



## EMPLOYERS IN KUWAIT RISK SUSPENSION OVER BANKED SALARY VIOLATIONS

# No delay, just on-time pay

PAM issues new private sector work schedule rules

By Fares Ghaleb  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14: Acting Director General of the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) Rabab Al-Osaimi says strict measures will soon be enforced, including halting the processing of employers' files that fail to transfer workers' salaries to their bank accounts. This step is a fundamental pillar in protecting workers' rights and pro-**

**moting a fair work environment.**

The announcement was made during a meeting organized by PAM with the Kuwait Banking Association to discuss developing a mechanism for transferring workers' salaries through the "Sahel for Companies" and "Sahel for Banks" platforms. The goal is to establish the highest standards of accuracy and efficiency in ensuring employers transfer workers' salaries within the specified deadlines.

Director of the Inspection Department Dr. Fahad Al-Murad attended the meeting. During the meeting, Al-Osaimi stressed the importance of submitting payroll files via "Sahel for Banks" according to approved procedures to enhance transpar-

ency and safeguard the labor market.

She affirmed the need to integrate efforts and build a true partnership with the banking sector to support the state's efforts to protect workers' rights and provide a safe and fair work environment, in line with the "New Kuwait 2035" vision.

Meanwhile, Al-Murad affirmed the importance of the partnership with the banking sector. He said the Inspection Department will monitor the establishments' compliance and provide the necessary support to ensure smooth implementation, in line with the policies of PAM to enhance transparency and protect the labor market.

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### Opinion

■ Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

## Regarding agricultural and industrial plots, do you want to enjoy dates or cut down palm trees?

ONCE again we return to the topic of industrial and agricultural plots due to their importance to the national economy. Beneficiaries of industrial, service, or agricultural plots have constructed buildings and invested huge sums of money in them. Many have taken loans from banks and maintained long-term relationships with them.

Therefore, any issues affecting these plots directly impact all contracts related to the projects established on them.

This is why banks consider these established buildings as tangible assets, which can be mortgaged and liquidated. When a project is halted due to license suspension, it often leads to involuntary insolvency for the investor.

As I mentioned yesterday, this situation leads to the demise of the project and causes major harm not only to the beneficiary but also to the workers, many of whom have financial obligations such as rent, car installments, and other debts.

Therefore, if a plot investor faces difficulties for any reason, they often turn to banks or bring in partners to revive the project or introduce supporting businesses to recover losses and develop their business.

This approach is standard practice worldwide, as the fundamental principle is to protect the national product and work towards enhancing industrial and food self-sufficiency.

This does not exist in Kuwait, neither for industrial plots, which are subjected to strict regulations as if they are always suspected of undermining social and economic security, nor in the form of pressure on industrialists and investors by employees whose only concern seems to

be "eating dates, even if it means cutting down the palm tree".

This undoubtedly affects productivity and obstructs progress, at a time when other Gulf countries are actively working to facilitate business and provide incentives for investment. These countries have established free zones that host multiple businesses to serve the overall development of their nation.

These countries have permitted farms to create recreational areas, as seen in Abu Dhabi, and to build rest houses, provided they obtain the necessary approvals to ensure that the structures comply with building and urban planning regulations and do not conflict with agricultural land use plans.

In contrast, Kuwait issued a decision ten years ago to establish ten industrial zones, but this has yet to be implemented. Instead, a decision was issued to suspend plot licensing and prohibit the transfer of licenses, representing a setback from the development expected by businessmen and investors aiming to stimulate the local industrial and agricultural sectors. Rather than advancing, we have regressed, which undoubtedly harms the economy and accelerates its decline.

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## Public transport key to easing Kuwait's traffic

By Mohammed Ghanem  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14:** Head of the Civil Engineering Technology Department at the College of Technological Studies and a member of the Kuwait Society for Traffic Safety Dr. Jamal Al-Mutawa affirmed that public transportation plays a vital role in solving the traffic crisis.

During an interview with the daily, he cited scientific studies from various countries showing that the presence of efficient public transport systems such as buses, metros, and trains can reduce traffic congestion by up to 50 percent.

Dr. Al-Mutawa stressed the importance of establishing a precise and comprehensive database to accurately identify causes of traffic accidents and to develop effective solutions based on thorough data analysis.

He explained that solutions to traffic problems can be engineering-based for addressing issues resulting from road design flaws or vehicle defects, or regulatory that may involve the enforcement of strict penalties on violators.

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Symposium participants pose for a group photo.

## Archaeological layers make Failaka Island globally significant

Acting Assistant Secretary-General of museum and monuments sector at Kuwait's National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) Mohammad bin Redha stressed the importance of preserving and developing Failaka Island as a cultural, natural, educational, and tourist landmark that reflects Kuwaiti identity and supports its inclusion on the World Heritage list.

In a statement to KUNA on the sidelines of a scientific symposium titled "Christian Archaeological Sites in Eastern Arabia: Towards a Shared Heritage", held September 13-14 by Bahrain Authority for Culture and

Antiquities, bin Redha said Kuwait's participation reflects its commitment to showcasing Failaka's exceptional historical value.

He noted that efforts are underway to highlight the island's heritage and prepare for its inclusion on the UNESCO Tentative List, based on a 2018 ICOMOS recommendation, adding that Failaka features archaeological layers spanning over 4,000 years, from the Bronze Age through Hellenistic, early Christian, Islamic, and modern periods.

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## Kuwait upholds rights for specific nationality group

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14:** The Capital Markets Authority (CMA) has announced that individuals whose citizenship has been revoked under Articles 8 and 5, and who have been granted the right to be treated as Kuwaiti citizens, will now be covered under Cabinet Resolutions Nos. 76/2025, 420/2025, 863/2025, and 913/2025. These resolutions extend benefits and services similar to those provided to Kuwaiti citizens, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

CMA explained that this move follows official directives, instructions, and correspondence received on Wednesday.

The Central Agency for the Remedy of the Situations of Illegal Residents (CARSIR) had previously noted the failure to implement its letter dated May 28, 2024, which formed the basis for CMA's Circular No. 3/2024, which emphasized that no transactions related to individuals whose nationality has been revoked should be processed unless they possess a valid card issued by CARSIR for this specific category.

The following Cabinet Resolutions address important entitlements for this group:

- Resolution No. 420/2025 continues the disbursement of the national labor subsidy for private sector employees whose citizenship was revoked under Article 8.
- Resolution No. 863/2025 ensures insurance rights for

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### Newswatch



**Zain: 1,000 young programmers pave the way for an economy built on digital innovation**



**9 KFH participates in the honoring ceremony of Kuwait Codes**

**KUWAIT CITY:** The Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah will depart tomorrow Monday to the Qatari capital, Doha, to take part in the Arab-Islamic Emergency Summit. (KUNA)

**DOHA:** Kuwait's Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya took part on Sunday in the preparatory ministerial meeting ahead of the emergency Arab-Islamic summit. The summit, to be held in Doha tomorrow Monday, is scheduled to address the Israeli occupation's attacks on the State of Qatar.

The Foreign Ministry said in a press statement that the ministerial meeting discussed ways to enhance joint Arab-Islamic cooperation in support of Qatar, condemned the Israeli occupation aggression. (KUNA)

## Moroccan-Kuwaiti Trade Forum highlights \$1.5 billion investment

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

**KUWAIT CITY,** Sept 14: Moroccan Ambassador to Kuwait Ali Ben Issa affirmed the strength of political and economic relations between the two countries, disclosing that Kuwait is the third largest Arab investor in Morocco, particularly in infrastructure, road and railway networks, and tourism.



Ben Issa

In a special statement to the newspaper on the sidelines of the Moroccan-Kuwaiti Trade Forum, hosted by Kuwait on Sunday, with Assistant Director General of Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI)

Firas Al-Odah in attendance, Ben Issa confirmed that Kuwaiti investments in Morocco have been proceeding at a steady pace for years, reflecting the great confidence of Kuwaiti investors in the investment environment in the Kingdom.

He said the joint economic forum is an important opportunity to introduce the business climate in Morocco and open horizons for Kuwaiti businesspersons to strengthen their presence in the Moroccan market.

"We are aware of the presence of a large number of Kuwaiti investors in Morocco, but we aspire to push for more investments, especially in light of the diverse opportunities offered by the Moroccan economy," he asserted.

He added that Morocco and Kuwait are bound by deep-rooted historical relations, supported by the signing of memoranda of understanding in various economic fields.

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### Other Voices

## The Gulf and Greater Israel: The blow that came home

By Saad Bentiflah Al-Ajmi

In September 2019, Iran launched missiles and drones targeting the Khurais and Bqiq oil facilities in Saudi Arabia, causing huge material losses.

Last June, the Houthis launched missiles at Abu Dhabi, resulting in material damage. Last June, Iran launched missiles at the Qatari capital, which were mostly intercepted by land-based anti-aircraft defenses and did not cause significant damage.



Al-Ajmi

However, the most important development in the series of Israeli attacks and incursions into the Arab region—from Tunisia in the West to Baghdad in the East—occurred last Tuesday. Israeli fighter jets targeted an anticipated meeting of Hamas leaders in Doha, resulting in the killing of a Hamas member and a Qatari security personnel.

This was the first Israeli attack on a Gulf city. Which city is it? The Qatari capital that hosts one of the largest U.S. military bases in the region, the venue for U.S.-Afghan talks, the bridge through which Hamas was coordinating with Israel, and a window for negotiations with Egypt to halt the genocide in Gaza and secure the release of Israeli prisoners.

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Prayer Timings

Fajr .....	04:12	Asr .....	15:13
Sunrise ..	05:32	Maghrib ..	17:55
Zohr .....	11:44	Isha .....	19:13

# Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

**By Day:** Hot with light to moderate northwesterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 10-38 km/h.

**By Night:** Rather hot to mild with light to moderate northwest-

Weather

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

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	44	33
Kuwait Airport	44	25
Abdaly	43	24

Babyan	42	19
Jahra	44	28
Fallaka Island	44	26
Salmiyah	41	32
Ahmadi	41	28
Nuwaisib	42	26
Wafra	44	24

Prince Abdulaziz conveys greetings from King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman

## Kuwait Amir, Crown Prince and PM receive Saudi Interior Minister

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Sunday at Bayan Palace, First Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah and Saudi Minister of Interior Prince Abdulaziz bin Saud Al-Saud, on the occasion of his official visit to the country.

Prince Abdulaziz conveyed to His Highness, the greetings and appreciation of King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, the Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud and their wishes to His Highness, for good health and continued well-being, and for the people of Kuwait further progress and prosperity.

His Highness the Amir also conveyed his greetings to King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud and the Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, wishing them good health and wellness and the people of the Kingdom further progress and prosperity.

The meeting was attended by the Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah, the Director of the Office of His Highness the Amir, Retired Lieutenant General Jamal Mohammed Al-Dhiyab, the Undersecretary of the Amiri Diwan Sheikh Abdulaziz Mishal Mubarak Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and the Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs at the Amiri Diwan Mazen Issa Al-Essa.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received on Sunday First Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah and Saudi Minister of Interior Prince Abdulaziz bin Saud Al-Saud, on the occasion of his official visit to the country.

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Amir Diwan photo  
His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receiving the Saudi Minister of Interior, His Royal Highness Prince Abdulaziz bin Saud bin Nayef bin Abdulaziz Al Saud

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The meeting was attended by the Head of the Diwan of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Thamer Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and senior officials.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received on Sunday First Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah and Saudi Minister of Interior Prince Abdulaziz bin Saud Al-Saud, on the occasion of his official visit to the country.

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The meeting was attended by the Head of the Prime Minister's Diwan, Abdulaziz Dakhil Al-Dakhil, Acting Undersecretary of the Prime Minister's Diwan, Sheikh Khaled Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah, Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait Prince Sultan bin Saad bin Khalid Al-Saud, and the Head of the Public Security Sector at the Ministry of Interior, Major General Hamad Ahmed Al-Munifi.



Amir Diwan photo  
His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receiving the Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah and the Chief of Staff of the Army Lieutenant General Khaled Daraj Saad Al-Shuriaan.

### HH Amir receives Minister of Defense, Army Chief of Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Sunday at Bayan Palace, the Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah and the newly-appointed Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Khaled Daraj Al-Shuriaan.

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The meeting was attended by the Head of the Prime Minister's Diwan, Abdulaziz Dakheel Al-Dakheel.



Amir Diwan photo  
His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receiving the Chief of the National Guard Sheikh Mubarak Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the Undersecretary of the National Guard Lieutenant General Hamad Salem Al-Barjas.

### Amir receives National Guard Chief and new undersecretary

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Sunday at Bayan Palace, the Head of the National Guard Sheikh Mubarak Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

During the meeting, Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah presented to His Highness the newly appointed Undersecretary of the National Guard, Lieutenant General Hamad Salem Al-Barjas.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received on Sunday the Head of the National Guard Sheikh Mubarak Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the newly-appointed Undersecretary of the National Guard, Lieutenant General Hamad Salem Al-Barjas.



Amir Diwan photo  
His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives Commander of the US Central Command, Admiral Brad Cooper.

### Kuwait Amir receives Minister of Defense, CENTCOM Commander

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The meeting was attended by Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah, Director of the Office of His Highness the Amir, Retired Lieutenant General Jamal Al-Dhiyab, Undersecretary of the Amiri Diwan Sheikh Abdulaziz Meshal Mubarak Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs at the Amiri Diwan Mazen Al-Issa, and the Chief of Staff of the Army, Lieutenant General Khaled Daraj Al-Shariaan.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received on Sunday the Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah and Commander of the US Central Command (CENTCOM), Admiral Brad Cooper.

The meeting was attended by the Head of the Diwan of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Thamer Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and senior officials.

# Kuwait, Saudi Arabia boost security co-op



KUNA photo  
The First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior receives the Saudi Minister of Interior on the occasion of his official visit to the country.

### Gulf stability talks underway

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14, (KUNA): First Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah met on Sunday with Saudi Minister of Interior Prince Abdulaziz bin Saud Al-Saud, now on a visit to Kuwait.

During the meeting, both sides discussed issues of mutual concerns, ways to enhance security cooperation, according to a statement from Kuwait's Ministry of Interior.

Discussions included mechanisms for coordinating joint efforts to confront regional and international

challenges, and to ensure the security and stability of the two countries and the region, the statement added.

The ministry briefed the Saudi Minister with an explanation provided by the Criminal Security Sector at the Ministry about its work mechanism and held a special exhibition showcasing the sector's most notable achievements.

The talks come within the framework of the keenness of the leadership of the two countries to consolidate cooperation and develop the prospects of partnership in a way that contributes to supporting the joint Gulf efforts to confront challenges and enhance security and stability in the region.

### Other Voices

## PAFN and its futile oversight actions

By Ahmad alsarraf

After decades of waiting, the law establishing the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN) was finally ratified. However, the name "PAFN" seems inadequate and misleading, as its oversight excludes medicines, despite their importance. Drug oversight still remains under a non-independent department within the Ministry of Health.

If it weren't for the seriousness and firm actions taken recently by several bodies, prompted by the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior's strict handling of violations and offenders, we likely would not have seen any meaningful efforts from oversight bodies, including PAFN.

PAFN, however, requires consumers to visit its website and fill out a silly form to report food violations, overlooking the fact that such complaints require confidentiality and privacy.

Years ago, I raised concerns with a senior official at PAFN about the authority's inadequate name. She explained that the name was set by law and could not be changed.

I explained to her that essential food items are destroyed once they reach their expiration date, which is typically set at two years according to a Gulf agreement. However, this procedure is scientifically and medically inaccurate. Many products like honey, sugar, salt, and white rice have shelf lives far beyond two years, yet companies discard them out of fear of violations. Moreover, the two-year shelf life limit primarily relates to product quality, not food safety. While the taste or color of some foods may change after three or four years, they can still be safe and suitable for consumption if stored



alsarraf

properly. This applies to items such as honey, salt, and sugar.

Regulatory shelf life often reflects market logistics management rather than actual spoilage. For example, honey can remain usable indefinitely if stored in an airtight container away from moisture and contaminants. In fact, honey has been found in ancient Egyptian tombs, still safe for consumption thousands of years later.

Salt does not expire if stored in a dry, uncontaminated environment. All types of sugar remain good for years unless exposed to moisture. White rice, when stored in cool, dry conditions, can remain usable for 25 to 30 years, while brown rice has a much shorter shelf life.

PAFN management must work in cooperation with relevant Gulf authorities to amend these regulations and prevent the annual waste of hundreds of thousands of tons of food.

It is also important to note that many items spoil before the two-year mark if not stored properly, for example, leaving them in a chalet during the hot summer months can accelerate spoilage.

The European Union follows a strict code regarding egg shelf life. It requires clearly defining expiration dates, identifying the source of the eggs, whether free-range or caged, and specifying the type of feed given to the chickens.

There is no doubt that PAFN is aware of the European code, and it is their responsibility to implement similar standards in Kuwait. This failure to do so is unacceptable, especially considering that many countries outside the EU adopt these regulations to enhance food safety and allow regulatory authorities to trace the source of eggs when necessary.

Furthermore, countries like Austria, Germany, and Switzerland have gone beyond the EU code by banning all forms of caged egg farming.



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diwaniya

ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

‘Municipality Complaints App’ paves way for public service reform

“THE launch of the ‘Municipality Complaints App’ by the Ministry of State for Municipal Affairs is a positive step forward. This initiative will greatly benefit citizens by opening the door to the reform of many issues in their neighborhoods and streets. It reveals the strong commitment to listening to the voices of the people,” columnist **Sheikh Fahad Dawood Al-Sabah** wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

“Undoubtedly, this measure offers valuable insights for a more civilized and effective approach to public service. The key now is to extend this system to other ministries, agencies, and official institutions. It helps identify shortcomings in areas that may not be apparent to officials, thereby improving overall performance. Moreover, it marks a significant shift in changing the perception of routine daily work, as many people remain unaware of their rights and their role in highlighting deficiencies.

“Regardless of the vision behind the app project, it remains a service that officials must diligently uphold. A prompt response must be guaranteed to maintain the app’s effectiveness and to rebuild trust in public institutions after years of inaction, or rather, procrastination, that have eroded confidence in public service.

“There is much that can be achieved in this area, not only by the municipality, which carries many responsibilities. At the same time, in recent years, especially under the current government, its remarkable activity in improving public facilities has begun to take shape. With the consolidation of digital work in state institutions, there is real potential to change public perceptions, not just of the municipality, but of all government bodies.

“This also indicates that the reform efforts are beginning to bear fruit, though it will take time for the achievements to become fully apparent. At the same time, special commendation is due to the Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Housing Affairs Abdul Latif Hamed Al-Mishari, for launching the Kuwait Municipality “139” complaints app to enhance communication with the public. This strengthens communication between the public and officials, and reflects the efforts being made in this regard.

“Kuwait needs more initiatives like this to help realize the radical reforms pursued by the current government.”

□ □ □

“Diwanias, the gatherings that bring together loved ones and friends, have been and continue to be a fundamental pillar of Kuwaiti society,” **Hamid Al-Hamli** wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

“They are spaces for exchanging ideas and strengthening social bonds. However, sometimes, they could transform from forums of positivity and inspiration into sources of negative energy due to the behavior and actions of their patrons.

“What makes our diwanias transform from oases of comfort into hotbeds of tension? How can we restore their true spirit?

“One of the most prominent factors contributing to the spread of negative energy is gossip. When conversation turns to delving into the faults of others or spreading rumors, the diwaniya loses its human value and becomes a source of tension and division.

“Unfortunately, some people tend to focus on the negatives in their lives or the events surrounding them, which spread an atmosphere of frustration.

“Constantly complaining without seeking solutions makes the diwaniya burdensome and deprives attendees of the desire to sit and enjoy themselves.

“Diwanias have their own place, but when they turn into arenas for fruitless debate—whether political, religious or even social—they often end in disagreements.

“Intolerance of opinions without respect for other viewpoints creates an atmosphere of tension and deprives the diwaniya of the value of constructive dialogue.

“Some men resort to sarcasm or mockery of others, mistaking it for a joke, but this behavior hurts the feelings of those present and instills feelings of inadequacy or embarrassment.

“In the past, diwanias were based on listening to the speaker without interruption until they finished, but nowadays, the conversation turns into idle chatter and interruptions, or attendees becoming preoccupied with their phones or other matters, thus, losing its value.

“How can we restore positivity to our diwanias? To transform our diwanias into sources of positive energy, we can practice the following simple steps that restore their authentic spirit:

“They should be a platform for exchanging positive

ideas and solutions.

“Bring up inspiring topics, such as success stories or creative ideas, to enhance the value of the session.

“We must avoid topics that provoke disagreement or, at the very least, agree to respect differences and avoid fanaticism.

“We must enhance it with positive humor: laughter and humor are among the most beautiful components of diwanias, but humor must be free of sarcasm or insults.

“Active listening makes everyone feel important, which strengthens bonds among attendees and makes the diwaniya a warm place.

“Honesty, respect and avoiding backbiting help maintain the purity of the diwaniya. ‘Majlises’ are considered a mirror that reflects the character of participants.

“If they are filled with positivity and respect, they will become a source of positive energy that nourishes souls and strengthens relationships.

“If negativity prevails, it becomes a burden on everyone.

“Let us ensure that our diwanias are a haven of comfort and inspiration among their patrons, and that they are pioneers of goodness and positivity. In doing so, we preserve our social heritage and improve the quality of our daily lives.”

— Compiled by Simi K. Kutty



Farwaniya governor reviews new academic year preparations with education officials.

Modern facilities, online transfers ready

Farwaniya governor and education leaders review school preparations

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah received in his office on Sunday morning the Director of the Farwaniya Educational Zone Jassim Bu Hamad, Director of Maintenance and representative of Ministry of Education in the Farwaniya Governorate Council Eng. Jamal Al-Aiban, Technical Office Supervisor Eng. Fatima Abdullah Al-Samel, and Head of the Planning Department Fatima Faisal Al-Kandari. Also present were Farwaniya Governorate Council members Saad Al-Hadba and Ali Abdullahi Al-Shanfa.

According to a press release issued by Farwaniya Governorate, the meeting involved discussions on the preparations for the start of the new academic year.

The governor welcomed the officials and extended his congratulations on the occasion of the new academic year. He expressed his hope for a successful academic term that meets the aspirations of students and the needs of teach-

ers, and ensures a supportive and well-prepared educational environment.

The Director of the Farwaniya Educational Zone Jassim Bu Hamad reaffirmed the Ministry of Education’s commitment to meeting the needs of the teaching staff and providing all necessary support to ensure a positive and effective educational environment.

He stated that the newly opened schools are a source of pride for Kuwait, as they feature modern educational specifications and services that are in line with global standards.

Bu Hamad also highlighted that the teacher and student transfer process has been upgraded to an online system to streamline procedures and eliminate obstacles.

Meanwhile, Eng. Jamal Al-Aiban confirmed that the Maintenance Department completed all necessary preparations ahead of the new academic year, and ensured that school facilities are fully operational and well-maintained.

MEWRE advances 15 key projects under 2025/26 development plan

Ministry’s work comprises 11% of all initiatives

By Mohammad Ghanem  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14: The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy is participating in the implementation of 15 projects under the 2025/2026 Development Plan – 11 percent of the total 134 projects in 42 government agencies.**

Sources from the ministry affirmed that these projects will greatly contribute to the ongoing efforts to realize the objectives of the abovementioned development plan.

Sources said the important projects include the supply and installation works for the fourth phase of the Subiya Power Plant project with a capacity of 900 megawatts. Sources explained this is included in program for the activation of the private sector in a bid to make Kuwait an attractive investment environment through the creation of a competitive business climate based on innovation and advanced technology.

Sources stated that the ministry is involved in two other projects -- digital transformation and the smart metering system. Sources pointed out these projects are part of the program to

develop a connected and transparent government with the aim of restructuring the government system, enhance integrity and transparency, and improve performance to meet the needs of citizens.

Sources also confirmed the involvement of the ministry in seven projects under the Cohesive Infrastructure Construction Program as follows:

- Convert the second phase of the gas turbines project at Subiya Power Plant to combined cycle generating 250 megawatts,
- Supply 400-volt overhead lines to Khairan, Wafra and Sulaibiya power plants,
- Install 300-volt underground cables in Sabah Medical District,
- Construct Nuwaiseeb Power Plant with a capacity of 3,600 megawatts (first phase),
- Install 400-volt overhead line linking the Nuwaiseeb Power Plant to the Shagaya Solar Power Plant,
- Two projects for the supply of fiber optic cables for the main transformer stations.

Sources stressed that these projects support the provision of an advanced network, in line with the national vision to transform the country into a financial and commercial hub.

Sources stated that the ministry is implementing two environmental projects within the program to create a harmonious living environment -- second phase of the Doha Reverse Osmosis Desalination Plant, and the supply of 30 mobile reverse osmosis units with a total capacity of 100,000 imperial gallons per day to conserve natural resources and

reduce pollution.

Sources added the ministry is also participating in two health projects under the Promoting Health and Well-being for All Program. These projects include the supply of medium-pressure equipment (11 kV) to the new Sabah Hospital and the new Cancer Hospital. Sources said these projects support efforts to develop health services according to the highest international standards, promote public health and healthy cities, and build national capacity.

**Following are the 15 projects:**

- Phase Four of the Subiya Power Plant project (900 megawatts)
- Digital transformation
- Smart metering system
- Gas turbine conversion at Subiya Power Plant (Phase Two)
- 400-volt overhead lines (Khairan, Wafra and Sulaibiya)
- 300-volt underground cables in Sabah Medical District
- Nuwaiseeb Power Plant (3,600 megawatts - Phase One)
- 400-volt overhead line from Nuwaiseeb to Shagaya Solar Power Plant
- Fiber optic cables for main transformer stations (two projects)
- Doha Desalination Plant (Phase Two)
- 30 mobile reverse osmosis units
- Medium-voltage equipment (11 kV) for the new Sabah Hospital
- Medium-voltage equipment (11 kV) for the new Cancer Hospital

MoSa dissolves 10 public benefit associations

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14: The official gazette “Kuwait al-Yaum” has published ten ministerial decisions that dissolved ten public benefit associations, reports *Al-Seyassah* daily.

The decisions, issued by Minister of Social Affairs, Family, and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah ordered the dissolution of the following associations:

- “My Mother is My Paradise” Women’s Association

- Kuwait National Brotherhood Society
- Kuwait Charity Forum Association
- Strategic Sports Planning Association
- Kuwait Food and Nutrition Association
- Kuwait Strategic Planning Association
- Kuwait Translators Association
- Kuwait Arabian Horse Association
- Kuwait Historical Society
- Kuwait Project Management Society

The decisions require the boards of directors and employees of these associations to refrain from handling any funds or documents and to hand over all assets to ministry-appointed staff responsible for carrying out the liquidation procedures.

News in Brief

GTD nets 42 juveniles, issues 32,187 citations

By Munif Naif  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14: Last week, the General Traffic Department (GTD) at the Interior Ministry referred 42 juveniles to the Juvenile Prosecution for driving without a license, in addition to the issuance of 32,187 traffic violation citations.

According to the weekly traffic patrol statistics, 32 vehicles and nine motorcycles were impounded, 49 individuals were referred to the traffic police station, 170 Residency Law violators were arrested, and 71 individuals wanted by law for absconding and evading arrest are now in detention.

The department also disclosed that it dealt with 1,194 traffic accidents, which resulted in 227 injuries.

A security source confirmed that traffic campaigns are conducted round the clock to apprehend wanted persons and outlaws.

□ □ □

**DCGD officer arrested:** The Drug Control General Department (DCGD) at the Interior Ministry arrested an officer for planting and using marijuana in his home in Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate, reports *Al-Rai* daily quoting a security source.

