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Opinion

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Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

YOUR Highness the Prime Minister, the economy cannot thrive, nor can the gross domestic product (GDP) grow, if there are barriers to commercial, industrial, service, and investment activities. The secret to stability lies in the exchange of benefits, especially between the public and private sectors. It is the private sector that should take the lead in development, exercising the freedom needed to propel the economy forward.

Empowering citizens to improve their livelihoods and increase their incomes is the cornerstone of social stability. However, this can only be achieved if the right policies are in place to create a strong state.

The exchange of benefits depends on the opportunities provided by the state through exchange projects. This is where the concept of "B.O.T." (Build, Operate, Transfer)

comes into play. Countries like Vietnam, which emerged from a devastating war that lasted for decades, have used this model to drive economic growth. Today, Vietnam stands as a growing economic power, much like Singapore and many other successful nations.

The governments of these countries do not compete with business owners for their livelihoods. Instead, they support struggling businesses, either through partnerships that enhance their strength or by providing energy and services at subsidized rates. These governments also facilitate employment procedures in the private sector to help reduce unemployment. When faced with a budget deficit, they increase fees to serve the state's best interests.

In many countries, governments provide land, what we refer to in Kuwait as "plots", for industrial, agricultural, or service purposes, based on a system of mutual benefit, and sometimes in partnership. If a project requires development, the government helps boost investment activity or facilitates the inclusion of a partner to strengthen the project.

These countries adopt an important principle - if a commercial project is hindered, the state does not benefit. It

loses. However, when the government supports development, it is the first to gain, as it results in increased income and revenue from fees and taxes.

In these countries, there is no room for envy, narrow-mindedness, or obstruction for personal reasons. The prevailing philosophy is simple - "Let it pass, let it operate." Markets are allowed to regulate themselves.

Adam Smith emphasized the importance of allowing markets to operate freely without government interference, believing that markets self-regulate through the forces of supply and demand.

The benefit is mutual between individuals and the government. Citizens pay taxes and fees in exchange for services and efficient procedures. When the government imposes overly strict regulations, it creates challenges for businesses, leading to losses for everyone. As inflation rises and unemployment increases, it harms the country as a whole, not just individuals.

In Kuwait, some government institutions have taken the opposite approach by revoking licenses and obstructing projects.

Certain projects were initially granted to investors as des-

ert lands, with significant investments made over 40 or 50 years of production. Others faced difficult periods but managed to overcome them, with the beneficiaries consistently meeting their obligations by paying fees and annual rents.

We must realize that global and regional conditions negatively affect businesses, as capital is inherently cautious. Despite these challenges, many countries encourage national investors, operating under the principle - "When you hear the roar of the cannons, start planning and building."

Other countries, such as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and Egypt, have achieved stability and financial prosperity by launching successful economic renaissances.

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Sabah Al-Salem, Dajeej sweep nets lawbreakers

Cafés, businesses closed for violations

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 20: The Ministry of Interior carried out a security and traffic campaign in Sabah Al-Salem to apprehend individuals wanted by law and those who committed various violations.

This campaign was conducted in accordance with the directive of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, under the supervision and follow up of acting Undersecretary of the ministry Major General Ali Al-Adwani, and in the presence of Head of the Human Resources and Information Technology Sector Brigadier General Anwar Ahmed Al-Yatami.

The Security, Traffic and Operations directorates participated in the campaign, with the support of the Human Resources and Information Technology Sector that provided advanced technology to help identify and apprehend wanted individuals and law violators.

In a recent press statement, the ministry stated that the campaign is part of its intensive efforts to maintain security and instill traffic discipline. It disclosed that the campaign resulted in the arrest of several individuals proven to have violated the Residency, Labor and Traffic laws.

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Ministry of Interior photo

The Ministry of Interior conducts a security and traffic campaign in the Sabah Al-Salem area to apprehend wanted individuals and lawbreakers.

Kuwait enhances measures to combat money laundering

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 20, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait continues its steady efforts against money laundering, bolstering measures in this domain cooperation with regional and international partners.

Such efforts coincide with the State of Kuwait's plans to become a regional anti-money laundering and terror financing center.

The judicial system saw a qualitative leap with the introduction of Decree No. 76/2025, amending some items within law No. 106/2013 concerning money laundering and combating terrorism financing. The amendments enabled the Kuwaiti cabinet to enact

decisions, which abide by international rules and regulations in this domain.

The law included decisions to list and freeze assets and finances as well as bar dealings with suspicious individuals.

To reinforce cabinet decisions on the matter, the laws issued would be enacted on the date of issuance, including penal verdicts and fines ranging from KD 10,000 to KD 500,000 for each violation.

The articles of the law took measures to execute UNSC resolutions on the matter within a legal framework balancing international obligations

and constitutional duties, which gave individuals rights to submit formal grievance, view records, and asking for permission to cover necessary expenses.

This legislative step is part of the National Committee to Combat Money laundering and Terrorism Financing, which is assigned by the cabinet to reinforce cooperation with other state institutions to achieve international standards and boost Kuwait's reputation in this field.

