It’s impossible. No one is like Harry Pot-



Leverkusen’s head coach Erik ten Hag gestures during the German Bundesliga soccer match between Werder Bremen and Bayer 04 Leverkusen in Bremen, Germany. (AP)

ter,” Ten Hag said before his debut at fourth-tier team Sonnenhof Grossaspach in the German Cup.

Leverkusen ultimately won that game 4-0, but it struggled and only got the second goal after Grossaspach had a player sent off, then the next two after the amateur side had another player sent off.

Ten Hag had previously used the Harry Potter line in his time at United.

Following a loss to Liverpool in September 2024, Ten Hag said he was no Harry Potter while explaining the difficulties of relying on players who hadn’t much game time. Less than two months later, he was fired.

Leverkusen gave no indication of a possible successor for Ten Hag. The team’s next game after the international break is at home against in-form Eintracht Frankfurt on Sept. 12.

Boca extends revival

# Coutinho on target as Vasco sinks Sport

RIO DE JANEIRO, Sept 1, (Xinhua): Philippe Coutinho scored his third goal in four matches as Vasco da Gama edged to a 3-2 away win over Sport Recife in Brazil’s Serie A on Sunday.

Nuno Moreira fired the visitor ahead in the eighth minute before Lucas Lima converted a 25th-minute penalty.

Former Liverpool, Barcelona and Bayern Munich midfielder Coutinho restored Vasco’s lead on the stroke of halftime by side-footing home after Moreira’s cross.

Argentine striker Pablo Vegetti made it 3-1 with a 49th-minute penalty before Ramon Menezes reduced the deficit late by nodding home after Lima’s corner.

Vasco is now 15th in the 20-team standings with 22 points, 12 ahead of last-placed Sport.

“We really needed three points and even though we didn’t play the way we wanted, we were able to get what we came here for,” Vegetti said after the match.

“We struggled a bit at the end of the game and we have to be smarter about that. It was a very even contest but we did the little things right and that was enough to win.” Elsewhere on Sunday, Santos was held to a goalless home draw by Fluminense, Gremio drew 1-1 at Flamengo, Corinthians was held to a 1-1 home draw by Palmeiras, Mirassol romped to a 5-1 home win against Bahia, Vitoria won 1-0 at home against Atletico Mineiro, and Internacional clinched a 2-1 home win over Fortaleza.

□ □ □

Boca Juniors continued to recover from a record slump on Sunday with a 2-0 away win over Aldosivi in Argentina’s Primera Division Clausura tournament.

Lautaro Di Lollo opened the scoring just before halftime, latching onto Carlos Palacios’ cross with a glancing header that beat goalkeeper Jorge Carranza at his near post.

Rodrigo Battaglia doubled the lead 10 minutes from time with a bullet header after Leandro Paredes’ delivery from a corner.

The result marked Boca’s third straight victory following a 12-game winless streak across all competitions - the worst in the club’s history.

“We are getting better with every match and results like this elevate us,” Boca manager Miguel Angel Russo told a post-match news conference.

“We’ve been working very hard as a group and that’s how we plan to continue so that we can always get the best out of ourselves. This is a competitive squad and it’s hard to pick a starting lineup, which is how it should be.” Boca now has 12 points in the 15-team Group A, two points fewer than leader Barracas Central, while Aldosivi is last, having yet to register a win.

Elsewhere on Sunday, Santiago Lencina and Maximiliano Salas scored first-half goals as River Plate remained top of Group B with a 2-0 home win over San Martin.

In other fixtures, Deportivo Riestra won 1-0 at Talleres Cordoba, and Defensa y Justicia clinched a 2-1 home victory over Belgrano.

# Best of the Rest

**Argentina claims historic title:** Argentina’s men’s volleyball team sealed its first title at the Hubert Wagner Memorial tournament, defeating host nation Poland 3-1 (25-20, 21-25, 25-19, 26-24) in the final round on Sunday evening in Krakow.

Marcelo Mendez’s men had put themselves just one step away from winning the trophy after having beaten Brazil and Serbia without dropping a set.