The source confirmed that after obtaining a warrant from the Public Prosecution, the DCGD officers searched the residence of the suspect where they uncovered a huge quantity of marijuana plants, along with marijuana packs ready for use.

The officer was referred to the prosecution for interrogation and other legal measures.

No casualties reported

KFF contains Al-Sulaibiya warehouse fire

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14, (KUNA): The Kuwait Fire Force announced on Saturday that six of its teams brought under control a massive fire that broke out in three warehouses containing dyes, diesel, gas cylinders, and various flammable materials in a farm in Al-Sulaibiya

agricultural area.

The KFF said, in a press statement, that its teams rushed to the scene immediately after receiving the report to fight the fire, contain it, and prevent it from spreading. It affirmed that the firefighters have put out the fire and there was no casualties.



Firefighters extinguish fire in warehouses holding flammable materials.

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# Kuwait AY 2025-2026 sees full return across all levels

Schools prepare festive welcome

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14: The new 2025/2026 academic year kicks off on Monday, September 15 with the return of 30,000 new first-grade students, reports Al-Seyassah daily.**

Schools have prepared a festive atmosphere to ease first-day anxiety and help students adjust psychologically. Special welcome programs have been prepared for the occasion, including entertainment activities and simple competitions to create a sense of fun and excitement, helping young learners gradually integrate into their new educational environment.

Students in grades two through five, as well as those in middle and high school, will begin school on Tuesday, September 16. Kindergarten students will join later. This will complete the full return to school for students of all educational levels.

According to official statistics, there are 173,251 students remaining in primary school classes, 158,011 in intermediate schools, and 121,578 in secondary schools.

Religious education includes 3,178 students in all three levels (324 in elementary, 1,162 in intermediate, and 1,692 in high school).

The demand for literacy and adult education programs remains strong, with over 7,400 students enrolled at various levels. This brings the total number of students for the new academic year to 520,271, with 422,744 in public sector schools and 97,527 in the private sector.

This year, 1,141 schools are accepting students, including 950 public sector schools and 191 private sector schools.

The number of students in the Ahmadi Educational Zone is 102,154, followed by Jahra with 81,111 students, Farwaniya with 74,854, the Capital Educational Zone with 55,972, Hawally with 45,711, and Mubarak Al-Kabeer with 47,524 students.

In addition, religious education schools have 3,278 students, special education schools have 687, and private Arabic schools 84,940 students.

Meanwhile, the new academic year 2025/2026 has begun with Kuwait University (KU) welcoming 43,843 students, including 6,596 new enrollees, in 15 colleges covering various disciplines, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

KU also welcomed its faculty members, assistant staff, and administrative personnel.

It affirmed its full readiness to provide all necessary services to ensure a smooth educational process, including the preparation of buildings, classrooms, laboratories, and parking facilities, as well as harnessing all administrative and technical capabilities to create an ideal university environment.

The university emphasized the importance of thorough preparation for the start of the first semester and a strong commitment to maintaining order and public safety on campus.



Audience attending the SDGs Through Arts event.



Cultural and arts dialogue sessions



Wooden sculptures displayed



Art works of groups of international and local artists on display.



## Scientific Center hosts ‘SDGs Through Arts’ event

Kuwait’s Scientific Center hosted on Saturday the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Through Arts event organized by the UN’s UNESCO incorporation with Zee Arts.

Head of the Marketing and Communication Administration at the Scientific Center Sara Al-Yaqout gave a statement to KUNA saying the event accumulated cultural and arts dialogue sessions in addition to an arts exhibition where works of groups of international and local artists were presented.

She also added the works on display shed light on the role of arts in strengthening awareness of sustainable development goals and encouraging more social involvement in environmental and development issues.

Further, she explained that holding such events comes in the frameworks of the Scientific Center’s

keenness for just works, as its the country’s main scientific advancement center in line with global scientific initiatives that brings together culture, science and arts, which reflects their role in spreading awareness of the environment and development in the region as the event created an opportunity for engagement in arts and humanitarian experiences to inspire the community for a more sustainable future.

Sara was also keen to say “the hosting of the worldly event confirms our message in collaborating science, art, and culture to better serve developmental goals to safeguard arts as an effective tool in creating awareness and strengthening sustainable values, and it pleases us that the center is a platform to showcase these inspiring experiences in Kuwait.” (KUNA)

## Students urged to embrace commitment

## PAAET gears up for new academic year

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14:** Director General of the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) Dr. Hassan Al-Fajjam announced that PAAET has completed all preparations for the launch of the new academic year 2025/2026 in all colleges and institutes, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Dr. Al-Fajjam praised the political leadership and government for their generous support and ongoing patronage of the education and training process.

In a press statement issued on Saturday, he highlighted PAAET’s efforts to provide com-



Dr. Al-Fajjam

prehensive services and facilities, including classrooms, laboratories, and workshops.

Dr. Al-Fajjam said the authority has developed the electronic registration and academic consultation systems to ensure students have a successful start and a distinguished academic journey.

He urged students to start the academic year with determination and seriousness, emphasizing that success depends on commitment, discipline, and making full use of the available programs and services.

Dr. Al-Fajjam highlighted the vital role of faculty and training staff in instilling values, reinforcing ethics, and developing skills and knowledge. He affirmed that PAAET is actively proceeding with its plans to develop applied education and technical training in line with Kuwait’s vision to build a knowledge-based economy.



KUNA photo  
Official bodies participating in the eighth relief plane within the second airlift to provide relief to the Gaza Strip.

## Kuwait sends 8th relief flight to Gaza

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14, (KUNA):** The eighth relief plane within Kuwait’s second air bridge to support Gaza departed on Sunday for Al-Arish Airport in Egypt, carrying 10 tons of essential food supplies as part of the campaign “Kuwait by Your Side.”

Organized under the “Fazza for Gaza” initiative, the campaign is led by the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) in collaboration with Kuwaiti charities and coordinated with the Ministries of Social Affairs, Foreign Affairs, and Defense.

Speaking to KUNA before departure, KRCS Chief Khaled Al-Mughamis said the mission reflects Kuwait’s longstanding humanitarian commitment and follows directives from His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah

Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah.

Al-Mughamis affirmed that Kuwait’s humanitarian efforts will continue in support of the Palestinian people amid the severe conditions they face, emphasizing the Society’s cooperation with the Egyptian and Palestinian Red Crescent organizations to overcome logistical challenges.

He expressed hope for the expedited opening of border crossings to facilitate the urgent entry of food and relief supplies into Gaza, reaffirming Kuwait’s steadfast support for just and humanitarian causes.

Since the launch of the second air bridge on August 10, Kuwait has delivered 110 tons of basic food aid in coordination with the Kuwait Flour Mills and Bakeries Company.

## KU opens 4th withdrawal and addition period for AY ‘25/’26

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14:** The Deanship of Admission and Registration at Kuwait University (KU) announced the start of the fourth withdrawal and addition period for the first semester of the 2025/2026 academic year. This period will begin on Sunday, September 14, and continue through Saturday, September 20, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The Deanship explained that registration will be conducted online, with no prior ap-

pointment required. It must comply with course regulations. Students are required to adhere to the maximum allowed credit hours and are not permitted to withdraw less than 12 credit hours.

The Deanship also emphasized the importance of students reviewing their study schedules during this period, especially following the cancellation of non-compliant sections.

## KUNA launches ‘News Editing’ program



KUNA photo  
Dr. Abdullah Al-Harbi of the Arab Open University covers key topics during the program.

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14, (KUNA):** The KUNA Center for Media Development launched its “News Editing” program on Sunday, with participants from KUNA, Qatar News Agency (QNA), the GCC General Secretariat, Kuwait’s Insurance Regulatory Unit, and the Kuwait Ports Authority.

Presented by Dr. Abdullah Al-Harbi from the Arab Open University, the program runs until September 18 and covers key topics such as news writing’s fundamentals, editorial skills, journalistic ethics, and digital journalism.

The course combines both theoretical and practical components, focusing on writing techniques, editing, headline writing, fact-checking, and identifying fake news.

Established in December 1995, the KUNA Center for Media Development is considered one of the country’s leading media training institutions. It has organized hundreds of training programs across various media fields, aiming to enhance both the personal and professional competencies of media professionals and to contribute to the advancement of journalism in Kuwait.



# SEPTEMBER

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Other Voices

# The attack on Qatar: A new stab in the heart of Arabism

By Dr. Yousef Al-Ameeri

The Israeli attack on Doha was not merely a random incident or a military maneuver under the pretext of pursuing Hamas cadres and leaders. Rather, it was a direct slap in the face of every Arab citizen who still believes that the Israeli occupation is confined to the borders of Palestine.

The scene we all witnessed was not just a violation of the sovereignty of an Arab state but it was also a mockery of all international norms and a clear message from Israel - "We can reach anywhere, do whatever we want, whenever we want."

Dear Arabs, under Netanyahu's leadership, Israel has once again proven that it understands nothing but the logic of brute force.

The bombing did not target a military site but struck at Qatar's prestige and the dignity of all Arabs. It was as if Israel was arrogantly and brazenly declaring, "No red lines."

This is the true face of the Zionist entity, a merciless force that neither recognizes rights nor respects international laws or humanitarian norms.



Dr. Al-Ameeri

Should we simply be content with condemning the attack and issuing verbal denunciations? How many times have we witnessed the same scene in other Arab capitals, only to respond with statements of condemnation and denunciation? The truth is, this momentous event should serve as an alarm for every Arab leader and every citizen. It is time to realize that danger surrounds us all. Weakness will cost us our very existence.

We possess tremendous human resources, inexhaustible natural wealth, a strategic geographic location that connects the world, and a media capable of being an influential competitive platform. Yet, Israel still manages to penetrate, attack, and escape without punishment.

The reason is that we, as Arabs, have not established a unified military force to protect our dignity. We have not built a joint economic bloc to shield our decisions from the blackmail of others, nor have we harnessed the power of the media to expose the enemy's crimes and educate our people about the importance of resistance.

Relying on the United States or other major powers for security is futile, as the popular saying goes - "Whoever covers himself with them is actually left uncovered."

Consecutive experiences have proven that those who depend on Western protection ultimately lose, because these countries see us as nothing more than markets, arenas for deals, and tools for creating leverage.

Ladies and gentlemen, what happened in Qatar is not just an isolated incident; it is a warning bell calling on all of us to be vigilant. If we fail to learn this lesson, we will continue to suffer blows one after another until we lose our homelands piece by piece.

It is time to reformulate our Arab strategy based on strength and equality, not dependency and passivity. Israel is not testing Qatar alone; it is testing the reaction of all Arabs. We must choose either to rise to the challenge or let history record that we witnessed the humiliation of our nation in silence.

I remind you and myself that the attack on Qatar is not a passing incident but a brazen message from an enemy that recognizes nothing but force.

I call on the leaders of the Arab nation to assume their historical responsibilities and turn words into action. Nations can only be protected by a decisive will, a strong army, an independent economy, and an informed media.

I tell the Arab peoples that they are the first line of defense and the true source of strength. I urge them not to allow any party to create divisions in their united fabric. The Arab peoples must remain vigilant and see the Israeli aggression on Qatar as a spark to awaken awareness and maintain a unified stance to avoid greater catastrophes.

Let us be vigilant, gentlemen, before it is too late.

## Kuwait Dive Team volunteers remove dangerous debris from southern coasts

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14, (KUNA): Kuwait Dive Team's Environmental Voluntary Foundation (EVF) has completed the third phase of its national coastal cleanup project, "Cleaning the Southern Coasts of the Country," by removing plastic and iron debris from Khor Iskandar, located in the south of the country.

In a statement to KUNA on Sunday, EVF Team leader Waleed Al-Fadhel said Khor Iskandar is the fourth inlet in the Khairan area, south of Ras Al-Zour ending in a large marina that forms part of Kuwait's major marine development projects.

Al-Fadhel explained that "Khairan," the plural form of "Khor," refers to dry waterways that end in bays, noting that there are four Khairan in southern Kuwait, Al-Awal, Al-Ammi, Mufthah, and Iskandar.

These Khairan have environmental value as habitats for marine life, economic value as tourist destination, and historical significance as a former diving port. He added that the team's project to clean the southern coasts aims to protect Kuwait's marine environment and is part of the global "Clean Seas" campaign launched by the UN Environment Programme's Regional Office for West Asia to protect the seas from plastic and other waste and to protect marine life.

He noted that the coasts cleaned included Bnaider, Al-Zour, Khairan, and Nuwaiseeb, emphasizing that the waste removed poses a threat to boat traffic, causes maritime accidents, and poses a threat to navigation, the marine environment, and its inhabitants.

He added that plastic waste causes the death of one million birds worldwide annually, in addition to a quarter of a million marine creatures, including endangered turtles, according to a UN report.

Al-Fadhel confirmed that the team will continue cleaning several coasts across the country, including Judailiyat coastal marine reserve, the Jahra Nature Reserve, and the Shuwaikh and Ashjri coasts, in cooperation with the Environment Public Authority (EPA).

He also confirmed that the team will continue



Kuwait Dive Team photo  
The Kuwait Dive Team removing plastic and iron debris from Khor Iskandar.

to remove boats and fishing nets from coral reefs, and will conduct awareness campaigns on the importance of preserving the marine environment through lectures and educational materials.

He emphasized the need to adhere to the Environmental Protection Law to avoid environmental violations and preserve the marine environment, and urged beachgoers to protect sea turtles, as they are rare and endangered, and to refrain from throwing waste into the water.

Since its founding in 1986, the Kuwait Dive Team has been performing these activities on a voluntary basis in service to Kuwait and its people, and to preserve the marine environment and ensure safe navigation.

### Continued from Page 1

## Regarding

If the government seeks private sector participation, it should clearly announce this intention. If the decision aims to improve regulation, the government must communicate it well in advance of implementation, allowing for thorough discussion among all stakeholders, including banks, the industrial and agricultural sectors, and take public opinion into consideration. It is unfair to issue a decision and enforce it immediately without addressing the negative consequences.

People yearn for stability and to witness the restoration of the state's prestige, as promised by the new era. The government must act in line with the directives of the highest political leadership to restore Kuwait's leadership. The Council of Ministers and official institutions must not work against this vision.

Your Excellency the Prime Minister, many affected by this poorly planned measure are already facing stagnation and depression. Please do not add to their anxiety. Let the people enjoy the promise of this new era - a return to leadership and prosperity.

## The Gulf

Before last Tuesday's aggression, many looked favorably — perhaps even with envy — at Qatar's diplomatic policy.

Qatar was able to balance the contradictions of the region. It successfully employed rare diplomacy to manage relations with Iran, the Gulf states, Israel, Hamas, Turkiye, and others. Most importantly, Qatar maintained close ties with its key western ally, the United States. However, the Israeli assault on Doha last Tuesday changed the equations and balances entirely.

The assault on Doha put the entire Gulf Arab countries in front of an unprecedented challenge. As the proverb says, "The blow went inside the home." Everyone felt the danger posed by Israel's expansionist policies across the Gulf. It is true that Qatar's policies are not always aligned with its Gulf sister states, especially regarding relations with Hamas and Israel. Still, the Gulf consensus on Israel, Hamas, Yemen and Iran was not uniform in all Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

A recent interview with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on an Israeli channel sparked much debate and reflection. He expressed his dream of a 'Greater Israel' stretching from Egypt in the West to Iraq in the East, and southward to Kuwait, reaching the northern and western parts of Saudi Arabia, extending northward to include parts of Syria and Lebanon. This prompted some to pause and reconsider the possibility of peace and coexistence with an expansionist, arrogant Talmudic mindset that seeks regional dominance and threatens to strike anywhere, anytime, as it pleases. This threat was reiterated by Netanyahu himself after the attack on Doha, when he said he would "pursue" terrorists wherever they are harboring, meaning anyone harboring resistance to occupation will be subject to Israeli bombing and aggression.

**What should be done?**

Over the past three decades, U.S. decisions in the Middle East have increasingly aligned with Israeli interests—especially concerning the Palestinian issue. There are no longer leaders like Ronald Reagan, who once picked up the phone to order Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin to halt the holocaust on Beirut during the 1982 Lebanon invasion, nor leaders like George H. W. Bush, who suspended aid worth \$10 billion until Israel stopped settlement construction in the West Bank. It is said that such

decisions contributed to his failure to win a second presidential term despite his enormous popularity prior to that decision.

The stark truth is that U.S. policies no longer prioritize American interests in the region. Instead, they tend to serve Israeli ambitions, even at the expense of U.S. interests—a fact openly acknowledged by many American voices. Although Gulf countries have sought to establish pathways of cooperation and mutual interests with the U.S., employing lobbying and public relations firms in Washington, these efforts have often been ineffective, as seen in the active Qatar lobby.

The Gulf states invested trillions in joint economic projects with the U.S., yet this did not protect them from Israeli arrogance and aggression. Israel's interests are prioritized—not only over the interests of Gulf allies, but even over the interests of America itself.

Despite some U.S. military bases and alliances, military strikes like those on Bqiq and Khurais, attacks on Abu Dhabi, Iran's recent assault on Doha, and the recent Israeli aggression against Qatar still occur. So, what is the way forward?

Gulf states have several cards they can use to bolster their stance and strength against Israeli arrogance and dominance in the region, including:

- Gulf Confederation for Survival: No longer just a theoretical utopian idea, the Gulf confederation is a strategic step to ensure regional resilience against Israeli expansionism. It could unify military, diplomatic and economic positions, and strengthen Gulf unity—crucial for resistance against aggression.
- Arab Dimension for Gulf Strength: Egypt, with its enormous human resources and the strongest Arab army, is vital. Other neighboring countries like Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Yemen and Sudan are currently weak and facing failure. Therefore, strengthening and stabilizing these countries can serve as a supportive factor in confronting Zionist dominance in the region.
- Regional Dimension: Although there is mistrust between the GCC and Iran, and concerns about the intentions of Turkiye, both are currently in a state of fear and cautiousness due to Israeli expansionist policies. Iran has been targeted by Israeli bombings, and Turkiye is resisting Israeli efforts to divide Syria to maintain its strategic security. If Gulf countries can build temporary trust with Iran and reduce fears regarding Turkiye, it could boost Gulf security strategy through a joint regional security project necessitated by Israeli arrogance and aggression.
- Supporting Palestinian Resilience: The Palestinian people are the primary front in resisting Zionist expansion. International society and friendly nations should support Palestinians in achieving their legitimate rights by resisting displacement and evacuation policies. Palestinian resistance remains strong and resilient, especially given Israel's ongoing bloodshed and destruction in Gaza over the past two years. Palestinians prefer to stay on their land and risk death rather than face forced displacement, fully aware that the alternative will be worse than death.
- Strengthening Anti-Zionist Sentiments: For the first time, influential Jewish voices are openly criticizing Zionism and Israel's war crimes, condemning the crimes carried out in the name of Judaism. These voices are a powerful force that can correct distortions and promote the true narrative of the Arab-Israeli conflict.
- The Last Option: Military Action

The final and most undesirable option is Gulf military confrontation with Israel. As the saying goes, "one has to stand his ground." Collectively, Gulf countries are among the world's largest arms buyers.

The obvious question is: why invest in weapons if not for deterrence

and self-defense? Nevertheless, these weapons will not be effective without unified Gulf positions and a shared confederation decision. Otherwise, we risk repeating our fragmented approach toward Iran, Yemen, Sudan or Syria. The message today is clear: "The blow came home," and there is no room for complacency.

## No delay,

In addition, in a press statement Sunday, PAM revealed that the meeting discussed the establishment of the highest standards of accuracy and efficiency, and ensuring that employers are committed to transferring salaries on time.

PAM confirmed that the technical mechanism for submitting employer files to banks was reviewed in accordance with the regulations.

First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior, and Chair of the Board of Directors of the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM), Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, has issued Ministerial Resolution No. 15/2025 concerning the work schedule in the private sector, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The resolution, which was published in the official gazette "Kuwait alyoum", has the following articles:

Article 1: In accordance with Law No. 6/2010, particularly articles 46, 65, 66, 67, 68, and 88, employers are required to enter data related to daily working hours and schedules, proposed rest periods, weekly days off, and official holidays into PAM's electronic system. Employers must also update this data immediately upon any changes.

Article 2: The submitted data will serve as an official reference for PAM inspectors during inspections and follow-ups. Once approved by PAM, the work schedule is considered officially authorized, and the employer must print and display it prominently at the workplace.

Article 3: Without prejudice to Article 141 of Law No. 6/2010, PAM will take legal action against employers who violate the provisions of this resolution. This may include partial or full suspension of the employer's file.

Article 4: This resolution shall be published in the official gazette and will take effect on November 1, 2025. All relevant authorities are instructed to comply and implement its provisions.

## Public transport

It is important to enhance traffic awareness and conduct targeted driving tests to improve road user behavior, in coordination with all relevant authorities.

The new traffic law has contributed to reducing congestion.

However, it is necessary to distinguish between traffic safety and traffic engineering, despite their close connection. Linking deterrent penalties with awareness campaigns, intensified training, and the implementation of effective driving tests is important.

There are both direct and indirect solutions to traffic congestion. Direct measures include reducing the number of vehicles, extending road networks, and activating the public transportation system, particularly trains and the metro. Indirect solutions involve encouraging the use of public transportation by providing affordable, reliable services nationwide. In addition, raising fuel prices and vehicle insurance fees could discourage excessive car ownership and promote a shift toward public transportation.

While the road repair projects carried out by the Ministry of Public Works help ease traffic congestion, they do not represent a comprehensive

solution. Engineering interventions such as constructing bridges and tunnels, and expanding road networks are necessary to effectively solve traffic congestion and reduce the risk of accidents.

Sound urban planning plays a major role in minimizing traffic congestion. When the capital serves as both the administrative and commercial hub, traffic naturally flows toward it. However, if services are more evenly distributed throughout the country, traffic would be more balanced, reducing pressure on the city center.

Dr. Al-Mutawa emphasized the importance of providing adequate parking in commercial areas within Kuwait City, which sees a high volume of daily visitors.

He stressed that developing residential areas farther apart can contribute to alleviating congestion, as it reduces concentrated traffic in specific zones.

Dr. Al-Mutawa also highlighted the existence of a National Strategic Plan for Traffic Safety, but it has yet to be implemented on the ground.

He explained that the establishment of the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation was originally intended to implement the National Strategic Plan for Traffic Safety. However, due to a lack of agreement on the distribution of roles and responsibilities among relevant entities, the project stalled. As a result, the authority's role has been limited primarily to the implementation of highways.

Dr. Al-Mutawa highlighted the wide-ranging social, psychological, economic, and environmental impacts of traffic congestion, including lost time, decreased individual productivity, business losses, fuel waste, and increased levels of gaseous and noise pollution, all of which contribute to rising health issues.

He also noted that the Kuwait Society for Traffic Safety plays an important role in raising public awareness through traditional and social media platforms, in addition to participating in and organizing traffic safety conferences.

Dr. Al-Mutawa revealed that a consultative study is currently underway for the Kuwait section of the Gulf Railway, highlighting its significant economic advantages, particularly the efficient, safe, and rapid transport of large quantities of goods.

He added that the Gulf Railway will support efforts to transform Kuwait into a regional financial and commercial hub, and it will offer social benefits by strengthening ties among citizens of the Gulf countries.

## Kuwaitis now

It indicated that despite the stability of the overall population, the balance between Kuwaiti women and non-Kuwaitis may witness a slight shift, especially with the slight decline in the number of non-Kuwaiti women.

The report concluded that the number of non-Kuwaitis, who still constitute the majority, is gradually declining, while the working-age expatriate workforce, particularly males, dominates the demographic structure.

It also confirmed an almost healthy gender balance among Kuwaitis.

The bureau pointed out that the largest age group among Kuwaitis is evolving toward younger ages, while the largest group among non-Kuwaitis and the total population remains the 35-39 age group.

It recommended continuing to monitor labor migration trends and their demographic impact, as well as planning to address the increased demand for Kuwaiti services like education, health and employment.

It called for studying policies that support achieving a better population balance, such as supporting family formation and retaining skilled expatriate workers.

The report presents the results of the annual population estimates for the State of Kuwait, reviewing population data by nationality (Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti), gender (males and females), and the important demographic changes during the year.

## Archaeological layers

He explained that they are working with local and international partners to prepare a comprehensive nomination file that preserves the island's authenticity and global significance.

Kuwait was represented at the symposium by NCCAL official Engineer Khuloud Al-Khashram and Head of the French-Kuwaiti Archaeological Mission Julie Bonneric. (KUNA)

## Moroccan-Kuwaiti

He urged businesspersons to capitalize on these memoranda and implement them through partnerships that utilize the potentials available to both parties.

He emphasized that the Moroccan-Kuwaiti Trade Forum, held in Kuwait with the participation of several officials and businesspersons from both countries, is a valuable opportunity to strengthen bilateral economic and trade relations, and open new horizons for cooperation and joint investment.

In his opening remarks at the forum, the ambassador said this economic event — organized by the Moroccan Agency for Investment and Export Development and the Moroccan Confederation of Exporters, in coordination with the Moroccan Embassy, the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and KCCI — aims to introduce the business climate in Morocco and build bridges of direct communication between economic actors in both countries in order to contribute to the development of fruitful partnerships.

He explained that the economic aspect is the fundamental pillar of these relations, with Kuwaiti investments in Morocco reaching about \$1.5 billion, supported by various projects funded by Kuwaiti institutions, companies and individuals, particularly in agriculture, automotive and aircraft manufacturing, renewable energy, water facilities, infrastructure and tourism.

He indicated that the past three years witnessed a significant increase in the volume of Kuwaiti investments, manifesting the high level of confidence enjoyed by the Moroccan business environment.

Regarding trade exchange, Ben Issa disclosed that the past two years recorded the highest since 2018, with the value of Moroccan exports to Kuwait reaching 216 million dirhams in 2023, compared to 1.3 billion dirhams for Kuwaiti exports to Morocco.

"Despite a slight decline in Moroccan exports in 2024 — approximately 180 million dirhams, future opportunities remain broad for economic actors on both sides," he added.

The ambassador also talked about the major investment projects in Morocco, stressing that the Kingdom is witnessing a qualitative leap in infrastructure works in preparation for hosting the 2030 World Cup in partnership with Spain and Portugal.

He revealed the highway network, estimated at 2,000 kilometers, will expand to 3,000 kilometers by 2030, in addition to the high-speed train project, the first of its kind in Africa, linking Tangier to Casablanca, with plans to extend it to Marrakech soon.

He also talked about the role of the Tangier Med Port, ranked among the top 20 container ports in the world and the first in the Mediterranean and Africa, as well as the ambitious projects of the Nador West Med and Dakhla Atlantic ports, to enhance maritime connectivity.

In the field of air transport, he said Morocco is developing its major airports as part of an integrated plan, while Royal Air Maroc intends to increase its fleet

from 50 to 200 aircraft by 2037, enhancing air connectivity and supporting the Kingdom's position as a regional logistics hub.

He went on to say that Morocco has become a global hub for renewable energy, thanks to its solar and wind projects, in addition to the launch of six major green hydrogen projects with investments amounting to \$32.6 billion, thereby, strengthening its position in the sustainable energy market.

He affirmed that the Kingdom solidified its position as a leading industrial and logistics hub in Africa, particularly in the automotive, aviation and food industries. He stated that Morocco will soon enter the top 50 countries in the World Bank's Doing Business Report.

He pointed out that the Moroccan government continues to improve the investment climate by implementing the new investment charter, simplifying administrative procedures, and providing attractive financial and tax incentives, and encouraging partnerships with foreign companies that contribute to technology transfer, skills development and the creation of sustainable job opportunities.

He added that these efforts have contributed to strengthening Morocco's position as a preferred destination for foreign investment.

