



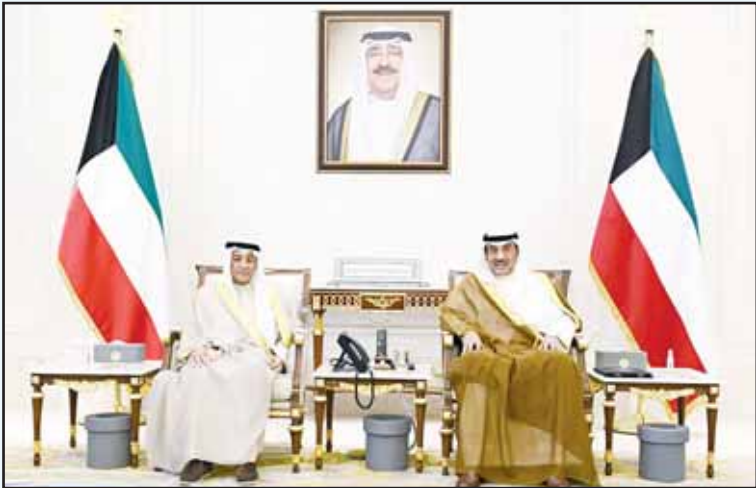
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## HH Amir, HH Crown Prince receive GCC Sec Gen



HH the Amir receives GCC Secretary General.



HH the Crown Prince receives GCC Secretary General.

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace on Tuesday the Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Jas-

sem Al-Budaiwi.

Similarly, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received on Tuesday at Bayan Palace Secretary General of the Gulf Co-

operation Council (GCC) Jassem Al-Budaiwi.

Present at the meeting was Head of His Highness the Crown Prince's Diwan Sheikh Thamer Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

## Kuwait courts reopen as judicial season kicks off

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

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2: Courtrooms resumed the usual hustle and bustle, as the new judicial season started Monday after the summer break. Various judicial circuits witnessed a remarkable turnout of litigants, while lawyers flocked to the courtrooms from the early hours of the working day to follow up their cases. This scene reflects the vitality of the judicial system and its pivotal role in ensuring justice for all.

Kuwait Lawyers Association congratulated its members on the start of the judicial season, wishing them success in fulfilling their noble mission. The association affirmed its continuous support for lawyers, defending their interests and strengthening their role as essential partners in achieving justice.

It asserted that the start of the judicial season is an important phase for reaffirming determination and commitment, hoping that it will be a year full of achievements, characterized by the application of the law and the protection of rights.

The newspaper interviewed some lawyers who agreed that the success of the judicial season hinges on the extent of cooperation between the judicial and executive authorities and the association in updating legislation, improving the work environment in courts, and expediting enforcement procedures.

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### Opinion

■ Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

## Service ministers, visit Kuwait's diwanias

AN official who goes to the people and listens to them demonstrates shrewdness and openness to the concerns and issues of the people. This is a significant and appreciated step.

Therefore, the visit of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef to Kuwait's diwanias is highly appreciated, as it aims to learn about what is happening among Kuwaitis, especially since his work addresses major issues that concern all citizens.

One of his personal virtues is that he listens to criticism before he offers praise. Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef is a good listener and allows space for every opinion, whether negative or positive.

Thus, this tradition established by the Minister of Interior is very important in clarifying the picture and the position.

It would be great if ministers, especially those responsible for services, do the same and meet with the people in the diwanias, or hold their meetings even once a week, to hear what the people of Kuwait have to say about the projects and plans the State intends to implement.

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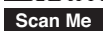
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# No tuition fee hike for private schools

Al-Siddiq Cooperative allocates KD 20 back-to-school allowance



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah chairs the weekly Cabinet meeting on Tuesday.

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

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2: Minister of Education Eng. Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei issued a decision to continue the implementation of the provisions of Ministerial Resolution No. 10/2018, stipulating the suspension of tuition fee hikes for all private schools.

The decision also stipulates the continuous implementation of the provisions of Ministerial Resolution No. 61/2020 regarding tuition fees in private schools for people with disabilities, according to the attached lists for the 2025/2026 academic year.

Pursuant to the decision, Al-Tabtabaei authorized the Assistant Undersecretary for Educational Affairs to impose appropriate penalties on schools proven to have violated this decision or any other decisions and circulars issued in implementation or regulation thereof, while ensuring the enforcement of legal provisions regulating tuition fees.

The Ministry of Education stated this decision is in line with its commitment to alleviate the burdens of parents and maintain stability in the private educational system, reaffirming its commitment to control tuition fees in order to guarantee fairness and stability of the educational process.

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## Kuwait sky to witness rare total lunar eclipse Sunday

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2, (KUNA): Al-Ojeiri Scientific Center Director Yousef Al-Ojeiri said the total lunar eclipse, which will be witnessed in Kuwait on Sunday, is a rare astronomical phenomenon and the second of its kind this year.

In a statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) on Tuesday, Al-Ojeiri explained that the rarity of this phenomenon is due to the moon entering the Earth's shadow completely, appearing in a copper-red color known as the 'blood moon'.

He revealed the total lunar eclipse will be visible in different parts of the country from the beginning of the eclipse until the end.

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## Sudan landslide kills more than 1,000 people

CAIRO, Sept 2, (AP): A landslide wiped out an entire village in Sudan's western region of Darfur, killing an estimated 1,000 people in one of the deadliest natural disasters in the African country's recent history, a rebel group controlling the area said late Monday.

The village of Tarasin was "completely leveled to the ground," the Sudan Liberation

Movement-Army said as it appealed to the U.N. and international aid groups for help to recover the bodies.

The tragedy happened Sunday in the village, located in Central Darfur's Marrah Mountains, after days of heavy rainfall.

"Initial information indicates the death of all village residents, estimated to be more

than 1,000 people," the rebel group said in a statement. "Only one person survived," it added.

Abdel-Wahid Nour, the group's leader, made an appeal on Tuesday for international help. "The scale and magnitude of the disaster are immense and defy description," he said.

## Number of Kuwaitis in contractor oil jobs declines

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2: A recent oil document revealed a decline in the number of Kuwaitis employed under contractor contracts with Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) and its subsidiaries by 246 within a year -- 5,236 in the first quarter of 2025, compared to 5,482 in the same period last year.

The document indicated that the Kuwaitization rate reached 23 percent last year, but declined to 20 percent in the first quarter of this year.

This confirms that the private oil companies providing services to KPC and its subsidiaries have not implemented the decision of the corporation requiring these private oil companies to adhere to the agreed-upon Kuwaitization rate. The document attributed the reluctance of some employees to accept positions to several factors, as these companies no longer meet their aspirations and that they suffer from not being granted the same job benefits as the employees in other KPC-affiliated oil companies.

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## Kuwait leads efforts for GCC emergency preparedness



KUNA photo

The 34th meeting of the GCC Civil Defense Authorities in session.

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait is keen on boosting cooperation among GCC countries on crisis management, Director General of Kuwait Civil Defense, Brigadier Mansour Al-Hashash, affirmed on Tuesday.

Speaking at the opening of the 34th meeting of the GCC Civil Defense Authorities, Al-Hashash said that Kuwait was looking forward to contributing to the GCC's overall civil defense cooperation to address challenges and manage any crises.

He welcomed the GCC participants to the three-day meeting, hoping that it would add to the joint GCC collaborations on civil defense matters.

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## Pharmaceutical independence strategic necessity for Kuwait

By Marwa Al-Bahravi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2: People's health is no longer just a medical issue, it is a strategic battle related to the security and sovereignty of nations.

The COVID-19 pandemic shook the pharmaceutical supply chains around the world, exposing the fragility of reliance on remote factories and closed ports, and the vulnerability of importing countries to sudden supply crises.

While many Arab and Gulf countries have moved quickly to localize their pharmaceutical industries to ensure their health security, the big question in Kuwait remains: When will we transition from consum-

ers dependent on foreign sources to producers making our own pharmaceutical decisions, especially with the annual drug bill exceeding half a billion Kuwaiti dinars in the general budget?

Pharmaceutical security means the ability of the State to secure its vital pharmaceutical needs, free from market fluctuations and supply crises. This has become a fundamental requirement of national sovereignty in a rapidly changing and turbulent world.

Success stories are evident in Egypt, Jordan, Algeria and Tunisia, as well as other Gulf countries such as Saudi Arabia, which expects its pharmaceutical sector revenues to

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Al-Oumi



Abdul Hussein



Dr. Taqi



Al-Qahntani



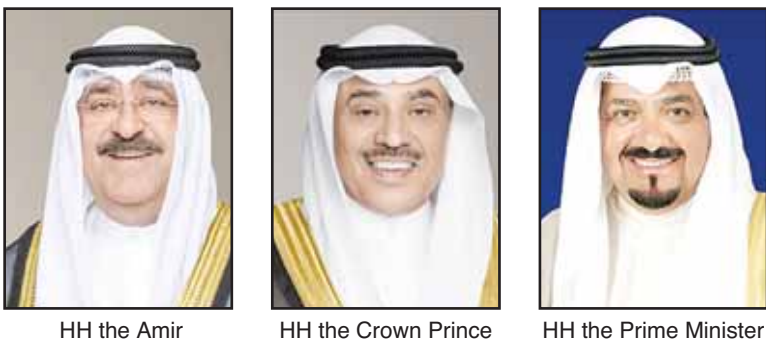
Prayer Timings			
Fajr .....	04:04	Asr .....	15:21
Sunrise ..	05:26	Maghrib ..	18:09
Zohr .....	11:48	Isha .....	19:29

# Local

**Expected weather for next 24 hrs:**  
**By Day:** Hot and relatively humid especially over coastal areas with light variable wind to light to moderate southeasterly wind, with speeds of 06-28 km/h.

Weather			
<b>By Night:</b> Hot to rather hot and relatively humid especially over coastal areas with light variable wind, with speeds of 08-22 km/h.			
Station	Max Exp	Min Rec	
Kuwait City	44	33	
Kuwait Airport	44	28	

Abdaly	45	28
Bubyan	37	23
Jahra	45	30
Salmiyah	42	34
Ahmadi	42	29
Nuwaisib	44	29
Wafra	44	27
Salmiya	43	24



## Kuwait Amir congratulates Vietnam on National Day

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Tuesday a congratulatory cable to the President of Vietnam, Luong Cuong, on his country's National Day.

His Highness the Amir wished the president good health and further progress and prosperity for the country and its people.

### Crown Prince

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent on Tuesday a congratulatory

cable to the President of Vietnam, Luong Cuong, on his country's National Day.

His Highness the Crown Prince wished the president good health and further progress and prosperity for the country and its people.

### Prime Minister

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent on Tuesday a congratulatory cable to the President of Vietnam, Luong Cuong, on his country's National Day.



KUNA photo  
Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya receives his Japanese counterpart Takeshi Iwaya in his office.

## FM meets Japanese counterpart

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya met Monday with his Japanese counterpart Takeshi Iwaya, who is in Kuwait to attend the second ministerial meeting of GCC-Japan Strategic Dialogue, held in Kuwait earlier in the day.

During the meeting, they discussed close relations between both friendly countries, ways of promoting and developing them in various fields, along with the latest regional and international developments.

## Power import from Gulf grid to continue till Dec

By Mohammad Ghanem  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2: Electricity imports from the Gulf Cooperation Council Interconnection Authority (GCCIA) will continue until December.

The newspaper obtained information that the extended period of energy imports from the GCCIA is part of the commitment of the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy to secure electricity for customers round the clock, as the new school year starts and the summer vacation ends.

This coincides with the shutdown of a number of production units for necessary maintenance in the coming months in preparation for the summer of 2026, which gives the ministry plenty of time to prepare.

Sources explained that the ministry does not need to import energy from the GCCIA after December, given the significant decline in consumption load indicators in January.

It is worth noting that the ministry obtained approval from regulatory authorities to import electricity from the GCCIA on July 1 at a total cost of KD161.381 million to cover electricity needs for a period of six months -- from June to December.

# Family unity vital in fast shifting world – minister

‘Shelter mechanism eyed for domestic-violence victims’

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2, (KUNA): Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs, and Chairperson of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs Dr. Amthal Hadi Al-Huwailah said Tuesday that bolstering family stability and empowerment amid rapid changes is a collective commitment for GCC states, calling for unified efforts, exchange of expertise and practical plans that preserve identity and values and support quality of life for GCC families.



Dr Al-Huwailah

Speaking at the “Gulf Family Forum: A Stable Family in a Changing World,” Al-Huwailah said the forum embodies joint Gulf action and reinforces the family's status as the solid nucleus of development and

stability, welcoming participants from GCC states to Kuwait.

She added that Kuwait's attention to the family is anchored in the Constitution, which provides for protecting its entity and strengthening its bonds.

She referred to the establishment of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs and a specialized legal framework that includes the Family Court Law (2015) and the Domestic Violence Protection Law (2020), in addition to providing psychosocial support centers, financial assistance for eligible cases and a shelter mechanism for domestic-violence victims.

She explained that government entities and public-benefit organizations participate in an integrated services ecosystem that upholds the best interest of all community members, affirming that such integration strengthens human capital and raises the efficiency of responses to family needs.

Al-Huwailah voiced hope the forum would produce actionable recommendations and initiatives that enhance Gulf cooperation on family affairs and serve GCC societies as a whole.

For his part, GCC Secretary General Jassem Al-Budaiwi said the Gulf family faces growing challenges amid digital and technological openness and its direct impact on social stability.

He pointed to intensified efforts across GCC states to raise awareness among children, youth and families on proper technology use and to

entrench citizenship and Gulf identity through a joint digital initiative on online child safety adopted by GCC information ministers at their 27th meeting in Oman in May 2023.

The initiative targets children aged 5-18 to face online risks, avoid misuse and act against abuse or potential danger through training on safe internet use.

Al-Budaiwi said GCC states continuously care for the child as the basic building block of society, noting that schools provide free basic services, internet access, textbooks, computers for learning, appropriate infrastructure for students with disabilities and basic sanitary facilities, with coverage reaching 100 percent in all GCC states for all services.

He added that attention also extends to women, the backbone of the family entity, and to senior citizens by providing all means that ensure a dignified life.

He noted that GCC-Stat has issued child-oriented statistical booklets presenting Gulf figures in an entertaining and objective manner to instill a sense of belonging to Gulf unity.

Recent statistics, he said, indicate 12.6 million children under the age of 15 in GCC states, with males accounting for 51.1, alongside rising rates of ICT skills among youth and adolescents, reflecting the GCC's keenness to create a supportive environment for raising youth capable of serving their homelands.



KUNA photos  
Acting Undersecretary of Social Affairs Dr. Khaled Al-Ajmi.

## Kuwait committed: Dr. Al-Ajmi

## ‘GCC to prioritize welfare of citizens in joint efforts’

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2, (KUNA): Acting Undersecretary of Social Affairs Dr. Khaled Al-Ajmi reaffirmed on Tuesday that the 11th meeting of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) social affairs undersecretaries reflects unity and will prioritize citizens' welfare.

In his opening remarks, Al-Ajmi expressed pride in Kuwait hosting the event, emphasizing the significance of the meeting, saying it goes beyond reviewing agendas or drafting recommendations, but a reflection of the “human first” principle in action.

He called for a stronger joint mechanisms, turning challenges into opportunities, and deeper cooperation.

Al-Ajmi reaffirmed Kuwait's firm commitment to supporting all joint Gulf efforts and providing the necessary resources to make these meetings a springboard for broader cooperation and stronger integration.

Assistant Secretary-General for Economic and Development Affairs at the General Secretariat of the GCC, Khaled Al-Sunaidi, echoed Al-Ajmi's remarks, emphasizing the importance of such meetings to the society.

He noted that the GCC population reached 61 million in 2024, with women accounting for 49 percent and the 15-64 age group making up 71 percent, requiring innovative programs to improve the quality of life.

He said that member states have advanced in social protection, insurance, women's empowerment, and care for people with disabilities and the elderly, with more than six million people benefited from social protection program in 2023,



Assistant Secretary-General for Economic and Development Affairs at the General Secretariat of the GCC, Khaled Al-Sunaidi.

12 percent increase from previous years.

Al-Sunaidi reiterated the 15 percent low-income household rate, economic shifts and the impact of global crises on vulnerable groups, urging greater coordination and hoping for practical outcomes that reinforce integration among GCC states.

He conveyed deep gratitude to His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, current chairman of the GCC Supreme Council, and to Gulf leaders for their continued support of joint action.

He also thanked Kuwait's Ministry of Social Affairs for its hospitality and organization, and praised Qatar for its role in chairing the previous session in 2024.

## Other Voices

## Bogeyman of corruption

By Ahmad alsarraf

The cooperative system is perhaps the last major activity that the State has not touched, especially since the government is the last entity capable of managing it.

For half a century, it has failed even to choose temporary managers for the cooperative societies until the boards of directors are elected.

Its choices have been unsuccessful, with the corruption of the ‘chosen ones’ rarely being less severe than that of the ‘elected ones’.

Furthermore, cooperative societies are the biggest headache for Ministry of Social Affairs officials, and no one seems to know the best way to preserve their current status, prevent privatization or prevent a government takeover.

This requires the concerted efforts of various parties to come up with the best way to reduce the stigma within such a cooperative system, which is supposed to be ideal.

It is so in the countries of ‘infidelity’, but it has failed in the land of 2,000 mosques.

After more than 60 years of cooperative experience, it is imperative to review and develop it for the better, and to enact strict laws to address serious violations, as they have become a symbol of terrible corruption, especially since their share of the consumer market has reached nearly 70 percent.

It can be said, in general, that the majority, if not all, of cooperative management is weak, governed by bureaucracy and red tape.

This has given rise to all forms of corruption and favoritism.

They have historically been known for wasting resources, lacking resources, and failing to control expenses, with the prevalence of nepotism in appointments.

It is also necessary to combat corruption and address shortcomings, such as the misuse of the free goods system.

It is necessary as well to stop the exaggeration in the prices of shelves and refrigerators, prevent the extortion of large suppliers to compensate for deficits and losses, and put



alsarraf

an end to the deception of purchasing large quantities to obtain free goods or discounts, then returning the goods to the supplier while keeping the discount.

It is imperative to address unjustified delays in paying the cooperative's dues.

The cooperatives complain about the interference of their members in the elections of other entities, with the aim of gaining influence, the appointment of inexperienced and incompetent individuals, and the lack of even minimum educational qualification for board members.

Almost all cooperatives lack cleanliness in the market, warehouses and bathrooms.

Small businesses are no longer able to compete with larger organizations, which have grown through acquisitions and mergers.

Many believe that developing cooperative work and increasing its efficiency and competitiveness can be achieved by merging them under a single management for each governorate, bringing their number down to six instead of 75.

A single union will unite them, and each governorate will have a member representing it in the cooperative's board of directors, who will participate in setting its policies, regulations and social activities.

The savings that will result from the merger are unimaginable, as there will be no need, for example, to employ 75 general managers, 75 supervisors, accountants, auditors and so on.

It will require the establishment of a central oversight department to monitor the implementation of policies and procedures adopted by the governorate's cooperative board of directors.

Giving every citizen the freedom to purchase from any cooperative, while preserving their right to receive the profits from their purchases, will increase competition among various cooperatives to provide the best services and attract shoppers.

It requires the introduction of automation and artificial intelligence into their operations, and the use of the best sales and warehouse control systems.

All of these features are available in many advanced systems, and all that is required is to purchase them.



email:a.alsarraf.alqabas.com.kw

## Kuwait-Oman MoU to safeguard consumers

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2: The Council of Ministers approved the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Kuwait and the Sultanate of Oman regarding cooperation in the field of consumer protection.

Decree No. 163/2025 stipulates the signing of a five-year MoU on cooperation between the Government of Kuwait, represented by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and the Government of the Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Consumer Protection Authority, in the field of consumer protection. The decree comprises eight articles aimed at strengthening technical, technological and legal cooperation between the two countries, and coordinating in all areas related to consumer protection, particularly general consumer protection policies, in accordance with the legislation in force in both states.

The memorandum establishes mechanisms for the exchange of expertise and cooperation between the two parties to develop joint awareness programs designed to educate consumers on the social, economic and environmental impacts of their choices, thereby, encouraging sustainable consumption patterns.

It also provides for the exchange of information, visits, expertise and databases related to local and regional consumer commodity prices, along with research and studies on electronic price monitoring systems.

It lays out a framework for joint electronic training programs, linking relevant institutions that oversee trade and consumer protection in both countries, and enabling the use of training courses, awareness programs, conferences, meetings, seminars and workshops held in both states, especially those addressing consumer protection laws, commercial fraud crimes and harmful trade practices. It includes the implementation of specialized studies and joint field research on the effects of various goods and services on consumers.

It stipulates the establishment of effective communication channels and mutual support in developing electronic systems and programs, including cooperation in electronic information exchange between the two parties.

Moreover, it introduces a joint mechanism, through electronic connectivity, for monitoring global product recalls and removing harmful products, should they be found in either country. Each party will notify the other of any information, test results or measures taken, provided this is permitted by their national laws.

It emphasizes strengthening strategic cooperation between the two parties, coordinating their positions in regional and international organizations within this field, and utilizing such collaboration to serve mutual interests. Both parties will keep each other informed about activities and operations of mutual concern carried out by either side. They will also prepare an annual work program to implement and expand the areas of cooperation outlined in the memorandum, while organizing annual or alternating meetings as required.







# Ministry of Education approves 5-yr unified academic calendar

Move aims to cut absences, save millions

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

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2: In an unprecedented move aimed at maintaining stability of the educational system, Minister of Education Jalal Al-Tabtabaei issued a ministerial decision approving the comprehensive educational calendar for the next five academic years.**

Al-Tabtabaei said this decision is a stable regulatory framework for various educational and administrative bodies, including public education, religious education, special education and adult education.

He pointed out this is the first comprehensive calendar covering all educational sectors to enable schools, and educational and administrative bodies to plan ahead and develop their curricula and activities in an organized manner.

He revealed the new calendar specifies the start and end dates of the school year, exam dates and vacation dates, as well as the electronic transfer periods for educational and administrative staff, application periods for supervisory positions, registration dates for kindergartens and new students in the elementary stage, and the transfer periods for students between public and private schools.

He affirmed this is an integrated administrative and educational system based on a clear vision, and good preparation and planning.

He disclosed that the last week of Ramadan holiday has been approved to include students and members of the teaching and administrative staff in schools. He stated that this decision confirms the flexibility of the ministry in managing the educational calendar and making good use of school days in line with the requirements of the educational plan.

He stressed that this step is in accordance with a well-thought vision, which guarantees



Jalal Al-Tabtabaei, Minister of Education

balance between providing an organized break period for teaching and administrative staff and students, and ensuring the completion of study plans without disrupting the educational process.

He added the ministry worked hard to schedule this holiday in a way that ascertains the number of actual school days is not affected based on the principle of efficiency in utilizing the academic year, and enhances the students' academic achievement opportunities within a clear and stable calendar.

He said the ultimate goal of this calendar is to ensure the achievement of educational returns from every actual school day, indicating that previous years witnessed the phenomenon of mass absence between official holidays whose negative impact was not limited to the loss of learning opportunities, but extended to include the depletion of schools' operational resources, such as electricity, water, air conditioning, transportation and support services, without any tangible educational return.

He emphasized that the new educational calendar contributes to addressing this phenom-

enon by organizing holidays and vacations in advance, which instills discipline and seriousness in the educational process and increases the efficiency of educational spending.

Studies conducted by a specialized team showed that this move will result in savings of around KD51 million — the value of financial waste recorded due to lost school days in previous years.

Al-Tabtabaei indicated that the ministry views such savings as a reflection of the rational approach to resource management, along with real investment in educational outputs, as efforts and resources are redirected to better serve the students, improve educational activities, and support programs that enrich their learning experience and the effectiveness of lessons.

He stated that regular school attendance is not just a formal obligation, as it is rather a national duty and a shared responsibility that falls on the shoulders of the student, guardian and school administration.

He emphasized that commitment to attendance is a fundamental pillar in building a student's character and refining his skills, while making sure that every school day is invested in achieving educational goals.

He added that deliberate or mass absence deprives the students of learning opportunities and weakens the educational impact of the efforts of teachers and administrators. He asserted this calls for instilling a culture of discipline and seriousness, as an integral part of the success of the educational system and the development of its outputs to serve the Kuwaiti society as a whole.

He stressed that the attendance and absence regulations approved by the ministry are binding on all, and that school administrations bear the responsibility of implementing them and closely monitoring the implementation.

He added that the school administrations' commitment to these regulations is a professional and legal duty, and that negligence or laxity in this regard is a violation requiring accountability in accordance with the legal frameworks regulating educational work.

## Minister hails her loyalty and service

# Higher Education honors Al-Mulhim on retirement

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

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2:** The Ministry of Higher Education organized a ceremony to honor acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Higher Education and Assistant Undersecretary for Administrative and Financial Affairs Lamia Al-Mulhim on her retirement.

Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr. Nader Al-Jalal, Undersecretary of the ministry Dr. Bader Al-Busairi, Director General of the National Bureau for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education Dr. Jassim Al-Ali, acting Assistant Undersecretary for Scholarships, Equivalencies and Cultural Relations Ghaidaa Madhkur, a number of official and ministry employees attended the event.

Al-Jalal expressed his sincere appreciation to Al-Mulhim, stressing that she was a model of loyalty and dedication, leaving an indelible mark in the development of scholarship plans and services provided to students in and outside Kuwait.

He said "today we bid farewell



Lamia Al-Mulhim, Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Higher Education

to a dear colleague whose fragrant memory will remain an integral part of the ministry's history."

On the other hand, Madkour asserted in her speech that Al-Mulhim is a pioneering leader, compassionate in her dealings, close to her employees and students, and a role model in giving and commitment.

## Courses aligned with market demands

# KCCI's Al-Saqr Center opens third 'Newly Recruited' training project

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2:** The Abdulaziz Hamad Al-Saqr Center for Development and Employment, affiliated with Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI), is preparing to launch the third edition of the 'Newly Recruited' Training and Qualification Project.

This follows the remarkable success of the first two editions in 2023 and 2024, which witnessed the participation of 60 trainees from the public and private sectors.

This year's program will run from Sept 14 to Oct 8 in the halls of the center at the KCCI building.

Organizing the third edition of the project is part of the center's commitment to meet the growing demand for the program from both sectors, and to further develop its content in line with the needs of the Kuwaiti labor market.

The four-week program will include 11 specialized training courses delivered by 11 expert lecturers from among the national professionals.

Major fields that will be covered include communication skills and work ethics, basic administrative writing, data analysis and decision-making, problem analysis and resolution, qual-

ity management, and legal awareness for employees in both sectors.

It also aims to strengthen teamwork, boost efficiency, and raise awareness on cybersecurity, artificial intelligence applications in the workplace, and the effective use of Microsoft Office programs.

The project offers participants the opportunity to gain insight into real-life experiences from both the public and private sectors. Through group work, trainees will develop practical solutions to exercises inspired by the local work environment, thereby, enhancing their ability to integrate effectively into the labor market.

This initiative is one of the pioneering national projects adopted by KCCI, through its training arm, the Abdulaziz Hamad Al-Saqr Center for Development and Employment. As a non-profit center, it is dedicated to empowering young national cadres and preparing them to embark on their professional careers with competence and confidence.

The project is based on specialized studies of the Kuwaiti labor market's needs, underscoring the center's role in supporting human development and enhancing the work environment.

Registration open by governorate schedule

# Islamic Affairs adopts facial recognition

**By Mohammad Al-Enezi**  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2:** The Ministry of Islamic Affairs has instructed employees of the Holy Quran Affairs and Islamic Studies Sector to register their facial prints, as part of its plan to modernize attendance systems and ensure accurate tracking of employee attendance.