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Kuwait, US armies hold joint training meeting

The Kuwaiti Army Ground Forces Command and US Army Central Ground Forces Command held on Saturday a training meeting, said General Staff of the Army. Kuwait Ground Forces Commander Brig. Gen. Hamad Al-Suwaidi and US Army Central Ground Forces

Commander Lt. Gen. Patrick Frank participated in the meeting. The two sides discussed joint training activities for the 2025-2026 season as part of efforts to enhance military cooperation, exchange expertise and strengthen combat readiness. (KUNA)



Ministry of Defense photo

Kuwait and US Army leaders pose with delegations during a joint training planning meeting, reinforcing cooperation and combat readiness for the 2025-2026 season.



Kuwait Dive Team photo

Cleaning the coast of Kuwait Towers during Kuwait Dive Team's Environmental Voluntary Foundation (EVF) campaign to mark World Cleanup Day.

World Cleanup Day events promote environmental awareness in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 20, (KUNA): Kuwait Dive Team's Environmental Voluntary Foundation (EVF) participated in a campaign to clean the Kuwait Towers shore on Saturday, along with a group of volunteers, to mark World Cleanup Day.

The team removed numerous plastic and microplastic wastes, as well as some old carpets pieces.

The team's International Relations Officer, Dr. Dari Al-Huwail, told KUNA that the team participates annually in the World Cleanup Day campaign, which is held on the third Saturday of September every year around the world.

The campaign aims to collect and clean waste from beaches and waterways, and to raise awareness

of the importance of preserving the cleanliness of the marine environment, since dangers of plastic waste can kill thousands of marine creatures, birds, and turtles.

Al-Huwail explained that this day is organized in cooperation with non-profit organizations and individual volunteers to collect and record waste to help understand its origins, find solutions, and combat it.

He emphasized the team's continued efforts to protect and rehabilitate the marine environment and clean the coasts periodically throughout the year, as they are a tourist destination and maintain ecological balance.

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7 arrested over illegal gambling

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 20: As part of the ongoing security efforts by the Ministry of Interior, represented by the Criminal Security Affairs Sector, to combat crime and fight money laundering, Hawally Investigations Department of the General Department of Criminal Investigations uncovered and arrested an international network involved in running online gambling operations and illegally transferring their proceeds within Kuwait, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

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Celebrities swap stardom for cuffs

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 20: Officers from the Hawally Security Directorate arrested a famous artist in Salamiya for the possession of narcotics and alcohol, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

A security source disclosed that as per the instruction of Head of the Public Security Sector in the Interior Ministry Major General Hamad Al-Munifi, the officers apprehended the famous artist who was referred to the Drug Control General Department (DCGD), along

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8 ZainTECH, Micro-soft host 'AI-Ready Kuwait' summit to accelerate Vision 2035



9 In the Banker's Top 1000 Global Banks Rankings 2025 KFH ranks 1st for the Best Performing Bank in Kuwait

Prayer Timings			
Fajr	04:15	Asr	15:09
Sunrise ..	05:35	Maghrib ..	17:48
Zohr	11:42	Isha	19:05

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:
By Day: Hot with light to moderate northwesterly wind to light northerly wind, with speeds of 08-35 km/h and some high clouds will appear.
By Night: Rather hot to mild

Weather			
with light to moderate northwest-erly wind, with speeds of 12-35 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.			
Station	Max Exp	Min Rec	
Kuwait City	43	32	
Kuwait Airport	42	31	

Abdaly	43	29
Babyan	38	24
Jahra	43	32
Fallaka Island	41	29
Salmiyah	40	32
Ahmadi	38	29
Nuwaisib	39	31
Wafra	42	28

Amir’s Representative at UNGA underscores Kuwait’s esteemed status

Kuwait reaffirms commitment to UN Charter at General Assembly

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 20, (KUNA): The participation of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah’s Representative, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah in the high-level meeting of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) embodies Kuwait’s prestigious position and firm commitment to the UN Charter principles, Minister of Foreign Affairs said on Friday.

Speaking to KUNA in a statement, Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya said Kuwait sees this occasion as an opportunity to renew its commitment to the values enshrined in the Charter, particularly in the fields of peace and security, development, and human rights.

Over decades, Kuwait has played an effective role in backing UN action through either its humanitarian and relief efforts, mediation initiatives or resolving conflicts, the minister noted.

This approach mirrors a firm policy that made Kuwait a reliable partner regionally and internationally, he stated.

Al-Yahya pointed out that the participation of His Highness the Amir’s Representative is a clear message showing Kuwait’s continued obligation to support pluralism and boosting international cooperation in the face of global challenges topped with climate change, armed conflicts and sustainable development.



His Highness the Amir’s Representative His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah arrives in New York.



Kuwait will continue supporting efforts aiming to achieve peace, security and global stability, he said.

The historic 80th anniversary of the founding of the UN in San Francisco must serve as an occasion for member states to renew their pledge to uphold the spirit of international cooperation and joint action, in a manner that meets the aspirations of peoples for a safer, fairer, and more prosperous future, the minister con-

cluded.

His Highness the Amir’s Representative His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah said Friday that “this occasion represents a pivotal moment for renewing the international community’s commitment to reforming the United Nations, and developing its working mechanisms to make it more effective and capable of addressing multiple challenges.” Upon arrival at JFK In-

ternational airport in New York, His Highness the Crown Prince is due to lead Kuwait’s delegation at the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), marking the 80th anniversary of the UN’s founding in New York City.