International reports have ranked Morocco among the top African countries for business in 2025.

It has transformed into a global tourist destination, attracting 17.4 million tourists in 2024 — 20 percent increase compared to the previous year.

Meanwhile, KCCI affirmed that the Moroccan-Kuwaiti Trade Forum is an important platform for learning about the investment environment in Morocco, the incentives available to Kuwaiti investors, and the numerous opportunities in vital sectors such as infrastructure, aircraft and automotive manufacturing, renewable energy, and other value-added sectors.

It praised the broad participation of Moroccan companies in the forum, which is prominent in the fields of food and pharmaceutical manufacturing, cosmetics, agriculture, communications and information systems, and the clothing and textile industry.

It asserted that this participation provides an opportunity to build fruitful partnerships with Kuwaiti counterparts, while strengthening economic cooperation between the two countries.

It disclosed that the volume of investment exchange between Kuwait and Morocco has witnessed leaps over the past two years, but it still requires further development and prosperity, especially given the availability of all investment components between the two countries.

It called for intensifying bilateral meetings and enhancing the promotion of investment opportunities to raise the level of cooperation, reflecting the strength of relations between the two sides.

It added that Kuwaiti capital has extensive experience and successful track records in foreign investments, and it is embarking on major projects, particularly in the fields of infrastructure and renewable energy.

It indicated that Morocco's preparations for hosting the 2030 World Cup in partnership with Spain and Portugal will open horizons for mega-projects, underscoring the importance of promoting these projects to enable the Kuwaiti private sector to seize these strategic opportunities.

## Kuwait upholds

individuals whose nationality was withdrawn in accordance with Article 4/13 of Amiri Decree No. 15/1959 concerning the Kuwaiti Nationality Law and its amendments.

Resolution No. 913/2025 maintains the provision of housing welfare for individuals whose nationality was revoked under Article 5.



## Georgia Democrat gains traction in special election for state Senate seat

CANTON, Ga., Sept 14, (AP): A lone Democrat competing for a state senate seat in a deeply Republican Atlanta suburb snagged nearly 40% of votes in a special primary election last month, amplifying her party's optimism that discontent with President Donald Trump could spur future wins.

Yet it's unclear whether Democrat Debra Shigley's success foreshadows a coming Democratic wave like her supporters hope. Democrats have performed well in low-turnout special elections in recent years, and parties perform better locally when they aren't in control of the executive branch, Georgia Republican strategist Brian Robinson said.

"To read the tea leaves too much is a fool's errand, because it's such a low turnout," Robinson said. "All it shows is that Democrats are more angry than Republicans are, and fear and anger are the most important motivators in voter turnout."

Data from The Downballot tracking 39 special elections nationwide since Trump entered office shows that on average, Democrats performed 15.7 percentage points better than former Vice President Kamala Harris did as a presidential candidate in 2024. Republicans mostly kept their seats, but Democrats flipped a Pennsylvania state senate seat in March and two Iowa state Senate seats in January and August.

After taking the primary, Shigley advances to a Sept. 23 runoff in which Republican Jason Dickerson will be favored. The District 21 seat is up for grabs after Trump drafted state Sen. Brandon Beach, who won with more than 70% of the vote in 2024, to serve as US treasurer.

Georgia does not have party primaries in special legislative elections, so Shigley competed against six Republicans. Dickerson, an investment company president,



Democratic state Senate candidate Debra Shigley poses for a photo in Canton, Ga. on Sept 6. (AP)

came in second with 17.4% of the vote.

Shigley is a lawyer and mother of five who started a business that delivers hair care services to women of color. She lives in the affluent suburb of Milton, and it is her second political race after she lost in 2024 to Republican state House Speaker Pro Tem Jan Jones.

Shigley promises to champion working families and push to lower the costs of housing, health care and groceries. But she says her campaign is also generating enthusiasm because it's letting Democrats organize and "make their voices heard" in a moment when "folks have felt a lot of despair."

"The chaos that's happening right now is causing folks not just pain in their pocketbook but the anxiety when you look at the headlines and feel it's just one chaotic measure everyday," Shigley said at a recent campaign event in the district, which includes suburbs in Fulton and Cherokee counties about 20 miles (30 kilometers) north of downtown Atlanta.

## Patel faces congressional hearings after missteps in Kirk assassination probe

WASHINGTON, Sept 14, (AP): Hours after the assassination of conservative activist Charlie Kirk, FBI Director Kash Patel declared online that "the subject" in the killing was in custody. The shooter was not. The two men who had been detained were quickly released. Utah officials acknowledged that the gunman remained at large. The false assurance was more than a slip. It spotlighted the high-stakes uncertainty surrounding Patel's leadership of the bureau when its credibility is under extraordinary pressure, as is his own.

Patel now approaches congressional oversight hearings this coming week facing not just questions about that investigation but broader doubts about whether he can stabilize a federal law enforcement agency fragmented by political fights and internal upheaval.

Democrats are poised to press Patel on a purge of senior executives that has prompted a lawsuit, his pursuit of President Donald Trump's grievances long after the Russia investigation ended, and a realignment of resources that has prioritized the fight against illegal immigration and street crime.

The hearings will offer Patel his most consequential stage yet, and perhaps the clearest test of whether he can convince the country that the FBI, under his watch, can avoid compounding its mistakes in a time of political violence and deepening distrust.



Kash Patel speaks at a news conference on Sept 12, in Orem, Utah, as Utah department of public safety commissioner Beau Mason, (left), and Utah Gov Spencer Cox listen. (AP)

"Because of the skepticism that some members of the Senate have had and still have, it's extremely important that he perform very well at these oversight hearings" on Tuesday and Wednesday, said Gregory Brower, the FBI's former top congressional affairs official.

The FBI declined to comment about Patel's coming testimony.

Kirk's killing was always going to be a closely scrutinized investigation, not only because it was the latest burst of political violence inside the Unit-

ed States but also because of Kirk's friendships with Trump, Patel and other administration figures and allies.

While agents investigated, Patel posted on X that "the subject for the horrific shooting today that took the life of Charlie Kirk is now in custody." Utah Gov Spencer Cox said at a near-contemporaneous news conference that "Whoever did this, we will find you," suggesting authorities were still searching. Patel soon after posted that the person in custody had been released.

### Students face bigger obstacles

## Trump's travel ban keeps international students from coming to US for college

WASHINGTON, Sept 14, (AP): With the Taliban barring women from college in her native Afghanistan, Bahara Saghari set her sights on pursuing higher education in the United States.

Saghari, 21, practiced English up to eight hours per day for several years, eventually winning an offer to study business administration at a private liberal arts college in Illinois. She was hoping to arrive this fall, but her plans were derailed again, this time by President Donald Trump's travel ban.

"You think that finally you are going to your dream, and then something came up and like, everything's just gone," Saghari said.

Thousands of students are among the people affected by the Trump administration's travel ban and restrictions on citizens from 19 countries, including many who now feel stranded after investing considerable time and money to come to the US.

Some would-be international students are not showing up on American campuses this fall despite offers of admission because of logjams with visa applications, which the Trump administration slowed this summer while it rolled out additional vetting. Others have had second thoughts because of the administration's wider immigration crackdown and the abrupt termination of some students' legal status.

But none face bigger obstacles than the students hit with travel bans. Last year, the State Department issued more than 5,700 F-1 and J-1 visas - which are used by foreign students and researchers - to people in the 19 travel ban-affected countries between May and September. Citizens of Iran and Myanmar were issued more than half of the approved visas.

Pouya Karami, a 17-year-old student from Shiraz, Iran, focused his college search entirely on the US. No other country offers the same research opportunities in science, he said. He was planning to study polymer chemistry this fall at Pittsburg State University in Kansas, but he had to shelve those plans because of the travel ban.

Karami deferred admission until next year and is holding out hope. He is still preparing for his embassy interview and reaching out to US politicians to reconsider the travel ban's restrictions on students.

"I'm doing everything I can about it," he said.



US President Donald Trump speaks to the White House Religious Liberty Commission during an event at the Museum of the Bible on Sept 8, in Washington. (AP)

The full travel ban affects citizens from 12 countries spanning Africa, Asia, the Middle East and the Caribbean. It blocks most people from obtaining new visas, although some citizens from the banned countries are exempt, such as green card holders, dual citizens and some athletes. Seven other countries have tighter restrictions that also apply to student visas.

When Trump announced the travel ban in June, he cited high visa overstay rates and national security threats from unstable or adversarial foreign governments as reasons for putting countries on the list. He has called some of the countries'

screening processes "deficient" and said he plans to keep the ban in place until "identified inadequacies" are addressed.

In Myanmar, the family of one 18-year-old student made his education their top priority, saving paychecks for him to go abroad for college. They risked their stability so he could have the chance to live a better life, said the student, who asked to be identified by only his nickname, Gu Gu, because he is worried about being targeted by the Myanmar or US government for expressing criticism.

When he shared a screenshot of his acceptance letter to the University of South Florida in a family group chat, it exploded with celebratory emojis, Gu Gu said. He had been waiting for visa appointments to be announced when one night, his mother woke him to ask about news of a US travel ban. In an instant, his plans to study at USF this fall were ruined.

Many students his age in Myanmar have been drafted into the military or joined resistance groups since the military ousted the elected civilian government in 2021. While a civil war rages, he had been looking forward to simple freedoms in the US like walking to school by himself or playing sports again.

"I was all in for US, so this kind of breaks my heart," said Gu Gu, who was unable to defer his acceptance.

Saghari, the Afghan student, postponed her July visa interview appointment in Pakistan to August after learning of the travel ban, but ultimately canceled it. Knox College denied her request to defer her admission.

She later applied to schools in Europe but encountered issues with the admissions process. A German university told Saghari she would need to take another English proficiency test because an earlier score had expired, but taking the test the first time was already a challenge in Afghanistan's political climate.

She has been accepted to a Polish university on the condition she pay her tuition up front. She said her application is under review as the school validates her high school degree. Amir, a 28-year-old Iranian graduate who declined to provide his last name for fear of being targeted, wasn't able to travel to the US to take a position as a visiting scholar. Instead, he has continued to work as a researcher in Tehran, saying it was difficult to focus after missing out on a fully funded opportunity to conduct research at the University of Pennsylvania.



Supporters of Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic attend a 'Family gatherings against blockades' rally in Novi Sad, Serbia on Sept 13. (AP)

## Serbia opposing camps hold parallel rallies, reflecting deep political crisis

BELGRADE, Serbia, Sept 14, (AP): Anti-government protesters and supporters of President Aleksandar Vucic held parallel rallies throughout Serbia on Saturday, reflecting a deep political crisis in the Balkan country following more than 10 months of protests against the populist government.

Vucic's Serbian Progressive Party recently started organizing its own demonstrations to counter persistent student-led protests that have challenged the president's firm grip on power in Serbia.

No major incidents were reported at the rallies held in a number of cities and towns with police separating the two camps. Brief scuffles erupted in the capital, Belgrade, when riot police pushed away anti-government protesters as Vucic joined his supporters in a show of confidence.

Vucic said that "people want to live normally, they don't want to be harassed and want to be free."

Vucic has refused a student demand to call an early parliamentary election. He has instead stepped up a crackdown on the protests, which have drawn hundreds of thousands of people in the past months. More than 100 university professors have been dismissed, while police have faced accusations of brutality against peaceful demonstrators.

Vucic has accused student-led protesters of being "terrorists" who are working against their country under orders from the West. He hasn't offered any evidence for such claims.

The protests first started in November last year after a concrete canopy collapse at a renovated train station in the northern city of Novi Sad killed 16 people. It ignited a nationwide move-

ment seeking justice for the victims and blaming corruption-fueled negligence for the tragedy.

Last week, tanks rolled through the capital, Belgrade, in preparation for a military parade on Sept. 20. If the parade becomes a flashpoint for unrest, protesters fear the military could remain on the streets.

Vucic has ruled Serbia for more than a decade, reshaping its politics while drawing accusations of corruption and authoritarianism.

He began his political career in the 1990s as a hardline nationalist in the Serbian Radical Party, becoming information minister under the late Serbian strongman Slobodan Milosevic. He was notorious for his calls to punish independent media and his wartime rhetoric against Serbia's neighbors which he maintains to this day.

presiding over an ecumenical prayer service in honor of 21st century martyrs. (AP)

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**Madrid blast kills 1, injures 25:** A suspected gas leak explosion in a building in Madrid killed one person and injured 25, emergency services for the Spanish capital said on Sunday.

Rescue workers found the body of a man in a rescue operation with search dogs following the explosion on Saturday, authorities said.

Spanish news agency EFE said that firefighters suspect that the explosion was caused by a gas leak, but police were still investigating its cause. (AP)

## Ukraine drones hit one of Russia's leading oil refineries, sparking fire

KYIV, Sept 14, (AP): Ukrainian drones overnight struck one of Russia's largest oil refineries, sparking a fire, according to Russian officials and Ukraine's military.

The strike on the Kirishi refinery, in Russia's northwestern Leningrad region, follows weeks of Ukrainian attacks on Russian oil infrastructure that Kyiv says fuels Moscow's war effort. The facility, operated by Russian oil major Surgutneftegas, produces close to 17.7 million metric tons per year (355,000 barrels per day) of crude, and is one of Russia's top three by output.

More than three years since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, drones have emerged as a key weapon for both sides. Multiple Russian drones crossed into Poland on Wednesday, prompting NATO to send fighter jets to shoot them down and underlining long-held concerns that the fighting might spill over beyond Ukraine's borders.

According to Ukraine's General Staff, explosions and a fire were reported at the Kirishi refinery. It posted a photo appearing to show a blaze and clouds of smoke against a night sky.

Regional Gov Alexander Drozdenko said three drones were downed overnight in the Kirishi area, with falling debris sparking a fire at the facility. He said no one was injured, and the blaze was put out.

Russian officials did not immediately comment on the consequences of the strike. At least 80 Ukrainian drones were shot down overnight over Russia, occupied Crimea and the adjacent Sea of Azov, according to the Russian Defense Ministry.

Russia remains the world's second largest oil exporter, but a seasonal rise in demand and sustained Ukrainian drone



Leningrad Region Governor Alexander Drozdenko speaks to Russian President Vladimir Putin during their meeting in St. Petersburg, Russia on Jan 29, 2024. (AP)

strikes have caused gasoline shortages in recent weeks.

Gas stations have run dry in some regions of the country, with motorists waiting in long lines and officials resorting to rationing or cutting off sales altogether.

To try to ease the shortage, Russia has paused gasoline exports, with officials Wednesday declaring a full ban until Sept. 30 and a partial ban affecting traders and intermediaries until Oct. 31. Also in the Leningrad region, a diesel locomotive was derailed during the night, local Gov. Drozdenko said Sunday. The region surrounds but does not include Russia's second city of St. Petersburg.

## More than 100,000 attend London protest organized by far-right activist

LONDON, Sept 14, (AP): A London march organized by far-right activist Tommy Robinson drew more than 110,000 people and became unruly on Saturday as a small group of his supporters clashed with police officers who were separating them from counterprotesters.

Several officers were punched, kicked and struck by bottles tossed by people at the fringes of the "Unite the Kingdom" rally, Metropolitan Police said. Reinforcements with helmets and riot shields were deployed to support the 1,000-plus officers on duty.

Twenty six police officers were injured - four who were seriously hurt, including broken teeth and a concussion, a possible broken nose and a spinal injury. At least 25 people were arrested for offenses including violent disorder, assaults and criminal damage, and the investigation continues, police said.

"There is no doubt that many came to exercise their lawful right to protest, but there were many who came intent



People demonstrate during the Tommy Robinson-led Unite the Kingdom march and rally, in London on Sept 13. (AP)

on violence," Assistant Commissioner Matt Twist said. "They confronted officers, engaging in physical and verbal abuse and making a determined effort to breach cordons in place to keep everyone safe."

The rally drew an estimated crowd of between 110,000 and 150,000 people, far surpassing expectations, police said. The rival "March Against Fascism" protest organized by Stand Up To Racism had about 5,000 marchers.

### Europe

**Pope Leo XIV turns 70:** Pope Leo XIV marked his 70th birthday on Sunday by thanking God, his parents and all those who prayed for him.

Leo saw giant "Happy birthday" banners, balloons and congratulatory signs held up by the faithful gathered in St Peter's Square for his traditional noon blessing.

"My dears, it seems you know today I have turned 70," Leo said to cheers. "I thank the Lord, my parents and all those who remembered me in their prayers."

Later Sunday, Leo was spending his birthday afternoon



Kim inspects weapons institutes

DPRK slams joint military exercises by United States, South Korea and Japan: KCNA

PYONGYANG, Sept 14, (Xinhua): Senior officials of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) have condemned upcoming military drills by the United States, South Korea and Japan, the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported Sunday.
   
 Seoul will launch two simultaneous drills on Monday, including Freedom Edge, a trilateral outdoor multi-domain exercise with the United States and Japan, and Iron Mace, a tabletop drill simulating a nuclear-attack response with the United States, South Korean media reported.
   
 Kim Yo Jong, vice department director of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK), said the "Guidelines for Nuclear Deterrence and Nuclear Operations on the Korean Peninsula" fabricated by the United States and South Korea are a dangerous idea.
   
 She said the DPRK will regard it as an unfiltered demonstration of their anti-DPRK confrontational stand and "sucession" of confrontational policy.
   
 The reckless show of strength made by the three countries in real action near the DPRK will inevitably bring bad results to themselves, she added.
   
 Pak Jong Chon, vice-chairman of the Central Military Commission of the WPK, said Iron Mace is a "nuclear war rehearsal aimed at using nuclear weapons against the DPRK from A to Z," while the Freedom Edge is the most comprehensive and offensive war drill for aggression in its scale, content and nature.
   
 The reckless military moves of the three countries pose a grave challenge to the security interests of our state and a major danger of undermining regional stability and escalating military tension, he said.
   
 Pak stressed that if the hostile forces persist in their muscle-flexing, the DPRK will respond to them with "counteraction in a very clear and intensified way."
   
 Top leader of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) Kim Jong Un gave field guidance at the Armored Defensive Weapons Institute and the Electronic Weapons Institute under the Academy of Defence Sciences on Thursday and Friday, the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported Saturday.
   
 Kim, general secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) and president of the State Affairs of the DPRK, listened to a report on the development of major core technologies completed through joint research by the Armored Defensive



A TV screen shows an image of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, (second from left), supervising a test of a new rocket engine during a news program at the Seoul Railway Station in Seoul, South Korea on Sept 9. (AP)

Weapons Institute and the Tank Designing Bureau, said the report, adding that he was also briefed in detail on research in the field of armored defense, including the development of special composite armor.
   
 He said the combat capability of the DPRK's armored forces has been remarkably bolstered with the successful development and deployment of the directional infrared and jamming equipment, as well as active and passive protection systems.
   
 Kim also visited the Electronic Weapons Institute, where he learned about and

guided important work, said the report.
   
 Noting that the Ninth Congress of the WPK would adopt a policy of simultaneously pushing forward the building of nuclear forces and conventional armed forces in the realm of national defense, Kim expressed confidence that the Academy of Defense Sciences would continue to play a leading role in modernizing the conventional armed forces.

Also:

**SEOUL:** South Korea protested at Japan's no mention of Koreans' forced labor during a Saturday ceremony to commemorate the victims in Japan's war-linked gold mine, multiple media outlets said Sunday.
   
 An unnamed presidential official was quoted as saying that South Korea was in a position that the memorial service should be carried out in full with its content and form consistent with its "purpose and nature," adding that Seoul would continue talks with Tokyo under the position.
   
 The official noted that although South Korea failed to reach a satisfactory conclusion this year, the country believed that building mutual trust and understanding, and creating right conditions, based on its position of facing the past while moving toward the future, will help further enhance the quality of cooperation, including on historical issues.
   
 The first annual ceremony was held last year in exchange for Seoul's agreement to list the "Sado Island Gold Mines," a gold mine on the Sado Island associated with the Korean Peninsula's wartime forced labor, as a UNESCO World Heritage site in July 2024.
   
 Like last year, South Korea boycotted the memorial service this year as no agreement was reached with Japan about Seoul's demand to include in the memorial address an acknowledgement that Koreans were forced into labor.
   
 South Korean historians say thousands of Koreans were forced by Imperial Japan into heavy labor for the gold mine, which was turned into facilities to manufacture war-related materials during World War II when the Korean Peninsula was under Japan's colonial rule. The mine was shut down in 1989.
   
 South Korea planned to hold its own ceremony with the victims' families, but the exact date had yet to be decided.

Chinese and Slovenian FM's vow to enhance political, economic ties

LJUBLJANA, Sept 14, (Xinhua): Top Chinese and Slovenian diplomats have pledged to strengthen political ties and enhance economic cooperation during their talks here on Saturday.
   
 During the talks with his Slovenian counterpart Tanja Fajon, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi hailed the traditional friendship between the two countries, as China was one of the first countries to recognize Slovenia's independence more than 30 years ago.
   
 Wang, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, said that the bilateral relationship, featuring equality, sincerity, trust and win-win despite their social and institutional differences, is particularly valuable amid the current complex and turbulent international landscape.
   
 He called on the two countries to uphold the original aspiration, enhance communication, deepen mutual trust, bolster cooperation and continuously enrich the strategic connotation of the China-Slovenia partnership.
   
 The "Taiwan independence" separatist forces are seeking to promote sepa-



Slovenian President Nataša Pirc Musar meets with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, in Ljubljana, Slovenia on Sept 13. (Xinhua)

ratist activities, which is a challenge to the victory of World War II (WWII) and a disruption to the post-WWII international order, Wang said, voicing his trust that the Slovenian side will continue to

abide by the one-China principle, support the Chinese people in opposing the "Taiwan independence" activities and consolidate the political foundation of bilateral relations.
   
 China is willing to enhance exchanges at all levels with Slovenia, expand cooperation in new fields such as high-end manufacturing, scientific and technological innovation, health and medicine, green energy and artificial intelligence, and provide a fair, open, and non-discriminatory business environment for enterprises of the two countries, Wang said.
   
 Both sides should leverage their respective strengths, promote trade balance in an open spirit, and jointly support economic globalization, he noted.
   
 Wang called on Slovenia to play an active role in promoting the healthy and stable development of relations between China and the European Union (EU).
   
 Chinese President Xi Jinping has proposed the Global Governance Initiative, which upholds five key principles that align with the shared aspiration of the international community, Wang said.



This stack composite photo taken on Sept 13, 2025 shows lightning in Beijing, capital of China. Scattered thundershowers hit Beijing on Saturday evening, accompanied by strong winds, hail, and short-lived downpours in some parts of the city. (Xinhua)

US Navy raids tuna boat in Caribbean: Venezuela

CARACAS, Venezuela, Sept 14, (AP): Personnel from a US warship boarded a Venezuelan tuna boat with nine fishermen while it was sailing in Venezuelan waters, Venezuela's foreign minister said on Saturday, underlining strained relations with the United States.
   
 The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment.
   
 Tensions between the two nations escalated after US President Donald Trump in August ordered the deployment of warships in the Caribbean, off the coast of the South American country, citing the fight against Latin American drug cartels.
   
 While reading a statement on Saturday, Foreign Minister Yván Gil told journalists the Venezuelan tuna boat was "illegally and hostilely boarded by a United States Navy destroyer" and 18 armed personnel who remained on the vessel for eight hours, preventing communication and the fishermen's normal activities. They were then released under escort by the Venezuelan navy.
   
 The fishing boat had authorization from the Ministry of Fisheries to carry out its work, Gil said at a press conference, during which he presented photos of the incident.
   
 Along with the statement, Venezuela's foreign affairs ministry distributed a short video, taken, according to the ministry, by the Venezuelan fisher-



Members of the government-organized militias receive military training at Fort Tiuna in Caracas, Venezuela on Sept 13. (AP)

men. In the video, it is alleged that part of the fishing boat, US Navy personnel and the US warship can be seen.
   
 "Those who give the order to carry out such provocations are seeking an incident that would justify a military escalation in the Caribbean," Gil said, adding that the objective is to "persist in their failed policy" of regime change in Venezuela.
   
 Gil said the incident was "illegal" and "illegitimate" and warned that

Venezuela will defend its sovereignty against any "provocation."
   
 The Venezuelan foreign minister's complaint comes days after Trump said that his country had attacked a drug-laden vessel and killed 11 people on board. Trump said the vessel had departed from Venezuela and was carrying members of the Tren de Aragua gang, but his administration has not presented any evidence to support that claim.

Ambush in flashpoint region killed at least 14 Nigerien soldiers: authorities

NIAMEY, Niger, Sept 14, (AP): An ambush by armed men in a flashpoint region in military-run Niger last week killed at least 14 soldiers, the country's defense minister said in a statement, the latest in escalating militant attacks in the West African nation.
   
 The attack took place in the hotspot Tillabéri region on Wednesday, said the statement, broadcast by the state RTN television late Saturday. It followed the deployment of a military unit on the outskirts of Tillabéri, based on intelligence reports of an ongoing robbery there by a gang of armed men riding on motorcycles.
   
 "This attempted theft turned out to be a decoy intended to lure the patrol into an ambush," said Salifou Mody, the defense minister. He did not name the group suspected in the attack.
   
 Several militant groups that target both civilians and the military operate in Niger, including an Islamic State group affiliate.
   
 The Tillabéri region borders borders Mali and Burkina Faso - two other countries struggling with escalating insurgency - and has been a hotspot for terror attacks over the past decade.
   
 The Nigerien military government came to power in 2023, after deposing the country's democratically elected



Nigeriens participate in a march called by supporters of coup leader Gen. Abdourahmane Tchiani, pictured, in Niamey, Niger on July 30, 2023. (AP)

government, promising to stem the increasing spread of attacks. However, data shows the attacks have stepped up - something that also applies to Mali and Burkina Faso, where the military also took over in coups.
   
 According to a report by Human Rights Watch earlier this month, the

Islamic State has stepped up attacks against civilians since March 2025.
   
 The New York-based watchdog documented at least five attacks in Tillabéri, where the militant IS Sahel offshoot reportedly killed "over 127 villagers and Muslim worshipers, and burned and looted dozens of homes."

Nepal's new Prime Minister Karki urges calm after deadly protests

KATHMANDU, Nepal, Sept 14, (AP): Nepal's new prime minister took office Sunday and "urged calm and cooperation to rebuild" the Himalayan nation after days of violent protests last week left at least 72 people dead and destroyed government buildings and politicians' homes.
   
 Sushila Karki, the country's first woman prime minister, told top officials gathered at her temporary office that each family of slain protesters will receive monetary compensation of 1 million rupees (about \$ 11,330) and assured that those injured would be taken care of, state TV reported.
   
 "We all need to get together to rebuild the country," Karki said, pledging to work to get the South Asian nation back on track.
   
 The massive demonstrations - called the protest of Gen Z - began on Sept 8 over a short-lived social media ban. Tens of thousands of protesters took to the streets, particularly young people, angry about widespread corruption and poverty, while the children of political leaders, known as "nepo kids," seemed to enjoy luxurious lifestyles.
   
 The protests soon turned violent, with protesters attacking the parlia-



Nepal's interim prime minister Sushila Karki, center, speaks to a person who was injured during anti-corruption protests at Civil hospital in Kathmandu, Nepal on Sept 13. (AP)

ment building and police opening fire, and led to the resignation of Prime Minister Khadga Prasad Oli, who fled his official residence.
   
 The actual headquarters of the prime minister, an old white-colored palace

converted to an office in the capital, Kathmandu, was set on fire along with the offices of the president, the supreme court, key government ministries and several police stations on Sept 9, a day after police shot at protesters.