The newspaper obtained a copy of the circular issued by the ministry, stating the dates for the employees to register their facial prints per governorate.

The schedule of the employees at the Holy Quran and its Studies Affairs Department in Farwaniya and Jahra governorates is from Aug 31 to Sept 3, Capital and Hawalli governorates on Sept 7-9, and Mubarak Al-Kabeer and Ahmadi governorates on Sept 10-11.

Reliable sources explained that this

measure is part of ongoing efforts to adopt a more accurate, integrated electronic system to link with the Civil Service Commission (CSC).

The ministry explained that facial printing is mandatory for all employees, indicating that the new system contributes to reducing errors and ensuring transparency in monitoring attendance, while stressing the importance of employees adhering to the specified times for registering their facial prints to prevent delays.

The sources added that the ministry has taken technical and administrative measures to facilitate the registration process and ensure the smooth flow of procedures for employees, affirming that the new system is a qualitative shift in the method of monitoring attendance, and reflects the ministry's keenness to keep pace with modern technological developments in the field of human resources management.

## News in Brief

**KU seeks Sana'a nursing approval:** Kuwait University has contacted the Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance Bureau regarding the inclusion of Sana'a University in the Republic of Yemen on the list of accredited universities for nursing only, reports Al-Qabas daily.

University President Dr. Dina Al-Mailam stated in her letter that the request for inclusion was based on a letter from the acting Vice President for Academic Affairs, which referred to the accreditation of Sana'a University in the Republic of Yemen for undergraduate studies. She also inquired whether the non-accreditation constituted a legal violation or it is based on non-academic considerations.

The request is supported by a letter from the acting Dean of the College of Allied Medical Sciences, calling for the inclusion of Sana'a University on the list of accredited universities for nursing only.

It can be recalled that on Jan 13, 2025, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr. Nader Al-Jalal issued a decision suspending the registration and enrollment of Kuwaiti students at all undergraduate and graduate levels in all disciplines at Sana'a University.

**Kindergarten registration may extend:** Relevant authorities at the Ministry of Education are considering adopting an exceptional period for the registration of kindergarten students, reports Al-Jarida daily quoting sources.

Sources stated that registration is expected to be open from Sept 9 to 25, indicating that the ministry intends to adopt this exceptional period to ease the process for parents and provide them more time to register their children in kindergarten.

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Continued from Page 1

### Service ministers,

This will ensure that no one falls into forbidden matters, which do not benefit the people, or if there are observations not addressed by officials in a ministry.

Ministers must remember the directives of the political leadership, headed by His Highness the Crown Prince, which are based on sustainable development and restoring Kuwait to its pioneering renaissance in the region.

It is self-evident that no project or plan can proceed without careful study, comprehensive action, and identification of shortcomings before benefits. These steps prevent being in a situation like plowing the sea.

Good planning is the most important pillar of the construction process. A good engineer is one who leaves no room for errors in his work. This is why it is said that the team that demolishes does not build.

The past four decades left behind reform, considering the corruption, depravity and systematic sabotage, as well as interference in public functions and other matters.

First, this made the administration slack. Second, it deviated from the mission for which it was created, while no one listened to the voices of the people.

So, today is an opportunity for officials to be informed about everything taking place in society and to engage in open-minded discussions.

At the same time, they must identify the shortcomings that people complain about.

Many decisions and projects are announced but not promoted. They have drawn criticism from Kuwaitis.

Therefore, service ministers, and indeed all Cabinet members, must be close to the people.

In every area of Kuwait, there are diwanis whose patrons are influential figures in society.

When an official listens to their comments and explains the government's perspective, he or she is half-way to achieving the goal.

As we mentioned, development is the first and most important issue for the ruler. All officials in the executive branch, which is unrivaled today, must adhere to this.

### No tuition

The ministry confirmed that the decision took effect from the date of its issuance, indicating all relevant authorities must be aware of it and act accordingly.

It emphasized that maintaining stable tuition fees is the top priority in its efforts to provide balanced education, which is accessible to all students.

Meanwhile, in view of the upcoming opening of schools, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Al-Siddiq Cooperative Society Mohammad Al-Azmi announced the allocation of KD20 purchase allowance for each family ration card in celebration of the back-to-school season, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Al-Azmi confirmed in a press statement that the cooperative made all school and office supplies available at reasonable prices and of high quality, ensuring that the needs of students and parents are met as the new academic year begins.

At the conclusion of his statement, Al-Azmi expressed his gratitude and appreciation to the Ministry of Social Affairs for its continuous cooperation and swift facilitation of transactions, which serve shareholders and strengthen the role of cooperative societies in supporting the community.

### Kuwait courts

They called for utilizing technological advancements to reduce paperwork and simplify services, in line with the vision of the State for reform and development.

Thus, the judicial season started amid high hopes that it will be a year of achievement and prompt justice, witnessing practical steps that will boost the confidence of citizens in the judicial institution and affirm the position of Kuwait as a country fully committed to respecting the rule of law.

Attorney Enaam Haidar told the newspaper that "the new judicial season is an opportunity to develop mechanisms for expediting the resolution of cases, particularly family, commercial and discrimination cases."

She stressed that "the citizen is the most harmed by protracted disputes," calling for the development of digital means of litigation to keep pace with the needs of the current era.

Attorney Jassim Bandar said the new beginning requires intensified efforts to address the backlog of cases. He proposed "increasing the number of specialized departments and activating early reconciliation mechanisms to ease the burdens of courts and serve the interests of litigants."

Attorney Israa Al-Haddad highlighted the importance of "expanding the role of family reconciliation and legal mediation offices," indicating this will contribute to reducing divorce rates and family disputes, which constitute a large percentage of the cases received annually.

### Kuwait sky

He pointed out that the phenomenon will be visible to the naked eye without any danger to eyesight, and can also be observed using a telescope or binoculars.

He added the Center will participate in a special event to monitor the eclipse, organized by the Physics Department at Kuwait University in cooperation with the Center and under the umbrella of Kuwait National Center for Space Research, to allow astronomy enthusiasts to witness the

eclipse live.

He said the event will start at 6:00 pm and will continue until 10:30 pm on Sunday, with representatives of diplomatic missions, students and those interested in space sciences in attendance.

He disclosed a site will be allocated for children to learn about the phenomenon, and observe it with the help of experts at the center and the participating entities.

### Kuwait leads

The agenda of the meeting will look into the outcomes of the 41st meeting of the GCC Interior Ministers regarding within civil defense and emergency response.

The agenda will also highlight the involvement of women in civil defense training and the exchanging expertise online among other issues.

### Pharmaceutical

\$16.8 billion by 2034, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which this year announced the establishment of three pharmaceutical factories with investments exceeding \$84 million. These countries are not only building their pharmaceutical industries, but also strengthening their national economies, creating job opportunities, and ensuring health stability for their governments and people.

Today, Kuwait stands at a critical crossroads: Will it remain an importer, enduring the fluctuations of global markets, or will it take firm steps toward building a domestic pharmaceutical industry that guarantees health and economic security?

The decision is in our hands, and the challenge lies in our ability to make it wisely and quickly. For Kuwait, pharmaceutical security is not a luxury, it is a national necessity that cannot be postponed.

The newspaper interviewed a number of pharmacists and pharmaceutical sector specialists in the country, who unanimously agreed that the pharmaceutical industry is not a luxury or a temporary industrial project, but rather a strategic pillar for enhancing health and economic sovereignty and consolidating Kuwait's position on the regional pharmaceutical industry map.

Fawaz Al-Oumi, Secretary General of the Union of Importers of Medicines and Pharmacies, explained that the pharmaceutical manufacturing sector in Kuwait faces accumulated challenges, most notably limited investment in research and development, a shortage of specialized technical competencies, and procedural and regulatory complexities that hinder the attraction of local and foreign direct investment.

He added "the near-total reliance on imports weakens the competitiveness of local entities and makes prices and availability subject to external fluctuations." He pointed out that the development of a local pharmaceutical industrial base not only impacts health, but also extends to constitute a key component of national security, as it contributes to reducing dependence on imports, which amounts to about \$1.8 billion annually, and provides a more flexible response to sudden health crises.

He believes that the pharmaceutical industry is a strategic sector with added value to economies, given its connection to advanced knowledge and technology. He emphasized that the presence of a national pharmaceutical industry contributes to diversifying the economic base, providing quality job opportunities for nationals, reducing the import bill that could burden the trade balance, and enabling the export of surplus products to Gulf and regional markets, thus, strengthening Kuwait's position as a promising regional center for health security.

He asserted that localizing pharmaceutical industries is not merely an industrial project, but rather a strategic pillar for enhancing health and economic sovereignty and consolidating Kuwait's regional position in this vital sector.

Dr. Ahmed Taqi, President of the Kuwait Pharmaceutical Association, emphasized that the State of Kuwait recognizes the importance of localizing pharmaceutical manufacturing to enhance its health security and diversify its sources of national income. He affirmed that pharmaceutical industries are not a luxury or an additional service, but an essential component of any integrated health system -- a fact reflected in the State's directives over the past years and its keenness to adopt this project in the coming period.

Taqi pointed out that Kuwait currently has only one pharmaceutical factory, the Kuwaiti Saudi Company, which meets part of the local market's needs, but is unable to cover the diverse demand due to the large number of patients.

He stated that the pharmaceutical sector drains more than KD500,000 annually from the public budget, reaching nearly KD800,000 in one year. He stressed that investing these funds in establishing an industrial infrastructure will provide a strategic drug stockpile that will protect the country from global market fluctuations and geopolitical crises, which could disrupt supply chains or maritime and air navigation for any reason.

He added that Kuwait still faces obstacles to the implementation of this approach, most particularly the lack of land for pharmaceutical manufacturing. "There is a genuine desire from local investors to establish pharmaceutical factories, but the lack of land from the Public Authority for Industry is hindering these efforts," he explained.

He hopes that the national vision will be realized by providing suitable land to attract local and international investments, emphasizing that the pharmaceutical industry not only enhances health security, but also drives the national economy by stimulating the transportation and logistics sector and providing quality job opportunities for pharma-

cists and nationals, thus, contributing to supporting the salaries item in the State budget.

Senior Pharmacy Specialist Shaima Abdul Hussein stated that the COVID-19 pandemic exposed the fragility of reliance on drug imports, after the world witnessed a severe shortage of many vital items. She pointed out that "in Kuwait, calls to localize pharmaceutical industries have become more urgent, as they are a fundamental pillar for achieving drug security and ensuring the availability of essential medicines, especially those for chronic diseases and antibiotics."

She indicated that establishing local pharmaceutical factories will give the country greater capacity to deal with crises and build a strategic stockpile that reduces future risks, in addition to accelerating response in the event of a new health emergency. However, she noted at the same time that the pharmaceutical sector is facing several challenges, especially the heavy reliance on imports, delays in drug registration and pricing, and variations in the availability of items, particularly those related to chronic diseases, in addition to the limited number of specialized personnel in pharmaceutical manufacturing.

She stressed that localizing pharmaceutical industries in Kuwait is no longer an option, but a national necessity to protect society and support the economy. She called for strict regulatory systems to ensure the quality of the local product in accordance with international standards, given the added economic value of this industry, which contributes to reducing the import bill, opening new job opportunities for Kuwaiti youths, enhancing scientific research and partnerships with universities, and providing opportunities for export, thus, strengthening Kuwait's position in health security in the Gulf and globally.

Director of Drug Registration and Regulation Pharmacovigilance Officer at Alghanim Healthcare Nouf Al-Qahtani indicted that localizing pharmaceutical manufacturing in Kuwait is a critical step to strengthen drug security, especially in light of the global crises exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting severe drug shortage. She continued "by developing a local pharmaceutical industry, we will reduce reliance on imports and ensure the availability of essential medications during critical times. This strategy will enhance the health system's ability to provide medications more quickly and effectively in health emergencies, significantly contributing to the sustainability of health services."

She underscored the need to improve the infrastructure for drug manufacturing and establish a regulatory framework that encourages innovation and investment in this vital sector, as well as qualifying and training nationals to ensure high level of production quality.

She added that "scientific pharmaceutical offices play a fundamental role in supporting this system by facilitating the import and effective distribution of medicines, and providing technical and marketing support to local companies to enhance confidence in the products available in the market and updating information on new medicines to enable medical teams to make accurate treatment decisions."

### Number of

Oil sources revealed to the newspaper that KPC is currently studying a file related to the rights of nationals working in the oil sector to fulfill their demands.

Sources disclosed that this file includes increasing the Kuwaitization percentage in private companies to 60 percent, instead of 30 percent, especially since the total number of nationals working in the private oil sector is around 13,000 -- both within and outside Kuwaitization contracts.

Sources pointed out that if KPC approves and ratifies this study, a copy of which was obtained by the newspaper, it will eliminate the problems of national labor in the private oil sector, in line with the directive of the State to encourage citizens to work in the private sector with the aim of creating more job opportunities for nationals to work under government contracts, to gain experience, develop technical skills, and achieve continuity and flexibility.

Sources said the study has several essential points, the most important of which are: obligating the contractor not to infringe on the rights and benefits of Kuwaiti workers, not to delay their salaries or abuse promotions and evaluations, and not to withhold their job benefits as per the executive regulations, such as the annual increase and annual bonus. Sources added that the lack of housing is also one of the problems that still exist.

The study stressed the need to include nationals working in the private oil sector in the health insurance policy for the oil sector by obligating the contractors to sign contracts with insurance companies and identify companies with a good reputation in the Kuwaiti market, as the total cost of insurance contracts is determined in advance, along with the need to reconsider the value of the insurance policy for the current allocations to obtain the best medical services.

Also, Kuwait Gulf Oil Company (KGOC) is obligated to implement the executive regulations for national labor under contractor contracts in the joint Wafra operations.

The memorandum stipulates the necessity of issuing a decision to obligate the contractor to transfer the salary of Kuwaiti employees into the designated bank accounts on a certain date of the month in which they are due, and not to delay the payment of salaries and any financial dues and benefits of any kind.

In the event that the contractor delays implementing the transfer of salaries on the specified date, the Kuwaitization Department is obligated to pay the salaries of Kuwaiti employees and apply an annual deduction for contractors who are not committed to paying the financial dues, especially since some drilling companies have not paid their financial dues for a period of up to 10 years.



KUNA photo

Kuwait's pavilion at Expo 2025 Osaka witnesses great turnout.

### Kuwait boosts Expo 2025 Osaka pavilion for visitors

Kuwait's Commissioner General at Expo 2025 Osaka, Salem Al-Watyan, affirmed the pavilion's commitment to providing a safe and organized environment for its visitors, in light of the large turnout since the expo's launch.

"The safety and comfort of visitors is a top priority in Kuwait's strategy for participating in this global event," Al-Watyan told KUNA after the Expo 2025 Osaka management accepted the Kuwait Pavilion's recommendation to allocate additional space for the waiting queue.

He explained that the pavilion's management is constantly monitoring the flow of visitors and implementing appropriate solutions to field challenges, in cooperation with the expo's management, to ensure smooth entry and exit without affecting the visitor experience.

He added that this expansion is part of the ongoing efforts by the pavilion's staff to enhance its positive image and provide a cultural and civilized experience that reflects Kuwait's status and its role in building bridges of communication with the world. (KUNA)

# Arab Council OKs drafts to enhance cooperation

Kuwait official highlights economic, social gains

**CAIRO, Sept 2, (KUNA): Assistant Undersecretary at the Kuwait Ministry of Finance for General Budget Affairs Saad Al-Alati said on Tuesday that the Arab League's Economic and Social Council's 116th ordinary session has approved draft resolutions to enhance Arab joint action and support economic integration among Arab countries.**

Speaking to KUNA, Al-Alati added that the council discussed the preparation of the economic and social file for the 35th Arab Summit scheduled to be held in Saudi Arabia next year.

He added that the session also addressed the developments of the Arab customs union, investment in Arab countries, ways to support the Palestinian economy, as well as the Arab Drug Agency.

The session is held at a time when the Arab region is going through difficult and painful circumstances as a result of the genocide against the Palestinian people carried out by the Israeli occupation, said the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the Arab League Ambassador Mohammad Youssef during his opening speech.

He emphasized his country's commitment to supporting joint Arab action in the economic, social, and developmental fields, particularly in supporting the Arab free trade area.



KUNA photo

Saad Al-Alati, Assistant Undersecretary for Technical Services at the Ministry of Finance.

For his part, Arab League Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Affairs, Ambassador Dr. Ali Al-Maliki affirmed the League's keenness to follow up on the council's decisions.

The summit also discussed the establishment of an Arab fund to contribute to the reconstruction of Yemen, the Greater Arab Free Trade Area, the Arab Customs Union, and investments in Arab countries, as well as other several prominent Arab issues.

## CSC commits to GCC collaboration

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2, (KUNA): Chairman of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) Dr. Essam Al-Rubaiaan affirmed the Commission's keenness to strengthen cooperation and integration with its counterparts in GCC countries to advance government performance.

Speaking at the 28th meeting of GCC Civil Service and Administrative Development Undersecretaries, Al-Rubaiaan said the meeting serves as a valuable platform for exchanging expertise and supporting joint development efforts, in line with the aspira-

tions of GCC leadership and peoples.

He praised the efforts of the GCC Secretariat, technical committees, and specialized working teams, expressing confidence that the meeting would yield constructive recommendations that contribute to administrative development and human re-



Dr. Al-Rubaiaan

source advancement across the region.

Meanwhile, GCC Assistant Secretary-General for Economic and Development Affairs Khalid Al-Sunaidi lauded Kuwait's continued support for joint Gulf initiatives, noting the region's tangible progress in digital transformation and institutional development.

He pointed to the GCC's improved position in the UN 2024 E-Government Development Survey, as a reflection of the efficiency of government services and their alignment with technological advancements.

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## Trump to award Rudy Giuliani Presidential Medal of Freedom

WASHINGTON, Sept. 2, (AP): US President Donald Trump said Monday he will award former New York mayor **Rudolph Giuliani** the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor, two days after his longtime political ally was seriously injured in a car crash.

The decision places the award on a man once lauded for leading New York after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks and later sanctioned by courts and disbarred for amplifying false claims about the 2020 election. Giuliani was also criminally charged in two states; he has denied wrongdoing.

Trump in a statement on social media called Giuliani the "greatest Mayor in the history of New York City, and an equally great American Patriot."



Giuliani

For much of the past two decades, Giuliani's public life has been defined by a striking rise and fall. After leading New York through the aftermath of Sept. 11, he mounted a brief campaign for the Republican presidential nomination and became one of the most recognizable political figures in the country. But as Trump's personal lawyer, he became a central figure in efforts to overturn the 2020 election. Courts repeatedly rejected the fraud claims he advanced, and two former Georgia election workers won a \$148 million defamation judgment against him.

The election workers, Ruby Freeman and Wandra "Shaye" Moss, said Giuliani's efforts to promote Trump's lies about the election being stolen led to death threats that made them fear for their lives.

Giuliani was disbarred in New York and Washington for repeatedly making false statements about the election, and he was criminally charged in Georgia and Arizona in connection with efforts to undo Trump's loss to Democrat Joe Biden.

## Pennsylvania Dems attract some buzz in party's bid to take back House

HARRISBURG, Pa., Sept. 2, (AP): Scranton Mayor Paige Cognito on Tuesday announced a bid for Congress in Pennsylvania, adding yet another competitive Democrat to the 2026 midterm election lineup in a state that gives her party perhaps its best chance to gain multiple seats without redrawing congressional lines.

The ranks of Democrats now running for Congress in Pennsylvania include a prominent mayor and a state labor leader, and give the party the kind of candidate-recruitment buzz it needs ahead of next year's congressional elections. At stake is a controlling majority in the US House.

Cognito, a mainstay on stage when national Democrats campaign in her working-class city, has long been viewed as the party's best candidate to try to unseat freshman Rep. Rob Bresnahan. The district is full of Democrats who more recently have backed President Donald Trump.

Cognito will campaign as an independent-minded Democrat and candidate corruption-fighting mayor who beat the party's nominee in 2019 to



Scranton Mayor Paige Cognito speaks during a President Joe Biden campaign event in Scranton, Pa., on April 16, 2024. (AP)

grab the top office in Scranton, a heavily Democratic city.

"People here are sick of self-serving politicians," she said in an interview. "I've shown in Scranton that we can build government for people and be honest with people. I have done it with an independent

streak and I think we will be able to take that successfully to the whole district."

Seats like Bresnahan's will be of prime importance in 2026: Democrats need just three seats to flip control of the US House and party leaders say the road to the majority likely

goes through Pennsylvania. The state holds four of the 35 seats nationwide that Democrats are targeting.

### Also:

**WASHINGTON:** Democratic Rep **Jerry Nadler** of New York says he will not run for reelection next year, according to an interview published Monday night by The New York Times.

Nadler told The Times that watching then-President **Joe Biden**'s truncated reelection campaign last year "really said something about the necessity for generational change in the party, and I think I want to respect that." He suggested a younger Democratic lawmaker in his seat "can maybe do better, can maybe help us more."

Nadler, 78, is serving his 17th term in Congress. He was chairman of the House Judiciary Committee from 2019 to 2023, then served as ranking member on the panel after Republicans won House leadership. He stepped down from that role late last year.

Nadler's decision to relinquish that spot came a day after fellow Democratic Rep. **Jamie Raskin** announced his bid for the job and quickly amassed support from colleagues.

## WH use of Nat'l Guard during Los Angeles immigration protests illegal, judge rules

# US President Donald Trump's policies spark protests in multiple cities on Labor Day

CHICAGO, Sept. 2, (AP): Protesters took to the streets in multiple US cities on Labor Day to criticize President Donald Trump and demand a living wage for workers.

Demonstrations in Chicago and New York were organized by One Fair Wage to draw attention to the struggles laborers face in the US, where the federal minimum wage is \$7.25 an hour. Chants of "Trump must go now!" echoed outside the president's former home in New York, while protesters gathered outside a different Trump Tower in Chicago, yelling "No National Guard" and "Lock him up!" Large crowds also gathered in Washington DC and San Francisco.

In New York, people gathered outside Trump Tower, which has become a magnet for protests and remains a prominent symbol of the president's wealth, even though the president hasn't lived in the Manhattan skyscraper for years. Demonstrators waved signs and banners calling for an end to what they said is a fascist regime.

In Washington, a large crowd gathered with signs saying "Stop the ICE invasion" and an umbrella painted with "Free D.C. No masked thugs." Hundreds more gathered at protests along the West Coast to fight for the rights of immigrants and workers.

Multiple groups joined together at the protests in Chicago to listen to speeches and lend their voices to the chants.

"We're here because we're under attack. We're here because our core values and our democracy is under attack. We are here because they are threatening to send the military into our streets," Daniel Biss, the mayor of Evanston, Illinois, told the crowd in Chicago as he urged them to stand up for workers.

At one point, a woman got out of a vehicle with Iowa plates in Chicago to shout "Long live Donald Trump" over and over again, resulting in a brief confrontation as the protesters responded with shouts of their own until the



People take part in a march, where activists, workers and politicians spoke against President Donald Trump and advocated for workers' rights on Labor Day in the West Loop on Sept. 1. (AP)

woman left a few minutes later.

In the crowd, Ziri Marquez said she came out because she's concerned

about overlapping issues in the US and around the world, decrying anti-migrant attitudes in the U.S. and the

deaths of Palestinians in Gaza.

"I think especially, you know, when we're dealing with low wages and we're dealing with a stagnant economy, immigrants are largely used as a scapegoat," said Marquez, 25.

Along the West Coast from San Diego up to Seattle, hundreds gathered at rallies to call for a stop to the "billionaire takeover."

Groups supporting federal workers and unions marched in Los Angeles; San Francisco; and Portland, Oregon, in support of workers rights. Rally organizer May Day Strong said on its website that "billionaires are stealing from working families, destroying our democracy and building private armies to attack our towns and cities."

They called on people to take collective action to stop the takeover.

Portland protester Lynda Oakley of Beaverton told Oregolive.com that her frustrations with health care, immigration and Social Security inspired her to join the march.

"I am done with what's happening

in our country," she said.

### Also:

**WASHINGTON:** A judge has ruled the Trump administration's use of National Guard troops during Southern California immigration enforcement protests is illegal.

Judge Charles Breyer ruled Tuesday that President Donald Trump's administration violated federal law by sending troops to accompany federal agents on immigration raids. The judge in Washington did not require the remaining troops withdrawn, however.

California sued, saying the troops sent to Los Angeles over the summer were violating a law that prohibits military enforcement of domestic laws. Lawyers for the Republican administration have argued the Posse Comitatus Act doesn't apply because the troops were protecting federal officers not enforcing laws. They say the troops were mobilized under an authority that allows the president to deploy them.

## Europe

**Latvia tightens entry rules:** New, stricter entry requirements for third-country nationals took effect in Latvia on Monday, the Foreign Ministry said.

The regulation does not apply to travelers from the European Union, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the European Economic Area, Switzerland, and Brazil, nor to persons with diplomatic immunity and certain other categories. Latvia's president is **Edgars Rinkēvics**.

Foreigners from all other countries seeking a Latvian visa or temporary residence permit must now submit information on their travel purpose, itinerary, accommodation, contact details, and professional or political background to the State Threat Prevention Information System at eta.gov.lv at least 48 hours before arrival.

According to the ministry, the amendments to the immigration law are intended to bolster national security and enhance border protection by identifying potential risks. (Xinhua)



Rinkēvics

Aware that not everyone in the pews spoke Italian, Leo summarized his homily for them in English.

"Not necessarily for the gift to understand or speak all languages, but the gift to listen, and the gift to be humble and the gift to promote unity within the order and through the order throughout the church and the world," Leo said.

Every few years, religious orders convene these general assemblies, with elected representatives coming to Rome to chart their future paths, priorities and elect new leaders.

Leo, the then-Rev. Robert Prevost, recalled the novelty of his final assembly as prior general in 2013. He has said that "sort of as a whim," he invited Pope Francis, who had just been elected pope a few months prior, to celebrate the opening Mass.

In the end, Francis presided over the conference and greeted all Augustinians present, including his eventual successor. (AP)

### Insufficient enrollment forces school closures:

Greece is closing hundreds of schools as falling student numbers highlight the country's worsening demographic situation, Kathimerini, a Greek daily newspaper that focuses on politics and economics, reported on Monday.

For the 2025-2026 academic year, 721 of Greece's 13,478 schools will suspend operations due to insufficient enrollment, most of them kindergartens and primary schools, according to Education Ministry data.

The student population is projected at about 1.21 million for the 2025-2026 academic year, a drop of more than 150,000 compared with the level during 2018-2019.

The closures come against a backdrop of long-term demographic decline. According to the Hellenic Statistical Authority, Greece's population has fallen by over 400,000 in the past 13 years due to plunging birth rates, aging, and outward migration.

School closures have been reported nationwide, including 77 in the Attica region. In remote areas, some children now need to travel up to 80 km daily to attend classes, the report said. (Xinhua)

# Putin says Trump administration listening to Russia's arguments on Ukraine war

BEIJING, Sept. 2, (AP): Russian President Vladimir Putin said Tuesday that US President Donald Trump's administration is listening to the Kremlin's justifications for its invasion of neighboring Ukraine and claimed that Moscow and Washington have come to a "mutual understanding" about the conflict.

Putin said during a visit to China that "the (Trump) administration is listening to us," as he complained that former President Joe Biden paid Moscow's arguments no heed.