His Highness Sheikh Sabah was received by Amiri Diwan Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Mazen Issa Al-Issa, Kuwait Ambassador to US Sheikha Al-Zain Sabah Nasser Al-Sabah, and Ku-

wait Permanent Representative to UN Tareq Mohammad Al-Bannai.

His Highness the Crown Prince expressed honor in representing His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, in this important session of the United Nations General Assembly, which coincides with the 80th anniversary of the founding of the organization, along with the participation of 105 leaders and heads of state and government.

His Highness Amir’s Representative stressed that “any anticipated reform must contribute to building a more efficient and effective international system that enhances international peace and security and achieves development for everyone in the world.” His Highness Sheikh Sabah added that the session’s agenda includes several high-level meetings, most notably the meeting on the two-state solution, which will be co-chaired by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Republic of France.

His Highness Sheikh Sabah expressed optimism that the meeting will witness advanced steps, represented by the recognition of the State of Palestine by a number of major and influential countries, which constitutes an important milestone on the path to its recognition as a full member of the United Nations.

His Highness Sheikh Sabah also affirmed his keenness to take advantage of this high-profile presence of various leaders through bilateral meetings to discuss bilateral relations and regional and international issues.

His Highness the Crown Prince noted that he will also hold meetings with a number of financial institutions and major companies in the United States that have partnerships with the State of Kuwait, to discuss future strategic plans and their work Kuwait, in a way that serves the achievement of the goals of Kuwait Vision 2035.

Indian Ambassador Swaika bids farewell, praises Kuwait-India strategic partnership

Diplomatic Corps plays tribute to outgoing envoy

By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 20: In a farewell that summed up three years of active diplomatic work, Indian Ambassador to Kuwait Adarsh Swaika painted a comprehensive picture of Kuwaiti-Indian relations, emphasizing that they have reached their best stage, thanks to the political, economic and cultural achievements, and the promising opportunities they hold for investors.

In a farewell meeting with the media, Swaika affirmed that the Kuwaiti media has been a true partner in strengthening these relations, indicating the visit of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Kuwait marked a historic turning point that elevated cooperation to a strategic partnership covering defense, energy, trade and investment, and laid the foundation for a new beginning in bilateral cooperation.

He pointed out that Modi’s visit -- which happened 43 years after the last visit by an Indian Prime Minister -- had symbolic significance and practical implications. He said “the Kuwaiti leadership awarded him the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Medal and invited him as a distinguished guest in the 26th Arabian Gulf Cup. The visit included important meetings with His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah. These meetings focused on strengthening political, economic and cultural cooperation between the two nations.”

He said this historic visit culminated in the elevation of relations to the level of a strategic partnership, opening new areas of cooperation, especially defense cooperation, after the Kuwaiti Council of Ministers ratified the memorandum of understanding (MoU) in this regard.

He also cited the accession of Kuwait to the India-led International Solar Alliance and the Shanghai Cooperation

Organization during India’s presidency in 2023. He attributed the momentum witnessed in multilateral cooperation, particularly through the strategic dialogue between India and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), to Kuwait’s presidency of the Council that played a vital role in advancing the joint action plan.

He added the number of joint working groups increased from three in 2023 to 10 at present, including the neighborhood, investment, culture, defense, security, counterterrorism, food security, agriculture, science and technology groups.

He revealed the trade exchange between the two countries ranged from \$10 billion to \$17 billion over the past decade. “However, there was no institutional framework for discussing commercial matters, a development that was recently achieved through the establishment of two working groups on trade and investment. The Kuwaiti investment in India is growing at a time major Indian companies are participating in huge projects in Kuwait, including roads, electricity, oil and gas, hospitals, and universities. India has become the fourth largest economy in the world and it is on its way to becoming the third, opening vast opportunities for Kuwaiti investors,” he stressed.

On the cultural front, he pointed out that Kuwait has great passion for Indian culture, evident in several events organized by the embassy, such as the ‘Festival of India’ in March 2023, concerts by giants such as Amjad Ali Khan and Laili Subramaniam in 2023 and 2024, and



Ambassador Zubaydullah Zubaydov with the Indian Ambassador, his wife, and the representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Muhanna Al-Muhanna.

the ‘Bharat Mela’ festival, which witnessed the participation of 7,000 people and 700 artists in Salmiya Square, in addition to celebrating the International Yoga Day inside and outside the embassy. A radio program in Hindi was launched in April 2024, and Indian cinema programs were broadcasted on Kuwaiti television. He emphasized that cultural ties run deep, and that the Kuwaiti dialect contains around 300 words of Indian origin.

He affirmed that the health sector is an important pillar of bilateral relations, as more than 1,000 Indian doctors and 30,000 nurses are working in

Kuwait. He recalled cooperation during the COVID-19 pandemic, when India sent medical missions and vaccines to Kuwait, while Kuwait supplied it with liquid medical oxygen.

He also touched on the success of the ‘e-visa’ initiative launched by India for Kuwaitis last July, which includes visas for tourism, medical treatment, business, yoga and conferences. He said more than 700 visas were issued in the first three months of implementing the initiative.

Regarding the Palestinian issue, he confirmed the steadfast position of his country in supporting the rights of the

Palestinian people, recalling that India was among the first non-Arab countries to recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization in 1974, and then the State of Palestine in 1988, providing humanitarian and development aid amounting to \$170 million over the years.