Lat/Am

**Ecuador pool hall shooting kills 7:** A shooting by a criminal gang at a pool hall in northern Ecuador killed at least seven people and four others wounded, police said on Saturday.
   
 It was the second such attack in less than a month in the same city during a wave of violence in the Andean country.
   
 The shooting occurred late Friday in the city of Santo Domingo de los Tsachilas, located 130 kilometers (80 miles) west of the capital, Quito, according to the local police commander, Col. Olga Benavides, who attributed the attack to a "territorial dispute" between criminal gangs.
   
 On Aug. 17, seven people were killed during a similar attack that also occurred at a pool hall in the same city.
   
 One of those killed and two of the wounded in Friday's shooting had criminal records for drug trafficking, criminal association, murder and theft, according to a police report. (AP)
   
**Costa Rica arrests 4 over killing of officer:** Costa Rican authorities said Friday they had arrested four people in connection with the killing in June of a retired Nicaraguan military officer and outspoken critic of President Daniel Ortega.
   
 Roberto Samcam, 67, was shot dead on the morning of June 19 when police said a man entered his condominium complex in the northeast of the Costa Rican capital, San Jose.
   
 The retired major was shot multiple times with a 9mm pistol, according to Costa Rica's Judicial Investigations agency. The gunman escaped.
   
 Samcam had been living in exile since July 2018 when paramilitaries assaulted his home in Nicaragua. (AP)

Subcontinent

**5.8 quake hits India's northeast:** A 5.8 magnitude earthquake struck India's northeastern Assam state on Sunday, sending tremors throughout the region, officials said. There were no immediate reports of any damage.
   
 The quake had a depth of 5 kilometers (3.1 miles) and its epicenter was in the town of Udalguri, according to India's National Center for Seismology. Terrified residents rushed outside their homes in Guwahati, the state's capital. Northern India is highly seismic. (AP)
   
**India stone quarry collapse kills 6:** At least six people were killed and four others injured, two of them critically, after rocks caved in inside a stone quarry in the eastern Indian state of West Bengal, officials said Saturday.
   
 The stretch of stone quarry collapsed on Friday near Bahadurpur village of Nalhati in Birbhum district.
   
 Following the collapse, locals, police personnel and rescuers from the fire and emergency department rushed to the site to rescue workers trapped under the debris. (Xinhua)
   
**6 dead in Afghanistan road crash:** At least six passengers were killed and four others injured in a head-on collision between a passenger car and a truck in northern Afghanistan's Faryab province on Sunday morning, the state-owned Bakhtar news agency reported.
   
 The accident occurred on the outskirts of Khwaja Sabz Posh district, where the vehicles slammed into each other, killing six commuters on the car instantly and wounding four others. (Xinhua)



# Dollar remains steady, euro rises

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14, (KUNA): The US dollar exchange rate remained stable against the Kuwaiti dinar at KD 0.304 on Sunday, according to the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK). The euro advanced 0.32 percent to KD 0.357, compared to Thursday's

level, while the British pound gained 0.24 percent to reach KD 0.413. The Swiss franc also moved higher by 0.29 percent, settling at KD 0.382. Meanwhile, the Japanese yen held steady at KD 0.002, with no change from the previous session.

# Business

## Company concludes 4th season of 'Kuwait Codes' with CODED Academy

# Zain: 1,000 young programmers pave the way for an economy built on digital innovation

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14: Zain Kuwait announced the successful conclusion of the fourth season of the “Kuwait Codes” program in strategic partnership with CODED Academy. This year’s cohort graduated more than 1,000 students, bringing the program’s total graduates to over 4,500 since launch, a milestone that reflects the strength of the partnership and the joint effort to empower Kuwaiti youth and build their skills for an innovation-driven digital economy.

Zain participated in the closing ceremony held at the Kuwait University Conference Center in Shadadiya, where the company honored the graduating students and presented the Zain Youth and Community Award to the winning student project that most effectively serves youth.

The ceremony also recognized outstanding students across the program’s different tracks, including web development, Python programming, app development, and cybersecurity. Special honors included the Exhibition Audience Choice Award, Excellence in Cybersecurity, Most Market-Ready Project, Digital Sustainability Award, Best Artificial Intelligence Project, Best Idea, Best Design, and the CODED Excellence Award.

This season featured two primary training tracks, cybersecurity and Python programming, using artificial intelligence techniques, introduced for the first time within the program. Python is among the world’s most widely used languages due to its versatility and ease of learning, making it an ideal choice for developing students’ technical skills.

The season’s conclusion capped a program marked by richer content and an integrated learning experience delivered with partners from both the public and private sectors. Zain reaffirmed its commitment to a corporate sustainability strategy that places digital education and youth empowerment at



Al-Khashti and Marafi with the program's partners.



Waleed Al-Khashti receives recognition from Ahmad Marafi for Zain's strategic partnership.



Al-Khashti delivering his speech during the ceremony.



Al-Khashti honoring the student who won the Zain Youth and Community Award.

the forefront, alongside its ongoing collaboration with CODED on complementary initiatives that build national technical capabilities.

In his keynote address to the students, Waleed Al-Khashti, Chief Corporate Affairs and Relations Officer, said: “You have proven that your passion for learning and experimentation can turn hours of training into real experience, and that the curiosity you carry is the key to building a promising

■ Waleed Al-Khashti: “Investing in youth is the greatest investment to enable them to lead the digital transformation journey.”  
■ Ahmad Marafi: “We look forward to continuing our work with Zain to build a tech future worthy of Kuwait’s ambitions and its youth.”

digital future. Every line of code you wrote and every idea you created is part of Kuwait’s digital future, a Kuwait led by an aware, creative generation equipped with

knowledge.”  
“This success would not have been possible without the outstanding efforts of the CODED Academy team and the support of

our partners, who believed with us that investing in people is the greatest investment. We extend our sincere thanks to them for this fruitful collaboration.”

“To the youth of Kuwait, know that this is not the end of the journey but its beginning. What you learned today is a launchpad, and what awaits you tomorrow is bigger and broader. The future needs your ideas, your self-confidence, and your determination to be at the forefront.”

Al-Khashti concluded: “At Zain, we will continue to support you, because we believe that building a digital generation capable of competing globally is a shared responsibility. You are today’s success story and tomorrow’s leaders who will write Kuwait’s next chapter in innovation and entrepreneurship.”

Ahmed Marafi, Co-founder and CEO of CODED Academy, said: “We are proud of the great success achieved by the 2025 ‘Kuwait Codes’ initiative, which saw the participation of more than 1,000 students whose passion and creativity proved the ability of Kuwait’s youth to turn knowledge into innovative projects that reflect their great potential.”

He added: “This success would not have been possible without Zain’s strategic support as a key partner in empowering youth and strengthening their position in the worlds of technology and innovation. We extend our sincere thanks to Zain for this constructive collaboration, and we look forward to continuing our work together to open more opportunities and build a tech future worthy of Kuwait’s ambitions and its youth.”

“Kuwait Codes” is one of the country’s leading educational programs focused on building students’ coding capabilities in a simple yet professional manner within an interactive learning environment and with modern training content that keeps pace with developments in the tech industry.

Zain’s participation in this initiative is part of its corporate sustainability strategy that places youth empowerment and digital education at its core. Within this framework, the company has supported a number of impactful initiatives with CODED, including Academy X to develop girls’ coding skills, the Kuwait Hackathon challenge, and a series of training programs aimed at developing technical skills among national talents, helping prepare them to compete in the future digital economy.

## All Share Index hits 8,784.83

# Boursa Kuwait closes higher

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait ended Sunday’s session on a positive note, with the All Share Index climbing 68.20 points, or 0.78 percent, to close at 8,784.83 points.

Market activity was strong, as 514.3 million shares changed hands through 24,040 transactions, with a total trading value of KD 104.6 million (USD 319 million).

The Main Market Index advanced 66.27 points, equal to 0.84 percent, finishing at 8,002.73 points. Trading volume on this market reached 316.9 million shares through 15,462 deals,

valued at KD 46.19 million (USD 140.8 million).

Similarly, the Premier Market Index gained 72.05 points, or 0.77 percent, ending the day at 9,413.99 points. It saw dealings of 197.3 million shares executed across 8,578 transactions, with a value of KD 58.4 million (USD 178.12 million).

The Main 50 Index also posted solid growth, adding 80.86 points, or 0.99 percent, to stand at 8,251.41 points. Trading in this index included 250 million shares through 10,531 transactions, worth KD 38.5 million (about USD 117.4 million).

## US jobless claims hit four-year high

# ECB’s Lagarde declares the disinflationary phase over

By National Bank of Kuwait

UK growth stalled in July as flat GDP highlighted weakness in manufacturing and industrial output, while in the US, jobless claims hit a four-year high and annualized CPI accelerated to 2.9% with core steady at 3.1%, keeping markets positioned for a Fed cut next week and even speculation of a 50bp move. Producer prices surprised with a 0.1% monthly decline, easing annual PPI to 2.6% and reinforcing disinflationary signals. Wall Street set fresh records, gold neared \$3,650 on safe-haven demand, and the IMF warned of softer US demand, slowing jobs, and tariff-driven risks. In China, CPI fell 0.4% year-on-year, and PPI dropped 2.9%, extending factory-gate deflation but at a slower pace, underscoring fragile domestic demand. Meanwhile, the ECB held rates steady but struck a hawkish tone, with Lagarde declaring disinflation “over” and the euro climbing back above \$1.1700.

### United States

#### Producer Price Index

U.S. producer prices unexpectedly fell 0.1% in August 2025, the first drop in four months and well below forecasts for a 0.3% gain, after a downwardly revised 0.7% rise in July. The decline was driven by a 0.2% fall in services costs, led by a sharp drop in machinery and vehicle wholesaling margins, alongside declines in chemicals, furniture, food retailing, and data processing. Goods prices edged up 0.1%, supported by tobacco, meat, poultry, and electronics. Annually, PPI eased to 2.6% from 3.1% in July, below expectations, while core PPI also slipped 0.1% on the month, with the annual rate cooling to 2.8%.

#### Inflation

U.S. annual inflation picked up to 2.9% in August 2025, the highest since January and in line with forecasts, after holding at 2.7% in June and July. The rise was driven by stronger food, used cars, and new vehicle prices, alongside the first energy increase in seven months. Gasoline and fuel oil declines eased, while natural gas costs stayed elevated. Shelter inflation edged slightly lower year-on-year but rose 0.4% month-on-month, contributing most to the monthly CPI gain of 0.4%, the fastest since January. U.S. core inflation held steady at 3.1% in August 2025, unchanged from July and matching expectations. Shelter costs rose 3.6% year-on-year, slightly easing from 3.7%, while notable gains came from medical care (+3.4%), household furnishings (+3.9%), used cars and trucks (+6.0%), and motor vehicle insurance (+4.7%). Month-on-month, core CPI increased 0.3%, the same pace as July and in line with forecasts.

#### Unemployment Claims

U.S. initial jobless claims jumped by 27,000 to 263,000 in early September, the highest since October 2021 and well above expectations of 235,000, reinforcing signs of labor market weakness. The four-week average rose by 9,750 to 240,500, its sharpest weekly increase since December 2020. Texas saw the largest unadjusted rise (+15,304). Continuing claims held at 1.93 million, slightly below forecasts but still above post-2021 norms.

#### U.S. Budget Deficit

The U.S. posted a \$345 billion budget deficit in August 2025, down 9% from a year earlier, helped by a surge in customs receipts from Trump’s tariff

Previous Week Levels					This Week's Expected Range		3-Month
Currencies	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	Forward
EUR	1.1717	1.1661	1.1779	1.1733	1.1700	1.1830	1.1796
GBP	1.3499	1.3478	1.3590	1.3556	1.3480	1.3680	1.3560
JPY	148.04	146.29	148.57	147.66	145.85	148.20	146.30
CHF	0.7988	0.7912	0.8004	0.7963	0.7850	0.8035	0.7880

iffs, which jumped \$22.5 billion. Year-to-date, however, the deficit widened by 4% to \$1.97 trillion, reflecting still-elevated spending. August receipts rose 12% to a record \$344 billion, while outlays edged up \$2 billion to \$689 billion, also a record. Net customs revenue hit a record \$29.5 billion versus \$7 billion a year ago, highlighting the tariff impact. Despite the monthly improvement, fiscal pressures remain with the deficit continuing to grow overall.

#### IMF Comments on U.S. Economy

The IMF cautioned that the U.S. economy is showing early signs of strain, with softer domestic demand and slowing job growth. While inflation is moving toward the Fed’s 2% goal, risks remain from Trump-era tariffs, which fueled import volatility earlier in 2025 and are now adding to price pressures. The IMF sees room for rate cuts but urged the Fed to proceed cautiously based on data. It also flagged the government’s recent downward revision of 911,000 jobs through March as unusually large, suggesting labor market weakness predated the tariff hikes. These issues will be examined in the IMF’s November review of the U.S. economy.

The Greenback was last seen trading at 97.550.

### United Kingdom

#### Manufacturing and Industrial Production

UK manufacturing output fell 1.3% month-on-month in July 2025, the sharpest drop in a year and well below expectations for no change, reversing June’s 0.5% rise. Declines hit 9 of 13 subsectors, led by steep falls in electronics (-7%), pharmaceuticals (-4.5%), and chemicals (-4.6%). Some resilience came from textiles (+1.2%) and electrical equipment (+3.3%). On an annual basis, manufacturing edged up 0.2%, improving from flat growth in June. Meanwhile, UK industrial production fell 0.9% month-on-month in July 2025, missing expectations for no change and reversing June’s 0.7% gain. Manufacturing output dropped 1.3%, led by declines in electronics, pharmaceuticals, and chemicals. Mining and quarrying also contracted further (-2.0%), while growth in utilities slowed, though water supply rose modestly. Annually, industrial output edged up just 0.1%, down from 0.2% in June and well below forecasts of 1.1%.

#### UK Economy

UK GDP stalled in July 2025 after a 0.4% gain in June, matching expectations. Services inched up 0.1%, led by transport and health, but were weighed down by a fall in information and communication. Construction grew 0.2%, supported by housing activity, while production dropped 0.9% on sharp declines in electronics and pharmaceuticals, partly offset by stronger electrical

equipment. Over the three months to July, GDP rose 0.2% as services and construction gains were dampened by weaker production. Annually, the economy expanded by 1.4%, the same as in June but slightly below forecasts of 1.5%.

The GBP/USD currency pair was last seen trading at 1.3556.

### Europe

#### Monetary Policy

The ECB left rates unchanged (deposit at 2.00%, refinancing at 2.15%, lending at 2.40%), as expected, with inflation near target and the outlook steady. Updated forecasts show headline inflation at 2.1% in 2025, easing to 1.7% in 2026 before rising to 1.9% in 2027, while core inflation is seen at 2.4%, 1.9%, and 1.8%, respectively. Growth was revised up to 1.2% in 2025, then slowed to 1.0% in 2026 and rebounded to 1.3% in 2027. The ECB reiterated its data-driven, cautious stance, with President Lagarde noting balanced growth risks and declaring the disinflationary phase “over” and signaling an end to the easing cycle.

The EUR/USD currency pair was last seen trading at 1.1733.

### Asia-Pacific

#### China Inflation

China’s consumer prices fell 0.4% year-on-year in August 2025, the steepest drop since February and sharper than expected, marking the fifth bout of deflation this year. The decline was driven by a 4.3% plunge in food prices, the largest in nearly four years, as ample supply and weak demand pushed pork and other categories lower. Non-food inflation picked up to 0.5%, supported by subsidies and gains in clothing, healthcare, and education, while transport costs fell at a slower pace. Core inflation rose to 0.9%, its highest in 18 months, though monthly CPI was flat, undershooting forecasts after July’s 0.4% rise.

#### China Producer Price Index

China’s producer prices fell 2.9% year-on-year in August 2025, easing from July’s 3.6% drop and marking the mildest decline since April, in line with expectations. The result extended factory-gate deflation to 35 months, reflecting weak demand and trade pressures, though Beijing’s efforts to curb price wars helped slow the pace of decline. Production material costs contracted less sharply, with smaller falls in mining, raw materials, and processing, while consumer goods prices stayed soft, led by food and durable goods. Clothing prices were flat, and daily-use goods eased slightly. On a monthly basis, PPI was unchanged after a 0.2% drop in July.

The USD/CNY currency pair was last seen trading at 7.1242.

# OPEC marks 65th anniv with focus on stability & dialogue

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14, (KUNA): The Organization of Petroleum Producing Countries (OPEC) marked on Sunday its 65th anniversary of establishment with an eye on a future with stable markets and multilateral dialogue.

Between September 10-14, 1960, and after intensive meetings held in the Iraqi capital Baghdad, the establishment of OPEC was announced by founding members Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, and Venezuela.

Kuwait was represented at the meeting by Ahmad Sayed Omar alongside Saudi Arabia’s Abdullah Al-Tariki, Iran’s Fuad Rouhani, Iraq’s Tala’at Al-Shaibani, and Venezuela’s Juan Pablo Perez Alfonzo.

According to OPEC, the organization’s formation “occurred at a time of transition in the international economic and political landscape, with extensive decolonisation and the birth of many new independent states in the developing world.”

“The international oil market was dominated by the ‘Seven Sisters’ multinational companies,” the organization added, indicating that such companies intentionally spiked prices twice in 1959 and 1960 causing severe damage to oil exporting countries and thus OPEC was born.

The establishing meeting devised a system ensuring the stability of prices and guaranteed production, attending to the needs of both producers and consumers. The founding of OPEC was also meant to boost cooperation among members and unify policies when needed, leaving the door open for more countries to join the organization via approval of the original five members. The accord establishing OPEC in 1960 was registered on November sixth, 1962 at the UN Secretariat in accordance with Article 102 of the UN’s Charter, which requires international agreements to be registered with the UN.

OPEC took in 1960 Geneva, Switzerland, as its headquarters, before heading to Vienna, Austria, after five years.

Qatar joined OPEC in 1961, followed by Libya and Indonesia in 1962. There are 12 members in the organization.

In the span of seven decades, OPEC has managed to keep its principles and values intact since establishment, making sure that the oil and energy markets were stable.

OPEC is run by the Board of Governors and Economic Council, with the former being the main driver of the organization and the latter focusing on economic studies. OPEC has many committees tasked with production observation, internal audit, and other responsibilities.

In 1976, OPEC established the OPEC Fund for International Development, headquartered in Vienna, with the aim of boosting cooperation between OPEC members and developing countries through providing assistance and loans. Kuwait played an integral role in OPEC activities, whether within the boundaries of the organization or through deals outside of OPEC, namely the OPEC+ agreement.

Kuwait contributed immensely in the previous decades and in January 2022, OPEC members nominated Dr. Haitham Al-Ghais to be the organization’s Secretary General for a three-year term starting in August 2022. His mandate was renewed for an additional three years in August 2025, reflecting trust in Kuwait’s leading role within OPEC.



Al-Ruwaieh: KFH continues its leadership in social responsibility, youth empowerment in innovation & tech

# KFH participates in the honoring ceremony of Kuwait Codes

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) participated in a ceremony honoring a group of graduates of the “Kuwait Codes” program and initiative, as part of its strategic partnership with CODED Academy. This participation reaffirms KFH’s leadership in fostering innovation, supporting youth empowerment in technology and innovation, and embracing the latest digital advancements.

It also reflects the Bank’s ongoing efforts in fostering digital transformation within the community, helping to build an innovative national generation capable of leading the digital future.

In his speech, Head of Public Relations and Media at KFH Group, Yousef Abdullah Al-Ruwaieh, said: “As the largest Islamic bank in Kuwait and the second-largest Islamic bank in the world, KFH is pleased to join CODED Academy, its digital strategic partner, in honoring a cohort of innovators under Kuwait Codes initiative.”

He added that the partnership with CODED Academy, which started in 2018, has extended to include diverse programs and initiatives targeting all age groups, from children’s educational workshops to university and graduate-level initiatives.

Al-Ruwaieh emphasized that KFH places great emphasis on promoting digitalization, innovation and technology by contributing to programs that build skills in coding, cyber security, AI, and website development.

He highlighted KFH’s commitment to continue its pioneering role in supporting the youth and honing their skills to benefit the overall society in line with the Bank’s social responsibility and its sustainability strategy.

Al-Ruwaieh further noted: “KFH has a distinguished track record of community initiatives and impactful partnerships that add value to society and reinforce the Bank’s standing as a prime example in the private sector.”



Yousef Al-Ruwaieh receiving the award from CEO of CODED, Ahmad Marafi.



Yousef Al-Ruwaieh honored as winner of the Digital Sustainability Award.



Yousef Al-Ruwaieh

He expressed his pride in the Kuwait Codes graduates, congratulating them on their achievements and wishing them continued success.

**Digital Sustainability Award**  
As part of the Bank’s commitment

to sustainability and keenness to integrate its standards within the digital transformation strategy, KFH has dedicated the Digital Sustainability Award, which was granted to Jarrah Dhiyab Al-Mutairi.

The award underscores KFH’s role in encouraging participants to acquire practical skills that help them create digital applications focusing on environmental responsibility and aligning with global sustainability standards. It also reflects

KFH’s commitment to advancing sustainable technological innovation and empowering youth to leverage their skills for the benefit of society and the environment.



Part of the audience.

**CODED Juniors**  
The strategic partnership between KFH and CODED focused on key aspects like empowering young people through innovative technology and coding programs, including the “Coded Juniors” initiative that presented 50 innovative educational programs developed, reaching over 1,700 children and providing them with insights into coding, programming, and technological innovation. Moreover, kids have gained rich practical coding experience with cutting-edge technological resources, fostering a deep appreciation for science and expanding their horizons for creativity and innovation. KFH has partnered with CODED to conduct cybersecurity workshops for its Baiti account customers, educating children on internet safety and data protection.

**Kuwait Hackathon**  
As part of its commitment to youth empowerment and talent development, KFH has also continued its strategic partnership with CODED Academy to support Kuwait Hackathon, the largest cybersecurity competition in Kuwait, for the second consecutive years.

Additionally, KFH’s support to Kuwait Hackathon under its strategic partnership with CODED Academy represents a significant contribution to equipping a generation with advanced skills in cybersecurity, and resilience to navigate rapid technological developments. These initiatives provide participants with invaluable experience, accreditations, and enhanced career opportunities.

These efforts align with KFH’s strategy for community development, youth empowerment, and innovation. They also emphasize the importance of utilizing and harnessing modern technology and digital learning to enhance cybersecurity, which is crucial for the global economy and the banking sector. This approach serves society and achieves public interest by protecting customer information and data.

## Kuwaiti banks lead growth with \$204.6 million profit jump

# GCC banks’ Q2-2025 profits hit record \$16.2 billion

By KAMCO Invest

Net profits reported by listed banks in the GCC reached a new record high of USD 16.2 Bn during Q2-2025, an increase for the second consecutive quarter with a growth of 3.7% while y-o-y growth stood at a strong 9.2%. The sequential increase was once again mainly led by a broad-based increase in revenues for the sector and lower cost-to-income ratio that more than offset an increase in impairments during the quarter. The topline growth for the sector reflected continued lending growth as economic fundamental remain strong in the region backed by a healthy pipeline of projects.

At the country level, the q-o-q growth remained largely positive with five out of six country aggregates showing a sequential growth in net income while the aggregate for the Bahraini banking sector showed a decline. Kuwaiti-listed banks showed the biggest absolute growth in net profits with an increase of USD 204.6 Mn or 15.6% mainly led by reversal of provisions reported by three out of nine listed banks on the exchange. UAE and Saudi banks were next with net profit growth of USD 191.8 Mn (+3.2%) and USD 152.3 Mn (+2.6%), respectively. The y-o-y growth in net income was also positive across the board with double-digit growth in profits for Saudi and Bahraini banks further supported by healthy growth in profits for banks in Oman and Kuwait.

In terms of topline performance, aggregate banking sector revenues reached a new record high during the quarter at USD 35.6 Bn, after registering a healthy q-o-q growth of 3.6%. The growth was led by a broad-based increase in revenues reported by banks across country aggregates that more than offset an 8.2% decline reported by Bahraini banks. UAE-listed banks led the way during the quarter with a revenue growth of 5.3% or USD 674.0 Mn during Q2-2025 as compared to Q1-2025.

Lending growth remained resilient during the quarter, registering an increase of 3.4%, the second-biggest q-o-q growth in 16 quarters, reaching USD 2.23 Trillion at the end of Q2-2025. The growth reflected resilient non-oil sector growth in the region with non-oil manufacturing consistently well above the growth mark for key economies in the region. Gross loans also showed a healthy growth of 3.3% during the quarter.

### Highlights - GCC Banking Sector

This report analyzes the financials reported by 56 listed banks in the GCC for the quarter ended Q2-2025. Data for individual banks have been aggregated to the country level. Some of the key observations from the most recent financial quarter for the GCC Banking Sector includes the following:

**Fed ready to make its first interest rate cut after a year's pause...**

The debate and uncertainty surrounding tariffs imposed by the US on its trading partners seems to be reaching some consensus with the finalization of rates between the US against a majority of its trading partners, including European and Japan at 15%. We believe that the ongoing negotiations with the rest of the countries would be around this level once finalized. However, now the uncertainty has increased regarding the impact that these tariffs would have on inflation in the US and the labor market. In his latest comments after the Jackson Hole symposium, the US Fed chairman clearly signaled that the central bank is prepared to cut interest rates, potentially as soon as this month. He cautiously pointed to a shifting balance of risks in the economy, noting that while inflation is still a concern, the labor market is showing signs of weakness that could worsen rapidly. He noted that the downside risks to employment are rising, and that if these risks were to materialize, they could happen quickly. He also mentioned that while inflation risks are still tilted to the upside due to factors like tariffs, the overall balance of risks may warrant an adjustment to the current policy stance.

Inflation in Europe is modestly above target and showing resilience, but mixed signals from ECB officials reflect cautious monitoring. As per economists, while cuts seem premature now, they remain plausible if disinflationary trends take hold along with strengthening Euro and falling energy costs. Eurostat’s flash estimate for August 2025 placed annual inflation at 2.1%. This slight rise comes after the inflation rate held steady at 2.0% for the previous two months. This suggests that while inflation has been brought closer to the European Central Bank’s target, it remains a dynamic situation with some ongoing price pressures.

On the other hand, the Chinese economy continues to battle deflationary pressures with falling producer and consumer prices reflecting weak domestic demand and over-



supply in some sectors. While official figures show that the economy met its GDP growth target of around 5% in 2024 and in Q2-2025, there are also signs of weakness. For instance, in July 2025, factory output growth slumped to an eight-month low and retail sales slowed sharply, prompting calls for more government stimulus. The real estate sector, which has been in a severe downturn, continues to remain a drag on growth. Reports on China’s manufacturing sector also showed subdued figures, with the official manufacturing PMI marking its fifth consecutive monthly contraction in August reaching 49.4 points.

The interest rate outlook for global central banks continues to remain uncertain although the probabilities of cuts in the US has strengthened over the last week. For the US Fed, there is an almost 90% probability for a 25-bps cut in this month’s meeting. There is also an over 80% probability for another rate cut in December-2025. The futures market is pricing in three cuts as of now. The ECB, meanwhile, is following a wait and see approach and has paused its easing cycle after eight rate cuts over the past year. The main refinancing rate is currently at 2.15% and the impact of ongoing trade uncertainty and potential U.S. tariffs on economic growth and inflation would determine the future path. The Bank of England slashed its base rate by 25 bps to 4.0% in August-2025 marking the third rate cut this year citing signs that inflation is coming down.