"Now we see this mutual understanding, it's noticeable," Putin said at a bilateral meeting with Slovakian President Robert Fico after talks with Chinese leader Xi Jinping in Beijing. "We are very happy about this and hope this constructive dialogue will continue."

But Russia faces possible punitive actions by Trump, who has expressed frustration at Putin's lack of engagement in US-led peace efforts and threatened unspecified "severe consequences." The American president has made ending the three-year war one of his diplomatic priorities and hosted Putin at a summit in Alaska last month.

Putin attended the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit in the Chinese city of Tianjin with Chinese leader Xi Jinping and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who are also facing pressure from Trump.

In Beijing, Putin struck an apparently amenable tone about possible progress in some aspects of the dis-



Russian President Vladimir Putin, (center), walks with Slovakian Prime Minister Robert Fico, (left), at Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing, China on Sept. 2. (AP)

cussions to stop the fighting, although his comments reflected no substantial change in Russia's position. Western leaders have accused Putin of marking time in peace efforts while Russia's bigger army seeks to overwhelm Ukrainian defenses.

### Also:

**LUXEMBOURG:** NATO is working to thwart Russian jamming of civilian flights, said the alliance's chief on Tuesday, two days after a jet carrying European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen lost its ability to

use GPS navigation midair in Bulgarian airspace.

The plane landed safely on Sunday, but Bulgarian authorities said they suspected Russia was behind the interference.

"It is taken very seriously," said NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte during a news conference in Luxembourg with the duchy's prime minister and defense minister. "I can assure you that we are working day and night to counter this, to prevent it, and to make sure that they will not do it again." He did not elaborate.

## Tens of thousands demand justice against populist rule in Serbia

Tens of thousands of anti-government protesters marched again in Serbia on Monday with shielded riot police guarding the Belgrade headquarters of Serbia's President Aleksandar Vucic, who has threatened a major crackdown against those protesting his populist rule.

The protest led by high school and university students marked 10 months since a concrete canopy collapsed at a train station in Serbia's northern town of Novi Sad, killing 16 people. The disaster ignited a wave of public outrage, with state corruption and negligence

cited as a major cause.

The protests Monday were held in the capital Belgrade and several other towns in Serbia. In Novi Sad, baton-wielding police charged against the peaceful protesters, slightly injuring some of them, according to local portals. (AP)

# Former Czech populist prime minister Babis attacked at rally ahead of polls

PRAGUE, Sept. 2, (Xinhua): Former Czech prime minister Andrej Babis said that he was canceling his Tuesday election campaign program after being attacked during a rally.

"Tomorrow, I'll be waiting for further evaluation of the test results, but the doctors have recommended rest, so unfortunately, I'll have to cancel at least tomorrow's program in the Olomouc Region," he said on the social media platform X.

Babis, who served as Czech prime minister from 2017 to 2021, was struck in the head with a metallic forearm crutch by a man during an election rally in the eastern Czech town of Dobra on Monday afternoon.

Babis, the leader of the opposition ANO party, went to hospital for an examination after the incident. He underwent a head CT scan and was subsequently released from the hospital, according to local media reports.

Czech Police said X that officers at the scene immediately detained the man after the attack, and the case is now under investigation. In addition to Babis, a woman was also treated for injuries.

Police have preliminarily classified the incident as a "criminal offense of disorderly conduct."

ANO's first deputy chairman Karel Havlicek wrote on X that the incident was one of the consequences of a "hate campaign" allegedly waged by political rivals.

Responding to the attack, Interior Minister Vit Rakusan stressed that violence in any form is unacceptable.

"I unequivocally condemn today's attack on Andrej Babis. Let us seek a better future for our country in clash-



Czech Republic's Prime Minister and leader of centrist ANO (YES) movement Andrej Babis addresses the media in Prague, Czech Republic, on Oct. 9, 2021. (AP)

es of arguments and ideas, not in physical violence," he said on X.

Czech Prime Minister Petr Fiala also condemned the attack, stressing that "violence has no place in politics under any circumstances."

The Czech Republic is set to hold elections to the Chamber of Deputies, the lower house of the parliament, on Oct. 3-4 this year.



North Korea's Kim arrives in Beijing for military parade

## Xi calls for enhancing political mutual trust and cooperation among China, Russia, Mongolia

BEIJING, Sept. 2, (Agencies): Chinese President Xi Jinping on Tuesday called for consolidating political mutual trust and deepening mutually beneficial co-operation among China, Russia and Mongolia.

Xi made the remarks during a trilateral meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin and Mongolian President Ukhnaa Khurelsukh. The meeting was the seventh of its kind among the heads of the three states.

Xi called on the three countries to consolidate political mutual trust, strengthen solidarity and coordination, enhance mutual support, respect each other's core interests and major concerns, and serve as steadfast strategic anchors for their respective development and revitalization.

The three countries should deepen mutually beneficial cooperation, advance cross-border infrastructure and energy projects, enhance the alignment of development strategies, expand the scale of local currency settlement, and strengthen cooperation in tourism and cultural heritage conservation, Xi said.

Xi also called for enhancing collaboration within the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), leveraging various platforms and centers established during the SCO Tianjin Summit to seek broader cooperation.

Putin said that enhancing political

mutual trust is very important, which is conducive to consolidating the foundation of the trilateral relations.

The three sides need to align their development strategies closely, enhance connectivity, expand the scale of trade and investment, and deepen cooperation and exchanges in finance, energy, digital economy, education, environmental protection, tourism and other fields, so as to boost economic development, promote regional economic integration, and enhance the bonds among the peoples, Putin said.

Khurelsukh expressed Mongolia's dedication to advancing the construction of the China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor, enhancing people-to-people and cultural exchanges, and promoting regional development and prosperity.

This year marks the 80th anniversary of the victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression and the Soviet Union's Great Patriotic War. The peoples of Mongolia, China and Russia should jointly commemorate this historic occasion and carry forward the correct view of the World War II history, Khurelsukh said.

Xi said on Tuesday that the China-Russia relationship has become an example of major-country ties, featuring permanent good-neighborly friendship, comprehensive strategic



Chinese President Xi Jinping, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Mongolian President Ukhnaa Khurelsukh hold a trilateral meeting at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China on Sept 2. (Xinhua)

coordination and mutually beneficial cooperation.

Xi made the remarks while holding talks with Putin, who is in China for the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit 2025, as well as commemorations marking the 80th anniversary of the victory in the Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression and the World

Anti-Fascist War.

China is ready to strengthen high-level exchanges with Russia, support each other's development and revitalization, coordinate positions on issues involving the two countries' core interests and major concerns in a timely manner, and advance bilateral relations for greater development, Xi said. The two sides should leverage major

projects to steer their cooperation, develop exemplary cooperation projects, and promote deep-level integration of interests, he noted, calling for enhanced resilience and understanding in cooperation and all-out efforts to consolidate the overall cooperation.

The two countries' heads of state attending each other's commemorations marking the victory of the World Anti-Fascist War fully demonstrates their responsibility as major victorious nations of World War II (WWII) and permanent members of the United Nations (UN) Security Council, Xi said. It also displays their firm resolve to defend the victorious outcomes of WWII and safeguard a correct historical perspective on WWII, he noted.

Also:

**SEOUL, South Korea:** North Korea leader Kim Jong Un arrived in Beijing by train on Tuesday to attend a military parade with his Chinese and Russian counterparts, an event that observers say could potentially demonstrate three-way unity against the United States.

Kim and Russian President Vladimir Putin are among the 26 world leaders who will join China's President Xi Jinping at Wednesday's massive military parade in Beijing that commemorates the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II and China's fight against Japan's wartime aggres-

sions.

It's set to be Kim's first time attending a major multilateral event during his 14-year rule, and the first time Kim, Xi and Putin, all key challengers of the US, have gathered at the same venue. None of the three countries have confirmed a private trilateral leaders' meeting.

**North Korea's** official Korean Central News Agency said Kim was greeted at Beijing railway station by senior Chinese officials. Kim was cited as saying he was pleased to visit China and expressing thanks to Xi and his government for their cordial hospitality.

China's state-run Xinhua news agency issued a photo of a smiling Kim, dressed in a black suit and red tie, stepping off his train at the station.

In a closed-door briefing to lawmakers earlier Tuesday, South Korea's National Intelligence Service said that Kim will likely receive special protocol and security measures on par with those given to Putin, according to Lee Seong Kweon, a lawmaker who attended the meeting.

The spy agency said Kim may stand alongside Xi and Putin on the rostrum at Tiananmen Square during Wednesday's parade, and anticipated that he will hold bilateral meetings with the Chinese and Russian leaders and interact with other heads of state at a reception and cultural performance as he seeks to further break out of isolation and expand his diplomatic footing, Lee said.

## Vietnam celebrates 80 years since declaring independence with flags and military parade

HANOI, Vietnam, Sept. 2, (AP): Vietnam marked its National Day on Tuesday with its largest military parade in decades, as thousands packed the streets of the capital, Hanoi, after many camped overnight to witness the grand display marking 80 years of independence.

The parade unfolded at Ba Dinh Square, the site where revolutionary leader Ho Chi Minh declared independence from French colonial rule on Sept. 2, 1945.

Fighting resumed soon after as Vietnamese forces battled the French in the First Indochina War, which ended in 1954 when the country was divided into Communist North and U.S.-backed South. The Vietnam War followed, during which the Communist North fought the South and its American allies. That conflict ended when Communist forces captured Saigon on April 30, 1975 and the country was unified.

Vietnam's top leader, Communist Party General Secretary To Lam, paid tribute to those who died in the fight for independence and reiterated the ruling party's goal that by 2045 Vietnam will be a "powerful, prosperous and happy nation," calling it "the aspiration of the entire nation, an oath of honor before history."

"We want to be a friend, be a trusted



Vietnamese troops march during a parade marking the 80th National Day anniversary in Hanoi, Vietnam on Sept 2. (AP)

partner with all countries in the world," he said, adding that Hanoi would never compromise on independence or sovereignty.

Columns of troops marched past as tanks, armored vehicles, and missile systems rumbled by. Helicopters flew overhead trailing giant Vietnamese flags followed by jets while a military band played martial tunes below.

Officials said nearly 16,000 soldiers joined the event, including upgraded tanks, large artillery guns on vehicles, amphibious vehicles and missile systems made by a state-owned Vietnamese company.

For the first time, it also organized a televised naval parade off the coast of the port city of Cam Ranh in southern Vietnam, featuring warships, submarines, helicopters and sea planes.

## Philippine prez, Congress probe alleged corruption in flood control projects

MANILA, Philippines, Sept. 2, (AP): The Philippine president and Congress have begun looking into possibly massive corruption in flood control projects that may implicate public works officials and engineers, construction firms and politicians in one of the countries most vulnerable to typhoons.

The House of Representatives infrastructure committee opened a nationally televised hearing Tuesday. The Senate's powerful blue ribbon committee resumed on Monday a separate inquiry, where senators grilled a private contractor Sarah Discaya who has denied any wrongdoing but faced intense questioning over her family's fleet of at least 28 luxury cars and SUVs.

Rep. Elajiah San Fernando said that given the huge budget allocated for flood control infrastructure and water resource development in the Philippines, including more than 308 billion pesos (\$5.4 billion) this year, the scale of the corruption could be "of the grandest kind."

Addressing construction companies, private contractors and politicians involved in anomalies or "ghost projects," San Fernando warned that Congress has "no other objective but to see your heads roll-



Members of the Philippine Coast Guard monitors the office of a firm owned by controversial contractors Sarah and Curlee Discaya after the Bureau of Customs served a search warrant questioning their 28 luxury cars which are believed to have been kept in their building in Pasig city, Philippines, on Sept 2. (AP)

ing, to hold you into account and lock you up in jail."

In July, back-to-back typhoons and seasonal monsoon downpours set off massive floods that affected millions of people, displaced more than 300,000 others, damaged nearly 3,000 houses and left extensive infrastructure and agricultural

losses. At least 26 people died in the weather onslaught.

"When it floods, it's not the wealthy engineers or politicians or senators or congressmen or contractors living in mansions with dozens of SUVs who suffer," San Fernando said. "When flood control fails, the ordinary Filipino gets to be hurt first."

## Verdict and sentencing phase of 'historic' attempted coup trial of Bolsonaro begins

BRASILIA, Brazil, Sept. 2, (AP): The verdict and sentencing phase began Tuesday in the trial of Brazil's former President Jair Bolsonaro, who faces allegations he led a conspiracy to stay in power.

A Supreme Court panel scheduled sessions on five days through Sept. 12 to decide whether the far-right ex-leader is guilty of seeking to overturn the 2022 presidential election result, when he was narrowly defeated by President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva.

"History teaches us that impunity, omission, and cowardice are not options for peace," Justice Alexandre de Moraes said as the trial commenced.

Bolsonaro, who denies any wrongdoing, was charged with five counts related to attempting to stage a coup. He is under house arrest and has repeatedly said the trial is politically motivated.

That argument made headway with President Donald Trump, who directly tied a 50% tariff on imported Brazilian goods to his ally's judicial situation. Trump has called the proceedings a "witch hunt" against a political opponent, triggering nationalist reactions from many Brazilian politicians.

Bolsonaro is accused of attempting to stage a coup, involvement in an



A supporter of former president Jair Bolsonaro prays while holding a banner with his image in front of the condominium where he is under house arrest, a day before his trial, in Brasília, Brazil on Sept 1. (AP)

armed criminal organization, attempted violent abolition of the democratic rule of law and two counts involving destruction of state property.

A guilty verdict on the coup plot charge alone carries a sentence of up to 12 years.

Seven other close allies of Bolsonaro are being tried alongside the former president, including his former running mate and defense minister Walter Braga Netto and former defense minister Paulo Sérgio Nogueira.

Brazil's top electoral court has already banned Bolsonaro from running in elections until 2030 over abuse of power while in office and casting unfounded doubts on the country's electronic voting system.

A federal police investigation said efforts to disseminate fake news about Brazil's voting system were part of a multipronged plan to keep Bolsonaro in office.

Part of that plot included a plan to kill Lula and a Supreme Court justice, the prosecution alleges. It also says that the Jan. 8 riot when Bolsonaro supporters ransacked top government buildings a week after Lula took office was an attempt to force military intervention and oust the new president.

The prosecution finished presenting its case in July and the defense wrapped up its arguments mid-August.



Mexico's President Claudia Sheinbaum delivers her first state-of-the-nation address at the National Palace in Mexico City on Sept 1. (AP)

## From Trump to social programs: Mexico's first female leader takes stock after a year in office

MEXICO CITY, Sept. 2, (AP): Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum celebrated her government's handling of its tumultuous relations with the Trump administration, progressive gains and controversial judicial reforms in her first state of the nation address Monday.

Sheinbaum, who is nearing the end of her first year in office, notably left out some of the major problems still simmering in Mexico, including ongoing cartel violence plaguing much of the country and democratic concerns over wider concentration of executive power.

Mexico's first female president took office in October and has led the Latin American nation of 131 million at a time

of radical global shifts. Despite that, the 63-year-old progressive leader has enjoyed soaring approval rates between 70% and 80% in Mexican polls.

"Things are going well, and they're only going to get better," she promised.

Here are some of the top takeaways from Sheinbaum's State of the Nation address.

Chief among Sheinbaum's challenges has been navigating Mexico's inextricable political and economic relationship with the United States as President Donald Trump has doled out tariffs globally and pressured allies into making concessions.

Sheinbaum has been able to dodge

the brunt of Trump's tariffs by going after Mexican cartels and their fentanyl production more aggressively than her predecessor. In recent months, the government has delivered dozens of cartel figures long wanted by U.S. authorities to the Trump administration.

At the same time, her administration has insisted that the Trump administration respect Mexican sovereignty, and has rejected talk of potential American military action against cartels in Mexican territory.

"Under no circumstance will we accept interventions, interference, or any other act from abroad that is detrimental to the integrity, independence, and sovereignty of the country," she said.

## Yamuna flows above danger mark in Delhi

NEW DELHI, Sept. 2, (Xinhua): Following the incessant overnight rains, the water level of the Yamuna river crossed the danger mark Tuesday, sending floodwater into homes across parts of the Indian capital territory - Delhi, officials said.

Residents in low-lying pockets, such as Mayur Vihar and Yamuna Bazaar, said the river water has inundated ground floors and damaged their belongings. The inundation has forced residents to move to relief camps set up on higher ground.

On Monday, authorities issued an advisory for people living in the Yamuna floodplain of Delhi to move to safety.

The low-lying areas of Delhi, especially along the banks of the river Yamuna, were put on alert with the river crossing the danger mark of 205.33 metres early Tuesday. Officials warned that water levels could rise further with nearby bargages constantly releasing water.

As a precautionary measure, schools have been ordered to remain closed on Tuesday in some affected areas.

The rising water levels have also caused significant traffic



The swollen river Yamuna is seen after incessant rain in the higher regions, in New Delhi, India on Sept 2. (AP)

congestion, particularly at the Delhi-Gurugram border.

On Monday night, Gurugram (located on the outskirts of Delhi) was a trend on social media over visuals of a "20-kilometer" traffic jam, with people being stuck for over three hours.

Rescuers in 'race against time' to reach survivors

## Afghanistan earthquake death toll passes 1,400

JALALABAD, Afghanistan, Sept. 2, (AP): The death toll from a major earthquake in eastern Afghanistan passed 1,400 on Tuesday, with more than 3,000 people injured, Zabihullah Mujahid, a Taliban government spokesman, said on social platform X.

Rescuers are scrambling in a "race against time" to reach the mountainous and remote area devastated by Sunday's powerful 6.0 magnitude earthquake, a U.N. official said, warning of an exponential rise in the number of casualties.

The quake struck in several provinces, causing extensive damage. It flattened villages and trapped people under the rubble of homes that were constructed mostly of mud bricks and wood and were unable to withstand the shock.

Rough terrain is hampering rescue and relief efforts, forcing Taliban authorities to send in dozens of commandos to evacuate the injured from places inaccessible by helicopter and other transport.

The casualty figures provided by the spokesman, Mujahid, were just for Kunar province.

"We cannot afford to forget the people of Afghanistan who are facing multiple crises, multiple shocks, and the resilience of the communities has been saturated," Indrika Ratwatte, the U.N.'s resident coordinator for Afghanistan, told a media briefing on Tuesday.

He urged the international community to step forward. "These are life and death decisions while we race against



An injured person is carried to a military helicopter that landed to evacuate injured victims of an earthquake that killed many people and destroyed villages in eastern Afghanistan, in Mazar Dara, Kunar province on Sept 1. (AP)

time to reach people."

It is the third major earthquake since the Taliban seized power in 2021, and the latest crisis to beset Afghanistan, which is reeling from deep cuts to aid funding, a weak economy, and millions of people forcibly returned from Iran and Pakistan.



## Kuwait oil price surges to \$72.77 pb

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2, (KUNA): The price of Kuwait oil rose by USD 1.06 to USD 72.77 per barrel on Monday, compared to USD 71.71 pb last Friday, said the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on

Tuesday.

The prices of the Brent crude and West Texas Intermediate at global markets rose by 67 cents each to reach USD 68.15 per barrel and USD 64.68 pb.

# Business

Platinum backing for Kuwait’s top real estate event

## Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait sponsors Baiti Expo 2025

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) has announced its platinum sponsorship of the fifth edition of Baiti Expo, the largest event in the construction and building sector, taking place at The Arena Kuwait from 3 to 6 September 2025.

The exhibition is held under the patronage and presence of Abdullahif Hamed Hamad Al-Meshari, Minister of State for Housing Affairs.

This sponsorship reaffirms ABK’s commitment to strengthening its presence in the real estate sector while providing clients with tailored financing solutions at the highest standards.

ABK’s participation underscores its dedication to engaging with customers and keeping pace with developments in Kuwait’s real estate market, particularly with the upcoming launch of new housing projects by relevant authorities.

On this occasion, Mohammad AlQattan, Chief Consumer Officer at ABK, said, “Our sponsorship of the Baiti Exhibition enhances our presence in the Kuwaiti market and reflects our mission to offer exclusive promotions and diverse financing solutions.

“These cater to customers who are building their dream homes, renovating their residences, or establishing business premises. We aim to serve them in an innovative way that mirrors our leading position in the local banking sector.”

AlQattan added that ABK’s participation aligns with the Bank’s strategy to continually elevate its banking services and solutions to suit the modern lifestyle of its customers.

He noted that the exhibition is one of Kuwait’s most significant events, attracting citizens and property owners seeking the latest in construction



Mohammad AlQattan, Chief Consumer Officer

■ **AlQattan:** This sponsorship comes at a time when the real estate sector is witnessing robust activity and during the anticipated rollout of new housing cities and land plot distributions

and design.

He further explained that ABK’s sponsorship comes at a time when the real estate sector is witnessing robust activity, with strong citizen demand and the anticipated rollout of new housing cities and land plot distributions by the Public Authority for Housing Welfare.

As part of its involvement, ABK will collaborate with various partners to offer clients comprehensive real estate solutions.

These include expert consultations, exclusive discounts on home furnishing and setup, and guidance on the requirements for obtaining housing loans and other financing solutions, fully compliant with the Central Bank of Kuwait’s regulations.

AlQattan emphasized the significance of the exhibition, which brings together more than 80 companies in

the construction and building sector under one roof, saving customers time and effort while giving them direct access to all stakeholders in the construction process.

Visitors to ABK’s booth will be introduced to the Bank’s diverse range of services and solutions that meet the aspirations of all customer segments in the Kuwaiti market.

The Bank’s dedicated team will be ready to address inquiries, provide expert advice, and ensure an exceptional client experience thus positioning ABK as the ideal banking partner for all financial and real estate needs.

ABK’s sponsorship further highlights its pioneering and responsible role in supporting Kuwait’s economic development, contributing to the success of national events and showcasing the ongoing progress across multiple sectors in the country.

### Branches closed Sept 4–6, resume Sept 7

## ABK extends greetings on Prophet’s birthday

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) extends its greetings to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khalid Al-Sabah as well as the government, people, and residents of Kuwait on the occasion of the Prophet’s birthday (PBUH), hoping it bestows an abundance of



blessings.

ABK disclosed that its branches will be closed on Thursday, 4 September 2025 to resume operations on Sunday, 7 September 2025. Dur-

ing this time, ABK’s digital branch in Al Khiran Mall will be functional to service customers from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

The Bank has also confirmed its full operational readiness to serve customers 24/7 via its various digital platforms throughout the holiday. This includes Online Banking via eahli.com, Mobile Banking through the ABK app, as well as the Bank’s call center Ahlan Ahli 1 899 899.

Offering customers a wide range of financing solutions

## KFH launches Back-to-School campaign

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2: In line with its commitment to offering the best financing solutions for its customers, Kuwait Finance House has launched its Back-to-School campaign, titled “KFH Auto | Various Financing Solutions”. Running across all KFH showrooms, the campaign will continue until the end of September.

KFH’s Back to School campaign provides customers with a wide array of services and benefits for the new school year. The campaign features diverse financing options for purchasing or leasing new or used cars, in addition to car financing abroad in the USA, Egypt, Jordan, and Turkey. It also includes solutions for customers seeking to finance their cars against cash collaterals.

In cooperation with authorized agents, KFH provides several advantages through the campaign to meet customer needs, covering a selected and diversified range of luxury and economy cars, in addition to competitive prices under the Leasing with Maintenance service and on used cars.

Among the main services highlighted in the campaign is the Trust Sale Service, allowing customers to sell their cars at KFH Auto showrooms. Under this service, customers can authorize KFH to sell their cars through its widespread showrooms and various sales channels across Kuwait.

Additionally, KFH provides a car valuation service, one of its core auto services that allows cus-



Campaign flyer

tomers to sell their cars without the need to make a new purchase.

Customers opting for finance against collaterals can enjoy flexible repayment terms extending to 10 years with competitive profits and diverse payment schemes. The financing is offered against a full collateral covering the total indebtedness and secured by booking the customer’s fixed deposits. This product caters to retail customers’ commercial needs, whether for cars, boats, or motorcycles, with a financing limit determined by the deposit value. The service provides other advantages including continuous deposit profits throughout the credit period, expedited processing and competitive rates.

While the campaign contributes to the enhancement of the local market and the businesses of agents and suppliers, it also provides customers with solutions that

meet their aspirations and needs. This reflects KFH’s ongoing efforts to deliver the best services, strengthen its extensive customer base, attract new customers, grow its market share, and reinforce its role as a key contributor to driving economic growth.

It is worth noting that KFH plays a prominent role in the local retail market by supporting and stimulating trade activity through its strong partnerships with suppliers and dealerships across a wide range of products. The Bank also offers a diverse portfolio of financing programs and initiatives designed to meet the evolving needs and aspirations of its customers. This approach reflects the purpose upon which KFH’s financing activities were established, seeking to achieve leadership in areas that deliver value and benefits to both merchants and consumers alike.

### All-Share Index gains 31.5 points

## Boursa Kuwait closes higher

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait ended Tuesday’s trading session in positive territory, with the all-share index gaining 31.50 points, or 0.37 percent, to settle at 8,541.80 points. A total of 264 million shares changed hands through 18,714 transactions, with a trading value of KD 67.4 million (USD 205.5 million).

The main market index advanced 39.96 points, or 0.51 percent, closing at 7,866.46 points. Trading on this market segment involved 158 million shares across 11,395 deals, worth KD 28.8 million (USD

87.8 million).

The premier market index also posted gains, rising 30.94 points, or 0.34 percent, to finish at 9,132.31 points. Around 105.9 million shares were traded in 7,319 transactions, with a total value of KD 38.5 million (USD 117.4 million).

Meanwhile, the Main 50 Index recorded a modest rise of 17.56 points, or 0.22 percent, closing at 8,031.01 points. The index saw 119 million shares traded across 6,435 transactions, with a turnover of KD 22.6 million (USD 68.9 million).

## Green finance tops agenda at the World Green Economy Summit '25

DUBAI, Sept 2, (BUSINESS WIRE): In light of escalating environmental challenges and the global push to achieve net-zero goals, the 11th World Green Economy Summit (WGES) continues to serve as a vital platform for decision-makers, investors and experts from around the world.

This year’s event comes at a critical time as rapid advances in artificial intelligence (AI) and data centres intersect with the urgent need to reshape the future of energy towards more sustainable and efficient alternatives.

Sessions will explore financial mechanisms driving the green transition, address challenges in scaling up renewable energy and explore avenues for climate finance.

Held under the patronage of HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, WGES is organised by the Dubai Supreme Council of Energy, Dubai Electricity and Water Authority (DEWA) and the World Green Economy Organization (WGEO).

Each year, the summit addresses key topics related to mobilising global efforts to accelerate the shift towards a green economy, in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030. The 2025 summit,

themed ‘Innovating for Impact: Accelerating the Future of the Green Economy’, will run on 1-2 October at Dubai World Trade Centre.

Global investments in clean technologies, including renewable energy, grids and storage, are projected to exceed USD2.2 trillion in 2025, double the investment in fossil fuels, within a total global investment of USD3.3 trillion.

However, developing countries continue to face a significant financing gap, requiring an increase in annual clean energy investments from USD270 billion to approximately USD1.6 trillion by the early 2030s. This underscores the need for innovative international co-ordination to reduce capital costs and mitigate investment risks.

The World Green Economy Summit reflects our commitment to supporting global efforts to achieve the transition to a comprehensive and sustainable green economy, based on innovation and effective partnerships, supporting Dubai’s position as a global hub for climate action.

WGES 2025 will focus on removing barriers to investment-ready green projects and enhancing risk-sharing mechanisms, such as guarantees from international financial institutions, to attract greater capital flows into sustainable initiatives.