On a humanitarian and personal level, he expressed his deep gratitude for Kuwaiti traditions, especially the ‘diwaniya’, which he described as a unique tradition that enabled him to build extensive relationships. He said “I will greatly miss walking down Gulf Street from the Towers to the Marina. I will have beautiful memories of the warmth of Kuwaiti society,” referring to the ‘Ramadan Coffee’ initiative he launched during his tenure in Kuwait.

Addressing the Indian community in Kuwait, Swaika asserted “you are a source of pride for India, distinguished by your peaceful nature and positive contributions to Kuwaiti society. I have always received words of thanks and appreciation from Kuwaiti officials for our community.”

He went on to thank his Kuwaiti friends for the generous hospitality he received over the past three years, calling for strengthening ties between the new generations in both countries.

He also wished success for his successor, who will arrive in Kuwait in October as the first female Indian ambassador to the country, stressing his confidence that she will continue the path of cooperation with the support of the Kuwaiti media.

Concluding his remarks, he revealed his next stop as his country’s ambas-

sador to Kenya, where he will also represent India at the United Nations Environment Programme and United Nations Habitat Programme in Nairobi, in addition to his accreditation as non-resident ambassador to Somalia. He then expressed his aspiration to embark on a new African experience after his rich experience in the Gulf region.

The Deanship of the Diplomatic Corps has organized a farewell ceremony for outgoing Indian Ambassador to Kuwait Dr. Adarsh Swaika, with Ministry of Foreign Affairs representative Muhanna Al-Muhanna and a large number of ambassadors and heads of diplomatic missions in attendance.

In his speech at the event, Dean of the Diplomatic Corps and Ambassador of Tajikistan Zubaydullah Zubaydov praised the achievements of Swaika throughout his tenure in Kuwait, stressing that he contributed significantly to strengthening and developing India’s relations with Kuwait.

Zubaydov highlighted the most important achievements of Swaika over the past three years in different fields, while commending his cooperation and communication with his fellow heads of diplomatic missions in the country. He wished the Indian Ambassador success in his future assignments.

In another development, Zubaydov welcomed the ambassadors who presented copies of their credentials to Foreign Affairs Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya -- ambassadors of the Netherlands, Lebanon and Somalia, wishing them a pleasant stay in Kuwait.

On the other hand, Swaika expressed his sincere gratitude to Kuwaiti officials for their cooperation in developing relations between the two countries, stating that they moved to an important stage of cooperation following the visit of the Indian Prime Minister to Kuwait.

He confirmed that officials at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs fully cooperated with him and provided him with all the facilities needed to ensure the success of his mission in the country.

He expressed his gratitude to his colleagues, the heads of diplomatic missions in the country, for their cooperation, support and attendance in events organized by the Indian Embassy.

He briefed his colleagues on his new assignments as his country’s representative in Kenya and non-resident ambassador to Somalia, in addition to representing India at the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Housing Programme in Nairobi.



Indian Ambassador Dr. Adarsh Swaika, Dean of the Diplomatic Corps Zubaydullah Zubaydov, and Muhanna Al-Muhanna are among the attendees.

Kuwait, Latvia eye stronger ties

Ambassador Al-Khaled presents credentials to Latvian President

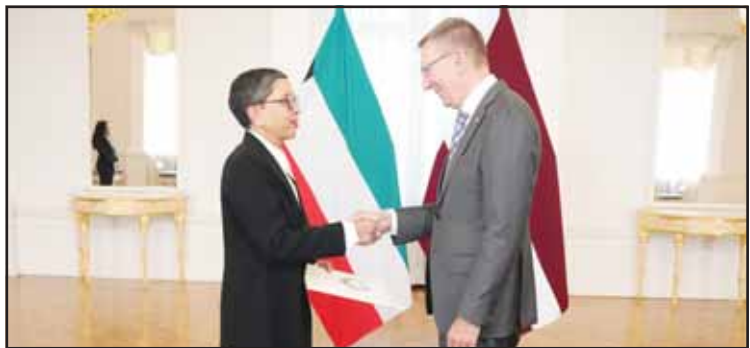
BERLIN, Sept 20, (KUNA): Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to the Federal Republic of Germany Reem Al-Khaled presented her credentials as the ambassador, extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the State of Kuwait to the Republic of Latvia to President Edgars Rinkevics at a ceremony held on Friday at the Presidential Palace in the capital, Riga.

In a statement, Ambassador Al-Khaled told KUNA that she had conveyed to President Rinkevics the greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince, Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and their wishes for the Repub-

lic of Latvia and its friendly people for continued progress and prosperity.

The meeting addressed the distinguished bilateral relations between the two friendly countries and ways to strengthen them as well as a number of regional and international issues of mutual interest, she pointed out.

The Kuwaiti envoy expressed her aspiration to build an effective strategic partnership between the two friendly countries in the coming period through enhancing channels of political, economic, and cultural cooperation and exploring new venues for serving mutual interests and consolidating bilateral relations.



KUNA photo
Ambassador Reem Mohammed Al-Khaled, Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to the Federal Republic of Germany, and President of the Republic of Latvia Edgars Rinkevics during the handover ceremony.