### GCC credit continues to grow...

Data from GCC central banks once again highlighted the resilience of regional economies with continued growth in outstanding credit facilities. Total credit facilities, as seen from central bank published data, continued to show growth during Q2-2025 led by growth in all countries in the region, barring Bahrain. The lending growth in the region continued despite a sharp fall in project awards. According to data from MEED Projects, the total value of contracts awarded in the GCC fell by 58.0% y-o-y in Q2-2025, totaling USD 28.4 Bn, the lowest figure recorded in the past fourteen quarters, compared to USD 67.7 Bn in Q2-2024. The decline was seen across the region with five of the six member countries recorded y-o-y decreases in project awards.

On the contrary, manufacturing activity data from Bloomberg (Markit Whole Economy Surveys) showed PMI figures stayed strong during the quarter above the growth mark of 50 for all the countries in the GCC that reported the number at the end of Q2-2025. Manufacturing activity in Saudi Arabia remained robust with PMI at 57.2 points during June-2025, a three-month high level. This was also reflected in the quarterly GDP growth for the Kingdom that reached 3.9% y-o-y in Q2-2025 led by with oil activities rebounding by 3.8% and non-oil activities growing by 4.7%. Oil production increased by 5.6% q-o-q during Q2-2025.

UAE also boasted a healthy PMI figure of 53.5 points in June-2025 as compared to 54.0 point during March-2025. The growth came despite Dubai reporting one of the lowest levels of non-oil manufacturing growth during June-2025 with a PMI of 51.8 points. Manufacturing activity recov-

ered in Qatar with the PMI recorded at 52.0 points during June-2025, in line with the activity during March-2025. The PMI data for Kuwait also showed manufacturing comfortably above the growth mark at 53.1 points in June-2025 as compared to 52.3 points during March-2025, according to S&P Global.

Kuwaiti banks witnessed the strongest q-o-q increase in outstanding credit facilities during Q2-2025 with a growth of 2.9% followed by Saudi Arabia and Oman with similar growth of 2.7% and 2.2%, respectively. Data for Q1-2025 for UAE banks showed a q-o-q growth of 2.7% supported by a slightly faster growth in personal loans to residents. The Q2-2025 credit sentiment survey from the Central Bank of UAE showed that the quarter saw moderating credit growth led by steady demand from both individuals and businesses underpinned by strong economic conditions, rising household incomes, and a supportive investment climate. As per the report, Dubai witnessed the strongest growth in business lending while Abu Dhabi recorded the largest increase in personal loans. In terms of sectors, property development registered the strongest growth followed by retail and wholesale trade, construction, and manufacturing.

According to SAMA, growth in outstanding credit facility in Saudi Arabia was at a six-quarter low level of 2.7% during Q2-2025 as compared to a growth of 5.7% during the previous quarter. The y-o-y growth stood at a strong 15.8% as compared to the corresponding quarter in 2024 to reach SAR 3.2 Trillion. The q-o-q growth reflected an increase in credit facilities to a majority of the sectors in the economy. From among the prominent sectors, outstanding credit facilities for Building and Construction activities increased by 8.1% q-o-q during Q2-2025 to reach SAR 142.1 Bn. Loans to the Real Estate sector increased by 1.5% to reach SAR 933.8 Bn led by 1.8% growth in retail Real Estate loans while Corporate Real Estate loan growth stood at 0.3%. Individual loans also increased at a smaller pace of 0.6% whereas outstanding facilities in the Electricity Water Gas & Health Services sector increased by 9.9% during Q2-2025. Sectors like Transport, Accommodation & Food Service Activities, Information & Communications, Professional, Scientific & Technical Activities and Human Health & Social Activities registered double digit q-o-q growth during Q2-2025. On the other hand, merely two sectors reported a q-o-q decline in outstanding credit facilities that included Education and Mining & Quarrying with declines of 10.2% and 7.7%, respectively.

Meanwhile, banking credit facilities in Qatar showed a marginal growth during Q2-2025 with an increase of 0.2%. The increase was led by growth in lending to almost all the sectors in the economy but a 2.8% decline in lending to the Public sector almost fully offset the overall growth. In Oman, outstanding credit facilities increased by 2.2% led by growth in all three components i.e. credit to government, public enterprises as well as private sector, as per data from the CBO.

Outstanding credit facilities in Kuwait showed consistent growth in lending to reach KWD 51.7 Bn during Q2-2025. The 2.9% q-o-q increase was led by a broad-based growth

in lending to a majority of the sectors that was offset by a marginal decline in lending for Consumer Loans, Crude Oil & Gas, Public Services and Other loans. Among the key sectors, lending to the Real Estate sector increased by 0.9% q-o-q.

On the other hand, outstanding credit facilities in Bahrain declined by 1.0% during Q2-2025 to reach BHD 12.5 Bn from BHD 12.4 Bn in the previous quarter. The decline was led by a fall in credit to Business sector and to government that was partially offset by an increase in lending to the personal sector. Almost all heads under the personal sector witnessed growth during the quarter barring credit card receivables that registered a 2.3% q-o-q decline.

### Lending by listed banks shows broad-based expansion...

Aggregate lending by listed banks in the GCC continued to show q-o-q growth during Q2-2025, backed by growth in all GCC markets. Aggregate gross loans at the GCC level reached a new record high of USD 2.32 Trillion, recording the second-biggest q-o-q growth in 16 quarters at 3.3% or USD 74.3 Bn in Q2-2025 vs. 3.6% during the previous quarter. The y-o-y growth continued to remain steady in double digits at 13.0%. Banks in the UAE reported the biggest q-o-q growth in gross loan in the GCC during Q2-2025 mainly led by healthy lending in almost all sectors. Gross loans growth for UAE-listed banks came in at 4.6% or USD 29.8 Bn to reach USD 672.8 Bn at the end of Q2-2025.

Saudi and Kuwaiti banks were next with lending growth of USD 20.3 Bn (+2.5% q-o-q) and USD 10.8 Bn (+4.2% q-o-q), respectively, while banks in Qatar was a close next with loan growth of USD 9.2 Bn or 2.2%, respectively, at the end of Q2-2025. In terms of type of banks, Islamic banks in the GCC registered a relatively healthy growth in lending during the quarter with gross loan growth of 4.3% to reach USD 706.8 Billion while growth in conventional bank lending came in at 2.9% to reach an outstanding gross loan of USD 1.6 Trillion at the end of the quarter.

### Customer deposits increase backed by sharp increase in savings deposits...

Total customer deposits reported by listed GCC banks reached a new record high level at the end of Q2-2025 at USD 2.74 Trillion registering a q-o-q growth of 3.5%. The y-o-y growth when compared to Q2-2024 came in at 13.3% or USD 91.8 Bn. The growth was broad-based as seen in higher q-o-q customer deposits in all countries in the GCC. At the country level, Kuwaiti banks registered the strongest growth in deposits during the quarter that reached USD 334.8 Bn after a q-o-q growth of 4.7%. UAE-listed banks were next with a q-o-q growth of 4.1% to reach total customer deposits of USD 941.0 Bn, the highest in the GCC, followed by banks in Saudi Arabia with a growth of 3.9% reaching USD 858.8 Bn. Banks in Bahrain, Oman and Qatar, reported slightly smaller customer deposit growth during the quarter.

Based on available data for banks in Saudi, UAE and Oman, the increase in customer deposits were mainly led by higher savings deposit that was up by 3.6% for the banks in the three countries. Based on data from Refinitiv, savings deposit growth was the strongest in Saudi Arabia at 8.6% during Q2-2025. In terms of demand deposits, the increase was slightly smaller at 3.1% q-o-q.

### Loan-to-deposit ratio sees marginal decline during Q2-2025...

The aggregate loan-to-deposit ratio for the GCC banking sector remained elevated above the 80% mark at the end of Q2-2025. However, the ratio declined sequentially to reach 81.5% when compared to 81.6% in Q1-2025. The ratio has remained consistently above the 80% mark over the last five quarters and reflects improving asset utilization as well as better margins to offset pressure from lowering interest rates. At the country level, banks in Saudi Arabia reported one of the highest levels of the loan-to-deposit ratio that reached 94.3% during the quarter, registering a decline of 120 bps as compared to the record level seen during Q1-2025 at 95.5%. Qatari banks were next with a loan-to-deposit ratio of over 90% at 90.3% during Q2-2025, an improvement from 89.6% during Q1-2025. Omani banks also registered a growth of 30 bps with the ratio at the third-highest level in the GCC at 88.6% during the quarter. UAE-listed banks showed an increase in the ratio during Q2-2025 after registering a decline during the previous quarter. Aggregate ratio for the UAE banking sector came in at 67.9%, the lowest in the GCC.

In a recent development, Saudi Arabia launched its first residential mortgage backed securities (RMBS) in an effort to free up liquidity with Saudi banks and boost lending in light of new efforts in the real estate market. The first RMBS was launched by the Saudi Real Estate Refinance Co. (SRC) and is expected to see an increase in the coming months. As per a Bloomberg analysis, Saudi banks are forecasted to transfer as much as USD 48 Bn in legacy mortgages to SRC by 2030.



Exhibitors warn of supply chain disruptions

# Tariffs and policy uncertainty cloud US Renewable Energy outlook

LAS VEGAS, Sept 14, (Xinhua): Exhibitors at RE+, North America's largest clean energy expo in Las Vegas, warned that U.S. tariffs and policy uncertainty pose major challenges for the global renewable energy industry, disrupting supply chains and complicating project planning.

The expo, held from Monday to Thursday, brought together exhibitors and industry professionals worldwide to showcase the latest solar, wind and energy storage technologies, explore new products, forge partnerships, and discuss trends shaping the renewable energy sector.

Behind the bustling exhibition halls, however, many companies voiced concerns over tariff-driven cost pressures and supply chain disruptions.

"Tariff hikes have brought significant cost pressure, forcing companies to pass the increases on to downstream customers, namely the end consumers," said Cheng Wang, CEO of Xenerpower, a Texas-based maker of transformers, switchgears and switchboards.

The uncertainty over U.S. tariffs and clean energy policies, along with rising costs, could severely impact the U.S. clean energy sector, particularly the solar and wind industries, Wang told Xinhua.

"When subsidies were in place, companies could fully cover their costs and even receive additional financial support. Now, with tax incentives removed and stricter approval standards, many projects have been forced to pause or be canceled," Wang noted.

For Premier PV, an Arkansas-based solar solutions company, tariffs are complicating component sourcing.



The RE+ expo, North America's largest clean energy gathering, kicked off last Monday in Las Vegas, the U.S. state of Nevada, bringing together industry leaders and experts to chart the future of sustainable power. The expo showcases cutting-edge products, technologies and solutions across a wide range of clean energy sectors, including solar, wind, hydrogen, microgrids, energy storage, as well as electric vehicle charging and infrastructure. (Xinhua)

"For the parts and the raw materials, we do have quite a bit of supplies from Europe, the DC feeder

cables come from either China or India, and lugs from India," said Brian Moore, the company's director of business development.

"There's some tariff the international components will carry ... at one point this year, the tariff went up to 125 percent. It's crazy. But it didn't actually go through, so it got reduced down," Moore added.

On U.S. energy policy, Moore said that President Donald Trump's administration has not actively supported renewable energy development.

"Trump keeps fighting against renewable energy. At the same time, for energy independence, the fastest to deploy is generally going to be renewable energy."

At least for the next four or five years, we really don't see a way for them to get around it. That's a trend," he said.

He added that independent of government subsidies, tech companies with high energy demands -- such as data centers -- are likely to continue pursuing renewable energy projects.

Some companies are taking a wait-and-see approach as they navigate the volatile tariff environment.

Jeannette Holton, senior communications manager at EcoFlow, a multinational specializing in portable power and home solar systems, told Xinhua the company is closely monitoring the situation and will reassess its pricing strategy as needed.

"Our business model isn't really focused on the tariff situation, because we know it's always up and down, and it's constantly changing," she said.

Looking ahead, Wang said the future of U.S. clean energy remains uncertain, with corporate planning and investment under heavy pressure.

# Fed Governor Lisa Cook fights Trump removal bid

Cook's lawyers warn against threat to Fed independence

WASHINGTON, Sept 14, (AP): Federal Reserve Governor Lisa Cook is asking a U.S. appeals court to reject the Trump administration's latest bid to remove her from her post ahead of the central bank's next vote on interest rates.

In a filing with the court Saturday, attorneys on behalf of Cook asked the court to refuse an emergency request by the Trump administration for a stay of a lower court ruling that would clear the way for President Donald Trump to remove Cook from the Federal Reserve's board of governors.

Lawyers for Cook argue that the Trump administration has not shown sufficient cause to fire her, and stressed the risks to the economy and country if the president were allowed to fire a Fed governor without cause.

### Guarantee

"A stay by this court would therefore be the first signal from the courts that our system of government is no longer able to guarantee the independence of the Federal Reserve. Nothing would then stop the president from firing other members of the board on similarly flimsy pretexts."

The era of Fed independence would be over. The risks to the nation's economy could be dire," according to the filing.

The court has given the Trump administration the option to respond to Cook's filing by 3 p.m. Eastern on Sunday.

At stake is whether the Trump administration will succeed in its extraordinary effort to shape the board before the Fed's interest rate-setting committee meets Tuesday and Wednesday.

At the same time, Senate Republicans are pushing to confirm Stephen Miran, President Donald Trump's nominee to an open spot



Norm Eisen, left, and Abbe Lowell attorneys of Lisa Cook, a governor on the Federal Reserve Board, leave the federal courthouse in Washington, Friday, Aug. 29, 2025. (AP)

on the Fed's board, which could happen as soon as Monday.

Trump has accused Cook of mortgage fraud because she appeared to claim two properties as "primary residences" in July 2021, before she joined the board. Such claims can lead to a lower mortgage rate and smaller down payment than if one of them was declared as a rental property or second home.

Cook has denied the charges and sued the Trump administration to block her firing.

On Tuesday, U.S. District Court Judge Jia Cobb ruled the administration had not satisfied a legal requirement that Fed governors can only be fired "for cause," which she said was limited to misconduct while in office.

Cook did not join the Fed's board until 2022.

The administration then ap-

pealed the decision and asked for an emergency ruling reversing the lower court order by Monday.

In their emergency appeal, Trump's lawyers argued that even if the conduct occurred before Cook's time as governor, her alleged action "indisputably calls into question Cook's trustworthiness and whether she can be a responsible steward of the interest rates and economy."

### Appeal

If the Trump administration's appeal succeeds, Cook would be removed from the Fed's board until her case is ultimately resolved in the courts, and she would miss next week's Fed meeting, when the central bank is set to decide whether to reduce its key interest rate.

If the appeals court rules in Cook's favor, the administration

could seek an emergency ruling from the Supreme Court.

The Fed is under relentless pressure from Trump to cut rates. The central bank has held rates steady since late 2024 over worries that the Trump administration's unpredictable tariff policies will reignite inflation.

Last month, Fed Chair Jerome Powell signaled that Fed officials are increasingly concerned about weaker hiring, setting the stage for a rate cut next week. Most economists expect the Fed will cut its benchmark interest rate by a quarter-point to about 4.1%.

When the Fed reduces its key rate, it often, over time, lowers borrowing costs for mortgages, auto loans, and business loans. Some of those rates have already fallen in anticipation of cuts from the Fed.

## Talks set in Madrid on trade, security

# China opens two probes on US semiconductor market

TAIPEI, Sept 14, (AP): China launched two probes targeting the U.S. semiconductor sector Saturday ahead of talks between the two nations in Spain this week on trade, national security and the ownership of social media platform TikTok.

China's Ministry of Commerce announced an anti-dumping investigation into certain analog IC chips imported from the U.S. The investigation will target some commodity interface IC chips and gate driver IC chips, which are commonly made by U.S. companies such as Texas Instruments and ON Semiconductor.

The ministry separately announced an anti-discrimination probe into U.S. measures against China's chip sector.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent is set to meet Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng in Madrid between Sunday and Wednesday, He's office said.

U.S. measures such as export curbs and tariffs "constitute the containment and suppression of China's development of high-tech industries" such as advanced computer chips and artificial intelligence, a Chinese commerce ministry spokesperson said.

The announcements of the probes follow the U.S. on Friday adding 23 Chinese companies to an "entity list" of businesses that will face restrictions for allegedly acting against U.S. national security and foreign policy interests. The list includes two Chinese companies accused of acquiring chip-making equipment for major Chinese chipmaker SMIC.

The meetings between Bessent and He in Madrid will be the latest in a series of negotiations aimed at reducing trade tensions and postponing the



Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng speaks during a press conference after the 11th China-UK Economic and Financial Dialogue in Beijing, on Jan 11, 2025. (AP)

enactment of higher tariffs on each other's goods.

U.S. and Chinese counterparts previously held discussions in Geneva in May, London in June and Stockholm in July. The two governments have agreed to several 90-day pauses on a series of increasing reciprocal tariffs, staving off an all-out trade war.

Bessent described the talks during the last round in Stockholm as "very fulsome." "We just need to de-risk with certain, strategic industries, whether it's the rare earths, semiconductors, medicines, and we talked about what we could do together to get into balance within the relationship," Bessent said at the time.

U.S. President Donald Trump and former President Joe Biden placed curbs on China's access to advanced semiconductors including restrictions on the sale of chipmaking equipment to the country. While Washington cites national security concerns, China argues the curbs are part of a U.S. strategy to contain its growth.

## Investments to create 1,800 jobs

# UK attracts GBP 1.25 billion in US financial sector investments

LONDON, Sept 14, (KUNA): The British government announced on Sunday the registration of new US direct investments worth GBP 1.25 billion (around USD 1.7 billion).

The Department for Business and Trade confirmed in a statement that the investments are entirely linked to the financial services sector and come specifically from Citibank, Bank of America, PayPal, and Standard and Poor's.

It explained that these companies will distribute their investments across different regions of the United Kingdom, particularly in London, Manchester, Edinburgh, and Belfast, adding that they will create around 1,800 new jobs, thereby strengthening the

economic partnership between Britain and the United States.

The statement noted that the announcement of these investments comes just days ahead of the expected visit of US President Donald Trump to Britain at the invitation of King Charles III, during which mutual projects and investment deals are scheduled to be revealed.

It stated in this regard that investment firm BlackRock will announce projects valued at GBP seven billion (USD 9.5 billion) on behalf of other companies, while it will itself invest GBP 500 million (USD 677 million) in data centers across Britain during the coming year.

## No serious injuries in January 2024 door plug blowout incident

# FAA proposes \$3.1 million fine against Boeing over safety violations

WASHINGTON, Sept 14, (AP): The Federal Aviation Administration is seeking \$3.1 million in fines from Boeing over safety violations, including ones related to an Alaska Airlines jetliner losing a door plug panel on its fuselage in midflight.

The proposed penalty is for safety violations that occurred from September 2023 through February 2024, the FAA said Friday.

That period includes the January 2024 blowout of a paneled-over exit door - called a door plug -- on an Alaska Airlines Boeing 737 Max 9 shortly after it took off from Portland, Oregon.

None of the 171 passengers or six crew members on the flight were seriously injured. Pilots landed the plane safely back at the airport.

In June, the National Transportation Safety Board said its 17-month long investigation found that lapses in Boeing's manufacturing and safety oversight, combined with ineffective inspections and audits by the FAA, led to the door plug blowout.

The FAA said Friday that it identified hundreds of quality system violations at Boeing's 737 factory in Renton, Washington, and Boeing subcontractor Spirit AeroSystems' 737 factory in Wichita, Kansas.

Among other violations, the regulator also found that a Boeing employee pressured a member of Boeing's ODA unit, which is tasked with performing certain inspections and certifications on the FAA's behalf, to sign off on a 737 Max airplane



The Boeing logo is displayed at the company's factory, Sept. 24, 2024, in Renton, Wash. (AP)

"so that Boeing could meet its delivery schedule, even though the ODA member determined the aircraft did not comply with applicable standards."

Arlington, Virginia-based Boeing has 30 days to respond to the FAA.

In a statement Saturday, Boeing said it is reviewing the agency's proposed civil penalty, noting that the company put in place a safety and quality plan last year, under FAA oversight, that aims to enhance safety management and quality assurance in its airplane production.

"We regret the January 2024 door-plug accident and continue to work on strengthening our safety culture and improving first-time quality and accountability across our operations," the company said.

The Max version of Boeing's bestselling 737 airplane has been the source of persistent troubles for the company since two of the jets crashed, one in Indonesia in 2018 and another in Ethiopia in 2019, killing a combined 346 people.

The Justice Department reached a deal in May allowing Boeing to avoid criminal prosecution for allegedly misleading U.S. regulators about the Max before the two crashes.

Boeing was also in the news in June when a 787 flown by Air India crashed shortly after takeoff and killed at least 270 people. Investigators have not determined what caused that crash, but so far they have not found any flaws with the model, which has a strong safety record.



## Oscar-winning filmmaker calls West Bank raid ‘horrific’

## Palestinian director Adra says Israeli forces raided his home

JERUSALEM, Sept 14, (AP): Palestinian Oscar-winning director Basel Adra said Israeli soldiers conducted a raid at his home in the occupied West Bank on Saturday, searching for him and going through his wife's phone.

Israeli settlers attacked his village, injuring two of his brothers and one cousin, Adra told The Associated Press. He accompanied them to the hospital. While there, he said that he heard from family in the village that nine Israeli soldiers had stormed his home.

The soldiers asked his wife, Suha, for his whereabouts and went through her phone while his 9-month-old daughter was home. They also briefly detained one of his uncles, he said.

Adra spent the night outside the village, unable to get home and check on his family because soldiers were blocking the village entrance and he was scared of being detained, he said.

Israel's military said soldiers were in the village after Palestinians had thrown rocks, injuring two Israeli civilians. It said its forces were still in the village, searching the area and questioning people.

Adra said settlers attacked the Palestinians on their land and denied throwing rocks or seeing anyone from the village do so.

Videos filmed by Adra's cousin and viewed by the AP showed settlers attacking a man Adra identified as his brother, Adam Adra, who was hospitalized with bruising to his left hand, elbow and chest, according to hospital records shared with the AP.

In another video, a settler chases a solidarity activist through an olive grove, tackling her to the ground.

Adra has spent his career as a journalist and filmmaker chronicling settler violence in Masafer Yatta, the southern reaches of the West Bank where he was born. After settlers attacked his co-director, Hamdan Ballal, in March, he told the AP that he felt they were being targeted more intensely since winning the Oscar.

He described Saturday's events as "horrific."

"Even if you are just filming the settlers, the army comes and chases you, searches your house," he said. "The whole system is built to attack us, to terrify us, to make us very scared."

Another co-director, Yuval Abraham, said he was "terrified for Basel."

"What happened today in his village, we've seen this dynamic again and again, where the Israeli settlers brutally attack a Palestinian village and later on the army comes, and attacks the Palestinians."

"No Other Land," which won an Oscar this year for best documentary, depicts the struggle by residents of the Masafer Yatta area to stop the Israeli military from demolishing



Basel Adra, (left), and Yuval Abraham, winners of the Oscar for best documentary feature film for 'No Other Land,' pose for photos at the Governors Ball, in Los Angeles, March 2, 2025. (AP)

their villages. Ballal and Adra made the joint Palestinian-Israeli production with Israeli directors Abraham and Rachel Szor.

The film has won a string of international awards, starting at the Berlin International Film Festival in 2024. It has

also drawn ire in Israel and abroad, as when Miami Beach proposed ending the lease of a movie theater that screened the documentary.

Israel captured the West Bank in the 1967 Mideast war, along with the Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem. The Palestinians want all three for their future state and view settlement growth as a major obstacle to a two-state solution.

Israel has built well over 100 settlements, home to more than 500,000 settlers who have Israeli citizenship. The 3 million Palestinians in the West Bank live under seemingly open-ended Israeli military rule, with the Western-backed Palestinian Authority administering population centers.

The Israeli military designated Masafer Yatta in the southern West Bank as a live-fire training zone in the 1980s and ordered residents, mostly Arab Bedouin, to be expelled. Around 1,000 residents have largely remained in place, but soldiers regularly move in to demolish homes, tents, water tanks and olive orchards and Palestinians fear outright expulsion could come at any time.

During the war in Gaza, Israel has killed hundreds of Palestinians in the West Bank during wide-scale military operations, and there has also been a rise in settler attacks on Palestinians. There also has been a surge in Palestinian attacks on Israelis.

## Television

## Cast shakeup

## Nwodim exits 'SNL' before new season

NEW YORK, Sept 14, (AP): **Ego Nwodim** is the latest - and perhaps last - high-profile departure from "Saturday Night Live," as the long-running sketch show has seen a cast shakeup ahead of its 51st season.

Nwodim announced Friday that she is leaving, just days after Hollywood trade outlets reported the Season 51 cast - which had included her - was finalized. Five new cast members are joining the upcoming season, which premieres Oct. 4.

Ben Marshall, already an "SNL" writer, will become a featured player, along with newcomers Tommy Brennan, Jeremy Culhane, Kam Patterson and Veronika Slowikowska, NBC announced last week.

Devon Walker, Emil Wakim and Michael Longfellow confirmed last month on their social media accounts that they are leaving the show. Multiple news outlets reported that cast mainstay Heidi Gardner was also departing the show, but neither Gardner nor NBC has publicly confirmed.

"SNL" creator Lorne Michaels previously said he anticipated changes following the show's historic 50th season. No cast members had announced their departure following the season's conclusion. In an interview with Puck that ran earlier this summer, Michaels answered "yes" when asked if he expected to "shake things up."

Michaels told Puck at least one cast member was certain to be back: James Austin Johnson, who plays President Donald Trump.

Since its debut in 1975, the NBC program has reinvented itself often, with performers over the past 50 years ranging from John Belushi and Dan Aykroyd to Kate McKinnon and Kenan Thompson.

Here's a look at the "SNL" members confirmed to be leaving and joining the show so far.

All new cast members will be joining the show as featured players. Marshall first joined the "SNL" writing staff in 2021, along with the other members of his comedy trio, Please Don't Destroy. Digital shorts from Please Don't Destroy, which includes John Higgins and Martin Herlihy, have been featured on "SNL" for the past four seasons. The group is currently on tour together.

## Performed

Brennan has performed on "The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon" and was selected as a Just for Laughs New Face of Comedy in 2023. Culhane, a regular on Dropout TV, is known for his viral videos and also performs with the Upright Citizens Brigade in Los Angeles.

Patterson is a regular on the live comedy podcast "Kill Tony," hosted by Tony Hinchcliff. The stand-up comedian also appears in Netflix's "72 Hours."

Slowikowska, known for her viral online comedy sketches, has appeared in "Tires" and "What We Do in the Shadows." Longfellow confirmed his departure on Instagram in late August. He first joined the show as a featured player in 2022 and was promoted the previous season.

Longfellow wrote on Instagram that he wishes he could've stayed on, adding that his three seasons on the show were "the best three years of my life so far. I feel nothing but gratitude for the experience and everyone there. Lorne, you gave me the greatest job in the world and changed my life. You even put my mom on TV. Thank you doesn't begin to cover it, but thank you."

The actor and comedian had some successful stints on the "Weekend Update" segment of the show. Nwodim announced Friday on Instagram that she would not be returning - and suggested she'd have more time now to attend weddings. Nwodim joined as a feature player in 2018, and was promoted two years later.

"The hardest part of a great party is knowing when to say goodnight," Nwodim said in her post. "But after seven unforgettable seasons, I have decided to leave SNL."

She thanked Michaels for the opportunity, and her castmates, writers and crew "for their brilliance, support and friendship."

"Week after week on that stage taught me more than I could have ever imagined, and I will carry those memories (and that laughter) with me always," Nwodim wrote, adding: "now invite me to your weddings please!!!"

Wakim announced in late August he wouldn't be returning, and indicated he had been let go, calling it "a gut punch of a call to get." Unlike Longfellow and Walker, members of the more established repertory player group, Wakim was a featured player who joined the show just last season.