Argentina began Sunday’s match with confidence, establishing an early lead in the opening set. A decisive spike from Luciano Palonsky secured the first set 25-20.

Led by Wilfredo Leon, who contributed six points including two aces, Poland responded in the second set and leveled the match at one set apiece.

Argentina regained control in the third set for a 25-19 win. Manuel Armoa emerged as a key figure, adding six points as Poland struggled in attack. (Xinhua)

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# Djokovic, Pegula stay on track in New York

Alcaraz makes history

**NEW YORK, Sept 1, (AP):** Novak Djokovic was cruising along with a big early lead in his U.S. Open fourth-round match on Sunday night when his neck started bothering him. That didn't stop Djokovic from dominating 144th-ranked qualifier Jan-Lennard Struff 6-3, 6-3, 6-2 to reach his record 64th Grand Slam quarterfinal.

Djokovic was ahead of 4-0, 15-love when he hit a nicely angled volley winner to go up 30-love in that game. The 24-time Grand Slam champion immediately grabbed at the back of his neck and started turning his head.

The 38-year-old Djokovic kept trying to stretch his neck or flex his right shoulder between points, and he went on to drop that game and the next one, too. But he soon regained the upper hand against Struff, who beat Frances Tiafoe in the previous round and was trying to get to a major quarterfinal for the first time.

After improving to 8-0 against Struff, Djokovic now carries a 10-0 head-to-head record into his quarterfinal on Tuesday against 2024 U.S. Open runner-up Taylor Fritz.

The No. 4-seeded Fritz, the last American man in the bracket, moved into the quarterfinals with a 6-4, 6-3, 6-3 victory Sunday against No. 21 Tomas Machac of the Czech Republic.

After Djokovic finished off that opening set against Struff, he was visited by a trainer for treatment during the ensuing changeover.

Carlos Alcaraz hit a behind-the-back shot to win a point in a 7-6 (3), 6-3, 6-4 victory over Arthur Rinderknech that made the Spaniard the youngest man in the Open era to



Novak Djokovic, of Serbia, returns a shot to Jan-Lennard Struff, of Germany, during the fourth round of the US Open tennis championships in New York. (AP)

reach 13 Grand Slam quarterfinals. . Jessica Pegula is back in the quarterfinals of a Grand Slam tournament, which used to be her roadblock.

The way Pegula is playing at this U.S. Open, it may be just another stop on the way back to the final.

The No. 4 seed rolled into the last eight by routing fellow American Ann Li 6-1, 6-2 in just 54 minutes on

Sunday. She will face Barbora Krejčíková on Tuesday after the two-time Grand Slam champion fought off eight match points in a second set that ended with a 25-minute tiebreaker and beat Taylor Townsend 1-6, 7-6 (13), 6-3.

Townsend was trying to reach her first quarterfinal in her 31st Grand Slam appearance.

Pegula hasn't dropped a set this

year at Flushing Meadows, and only once was she even kept on court for more than 1 hour, 15 minutes.

"Probably the best match, honestly, I've played since, like, before Wimbledon I feel like from the start to finish. So that was encouraging," Pegula said of Sunday's victory. "I was just hitting the ball, doing everything well, executing my strategy very well and got through it pretty

quick."

Pegula had been 0-6 in Grand Slam quarterfinals before upsetting Iga Świątek in that round last year. She went on to reach the final, where she was defeated by Aryna Sabalenka. But she wasn't sure her tennis was ready for a follow-up when she returned to New York.

She had lost four of her previous six singles matches coming into the

U.S. Open, and said she played so poorly while practicing with Sabalenka a few days before the tournament that she stopped early, opting instead for an escape room with some friends and a couple of drinks.

Things have certainly gotten better since.

"Like I said, I haven't been feeling my best on court, so to be able to come back and make another quarterfinal here is something I'm definitely proud of," Pegula said. "Of course, I want to go further and do more and win the tournament, but I feel like just on a personal kind of goal level, I'm happy with the way I've been able to kind of turn some of my tennis around the last few weeks."