Indiscriminate waste disposal poses serious threat in Kabad

“KABAD is one of the areas struggling with the problem of indiscriminate waste disposal, a growing issue that poses serious environmental and health threat. The random dumping of waste leads to pollution, spoils the natural landscape, and endangers wildlife, making it a problem that requires urgent action from both individuals and responsible authorities,” journalist **Hamed Al-Hameli** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“Several factors contribute to the worsening situation in Kabad. First, the area is an open desert, which makes it an easy target for illegal dumping by irresponsible individuals and companies. Secondly, a lack of environmental awareness among some residents



Al-Hameli

leads to the careless disposal of waste, such as construction debris, old furniture, household garbage, and even dead livestock, without considering the harmful consequences. In addition, the absence of strict law enforcement and the lack of proper waste collection services in remote areas make the problem even worse.

“The phenomenon of illegal dumping in Kabad has serious consequences for both the environment and the community. Environmentally, the waste pollutes the soil, especially when it contains chemicals or hazardous materials. The buildup of waste also harms wildlife, as animals may ingest dangerous substances, and it poses risks to children living or playing in the area. “Aesthetically, the waste disfigures the natural landscape, diminishing the area’s appeal as a recreational or camping destination. From a health perspective, it can contribute to the spread of diseases due to the increased presence of insects and rodents.

“To address this issue, a comprehensive approach is needed, one that combines public awareness, effective legislation, and infrastructure development. Environmental awareness campaigns should be strengthened to target both individuals and businesses, highlighting the importance of recycling and proper waste disposal.

“Government agencies, especially the Kuwait Municipality, can play a major role by intensifying monitoring efforts in the area and imposing substantial fines on violators. Establishing dedicated waste collection centers near Kabad, along with providing adequate and accessible waste containers, is also highly recommended.

“Finally, community initiatives such as volunteer cleanup campaigns should be encouraged to promote a sense of shared responsibility for the environment. Solving this problem is not solely the duty of official bodies; active community participation is essential.

“Individuals can help by disposing of waste in designated areas, avoiding littering during outdoor activities, and reporting any irresponsible behavior. The Environment Public Authority can also play a role by organizing events to educate the public and promote the protection of natural areas.

“The issue of littering in Kabad is not just an environmental challenge but it is a matter of collective responsibility to preserve the beauty of Kuwait and protect the well-being of its people. With cooperation between the government and the community, Kabad can be transformed into a clean and sustainable area. Addressing this issue requires genuine commitment and ongoing effort to ensure a healthy, clean environment for both present and future generations.”

□ □ □

“Former Al-Arabi Club president **Jamal Al-Kazemi** won a court ruling requiring the club to repay **KD 300,000**, which he claims he provided as a loan during his time in office. While the ruling itself may appear routine, the recurrence of such cases raises questions and suspicion,” columnist **Abdulkareem Al-Shamali** wrote for **Al-Jarida** daily.

“A similar case involved Sheikh **Talal Al-Fahad**, who previously demanded **KD 2 million** from the Kuwait Football Association, an amount he had also contributed during his presidency. Rumors continue to circulate about other similar cases, with some expected to surface soon. Others, reportedly, remain tucked away, waiting for the end of certain presidencies to emerge in the form of checks and payment receipts.

“The question here isn’t whether a former president has the right to reclaim their money... such financial rights are, in principle, undeniable. The real issue lies in “how” these so-called “loans” are made. Are there formal contracts, clearly defined terms, and officially approved minutes? Or are these merely verbal agreements, presented as “gifts” during a term and later reclassified as “debts” once the official steps down?

“This legal and ethical gray area

must be addressed urgently, either through new legislation or, at the very least, by amending the bylaws of sports clubs and federations to explicitly prohibit lending money to the entity one manages. Such a step would protect institutions from future liabilities, enhance financial transparency, eliminate conflicts of interest, and prevent the misuse of official positions for personal gain.

“Ultimately, a sports club or federation president cannot simultaneously act as both lender and manager of the same entity... being both creditor and debtor creates a clear conflict of interest. We cannot hold past administrations accountable for loans made without transparency or documentation. The core issue lies in the fact that many of these “loans” were originally described as acts of “personal support” or “noble gestures”. Yet, once the individual leaves office, that “nobility” often transforms into a “promissory note payable”.

“Some presidents go to great lengths to appear as though they are spending from their own pockets out of love and loyalty for the entity they lead. But over time, it becomes clear that the real intention may have been to secure a legal claim against the very entity they managed. The result? A president who “funds today and sues tomorrow”.

“Sadly, this has turned some sports institutions into little more than ATMs... used to retroactively refund unofficial loans under the cover of generosity.”

□ □ □

“During my first visits to Britain in my youth, I was deeply impressed by people’s relationship with books and reading. I was struck by how books are friends to all segments of society, of all ages, and in all places. I became convinced that every English person carried a book in their pocket or bag. I noticed that reading on trains, airplanes, in parks, and cafes was the most important and greatest unifier among the English people,” columnist **Talib Al-Rifai** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

“During a recent visit to several European countries, I recalled the



Al-Rifai

American writer, critic, and professor **Harold Bloom** (1930-2019) in a video clip posted online, warning about the internet’s devastating impact on education. Bloom said, “The internet, and I know many may disagree with this opinion, is a terrible danger to the mind, and a terrible danger to real reading. The internet is a kind of great gray ocean, where everything overlaps with everything else. Therefore, it is very difficult for young people to set standards for reading and to develop what might be called a standard of intellectual and aesthetic judgment in human relations. On the internet, there are no guidelines. I can say, despite my dislike of the phrase, that there is no intellectual authority in what is presented. The internet does not seem to be a good or appropriate method of education, as a tool or means of learning, because there is something in its nature that conflicts with what education should be.”