"Every time I scanned into the building I would think how insane it is to get to work there. It was the most terrifying, thrilling, and rewarding experience of my life and I will miss it dearly and all the brilliant people that work there that made it feel like a home," he wrote in an all-lowercase Instagram post that thanked Michaels.

## Film



This image released by Bleecker Street shows, (from left), Elton John, Christopher Guest, Harry Shearer, and Michael McKean in a scene from 'Spinal Tap II: The End Continues.' (AP)

## 'Spinal Tap' sequel gets mixed reviews

## 'Spinal Tap' reunites ... but does it still rock?

LOS ANGELES, Sept 14, (AP): In an early scene from "Spinal Tap II: The End Continues," the blisteringly obtuse Nigel Tufnel asks his wife a question after he and his bandmates have reunited after many years: "I don't know whether this was a good idea or not."

Fans may ask that very same question after an albeit mercifully short sequel hit theaters last Friday from the mother of all rock mockumentaries, 1984's "This Is Spinal Tap." Forget about going to 11. This one barely registers at 4.

Despite some great starry cameos - Paul McCartney's is easily the best - "Spinal Tap II" leans into the old favorite bits too needily and is suffocated by the constantly looming presence of death, a downer. The improv-based comedy is forced and the laughs barely register. This is a movie only for die-hard Tappers.

The structure is the band reunion and countdown to a final concert by Spinal Tap, who we are told disbanded 15 years ago. They've not agreed to reform out of love, but contract. (They owe one more live set.) The venue is in New Orleans, because a Stormy Daniels appearance fell through. (That was probably really funny in 2017.) There are simmering intra-band tensions.

Rob Reiner - who directed, starred and co-wrote the original with Christopher Guest, Michael McKean and Harry Shearer - has once again directed the sequel, faithfully playing his role as filmmaker Marty DiBergi, complete with military baseball cap and a director's viewfinder around his neck. All the guys get screenwriting credit.

We learn where the trio has landed after all these years - one runs a cheese-and-guitar shop, another is the proprietor

of a glue museum and a third writes soundtracks to podcasts and the hold music for phones.

Mortality is a constant theme, from the concert promoter who suggests one or two of the three members die onstage for good publicity - "Would you settle for a coma?" one band member offers - to the Shearer song "Rockin' in the Urn" to a photo shoot in a cemetery to the whole thing ending in a hospital. Bones creak when they settle into chairs; paunches are hard to hide and reading glasses are necessary. This is a movie that celebrates those whose "candles cost more than the cake." Yum, dig in.

## Stalks

Death obviously stalks the search for a drummer, who has the habit of coming to an abrupt demise whenever they join. That was a kind of background joke in the original, but here the comedians lean in too much, with cameos from reluctant suitors, including Metallica's Lars Ulrich, Red Hot Chili Peppers' Chad Smith and Questlove - "You're legendary, but I don't want to die," he begs off - all landing flat. Just including famous people isn't funny enough.

Valerie Franco eventually steps behind the drum kit, bringing a vitality and effervescence to a movie that sorely lacks it. But you'll cringe when Shearer's Derek Smalls hits on her, a woman four decades his junior. Shearer also at one point gets a vial stuck up his nose, a desperate bit of physical comedy that shouldn't have made the cut.

Guest's Tufnel tries cloyingly to recreate his "up to 11" from the original film when he and DiBergi discuss various guitar pedals - one "is like someone singing through a duck"

- and he reveals a secret compartment of cheese in a guitar. It falls apart like brie on a warm day.

The high point is when McCartney happens to stop by the recording studio. He praises the band for their ability to rhyme "flesh tuxedo" with "pink torpedo" on the song "Big Bottom." ("That's literature," says the ex-Beatle in admiration.) But soon things grow testy between him and McKean's David St. Hubbins over a song's direction. "We'll take it under advisement," McKean curtly tells McCartney about his suggestion. Later, he grouches about the sunny McCartney: "He's got this sort of toxic personality."

There are also appearances by Elton John, Garth Brooks and Trisha Yearwood. Fran Drescher and Paul Shaffer reprise their old roles in blink-and-you'll-miss-them moments. Henry Diltz, one of rock's great photographers, also gets a cameo. John, whose natural comedy instincts are sadly untapped here, sits in with the band twice, for "(Listen to the) Flower People" and "Stonehenge." The movie often stalls in the second half as it loads up on performances leading up to the final concert.

One of the bits that doesn't work is that the band's apartment in New Orleans is constantly interrupted by a walking tour of haunted spots. But that's fitting, perhaps: "Spinal Tap II" is filled with ghosts. It's like watching a cover band playing the hits but then realizing it's actually the original band onstage after all.

"Spinal Tap II: The End Continues," a Bleecker Street released in theaters last Friday, is rated R for "language including some sexual references." Running time: 83 minutes. One and a half stars out of four.

## Variety

**LOS ANGELES:** The union that represents tens of thousands of actors and other entertainment and media professionals has elected **Sean Astin** as its new president.

On Friday, SAG-AFTRA elected Astin - an actor who appeared in "The Lord of the Rings," "Stranger Things" and "Rudy" - to succeed Fran Drescher as its president. Astin is the son of the late Academy Award-winning actress Patty Duke and John Astin, who starred in the 1960s TV series "The Addams Family."

Sean Astin defeated Chuck Slavin in a 79% to 21% vote. Michelle Hurd was elected secretary-treasurer.

Patty Duke, Sean Astin's mother, served as the Screen Actors Guild's president from 1985-1988.

According to its website, SAG-AFTRA brings together Screen Actors Guild and the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists. It represents approximately 160,000 actors, announcers, broadcast journalists, dancers, DJs, program hosts, recording artists and others.

Under Drescher, the union has navigated a pair of strikes involving film and television actors and a separate one involving video game and interactive media performers. (AP)

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**NEW YORK:** New fiction by Angela Flournoy and Susan Choi, a memoir of tragedy by Yiyun Li and a novel in trans-

lation by Nobel laureate Han Kang were among the nominees announced this week for the long lists of the National Book Awards.

The National Book Foundation announced 10 books in each of five categories - fiction, nonfiction, poetry, translation and young people's literature. The categories will be narrowed to five finalists on Oct. 7, and winners will be announced at a Nov. 19 dinner ceremony in Manhattan, when the foundation also will present honorary awards to author George Saunders and author-publisher Roxane Gay.

Choi's "Flashlight" is her first novel since 2019, when she won the National Book Award for "Trust Exercise." Flournoy's "The Wilderness" came out a decade after she was a National Book Award finalist for "The Turner House." Other fiction nominees include Megha Majumdar's "A Guardian and a Thief," the follow-up to her celebrated debut from 2020, "A Burning"; Bryan Washington's "Palaver" and the latest collection from acclaimed short story author Joy Williams, "The Pelican Child."

Li's "Things In Nature Merely Grow" opens with a painful acknowledgment. "There is no good way to say this," as she attempts to make sense of the suicides of her two teenage sons. The author is also known for such prize-winning fiction as "The Book of Goose" and "Where Reasons End," an imagined dialogue between a mother and her son, who has taken his own life. (AP)

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**LONDON:** Dozens of Ukrainians and their supporters have demonstrated outside the Royal Opera House in London to protest a performance by Russian soprano Anna Netrebko.

Protesters outside Thursday's opening night of Giacomo Puccini's "Tosca" held Ukrainian flags and signs saying

"While Netrebko sings, Ukraine bleeds" and "Stop glorifying Russian aggressor culture."

Netrebko received an award from Russian President Vladimir Putin in 2008 but has not performed in Russia since its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

Netrebko, one of the world's leading opera singers, was dropped by New York's Metropolitan Opera after Russia's invasion. She is suing the company, saying she faced discrimination on the basis of gender and national origin.

She has continued to sing at many top houses and made her first US appearance in six years at a Palm Beach Opera recital in February. (AP)

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**BERLIN:** Belgium's prime minister traveled to neighboring Germany for a concert led by an Israeli conductor whose appearance was canceled by a Belgian festival, a gesture that added to strong criticism of the decision.

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz thanked Belgian Prime Minister Bart De Wever in a social media post Sunday for "his strong signal of solidarity" after he attended the concert given in Essen Saturday evening by the Munich Philharmonic and conducted by Lahav Shani, who is due to become the orchestra's chief conductor next year. Shani is also music director of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra and currently chief conductor of the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra.

On Wednesday, the Flanders Festival Ghent said it was canceling a concert by the Munich Philharmonic under Shani scheduled for Sept. 18. It said in a statement that Shani "has spoken out in favor of peace and reconciliation several times in the past, but in the light of his role as the chief conductor of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, we are unable to provide sufficient clarity about his attitude to the genocidal regime in Tel Aviv." (AP)



Visual archive revives history decimated by IS genocide

Iraq’s Yazidis rediscover lost history through museum photos

PHILADELPHIA, Sept 14, (AP): Archeologists studying ancient civilizations in northern Iraq during the 1930s also befriended the nearby Yazidi community, documenting their daily lives in photographs that were rediscovered after the Islamic State militant group devastated the tiny religious minority.

The black-and-white images ended up scattered among the 2,000 or so photographs from the excavation kept at the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, which led the ambitious dig.

One photo - a Yazidi shrine - caught the eye of Penn doctoral student Marc Marin Webb in 2022, nearly a decade after it was destroyed by IS extremists plundering the region. Webb and others began scouring museum files and gathered almost 300 photos to create a visual archive of the Yazidi people, one of Iraq’s oldest religious minorities.

The systematic attacks, which the United Nations called a genocide,



This photo provided by The Sersal Project shows an exhibition of community and archival photographs during Yazidi New Year celebrations in the town of Bashiqa, Iraq, in April 2025. (AP)

killed thousands of Yazidis and sent thousands more into exile or sexual slavery. It also destroyed much of their built heritage and cultural history, and the small community has since become splintered around the world.

Ansam Basher, now a teacher in England, was overwhelmed with emotion when she saw the photos, particularly a batch from her grandparents’ wedding day in the early 1930s.

“No one would imagine that a person my age would lose their history because of the ISIS attack,” said the 43-year-old, using an acronym for the extremist group. Basher’s grandfather lived with her family while she was growing up in Bashiqa, a town outside Mosul. The city fell to IS in 2014.

“My albums, my childhood photos, all videos, my two brothers’ wedding videos (and) photos, disappeared. And now to see that my grandfather and great-grandfather’s photo all of a sudden just come to life again, this is something I’m really happy about,” she said. “Everybody is.”

The archive documents Yazidi people, places and traditions that IS sought to erase. Marin Webb is working with Nathaniel Brunt, a Toronto documentarian, to share it with the community, both through exhibits in the region and

in digital form with the Yazidi diaspora.

“When they came to Sinjar, they went around and destroyed all the religious and heritage sites, so these photographs in themselves present a very strong resistance against that act of destruction,” said Brunt, a postdoctoral student at the University of Victoria Libraries. The city of Sinjar is the ancestral homeland of the Yazidis near the Syrian border.

The first exhibits took place in the region in April, when Yazidis gather to celebrate the New Year. Some were held outdoors in the very areas the photos documented nearly a century earlier.

“(It) was perceived as a beautiful way to bring memory back, a memory that was directly threatened through the ethnic cleansing campaign,” Marin Webb said.

Basher’s brother was visiting their hometown from Germany when he saw the exhibit and recognized his grandparents. That helped the re-

searchers fill in some blanks.

The wedding photos show an elaborately dressed bride as she stands anxiously in the doorway of her home, proceeds with her dowry to her husband’s village, and finally enters his family home as a crowd looks on.

“I see my sister in black and white,” said Basher, noting the similar green eyes and skin tone her sister shares with their grandmother, Naama Sulayman.

Her grandfather, Bashir Sadiq Rashid al-Rashidani, came from a prominent family and often hosted the Penn archaeology crews at his cafe. He and his brother, like other local men, also worked on the excavations, prompting him to invite the westerners to his wedding. They in turn took the photos and even lent the couple a car for the occasion, the family said.

Some of the photos were taken by Ephraim Avigdor Speiser, the Penn Museum archaeologist who led excavations at two ancient Mesopotamian sites in the area, Tepe Gawra and Tell Billa.

Fashion



Models walk the runway during the Prabal Gurung Spring/Summer 2026 fashion show as part of New York Fashion Week at St. Bartholomew’s Church on Saturday, Sept. 13, in New York. (AP)

Julian Fellowes reflects on closing show after 15 years

‘Downton Abbey’ ends with ‘The Grand Finale’

LOS ANGELES, Sept 14, (AP): Julian Fellowes has been saying goodbye to “Downton Abbey” for nearly as long as it has existed. By the fifth season of the series, he’d even grown accustomed to writing more definitive endings, not knowing that there would be a sixth season and three feature films to come.

But 15 years after the world first met Violet Crawley, Lord Grantham, Lady Mary, Mr. Carson, John Bates and everyone else upstairs and downstairs at that beautiful estate, the creators are really, truly closing a chapter and saying farewell with “Downton Abbey: The Grand Finale,” which opened in theaters nationwide Friday.

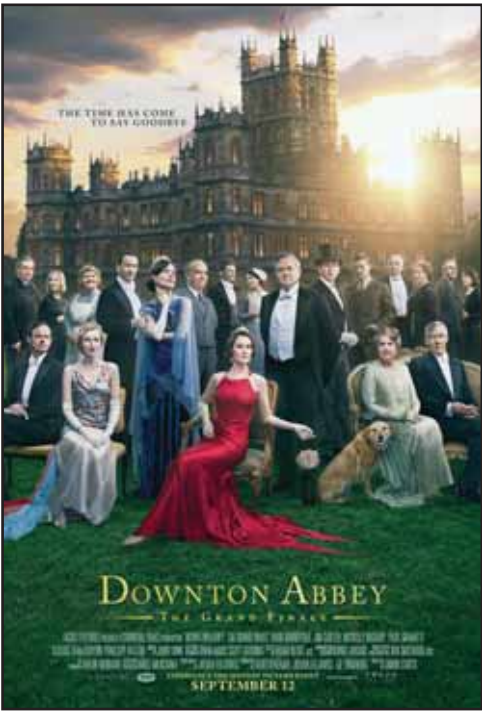
“It is sad,” Fellowes said in a recent interview with The Associated Press. “It’s been a huge chunk of my life. And when I die, I think it’ll probably be the only job anyone remembers. But I hope it’s been happy.”

“Downton Abbey,” which was conceived by producer Gareth Neame as a kind of spinoff to “Gosford Park,” was in many ways an improbable hit. In an era of television that celebrated difficult men and anti-heroes, here was a warm British period drama about aristocrats and their household staff that became a global phenomenon and, later, a successful film franchise. The first two features, released in 2019 and 2022, grossed more than \$287 million at the worldwide box office.

“None of us knew it was going to be a success,” said actor Hugh Bonneville, who plays Lord Grantham. “I remember Gareth saying to me, ‘Let’s face it, it’s not going to run beyond seven episodes, these sorts of shows don’t.’”

But audiences never seemed to tire of the Downton crew. The longer it went on, the more it became part of the furniture.

“It has been this remarkable journey,” Neame said. “We look at the Grantham family, the Crawleys, as a representative of the families that we all live in because we’ve seen them marry and have children and pass away and get money and lose money and become sick and get well again, hopefully. There’s something extremely comforting about that.”



This image released by Focus Features shows promotional art for ‘Downton Abbey: The Grand Finale.’ (AP)

Despite the success of the show, which ended in 2015, a feature film was never a given. From a studio perspective, Neame said, there were very few precedents and the ones that existed were not positive. Money always seemed to be lost. But the bigger headache was the idea that even if they got the greenlight to make a film, they’d have to assemble more than 20 specific actors to do it. And they needed

every one.

“We said goodbye when we finished the TV show and didn’t think we’d ever come back,” Bonneville said. “I said, it’s like herding cats, he’ll never get us together again. And, blow me down, he did, not once but three times.”

They were difficult negotiations, Neame said, and much more complicated than anyone might imagine, but there was still such goodwill that they made it work. Especially for this last film, he said, “everyone wanted to give it a proper conclusion and see an ending for all of those characters.”

In the first film, the family prepared for a visit from the king and the queen. In the second, they traveled to the South of France and said goodbye to the Dowager, Maggie Smith’s sharp, beloved matriarch who had been with the show from the beginning and was a large part of the reason it even got made. There were many farewell parties for her on set. Then, two years after the film was released, Smith died at 89.

“She was a fantastic character in the show and she was fantastic character in life,” Fellowes said. “I don’t think I’m likely to have another partnership as I had with her. No, we weren’t best friends. We didn’t take a house by the sea together. But she knew how to play what I wrote and I knew how to write for that character.”

Smith, he said, made something iconic out of that character, which is a writer’s dream. But after the character died, and then the actor, the question remained: What happens to everyone else? The third film brings things back to the home as Lord Grantham prepares to finally hang up his hat and let Lady Mary run things on her own.

“The idea was to give all the fans the knowledge that this is how the camera finally pulls away and we leave Downton to its future,” Neame said.

The title was a slightly grandiose way of announcing their clear intention that this is the last film and the story is ending. Well, at least the story for this cast.

‘Janeites’ celebrate

Fans waltz back in time for Austen’s 250th b’day

LONDON, Sept 14, (AP): Ellie Potts goes dancing with her friends most weeks. They don’t put on the latest Taylor Swift or Ed Sheeran, though - they much prefer English country dances that were popular more than 200 years ago.

As the music starts, about two dozen men and women curtsy and bow, extend a gloved hand to their partner, before dancing in circles or skipping in elaborate patterns around each other.

Like many of her fellow Hampshire Regency Dancers, Potts is a devotee of Jane Austen and all things from the Regency period. Not only have they studied the books and watched all the screen adaptations - they also research the music, make their own period dresses, and immerse themselves in dances Austen and her characters would have enjoyed in centuries past.

“I’ve been interested in Jane Austen since I was about 8 or 9,” said Potts, 25. “I mainly joined (the dance group) so I can have balls and things to go to in my costumes, but I really got into it. I’ve been surprised how much I enjoy the dancing.”

There’s no shortage of grand costumed balls and historical dancing this year, which marks the 250th anniversary of Austen’s birth. This weekend, thousands of fans who call themselves “Janeites” are descending on the city of Bath for a 10-day festival celebrating the beloved author of “Pride and Prejudice” and “Sense and Sensibility.”

The highlight is a Regency costumed promenade on Saturday, where some 2,000 people in their finest bonnets, bows and costumes will parade through the streets of Bath. Organizers say the extravaganza holds the Guinness World Record for the “largest gathering of people dressed in Regency costumes.”

Bonny Wise, from Indiana, is attending her sixth Jane Austen festival in Bath. This time she’s bringing four period dresses she made, and will lead a tour group of 25 Austen enthusiasts from all over the United States.

“I started planning a tour four years ago, when I realized this was a big year for Jane,” said Wise, 69. She credited the 1995 adaptation of “Sense and Sensibility” with

sparkling her obsession.

“That movie just opened up a whole new world for me,” she said. “You start with the books, the movies, then you start getting into the hats, the tea, the manners ... one thing just led to another.”

Wise said she loves the wit, humor and social observations in Austen’s books. She also finds the author’s own life story inspiring.

“I admire Jane and what she managed as a woman in that era, her perseverance and her process of becoming an author,” she said.

The Jane Austen Society of North America, the world’s largest organization devoted to the author, says it has seen a recent influx of younger fans, though most of its members - 5,000 to date - skew older.

“We’re growing all the time because Jane Austen is timeless,” said Mary Mintz, the group’s president. “We have members from Japan, India. They come from every continent except Antarctica.”

Many festival-goers will be making a pilgrimage to Steventon, the small village in rural Hampshire, southern England, where Austen was born in 1775.

The author lived in Bath, a fashionable spa town in the 18th and 19th centuries, for five years. Two of her novels, “Persuasion” and “Northanger Abbey,” feature scenes set in the World Heritage city.

Bath is also the filming location for parts of “Bridgerton,” Netflix’s wildly popular modern take on period drama based loosely on the Regency period, the decade when the future King George IV stood in as prince regent because his father was deemed unfit to rule due to mental illness.

Thanks to the show, Austen and Regency style - think romantic flowing gowns, elegant ballrooms and high society soires - have become trendy for a new generation.

“I think Jane Austen is on the rise,” Potts said. “She’s definitely become more popular since ‘Bridgerton.’”

In a church hall in Winchester, a few streets away from where Austen was buried, the Hampshire Regency Dancers gather weekly to practice for the many performances they’re staging this year in honor of the author.



Members of the Hampshire Regency Dancers practice dance in Winchester, England, Sept. 10, ahead of the 10 days Jane Austen Festival starting on Friday. (AP)

Variety

**GAZIANTEP, Türkiye:** The seventh edition of the international gastronomy festival GastroAntep kicked off on Saturday in Gaziantep of southeastern Türkiye, a city renowned for its rich culinary heritage.

Co-organized by the Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality and Türkiye’s Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the nine-day festival, running from Sept. 13 to 21, features hundreds of events, including concerts, theater performances, talks, and gastronomic presentations. Deputy Minister of Culture and Tourism Nadir Alpaslan said at the opening ceremony.

On Saturday, the festival kicked off with a lively procession winding through the heart of Gaziantep. Beginning at Gaziantep Castle, it passed the bustling, historic Coppersmiths’ Bazaar before concluding at Balikli Park, one of the city’s



Sahin

oldest parks.

Describing Gaziantep as “a mosaic of civilizations,” Mayor **Fatma Sahin** highlighted that the city’s cuisine is deeply rooted in tradition and ritual.

GastroAntep was launched in 2018, and this year’s edition forms part of the nationwide Culture Road Festival. (Xinhua)

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**JACKSON, Miss.:** With powerfully haunting eyes and an enigmatic expression, “Portrait of Frederick,” an enslaved man painted circa 1840, stares out at visitors of the Mississippi Museum of Art.

A little further into the museum is Delia, a Black woman dressed in red and wearing a headscarf who bears a similarly unknowable expression. The pair of portraits are the only known preemancipation paintings of enslaved people in Mississippi.

Now, for the first time, they hang together for the public to see.

“I was mesmerized by the painting,” museum visitor Staci Williams said. “The colors, the expression. His humanity seemed to jump off of the page.”

The portraits evoke questions about who Frederick and

Delia were, why they were painted and what went through their minds as their faces were captured stroke by stroke for generations to see.

“We don’t know, for example, if either of these people had the choice to sit for the portrait. We don’t know if they had the choice of what they were wearing when they were painted,” said Betsy Bradley, the Laurie Hearin McRee director of the museum. “They certainly weren’t allowed to own their own portrait.”

The museum bought “Portrait of Frederick” in partnership with the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville, Arkansas. The museums will pass the portrait back and forth, each displaying it for several years at a time. (AP)

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**PHILADELPHIA:** Break out the sad trombone at Oklahoma: The Pride of Oklahoma marching band has been benched.

The marching band wrote on social media that budget constraints forced it to stay home instead of traveling to Philadelphia for Saturday’s game between No. 13 Oklahoma and Temple.

The Saint Joseph’s pep band pinch-hit for OU and led “Boomer Sooner” for the game at Lincoln Financial Field.

The Pride of Oklahoma wrote the band would still travel to all Southeastern Conference road games this season. The full band will travel to Texas and the pep band will travel to South Carolina, Tennessee and Alabama. The social media post said it was believed to be the first time the band had stand-ins play for it at a football game. (AP)

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**CHENGDU:** The second Golden Panda Awards were presented on Saturday in Chengdu, southwest China’s Sichuan province, which is the home of the giant panda.

The international cultural event honors achievements in the fields of film, TV, documentary and animation under 27 categories.

Italian film “There’s Still Tomorrow” won Best Picture. The award for Best TV Drama went to “She and Her Girls,” based on the true story of Zhang Guimei, a school principal from a Chinese mountainous area who dedicated herself to empowering rural girls through education. The winner for Best Animation was “Ne Zha 2,” China’s highest-grossing film.

This year’s awards attracted 5,343 entries from 126 countries and regions, with international submissions accounting for 73.2 percent of the total. (Xinhua)



## HEALTH/SCIENCE

## Mealtime shifts in old age tied to health and mortality

## Eating breakfast earlier could prolong one's life, study finds

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14: Results of a recent study showed that eating breakfast earlier could prolong one's life.

A report published by Fox News revealed that the study looked into the mealtimes of 3,000 adults within three decades and researchers discovered that the timing of meals, especially breakfast, could be important as well, not just the types of food.

Dr. Hassan Dashti of Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School led a research team that used data from the University of Manchester to study the meal times, health conditions, genetics and mortality of the sample of adults whose ages range from 42 to 94 years old.

According to the study that was published in the journal Communications Medicine recently, people have the tendency to eat breakfast and dinner at later times as they grow older. It pointed out that adults usually "shift their eating midpoint – the halfway point between the first and last meal

of the day, thereby, shortening their overall eating window."

The study explained that "breakfast and dinner times are likely to shift later due to factors such as poor sleep, depression, dental problems, difficulty preparing meals and lifestyle changes like retiring, living alone or moving into assisted living facilities."

Dashti explained that "depression and fatigue may reduce appetite or slow down morning routines, while dental or chewing problems can make eating uncomfortable, prompting people to postpone breakfast."

He was quick to add that "the researchers cannot say for sure that these health issues cause later breakfasts, only that they often occur together."

Scientists found out that every decade of aging was linked to an eight-minute delay in breakfast and a four-minute delay in dinner. Within a period of more than 22 years of follow-up, researchers recorded 2,361 deaths among partici-

pants. Each additional hour delay in breakfast time was tied to a higher risk of death.

Results showed that older adults who had meals earlier were more likely to live longer -- 10-year survival rate of 89.5 percent compared to 86.7 percent among those who ate later.

Dashti stated that "the difference was statistically significant, but it was modest."

It was also discovered that physical and psychological illnesses including depression, anxiety, fatigue and oral health issues are linked with eating at later times.

The researchers disclosed "our findings suggest that later meal timing, especially breakfast, could serve as a simple marker of health in older adults and may guide future strategies for healthy aging."

This contributes to the growing field of 'chrononutrition' – the study of how meal timing affects health, and it

highlights the role of circadian rhythms and meal times in healthy aging.

Dashti added "up until now, we had a limited insight into how the timing of meals evolves later in life and how this shift relates to overall health and longevity. These results add new meaning to the saying that 'breakfast is the most important meal of the day,' especially for older individuals."

He considers the findings significant, particularly in light of the growing popularity of intermittent fasting and time-restricted eating trends, which could have a different effect on older adults than those who are younger.

The experts suggested that "consistent eating patterns may help maintain healthy body rhythms that support aging and longevity", while Dashti recommended that older adults should follow a regular meal schedule to promote healthy aging and longer life.

## Offline hobbies boost well-being

## Tips to step back from screens, start new hobby

NEW YORK, Sept 14, (AP): During the winter of 2024, Rachel Martin came to a startling realization: She spent most of her free time staring at screens. "I couldn't really think of hobbies or things that I did that took a break from the digital world," she said.

With pastimes like watching television, playing video games and creating digital art, Martin, 33, sometimes spent more than 12 hours per day looking at screens. She longed for an analog alternative.

After some trial and error, she found one: journaling with fountain pens and specialty inks. "It's quite a cool tactile experience," she said, and one that unexpectedly turned social when she started attending meetups for fountain pen enthusiasts in her city of Sydney, Australia.

"It's something that I definitely didn't expect to love," she said, "but that actually really helped me with going (mostly) screen-free."

Martin had extra motivation for avoiding devices - she has chronic migraines, and screens are a trigger for her - but many people share her goal.