# Kuwait’s real estate deals dip 11% in Aug

Market value rises 6%

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

## KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2: The real estate market in the country witnessed a remarkable shift in trading activity in August.

Residential and investment properties experienced a slowdown, while the commercial sector recorded a substantial leap, achieving a surge in both the number and value of transactions. This was reflected in the overall market performance, which witnessed fewer transactions but higher values.

The residential sector continued its slight decline under price pressures and weakened demand, registering a seven percent drop in both the number and value of transactions.

Meanwhile, the investment sector lost significant momentum during the month, contrary to expectations.

Despite the resumption of visitor visas, trading activity in the investment sector fell by 33 percent in the number of transactions and 48 percent in value, suggesting that investors are waiting for greater clarity in housing and rental policies.

In contrast, the commercial sector attracted the most attention, supported by major deals that propelled its growth by 139 percent in the number of transactions and 129 percent in value. This positioned the commercial sector as the main driver of the real estate market during the month.

The newspaper obtained a copy of the monthly statistical report on real estate transactions issued by the Real Estate Registration and Documentation departments in

the Ministry of Justice.

The report revealed that the total value of transactions in August reached around KD475 million for 514 transactions, compared to KD448.8 million for 579 transactions in July. This indicates a decline of 11 percent in the number of transactions and six percent increase in value.

Residential property trading recorded a drop in August, with transactions falling from 377 deals worth KD143 million in July to 351 deals worth KD133 million in August—down by about seven percent in both number and value.

Investment property trading showed a steep decline, with the number of transactions falling from 177 deals worth KD189 million in July to 118 deals worth KD99 million in August—a drop of around 33 percent in transactions and 48 percent in value.

This performance entails the continuation of sluggish demand for investment properties, despite the easing of entry restrictions through visitor visas.

On the other hand, the commercial sector stood out as the ‘biggest gainer’, surging from 18 deals worth KD105 million in July to 43 deals worth KD240 million in August.

This is a growth of 139 percent in the number of deals and 129 percent in value, firmly establishing the sector as the market’s primary driver for August, and potentially for the coming months amid sustained economic growth.

However, the crafts real estate sector witnessed a marked decline, dropping from four deals worth KD 5.2 million in July to just one deal worth KD 1.5 million in August — 75 percent decrease in number and 71 percent decline in value.

Nevertheless, despite the overall drop in number and value, the average deal size increased by around 15 percent, indicating that the single deal executed in August was larger than the average deal recorded in July.

### Bilateral trade target of \$100 bln by 2030

## India, UAE discuss economic partnership

NEW DELHI, Sept 2, (KUNA): Indian authorities said on Monday that India and the UAE discussed ways of deepening Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement between the two countries.

A statement from the Indian Ministry of Commerce and Industry said that Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal held a bilateral meeting in Mumbai with Minister of Foreign Trade of the UAE Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi with the objective of further deepening the India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement.

Both the sides underlined the importance of working closely in the current global scenario to strengthen the bilateral economic partnership. The Indian minister highlighted the resilience and strengths of the Indian economy. Both the sides agreed to work with diverse partners for mutual benefit.

They reviewed the progress made under Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement and reaffirmed the shared vision of expanding bilateral trade towards the target of USD 100 billion non-oil and non-precious metals trade by 2030.

Collaboration in emerging sectors such as renewable energy, digital infrastructure, supply chain resilience, and healthcare also came up for discussion.

“The Indian side welcomed the formation of the Emirates Drug Establishment and its role in addressing concerns of Indian pharmaceutical companies,” the statement said.

Both ministers agreed to take up matters related to market access and regulatory issues for early resolution.

The Indian minister welcomed UAE’s growing investments in India’s infrastructure, logistics, and food processing sectors, and appreciated Thani’s leadership in advancing multilateral trade cooperation.

They noted the importance of initiatives such as the Local Currency Settlement System and Bharat Mart in the UAE as enablers of trade facilitation.

The meeting underscored the India-UAE partnership as a defining alliance of the 21st century, rooted in innovation, sustainability, and shared prosperity.

The visiting UAE minister stressed that despite global turbulence, the India-UAE partnership has emerged as a resilient driver of growth while noting that India, now the world’s fourth-largest economy and a technological as well as agricultural powerhouse, finds in the UAE a vital gateway to Africa, the Middle East and Europe.



Kuwait profits down 25% on Agility’s discontinued ops

# GCC Q2 profits drop 8.7% to \$56.7 bln on oil price slump

By KAMCO Invest

Aggregate net profits reported by companies listed on GCC exchanges witnessed a steep y-o-y decline of 8.7% during Q2-2025 to reach USD 56.7 Bn as compared to USD 62.1 Bn in Q2-2024. Net profits also declined sequentially as compared to Q1-2025 by 3.4%. The decline during Q2-2025 was mainly led by a sharp fall in crude oil prices that affected the bottom-line for energy companies in the region. Softer y-o-y global petrochemical prices also affected profitability of basic materials companies in the region. On the other hand, strong economic fundamentals and a resilient non-oil manufacturing sector helped to offset the impact of this decline.

At the country level, the y-o-y change in profitability was mixed with three exchanges reporting decline in net profits while aggregates for the remaining four countries showed growth. Saudi Arabia registered the biggest absolute fall of USD 6.3 Bn in net profits during the quarter that reached USD 33.04 Bn as compared to USD 39.4 Bn in Q2-2024. Kuwait was next with a profit decline of more than a quarter or USD 0.6 Bn to reach USD 1.65 Bn, mainly led by profit decline reported by Agility related to discontinued operations. Net profits for Dubai-listed companies also declined by 5.7% y-o-y or USD 0.4 Bn to reach USD 6.5 Bn during Q2-2025. On the other hand, companies listed in Abu Dhabi registered the biggest profit growth of USD 1.6 Bn reaching USD 10.3 Bn in Q2-2025 followed by Oman and Qatar with net profit growth of USD 1.0 Bn and USD 3.6 Bn.

In terms of sectors, a majority of the sectors saw higher y-o-y profits during Q2-2025. This included heavyweight sectors like F&B, Real Estate, Utilities, Telecom that reported healthy double-digit growth in profits during the quarter. Net profits reported by listed banks in the region also showed a strong double-digit growth of 10.3% to reach USD 16.6 Bn during Q2-2025. On the other hand, these gains were more than offset by a fall in profits for the Energy and Basic Materials sectors, in addition to Transportation (Agility), Capital Goods and Media & Entertainment sectors.

In terms of 1H-2025, aggregate net profits for GCC listed companies witnessed a much smaller y-o-y decline of 3.4% or USD 4.0 Bn to reach USD 115.4 Bn. The decline was led by fall in profits reported by Saudi Arabia and Kuwaiti companies while the rest of the country aggregates showed growth in profits. The aggregates for Oman and Abu Dhabi increased in double-digits whereas Qatar and Dubai registered profit growth of 2.3% and 2.4%, respectively.

Profits reported by listed banks in the GCC reached a new record high during Q2-2025 at USD 16.6 Bn backed by higher y-o-y profits registered in six out of the seven country aggregates in the region. Dubai was the only exchange with registered a 6.4% y-o-y fall in profits for the sector mainly led by fall in profits for Emirates NBD and Mashreq Bank due to higher non-interest expense and impairments charges booked during the quarter vs. reversals booked during Q2-2024. On the other hand, most of the other country aggregates showed double-digit growth in profits during the quarter. The increase in profits for the sector in Q2-2025 was driven by a 6.9% growth in net interest income while non interest income increase by over a quarter as compared to Q2-2024. This more than offset a 41.6% increase in impairments that reached USD 2.7 Bn in Q2-2025.

In the Energy sector, 16 out of 30 listed companies showed a y-o-y fall in profits during Q2-2025. The aggregate profit for the sector witnessed a y-o-y decline of 18.0% during Q2-2025 to reach USD 25.5 Bn as compared to USD 31.2 Bn during Q2-2024. This was also reflected in the 19.6% fall in average price for Brent crude oil during Q2-2025 reaching USD 68.1/b led by announcements made by OPEC to raise output as well as talks between US, Russia and Iran on sanctions. The decline was mainly led by fall in profits for Saudi Aramco by 19.4% that was further exacerbated by lower profits reported by Abu Dhabi National Energy (Taqa) that fell by almost a third due to higher pass through revenue for transmission and distribution. Net profits for Saudi Aramco declined due to fall in crude oil prices as well as lower refined and chemical product prices.

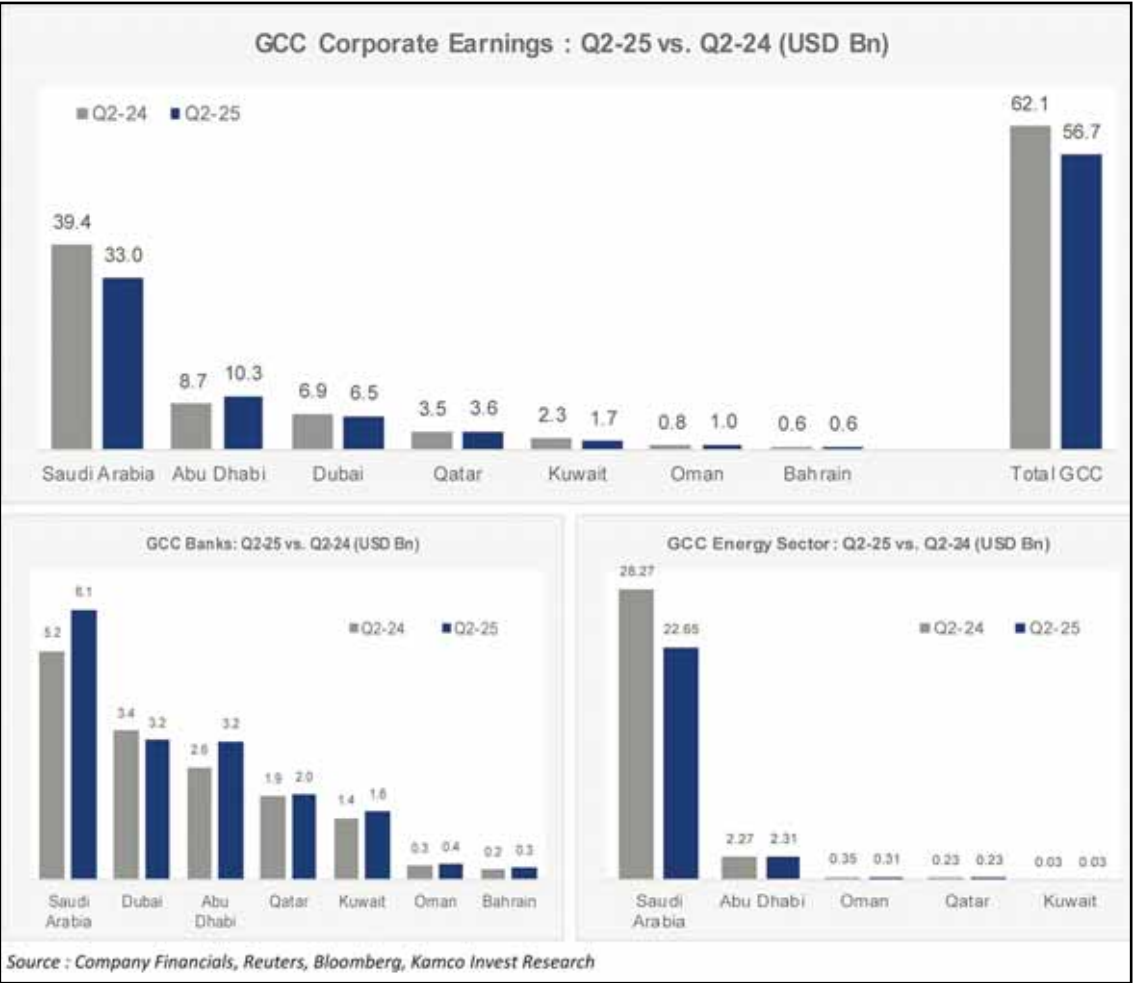
## Kuwait

Aggregate net profits for Boursa Kuwait listed companies witnessed a steep decline of 26.9% to reach USD 1.7 Bn in Q2 -2025 against USD 2.3 Bn in Q2-2024. Among the top sectors of the exchange, the Banking and the Telecom sectors reported an increase in profitability during the quarter. On the other hand, the decline came primarily from the steep drop in profits for the Transportation sector after Agility PWC reported a net loss of USD 922.3 Mn during Q2-2025 due to loss from discontinued operations against a profit of USD 19.6 Mn in Q2-2024. In terms of 1H-2025 earnings performance, net profits declined by 13.5% to reach USD 4.0 Bn as compared to USD 4.7 Bn during 1H-2024. Earnings growth during the 1H-2025 was broad-based and was mainly driven by Banks, Telecommunication Services, and Diversified Financials companies. It is noteworthy that out of the eighteen sectors on Boursa Kuwait, thirteen have witnessed a y-o-y increase in profits during 1H-2025 while the remaining five sectors witnessed declines. Transportation and Real estate sectors are the prominent decliners during 1H-2025. In the Banking sector, Kuwaiti listed banks reported net profits of USD 2.9 Bn for 1H-2025, as compared to USD 2.8 Bn in 1H-2024, up by 4.8%.

Quarterly net profits for listed banks in Kuwait increased by 10.0% y-o-y to reach USD 1.56 Bn as compared to USD 1.42 Bn in Q2-2024. The profit growth was led by higher total banking revenue that increased by 5.7% backed by 2.3% increase in net interest income and 15.3% increase in non-interest income. Moreover, instead of an impairment charge, there was a reversal of impairment during the quarter aggregating to USD 44.0 Mn in Q2-2025 as compared to an impairments charge of USD 176.3 Mn in Q2-2024 after three out of the nine listed banks reported impairment reversals during the quarter. NNBK reported a net profit of USD 592.5 Mn, up by 24.6% vs. a profit of USD 475.5 Mn in Q2-2024 mainly led by higher net operating income which increased by 5.7% to USD 303.4 Mn. Net profits for Warba Bank reached USD 49.7 Mn during Q2-2025, up by 229.3% compared to USD 15.1 Mn from Q2-2024 mainly due to the increase in the investment income and net fees and commission income. Meanwhile, net profits reported by KFH declined to reach USD 569.2 Mn in Q2-2025 from USD 581.4 Mn Q2-2024 down by 2.1%.

The Diversified Financials sector recorded a net profit of USD 304.6 Mn for Q2-2025 against USD 129.7 Mn for Q2-2024. Net profits for Asiya Capital Investment Co. came in at USD 29.7 Mn for Q2-2025 compared to a loss of USD 3.5 Mn for Q2-2024 supported by net gain on financial assets at fair value through profit or loss. Egypt Kuwait Holding Co. posted a net profit of USD 50.0 Mn in Q2-2025 vs USD 20.0 Mn in Q2-2024 led by the increase of the net operating profit in addition to the increase in operating revenue.

Net Profits for the Telecom sector increased by 42.3% y-o-y to reach USD 341.4 Mn for Q2-2025 compared to USD 239.9 Mn for Q2-2024. All the constituent stocks reported net profit gains with Zain Group leading with a gain of 39.7%. Zain Group reported a net profit of USD 237.8 Mn during Q2-2025 as compared to a profit of USD 170.2 Mn during Q2-2024 led by higher revenue which grew by 15% y-o-y, driven by strong performance across main operations including Sudan (+112%), Iraq (+13%), Bahrain (+8%), Jordan (+7%), and KSA (+6%). Revenue growth was driven by increasing customer base which soared 7% to reach KWD 50.9 Mn, mainly due to continual network restoration in Sudan, improved market access in Iraq as well as strong growth in other markets. Additionally, new business verticals contributed to the revenue growth. Ooredoo also registered strong net profit growth during Q2-2025 that reached USD 76.6 Mn compared to USD 43.5 Mn in Q2-2024, up by 76.1%. The telecom operator recorded revenues of USD 618.4 Mn up by 7%, driven by an increase in strong operational performance in Algeria, Tunisia and Kuwait. EBITDA expanded significantly by 20% y-o-y to USD 258.5 Mn. The customer base increased by 1.3% y-o-y to end Q2-2025 with 2.9 Mn customers. Similarly, STC Kuwait posted a net profit of USD 27.0 Mn for Q2-2025 against a profit of USD



26.2 Mn, up by 3.0%, driven by a 4.9% increase in revenues amounting to USD 285.5 Mn.

## Saudi Arabia

Aggregate net profits for Saudi Arabian listed companies witnessed a decline of 16.1% y-o-y to reach USD 33.0 Bn in Q2-2025 against USD 39.4 Bn in Q2-2024. The key sectors on the exchange including Banks, Real Estate, Telecom reported a strong y-o-y growth in profitability during the quarter, whereas a fall in profits for the Energy, Materials, and Transportation sectors more than offset the growth in profits. In terms of 1H-2025 earnings performance, aggregate net profits declined by 8.6% to reach USD 69.3 Bn as compared to USD 75.8 Bn during 1H-2024. The Energy sector reported the biggest drop in net profits with aggregate sector profit of USD 48.2 Bn as compared to USD 55.7 Bn during 1H-2024, resulting in a y-o-y decline of USD 7.5 Bn or 13.5%. The Materials sector was next to report a net profit decline that reached USD 0.5 Mn in 1H-2025 against a profit of USD 2.2 Bn during 1H-2024, down by 77.6%. Transportation, Insurance , Diversified Financials were some of the other sectors that reported y-o-y profit declines during 1H-2025. On the other hand, Banks, Real Estate and Telecom sectors reported healthy growth in profits during the 1H-2025, partially offsetting the overall decline.

The Banking sector outperformed other sectors as the biggest contributor to net profits during the period by registering a net profit of USD 6.1 Bn in Q2-2025 vs. USD 5.2 Bn in Q2-2024, up by 17.8%. All the listed banks reported a gain in net profits during Q2-2025. Al-Rajhi Bank reported higher profits that reached USD 1.6 Bn in Q2-2025 vs USD 1.3 Bn a year earlier, mainly led by 24.7% y-o-y rise in net financing and investment income. Profits for Saudi National Bank surged 17.4% to reach USD 1.6 Bn for Q2-2025 against a profit of USD 1.4 Bn for Q2-2024 primarily driven by an increase in the fee income which increased 20.6%. Banque Saudi Fransi reported a 24.3% increase in the net profit that reached USD 374.1 Mn in Q2-2025 compared to USD 300.9 Mn in Q2-2024 driven by a 3.7% rise in gross special commission income and a 14.3% growth in gross operating income. Meanwhile, Riyad Bank reported 11.1% increase in profits that reached USD 692.3 Mn in Q2-2025 from USD 623.0 Mn in Q2-2024.

Net profits for the Telecom sector grew 17.5% y-o-y to USD 1.3 Bn in Q2-2025 as compared to USD 1.1 Bn during Q2-2024. Profits for STC increased by 15.8% y-o-y to reach USD 1.0 Bn in Q2-2025 compared to USD 880.6 Mn in Q2-2024 led by higher revenues along with lower operating expenses. STC announced a distribution of SAR 0.55 per share for the 2Q-2025. Mobily registered a net profit of USD 221.3 Mn for Q2-2025 compared to USD 176.2 Mn in Q2-2024. The increase was driven by an 8.1% y-o-y increase in all revenue streams led by growth in the subscriber base.

Quarterly net profits in the Energy sector declined by 19.9% y-o-y to USD 22.6 Bn down from USD 28.3 Mn during Q2-2024. Within the sector, Saudi Aramco reported a 19.3% y-o-y decline in profits during Q2-2025 primarily led by lower revenues primarily due to lower crude oil selling prices and weaker prices for refined and chemical products. The decline was partially offset by higher volume for refined and chemical products. On the other hand, net profits for Bahri improved by 21.0% during the quarter to reach USD 26.6 Mn vs. 22.0 Mn in Q2-2024 led by the higher sales supported by the growth in the number of service stations and improved transportation rates.

In the Utilities sector, Saudi Electricity Co. reported net profits of USD 815.3 Mn in Q2-2025 as compared to USD 575.3 Mn in Q2-2024, up by 41.7%. In Q2-2025, the company's revenue rose 23.9% y-o-y to USD 1.62 Bn, supported by growth in the regulated asset base of its electricity network and higher electricity production revenues driven by rising energy demand. Operating profit also rose by 21% to USD 1.8 Bn. Meanwhile, ACWA Power Co. reported a net profit of USD 128.5 Mn for Q2-2025, down by 23.6% from USD 168.1 Mn in Q2-2024. The decline in the net profit is primarily due to an impairment charge at one of its affiliated companies.

## Dubai

Net profits of Dubai-listed companies declined by 5.7% y-o-y to USD 6.5 Bn in Q2-2025 as compared to USD 6.9 Bn in Q2-2024. The earnings contraction during the quarter was primarily driven by lower aggregate net profits from the Banks and Capital Goods sectors, with these two sectors together accounting for 50.7% of the total profits on the exchange during the quarter. It is noteworthy that out of the thirteen sectors on the Dubai Stock Exchange, eleven reported y-o-y profit increases during Q2-2025, while the remaining two sectors posted declines. For 1H-2025, aggregate net profits increased by 2.4% y-o-y to reach USD 12.6 Bn versus USD 12.3 Bn in 1H-2024.

The Banking sector's total net profits dropped 6.4% y-o-y in Q2-2025 to USD 3.2 Bn compared to USD 3.4 Bn in Q2-2024. For 1H-2025, profits for the sector decreased by 2.8% y-o-y to USD 6.4 Bn versus USD 6.6 Bn in 1H-2024. The decline in sector earnings was mainly attributable to Emirates NBD, which reported a 9.0% y-o-y decline in net profit of USD 3.4 Bn for 1H-2025. The y-o-y decline in quarterly net profits for the bank was mainly led by impairment charge during Q2-2025 as compared to a reversal of impairment during Q2-2024. In addition, higher non-interest expenses also affected the bottom-line performance for the bank. On the other hand, Commercial Bank of Dubai delivered a 15.4% y-o-y increase in net profits, reaching USD 236.1 Mn in Q2-2025 versus USD 204.6 Mn in Q2-2024. The bank's performance was underscored by total assets surpassing AED 150 Bn (USD 40.8 Bn) for the first time in its history, reflecting momentum and effective strategic execution.

In the Real Estate sector, net profits surged 40.8% y-o-y to USD 1.6 Bn in Q2-2025 compared to USD 1.1 Bn in Q2-2024. Similarly, aggregate profits for the sector rose 36.6% y-o-y to USD 3.2 Bn in 1H-2025 versus USD 2.4 Bn in 1H-

2024. Emaar Properties posted the largest net profits within the sector, reaching USD 917.8 Mn in Q2-2025 compared to USD 658.7 Mn in Q2-2024. The growth was primarily driven by higher property sales that reached a record at AED 46 Bn (USD 12.5 Bn) in 1H-2025, up 46% y-o-y. Additionally, Tecom Group's aggregate net profits increased 21.3% y-o-y to USD 102.5 Mn in Q2-2025 compared with USD 84.5 Mn in Q2-2024.

Total net earnings for the Utilities sector rose by 19.4% y-o-y in Q2-2025 to USD 727.8 Mn against USD 609.4 Mn in Q2-2024. All of the three constituent companies in the sector reported earnings growth. Dewa posted a 21.4% y-o-y increase in profits that reached USD 614.7 Mn, while Emirates Central Cooling Systems Corp. reported a 15.3% y-o-y increase to reach USD 69.4 Mn during the same period. Net profits for Tabreed increased by 2.2% y-o-y to reach USD 43.6 Mn in Q2-2025 mainly led by higher revenues during the quarter.

## Abu Dhabi

Listed companies in Abu Dhabi witnessed an 18.3% y-o-y increase in total net profits during Q2-2025, reaching USD 10.3 Bn compared to USD 8.7 Bn in Q2-2024. Aggregate net profits also rose by 3.4% y-o-y during 1H-2025, amounting to USD 19.3 Bn versus USD 16.9 Bn in 1H-2024. The Banking sector in Abu Dhabi reported a strong improvement in net profits with aggregate earnings of USD 3.2 Bn in Q2-2025 against USD 2.6 Bn in Q2-2024, reflecting a y-o-y growth of USD 592.5 Mn or 23.1%. The Energy sector posted the second-largest net earnings on the exchange in Q2-2025, recording a 1.9% y-o-y increase in total profits to USD 2.31 Bn as compared to USD 2.3 Bn during Q2-2024. The Food, Beverage & Tobacco sector along with the Telecommunication sector were among the other significant industries that achieved y-o-y aggregate earnings growth during Q2-2025, thereby contributing positively to the overall expansion in total exchange-wide profits during the period.

The Banking sector delivered broad-based earnings growth across all listed banks. First Abu Dhabi Bank led the performance by reporting the largest net profits in Q2-2025 after a 29.4% y-o-y increase, reaching USD 1.5 Bn against USD 1.1 Bn in Q2-2024. In terms of half-year performance, FAB's net earnings advanced by 26.5% to USD 2.9 Bn compared to USD 2.3 Bn in 1H-2024. The bank's results were mainly driven by higher non-interest income and lower impairments during the quarter. FAB's Investment Banking & Markets division recorded a 17% y-o-y revenue increase to AED 6.1 Bn (USD 1.7 Bn) in 1H-2025, while both Wholesale Banking and the Personal, Business, Wealth & Privileged Client Banking Group achieved revenue growth of 12% each during the period. Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank reported the second-largest net earnings in the Banking sector during Q2-2025, at USD 699.2 Mn versus USD 631.0 Mn in Q2-2024. ADCB's profit growth was primarily driven by a 12% increase in net interest income and a 44% rise in non-interest income. Similarly, Abu Dhabi Islamic Bank recorded 12.3% y-o-y growth in Q2-2025 net profits, reaching USD 456.5 Mn compared with USD 406.5 Mn in Q2-2024.

Within the Energy sector, Q2-2025 net profits grew by USD 43.5 Mn y-o-y to reach USD 2.31 Bn compared with USD 2.27 Bn in Q2-2024, supported by earnings growth in two constituent companies. Total 1H-2025 net profits for the Energy sector improved by 4.5% y-o-y, reaching USD 4.6 Bn compared to USD 4.4 Bn in 1H-2024. The sector's performance was largely underpinned by ADNOC Gas, which reported USD 1.4 Bn in net earnings during Q2-2025 versus USD 1.2 Bn in Q2-2024, mainly supported by higher y-o-y revenues. ADNOC's strong results were attributed to its well-diversified product portfolio, especially within the local gas market. The company also benefitted from higher volumes at favorable prices, both domestically in the gas market and internationally in the LNG export market. ADNOC Drilling also posted a 19.0% y-o-y increase in earnings, reaching USD 351.0 Mn during the same period. Meanwhile, Abu Dhabi National Energy Company reported an 18.2% y-o-y decline in Q2-2025 net profits to USD 443.0 Mn versus USD 658.3 Mn in Q2-2024. The decline was led by higher pass-through revenue for transmission and distribution.

Aggregate Q2-2025 net earnings for the Food, Beverage & Tobacco sector rose 65.8% y-o-y to USD 1.1 Bn versus USD 648.4 Mn in Q2-2024. Net profits for IHC jumped 71.6% in Q2-2025 to USD 1.1 Bn, representing more than 99% of the sector's profits during the quarter. IHC's higher profit was supported by growth in revenues across its core segments including Real Estate & Construction (USD 6.2 Bn) and Marine & Dredging (USD 3.8 Bn).