The 58th-ranked Li was the highest-ranked player Pegula has faced in the tournament, but the 25-year-old was overpowered in her first appearance in the round of 16 in a major. Pegula broke her all four times she served in the 25-minute first set, and she had just five winners against 19 unforced errors in the match.

Pegula will certainly be the fresher player Tuesday. Krejčíková, who missed nearly five months to begin the season with a back injury, rallied late to knock off 10th-seeded American Emma Navarro in 2 1/2 hours in the third round, then went 3 hours, 4 minutes Sunday - 98 minutes alone for the second set.

"I don't worry. I'm not really thinking about it right now," Krejčíková said. "I'm just really happy that I won today, because, I mean, also, if one point didn't go my way, I would have been searching for flights."

Sabalenka returned to the quarterfinals with a 6-1, 6-4 win over Cristina Bucsa. Sabalenka's next opponent will be 2023 Wimbledon champion Marketa Vondrousova, who defeated 2022 Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina 6-4, 5-7, 6-2 at night with the help of 13 aces, including three in the last game.

Two foreigners allowed on court under new rule

## Kuwait Handball League gets underway

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 1: The 58th edition of the Kuwait Premier Handball League launches today at Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Indoor Sports Complex with two opening-round clashes. Al-Nasr faces Kuwait Club at 5:00 p.m., followed by Qadsia against Burgan at 6:30 p.m. The first round concludes tomorrow with Al-Arabi taking on Kazma and Salmiya meeting Sulaibikhat.

This season's premier division features eight teams, including Qadsia and Al-Nasr, who earned promotion after finishing first and second in the First Division last year.

Several clubs fine-tuned their squads abroad: Kuwait, Burgan, Sulaibikhat, and Al-Arabi trained in Bosnia; Kazma held camp in Izmit, Turkey; and Salmiya prepared in Qatar. Qadsia and Al-Nasr were the only teams to stay local.

Four Kuwaiti coaches will lead their sides this season: Hussein Habib (Burgan), Waleed Salmeen (Sulaibikhat), Yaqoub Al-Mousawi (Salmiya), and Hussein Habib (Al-Arabi). Foreign coaches include Algerian Saeed Hijazi (Kuwait Club), Tunisian Amen Al-Qafsi (Qadsia), Serbian Bozo (Kazma), and Bosnian Davor (Al-



A player from Al Kuwait Handball Team attempts to score as the opposition tries to block the shot.

Nasr).

For the first time, teams are allowed three foreign professionals, with two permitted on court at once.

K u w a i t Club added Montenegrin Vladan Lipovina and Portuguese Victor Iturriza alongside Qatari Frankis Marzo.



Al-Qabandi

Burgan brought in Japanese Kosuke Yasuhiro, Croatian Stipe Mandalinic, and Serbian Jovica Nikolic.

Kazma signed Tunisians Anouar Ben Abdullah and Mohamed Ferad plus Slovenian Labin Ganos. Qadsia landed Tunisians Rayan Zriat and Jihad Araar with Croatian Nadeem Hadzic.

Salmiya secured Tunisians Khaled Al-Haj and Mohamed Al-Sousi along with Austrian Janko Brovic.

Sulaibikhat added French-Algerian Nouri Ben Halima and Portu-

guese Gonzalo Ribeiro.

Al-Nasr retained only one foreigner, Tunisian Hani Al-Qarawi.

Assistant Secretary of the Handball Federation **Mishaal Al-Qabandi** said the new rule aims to raise competition and end Kuwait Club's dominance.

"The three-foreigner rule is part of our plan to increase parity and push the overall standard of the league," Al-Qabandi explained. "If clubs balance their rosters and coaching staff, the championship could be up for grabs."

He added that referees have undergone extensive workshops and training to ensure they are fully prepared for the new season.

Burgan handball director Abdulaziz Najib believes the league will be stronger and more competitive than ever.

"Adding a third foreigner benefits local players," Najib said. "They get to train and compete alongside world-class talent, which raises their game."