“Yes, today the mobile phone and the internet are the most important and dominant forces among all segments of society. The phone has rightly replaced books, reading, and learning in many ways. It is true that some groups of young people still hold on to the habit of reading, and the book industry continues to generate millions for publishers. The printed book has not lost its unique appeal and charm. But it is also true that the mobile phone has taken over much of human behavior and replaced other forms of connection.

“In restaurants, cafes, airplanes, trains, and waiting areas, there is little room left for real human interaction. Relationships between people, their families, relatives, and friends are not what they used to be. Everyone is absorbed in their own world, satisfied with it, and unwilling to let anyone else intrude.

“Mobile phones and the internet have come to shape people’s private lives and provide knowledge and information. This is frightening, given the sheer volume of content available on websites, especially since there are no clear boundaries or ethical rules governing what appears on their colorful screens.

“I understand how difficult it is to give up or limit mobile phone use, but I urgently appeal to young mothers to keep their children away from mobile phones and iPads at an early age. It deeply pains me to see a child under two years old crying, only for their mother or nanny to quickly hand them a phone to play a song or video to calm them down.

“Young children’s attachment to mobile phones is a disaster. The most alarming aspect is that it creates individuals disconnected from reality and unaware of the natural laws of human life. This is how we end up raising children with whom we cannot communicate because their beliefs and experiences are completely different from ours.”

— Compiled by Simi K. Kutty

Al-Awadhi inaugurates cutting-edge facility

MoH opens 24/7 Emergency Center in Al-Mutlaa

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

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 20: Minister of Health Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi inaugurated the Accident and Emergency Center in Al-Mutlaa Residential City on Thursday.

This is the first integrated emergency center of its kind in the area, and the third after clinics, medical centers and specialized centers.

Al-Awadhi said the new center will serve an area with an expected population of about 400,000 in 28,000 housing units. He revealed the center will operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to meet the growing needs of the population and provide urgent and comprehensive health services.

He stressed that the opening of the center will ease the burden on Jahra Hospital, which is administratively affiliated with it. He added the center will receive patients referred by primary health centers for diagnosis and stabilization before transferring them to the hospital when necessary.

He also indicated that the ministry is currently working on receiving 12 additional health centers from the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW), as well as equipping them, to be ready for the opening.

He added these centers include emergency and ambulance units, as per the plan of the ministry to develop the healthcare system and expand the scope of services offered to the public.

He said the center consists of emergency departments for men, women and children,



KUNA photo

A scene from the Minister of Health’s inauguration of the Accident and Emergency Center in Al-Mutlaa Residential City.

observation and resuscitation departments, ambulance services, surgery and minor operations rooms, specialized clinics for dentistry, ear, nose and throat and ophthalmology, a 24-hour orthopedics department, modern laboratories,

a radiology department, a fully equipped pharmacy, and an advanced CT scan machine to handle various emergency cases, such as traffic accidents, falls, high blood pressure, diabetes, heart conditions and fractures.

Court clears blogger, ex-candidate; murder suspect remains in custody

Prison sentence for ex-MP suspended

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

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 20: The Court of Cassation on Thursday upheld the acquittal of a blogger residing outside Kuwait on charges of spreading false news.

It also upheld the acquittal of a former National Assembly election candidate who expressed his dissatisfaction with the appointment of undersecretaries in ministries on social media.

Meanwhile, the Criminal Court rejected the request to release a Saudi woman accused of beating her maid to death in Sabah Al-Nasser,

hence, the continuation of her detention pending trial.

This court also postponed the hearing of the case of a citizen and others accused of insulting a segment of society, until Oct 1.

Meanwhile, the Court of Appeal Thursday sentenced former MP Bader Al-Dahoum to one year in prison, suspended the execution of the sentence, and set bail at **KD 5,000**.

The court also ordered Al-Dahoum to maintain good conduct for three years to avoid serving the sentence.

Al-Dahoum was convicted of insulting Constitutional Court judges during a seminar.

Also, the Court of First Instance ordered the Public Authority for the Disabled Affairs (PADA) to amend a citizen’s disability classification to “severe disability,” thus overturning a previous classification of medium

disability. The court based its decision on official medical reports proving the citizen’s deteriorating health condition requires permanent care.

Lawyer Ali Matar Al-Wawan, who represented the citizen, emphasized that the ruling is a significant victory for the rights of persons with disabilities and affirms judicial oversight over administrative decisions impacting individuals’ basic rights.

He said the court invalidated the prior classification due to its lack of a sound medical basis and contradiction with the Ministry of Health’s reports.

Al-Wawan added that this ruling sets an important precedent, allowing all persons with disabilities to review their classifications and claim their full rights in cases of administrative errors or negligence.

Municipality to clear illegal farms in Jahra

By Inaas Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 20: Kuwait Municipality teams will carry out a campaign on Sunday to remove illegal farms and tents belonging to livestock owners in Jahra Governorate. These tents cover an area of approximately 87 square kilometers and are located at two sites along Salmi Road.