## Qatar

Total earnings for Qatari-listed companies witnessed a gain of 3.8% during Q2-2025 to reach USD 3.6 Bn as compared to USD 3.5 Bn in Q2-2024. The surge in earnings was primarily driven by earnings growth in the Banking, Real Estate and Food, Beverage & Tobacco sectors. However, a decline in profits for Capital Goods, Food & Staples Retailing and Insurance sectors partially offset the overall growth in net profits. In terms of 1H-2025 earnings performance, net profits increased by 2.3% to reach USD 7.2 Bn as compared to USD 7.0 Bn during 1H-2024. Earnings growth during the 1H-2025 was broad-based and was mainly driven by Banks, Capital Goods, and Telecommunication Services.

Qatar's Banking sector reported a profit growth of 2.0% in Q2-2025 that reached USD 2.0 Bn accounting for 54.2% of the overall exchange profits during the quarter. QNB's net profit reached USD 1.1 Bn in Q2-2025, up 3.3% compared to USD 1.0 Bn in Q2-2024, driven by higher operating income which increased 11.2% to reach USD 10.6 Bn. The bank reported a 5.0% increase in customer deposits while loans and advances increased by 9.4% to reach USD 263.6 Bn. Meanwhile, QIB's net profit surged 7.3% in Q2-2025 to reach USD 326.6 Mn vs USD 304.5 Mn in Q2-2024. The bank reported higher net interest income and a decline in

quarterly impairments during Q2-2025.

The bank's board recommended a cash dividend of 40% of nominal share value (QAR 0.40 per share) for H2-2025. Net profits for Masraf Al Rayan increased by 8.1% to USD 113.6 Mn in Q2-2025 from USD 105.1 Mn in Q2-2024 mainly led by an increase in income from investing activities which was up by 10.5% in addition to increase in the net fee and commission income. On the other hand, net profit for the Commercial Bank of Qatar decreased by 20.7% during Q2-2025 to USD 167.4 Mn compared to USD 211.0 Mn in Q2-2024. The group's result was affected by the Alternatif Bank, which reported a loss of QAR 107.1 Mn, due to the impact of hyperinflationary accounting and market volatility. In the Telecom sector, Ooredoo reported net profits of USD 271.1 Mn in Q2-2025 as compared to USD 262.9 Mn in Q2-2024, up by 3.1%. The Telco's revenue grew by 6% y-o-y to USD 1.67 Bn for Q2-2025 from USD 1.6 Bn in Q2-2024 driven by sustained growth in Iraq, Algeria, Kuwait. Quarterly EBITDA increased by 2% to USD 705.3 Mn, while EBITDA margin remained 43%. Vodafone Qatar reported a net profit of USD 45.6 Mn for Q2-2025, representing an increase of 16.3% y-o-y.

Total revenue for the telco increased by 12.2% y-o-y to reach USD 246.1 Mn. Service revenue also grew by 4.4% supported by growth from all the segments. EBITDA increased 11.8% following higher service revenue and stable costs. The total number of mobile customers stood at 2.1 Mn up by 1.6%.

Net profits for the Energy sector improved marginally by 0.2% y-o-y to reach USD 235.0 Mn supported by higher profits reported by Qatar Gas Transport Co. (Nakilat). The company posted a net profit increase of 4.2% to reach USD 117.0 Mn in Q2-2025 vs USD 112.3 Mn in Q2-2024 mainly led by lower total expenses that were further supported by better topline growth.

In the Real Estate Sector, aggregate net earnings soared by 72.3% in Q2-2025 to reach USD 187.0 Mn against USD 108.5 Mn in Q2-2024. Ezdan Holding Group posted the biggest net profits in the sector that reached USD 74.1 Mn, up by 233.1% as compared to the corresponding period of the previous year. The profit growth was achieved by a 2.5% increase in rental income in addition to the gain on sale of investment property. Meanwhile, Mazaya Qatar Real Estate Development Co. returned to profitability of USD 2.8 Mn in Q2-2025 after reporting losses in the same period last year.

## Bahrain

Total Q2-2025 net profits for Bahrain-listed companies increased marginally by 0.5% y-o-y to reach USD 567.1 Mn after ten of its fourteen sectors reported y-o-y growth, including two of its most influential sectors, Banking and Insurance. On a semiannual basis, net earnings for the broader market rose by 6.9% y-o-y to USD 1.13 Bn in 1H-2025 versus USD 1.06 Bn in 1H-2024, reflecting resilience across several key industries.

The Banking Sector delivered the largest contribution to quarterly growth. Q2-2025 net profits for the sector advanced 13.5% y-o-y, reaching USD 280.4 Mn compared to USD 247.0 Mn in Q2-2024. For 1H-2025, sector earnings jumped 25.3% y-o-y to USD 668.9 Mn against USD 533.8 Mn in 1H-2024. The strong performance was underpinned by notable increase in profits for Al Salam Bank. The bank reported a 31.3% y-o-y surge in Q2-2025 net profits to USD 49.8 Mn versus USD 37.9 Mn in Q2-2024, driven mainly by the robust performance of its core banking activities. Similarly, National Bank of Bahrain posted a 1.5% y-o-y rise in net profits to USD 51.4 Mn in Q2-2025 from USD 50.7 Mn a year earlier, supported by diversified revenue streams including 45% growth in fee-based income, client-driven activity gains, and reduced provisioning requirements. Net profits for ABC increased marginally during Q2-2025 backed by higher net interest income and lower provisions that were offset by higher operating costs.

Net profits for the Insurance sector registered a sharp surge of over 6x to reach USD 95.8 Mn in Q2-2025 compared with USD 15.7 Mn in Q2-2024. On a 1H-2025 basis, sector profits increased by 184.6% y-o-y to USD 107.8 Mn against USD 37.9 Mn. The increase primarily driven by Bahrain National Holding Co., which reported Q2-2025 net earnings of USD 79.0 Mn vs. USD 2.83 Mn in Q2-2024, attributed mainly to the firm's exit from two subsidiaries.

Conversely, weaker performance was observed in the Materials and Telecom sectors. The Materials Sector, represented solely by Aluminum Bahrain, posted a 64.2% y-o-y decline in net profit to USD 65.1 Mn, pressured by elevated raw material costs, particularly alumina. However, Alba maintained stable revenue streams and resilient value-added sales despite the headwinds. Meanwhile, the Telecom sector saw profits decline 6.4% y-o-y to USD 49.1 Mn, reflecting softer sectoral earnings during the quarter.

The Diversified Financials sector recorded a 6.5% y-o-y increase in aggregate net profits during Q2-2025, reaching USD 43.1 Mn compared with USD 40.5 Mn in Q2-2024. For 1H-2025, sector-wide net earnings stood at USD 77.6 Mn versus USD 75.5 Mn in 1H-2024. GFH Financial Group was the primary contributor to the sector's overall earnings growth during both periods. GFH's Q2-2025 net profits rose 10.3% y-o-y to USD 37.1 Mn against USD 33.6 Mn in Q2-2024, reflecting stronger performance across its investment and banking activities.

## Oman

Total net profits for listed companies in Oman increased by 21.7% y-o-y to USD 1.0 Bn in Q2-2025 compared with USD 847.6 Mn in the same quarter in 2024. For the first half of the year, total net earnings remained stable at USD 1.8 Bn. The net earnings growth was concentrated in the Banking and Utilities sectors, even as ten out of fourteen sectors on the exchange reported y-o-y profit increases during Q2-2025.

Total Q2-2025 earnings of the Banking Sector, the largest sector in the exchange by market cap, grew by 10.5% to USD 362.8 Mn from USD 328.3 Mn in Q2-2024. For 1H-2025, total net profits for the Banking Sector increased by 7.8% y-o-y to USD 702.8 Mn compared with USD 651.8 Mn. Bank Muscat recorded the highest net earnings among banks in Q2-2025 at USD 174.7 Mn, up from USD 150.3 Mn in Q2-2024. Sohar Bank followed with the second-largest net profits at USD 64.1 Mn vs USD 65.3 Mn in Q2-2024. Bank Muscat's strong net earnings were driven by higher net interest income from conventional banking and net income from Islamic Financing, which stood at OMR 206.44 Mn for the first six months of 2025, compared to OMR 190.63 Mn for the same period in 2024, reflecting an increase of 8.3%.

Aggregate net profits for the Utilities Sector rose by 53.8% y-o-y to USD 151.7 Mn from USD 98.6 Mn in Q2-2024. For 1H-2025, total net profits improved 56.3% y-o-y to USD 149.3 Mn from USD 95.6 Mn in 1H-2024. Sohar Power rebounded from a USD 1.9 Mn loss in Q2-2024 to USD 52.1 Mn in Q2-2025, supporting the sector's overall earnings growth during the two periods. The return to profitability was mainly due to the commencement of new PPA revenue and debt write-offs following the debt restructuring agreement. Conversely, Q2-2025 net earnings of Phoenix Power Co. declined by 15.5% y-o-y to USD 32.2 Mn from USD 38.1 Mn in Q2-2024.

Total net profits for the Telecom Sector increased by 22.4% to USD 54.3 Mn in Q2-2025, compared with USD 44.4 Mn in Q2-2024. Q2-2025 net profit for Omantel reached USD 49.9 Mn versus USD 38.8 Mn in Q2-2024. For 1H-2025, Omantel's net earnings rose 25.4% y-o-y to USD 90.6 Mn from USD 72.3 Mn in the corresponding period of 2024. The earnings growth was mainly supported by a substantial increase in telco revenue of OMR 14.3 Mn, driven by strong performance across multiple segments.

Telco revenue growth was underpinned by increases in Fixed revenue by OMR 2.4 Mn, Device revenue by OMR 6.1 Mn, and Wholesale revenue by OMR 5.8 Mn. On the other hand, Ooredoo Oman posted a 39.9% y-o-y decline in Q2-2025 net profits, falling to USD 4.3 Mn from USD 7.2 Mn in Q2-2024. The decline was mainly attributed to reduced revenue, partly offset by lower operating expenses along with reduced depreciation and amortization costs.



Proposed cuts threaten Appalachian & rural housing

Trump pushes to ax HOME affordable housing program

WASHINGTON, Sept 2, (AP): Heather Colley and her two children moved four times over five years as they fled high rents in eastern Tennessee, which, like much of rural America, hasn't been spared from soaring housing costs.

A family gift in 2021 of a small plot of land offered a shot at homeownership, but building a house was beyond reach for the 45-year-old single mother and manicurist making \$18.50 an hour.

That changed when she qualified for \$272,000 from a nonprofit to build a three-bedroom home because of a grant program that has helped make affordable housing possible in rural areas for decades. She moved in last June.

"Every time I pull into my garage, I pinch myself," Colley said.

Now, President Donald Trump wants to eliminate that grant, the HOME Investment Partnerships Program, and House Republicans overseeing federal budget negotiations did not include funding for it in their budget proposal. Experts and state housing agencies say that would set back tens of thousands of future affordable housing developments nationwide, particularly hurting Appalachian towns and rural counties where government aid is sparse and investors are few.

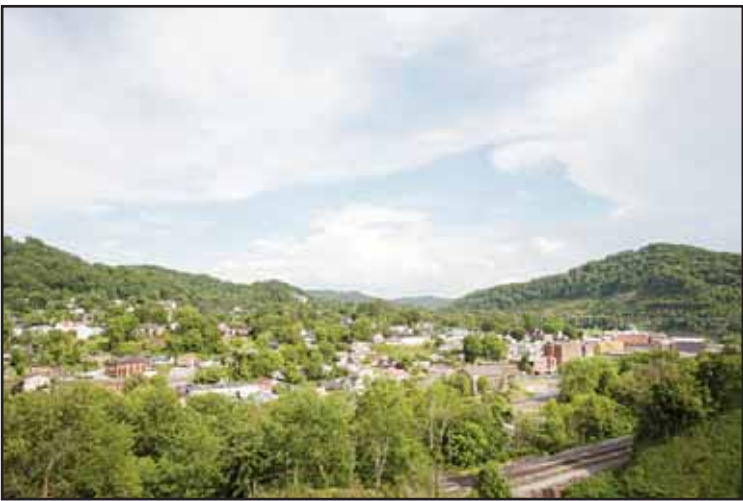
The program has helped build or repair more than 1.3 million affordable homes in the last three decades, of which at least 540,000 were in congressional districts that are rural or significantly rural, according to an Associated Press analysis of federal data.

"Maybe they don't realize how far-reaching these programs are," said Colley, who voted for Trump in 2024. Among those half a million homes that HOME helped build, 84% were in districts that voted for him last year, the AP analysis found.

"I understand we don't want excessive spending and wasting taxpayer dollars," Colley said, "but these proposed budget cuts across the board make me rethink the next time I go to the polls."

The HOME program, started under President George H. W. Bush in the 1990s, survived years of budget battles but has been stretched thin by years of rising construction costs and stagnant funding. That's meant fewer units, including in some rural areas where home prices have grown faster than in cities.

The program has spent more than \$38 billion nationwide since it began filling in funding gaps and attracting more investment to acquire, build and re-



Nestled in the heart of the coal fields of Appalachia, the small city of Hazard, Ky., is seen on May 26, 2015. (AP)

pair affordable homes, HUD data shows. Additional funding has gone toward projects that have yet to be finished and rental assistance.

To account for the gap left by the proposed cuts, House Republicans want to draw on nearly \$5 billion from a related pandemic-era fund that gave states until 2030 to spend on projects supporting people who are unhoused or facing homelessness.

That \$5 billion, however, may be far less, since many projects haven't yet been logged into the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's tracking system, according to state housing agencies and associations representing them.

A spokesperson for HUD, which administers the program, said HOME isn't as effective as other programs where the money would be better spent.

In opposition to Trump, Senate Republicans have still included funding for

HOME in their draft budget. In the coming negotiations, both chambers may compromise and reduce but not terminate HOME's funding, or extend last years' overall budget.

White House spokesperson Davis Ingle didn't respond to specific questions from the AP. Instead, Ingle said that Trump's commitment to cutting red tape is making housing more affordable.

A bipartisan group of House lawmakers is working to reduce HOME's notorious red tape that even proponents say slows construction.

In Owsley County - one of the nation's poorest, located in the rural Kentucky hills - residents struggle in an economy blighted by coal mine closures and declining tobacco crop revenues.

Affordable homes are needed there, but tough to build in a region that doesn't attract larger-scale rental developments that federal dollars typically go toward.

That's where HOME comes in, said Cassie Hudson, who runs Partnership Housing in Owsley, which has relied on the program to build the majority of its affordable homes for at least a dozen years.

A lack of additional funding for HOME has already made it hard to keep up with construction costs, Hudson said, and the organization builds a quarter of the single-family homes it used to.

"Particularly for deeply rural places and persistent poverty counties, local housing developers are the only way homes and new rental housing gets built," said Joshua Stewart of Fahe, a coalition of Appalachian nonprofits.

That's in part because investment is scant and HOME steps in when construction costs exceed what a home can be sold for - a common barrier in poor areas of Appalachia. Some developers use the profits to build more affordable units. Its loss would erode those nonprofits' ability to build affordable homes in years to come, Stewart said.

One of those nonprofits, Housing Development Alliance, helped Tiffany Mullins in Hazard, Kentucky, which was ravaged by floods. Mullins, a single mother of four who makes \$14.30 an hour at Walmart, bought a house there thanks to HOME funding and moved in August.

Mullins sees the program as preserving a rural way of life, recalling when folks owned homes and land "with gardens, we had chickens, cows. Now you don't see much of that."

Separation set for H2 2026

Kraft Heinz to split into two companies

NEW YORK, Sept 2, (AP): Kraft Heinz is splitting into two companies a decade after they joined in a massive merger that created one of the biggest food companies on the planet.

One of the companies, currently called Global Taste Elevation Co., will include shelf stable meals and include brands such as Heinz, Philadelphia cream cheese and Kraft Mac & Cheese, Kraft Heinz said Tuesday. The other, currently called North American Grocery Co., will include brands such as Oscar Mayer, Kraft Singles and Lunchables. The official names of the two companies will be released later.

Kraft Heinz said in May that it was conducting a strategic review of the company, signaling a potential split.

The company in 2015 wanted to capitalize on its massive scale, but shifting tastes complicated those plans, with households seeking to introduce healthier options at the table. Kraft Heinz and other food producers have shifted offerings to follow that trend.

"Kraft Heinz's brands are iconic and beloved, but the complexity of our current structure makes it challenging to allocate capital effectively, prioritize initiatives and drive scale in our most promising areas," Executive Chair Miguel Patricio said in a statement.

The path to the merger of Kraft and Heinz began in 2013, when billionaire investor Warren Buffett teamed up with Brazilian investment firm 3G Capital to buy H.J. Heinz Co. At the time, the \$23 billion deal was the most expensive ever in the food industry.

3G was also behind the formation of Restaurant Brands International - a merger of Burger King, Tim Hortons and Popeyes - and Anheuser-Busch InBev. It's known for strict cost controls and so-called zero-based budgeting, which requires all expenses to be justified each quarter.

The deal was intended to help Heinz, which was founded in 1869 in Pittsburgh, expand sales of its condiments and sauces on grocery store shelves. Heinz's new owners also set about cutting costs, laying off hundreds of workers within months.

At the same time Kraft, based in Chicago, sought for a partner after a 2011 split from its snack division,

which became Mondelez International.

In 2015, Buffett and 3G decided to merge Heinz with Kraft. The merger created the 5th largest food and beverage company in the world, with annual revenue of \$28 billion. Buffett and 3G each contributed \$5 billion for a special dividend for Kraft shareholders.

But the combined company struggled, despite layoffs of thousands of employees and other cost-cutting measures. Even at the time of the merger, many consumers were shifting away from the kinds of highly processed packaged foods that Kraft sells, like Velveeta cheese and Kool-Aid.

Kraft Heinz also had trouble distinguishing its products from cheaper store brands. At Walmart, a 14-ounce bottle of Heinz ketchup costs \$2.98; the same size bottle of Walmart's Great Value brand is 98 cents.

In 2019, Kraft Heinz slashed the value of its Oscar Meyer and Kraft brands by \$1.54 billion, citing operational costs and supply chain problems. But many investors blamed the company's leadership, saying its zeal for cost-cutting was hurting brand innovation.

In 2021, Kraft Heinz sold both its Planters nut business and its natural cheese business, vowing to reinvest the money into higher-growth brands like P3 protein snacks and Lunchables.

But the company's net revenue has fallen every year since 2020, when it saw a pandemic-related bump in sales. In April, Kraft Heinz lowered its full-year sales and earnings guidance, citing weaker customer spending in the U.S. and the impact of President Donald Trump's tariffs.

Carlos Abrams-Rivera will continue to serve as CEO of Kraft Heinz and will become CEO of North American Grocery Co. once the separation is complete. Kraft Heinz said that its board is working with an executive search firm to identify potential CEO candidates for Global Taste Elevation Co.

Kraft Heinz has no plans to change its current headquarter locations in Chicago and Pittsburgh. It currently expects the transaction to close in the second half of 2026.

Shares of the company rose slightly before the market open.

Global stocks slump as gold surges past \$3,550 an ounce

Trump's Fed challenges shake investor confidence

BANGKOK, Sept 2, (AP): The price of gold hit a new record and world shares were mostly lower on Tuesday after U.S. markets were closed for the Labor Day holiday.

The spot price of gold, traditionally a haven for investors in times of uncertainty, climbed as high as \$3,578.40 per ounce early Tuesday. That surpassed an intraday record of \$3,509.90 an ounce set in April. It later slipped back a bit, gaining 1.1% to \$3,549.10 per ounce.

President Donald Trump's challenges to the U.S. Federal Reserve and other institutions have shaken faith in the U.S. dollar, prompting a shift into other investment options such as gold and silver, analysts say.

The price of silver was up 1.8% at \$41.46 an ounce on Tuesday, surpassing \$40 an ounce for the first time since 2011.

"That's not just a price tick; it's the market's confession that faith in fiat is wobbling," Stephen Innes of SPI Asset Management said in a commentary. He noted that the price of the precious metal has nearly doubled since early 2023.

Investors have been shifting away from U.S. Treasuries for years but that shift has accelerated this year due to worries over U.S. government debt, trade tensions and geopolitical risks, said Ipek Ozkardeskaya, a senior analyst at Swissquote Bank.

In early European trading, Germany's DAX dropped 1.1% to 23,767.08, while the CAC 40 in Paris was nearly unchanged at 7,707.09. In Britain, the FTSE 100 declined 0.4% to 9,158.78.

The future for the S&P 500 lost 0.5% while that for the Dow Jones Industrial Average was 0.4% lower.



An electronic notice board shows the price of gold at a jewelry shop in Tokyo, Monday, Sept. 1, 2025. (AP)

Since Wall Street was shuttered on Monday, analysts said traders also were still focusing on the potential implications of Friday's ruling by a U.S. court against Trump's higher tariffs on many coun-

tries around the world.

In Tokyo, the Nikkei 225 picked up 0.3% to 42,310.49 as investors snapped up bargains following recent losses. An auction of 10-year Japanese government bonds was expected to test the stability of that market.

Markets in China fell back from recent gains. Hong Kong's Hang Seng shed 0.5% to 25,496.55, while the Shanghai Composite index lost 0.5% to 3,858.13.

South Korea's Kospi advanced 0.9% to 3,172.35, while the S&P/ASX 200 in Australia gave up 0.3% to 8,900.60.

India's Sensex rose 0.4% and the SET in Bangkok gained 0.4%.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit ruled Friday, 7-4, that Trump went too far when he declared national emergencies to justify imposing sharply higher import taxes on almost every country on earth.

The ruling largely upheld a May decision by a specialized federal trade court in New York, but it rejected part of that ruling striking down the tariffs immediately, giving the Trump administration time to appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Updates on U.S. durable goods orders, manufacturing, jobless claims and other data that may provide insights into how the economy is holding up under the higher tariffs are due this week. European manufacturing data and a preliminary consumer price index reading for the countries using the euro also are on the agenda.

In other dealings early Tuesday, U.S. benchmark crude oil gained \$1.86 to \$65.87 per barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, advanced \$1.22 to \$69.37 per barrel.

The U.S. dollar rose to 148.54 Japanese yen from 147.18 yen. The euro fell to \$1.1635 from \$1.1711.

Activist investor takes a \$4 billion stake in PepsiCo

WASHINGTON, Sept 2, (AP): Activist investor Elliott Investment Management is taking a \$4 billion stake in PepsiCo, saying there's an opportunity to revive the snack and drinks company.

Years of double-digit price increases from PepsiCo and changing customer preferences has weakened demand for its drinks and snacks, the company said in February. In July PepsiCo said that it is trying to combat perceptions that its products are too expensive by expanding distribution of value brands like Chester's and Santitas.

Stubborn inflation has had an impact on consumer behavior and many people have cut back on the discretionary purchases that they make.

The company did not immediately respond to a request for comment from The Associated Press.

PepsiCo lowered its full-year earnings expecta-

tions in April, citing increased costs from tariffs and a pullback in consumer spending. The company reaffirmed that guidance three months later. Its tariff costs have risen since then. In June, the Trump administration hiked the tariff on imported aluminum from 25% to 50%.

In a letter to PepsiCo's board, Elliott said that the company is being hurt by a lack of strategic clarity, decelerating growth and eroding profitability in its North American food and beverage businesses. But the firm still believes in PepsiCo's potential, particularly noting its growing international business.

"While unfortunate, this disappointing trajectory has created a historic opportunity: With the right mindset and an appropriately ambitious turnaround plan, PepsiCo today represents a rare

chance to revitalize a leading global enterprise and unlock significant shareholder value," Elliott said.

Shares of PepsiCo climbed more than 3% in Tuesday morning trading. The stock is down nearly 10% over the past 12 months, according to FactSet, but it is up almost 12% over the past month as Elliott has purchased shares.

Elliott said that it wants to work with PepsiCo's board and management on ways to improve performance.

"Elliott's goals at PepsiCo are straightforward: help the company sharpen focus, drive innovation, become more efficient and unlock the value that its leading brands, unmatched scale and world-class employees deserve," it said. "The path back to winning is clear and achievable."

Over NZ\$7.5 bln investment planned for data centers

Amazon launches AWS Asia Pacific Region in New Zealand

SEATTLE, Sept 2, (BUSINESS WIRE): Amazon (NASDAQ: AMZN) today announced the launch of the AWS Asia Pacific (New Zealand) Region. The new AWS Region will give developers, startups, entrepreneurs, and enterprises, as well as financial services, retail, education, government, and nonprofit organizations, greater choice for running their applications and serving end users from data centers located in New Zealand. As part of its long-term commitment, Amazon is planning to invest more than NZ\$7.5 billion in New Zealand to support the construction, connection, operation, and maintenance of its data centers in the country.

"The new AWS Region in New Zealand will help serve the growing demand for cloud services across the country and empower organizations of all sizes to accelerate their digital transformation," said Prasad Kalyanaram, vice president of Infrastructure Services at AWS. "With this launch, businesses can now leverage advanced AWS technologies, from core cloud capabilities to artificial intelligence and machine learning, all while meeting local data residency requirements. By investing in New Zealand's digital infrastructure, we're proud to support the country's economic growth, foster innovation, and help position it as a technology hub in the Asia Pacific region."

"The launch of the AWS Region in New Zealand is an exciting moment. This investment in digital infrastructure and Amazon's commitment to digital skills can accelerate New Zealand technology businesses and help New Zealanders to move into highly skilled, secure, and well-paid technology jobs-which exist right across the economy, from tech companies to various sectors including agriculture, finance, retail, professional services, government, and many more," said Graeme Muller, CEO at NZTech.

The AWS Asia Pacific (New Zealand) Region is the latest Amazon investment in New Zealand to provide customers with advanced and secure cloud technologies.

AWS Regions consist of Availability Zones that place infrastructure in separate and distinct geographic locations. Availability Zones are located far enough from each other to support customers' business continuity, but near enough to provide low latency for high availability applications that use multiple Availability Zones. Each Availability Zone has independent power, cooling, and physical security, and is connected through redundant, ultra-low-latency networks. AWS customers focused on high availability can design their applications to run in multiple Availability Zones to achieve even greater fault tolerance.

AWS is constantly working on ways to increase the en-

ergy efficiency of its data centers-optimizing data center design, investing in purpose-built chips, and innovating with new cooling technologies. A report by Accenture, commissioned by AWS, estimates AWS infrastructure is up to 4.1 times more efficient than on-premises, and when workloads are optimized on AWS, the associated carbon footprint can be reduced by up to 99%. For more information about AWS sustainability efforts, visit [aws.amazon.com/about-aws/sustainability](https://aws.amazon.com/about-aws/sustainability).

The AWS Asia Pacific (New Zealand) Region will enable customers with data residency preferences or requirements to store their content securely in New Zealand, enable customers to achieve even lower latency, and serve demand for cloud services across Asia Pacific. Customers from startups to enterprises to government organizations and nonprofits will be able to use advanced technologies from the world's leading cloud provider to drive innovation, reduce costs, and accelerate transformation.

Since 2006, Amazon Web Services has been the world's most comprehensive and broadly adopted cloud. AWS has been continually expanding its services to support virtually any workload, and it now has more than 240 fully featured services for compute, storage, databases, networking, analytics, machine

learning and artificial intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT), mobile, security, hybrid, media, and application development, deployment, and management from 120 Availability Zones within 38 geographic regions, with announced plans for 10 more Availability Zones and three more AWS Regions in Chile, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the AWS European Sovereign Cloud. Millions of customers-including the fastest-growing startups, largest enterprises, and leading government agencies-trust AWS to power their infrastructure, become more agile, and lower costs. To learn more about AWS, visit [aws.amazon.com](https://aws.amazon.com).