Adopting a new hobby can be an effective way to get a break from screens. (Martin is even looking into selling her TV.) And as an added bonus, enjoyable pastimes can reduce stress and improve mental and physical health, research suggests.

Finding a screen-free hobby that sticks, though, can be easier said than done. Here's where to start:

Some people feel pressured to find the "ideal" hobby that will perfectly optimize their free time - but there's no such thing, said Sarah Pressman, a professor of psychological science at the University of California, Irvine who has studied leisure time.

## Effect

"Having a mix of small enjoyable activities - a little bit of pickleball, cooking something new, chatting with a friend over coffee, spending some time in your garden - can have a cumulative effect on your mood and health," she said. "So rather than putting pressure on yourself to find the perfect pastime, just ask, 'What brings me a little joy today?'"

Similarly, hobbies don't have to fill hours upon hours of time to be beneficial, said Matthew Zawadzki, an associate professor of psychological sciences at the University of California, Merced who has studied hobbies.

Start small by thinking about activities that would be fulfilling for 20, 10 or even five minutes at a time.

"We really need to embrace small engagements with our leisure," he said, particularly given how many other demands there are on our time.

A pastime may not reset your life, "but instead it's going to reset the next hour," Zawadzki said. Cast a wide net.

"Test out a few activities for 30 minutes each and just notice how they make you feel," Press-

man said. "Think of it like dating. You may have to go on a few first dates before you find your match."

Think about how activities you loved as a child could be adapted for adulthood, or about things that you naturally lose track of time while doing, she suggested.

It can also be helpful to consider what you're missing, or want more of, in your daily routine, Zawadzki said. If you feel too sedentary, try a new form of fitness. If you need to get out of your head, pick up an engrossing book. If you feel starved for social connection, join a club or volunteer. If you haven't used your creative muscles in a while, pick up a paintbrush.

"It's about being more intentional about how you use your time," Zawadzki said.

"It's hard to think past what we currently do," Zawadzki said. So, outsource your search.

## Activities

Just as you'd ask a friend for a book or movie recommendation, ask your loved ones which activities they'd recommend for someone with your interests and tastes. Make sure they're aware of any financial, time or space constraints, too.

If you're used to spending your evening in front of the TV, it can be hard to put those hours to new use - even once you've found a rewarding hobby.

"Screens are so easy," said Gabriela Tonietto, an associate professor of marketing at Rutgers Business School who has studied leisure time.

So, keep your sketchpad or crossword puzzle in plain sight rather than stored away, Pressman suggested, and flow directly from work or dinner into hobby time before you get distracted by screens.

Setting specific goals (not just, "I want to reduce screen time," but something like, "I will read for an hour before bed"), carving out designated time for your activity, and enlisting a hobby buddy for accountability can all help you stick to your pastime, Tonietto said.

Screen time isn't inherently bad, Zawadzki said. Watching a movie with your family can be a bonding activity - especially if you talk about it afterward - and catching up with a juicy TV show on the treadmill may motivate you to exercise.

"Any kind of activity has the potential to be positive," he said. "But you have to optimize it a little bit to serve your goals," and set a cap on how much time you spend vegging out.

So don't be too hard on yourself if you can't totally quit your screen-based hobbies. They may have some benefits too - and recognizing them is half the battle. Tonietto's research suggests that viewing leisure time as wasteful can make it less enjoyable and beneficial.

"Step one is actually experiencing that positivity when you engage in these activities," Tonietto said. "The consequences of that are feeling more relaxed, feeling less stressed, feeling happier."

## 'AI companions' may harm youth mental health

## FTC launches probe into AI chatbots over potential risks to children, teens

NEW YORK, Sept 14, (AP): The Federal Trade Commission has launched an inquiry into several social media and artificial intelligence companies about the potential harms to children and teenagers who use their AI chatbots as companions.

The FTC said Thursday it has sent letters to Google parent Alphabet, Facebook and Instagram parent Meta Platforms, Snap, Character Technologies, ChatGPT maker OpenAI and xAI.

The FTC said it wants to understand what steps, if any, companies have taken to evaluate the safety of their chatbots when acting as companions, to limit the products' use by and potential negative effects on children and teens, and to apprise users and parents of the risks associated with the chatbots.

The move comes as a growing number of kids use AI chatbots for everything - from homework help to personal advice, emotional support and everyday decision-making. That's despite research on the harms of chatbots, which have been shown to give kids dangerous advice about topics such as drugs, alcohol and eating disorders. The mother of a teenage boy in Florida who killed himself after developing what she described as an emotionally and sexually abusive relationship with a chatbot has filed a wrongful death lawsuit against Character.AI. And the parents of 16-year-old Adam Raine recently sued OpenAI and its CEO Sam Altman, alleging that ChatGPT coached the California boy in planning and taking his own life earlier this year.

Character.AI said it is looking forward to "collaborating with the FTC on this inquiry and providing insight on the consumer AI industry and the space's rapidly evolving technology."

"We have invested a tremendous amount of resources in Trust and Safe-



A girl uses her smartphone at home in Arizona on Friday, June 16, 2023. (AP)

ty, especially for a startup. In the past year we've rolled out many substantive safety features, including an entirely new under-18 experience and a Parental Insights feature," the company said. "We have prominent disclaimers in every chat to remind users that a Character is not a real person and that everything a Character says should be treated as fiction."

Snap said its My AI chatbot is "transparent and clear about its capabilities and limitations."

"We share the FTC's focus on ensuring the thoughtful development of generative AI, and look forward to working with the Commission on AI policy that bolsters US innovation while protecting our community," the company said in a statement.

Meta declined to comment on the inquiry and Alphabet, OpenAI and xAI did not immediately respond to messages for comment.

OpenAI and Meta earlier this month announced changes to how their chat-

bots respond to teenagers asking questions about suicide or showing signs of mental and emotional distress. OpenAI said it is rolling out new controls enabling parents to link their accounts to their teen's account.

Parents can choose which features to disable and "receive notifications when the system detects their teen is in a moment of acute distress," according to a company blog post that says the changes will go into effect this fall.

Regardless of a user's age, the company says its chatbots will attempt to redirect the most distressing conversations to more capable AI models that can provide a better response.

Meta also said it is now blocking its chatbots from talking with teens about self-harm, suicide, disordered eating and inappropriate romantic conversations, and instead directs them to expert resources. Meta already offers parental controls on teen accounts.

## ACA subsidy standoff risks premium hikes

## Millions in US at risk of higher health costs

WASHINGTON, Sept 14, (AP): There's bipartisan support in Congress for extending tax credits that have made health insurance more affordable for millions of people since the COVID-19 pandemic. But the credits are in danger of expiring as Republicans and Democrats clash over how to do it.

Democrats are threatening to vote to shut down the government at the end of the month if Republicans don't extend the subsidies, which were first put in place in 2021 and extended a year later when they controlled Congress and the White House. The tax credits, which are slated to expire at the end of the year, go to low- and middle-income people who purchase health insurance through the Affordable Care Act.

Some Republicans who have opposed the health care law since it was enacted under President Barack Obama are suddenly open to keeping the tax credits. They acknowledge that many of their constituents could see steep hikes in coverage if the subsidies are allowed to lapse.

Still, the two sides are far apart. Republicans are divided, with many firmly opposed. GOP leaders in the House and Senate have been open but noncommittal on the extension, and many of those Republicans who say they support it argue that the tax credits should be reworked - potentially opening up a new health care debate that could take months to resolve.

Democrats would be unlikely to agree to any changes in the subsidies, increasing the chances of a standoff and mounting uncertainty for health insurers, hospitals, state governments and the people who receive them.

"In just a few weeks, unless Congress acts, millions of Americans will start getting letters in the mail telling them their health insurance costs are about to go through the roof - hundreds of dollars, thousands in some cases," Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer said this past week.

Enrollment in ACA plans has surged to a record 24 million people in large part due to the billions of dollars in subsidies that have lowered costs for many people. The expanded subsidies allowed some lower income enrollees to access health plans with no premiums and capped the amount higher earners pay for premiums to 8.5% of their income. It also



Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., joined at left by House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, D-N.Y., speaks to reporters after meeting about Republican efforts to cut health care spending, at the Capitol in Washington, Thursday, Sept. 11. (AP)

expanded eligibility for middle-class earners.

With expiration now just a few months away, some of those people have already gotten notices that their premiums - the monthly fee paid for insurance coverage - are poised to spike next year. Insurers have sent out notices in nearly every state, with some proposing premium increases of as much as 50 percent.

Lawmakers are facing pressure to act from some of the country's biggest industries, including the insurers that cover people on the marketplace and hospital executives who say they're already going to be squeezed by the Medicaid cuts in President Donald Trump's "big, beautiful" tax bill.

"There's broad awareness that there's a real spike and premiums coming right around the corner, both Republicans and Democrats," said David Merritt, senior vice president of external affairs at Blue Cross Blue Shield. "It's certainly lining up for Congress to have an opportunity to head off this problem."

## UN meeting

## Make psoriasis global priority

STOCKHOLM, Sept 14, (AP): The International Federation of Psoriasis Associations (IFPA) spotlights psoriatic disease at the upcoming UNGA 80 in New York, where world leaders are expected to adopt a new Political Declaration on noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), mental health and well-being.

Key highlights:

■ An estimated 60 million people worldwide are affected by psoriatic disease - a serious, lifelong noncommunicable disease that impacts the skin, joints, and other organs. Psoriasis also increases risks for diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular disease and depression.

■ Despite a 2014 World Health Organization (WHO) resolution recognizing psoriasis as a major public health concern, progress has been slow, prompting IFPA (International Federation of Psoriasis Associations) to call for renewed global commitment.

■ IFPA representatives are traveling to the UN High-Level Meeting on NCDs to advocate for the inclusion of people with psoriatic disease in global and national health policies, with a special focus on putting lived experience at the heart of policymaking.

Psoriatic disease is a lifelong, systemic inflammatory condition, often coexisting with other NCDs, such as diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular diseases and depression. An estimated 60 million people live with the disease. Despite the numbers, psoriatic disease has been overlooked in the health systems worldwide.

The first and only resolution on psoriasis was adopted by WHO in 2014, recognizing it as a major public health concern. Since then, the progress has been poor. IFPA is calling for a greater global commitment to ensure that the needs of people with psoriatic disease are integrated into global and national health policies.

To amplify this call, IFPA representatives are traveling to New York to participate in the upcoming United Nations High-Level Meeting on Noncommunicable Diseases (NCDs) - at UN Headquarters on September 25. This event brings together health leaders, experts, and policymakers to shape the future of NCD prevention and care. IFPA is seizing this opportunity to advocate for more inclusive policies, improved access to care, and greater recognition of psoriatic disease within the broader NCD agenda.

As a part of this advocacy initiative, IFPA organizes a high-level conversation in partnership with Devex on the sidelines of UNGA, titled: Psoriatic Disease and NCDs: Putting Lived Experience at the Heart of Policy. The event takes place at the Devex NCD Pavilion in New York on September, 22.

The session will feature Frida Dunger, Executive Director of IFPA, and Kate Reynolds, IFPA ambassador, living with psoriatic disease. The speakers will share powerful perspectives on why lived experience must move to the center of global health policymaking.

"People living with psoriatic disease are more than our illness, we are whole people, and we need to live our best lives, just like anybody else," shares Kate Reynolds, IFPA Ambassador.

## Norway to introduce public AI service for health advice

OSLO, Sept 14, (Xinhua): The Norwegian government on Thursday announced plans to establish a national artificial intelligence (AI) service to provide citizens with health advice through the country's public health platform.

The Ministry of Health and Care Services has tasked the Directorate of Health with assessing the establishment of the new service, which will be based on generative AI technology, the ministry said in a press release.

"The goal is to offer quality-assured and safe digital health advice to everyone, and ensure that Norwegian recommendations and legislation form the basis for the AI service," said Minister of Health and Care Services Jan Christian Vestre.

The government noted that Norwegians, especially young people, are increasingly turning to AI tools for health information. According to official figures, seven out of ten people aged 16-24 have used AI in the past three months.

Vestre stressed the importance of a national service that can serve as a "digital health advisor, available 24 hours a day," while not replacing visits to doctors or emergency services.

The AI service is expected to be integrated into Helsenorge, the official website for health information and access to services. The government said safety and privacy would be prioritized, with the Directorate of Health commissioned to examine legal and ethical aspects.

## Acupuncture eases chronic low 'back pain' in seniors: research

LOS ANGELES, Sept 14, (Xinhua): Older Americans with chronic low back pain who received acupuncture experienced greater improvements in physical function and reduced pain compared with those who received usual medical care only, a new study showed Friday.

Chronic low back pain is the leading cause of disability worldwide and affects over one-third of older adults in the United States, said the study funded by the US National Institutes of Health.

"What sets the study apart is that it focused specifically on adults 65 years of age and older, and it was pragmatically designed," said Lynn DeBar, lead author of the study and distinguished investigator at Kaiser Permanente Northwest.

The clinical trial, known as BackInAction, enrolled 800 participants, including men and women aged 65 and older with a medical history of low back pain for at least three months.

A third of those received up to 15 standard acupuncture treatments over three months, and another third received an additional six acupuncture treatments over the following three months. Patients provided self-assessment of their pain and physical limitations after three, six and 12 months from enrollment.



A foreign trainee takes hands-on acupuncture practice in Sanya, south China's Hainan Province, Aug. 7, 2025. (Xinhua)



# Bell wins at Bristol to complete sweep for Joe Gibbs Racing

Gisbergen and Berry eliminated from championship run

**BRISTOL, Tenn., Sept 14, (AP): Joe Gibbs Racing completed a clean sweep of the first round in the NAS-CAR Cup Series playoffs as Christopher Bell charged to a victory Saturday at Bristol Motor Speedway.**

Bell went from fourth to first on the final restart and led the last four laps at the 0.533-mile oval, ending a 24-race winless streak with his fourth victory of the season. “It wasn’t pretty there at the end, but we got her done,” said Bell, who led only 12 laps in his 13th career victory. “We just know that any given week, it could be us, and it hasn’t been for a long time. But Bristol, baby, tonight it’s us.” He joined JGR teammates Denny Hamlin and Chase Briscoe as playoff winners with the first round concluding at Bristol. Alex Bowman, Austin Dillon, Shane van Gisbergen, and Josh Berry were eliminated from the 10-race championship run. “Just so excited about the start to the playoffs,” team owner Joe Gibbs said. Bell finished 0.343 seconds ahead of Brad Keselowski, who was trying to end a 51-race winless streak. “Just the story of our season,” Keselowski said. “Just a 50-50 shot on the restart, and I got the lane that couldn’t



Christopher Bell celebrates winning a NASCAR Cup Series auto race in Bristol, Tenn. (AP)

launch. Just frustrating. We had a great car, great strategy, and on the last restart, we just rolled the dice and didn’t get anything good.” Zane Smith finished third, followed by Ryan Blaney and Joey Logano. There were a season-high 14 caution flags for 137 laps as drivers and teams struggled to get a handle on a new

right-side tire with excessive wear that required more pit stops. The playoff drama spiked with 40 laps remaining when a fire erupted under Austin Cindric’s No. 2 Ford. His team was able to extinguish the flames, but Cindric lost several laps in the pits and re-emerged outside the top 30. His 30th-place finish was still good

enough for the 12th and final transfer spot into the second round. “Moving on,” Cindric said after finishing 30th. “I believe in this team. I believe in myself. I have not been driving as well as I am now in the Cup Series.” Bowman ran as high as second after rebounding from a spin on the 100th

lap. He would have bumped Cindric with a victory but finished eighth and came up 10 points short of advancing. “I don’t think you can really point at something that cost us,” said Bowman, who benefited from a pit crew overhaul after suffering through some disastrous stops in the past two races. “Our back was against the wall coming

in here. We knew it was going to be a tough thing to do.” Seeking his first Cup victory, Ty Gibbs led a race-high 201 of 500 laps but bungled while trying to reach the pits for his final green-flag stop, losing major time in his No. 54 Toyota. With smoke billowing from the cockpit and flames shooting out from his right-front tire, Berry made an eye-catching exit as the first driver eliminated. The Wood Brothers Racing driver qualified 10th and ran as high as third before a fire erupted on his No. 21 Ford. “Man, just so disappointing,” Berry said. “That was going to be a lot of fun. We were moving forward. It’s been a tough couple of weeks, but it hasn’t been because of performance. We executed well and ran well, just haven’t had the finishes.” Berry, whose playoff debut began with a crash on the first lap of the Southern 500, finished last in all three races of the first round. “I don’t think you could ever script three last-place finishes in the ways that we’ve gotten them,” he said. Bell is typically low-key, but the Joe Gibbs Racing driver blasted his team and its strategy with a vulgarity-laced tirade after finishing seventh in the prior race at Gateway. Bell, who is winless in 24 races and without a top five since July, said he was frustrated after watching teammates Denny Hamlin and Chase Briscoe win the first two races of the playoffs.

Nissanka becomes quickest Sri Lankan batter to reach 2,000 T20 runs

## Sri Lanka sprints to six-wicket win over Bangladesh

ABU DHABI, United Arab Emirates, Sept 14, (AP): Pathum Nissanka became the quickest Sri Lankan batter to reach 2,000 T20 runs as the opener sprinted his team to a six-wicket win over Bangladesh in a crucial Asia Cup match.



Sri Lanka's Kusal Perera bats during the Asia Cup cricket match between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka at Zayed Cricket Stadium in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. (AP)

ers to score 50 off 34 balls and Sri Lanka breezed to 140-4 in a strong start to its campaign. Bangladesh, which handed Hong Kong a seven-wicket drubbing in its first Group B game, recovered from a horror start to score 139-5 after it lost both openers to fast bowler Nuwan Thushara and Dushmantha Chameera’s successive wicket maidens with the new ball. Nissanka batted fluently and scored six fours and a six as he reached the 2,000-run landmark in his 68th T20 innings when he completed his half century. Kusal Perera had the previous Sri Lanka record, achieving the feat in 76 innings. Nissanka fell soon after his entertaining 95-run stand with Kamil Mishra (46 not out) had all but sealed the game, when Shoriful Islam held on to a spectacular two-handed catch at deep backward square leg. Bangladesh had to pay a heavy price of dropping Mishra on 1 when Mahedi Hassan couldn’t hold on to a two-handed catch close to the 30-meter circle at wide mid-on. Although Perera and Dasun Shanaka also perished quickly while going for big shots, Mishra’s unbeaten knock of 32 balls ensured Sri Lanka finished off the game with more than five overs to spare. Earlier, after being put into bat, Shamim Hossain (42) and Jaker Ali (41) helped Bangladesh recover from a disastrous start in the second half of their innings when they combined in a 86-run unbroken stand off 61 balls. Wanindu Hasaranga made an impactful return to international cricket with figures of 2-25 after missing the last series against Zimbabwe due to a hamstring injury. The leg-spinner should have had the wicket of Jaker in his eventful second over only to see his sharp googly grazing the off stump after going through the defenses of the batter, but both bails stayed on the stumps.

Jackson makes debut

## Bayern thrashes Hamburg ahead of Champions League clash with Chelsea

BERLIN, Sept 14, (AP): Bayern Munich warmed up for its Champions League opener against Chelsea by routing Hamburger SV 5-0 in the Bundesliga on Saturday. Serge Gnabry got the scoring under-way in the third minute, Harry Kane set up Aleksandar Pavlovic in the ninth and then converted a penalty, shortly before Luis Diaz made it 4-0 with a deflected shot in the 29th. Hamburg goalkeeper Daniel Heuer Fernandes prevented a bigger score-line. Bayern’s transfer chief, Max Eberl, acknowledged Friday that he’d prefer to see Israel goalkeeper Daniel Peretz in the Hamburg goal. Peretz joined Hamburg on loan from Bayern in the offseason in the hope of getting more playing time, but Heuer Fernandes helped his team to promotion last season and has stayed in coach Merlin Polzin’s favor for its Bundesliga return. Bayern coach Vincent Kompany sent on Senegal forward Nicolas Jackson after the break for his Bundesliga debut, but Bayern’s intensity dropped with the result already clear - Kane had to wait until the 62nd before getting his second goal. Both sets of fans refrained from chanting and singing during the second half when it was apparent there were two medical emergencies in the stands. The supporters resumed once they got the all-clear. Bayern hosts Chelsea on Wednesday, when Jackson will have a quick reunion with his former teammates. Serhou Guirassy scored again as Borussia Dortmund defeated 10-man Heidenheim 2-0. Heidenheim endured a dreadful start awith defender Leart Pagarada going off injured before Georgian forward Budu Zivzivadze was sent off for a bad challenge on Felix Nmecha.



Berlin's Ilyas Ansah, front left, and Hoffenheim's Robin Hranac, right, challenge for the ball during the German Bundesliga soccer match between 1. FC Union Berlin and TSG 1899 Hoffenheim in Berlin, Germany. (AP)

Guirassy headed in the opener in the 33rd to take his tally to four goals in three games and Maximilian Beier added another before the break. Stuttgart, the German Cup champion, slumped to a 3-1 loss at Freiburg despite taking the lead through Ermedin Demirovic scoring with his heel. Freiburg, which lost both its opening games while conceding seven goals, struck back with two goals from Croatia forward Igor Matanovic on his injury comeback and another from

Derry Scherhanth. Stuttgart has now lost two of its opening three games. Wolfsburg loanee Jakub Kamlnski scored on his return - 14 minutes into stoppage time - for Cologne to draw 3-3 and dent Wolfsburg’s celebrations a day after the 80th anniversary of the club’s founding. With new signing Christian Eriksen watching from the substitutes’ bench, the game saw three goals scored in injury time. Isak Bergmann made it 2-2

for Cologne in the first minute of stoppages and Wolfsburg captain Maximilian Arnold thought he had won it with a brilliant free kick eight minutes later. But Kamlnski had the final say to keep promoted Cologne unbeaten since its return to the top division. Hoffenheim snatched a 4-2 win at Union Berlin with the Berlin-born Fisl-nik Asllani scoring twice against his old club. Johan Bakayoko led Leipzig to a 1-0 win in Mainz.

LAFc doubles up Earthquakes

Müller scores hat trick as Whitecaps dominate Union to clinch playoff spot

VANCOUVER, British Columbia, Sept 14, (AP): Thomas Müller scored a hat trick on his 36th birthday, Seymour Reid became the youngest player in Vancouver history to score a regular-season goal at 17 years, 193 days, and the Whitecaps beat the Philadelphia Union 7-0 on Saturday night to clinch a playoff spot. Vancouver (15-6-7) became the seventh team in MLS history to win a regular-season game by seven goals. The seven goals were also a club record. Philadelphia (17-7-6) came into the game sitting atop the league standings. The Whitecaps scored four first-half goals for the first time in their MLS history. Müller, playing in his third MLS game, converted a pair of first-half penalty kicks and scored on a header late in the second half. He added his first MLS assist midway through the second half on a pass to Emmanuel Sabbi at the top of the penalty area. Sabbi scored twice for the Whitecaps, who secured a postseason berth for the third year in a row. Mathias Laborda and Rayan Elloumi each added a goal. Yohei Takaoka stopped two shots to record his MLS-leading 12th clean sheet of the season. Vancouver played without star striker Brian White, who is recovering from a hamstring injury. Denis Bouanga finished with a hat trick after Son Heung-Min scored in the first minute and Los Angeles FC beat the San Jose Earthquakes 4-2 at Levi Stadium. Son gave LAFc (12-7-8) the lead when he used passes from rookie Artem Smolyakov and Mark Delgado to score 54 seconds into the match. It was Son’s second goal in five matches since transferring in from Tottenham Hotspur. He ties for the third fastest goal in club history. Smolyakov’s assist was his first in his 19th appearance and Delgado’s was his career-high eighth. Bouanga took over from there - scoring in the 9th, 12th and 87th minutes for his third career three-goal effort in regular-season play. Bouanga, who won the Golden Boot Award in 2023, has 18 goals on the season - three behind league leader Sam Surridge of Nashville SC. Preston Judd scored in the 18th minute for the Earthquakes, whose final tally came on an own goal by LAFc defender Sergi Palencia in the 90th minute. Judd’s netter was his career-best seventh. Palencia had assists on two of Bouanga’s goals. Alonso Martinez scored the go-ahead goal early in the second half and New York City FC beat the Chicago Fire 3-1. Chicago grabbed a 1-0 lead in the 13th minute on Philip Zinckernagel’s 13th goal in his first season in the league. Brian Gutierrez earned his fifth assist on the score. NYCFC pulled even by halftime on Nicolás Fernández’s first goal in his fifth career appearance. Kevin O’Toole and Hannes Wolf had assists. It was the first of the season for O’Toole and the seventh for Wolf. Martinez scored his 15th goal of the campaign - unassisted in the 57th minute to give NYCFC the lead. Seventeen-year-old Seymour Reid capped the scoring in the third minute of stoppage time with his first goal in his seventh appearance. Reid subbed in for Martinez in the 90th minute. Paxten Aaronson scored his first goal of the season in the sixth minute of stoppage time and the Colorado Rapids beat the Houston Dynamo 2-1. Aaronson scored on a header off a corner kick that redirected off a defender and slipped inside the back post to give Colorado (11-13-6) the lead. Zack Steffen stopped four shots for the Rapids. Cole Bassett scored to give Colorado a 1-0 lead in the 10th minute. Rafael Santos tapped a free kick to Bassett who slipped a shot from just outside the area inside the near post.



Vancouver Whitecaps' Tate Johnson (28) and Philadelphia Union's Frankie Westfield (39) vie for the ball during the second half of an MLS soccer match in Vancouver, British Columbia. (AP)

Petar Musa scored in the second minute, Bernard Kamungo added another goal early in the second half and Jacob Jackson earned a clean sheet in his home debut as FC Dallas beat Austin 2-0. Dallas (8-11-10) was without its first- and second-choice goalkeepers. Maarten Paes has missed the last four games with a hamstring injury. Backup Michael Colodri was suspended having received a red card last time out in St. Louis. Musa scored 90 seconds in off a nice back-heel pass from Logan Farrington. Musa has produced the most goals in a two-season span in club history, with 31, eclipsing Jesús Ferreira’s 30 from 2022-23. Austin (11-10-8) had a two-game winning streak stopped with just its second loss in the last nine games. Diego Luna and defender Alexandros Katranis both scored to lead Real Salt Lake to a 2-1 victory over Sporting Kansas City on Saturday night. Luna picked up his ninth goal of the season - unassisted in the 40th minute for a 1-0 lead. Katranis scored his first of the season in the 62nd minute for a two-goal advantage. Eighteen-year-old Javier Gozo notched his second assist in the 22nd appearance of his rookie campaign. Sporting KC’s only score came on an own goal by Real Salt Lake defender Brayan Vera in the 71st minute. Rafael Cabral saved three shots for Real Salt Lake (10-14-4). Substitute defenders Anthony Markanich and Carlos Harvey ended a scoreless duel with goals three minutes apart in the second half, Nectarios Triantis debuted with a goal and an assist and Minnesota United went on to beat expansion side San Diego FC 3-1 on Saturday night in a battle between the top two teams in the Western Conference. Markanich subbed into the match in the 63rd minute before taking a pass from Joaquín Pereyra in the 74th and scoring for a 1-0 lead. Seven of Markanich’s eight career goals have come this season. Pereyra’s assist was his 10th in his first full season in the league. Both of Harvey’s goals have come this year in his second full season. He entered midway through the first half and used assists from Triantis and Kelvin Yeboah - his third - to score. Rookie defender Alex Freeman scored the equalizer early in the second half as Orlando City settled for a 1-1 draw with D.C. United despite playing with a man advantage over the final 43 minutes. Freeman tied it unassisted in the 53rd minute with his fifth goal. DC United defender Lukas MacNaughton was tagged with a red card four minutes later. DC United took a 1-0 lead in the 33rd minute when Jackson Hopkins used assists from defender Conner Antley and rookie João Peglow to score his third goal of the season. Antley’s assist was his first this season and second in 23 career appearances. Peglow notched his fourth assist.