The Public Relations Department of Kuwait Municipality explained that the campaign will be carried out with the participation of the Violations Removal Department and the Public Hygiene Department, and with the cooperation of the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy, the Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR), and the Ministry

of Interior. It is aimed at clearing the area for a renewable energy production project.

The project includes the construction of a renewable energy complex combining three technologies - photovoltaic (PV), concentrated solar power (CSP), and wind energy (WE), with a total expected capacity exceeding 2 gigawatts. It seeks to enhance clean energy production in Kuwait.

Passenger arrested at T4

Kuwaiti citizen in custody following mother’s death

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

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 20: A Kuwaiti citizen, born in 1988, was arrested in connection with the death of his mother, reports Al-Seyassah daily. According to security sources, the citizen allegedly slit his mother’s throat with a knife at their home in Saad Al-Abdullah. She was taken to the hospital by her daughter but despite medical efforts, she passed away.

The suspect was detained by authorities while accompanying the transfer of his mother to the hospital. He was reportedly in possession of a bloody knife at the time of his arrest. He has been referred to the local police station, and the Public Prosecution has been notified to initiate legal procedures.

Meanwhile, Customs officers at Kuwait International Airport apprehended a passenger found in possession of 219 grams of hashish, reports Al-Anba daily quoting a security source.

The source stated that the arrest occurred at Terminal Four. The suspect was detained during the immigration process. Upon inspection of his luggage, the contraband was discovered. The source added that the suspect was referred to the competent authorities. A case was filed against him for possession of narcotics with the intent to use or trafficking. Legal proceedings are currently underway.



KFF photo

Part of the Inspection campaign in West Abu Fatirah Industrial Area.

KFF enforces fire safety in Abu Fatirah industrial area

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 20: The Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) conducted an inspection campaign West Abu Fatirah Industrial Area recently to ensure compliance with fire safety regulations, reports Al-Rai daily.

The campaign resulted in the temporary closure of two commercial establishments for violating safety standards, in addition to issuing 16 warnings and notices to other establishments for failing to meet the fire safety standards set by KFF.

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MEW rolls out integrated automated access system

Citizens can now track transactions

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 20: The official spokesperson for the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, Eng. Fatima Jawhar Hayat, announced the launch of electronic access requests through the newly introduced “Automated Access” system, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press statement, Eng. Hayat said the ministry recently conducted several courses and workshops for assistant undersecretaries to familiarize them with the system’s operation and how to use it effectively.

She explained that the ministry is the first government entity to implement a fully integrated automated access system. The successful launch was the result of collaborative efforts among several specialized departments - the Monitoring and Control Centers Sector, which laid the foundation for the system, the Information Systems Center Department, which managed authentication through the “My Identity” application, and the Computer Department in the Financial Affairs Sector, which integrated the system with the KNet payment service according to the approved payment mechanism.

The new system enables citizens to

easily track their transactions and inquiries anytime, anywhere. It is part of the ministry’s efforts toward digital transformation and the development of a modern technological infrastructure aimed at improving customer satisfaction and saving time and effort for all parties involved.

Eng. Hayat praised the efforts of all departments that contributed to the launch and implementation of the system.

She added that the ministry plans to expand its range of online services to better meet citizens’ needs using the latest technologies, enhance operational efficiency, and simplify access to the various services it offers to all sectors and consumer groups.

A call for a cleaner Kuwait

Social Affairs to hold month-long nationwide cleanliness campaign

By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 20: The Ministry of Social Affairs, headed by Minister **Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah**, announced the launch of the National Cleanliness Campaign, which will be implemented throughout the country from Nov 4 to Dec 5, with the participation of public institutions and volunteer organizations.

In a press statement, the ministry revealed the campaign will conclude with a national celebration under the slogan, “This is Your Turn.” He said the campaign aims to promote the culture of volunteering, raise envi-



Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah, Ministry of Social Affairs

ronmental awareness, and establish cleanliness as a daily lifestyle, there-

by, highlighting the civilized image of the country while supporting its sustainable environmental development vision.

It confirmed the participation of other ministries and government agencies, including the Ministry of Education and Kuwait Municipality, along with the governorates, civil society organizations, and youth volunteer teams, through the implementation of a daily action plan covering all areas.

It added that the campaign is a model of community partnership and national responsibility, praising the role of youths and volunteers in ensuring the success of the campaign.



Kuwait University's annual gathering to mark the start of the new academic year.

KU holds annual meeting to mark start of academic year

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 20: Kuwait University (KU) held its annual meeting to mark the beginning of the 2025/2026 academic year at the Conference Center in Sabah Al-Salem University City, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The meeting was attended by KU President Professor Dina Al-Mailam, along with senior officials, deans, faculty members, administrative staff, students, and employees from various colleges and departments.

In a statement, the university highlighted its mission to prepare well-informed generations capable of meeting the challenges of a rapidly evolving world.

On this occasion, Professor Al-Mailam expressed her pleasure in hosting the gathering, describing it as a reflection of the strong bonds that unite the university community.

She affirmed that KU is opening new horizons in re-

search and knowledge, aiming to nurture individuals who can innovate and contribute to national development.

Professor Al-Mailam also praised the great efforts of the academic, administrative, and support staff in advancing the university’s educational system in line with the goals of New Kuwait 2035 vision.