Amazon is guided by four principles: customer obsession rather than competitor focus, passion for invention, commitment to operational excellence, and long-term thinking. Amazon strives to be Earth's Most Customer-Centric Company, Earth's Best Employer, and Earth's Safest Place to Work. Customer reviews, 1-Click shopping, personalized recommendations, Prime, Fulfillment by Amazon, AWS, Kindle Direct Publishing, Kindle, Career Choice, Fire tablets, Fire TV, Amazon Echo, Alexa, Just Walk Out technology, Amazon Studios, and The Climate Pledge are some of the things pioneered by Amazon. For more information, visit [amazon.com/about](https://amazon.com/about) and follow @AmazonNews.



## Butler shines in Aronofsky's crime thriller

# In 'Caught Stealing,' an endearing crime caper set in '90s NY

LOS ANGELES, Sept 2, (AP): Darren Aronofsky has already made several indelibly New York movies. But loveable as was the subterranean monochrome paranoia of "Pi" and charming as we all consider the pupil-dilating tragedy of his bleak Brighton Beach-set "Requiem for a Dream," Aronofsky's latest, "Caught Stealing," is easily the director's most affectionate portrait of his hometown.

That, too, may be a funny way to describe a movie where bodies get brutalized, corpses accumulate and even the cat comes away with a limp. But "Caught Stealing," a terrific caper starring Austin Butler as a Lower East Side man inadvertently drawn into a nightmarish crime world, is a period movie. It's set in 1998. And no amount of blood can detract from the overwhelming endearment Aronofsky has for '90s New York.

Butler plays Hank Thompson: a former baseball player who can't play anymore; a bartender who, after some of the early events of the movie, can't drink anymore; and a devoted San Francisco Giants fan surrounded by Mets fans. As his not-quite girlfriend Yvonne ( Zoë Kravitz ) says, he's "a good country boy" who calls his mom in California every day. They end every call with "Go Giants!"

Hank is far from the first regular guy to be ensnared in underground crime syndicates, but there are a number of things that distinguish "Caught Stealing." First, his troubles stem, like they do for so many New Yorkers, from his neighbor. Russ (Matt Smith), the mohawked Brit punk who lives next door, rushes out to fly to London, and he leaves Hank his cat to take care of.

Soon, though, a pair of Russian gang skinheads (Yuri Kolokolnikov, Nikita Kukulshkin) are banging on Russ' door and quickly after, pummeling Hank, too. Their beating of Hank is unexpectedly brutal, and the first sign that "Caught Stealing" is going for something a little different. When Hank wakes up in the hospital, he's down a kidney and told he can't drink alcohol ever again.

For Hank, it's not his first blush with alcohol-connected fatality. In flashbacks that replay as Hank's nightmares, we see him as a hotshot high-school baseball



This image released by Sony Pictures Entertainment shows Matt Smith, (left) and Austin Butler in a scene from 'Caught Stealing.' (AP)

player, soon to be drafted into the pros. While drinking and driving, he careens off the road to avoid a cow, driving straight into a pole. His buddy is dead, and Hank's knee won't ever be the same.

Meanwhile, the Russian mob interest continues to spiral, drawing in a police detective (Regina King, always good), the skinheads' boss, Colorado (Bad Bunny),

and a pair of Orthodox Jewish brothers (Liev Schreiber and Vincent D'Onofrio). The question that keeps coming up is whether Hank can hack it in this world. Is he a killer? He doesn't think so, even though he has killed. As King's detective says, "I thought maybe you played real ball."

For Butler, the role flashes his talent better than "Elvis" ever did. Aronofsky captures the sweet kid in him, with the hint of something a little more. If it once appeared that Butler might be trapped in his breakthrough role, "Caught stealing" shows how he can carry a movie in a much less adorned performance.

For Aronofsky, little in his recent filmography ("The Whale," "Mother!") suggested that an "After Hours"-like New York odyssey was coming next from him. It's a little shaggy and you'll occasionally yearn for a bit more humor along the way. But "Caught Stealing," based on Charlie Huston's 2004 novel, is a ride, foremost, in '90s nostalgia.

The looming Twin Towers are a regular reminder that this was a long time ago, indeed, even if the New York of Aronofsky's movie seems achingly familiar to some of us. That goes for places the movie rushes past, like Kim's Video and Shea Stadium, the Alphabet City bars of the film and the now-bygone concerns of cell phone minutes running low. Hank has another neighbor, too, whom he and Yvonne mock for how he describes his job as "building websites."

Late summer is always a funny time in movie theaters, but that goes especially for this year. We've somehow had not one but two excellent New York movies, both rich in baseball fandom, in "Caught Stealing" and Spike Lee's "Highest 2 Lowest." Hollywood seemingly has little idea what to do with genre movies from auteur filmmakers that aren't obvious awards fodder. These are movies that might not be home runs, but their directors most definitely stretch them for extra bases.

"Caught Stealing," a Columbia Pictures release is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for strong violent content, pervasive language, some sexuality/nudity and brief drug use. Running time: 107 minutes. Three stars out of four.

### Books

#### 'Brutal ride'

## 'Hitchhikers' lack surprise

LOS ANGELES, Sept 2, (AP): It's the summer of 1976, and life has not been kind to Tom and Alice. They've been trying for years to have a family, two attempts ending in a miscarriage and another in a baby that died at birth. They need a break.

Together, they climb into their new RV and cross the border from their home in Seattle, hoping to find a little peace in a relaxing trip through rural Canada. But in "The Hitchhikers," the eight novel by Chevy Stevens, the trip becomes a nightmare.

Along the way, they pick up two teenage hitchhikers who introduce themselves as Blue and his pregnant girlfriend Ocean. They get along well until Alice pops into a rest stop and sees their photographs in the newspaper. It turns out that their names are Simon and Jenny, and they are being hunted for the brutal murders of Jenny's parents.

When Tom, who had brought a pistol along for protection, confronts them, Simon disarms him and beats him so badly that Tom spends the rest of the novel tied up inside the RV with a broken collarbone.

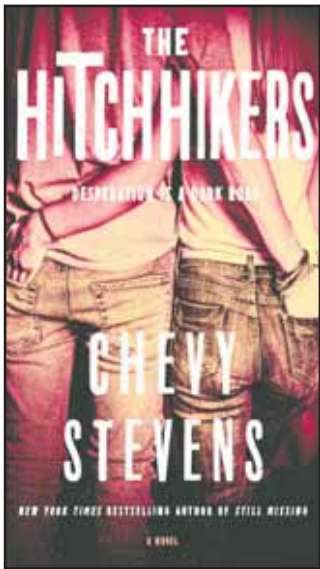
#### Violence

With Alice forced to drive, they head off down the road, stopping occasionally for gas and food. Simon, who needs money to stay on the run, commits crimes at nearly every stop, stealing cash and supplies from gas stations, convenience stores and even a church. At each stop, his violence escalates, culminating in the shooting of a policeman. His girlfriend seems squeamish about the violence but does nothing to dissuade him.

Here and there, the narrative is interrupted as the author gradually reveals Simon and Alice's back story, a sad one about abusive childhoods.

"The Hitchhikers" is promoted as a thriller, but thrills and suspense are in short supply. Instead, the tale is tedious and predictable as Simon brutalizes people over and over again. Stevens writes well, each scene well crafted, but the repetitive brutality gives the book the feel of a short story that has been unwisely stretched into a novel.

The tale finally comes to an end with two twists that seem less surprising than inevitable.



This cover image released by St. Martin's Press shows 'The Hitchhikers' by Chevy Stevens. (AP)

### Film



Emily Blunt poses for photographers on the red carpet for the film 'The Smashing Machine' during the 82nd edition of the Venice Film Festival in Venice, Italy, on Monday, Sept. 1. (AP)

## 'A House of Dynamite' highlights nuclear fears

# Bigelow unveils political thriller at Venice

VENICE, Italy, Sept 2, (AP): Kathryn Bigelow was interested in the US nuclear stockpile: Who was guarding it? What would happen if a missile strike was imminent? And who would be making the decisions about what to do?

Her new film "A House of Dynamite" takes audiences into those guarded rooms as US government officials and military leaders attempt to manage a missile strike from an unknown aggressor that is 20 minutes from impact. It has its world premiere on Tuesday evening at the Venice Film Festival.

"This is a global issue," Bigelow said before the premiere. "We are really living in a house of dynamite. My interest was to really get that information out there."

Bigelow worked alongside screenwriter and the former president of NBC News, Noah Oppenheim, to craft an authentic portrait of what might transpire in those 20 minutes.

"One of the many things that makes Kathryn such an extraordinary filmmaker is her commitment to authenticity," Oppenheim said. "From the very beginning her mandate was, 'lets find out how this would really work, let's take people into these rooms where these decisions would be made and show how it would actually unfold.'"

It helped that Oppenheim had covered the subject for decades as a journalist, and that he had his own arsenal of contacts who could help inform the story, including former Pentagon, White House and CIA officials.

The film boasts a large ensemble cast, with Idris Elba as the US President, Jared Harris as the Secretary of Defense, Tracy Letts as a general and Gabriel Basso as the deputy national security advisor.

These are not just suits in situation rooms, either. The audience gets glimpses into their lives outside of work too. One person is



Barbara Sirotti shows photographers her hand which reads 'Stop Violence' at the 82nd edition of the Venice Film Festival in Venice, Italy, on Monday, Sept. 1. (AP)

running late, another is worried about a sick kid, and they're all dealing with the extreme stress of the quickly unfolding situation.

"The movie could be performed as purely procedural, and we simply see people doing their jobs and nothing but their jobs. But the truth is, they're human beings performing these functions so humanity seeps out," Letts said. "I really think that's part of the beauty and strength of the film, reminding that ultimately these are human beings making these decisions."

The story is not meant to be a precise portrait of any specific

geopolitical moment, or administration, however.

"The point is no matter what's going on in the world, and the world is always unstable in some way or another, we've constructed this weaponry that could end all life," Oppenheim said. "In countries like ours, one individual, the president, has the sole authority to authorize their use. We wanted to tell a story about that system, which is not really a reflection of any partisan, political situation, it's just the reality of the nuclear age."

"A House of Dynamite" is Bigelow's first film since the 2017 release of "Detroit." Her most acclaimed films have been politically themed, from "The Hurt Locker," for which she became the first woman to win the best director Oscar, to "Zero Dark Thirty." In some ways, "A House of Dynamite" is a kind of natural counterpart to those.

#### Also:

**VENICE, Italy:** Singer Halsey bid for the top lot at the amfAR Venezia fundraiser Sunday and spoke on the red carpet about how the charitable foundation's work has helped her personally.

Hosted by an impassioned Colman Domingo in a bright green custom Valentino jacket, the event took place at the Arsenale during the Venice Film Festival.

More low key and intimate than it's Cannes Film Festival counterpart, the event still attracted its share of celebrities including Jude Law, in Venice to promote "The Wizard of the Kremlin," in which he stars as Putin.

The evening started with champagne, canapés, Italian spritz and negronis on the waterfront terrace as a DJ spun tunes and guests viewed the artwork to be auctioned off later in the evening.

As those attending were seated for a traditional Venetian dinner of Ombrina fish, Paris Jackson performed an acoustic set on stage.

### Variety

**NEW YORK:** Naomi Osaka is bringing the Labubu fad to the US Open - all the way to at least the quarterfinals.

Osaka has played four matches at the Grand Slam tennis tournament so far this year, each time toting a different version of the popular plush toy attached to her racket bag. And she's won each time, too, including a 6-3, 6-2 victory over Coco Gauff on Monday.

At her postmatch news conference, four-time major champion Osaka pulled her latest US Open Labubu - a shiny, silver one - from the pocket of her black jacket and introduced the creature to reporters, saying, "Her name is Althea Glitterson," a tribute to Althea Gibson, the tennis champion who broke the sport's color barrier 75 years ago.

Osaka's Labubus at Flushing Meadows have sported varying color schemes and nicknames, all decked out with shiny get-ups. She brought one she called Billie Jean Bling - a la tennis great Billie Jean King, get it? - to the court for the first round.

That one even has an official US Open credential to prove it, replete with a photo, identifying Ms. Bling as a player guest with full access to player dining. (The U.S. Tennis Association

confirmed that it provided the printed pass but noted that it won't work with the scanning machines security guards have at entrances.)

There also was a second one modeled after King, even sporting the Hall of Famer's trademark red eyeglasses, known as La-Billie-Bu. Another was named Arthur Flashe - as in Arthur Ashe, for whom the main US Open stadium is named.

The Labubu, with its pointed ears and pointy teeth, was created by artist and illustrator Kasing Lung and made its debut in 2015 via three picture books inspired by Nordic mythology.

In 2019, Lung made a deal with Pop Mart, a company that caters to toy connoisseurs and influencers, to sell the figurines.

Four years later, when Pop Mart began selling Labubus on key rings, the toothy monsters began to be seen everywhere - and the phenomenon really has taken off lately. (AP)

□ □ □

**NEW YORK:** New York City's West Indian American Day Pa-

rade, one of the world's largest celebrations of Caribbean culture, kicked off Monday with vibrant costumes, colorful flags and the sounds of soca and reggae music.

Along with crowds of hundreds of thousands of people, the parade has long been a magnet for local politicians, many of whom have West Indian heritage or represent members of the city's large Caribbean community. With a mayoral election looming in November, the political overlap was particularly evident this year as rival candidates jockeyed for attention and support.

Mayor Eric Adams, who is running for reelection as an independent this fall; and Democratic Gov. Kathy Hochul cut a ceremonial ribbon at the start of the parade as the civil rights leader the Rev. Al Sharpton looked on.

Several of Adams' reelection challengers were also there, including State Assemblyman and Democratic nominee Zohran Mamdani, who swiveled his hips in a traditional Caribbean dance. Former Gov. Andrew Cuomo, who is running for mayor as an independent, flashed a thumbs up as he made his way along the route. Republican mayoral hopeful Curtis Sliwa waved to the crowd while wearing his trademark red Guardian Angels beret.

The parade also saw increased security after a fatal shooting at last year's event. (AP)



‘Robots still 100,000 years behind AI in data training’

# Humanoid robots impress with skills at Ancient Olympia

ANCIENT OLYMPIA, Greece, Sept 2, (AP): With jerky determination, robots played soccer, wowed children with shadow-boxing skills and shot arrows on Monday at the birthplace of the Olympic Games.

As they shuffled and occasionally froze for a battery change, their creators and futurologists debated the central question of when robots will be ready to tidy closets and wash dishes.

Despite the explosive advance of artificial intelligence in applications like ChatGPT, their physical cousins - robots with human-like appearances and skills - are lagging years behind.

"I really believe that humanoids will first go to space and then to houses ... the house is the final frontier," said Minas Liarakapis, a Greek academic and startup founder who organized the International Humanoid Olympiad.

The four-day event gathered experts and developers at Ancient Olympia in southern Greece where the flame is lit every two years for the modern Summer and Winter Games.

"To enter the house it'll take more than 10 years. Definitely more," Liarakapis said. "I'm talking about executing tasks with dexterity, not about selling robots that are cute and are companions."



The Unitree G1 robot plays boxing with Aadeel Akhtar, CEO and Founder of Psynic at the first International Humanoid Olympiad at the Olympic Academy, in Ancient Olympia, Greece, Monday, Sept. 1. (AP)

AI is racing ahead thanks to vast amounts of data readily available online. But training material for humanoid robots is scarce. It involves real-world actions that are slower, more expensive and harder to record than digital data like text or images.

By one measure, humanlike robots are roughly 100,000 years behind AI in learning from data, according to an article in the current edition of the journal Science Robotics.

To catch up, author Ken Goldberg, a professor at the University of California,

Berkeley, urged makers to move beyond simulations and combine "old-fashioned engineering" with real-world training. That, he argues, would let robots "collect data as they perform useful work, such as driving taxis and sorting packages."

Luis Sentis, professor of aerospace engineering and engineering mechanics at The University of Texas at Austin, said that successful robotics requires collaboration between researchers, data companies and major manufacturers to provide scale. Those partnerships, he noted, are already attracting billions of dollars in funding to develop humanoid robots.

"These synergies are happening very, very quickly. So I do see these problems being cracked on a day-to-day basis," said Sentis, who's also a co-founder of humanoid maker Apptronik.

Developers at the Greek event brought their own ideas.

Aadeel Akhtar, CEO and founder of advanced prosthetics maker Psynic, gained international attention after appearing on the U.S. television show "Shark Tank" last year seeking investment for his company's bionic hand, which offers sensory feedback.

That data, he told The Associated Press on Monday, could accelerate ro-

bot development.

"We've built our hand for both humans and robots," he said. "So we're closing that gap by actually using the hand of the prosthetic on humans and then translating that (data) over to robots."

Hon Weng Chong, CEO of Cortical Labs, said that the Australian biotech company is developing a so-called biological computer that uses real brain cells grown on a chip. Those cells can learn and respond to information - and potentially teach robots to think and adapt more like humans.

At the Olympiad, organizers hoped to lay a foundation for annual competitions providing an "honest validation of the progress that has been made in humanoid robots," said Patrick Jarvis, who with Liarakapis is co-founder of robot maker Acumino.

Organizers limited events to what humanoids could reasonably attempt.

"We were trying to get the discuss and the javelin, but that's tough for humanoid robots," Jarvis said. "We also can't say whose robot can do a high jump because you'd have to build special legs ... and that's not necessary for most humanoid robots."

One company even tested whether

its machine could manage the shot put, said Thomas Ryden, executive director of MassRobotics, who worked to "get as many humanoid companies there as possible."

In the end, several US roboticists came to Greece to speak, but few brought robots.

Chinese companies increasingly showcase their machines at public events, such as Beijing's first Humanoid Robot Games in August, while US rivals mostly stick to polished videos that can mask failures.

There are exceptions. Elon Musk revealed Tesla's Optimus in 2022: The prototype walked stiffly onstage, turned and waved to a cheering crowd.

Boston Dynamics went further. Ten years after launching its dog-like Spot, the company had them dance in synchrony to a Queen song on "America's Got Talent."

One of the five broke down mid-routine, creating a reality-show punchline, but also highlighting their agility and coordination.

"Can I be honest with you? I actually think - I don't mean this in a cruel way - it is weirdly better that one of them died," judge Simon Cowell said. "Because it showed how difficult this was."

## Gardening

‘Garden bounty’

## Simple tips to pickle your garden harvest

By Jessica Damiano

It's September, and I still haven't harvested a single red tomato. The beets are still grape-size and, so far, my four plants have produced only two zucchini. But the green beans? They're suddenly coming in faster than I can eat them.

I've blanched and frozen several bags for fall and winter, and, in the interest of variety, have just pickled a batch.

As a lifelong gardener, I'm no longer surprised by annual harvest fluctuations. A few years back, my plants yielded a single bean, which I comically steamed, salted and cut four ways to split with my family. It was delicious, but not worthy of pickling, unfortunately.

This year, however, my tomato deficiency is offset by an embarrassment of bean riches.

Since I don't have the patience for pressure canning, I do all my pickling the quick-and-easy way -- in the refrigerator. (Besides pickling, I preserve most of my herbs and vegetables by drying or freezing them.)

The easiest way to do this is to reuse the brining liquid from a just-finished jar of purchased pickles. I simply wash and pat-dry the beans, then place them in the pickle "juice" and return the jar to the refrigerator.

With this shortcut, you'll be enjoying tasty pickled green beans in just 24 hours, and they'll remain crispy for up to a month. You can even use the brine one more time to make a second batch.

There are plenty of other uses for the tasty liquid, too, such as in pickle martinis, but I digress.

If you don't have leftover brine, it's easy to make your own: Boil 1 1/2 cups each of water and distilled white vinegar with 1 1/2 tablespoons of kosher salt and 1 tablespoon of pickling spices in a nonreactive pot (stainless steel is best). Sugar is optional; I don't use it, but feel free to include some if you like sweeter pickles. Turn off the heat when the salt and sugar, if using, are fully dissolved.

### Solution

Next, add 5-10 sprigs of dill, 3-4 crushed garlic cloves and a pinch of red pepper (if desired) to a clean, sterilized, quart-sized Mason jar.

Pack the jar tightly with the whole, trimmed beans, then pour in the vinegar solution, leaving 1 inch of headspace at the top of the jar. Allow it to cool at room temperature before covering and refrigerating.

Fresh-made brine can be reused twice, for a total of three batches.

Of course, if you're a purist, these methods can also be used to make refrigerator-pickled cucumbers: Slice cucumbers into wedges or quarter-inch rounds, or use whole pickling cucumbers, such as kirbys, and proceed as above (if using whole cukes, cut off their blossom ends but leave their stem ends intact).

If you're feeling adventurous, you can pickle all sorts of other fruits and vegetables in the refrigerator.

Try it with asparagus, beets, end-of-season green tomatoes (cut into wedges), or sweet or hot peppers, as Peter Piper did.

You can even pickle cherries, peach slices and watermelon rinds, a southern delicacy that recently made a surprisingly tasty snack for this northerner. Keep the salt, vinegar and water, but feel free to adjust the seasonings and spices as you wish.

For instance, I include sugar when pickling fruit and swap the pickling spices for ginger, cinnamon or cloves.

All sorts of pickle-inspired foods - from chips to gummy candies - have been gaining popularity lately, but there's nothing better than the real thing. And with so many flavor variations to experiment with, all you have to do is follow your taste buds. (AP)



This Aug. 27, 2025, image provided by Jessica Damiano shows pickled green beans served on a decorative plate on Long Island, N.Y. (AP)

## Art

Hutton's guide

## WH portraits made easy in four steps

WASHINGTON, Sept 2, (AP): John Hutton starts every White House portrait with an egg-shaped frame.

He adds a nose, mouth, eyes and eyebrows, then outlines the face, guided by a series of horizontal and vertical lines through the oval. Hair comes next, followed by the neck and shoulders to add definition and make his paper renderings look like President George Washington or first lady Jacqueline Kennedy - or any of the other presidents and first ladies, including Donald Trump and Melania Trump.

Hutton, a North Carolina art history professor who draws in his spare time, outlined his four-step technique in a new book, "How to Draw the Presidents & First Ladies," published in July by the White House Historical Association. He demonstrated it for The Associated Press.

Anyone can learn to draw by following patterns, said Hutton, who created patterns of every president and first lady. One teaching method is based on an egg-shaped frame divided into thirds. Hutton took it a step further.

"My version of it is that we have four steps," he said. "We draw the facial features first. We draw the outline of the face second. We draw the hair, or sometimes a bonnet for some of the first ladies in the old days, in step three, and then we draw the neck and shoulders a little bit to give the face some place to go."

"A lot of people think they can't draw because they don't know where to get started," Hutton said. "So what I've done is I created a series of line patterns for each portrait, and then I have you copy the line pattern I create for each facial feature, for the shape of the face and so forth, and if you copy the shapes right, you're halfway there."

### Patterns

If the shapes are right and correctly placed, "you've got a really good portrait," he said.

An AP reporter used Hutton's patterns and four steps to draw portraits of Washington and Jacqueline Kennedy that looked reasonably like them after the first try.

The easiest presidents and first ladies to draw are the most recognizable ones and those with strong features "because people recognize that they've done a good job more quickly than they would if we were doing Franklin Pierce," Hutton said. "Nobody knows who he is."

Those with small features are the hardest to draw, he said.

Hutton, 64, has taught art history for more than 30 years at Salem College in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, where he lives with his wife, Kathleen, also an artist.

He studied at Princeton, Harvard and the prestigious Courtauld Institute of Art at the University of London, and is the illustrator of a series of award-winning children's books published by the White House Historical Association. Hutton also gives lessons to children during the annual White House Easter Egg Roll.

He has been drawing since he was 3 and now spends his free time drawing people and landscapes. Hutton started drawing presidents and first ladies when he illustrated an alphabet book for the historical association. His latest book is an update of an earlier one about drawing presidents.



John Hutton, illustrator and professor of art history at Salem College, shows Aidan Santos, 8, of Long Island, N.Y., how to draw a picture of President Abraham Lincoln, Tuesday, Aug. 12, 2025, from his book, 'How To Draw The Presidents and First Ladies,' at The People's House, a museum in Washington. (AP)



Iraqis walk in the street in front of the historic Al-Nuri Grand Mosque during its reopening in the city of Mosul, Iraq, Monday, Sept. 1. (AP)



Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani, (center), presides over the reopening of the historic Al-Nuri Grand Mosque. (AP)



Iraqi Christian priests attend the reopening of the historic Al-Nuri Grand Mosque. (AP)

A symbol of heritage and resilience

## Iraq reopens historic mosque in Mosul

BAGHDAD, Sept 2, (AP): Iraq's prime minister presided over the official reopening of the historic al-Nuri Grand Mosque and its leaning minaret in the heart of Mosul's Old City Monday, eight years after the mosque was destroyed by militants from the Islamic State group.

For some 850 years, the leaning minaret of the mosque stood as an iconic landmark. In 2014, IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi declared the so-called "caliphate" there by delivering a Friday sermon and leading prayers.

The militant group later destroyed the mosque by detonating explosives inside the structures as it faced defeat in a battle with Iraqi military forces for control of the city in 2017.

UNESCO, the UN's scientific, educational and cultural organization, worked alongside Iraqi heritage and Sunni religious authorities to reconstruct the minaret using traditional techniques and materials salvaged from the rubble. UNESCO raised \$115 million for the reconstruction project, with large shares coming from the United Arab Emirates and the European Union.

Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani said in a statement that the reconstruction of the mosque "will remain a milestone, reminding all enemies of the heroism of Iraqis, their defense of their land, and their rebuilding of everything destroyed by those who want to obscure the truth."

"We will continue our support for culture, and efforts to

highlight Iraqi antiquities, as a social necessity, a gateway to our country for the world, an opportunity for sustainable development, and a space for youth to innovate," he said.

At its peak, IS ruled an area half the size of the United Kingdom in Iraq and Syria and was notorious for its brutality. It beheaded civilians and enslaved and raped thousands of women from the Yazidi community, one of Iraq's oldest religious minorities.

In addition to the mosque, war-damaged churches were rebuilt as part of the reconstruction project, aiming to preserve the heritage of the city's shrinking Christian population. Sudani said the city of Mosul embraces all of its communities and "embodies all the characteristics of Iraq's diverse society."

UN investigators have said that IS militants committed war crimes against Christians in Iraq, including seizing their property, engaging in sexual violence, enslavement, forced conversions and destruction of cultural and religious sites.

Most of Mosul's small population of Christians fled when IS launched its offensive in 2014. In 2003, Mosul's Christian population stood at around 50,000. Today, fewer than 20 Christian families remain as permanent residents in the city, although some who resettled in the semi-autonomous Kurdish area of northern Iraq still return to Mosul for church services.

## Lagos literacy drive targets Guinness Record

## Nigerians try 431-hr reading marathon

ABUJA, Nigeria, Sept 2, (AP): It's a bookworm's idea of heaven: 18 days of non-stop reading.

In a restaurant in Nigeria's Lagos, three men and two women have been reading books for over 431 hours in an attempt to set a Guinness World Record for the longest marathon of reading aloud, part of a campaign to promote literacy in Africa's most populous country.

Throughout the daunting task, dozens joined the group, some online via a live stream, cheering them on.

By Saturday, when the attempt ended, the reading marathoners had read 79 books authored by Nigerians, taking turns to continuously read out loud literary works and self-help books to give the other team members a chance to catch their breath.

In the country of more than 210 million people, "most people don't have access to books (and) I participated to encourage inclusive education," Precious Ukachi told The Associated Press. The 30-year-old was one of the reading marathoners. Others were John Obot, 37, Stephen Oyelami, 23, Temitope Ogunremi, 28, and Ketura Heman, 27.