After finishing second last season and qualifying for Asian competitions, Burgan has reinforced its squad with targeted signings.

"Our goal this year is the league title," Najib confirmed. "We have a strong national coach, an experienced staff, and the core of last year's team intact. With our new additions, we are ready to compete at the highest level."

Lyon edges 10-man Marseille with late own goal

## Juventus stays unbeaten, Inter shocked

ROME, Sept 1, (AP): Juventus would sell Dusan Vlahovic to any buyer with enough cash for the highly paid center forward.

Yet the Bianconeri can hardly get by without him.

Having turned down transfer offer after transfer offer, Vlahovic came off the bench and scored for the second consecutive match in Juventus' 1-0 win at Genoa in Serie A.

In the 73rd minute, Vlahovic rose far above his marker to redirect a corner from Serbia teammate Filip Kostic - another player who has surprisingly remained in Turin.

Juventus has been trying to offload Vlahovic and his 12 million euros (\$14 million) salary - the highest in the league - before his contract expires after this season. Without much success, though, since Vlahovic has so far seemed determined to stay ahead of Monday's market closure.

Juventus joined defending champion Napoli, promoted Cremonese and Roma with a perfect six points from the opening two rounds.

Inter Milan was the most impressive side during Serie A's opening round, routing Torino 5-0. In the second round, the Nerazzurri were a big disappointment, getting beat 2-1 by Udinese in their home opener.

Inter went ahead early on with a

goal from Denzel Dumfries. But a foul by Dumfries resulted in a penalty that Keinan Davis converted for Udinese to equalize and then Arthur Atta also scored before the break after Inter lost possession at mid-field.

Also, Lazio beat Hellas Verona 4-0 with goals from Matteo Guendouzi, Mattia Zaccagni, Valentin Castellanos and Boulaye Dia.

Torino and Fiorentina drew 0-0.

□ □ □



Genoa's Morten Frendrup, left, and Juventus' Kenan Yildiz, right, challenge for the ball during the Serie A soccer match between CFC Genoa 1893 and Juventus Turin in Genoa, Italy. (AP)

Lyon finally prevailed in a 1-0 win over 10-man Marseille thanks to a late own-goal from Leonardo Balerdi in the French league.

Lyon substitute Nicolas Tagliafico struck the crossbar and teammate Pavel Šulc's pressure forced the despairing Balerdi on the line to bundle the ball into his own net in the 88th minute.

Lyon had two goals ruled out in the first half, and Marseille had defender CJ Egan-Riley sent off in the

29th for taking down Malick Fofana when he was through on goal.

The visitors improved after the break despite their numerical disadvantage. Hamed Junior Traoré and Pierre-Emile Höjbjerg both missed good chances for Marseille.

It's Marseille's second loss from three league games so far this season.

Lyon was without star player Georges Mikautadze, who has been linked with a move away to alleviate the financial situation at the club.

The seven-time French champion was in June demoted to the second tier because of financial irregularities and debts estimated at 175 million euros (\$203 million), but it secured its top-division status on appeal.

Paris FC celebrated its first win since clinching promotion as it defeated visiting Metz 3-2 in a game watched by Red Bull head of global soccer Jürgen Klopp. The energy drinks manufacturer is a minority stakeholder in the team backed by France's richest family, the Arnaults of luxury empire LVMH.

Paris' Ilan Kebbal scored twice for the hosts - the first was a penalty - before Boubacar Traoré drew the visitors level at 2-2. Moses Simon scored what proved to be the winner in the 67th and Metz ended the game with 10 men as Sadibou Sané, who got the opening goal, was sent off in the 80th.

## Ferrari and Hamilton aim to bounce back at Monza

ZANDVOORT, Netherlands, Sept 1, (AP): Monza is where the magic happens for Ferrari. And the Italian Grand Prix couldn't come at a better time.