## Former world champion Ricky Hatton dies at 46

MANCHESTER, England, Sept 14, (AP): Former world boxing champion Ricky Hatton, who rose to become one of the most popular fighters in the sport, has died. He was 46. Hatton was found dead at his home in Greater Manchester, Britain’s Press Association reported Sunday. Police said they are not treating the death as suspicious. “Officers were called by a member of the public to attend Bowlacre Road, Hyde, Tameside, at 6:45am

today where they found the body of a 46-year-old man,” Greater Manchester Police said in a statement. “There are not currently believed to be any suspicious circumstances.” Police would not reveal the identity of the man, but said they were working with his family to provide a statement for media. Friends of Hatton were quick to pay tribute Sunday morning. “Today we lost not only one of Britain’s greatest boxers, but a friend, a mentor, a warrior, Ricky

Hatton,” said another former world champion, Amir Khan on X. “Rip to the legend Ricky Hatton may he rip.” Former heavyweight champion Tyson Fury said in an Instagram post, with photos of the pair together. “There will only ever be 1 Ricky Hatton. can’t believe this so young.” News of Hatton’s death comes two months after he announced he would make a return to boxing in December in a professional bout against Eisa Al Dah in Dubai.



Blues target World Cup spot

# Kuwait begins journey to Junior Handball World Cup in Morocco

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

AMMAN, Sept 14: Kuwait begins its journey today in the inaugural Asian Junior Handball Championship, hosted in Jordan through September 25. The competition also serves as a qualifier for the World Cup in Morocco, scheduled for October 24 to November 2.

Drawn in Group A, Kuwait opens against Hong Kong before meeting Bahrain in the second preliminary round match on Monday.

The young “Blue” squad prepared through an intensive program that included a European training camp in Croatia and Slovenia, followed by final preparations at home.

Kuwait’s 18-player roster features: Hussein Al-Istad, Mohammed Jabara, Nayef Al-Ajmi, Faisal Al-Enezi, Abdulhadi Mohammed, Ahmed Al-Mathen, Hussein Awad, Omar



A Kuwaiti player tries to score as the opposition puts up a defense.

Madouh, Mohammed Al-Farhan, Fahad Al-Mahboub, Saqr Al-Obaid, Yasser Dashti, Ali Al-Hindai, Athbi Yaloos, Mohammed Salmeen, Zaid Al-Otaibi, Bader Al-Saleh, and Ahmed Al-Shammari. The team is led by head coach Ivan Dragic, assisted by Kuwaiti coach Khaled Al-Mulla, with Federation Treasurer Khaled Taleb heading the delegation.

Taleb voiced confidence in the squad’s ability to compete, praising both the technical staff and the players’ commitment. He highlighted the benefit of the European camp, which featured strong friendly matches that sharpened the team both physically and technically.

Team standout Ahmed Al-Mathen also expressed optimism, commending the federation for its support throughout both training phases.

He emphasized that the players are determined to represent Kuwait with pride and secure one of the coveted qualification spots for the Morocco World Cup.

## Núñez and Neves score

# Hilal stumbles against Al-Qadsia as Lodi contract row escalates

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14: Al-Hilal was held to a 2-2 draw by visiting Al-Qadsia in the second round of the Saudi Professional League, leaving both sides level on points, with Al-Hilal in fourth and Al-Qadsia in third.

Al-Qadsia opened the scoring in the sixth minute through Christopher Bonso, but Darwin Núñez quickly equalized for Al-Hilal early in the second half. Julián Quiñones restored Al-Qadsia’s lead in the 50th minute, before Rúben Neves converted a penalty in the 73rd to secure a point for



David Núñez celebrates after scoring a goal.

the “Blue.”

Elsewhere, Al-Khaleej defeated Al-Fayha 3-0, while Al-Taawoun

left-back Renan Lodi, who left for Brazil without the club’s knowledge and later officially announced the termination of his contract.

In an official statement, communications director Hisham Al-Katiri confirmed that the club received a notice from Lodi’s legal representative claiming a unilateral termination of his contract.

He stressed that Al-Hilal will take all necessary legal measures to protect its rights and pledged to keep fans informed of all developments, emphasizing the club’s commitment to transparency.

# Crawford unifies middleweight crowns with win over Alvarez

## Boxing history made

**LAS VEGAS, Sept 14, (AP): Terence Crawford said several times in his soft-spoken but confident way that he’s proven doubters wrong throughout his boxing career - and he was planning to do it again.**

Few listened.

Canelo Alvarez was the bigger name, the one most responsible for helping draw an announced record crowd of 70,482 on Saturday night.

But Crawford now is the unified super middleweight champion. He became the first male boxer to capture three unified division titles when he defeated Alvarez by unanimous decision.

Judges Tim Cheatham and Max DeLuca awarded Crawford (42-0, 31 knockouts) the match 115-113 and Steve Weisfeld 116-112. The Associated Press scored the fight 118-110 in favor of the 37-year-old from Omaha, Nebraska.

Crawford, who moved up two weight classes, went down to a knee even before the decision was announced and then wept after he was named the winner. “I know what I’m capable of,” Crawford said. “It’s not a surprise. It’s a surprise to y’all because you all didn’t believe in me.”

He won before a pro-Alvarez crowd, but there were significant chants of “Crawford” in the bout’s later rounds, and even Canelo back-



Terence Crawford, left, punches Canelo Alvarez during an undisputed super middleweight championship boxing match in Las Vegas. (AP)

ers didn’t try to boo them down as they had earlier in the night.

This was the first defeat for Alvarez (63-3-2, 39 KOs), the 35-year-old champion from Mexico who looked like the older boxer even going against someone his junior, since losing by unanimous decision to Dmitrii Bivol on May, 7, 2022. He was the -185 favorite at BetMGM Sportsbook.

“We knew Crawford is a great fighter,” Alvarez said. “I did what I was supposed to do. I trained really hard. He deserved all the credit. I tried my best tonight and I couldn’t figure out the style.

“He had everything.”

This fight already was being compared with some of the greatest in Las Vegas’ rich history well before the two contestants tapped gloves.

The setting of Allegiant Stadium itself separated this bout because it was the first match at this venue. Never in question was the attendance record for a Las Vegas fight - 29,214 in 1982 for heavyweight champion Larry Holmes’ 13th-round knockout of Gerry Cooney at Caesars Palace’s specially constructed outdoor stadium - would fall on this night. So did the gate

gross revenue record, the fight making \$47.23 million.

It also surpassed the largest attendance for a sporting event in the 5-year-old stadium. The previous record of 63,969 was set Sept. 1 of last year when Southern California defeated LSU 27-20 to open the college football season.

There was plenty of star power in the stands, including boxing Hall of Famers, Mike Tyson, Evander Holyfield, Roy Jones Jr., Thomas Hearns and Julio Cesar Chavez. Actors Sofia Vergara, Michael J. Fox and Charlize Theron.

## Hojlund marks Napoli debut with goal

# Juventus maintains perfect Serie A start

MILAN, Sept 14, (AP): Both Thuram brothers scored - for opposing teams - on Saturday, but it was Khephren who ended up celebrating after his Juventus side snatched a 4-3 win over Inter Milan in a thrilling Derby d’Italia on Saturday.

Marcus Thuram didn’t celebrate when he put Inter 3-2 up in the 76th minute but his younger brother Khephren certainly did when he netted the equalizer six minutes later.

Their dad, Lilian Thuram, was watching in the stadium. He was a standout defender for Juventus and won the World Cup with France in 1998.

Vasilije Adzic scored the winner in stoppage time to see Juventus maintain its perfect start to the Serie A season after winning its opening two matches without conceding a goal. Defending champion Napoli also made it three straight wins with a 3-1 victory at Fiorentina.

Inter had started the season by beating Torino 5-0 but was upset 2-1 at home by Udinese, heaping pressure on new coach Cristian Chivu, who replaced Simone Inzaghi in the offseason.

The game in Turin also marked the debut of the refcam in the Italian league, with the match official wearing a small video camera to provide viewers at home with an on-field look.

The opening goal came from a surprising source in the 14th minute. Manuel Locatelli floated a ball to the far post, where Bremer volleyed it back for Lloyd Kelly to drill into the bottom right corner. It was the English defender’s first goal for Juventus.

Hakan Çalhanoğlu equalized in the 30th with a trademark long-range shot but Kenan Yıldız restored Juve’s lead just eight minutes later, controlling a pass from Bremer with his back to goal and then turning to lash in a magnificent strike from 30 yards.

Inter upped the pressure after the break, however, and got a deserved equalizer in the 65th minute. Thuram did well to keep a cross from going out and the ball came out to Çalhanoğlu, who controlled it on his chest before smashing it into the far bottom corner.

Thuram headed in a corner to give Inter the lead for the first time in the match before his

younger brother headed in a free kick.

There was still time for another screamer from distance as Adzic unleashed a fierce shot from 35 yards out that squirmed through the hands of Yann Sommer.

Rasmus Hojlund netted on his debut for Napoli, which is managed by former Chelsea coach Antonio Conte.

Hojlund - who joined from Manchester United on transfer deadline day - scored Napoli’s second goal in the 14th minute, running onto Leonardo Spinazzola’s through-ball and firing in off the far post.

Former Manchester City midfielder Kevin De Bruyne had converted a penalty for the opener in the sixth minute after Fiorentina defender Pietro Comuzzo had clattered into André-Frank Anguissa.

Sam Beukema also grabbed a debut goal in the 51st before Luca Ranieri scored a late consolation.

Elsewhere, Cagliari beat Parma 2-0 for its first

# Burgan adds Al-Subagah to squad ahead of new season

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

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14: Burgan Club has bolstered its volleyball team ahead of the season by signing experienced player Jassim Al-Subagah for one year. Al-Subagah joins after several seasons with Kuwait Club, which he left this year.

This signing follows Bargan’s earlier acquisition of standout player Abdulrahman Al-Mutawa from Kazma, signaling the team’s intent to compete strongly for next season’s titles. Last season, Bargan impressed by reaching the league final, falling just short to defending champions Kuwait Club.

Bargan aims to offset the departure of key player Youssef Mendil to Al-Arabi and to contain star player Abdullah Al-Mulla by bringing in Al-Mutawa and Al-Subagah.

The team kicked off its preparations for the new season in Bosnia on September 26, participating in several



Al-Subagah poses with an official during the signing of his agreement.

friendly matches under the guidance of Argentine coach Alejandro Grossi. Bargan had previously also signed Mohammed Al-Shammari to strengthen the squad further.

## ‘We’re heartbroken’

# France edges Ireland to reach semis

LONDON, Sept 14, (AP): France captain Manaé Feleu spoiled Ireland’s last-chance lineup and sent her team into the Women’s Rugby World Cup semifinals in Exeter on Sunday.

France won a nail-biter 18-13 from 13-0 down at halftime in slippery conditions.

The French advanced to their ninth semifinal in 10 World Cups against England or Scotland but they were pushed to the brink by a tenacious Irish side playing their first knockout match in 11 years.

“We’re heartbroken,” Ireland captain Sam Monaghan said. “It went to the death. We took them to a dark place. It was in our hands.”

Two last-minute penalties gave Ireland a throw-in five meters from the try-line with the French short a woman; Alexandra Chambon was in the sin-bin.

France gambled on lifting players instead of bracing for a maul and Feleu, at the front, got finger-tips to the throw-in to knock on the ball and close the nerve-wracking end.

But perhaps even more incredible was the French defense at the end of the first half.

Ireland had first use of what Sandy Park veterans predicted was a 15-point wind and was 13-0 up but desperate for a possibly decisive third try.

Feleu was in the sin-bin for collapsing a 20-meter rolling maul. But somehow her 14 teammates repelled 35 phases by the Irish that lasted for four edge-of-the-seat minutes.

“Super proud,” Feleu said. “We knew it was going to be hard in the conditions. We just needed to be patient (in the first half), put our heads down and defend. We showed a great spirit. Our defense is really part of our team values.”

Ireland got tries by prop Linda Djougang and fullback Stacey Flood, playing on a stitched right foot cut to the bone last weekend against New Zealand. Dannah O’Brien’s only successful goalkick in three attempts made it 13-0.

But it didn’t appear enough in the conditions, especially having spent 80% of the half on French turf, which accounted for the desperation before the interval.

Morgane Bourgeois began France’s comeback with a penalty kick and conversion to a try by No. 8 Charlotte Escudero to trail by three.

Two huge turnovers by replacement hooker Manon Bigot, a 35-year-old firefighter, led to right wing Joanna Grisez’s 12th try in 12 tests and fourth in the World Cup, and Bourgeois’ second penalty kick for 18-13 with five tense minutes to go.

## Best of the Rest

**Argentina, France and Germany advance:** Argentina and France joined Germany in qualifying for the Davis Cup Final 8 on Saturday with wins over the Netherlands, Croatia and Japan, respectively.

Germany didn’t need Alexander Zverev as Kevin Krawietz and Tim Pütz booked their team’s place in Bologna, Italy with a 6-3, 7-6 (4) win over Japanese pair Yosuke Watanuki and Takeru Yuzuki for an unassailable 3-0 lead in the second qualifying round.

Germany became the first team to join host Italy in the final round in November.

Later, Andres Molteni and Horacio Zeballos won five straight games for a 6-3, 7-5 win over the Netherlands’ Sander Arends and Botić van de Zandschulp to put Argentina through against last year’s runner-up.

Corentin Moutet got his second singles win in as many days to send France through 3-1 with a 7-5, 6-4 win over Marin Cilic.

Also, Denmark was leading against Spain 2-0, Belgium was 2-0 up against Australia, and the United States was drawing 1-1 with the Czech Republic in Delray Beach, Florida. (AP)

**Sun, Wang crowned at WTT Champions:** China’s Sun Yingsha and Wang Chuqin clinched the singles titles at the World Table Tennis (WTT) Champions Macao 2025 on Sunday.

World No. 1 Sun successfully defended her crown with a 4-3 win over world No. 2 and teammate Wang Manyu. In a gripping contest, Sun took the opener, trailed 3-2, and rallied to prevail in the deciding seventh game.

Wang Chuqin eased past Brazil’s Hugo Calderano 4-0 (11-9, 11-7, 11-9, 11-4). The pair had already met twice this year in major events, the ITTF Men’s and Women’s World Cup Macao 2025 and the ITTF World Table Tennis Championships Finals Doha 2025, with one victory each before Sunday’s final.

At the post-match press conference, Wang addressed the challenges facing China’s men’s team, noting the depth of global competition. “As the sport evolves, the competition is becoming increasingly fierce, but I believe the Chinese team is still the strongest,” he said.

Looking ahead to the upcoming 2025 WTT China Smash, Sun highlighted her partnership with Wang in mixed doubles. “After our singles matches, when we team up again, our overall strength is still very solid,” she said. “I hope that within these 10 days we can make a smooth switch between events and manage our energy well.” (Xinhua)

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NEWS





Burnley's Quilindschy Hartman guards Liverpool's Mohamed Salah during the Premier League soccer match between Burnley and Liverpool in Burnley, England. (AP)

# Sports

Al-Abyad defeats Kazma to reach quarterfinals

## Kuwait stays on course for third consecutive title at Arab Club Handball Championship



Kuwait Club players defend against Kazma player during the Arab Club Handball Championship match in Kuwait.

By Khaled Al-Enezi  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14: Kuwait Club continued its strong run in the 40th Arab Club Handball Championship, defeating Kazma 33-24 in the second round of the preliminary stage. The victory secured Kuwait Club a spot in the quarterfinals and kept it top of Group A with four points, while Kazma sits at two points from a win and a loss.

Team manager Sameh Al-Hajri emphasized that Kuwait Club always aims for first place in every competition, with the primary goal of not only ensuring the success of the tournament – currently held at Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Hall until September 22 – but also clinching the Arab title for the third consecutive time, following triumphs in Dam-

mam (2023) and Kuwait (2024).

Al-Hajri praised his side's performance, stressing the importance of maintaining group leadership to ease the path in the knockout stages. He noted the high level of competition, with clubs like Al-Hashd of Iraq, Al-Ahli Bank of Egypt, and Al-Sulaibikhat emerging as strong contenders.

In other Group A results, Syria's Al-Taliya drew 27-27 with Iraq's Naft Al-Basra, while Al-Hashd defeated Qatar 31-21.

Al-Hajri, who also serves as tournament director, thanked Kuwait Club's board for its strong administrative and technical support, as well as for its efforts in reinforcing the squad, making "Al-Abyad" one of the top contenders for the Arab crown.

Meanwhile, Al-Sulaibikhat's secretary general Nasser Mansi lauded his team's hard-fought

victory over Syria's Al-Nawaeir, saying: "Despite the difficulty, our players rose to the occasion and delivered when it mattered most."

Mansi added that the team is now preparing for a decisive third-round clash against Al-Hashd, hoping to maintain momentum and compete strongly, especially as Al-Sulaibikhat has previously lifted the Arab championship.

The tournament will pause for a rest day today before resuming tomorrow with the third round:

2:00 PM: Al-Nawaeir (Syria) vs Al-Ahli Bank (Egypt)

4:00 PM: Naft Al-Basra (Iraq) vs Kazma (Kuwait)

6:00 PM: Al-Sulaibikhat (Kuwait) vs Al-Hashd (Iraq)

8:00 PM: Al-Shabab (Syria) vs Kuwait Club (Kuwait)

### Veteran captain Al-Mutawa on target

## Kuwait Club, Qadsia secure strong victories in the Zain Premier League

By Hassan Mosa  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14: Defending champion Kuwait Club launched its Zain Premier League title defense in style with a 3-1 victory over Tadamon at Ali Sabah Al-Salem Stadium in the opening round. Qadsia also impressed with a commanding 4-0 win over Al-Nasr at Mohammed Al-Hamad Stadium.

Kuwait Club's win was secured by two goals from Bahraini Mohamed Marhoon and a brace from Tunisian striker Taha Yassine Khenissi, both from the penalty spot. Tobi Okiki scored the only goal for Tadamon.

Qadsia, meanwhile, dominated its clash against Al-Nasr, with goals from Rashid Al-Dosari, Eid Al-Rasheedi, veteran captain Bader Al-Mutawa, and Egyptian star Mahmoud Abdel Moneim "Kahraba."

The round's earlier fixtures saw Arabi defeat Shabab 2-0 and Fahaeel overcome Jahra 3-1.

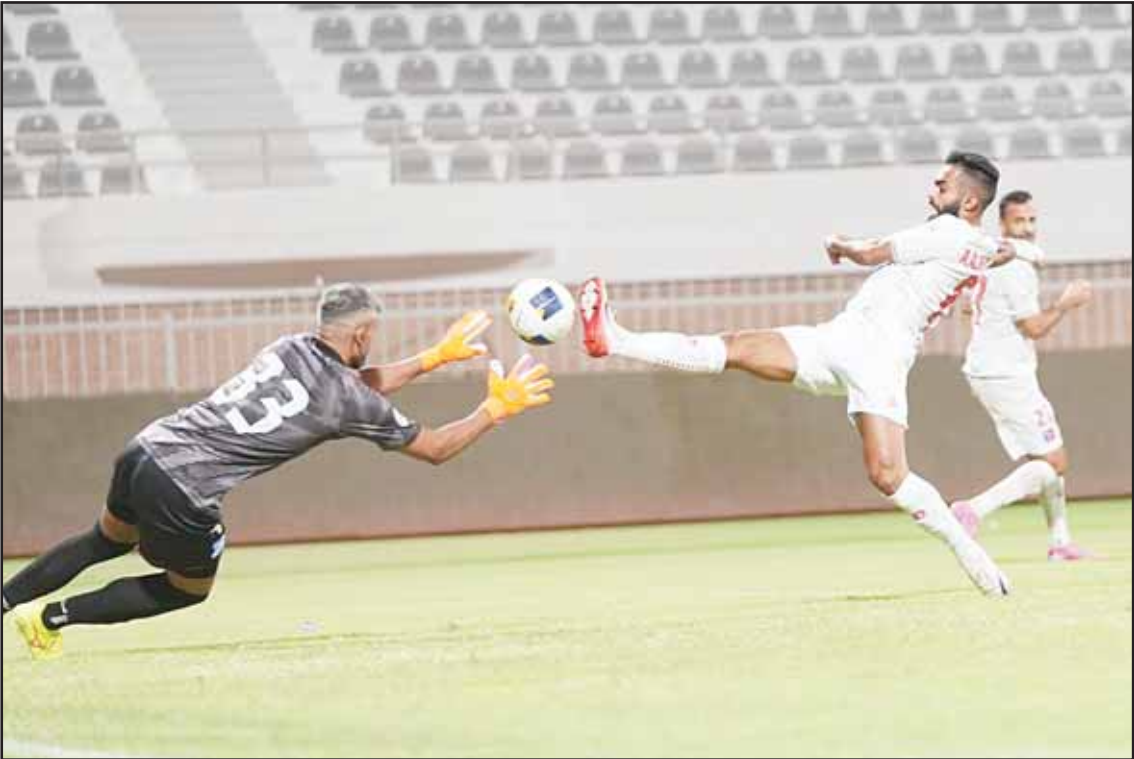
Qadsia coach Nabil Maaloul hailed Bader Al-Mutawa as "a role model for all players through his discipline and leadership," stressing his importance to the squad.

He thanked the fans for their support and underlined his ambition: "I'm here to coach Qadsia, and our goal is to compete for all five titles this season. Hopefully, fortune will be with us."

Despite missing several key players – including Mohamed Soula, Sofiane Bouchar, Abdulaziz Wadi, and Talal Al-Fadhil – Maaloul praised his squad's performance, noting that debutants Victor Lekhal, Kahraba, and Kipao played despite lacking full fitness. He added: "The three points give us valuable momentum, but the season is still long."

Kuwait Club assistant coach Karim Al-Shazly described the win as both "convincing and important," emphasizing that as champions, the team faces constant pressure to deliver both results and performances every week.

Tadamon assistant coach Jamal Al-Qabandi, meanwhile, noted that the game marked the first time his squad had been at full strength this season following the arrival of foreign players. He admitted Kuwait capitalized on defensive errors but stressed: "The gap between the two sides wasn't that big. Circumstances before the match limited us, but we'll look to bounce back in the next round."



Kuwait Club player makes a goal attempt during the opening match against Tadamon.

# Seville, Jefferson-Wooden storm to 100m titles



Jamaica's Oblique Seville, left, celebrates winning the gold medal in the men's 100 meters final ahead Jamaica's Kishane Thompson, United States' Noah Lyles and United States' Kenneth Bednarek at the World Athletics Championships in Tokyo. (AP)

## Salah scores late penalty to preserve Liverpool's perfect start

MANCHESTER, England, Sept 14, (AP): Liverpool left it late again and moved back to the top of the Premier League.

The defending champion secured a 1-0 win against Burnley on Sunday and preserved its 100% start to the season thanks to a stoppage-time penalty from Mohamed Salah.

After late winners against Bournemouth and Newcastle already this term, Liverpool staged another dramatic finale at Turf Moor.

Arne Slot's team looked set to drop points for the first time this season, but was handed a lifeline when Hannibal Mejbri handled the ball in the box and referee Michael Oliver pointed to the spot.

Salah did the rest by blasting a powerful shot past Burnley goalkeeper Martin Dubravka before running away in celebration.

Teenager Ethan Mbappé, the brother of France superstar Kylian, scored his first goal in the French league on Sunday, a superb volley deep in injury time that secured a 2-1 win for Lille against

Toulouse.

Mbappé, who joined Lille a year ago from Paris Saint-Germain, came on as a substitute with only nine minutes left to play. He connected with a cross in the eighth minute of added time and volleyed the ball into the top corner with his left foot.

The technically gifted left-footed 18-year-old midfielder was hampered by injuries last season.

Lille trailed until the 90th minute when Nabil Bentaleb scored from the penalty spot to level the score after a handball in the box by Rasmus Nicolaisen.

Lille dominated proceedings in the first half and was caught against the run of play after the interval in the 50th minute when Frank Magri broke the deadlock. The visitors were reduced to 10 men in the 80th minute after Alexis Vossah was sent off for a dangerous foul on Benjamin André.

Both Mbappé brothers left Paris Saint-Germain in the summer of 2024. While Kylian crossed the border to join the Spanish league, Ethan remained in France and signed a three-year deal with Lille.

### Gressier produces stunning 10,000m surge

TOKYO, Sept 14, (Agencies): **Melissa Jefferson-Wooden of the U.S. and Oblique Seville of Jamaica won the 100-meter finals at world championships Sunday in a changing of the guard in track.**

The 24-year-old Jefferson-Wooden blew away the field, finishing in 10.61 seconds to break Sha'Carri Richardson's two-year-old world-championship record. Richardson barely squeezed into the final and finished fifth despite running a season-best 10.94.

Seville, also 24 and who works with Usain Bolt's old coach, Glen Mills, reeled in countryman Kishane Thompson for a win in 9.77. Defending world and Olympic champion Noah Lyles finished third.

Bolt watched this one from a luxury box - his first return to a big race since he exited the sport in 2017 - and was high-fiving and hugging friends when he watched a Jamaican win the men's title for the first time since he left.

There were some who argued Seville, not Thompson - who adds this silver to his silver from Paris last year - was the best young sprinter on the island. Seville has a winning record against Lyles, but has not been able to put it together in the biggest races.

This time, he did - getting the best start, but then falling behind by about two steps halfway through the race, and then, step-by-step, closing the gap on Thompson.

The women's race was pretty much over as soon as it started.

Jefferson-Wooden got about a step ahead of Julien Alfred in the lane next to her, then kept expanding her lead and ran hard through the line when she could

have coasted. She ended with a .15-second margin over Jamaica's Tina Clayton - the same gap Alfred, who finished third this time, beat Richardson by in Paris last year. Richardson, who trains with Jefferson-Wooden, wasn't the same runner as last year or the year before when she won worlds.

After finishing third in her semifinal heat, she had to wait to see if she'd get one of the last two spots. She did and started on the inside in Lane 2, but was never a factor. While Jefferson-Wooden jumped and shouted into the stands, Richardson slowly paced the inside of the track with her hands on hips.

Elsewhere on Sunday, France's Jimmy Gressier produced a stunning late surge in the men's 10,000m, overtaking Ethiopia's Yomif Kejelcha in the final meters to win gold in a season-best 28:55.77. Kejelcha took silver in 28:55.83, while Sweden's Andreas Almgren earned bronze in 28:56.02.

In the field events, American Valarie Allman finally captured world championship gold in the women's discus with a throw of 69.48 meters. The two-time Olympic champion and 2023 world silver medalist beat Jorinde van Klinken of the Netherlands (67.50) and Cuba's Silinda Morales (67.25).

In the women's long jump, Tara Davis-Woodhall of the United States leapt 7.13 meters to secure gold, ahead of Germany's Malaika Mihambo (6.99) and Colombia's Natalia Linares (6.92).

The morning session featured high drama in the women's marathon, where Tokyo Olympic champion Peres Jepchirchir of Kenya outdueled Ethiopia's Tigst Assefa to win in 2:24:43. The pair broke away before 30km, with Assefa launching an attack at 250 meters. Jepchirchir responded with a decisive surge on the final bend. Uruguay's Julia Paternain claimed bronze, earning her country's first-ever athletics world championship medal.



United States' Melissa Jefferson-Wooden poses after winning the gold medal in the women's 100 meters final at the World Athletics Championships in Tokyo. (AP)