Obot said the hardest part of the attempt was reading at night. "We had limited time to rest, but what kept me going was the goal."

The current record holders for the longest reading aloud marathon are a group of five people from the Dominican Republic, who clocked 365 hours and 39 seconds in 2011.

This time in Nigeria, the last word was uttered when the timer showed: 431 hours, 31 minutes and 25 seconds.



From left: John John Obot, Keturah Heman, Preciouslight Ukachi, Stephen A Oyelami and Ogunremi Temitope Timothy, a team of five Nigerians who read aloud nonstop for over 400 hours in an attempt to break the Guinness World Record, pose for a photo in Lagos, Nigeria, Saturday, Aug 30, 2025. (AP)

The Guinness World Record is yet to confirm the new record, a process that sometimes takes weeks. The nonprofit behind the event, the Naija ReadFest, says it will forward all evidence needed to the organization.

"We did this to celebrate Nigerian literature," said Kingsley Sintim of the Naija ReadFest.



Growing elderly population drives dementia spike

Dementia cases surge in Africa as families struggle with care

KITABURAZA, Uganda, Sept. 2, (AP): In the night, when all that glows on this hilltop is the moonlight and all that moves are branches tickled by a soft breeze, the tumult returns. The old woman grows convinced her house is on fire and, panicked, drags the table, chairs and the rest of her few worldly possessions, outside. Unable to calm his mother, her son knows just one way to end it. He locks her up.

“She yells,” the son, 62-year-old Herbert Rutabyama, says matter-of-factly. “She pounds on the door.”

Dementia’s prevalence has long been muted on this continent where lifespans have trailed the rest of the world for as long as anyone has kept track. But as the population of older people increases across Africa, experts are seeing a spike in new diagnoses, each of them bringing profound challenges to the patient and their family.

A surge of new cases of dementia is expected across Africa in the coming years as the demographic shift continues. But, already, the desperation of those caring for people living with diseases like Alzheimer’s is beginning to



Alice Ndimuhara, 87, who has dementia, touches her arm and replies ‘This looks good to you?’ in response to a visit by a nongovernmental organization worker to her home in Kitaburaza, Uganda, Monday, Nov. 18, 2024. (AP)

show.

They turn for help in a place with little to offer. In many of the languages spoken on this continent, they don’t

even have a word for dementia.

This day, the crew from Reach One Touch One is making its rounds in this western Uganda village about an hour

north of the Rwandan border. Nearing the woman whose middle-of-the-night visions are so unnerving, aid worker Moses Kahigwa musters as much sunniness as is splashed outside the lush valley below.

“You look good!” he coos.

The woman, 87-year-old Alice Ndimuhara, gives him an icy glare.

“This looks good to you?” she says.

It’s just past noon and Ndimuhara hasn’t had anything to eat today. She has no money. All her limbs feel weak. Her headache never seems to go away.

If not for visitors, she would’ve just stayed in bed.

“My life is just meaningless,” she says.

Her son, Rutabyama, arrives from working in the field, wearing tall black rubber boots that are coated with mud. Sweat wets his forehead.

Don’t be fooled by his mother’s sass. This, he says, is one of her good days.

It’s been a few years since she started wandering from the house and showing other signs that something was wrong. He took her to ROTOM’s clinic and they said she had dementia. His father

has been diagnosed, too.

“It’s really, really hard,” he says of managing their care.

When Ndimuhara wanders off in the daytime, her son will set out to look for her, sometimes finding she’s made it as far as the next village. But when her nighttime confusion returns, he’s unsure what to do. He puts a padlock on her door and nails her window shutters closed and resists unlatching them even when she screams and pounds.

“You know better,” the mother says when the subject comes up.

It’s not entirely uncommon. The United Nations’ chief voice on the rights of older people, Claudia Mahler, issued a report in 2022 warning of elders being locked in their rooms and tied to trees in their yards, without citing the countries in which it was common.

Even for the wealthiest people in the richest places, the solutions offered for those with dementia are inadequate, amounting to salves for a disease with no cure.

Here, though, there is basically nothing. Rutabyama believes caring for his parents is his responsibility. Even if he

could afford a nursing home, the country has only a handful and the closest one is a day’s drive away.

As Africa’s longevity revolution makes itself known in a thousand ways, the problems that come with it are being dumped in a place where they have lots of company.

Elders, no longer able to walk, are trapped inside with no wheelchair. But what good would it do if sidewalks are missing, streets are cratered and homes are unnavigable shacks?

Untreated cataracts leave many blind. But how do you broach surgery when even a ride to the doctor is a quandary and even a simple pair of glasses is out of reach?

Dementia brings ostracization and accusation. But who can help if belief in witchcraft is wide, cognitive expertise is sparse and the language hasn’t even a word for the diagnosis?

Rutabyama doesn’t know the answer to those questions and doesn’t defend his choice to lock his mother up.

It is another flawed response to a question with no good answer.



Photo taken with a mobile phone on Aug. 25, 2025 shows workers checking an artificial intelligence (AI) sorting system developed through cooperation between Chinese tech giant Huawei and Norwegian partners on the Skallelv River in northern Norway. (Xinhua)

Tech fights invasive fish

AI helps save endangered wild salmon in Arctic rivers

SKALLELV, Norway, Sept 1, (Xinhua): On a late summer morning in Skallelv, a small village inside the Arctic Circle, the Skallelv River glitters under the pale sun. Beneath the icy water flowing quietly toward the Barents Sea, endangered wild Atlantic salmon struggle upstream to reach one of their breeding grounds.

Each year from June to September, the salmon undertake this arduous migration, overcoming natural obstacles to spawn. But in recent years, new risks have compounded their struggle. Rising water temperatures caused by climate change, environmental changes linked to fish farming, and most critically, the rapid spread of invasive pink salmon have mounted pressure on the native species.

The invasive pink salmon threatens wild Atlantic salmon on multiple fronts, Vegard Kjenner, chief technology officer of Huawei Norway, told Xinhua. It takes over prime spawning grounds, pollutes rivers and spreads disease through its carcasses, and competes aggressively for limited food, he explained.

To tackle the invasion, an artificial intelligence (AI) sorting system was introduced in the Skallelv River in 2021. The project, developed through cooperation between Chinese tech giant Huawei and Norwegian partners, is part of Huawei’s global TECH4ALL program, launched in 2019 to promote inclusivity and sustainability through innovative technology.

Experience

“After we were given funding from TECH4ALL to start this project, we searched across Norway for partners,” Kjenner said. “We found Simula, one of the top AI institutes in Norway, and TrollSystems, which has extensive experience in the fish farming industry.”

In addition, with the support of local fishing organizations, which provided thousands of images of different fish species, including Atlantic salmon, Arctic char, and pink salmon, they trained the AI algorithms to recognize and sort fish in real-time.

The system functions as a non-intrusive river barrier that guides fish into a monitored passage. Underwater cameras capture real-time images of groups of passing fish, which AI algorithms identify and sort within milliseconds. Native Atlantic salmon are then allowed upstream to complete their spawning

cycle, while invasive pink salmon are diverted into a containment cage for removal.

With an accuracy rate of 99.997 percent, the system has, by this summer, intercepted more than 4,000 pink salmon in the Skallelv River alone, effectively reducing the threat to native species.

For Bror Bonde, the lead river warden who has overseen the Skallelv for seven years, the difference is significant. “With manual sorting, you had to physically handle every native spawner. That was both labor-intensive and harmful to the fish,” he said.

Environment

With the AI system, fish can pass through unhindered. He said, “It’s better for the Atlantic salmon to self-regulate all the environmental stressors and to adapt to the freshwater after returning from the sea.”

The project has since developed into a pilot model applied in multiple rivers, winning support from Norway’s Ministry of Climate and Environment.

Looking ahead, Kjenner said that the next large-scale pink salmon migration is expected in 2027, and he hopes the system could be deployed widely by then.

Beyond sorting pink salmon, the technology has broader potential. “The algorithm we’ve developed can be trained to recognize any fish species, as long as there are enough pictures and materials,” Kjenner said. “In Norway, we also face challenges with escaped farmed salmon, which we don’t want entering the upper rivers. We are now training the AI to detect and separate farmed salmon from wild Atlantic salmon.”

From the Arctic rivers to tropical rainforests, technology is increasingly becoming a vital tool in tackling environmental challenges. In an active role participating in such biodiversity protection, Huawei’s TECH4ALL program has been applied in diverse environments worldwide, from wetlands to wildlife reserves.

“It is only our imagination that sets the limits for where we can use technology,” Kjenner said. “This project is just a concrete case showing that we are doing something good - and it works. I’m sure there are hundreds of other cases around the world where we can use technology. And it is fun.”

Polio cases

FMD spreads in South Africa

CAPE TOWN, Sept 2, (Xinhua): South Africa’s Minister of Agriculture John Steenhuisen on Monday voiced concern about the country’s spreading foot-and-mouth disease (FMD).

“At present, there are 274 unresolved outbreaks across KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng, Free State, North West, and Mpumalanga provinces. Positive cases have been confirmed in all cattle farming systems, including commercial beef herds, animal breeding, feedlots, dairy cattle, and communal herds,” Steenhuisen said at a media briefing in Cape Town, the country’s legislative capital.

Steenhuisen urged farmers to comply with regulations aimed at curbing the disease.

“Reports of farmers moving cattle showing clinical signs of the disease, or treating them privately without reporting, are deeply concerning and irresponsible. These actions not only contravene legal directives but risk entrenching FMD as endemic in South Africa,” said the minister.

While last year’s outbreak in the Eastern Cape has been contained and the Western and Northern Cape remain disease-free, Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal continue to face new cases under close monitoring.

South Africa launched its FMD vaccination campaign in late June, ordering more than 900,000 doses worth about 70 million rand (about 3.97 million U.S. dollars).

So far, around 500,000 have been administered in KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga, Limpopo, Gauteng, North West, and Free State provinces.



**Polio:** Pakistan has confirmed a new case of wild poliovirus type 1, bringing the total number of infections in the country so far this year to 24, health authorities said Monday.

The latest case involved a 20-month-old girl from Tank district of the northern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province.

A door-to-door polio immunization campaign has begun nationwide, aiming to vaccinate over 28 million children under five. In southern parts of KP, the campaign will run from Sept. 15 to 18.



**Swine fever:** African swine fever (ASF) has been detected at a large pig farm in Laubere parish, central Latvia, the country’s veterinary authority said Monday.

To contain the outbreak, more than 23,300 pigs at the Baltic Pork farm will be culled. A quarantine zone has been established, restricting the movement of pigs and pig products, and nearby farms are undergoing health and biosafety checks.

Baltic Pork representative Daiga Lubka said it is too early to estimate the overall impact and losses.

Mental health second leading cause of global disability

Over 1 billion people worldwide live with mental health disorders: WHO

GENEVA, Sept 2, (Xinhua): Over 1 billion people worldwide, nearly one in seven, are living with mental health disorders, with anxiety and depression posing a heavy burden on human health and economic development, according to two new reports released by the World Health Organization (WHO) on Tuesday.

The reports, World Mental Health Today and Mental Health Atlas 2024, highlight that mental health conditions are prevalent across all countries and communities, affecting people of all ages and income groups.

Mental health issues have become the second leading cause of long-term disability, driving up medical expenses for families and inflicting enormous economic losses worldwide. Beyond direct medical costs, indirect costs such as productivity losses are staggering. Depression and anxiety alone cost the global economy an estimated 1 trillion US dollars annually.

According to the reports, although the prevalence of mental health disorders varies by gender, women are disproportionately affected overall. Anxiety and depression are the most common categories of mental illnesses among both genders.

Suicide remains a devastating consequence, claiming more than 720,000 lives every year and ranking as a leading cause of death among young people. Despite global efforts, progress in reducing suicide mortality remains insufficient to meet the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal



A 35-year-old mother of five and a client of a specialized mental health clinic led by Amref Health Africa, digs soil with a hoe at a farm in Mundri, South Sudan, June 24, 2025. (AP)

of reducing suicide rates by one-third by 2030. At the current pace, only a 12-percent reduction will be achieved by the deadline.

To address these challenges, the WHO urges accelerated action through several key strategies. Specific measures include establishing equitable financing mechanisms, implementing legal and policy reforms to uphold human rights, sustaining investment in the mental health workforce, and expanding community-based and person-centered care.

“Transforming mental health services is one of the most pressing public health challenges,” WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in the report. “Investing in mental health means investing in people, communities and economies -- an investment no country can afford to neglect. Every government and every leader has a responsibility to act with urgency and to ensure that mental health care is treated not as a privilege, but as a basic right for all,” he added.

Drugs lifted AIDS patients death sentence

HIV survivors now face aging challenges

NKULAGIRIRE, Uganda, Sept 2, (AP): Past a smoldering pile of trash and two bleating goats, through a doorway beginning to buckle beneath the weight of the bricks above, is a darkened room where a skeletal, 70-year-old man lies on a pillowless bed above a floor littered with trash.

The lone window’s shutters are closed but enough shards of sun make it through holes in the corroded roof to see Joseph Malagho’s ribs poke at the skin of his torso and legs like twigs inside his olive green pants. As he struggles to sit up, leaves crinkle beneath him on a soiled sheet. His mattress sags. The air is thick and stale.

Malagho has no illusions about the difficulty of growing



Joseph Malagho, who is about 70 and living with HIV, sits in his bed under a mosquito net at his home in Nkulagirire, Uganda, Friday, Nov. 15, 2024. (AP)

old. But the fact that he is here at all is its own miracle.

Across Africa, millions who once faced the death sentence of an HIV infection have survived only to face something nearly as daunting: old age.

As infections have dropped markedly and antiretroviral drugs have reduced mortality, the turnaround of the AIDS crisis has helped build Africa’s longevity revolution. Lives that were expected to be cut short instead continued decades more, changing the demographics of those facing the disease and fueling the rush of people encountering health systems that were never built for old age.

Malagho isn’t sure when he was infected, but he was diagnosed about five years ago. His health has steadily declined since. He has tuberculosis now, too, and can barely stand.

He hasn’t left this room in months.

There is barely any soap for his wife to wash him with a rag. His lone source of entertainment, a small radio, has gone dead, and there’s no money for batteries. He has lost most of his teeth and can’t afford dentures, but there is little food to eat anyway.

“If there is food or not,” he says, “I don’t even care.”

He urinates into a small white bucket and his wife hurls it outside just as the first drops of rain begin to strafe the roof and start leaking to the space below.

Reach One Touch One sponsors Malagho and has dispatched a field worker, Grace Nabanoba, to check on him this day.

The organization distributes food and medicine to many of its beneficiaries and helps repair homes, install water tanks and provide basic items, like a bed for seniors who are sleeping on dirt floors. But there are limits to what it can do and Nabanoba feels helpless as she stands before Malagho.

She promises him batteries for his radio and exits the home. Sometimes, after visiting him, colleagues will ask her why she’s quiet and she’ll slink off to cry.

“Some situations,” she says, “are too hard to bear.”

Global experts join fossil hunt in China

China taps global expertise to build world-class dinosaur geopark

HARBIN, Sept 2, (Xinhua): On the sidelines of an international fossil protection forum in northeast China’s Heilongjiang Province, hundreds of participants eagerly picked up hammers and carefully scoured the ground for fish fossils, immersing themselves in the hands-on thrill of excavation at the China National Geological Park of Dinosaurs.

Jiayin, a county-level city in the province, is known as the “hometown of dinosaurs,” where China’s first dinosaur fossil was unearthed in 1902, and today, these prehistoric giants have become its emblem, drawing dinosaur enthusiasts from around the world.

Hundreds of paleontology and ge-

ology experts from China and eight other countries, including Russia, France, Germany and Belgium, joined the lively activity during the 4th Jiayin Forum on Fossil Protection and the Symposium on Tourism Geosciences, held on Aug. 27 and 28.

“Look at the blackened area. This is where fish fossils are most likely to be found,” said Sun Ge, honorary chairperson of the Popular Science Committee of the Chinese Society of Paleontology, as he guided the fieldwork.

At his cue, the crisp sounds of hammering echoed through the valley of the national park, as if bringing the ancient past vividly to life.

The forum was jointly established by



Photo taken on Aug. 13, 2017, shows the Dinosaur National Geology Park in Jiayin County, northeast China’s Heilongjiang Province. (Xinhua)

the Palaeontological Society of China, Jilin University, Shenyang Normal University, and a number of institutes of the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

Held previously in 2017, 2019 and 2023, the forum aims to bolster the protection of paleontological fossils, particularly those of dinosaurs, and their sites, promote geoscience research and public science education, and strengthen international exchange and cooperation.

Since the discovery of China’s first hadrosaurid dinosaur fossil in 1902, Jiayin has yielded more than 10 complete hadrosaurid specimens.

“Experts believe there is a large dinosaur graveyard here, with at least

100 more fossils yet to be excavated,” said Sun Kexin, a guide at the Jiayin Shenzhou Dinosaur Museum in the geological park.

China established the country’s first national dinosaur geopark in Jiayin in 2001, covering an area of 38.44 square km and serving multiple functions such as scientific research, popular science education and tourism.

“Since the first dinosaur fossil was discovered and excavated by Russian paleontologists, experts from home and abroad have been engaged in the excavation work in Jiayin with remarkable achievements made over the years,” said Shen Fengbin, a fossil restorer at the geological park.



# Turkey and Germany stay perfect



Britain's Patrick Whelan, right, and Germany's Dennis Schroeder, left, challenge for the ball during the Eurobasket, European Basketball Championship, Group B match between Germany and Great Britain in Tampere, Finland. (AP)

TAMPERE, Finland, Sept 2, (AP): Chicago Bulls center Nikola Vucevic scored 23 points to lead Montenegro to a much-needed 87-81 victory over Sweden at EuroBasket. Also, Serbia, Turkey and Germany extended their records to four group stage wins.

Vucevic also grabbed 15 rebounds and delivered four assists in Tampere, Finland, as Montenegro overcame a blip in the third quarter to post its first win at the continental tournament, keeping its hopes alive of reaching the round of 16.

Pelle Larsson led the Swedes with 28 points.

Montenegro had a 40-34 halftime lead but Sweden was the better team returning from the locker room and out-scored its rival in the third quarter 31-24 to take the lead. A strong effort by Kyle Allman, who scored 10 points



From left, Kyle Allman Jr. of Montenegro, Melwin Pantzar of Sweden and Marko Simonovic of Montenegro during the Eurobasket, European Basketball Championship Group B match between Sweden and Montenegro in Tampere, Finland. (AP)

in less than two minutes for an 80-77 lead with 1:50 left, helped Montenegro

recover and win the contest in Group B.

The group phase of 24 teams is being played in four countries. The top four teams from each group advance to the knockout phase in Riga, Latvia, from Sept. 6-14.

Montenegro can qualify with another victory against winless Britain, arguably the weakest team in the group.

Serbia remained unbeaten and knocked the winless Czech Republic out of playoffs contention after a comfortable 82-60 win.

A lineup with Nikola Jovic, Nikola Jokic and Nikola Milutinovic propelled the Serbs to 27-5 after the first period. Milutinovic finished with 12 points, 7 rebounds and 2 steals.

Serbia's win also lifted Latvia into the round of 16.

Germany stayed unbeaten in Group B with a 120-57 victory over Britain, which resisted in the early stages before collapsing. Franz Wagner had a double-double of 18 points and 10 assists in just 18 minutes of play and Tristan Da Silva scored 25 points for the Germans.

Already qualified from Group A,

Turkey made light work of Estonia by 84-64 in Riga. Turkey dominated and built a 12-point lead after 10 minutes.

Houston Rockets center Alperen Sengun was again decisive for Turkey with 21 points, eight rebounds and five assists.

It was the first time since 2009 that Turkey managed to secure four wins in a single EuroBasket. Estonia dropped to 1-3 ahead of its final group game against Portugal on Wednesday. Turkey will face Serbia in a game that determines the group winner.

Latvia defeated Portugal 78-62 to improve its record to 2-2, with Kristaps Porzingis collecting 21 points, nine rebounds, three assists and a block for the hosts.

Lithuania clinched a spot in the round of 16 and handed host Finland its first loss by 81-78. Azuolas Tubelis posted 12 points and 11 rebounds, and Rokas Jokubaitis 16 points and nine assists before he was forced off injured in the final period.

Finland star Lauri Markkanen, held to 7 points in the first half, rallied to finish with 17, 11 rebounds and six assists.

## Starc retires from T20 intl's

# Pakistan's Asif Ali retires from international cricket

ISLAMABAD, Sept 2, (AP): Pakistan batter Asif Ali retired from international cricket on Monday after 79 white-ball matches in a career often criticized for being too carefree.

The 33-year-old Asif represented Pakistan in 58 Twenty20s and 21 one-day internationals.

His T20 highlight was 25 off seven balls during a win over Afghanistan at the 2021 T20 World Cup in the United Arab Emirates.

His last international was at the 2023 Asia Games.

The middle-order power-hitter scored 577 runs in T20s with a top score of 41 not out against Zimbabwe in 2018. In ODIs, he made 382 runs with 21 sixes and 22 fours. His last ODI was against Australia in 2022.

"Wearing the Pakistan jersey has been the greatest honour of my life and serving my country on the cricket field has been my proudest chapter," Asif said on X.

"To my family and friends, who stood with me in moments of joy and in the deepest of trials, including the loss of my beloved daughter during the World Cup, your strength carried me forward."

Veteran Australia fast bowler Mitchell Starc has retired from Twenty20 international cricket in a bid to extend his career in the test and one-day formats.

Starc and test skipper Pat Cummins, two members of Australia's long-serving pace bowling triumvirate, were missing from the national T20 squad announced Tuesday for a three-game series in New Zealand starting Oct. 1.

The 35-year-old Starc, who took 79 wickets in 65 T20 internationals for Australia, said test cricket was his priority and he needed to prepare for an intense international schedule over the next two years.

Cummins has been rested since the test series in the Caribbean last month and has experienced some lower back pain, limiting his preparation for the Ashes series against England starting in November.

Starc wants to be at full fitness for the Ashes and test series in India next year and the next ODI World Cup in 2027, and decided something had to give.

"I have loved every minute of every T20 game I have played for Australia, particularly the 2021 World Cup - not just because we won but the incredible group and the fun along the way," he said. "Looking ahead (T20 retirement) is my best way forward to remain fresh, fit and at my best for those campaigns."

"It also gives the bowling group time to prepare for the T20 World Cup in the matches leading into that tournament."

Starc has been instrumental in Australia's success, and is second on the list of all-time wicket-takers for the national team in the T20 format. The left-arm paceman's full-length deliveries have cemented his reputation as a strike bowler.

"Mitch should be incredibly proud of his T20 career for Australia. He was an integral member of the 2021 World Cup winning side and, as across all his cricket, had a great skill for blowing games open with his wicket taking ability," Australia selection chairman George Bailey said. "We will acknowledge and celebrate his T20 career at the right time, but pleasingly he remains focused on continuing to play test and ODI cricket for a long as possible."



In this file photo, Australia's Mitchell Starc smiles during Day 2 of the second cricket Test match against West Indies at National Cricket Stadium in St. George's, Grenada. (AP)

## Best of the Rest

**Ex-Chelsea star Willian on Gremio radar:** Gremio is considering a move to sign former Chelsea midfielder Willian on a free transfer, according to media reports in Brazil. The 37-year-old has been without a club since parting ways with Fulham in May after just four months in his second spell at the Premier League club.

He has also attracted the interest of clubs in the MLS and Saudi Arabia, according to Globo Esporte.

Gremio is currently 13th in Brazil's Serie A standings, just three points clear of the relegation zone.

Willian has been capped 70 times for Brazil in a career that has included spells at Corinthians, Shakhtar Donetsk, Chelsea and Arsenal, among other clubs.(Xinhua)

□ □ □

**'Paraguay motivated for World Cup return':** Paraguay captain Gustavo Gomez said Monday that his team is ready to return to the FIFA World Cup finals after a 16-year absence.

The Guaraniens need only a point from their final two qualifiers against Ecuador in Asuncion on Thursday and Peru in Lima five days later to clinch a place in football's showpiece next year.

"We're very motivated," Gomez told a news conference on Monday. "We can return to a World Cup after 16 years and that fills us with confidence." The Palmeiras center-back said that Paraguay would need to be at its best to reach its objective against Ecuador, despite its home advantage at the Defensores del Chaco stadium.

While Paraguay is fifth in the 10-team South American group, Ecuador is second and already guaranteed a berth at next year's tournament in the United States, Mexico and Canada.

"It's an important match and expectations are high, but we're close to achieving our goal, and we're taking it one match at a time," the 32-year-old said.

"Ecuador has top-tier players, and we're preparing in the best possible way to maintain our momentum. Paraguay last qualified for the World Cup finals in 2010, when it was eliminated by eventual champion Spain in the quarterfinals. (Xinhua)

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## Sparks rally past Storm

# Hiedeman has 20 points and career-high 10 assists for first double-double as Lynx overpowers Wings

MINNEAPOLIS, Sept 2, (AP): Napheesa Collier scored 25 points, Natisha Hiedeman added 20 points and a career-high 10 assists for her first double-double, and the Minnesota Lynx beat the Dallas Wings 96-71.

Courtney Williams added 15 points and nine assists for the Lynx (32-8), who already wrapped up the No. 1 overall seed for the playoffs. Bridget Carleton had 12 points.

Paige Bueckers scored 17 points for the last-place Wings (9-33). Maddy Siegrist, Amy Okonkwo and Diamond Miller each added 12.

Collier and Williams both shot 7 for 10 as the Lynx made 55% (36 for 65) but Collier was 4 for 4 from 3-point range. Hiedeman was 4 for 5 behind the arc and Carleton 4 for 8 as the Lynx went 14 for 24 (58%). They also had 29 assists.

Dallas was 3 for 15 from long range and shot 39% overall.

Minnesota rested Kayla McBride, and DiJonai Carrington stepped into the starting lineup but did not play in the second half with a shoulder issue.

Collier had 11 points in the first quarter when the Lynx scored the last two baskets to take a 25-21 lead.

Dallas tied the score at 32 on Bueckers' jumper with four minutes left in the second quarter but Williams, Carleton and Hiedeman hit consecutive 3s for the Lynx. After Siegrist scored inside for the Wings, Collier hit a 3 for a 44-34 lead just inside the two minute mark. It was 48-41 at the break.

Hiedeman had 10 points in the third quarter with her late 3 making it 71-59 entering the fourth.

Minnesota dominated the fourth quarter, outscoring the Wings 25-12.

The Lynx start a three-game road trip at Las Vegas on Thursday when the Wings



Seattle Storm forward Nneka Ogumike, left, and guard Brittney Sykes double team Los Angeles Sparks guard Rae Burrell forcing her into a turnover during the second quarter in Seattle. (AP)

are at Golden State.

### Sparks 91, Storm 85

In Seattle, Dearica Hamby had 27 points and 11 rebounds, Rickea Jackson added 23 points and the Los Angeles Sparks beat the Seattle Storm.

Seattle led 85-80 with 2:47 to play but Hamby scored five points and Jackson four in an 11-0 closing run to pull the Sparks within 1 1/2 games of the Storm and Indiana for the final two playoff spots. Seattle missed its last five shots.

Kelsey Plum added 14 points for Los Angeles (19-20) and Rae Burrell had 11. Hamby had 11 rebounds as the Sparks dominated the boards 37-23. The also had a 60-30 advantage on points in the paint.