Formula 1's annual pilgrimage to the "Temple of Speed" this week brings a chance for Lewis Hamilton and Charles Leclerc to rebound from race-ending crashes at the Dutch Grand Prix on Sunday. It was only Ferrari's second Grand Prix this year without scoring points and Hamilton also picked up a grid penalty for Monza.

The only Italian on the grid, Mercedes' Kimi Antonelli, wants to "put in the trash" a practice crash at Monza last year, and make up for ending Leclerc's race on Sunday. Success has been rare for Italian drivers at Monza, though.

There isn't much that seven-time world champion Lewis Hamilton hasn't done in F1, but racing for Ferrari at Monza will be something "unique."

It's Hamilton's 19th race at the high-speed Italian track, but his first in red.

He's spoken of wanting to enjoy his racing again after a difficult start with Ferrari, and insisted Sunday he'd made progress despite sliding into the barriers at the Dutch Grand Prix, "so to come away with that is definitely painful."

Worse was to come later that day as Hamilton was handed a five-place grid penalty for the Italian Grand Prix for failing to slow down enough for yellow flags before Sunday's race at Zandvoort.

Hamilton had a taste of racing in red in Italy at the Emilia Romagna Grand Prix

at Imola in May, and dedicated his result - fourth place - to the Ferrari fans. He still hasn't been able to get onto the podium in a Grand Prix race for Ferrari.

Even some of Ferrari's most troubled F1 seasons have been redefined by success at Monza, like in 1988 when Gerhard Berger took an emotional first win for the team since the death of founder Enzo Ferrari.

Leclerc won there in his first Ferrari season in 2019 and again last year.

"I'm pretty sure that he will still be shocked by how special this week feels, but he's gone through a lot more than I had done back then. I just came from Sauber to win in Monza with Ferrari, which was unbelievable. So it was all at once and it was quite crazy."

It's been 20 years since an Italian driver was on the Monza podium.

Kimi Antonelli arrived in F1 with plenty of hype as the youngest succeeding Hamilton at Mercedes. Crashing 10 minutes into his first F1 practice session for Mercedes at Monza last year was a tough introduction.

Putting Antonelli in the car a year ago was a gamble and "maybe a mistake". Mercedes team principal Toto Wolff admitted Friday, but argued it would have been a major confidence-builder without the crash.

Antonelli has two points finishes in his last nine races after a strong start to 2025. He was competitive on pace at the Dutch Grand Prix but it all went wrong when he tried to overtake Leclerc and instead tipped the Ferrari driver into the barrier. Mercedes has yet to formally confirm Antonelli or teammate George Russell for 2026.

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South Africa's Zintle Mpupha, left, attempts to get past Italy's Aura Muzzo during the Women's Rugby World Cup 2025 Pool D match between Italy and South Africa at York Community Stadium, in York, England. South Africa stunned Italy 29-24 and reached the Women's Rugby World Cup quarterfinals for the first time in York on Sunday. (AP)

# Sports

## Kuwait fencing team shines with 9 medals at West Asia Championship

MANAMA, Sept 1: The Kuwait national fencing team achieved an impressive haul of nine medals on the second day of the West Asia Fencing Championship in Bahrain, which continues through September 4.

Rashid Al-Shammari, head of Kuwait's delegation, praised the athletes for their exceptional performances, noting that the tournament serves as a key benchmark for fencing standards in the region.

He also highlighted the strong support and attention provided by the Kuwait Fencing Federation, in line with the vision of the Public Authority for Sports and the country's commitment to developing young athletes.

**Medal Winners**  
**Boys U-13 Épée:** Gold – Hussein Al-Hashimi  
**Girls U-13 Épée:** Gold – Suhaila Ahmed Al-Nakas  
**Girls U-13 Foil:** Gold – Rayan Al-Ghais; Silver – Zina Al-Amir; Bronze – Noor Al-Najjar  
**Boys U-13 Foil:** Bronze – Ahmed Al-Jaber  
**Girls U-13 Saber:** Silver – Zina Al-Amir  
**Boys U-13 Saber:** Silver – Jaber Al-Abbasi; Bronze – Said Hamza Al-Mousawi

Al-Shammari expressed pride in the team's achievements, emphasizing that their success reflects Kuwait's rising standards in fencing and the growing talent of its young athletes.



Kuwait Fencing team celebrates with the national flag.



Players prepare for a friendly against Syria.

## Kuwait prepares for Syria friendly

**By Khaled Al-Enezi**  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 1: The Kuwait national football team is continuing its daily training sessions at Aspire Academy in Doha as part of its camp in the Qatari capital, which runs until September 9. The team will face Syria in a friendly match on September 8.

Originally, Kuwait had planned to hold its camp in Jakarta, where it would have played friendlies against Indonesia and Lebanon. However, Portuguese coach Helio Sousa opted to move the camp to Qatar and limit it to a single match after a scheduled game against a Qatari club fell through.

The team is also set to hold another training camp in Dubai in early October to prepare for its November playoff match against Mauritania in the Arab Cup, which will take place in Doha in early December.

Meanwhile, Syria's coach José Lana has ruled out Charleroi defender Ayham Oso following an injury sustained during a league match. Oso's injury comes just two days after striker Pablo Sabagh of South Korea's Suwon club was sidelined.

Syria will face Myanmar in a two-legged tie on October 1 and 14, followed by Pakistan on November 18 and March 31, as part of the 2027 AFC Asian Cup qualifiers.

## Kuwait 'holds' Saudi Arabia to keep U-20 Gulf Cup semifinals hopes alive

Olympic team prepares for Myanmar

**By Hassan Mosa**  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

RIYADH, Sept 1: Kuwait kept its U-20 Gulf Cup hopes alive after a 1-1 draw with Saudi Arabia at Prince Sultan bin Abdulaziz Sports City in Group A. Abdulaziz Al-Shamri gave Saudi Arabia the lead in the 41st minute, but Musfer Al-Adwani equalized for Kuwait in the 77th.

Yemen also claimed a crucial 1-0 win over Qatar, thanks to Mukhtar Muwafaq's goal in the 21st minute.

After two rounds, Saudi Arabia leads the group with four points, Yemen sits second with three, Kuwait has two, and Qatar trails with one.

Kuwait must defeat Yemen in its final group match to advance to the semifinals. Saudi Arabia needs only a draw against Qatar, Yemen can progress with a draw or win, and Qatar must win to qualify.



Musfer Al-Adwani shoots the ball during Kuwait and Saudi Arabia match.

The Kuwait Olympic team wraps up preparations this evening ahead of tomorrow's opening match against host Myanmar in Group B of the AFC U-23 Asian Cup qualifiers. Head coach Dario Basic is expected to finalize his starting lineup during today's session, as the team looks to secure a positive start and

ease its path to the next round.

Kuwait will face Afghanistan on Saturday and conclude the group stage against Japan on September 9. The team trained yesterday in Myanmar after arriving from a preparatory camp in Bangkok. This marks Kuwait's seventh appearance in the

U-23 qualifiers and its sixth consecutive campaign, with the goal of reaching the finals for the fourth time.

The 2026 AFC U-23 Asian Cup finals will be hosted by Saudi Arabia in January. Group winners, along with the four best runners-up, will qualify to join the hosts.

San Diego FC spoils Son's LAFC home debut

## Sounders dominate Miami to win Leagues Cup as Messi fails to score

SEATTLE, Sept 1, (AP): Osaze De Rosario scored in the 26th minute, and the Seattle Sounders blanked Lionel Messi and Inter Miami 3-0 on Sunday night to win the Leagues Cup.

De Rosario headed a cross from Alex Roldan into the bottom left corner of the net for his fourth goal in Leagues Cup play. Roldan scored on a penalty kick in the 84th minute, and Paul Rothrock found the net in the 89th.

By winning the annual tournament featuring clubs from Major League Soccer and Liga MX, the Sound-

ers earned a bye into the round of 16 in the next CONCACAF Champions Cup. Seattle also became the only MLS team to have won all five annual trophies available to clubs in the league, having already claimed the MLS Cup, the CONCACAF Champions Cup, the U.S. Open Cup and the Supporters' Shield.