Nneka Ogumike had 21 points on five

first half 3-pointers and two second half three-point plays for the Storm (22-20). Skylar Diggins also had 21 points and Ezi Magbegor added 11.

Gabby Williams had two baskets and an assist to fuel a 10-0 run for the Storm, who led 25-20 after one quarter.

Ogumike had three 3-pointers in less than a minute, making her 5 for 5, for a 36-25 lead 3 1/2 minutes into the second quarter. The Storm had six 3s in the quarter with Erica Wheeler's in the closing seconds making it 53-39 at the half.

Diggins opened the second half with a 3 for a 17-point lead but the Sparks hit their first five shots and were 12 for 17 in the quarter. The final shot was a buzzer-beating one-handed push shot 3-pointer by

Jackson from beyond the top of the key, to cut the Storm lead to 73-68 entering the fourth quarter.

Los Angeles plays at second-place Atlanta on Wednesday and Friday. The Storm are home against New York on Friday.

### Dream 93, Sun 76

In Uncasville, Rhyné Howard scored 23 points, Naz Hillmon and Allisha Gray each added 17 points, and the Atlanta Dream closed on a 17-2 run to beat the Connecticut Sun.

Atlanta (26-14), which is headed to the playoffs for a third straight year, moved into a second-place tie with Las Vegas (26-14) in the WNBA standings with four games to play. The Dream have not won a playoff game since the 2018 season.

Connecticut was within 76-74 with 5:07 remaining before Atlanta scored the next 17 points. Howard and Jordin Canada each scored six points during the run, and Hillmon added the other five.

Canada finished with 15 points off the bench and Brionna Jones had 10 points and 11 rebounds for Atlanta.

Tina Charles led Connecticut (10-30) with 22 points and eight rebounds. Leila Lacan added 17 points, Marina Mabrey had 12 and Saniya Rivers 10.

Charles, Mabrey and Lacan each scored in double figures in the first half to help Connecticut build a 48-42 lead. The Sun closed the first half on an 8-0 run, with five points from Lacan.

Canada completed a three-point play with 4.4 seconds left in the third quarter to give Atlanta a 67-64 lead. But Rivers raced the other way to just get a shot up before the buzzer to get the Sun within one.

It was the first of three matchups between Atlanta and Connecticut in the final five games of the regular season.

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## Women's ODI World Cup prize money soars past men's to \$13.8 million

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates, Sept 2, (AP): Cricketers at the Women's World Cup in India and Sri Lanka will play for \$13.8 million in prize money from this month, two years after the men played for \$10 million.

The 2022 Women's World Cup in New Zealand had an overall purse of \$3.5 million.

"This four-fold increase in prize money is a landmark moment for women's cricket and reflects our

clear commitment to its long-term growth," International Cricket Council chairman Jay Shah said in a statement.

"Our message is simple: Women cricketers must know they will be treated on par with men if they choose this sport professionally."

"Women's cricket is on a remarkable upward trajectory, and with this step we are confident the momentum will accelerate."

The Women's World Cup starts on Sept. 30 when co-hosts India and Sri Lanka meet in Guwahati. Australia is the defending champion.

The winner of the 13th ODI World Cup will receive \$4.48 million, and the runner-up \$2.24 million.

The losing semifinalists will be awarded \$1.12 million each. Group stage competitors earn a guaranteed \$250,000.

Each game winner in the

group stage will receive another \$34,314.

After the group stage, the fifth- and sixth-placed teams will be awarded \$700,000 each, and seventh- and eighth-placed teams \$280,000 each.

"The uplift (in prize money)," Shah said, "underscores our ambition to deliver a world-class ICC Women's Cricket World Cup and to inspire the next generation of players and fans."



# Arab Club Championship draw pits Kuwait Club and Kazma in Group A

Al-Hajri welcomes teams, confirms readiness

**By Khaled Al-Enezi**  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2:** The draw for the 40th Arab Club Championship for League and Cup Winners in handball was held at Al-Raya Hotel, placing host club Kuwait Club in Group A alongside Qatar’s Al-Ahli, Iraq’s Naft Al-Basra, and fellow Kuwaiti side Kazma. The tournament will run from September 12–22 at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Indoor Hall Complex.

Group B features Al-Ahly Bank of Egypt, Iraq’s Al-Hashd, Qatar SC, Kuwait’s Al-Sulaibikhat and Al-Shabab, and Syria’s Al-Nawaeir.

The draw ceremony was overseen by Arab Handball Federation Secretary General Fakher Al-Ghashi, Competitions Committee member Ali Al-Alouyat, and Tournament Director Samih



Al-Ghashi, Al-Alouyat, and Al-Hajri during the draw ceremony.

Al-Hajri, in the presence of club representatives including Hussein Sioan (Al-Sulaibikhat) and Hamza Al-Wazzan (Kazma). Six international refereeing teams from Hungary, France, Poland, Kuwait, Egypt, and Qatar will officiate the matches.

Welcoming the participants, Samih Al-Hajri said Kuwait was proud to host the championship for the second consecutive year:

“The board of directors, under the leadership of Khaled Al-Ghanim, has ensured all obstacles to organizing the event are removed and that preparations are completed at the highest level. This reflects Kuwait’s commitment and passion for hosting such a prestigious Arab sporting event.”

He added that admission to all matches will be free of charge, describing fan presence as essential

to the success of the championship.

Arab Handball Federation official Ali Al-Alouyat confirmed that the event promises to be special, especially following the success of last year’s edition in Kuwait. He explained that each club will register 28 players, with the top four from each group qualifying for the quarterfinals.

Al-Sulaibikhat team manager Hussein Sioan described the draw as balanced and expressed confidence in the Kuwaiti teams’ chances of progressing to the last eight. He also highlighted Al-Sulaibikhat’s return to international competition after a 15-year absence, thanking the Arab Federation and Kuwait SC for their efforts.

Meanwhile, Outaiba Nader, Vice President of the Iraqi Handball Federation, welcomed the participation of Al-Hashd and Naft Al-Basra, saying:

“We fully support the Iraqi teams and hope they will compete strongly. We also look forward to a high-level competition that reflects the true strength of Arab handball.”

Clubs surpass \$4b in spending

# Liverpool completes Isak signing in record-breaking summer spree

LONDON, Sept 2, (AP): Liverpool saved the biggest transfer until last in its remarkable \$570 million summer spree, finally signing Alexander Isak from Newcastle for a British-record fee as the window closed on Monday with spending by Premier League clubs soaring beyond \$4 billion.

The biggest saga of Europe’s summer transfer window ended with Isak completing his dream move to the English champion for 125 million pounds (\$170 million), with the deal announced in the final throes of a chaotic deadline day.

“I feel amazing. It’s been a long journey to get here,” said Isak, who effectively went on strike at Saudi-controlled Newcastle over the summer as he agitated for a move to Anfield.

On the back of winning the Premier League for a record-tying 20th time, Liverpool has aggressively overhauled its squad and blown its rivals out of the water, spending more than any other team in Europe. Germany playmaker Florian Wirtz and young French striker Hugo Ekitike have also joined in deals worth more than \$100 million.

One transfer Liverpool failed to get over the line, however, was for England defender Marc Guehi, who will stay at Crystal Palace for the final year of his contract because the London team couldn’t secure a replacement.

English soccer has unrivalled spending power owing to its huge domestic and international broadcasting deals and its top-flight clubs have demonstrated their financial might this summer. They’ve smashed the previous single-window record spend of 2.36 billion pounds (now \$3.2 billion) in 2023 by splashing out around 3 billion pounds (\$4.15 billion) over the past few months.

The 20 Premier League teams spent more than those in the top leagues in Spain (\$800 million), Italy (\$1.4 billion), France (\$750 million) and Germany (\$1 billion) combined, according to expenditure figures on the Transfermarkt web-



Newcastle’s Alexander Isak, center, challenges for the ball with Manchester United’s Casemiro during the English Premier League soccer match between Manchester United and Newcastle United, in Manchester, England. (AP)

site.

Arsenal was second to Liverpool with its summer outlay of more than \$300 million on players such as Eberechi Eze, Viktor Gyokeres and Martin Zubimendi. The club’s eighth and likely final signing of the window was a loan deal for Ecuador defender Piero Hincapié from beleaguered Bayer Leverkusen.

Flush with cash from the Isak transfer, Newcastle signed Yoane Wissa from Brentford for a reported \$55 million pounds (\$75 million) as a second striker addition along with Nick Woltemade, who joined for a club-record fee on Saturday.

Other highlights on Monday included Tottenham signing France striker Randal Kolo Muani on loan from Paris Saint-Germain, while Aston Villa was very active in signing midfielder Harvey Elliott on loan from Liverpool, winger Jadon Sancho on loan from Manchester United

and former United center back Victor Lindelöf on a free transfer.

United continued trimming its squad by offloading Antony to Real Betis on a permanent deal and Rasmus Højlund to Napoli on loan, while signing Belgian goalkeeper Senne Lammens from Royal Antwerp in a bid to fix its issues in that department.

Manchester City signed Gianluigi Donnarumma from Paris Saint-Germain after selling long-time goalkeeper Ederson Moraes to Fenerbahçe, in a switch that seems at odds with the playing approach by the once-dominant Premier League team.

Most Premier League clubs were in the market for players on deadline day in what has been one of the most chaotic transfer windows in history.

In Germany, Bayern Munich succeeded in signing Senegal forward Nicolas Jackson from Chelsea after

an on-off transfer saga.

Jackson arrived in what both clubs described as a season-long loan, giving Bayern backup for Harry Kane and a wider range of tactical options in attack.

Earlier in the window, Bayern signed winger Luis Díaz from Liverpool and defender Jonathan Tah arrived on a free transfer from Bayer Leverkusen, the 2023-24 Bundesliga champion where a summer of upheaval saw the exits of other star players including Wirtz and Granit Xhaka as well as - on Monday - the firing of coach Erik ten Hag.

Marseille pulled off the biggest move of deadline day in France by signing 2018 World Cup winner Benjamin Pavard.

The defender joined on a loan from Inter Milan. According to L’Equipe newspaper, the deal includes a purchase option set at 15 million euros.

## Celebration of unity and sports

# Islamic Solidarity Games return to Saudi Arabia after 20 years

RIYADH, Sept 2: Saudi Arabia is gearing up to host the sixth edition of the Islamic Solidarity Games, scheduled to take place in Riyadh from November 7 to 21, 2025. The event will bring together over 3,000 athletes from 57 Islamic countries, competing across 23 sports, including athletics, swimming, 3x3 basketball, handball, volleyball, table tennis, futsal, fencing, karate, judo, wushu, taekwondo, boxing, Muay Thai, wrestling, jiu-jitsu, weightlifting, equestrian events, camel racing, duathlon, e-sports, as well as para-athletics and para-weightlifting.

The Islamic Solidarity Games are the third-largest multi-sport event in the world, after the Olympics and the Asian Games, providing a major platform to celebrate unity, sportsmanship, and friendly competition among the Islamic world.

The Games have a rich history: the first edition was held in Saudi Arabia in 2005, while the second edition in Iran (2009) was canceled due to organizational issues. Subsequent editions took place in Indonesia (2013), Azerbaijan (2017), and Turkey (2021).



The mascot of the Islamic Solidarity Games.

One new face

# Donald fills out Europe’s team with familiar names

LONDON, Sept 2, (AP): European captain Luke Donald is bringing the same 12 faces - one different name - to the Ryder Cup with hopes of creating a new experience while getting the same outcome as when they dismantled the Americans two years ago in Rome.

Donald filled out the rest of his 12-man team Monday with six captain’s picks, all of whom contributed to a resounding victory at Marco Simone in 2023.

There were no surprises. Donald asked Matt Fitzpatrick to play the last two weeks at the British Masters and European Masters, and he obliged by delivering a pair of top-six finishes. The former U.S. Open champion was the final pick Donald announced.

The other choices were Shane Lowry, Jon Rahm, Sepp Straka, Viktor Hovland and Ludvig Åberg. It’s the first time Europe has returned 11 of the 12 players from a previous Ryder Cup team.

The exception was Rasmus Højgaard of Denmark, who qualified for the team in the final week. His identical twin, Nicolai, played on the team in Rome.

The Ryder Cup has been increasingly difficult to win on the road - Europe’s only victory on U.S. soil required the greatest comeback by a visiting team in 2012 at Medinah - and it figures to be especially difficult at Bethpage Black in New York, renowned for its hostile crowd.

“Even though we have a lot of continuity, this is a different animal,” Donald said. “We understand how difficult it is.”

The matches are Sept. 26-28. Europe has a 12-9-1 record against the Americans dating to 1979, when continental Europe was added to what previously had been only Britain and Ireland.

“If we’re sitting in New York on the Sunday night with the Ryder Cup in our team room, I’ll be a very happy man,” said Lowry, one of five Europeans without a win this year.

Højgaard is the only Ryder Cup rookie for Europe, its fewest since Nicolas Colsaerts was the sole rookie at Medinah in 2012. That was by design, as it’s far easier to bring in a newcomer before a home crowd. Europe had four rookies at Marco Simone.

“You have to understand who you are playing against, what course you’re playing and what the environment is going to be like,” Donald said. “Understanding all of that had a big factor in choosing the guys I did. They understand they can go head-to-head. I think they feel like they can compete with these guys.”

“That was significant in my thinking why they deserved to be on that team.”

The other five players who automatically qualified were Rory McIlroy, Tommy Fleetwood, Robert MacIntyre, Justin Rose and Tyrrell Hatton.

Among those under consideration were Marco Penge with his two European tour titles this season and Matt Wallace, a runner-up at the European Masters on Sunday. He finished 12th in the standings and broke down while talking about his desire to play on the team.

“I called him 10 to 15 minutes after that emotional interview he did and I felt very emotional for him,” Donald said. “It shows to me what the Ryder cup means to these guys.”

While the team is nearly the same, Donald said this will be a new Ryder Cup for Europe that could feature different partnerships and other “techniques” to prepare for a road game. Most of his players will be at the BMW PGA Championship at Wentworth next week, and he plans a trip to Bethpage Black before Ryder Cup week.

All six of Donald’s captains picks were made available on a virtual call, all with big smiles.

“These are the greatest days of our lives,” Donald said. “We unbelievably enjoy the Ryder Cup. As fun and as good as Rome was, I want to make this an even better experience.”

Lowry, Straka, Åberg, Hovland and Fitzpatrick placed No. 7-11 on Europe’s Ryder Cup rankings. Rahm, a two-time major champion who now plays on the Saudi-backed LIV Golf League, is playing in his fourth straight Ryder Cup, but this was the first time he needed a captain’s pick.



Alex Noren, of Sweden, hits from the bunker on the fourth hole during the final round of the PGA Championship golf tournament at the Quail Hollow Club in Charlotte, N.C. (AP)

54 teams compete for 16 World Cup places

# Europe resumes World Cup qualifying

GENEVA, Sept 2, (AP): European soccer now focuses on qualifying for the 2026 World Cup with recent champions France, Germany and Spain among the nations starting a six-game, 11-week sprint to advance to the tournament being played across North America.

The European qualifying program returns Thursday with six days of games involving 54 teams - 24 of them kicking a first ball on their intended road to play on soccer’s biggest stage in the United States, Canada and Mexico starting June 11.

Italy began its campaign - shakily - in June and resumes its quest to avoid a third straight failure to qualify already trailing nine points behind group leader Norway.

England opened in March and looks to add to three straight wins with no goals conceded for coach Thomas Tuchel.

Among those starting their qualifying program are top-tier teams who played a thrilling set of Nations League games in March and June.



Germany’s Nick Woltemade, front, attends a training session of the German national soccer team in Herzogenaurach, Germany ahead of the World Cup 2026 qualifying match against Slovakia. (AP)

Spain, the 2010 World Cup winner, begins at Bulgaria on Thursday when 2014 champion Germany starts at Slovakia.

France, the 2018 title winner, starts Friday away against Ukraine in Les Bleus’ first game in the

competition since losing an epic final against Argentina in December 2022.

Ukraine will host that game in Wroclaw in neutral Poland because of security concerns at home during the Russian military invasion. Rus-

sia’s teams were banned by UEFA and FIFA from all international competitions in February 2022 when the war began.

Europe has 16 entries in the first 48-team men’s World Cup, three more than in the 32-team format played in 2022.

The 12 first-place teams when qualifying groups end in November advance direct to the tournament.

The 12 runners-up go to the play-offs scheduled in March, joined by four winners of Nations League groups played last year. Those extra teams could include, remarkably, San Marino, 210th and last of the men’s national teams ranked by FIFA.

The 16 European playoffs teams will be seeded into four knockout brackets of four teams each. They play single-game semifinals and finals on March 26 and 31, to decide the four remaining World Cup slots.

The extra World Cup entries given by FIFA, and Nations League knockout stage expanded by UEFA, have changed the qualifying formula.

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Naomi Osaka, of Japan, returns a shot against Coco Gauff, of the United States, during the fourth round of the US Open tennis championships in New York. (AP)

# Sports

## Kuwait fencing team continues impressive run



Kuwait fencing team.

MANAMA, Sept 2, (KUNA): Kuwait's fencing team continued its impressive run at the West Asian Championship, hosted by Bahrain and running through September 4.

On the third day of the tournament at Al-Najma Sports Club, the national team added six medals to its tally, bringing the total to 21.

Sahar Al-Omair claimed gold in the Under-15 girls' saber, while Abdulaziz Duaij took gold in the Under-15 boys' saber.

In the Under-15 boys' epee, Khaled Al-Houli earned silver, and Youssef Al-Shammari secured bronze. Bronze medals were also won by Shaikha Al-Batty in the Under-15 girls' epee and Nour Al-Najjar in the Under-15 girls' foil.

## Must-win day for Kuwait against Yemen



Kuwaiti goes for header as teammates and an opponent look on.

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

JEDDAH, Sept 2: Kuwait's U-20 national team goes into today's clash with Yemen with no option but victory. The match kicks off at 4:30 PM at the Prince Sultan bin Abdulaziz Sports City Stadium in Al-Mahala, marking the final round of Group A in the U-20 Gulf Cup. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia faces Qatar in the

group's other fixture.

Kuwait is currently third in the group with 2 points, trailing Saudi Arabia (4 points) and Yemen (3 points), while Qatar sits at the bottom with 1 point.

Kuwait started the tournament with a 2-2 draw against Qatar, followed by a 1-1 draw with Saudi Arabia, leaving today's result crucial for advancing. A win would put the team firmly in control of its semi-final ambitions.

Coach Croatian Verdo Milin is confident in the squad's abilities, noting that the team has shown impressive form in both previous matches. Against Qatar, Kuwait led twice but was denied victory as Qatar equalized each time.

All four teams still have a shot at the semi-finals: Yemen needs a draw or win, Qatar must win to advance, and Saudi Arabia can progress with either a win or a draw.

## Kahn demands a turnaround as sell-out triggers concerns

BERLIN, Sept 2, (Xinhua): After a tense deadline day, goalkeeper legend Oliver Kahn has called for new structures in German football and urged more risk-taking and long-term thinking in the sport.

While the English Premier League broke its 2023 transfer record during the 2025 summer transfer window, the German league and other European leagues lost ground. Even the EFL Championship clubs, England's second division, spent around 309 million euros this summer.

In comparison, the Premier League is expected to end with a transfer income of 2.04 billion, while the German league is projected to gain revenues of 1.03 billion.

Former Bayern keeper and German international, Kahn, claims German football plays it safe far too much and "has unlearned to take manageable risks." The 56-year-old, a 2001 UEFA Champions League winner and former Bayern chairman (2020-2023), said the German league is content with its role as a runner-up.

"German football is maintaining its status quo, while the Premier League is playing its leading role," the 86-capped player added in a LinkedIn posting.

From his perspective, the Premier League is offering quick fixes, as approval from 14 of the 20 clubs is sufficient; Germany's 36 clubs (first

and second division) generate little consensus rather than progress.

After losing several key players, including Florian Wirtz, Nick Woltemade, Xavi Simons, Granit Xhaka, and Hugo Ekitike, German media called the country's first division a "farmers league." Leverkusen CEO Simon Rolfes mentioned that German clubs ultimately fell short of withstanding the Premier League's dominance "as there is no chance to keep a player wanting to depart." Bayern board member for sports, Max Eberl, explained Bayern's restrained approach with "financial farsightedness." Former Borussia Dortmund CEO and German Football League Association vice-president Hans-Joachim Watzke mentioned a salary cap in European football, and said German football missed developments because "we like to stew in our own juice." Rolfes said the future of the German league depends on "the development of top-class players educated by the clubs." Kahn called for better governance, higher investments, and improved international marketing. "Bayern is maintaining its national leading position but is slowed down on the international stage." Due to the worrying transfer trend, German football is reigniting the debate over the country's 50-plus-one rule, which requires clubs to hold a majority of

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

MYANMAR, Sept 2: The Kuwait Olympic soccer team launches its campaign in the AFC U-23 Asian Cup qualifiers today, taking on host nation Myanmar at 12:30 PM at Thuwunna Stadium in the opening match of Group A.

Kuwait will face Afghanistan in the second round on September 6, before concluding the group stage against Japan on September 9. The 11 group winners, along with the four best runners-up, will advance to the finals set to take place in Saudi Arabia next year.

Coach Croatian Dario Bisic has named a 23-player squad, excluding Bader Al-Mutairi, Adel Al-Shammari, and Ali Hassan. The squad includes: Abdulrahman Ajaj, Hussein Konkoni, Dhari Al-Misri, Bandar Al-Barazi, Moham-

## Osaka, Swiatek roll into US Open quarterfinals

Sinner back in US Open last 8 by routing Bublik

NEW YORK, Sept 2, (AP): Naomi Osaka and Iga Swiatek rolled into the quarterfinals at the U.S. Open, showing off what once made each of them the top-ranked women's tennis player in the world.

Osaka dominated Coco Gauff 6-3, 6-2 in their highly anticipated showdown Monday in Arthur Ashe Stadium. Swiatek rallied from down 3-1 in the first set to beat Ekaterina Alexandrova 6-3, 6-1.

"At the beginning, I felt like she was playing really fast," said Swiatek, who is seeking her second U.S. Open title and seventh in a Grand Slam. "I wanted to find my rhythm, but later on I really felt like I was in my bubble and in my zone."

Osaka, in the quarterfinals at a major for the first time since 2021, is set to face No. 11 Karolina Muchova of the Czech Republic for a spot in the semifinals. Up next for Swiatek is American Amanda Anisimova in a rematch of her 6-0, 6-0 victory in the Wimbledon final.

The No.8-seeded Anisimova reached her first U.S. Open quarterfinal by beating No. 16 Beatriz Haddad Maia 6-0, 6-3.

Venus Williams and Leylah Fernandez advanced to the quarterfinals of women's doubles by beating the 12th-seeded duo of Ekaterina Alexandrova and Zhang Shuai. Afterward, Venus said it was time for her sister, Serena, to show up.

On the men's side, Jannik Sinner was so dominant Monday night at the U.S. Open that his opponent had to remind him after the match that he's not that bad of a player.

Sinner sure made Alexander Bublik look like one, though.

Sinner overwhelmed the only player other than Carlos Alcaraz who has defeated him this season, routing Bublik 6-1, 6-1, 6-1 to return to the quarterfinals of the tournament he won last year.

The top-seeded Sinner's victory took just 1 hour, 21 minutes, the second-shortest completed match in the tournament. A first-round victory for Tomas Machac was a minute shorter.

"At times I felt like today I was playing some great tennis, and I managed to break him very early, which



Jannik Sinner, of Italy, returns a shot to Alexander Bublik, of Kazakhstan, during the fourth-round of the U.S. Open tennis championships in New York. (AP)

then gave me the confidence to serve a little bit better and play from the back of the court a bit better," Sinner said.

"It was a faster, or a fast match."

Sinner lost to Bublik in June in Halle, Germany, in a warm-up tournament before Wimbledon, but that was played on a grass court. Trying to beat the defending U.S. Open champion on a hard court is an entirely different story - and almost impossible these days.

Sinner has won 25 straight Grand Slam matches on that surface, including the last two Australian Open titles, along with his first U.S. Open trophy last year.

He will face fellow Italian Lorenzo Musetti, the No. 10 seed, on Wednesday. The other quarterfinal that day will pit No. 8 Alex de Minaur against No. 25 Felix Auger-Aliassime.

Bublik, the No. 23 seed from Kazakhstan, had been one of the hottest players in tennis, with an ATP Tour-leading 11 straight victories and three titles, which is tied for the second-best this year behind Alcaraz's six.

He had won all 55 service games coming into this match, yet Sinner broke him eight times.

Bublik could only smile at times, including after the match, when he told Sinner at the net that "I'm not bad."

But he wasn't nearly good enough against Sinner, who had an 86-46 advantage in points won. Bublik helped by committing 13 double-faults.

Sinner noted that Bublik had a late finish Saturday night in his five-set victory over No. 14 seed Tommy Paul, and tried to test his energy level Monday in his first night match of this tournament.

"I tried to move him around, trying to see how he moves, trying to put it more on the physical side," Sinner said. "Today I played some good tennis at times. At times he gave me some free points."

Sinner improved to 35-4 this year. Alcaraz beat him in the French Open final and also in Rome and Cincinnati - where Sinner was ill and had to stop playing in the first set.

Canadian 25th-seeded Felix Auger-Aliassime advanced by defeating Andrey Rublev 7-5, 6-3, 6-4 in a match in Arthur Ashe Stadium that took just over two hours.

Auger-Aliassime won for just the second time in nine career matches against Rublev, the No. 15 seed who slammed his racket after losing a point in the second set.

"As I won the first set, I felt like I was in control of the match," said Auger-Aliassime, who at age 25 is in the quarterfinals of a Grand Slam tournament for the fourth time. "Good win considering our head-to-head, considering how good he is as a player."

Alex de Minaur of Australia and Lorenzo Musetti of Italy advanced to the quarters by winning in straight sets. De Minaur is set to play Auger-Aliassime next.

### Best of the Rest

**Second Fiji front-rower suspended:** Fiji lost a second front-rower to suspension at the Women's Rugby World Cup after hooker Bitila Tawake was issued a four-game ban on Tuesday.

Tawake received a 20-minute red card for a dangerous

shoulder-to-head tackle on Scotland counterpart Elis Martin on Saturday in Manchester.

A fast-track disciplinary hearing on Sunday set a three-game suspension but Tawake did not accept it, prompting a full in-person hearing on Monday. That panel suspended her for four games, the fourth forfeited if she completes World Rugby's tackle school. (AP)

### Host Myanmar looms in opener

## Kuwait begins quest for AFC U-23 Asian Cup finals



Kuwaiti player kicks the ball during the team's final practice.

med Al-Shuraifi, Nasser Al-Enezi, Saleh Al-Mutahib, Abdullah Faris, Muneer Al-Subaie, Jassim Al-Enezi, Mohammed Al-Suraii, Jassim Al-Matar, Montaser Abdulsalam, Omar Al-Saleem, Omar Al-Matar, Omar Al-Azmi, Abdullah Al-Ghanim, Jarrah Al-Hleili, Ahmed Boudi, Moath Al-Asima, Youssef Al-Shammari, Khaled Al-Kharqawi, and Saud Qassem.

The team's preparations began on June 17 and included a training camp in Egypt from July 7 to 21, during which they played four friendly matches. Back in Kuwait, the squad played three friendlies, defeating Kazma 3-1, Al-Fahaheel 1-0, and Al-Yarmouk 3-0.

The final phase of preparation took place in Thailand, starting August 12, where Kuwait played three more friendlies, beating Nonthaburi (Thailand) 2-0, Malaysia 1-0, and drawing 1-1 with Oman.