A postgame brawl broke out between the teams after Miami was shut out for the first time in Leagues Cup play, and videos posted on social media appeared to show Miami's Luis Suárez spitting

on a Sounders staff member.

Messi, who led Miami to the Leagues Cup title in 2023, had plenty of scoring chances, including one off a brilliant pass from Suárez in the 49th minute. But Messi couldn't convert and was denied a 34th goal in as many Leagues Cup matches.

The Sounders, meanwhile, missed a couple of chances to make it even more lopsided. Jesús Ferreira ripped a shot off the left post in the 39th minute, and Rothrock was stopped on a breakaway in the 72nd.

Second-half substitute Georgi Minounou drew a foul in the penalty area, leading to Roldan's successful spot kick.

Hirving Lozano and Anders Dreyer scored, and San Diego FC spoiled the home debut of Los Angeles FC forward Son Heung-min with a 2-1 victory.

After Dreyer got the tiebreaking goal in the 66th minute, Western Conference-leading San Diego held on against a barrage of LAFC chances to extend its unbeaten streak to six matches in MLS play.

Denis Bouanga scored in the first half for LAFC, but the French star and Son both failed to convert golden scoring chances in the final minutes of expansion San Diego's first trip 120 miles north to BMO Stadium. CJ Dos Santos made three saves for the visitors, including a diving stop on Son in second-half injury time.



Seattle Sounders players celebrate after the Leagues Cup final soccer match against Inter Miami in Seattle. (AP)

Bilbao makes it three wins in as many rounds

## Barcelona drops first points of season at Rayo

BARCELONA, Spain, Sept 1, (AP): Lamine Yamal scored from the penalty spot but Barcelona needed goalkeeper Joan García to ensure it left Rayo Vallecano with a point after a 1-1 draw in the Spanish league.

The defending champions were largely outplayed by the modest side from Madrid with its speed and ability to break Barcelona's offside trap.

It was Barcelona's first slip of the season after it started with a pair of wins at Mallorca and Levante.

Yamal got the penalty after he dribbled past a defender and was knocked down by Pep Chavarría in a foul that was fiercely protested by Rayo's players and staff.



Barcelona's Lamine Yamal, center, is challenged by Rayo's Unai Lopez, left, and Pathe Ciss during the Spanish La Liga soccer match between Rayo Vallecano and FC Barcelona at the Vallecas stadium in Madrid, Spain. (AP)

unmarked at the far post in the 67th.

"We have to control the ball better. We have to be happy with the point," Barcelona coach Hansi Flick said. "Joan García played a fantastic match today."

Fermín López played as a second-half substitute amid speculation that Chelsea wants to sign the Barcelona midfielder before the summer transfer window closes on Monday.

The game was marked by an apparent malfunction to the video review service for referees.

The referee informed team captains

midway through the first half that it was not working. That meant there was no review of Chavarría's foul of Yamal.

Rayo coach Íñigo Pérez got a yellow card for his vehement protest, which included him knocking over a stand that held a tablet of his coaching staff in the dugout.

After the game, he apologized for what he called his "embarrassing behavior."

"I am a firm defender of the referee's right to make mistakes," Pérez said. "The referee is a key figure in this sport who gets little support, and he can commit errors."

He added: "What made me lose my cool was that you can't start playing with video review and then be told that now you are playing without it. The video review affects how you play, how the referees work."

Borja Iglesias scored with a header in second-half injury time to snatch Celta Vigo a 1-1 draw with Villarreal, dealing the "Yellow Submarine" its first setback of the season after two victories.

Athletic Bilbao made it three wins in as many rounds after beating Real Betis 2-1 in Seville.

The Basque Country club got an own-goal by Marc Bartra before Aitor Paredes got the second. Cedric Bakambú pulled one very late goal back for the hosts.

Espanyol remained unbeaten after defender Carlos Romero scored in a 1-0 win against Osasuna.