She added that the meeting reflects KU’s commitment to making this academic year one of excellence and achievement.

In conclusion, Professor Al-Mailam extended her congratulations to all members of the university, wishing them a successful and distinguished academic year under the leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled.

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Kuwaiti student wins 2nd place in global sustainability competition

Kuwaiti student, Zaina Al-Muwaineh recognized for her research on soil and earthworms

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 20: The Ministry of Education announced that **Zaina Al-Muwaineh**, a twelfth-grade student at Sharifa Al-Awadhi High School in the Capital Educational Zone, has won second place in the Global Sustainability Competition 2025, under the supervision of her biology teacher Jumana Sulaiman Al-Saleh, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Al-Muwaineh earned the award for her scientific research paper titled “The Effect of Soil Acidity and Temperature on Earthworms”, competing against a wide range of student entries from around the world. The competition was held recently in an online format.

The ministry praised this distinguished achievement and extended its heartfelt congratulations to both the student and her teacher for their academic excellence.

It noted that this success reflects Kuwait’s commitment to encouraging student participation in international scientific competitions and programs focused on sustainability, and promoting educational exchange, innovation, environmental awareness, and a culture of scientific research among learners.

Al-Muwaineh’s participation came in response to the ministry’s invitation for schools to take part in international competitions organized by the Korean Ministry of Environment and the Jongno Arts and Culture Foundation, in cooperation with several international organizations.

The Global Student Sustainability Competition, held under the theme “Protect the Earth,” is one of the most prominent international educational initiatives targeting students aged 14 to 22. The competition was launched by the organization “We Art the World” under the title “Urban Environmental Sustainability” with the aim of actively engaging students in tackling environmental issues and providing them with valuable hands-on experiences.

MoCI forms 3 new committees to monitor industrial plots violations

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 20: Minister of Commerce and Industry **Khalifa Al-Ajeel** issued three separate ministerial decisions on Tuesday to form specialized inspection committees, each headed by an advisor. The committees will carry out a comprehensive and integrated survey of plots under the supervision of the Public Authority for Industry (PAI), monitor all violations, and take the necessary actions against them, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a statement to the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), PAI explained that this step aims to rectify irregularities, promote discipline in the industrial and service sectors, support compliant factories, and encourage serious business activities. The goal is to create a modern industrial environment capable of supporting the national economy and enhancing competitiveness.

The committees include representatives from eight government agencies: the Ministry of Interior, Kuwait Municipality, Fatwa and Legislation Department, Kuwait Fire



Al-Ajeel

Force, Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, Ministry of Health, Public Authority for Manpower (PAM), and the Ministry of Justice.

PAI explained that the ministerial decisions stipulate the responsibilities of these committees, which include conducting a comprehensive and integrated survey of all plots under PAI’s supervision, monitoring all types of violations through the relevant authorities, and taking appropriate legal action. The committees are also tasked with preparing detailed reports outlining the violations observed, as well as their recommendations and proposed corrective measures.

The decisions to form the committees grant them broad powers in inspection, oversight, and the detection and verification of violations committed by individuals or suspicious entities. The committees are also authorized to utilize modern technology to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of their tasks. PAI emphasized that this step reflects a strong commitment to promoting transparency and discipline in the management of industrial, service, commercial, and craft plots, adding that it aims to boost investor confidence, uphold the principles of fair competition, and create an industrial environment capable of making a meaningful contribution to the national economy.

News in Brief

Pensions restored for Article 5 Kuwaitis: In response to Cabinet’s instructions, the Public Institution for Social Security has begun depositing retirement pensions into the bank accounts of individuals whose Kuwaiti citizenships were revoked under Article 5 of the “Outstanding Services to Kuwait” Act. This includes retroactive payments covering the full amount of pension dues for the months during which payments were suspended following the revocation, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

KISR named Gulf’s hub for radiation monitoring

Kuwait, IAEA ink three cooperation agreements: KISR chief

VIENNA, Sept 20, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) have hammered out three agreements during the 69th IAEA annual conference which concluded Friday, said the Director General of the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR).

In a statement to KUNA, Dr. Faisal Al-Humaidan said that some of the signed agreements extend for 10 years.

He added that Kuwait will also continue implementing nine existing joint projects and eight other ongoing regional projects with the IAEA.

The three new agreements are: an agreement on the Fourth Technical Cooperation Framework Plan (2026-2035); an agreement for designating KISR as a center for cooperation with the IAEA until 2028 as a regional center for radiation monitoring; and an agreement for re-designating KISR as a center for cooperation with the IAEA until 2028 in the field of combating marine pollution, Al-Humaidan clarified.

He pointed out that the IAEA’s technical cooperation (TC) programme in Asia and the Pacific official have expressed appreciation of KISR’s cooperation at the regional level.

KISR Director confirmed that five new projects have been approved for the years 2026-2027, covering various fields, including studying the impact of coke clumping on reactor performance, im-



Left: State of Kuwait delegation at the 69th IAEA annual conference. Right: Photo during the signing ceremony.

proving food safety, establishing a national neutron analysis laboratory, monitoring groundwater pollutants, and continuing work on a cancer treatment project with a budget of approximately 600,000 euros.

Al-Humaidan added that Kuwait hosts three regional service and cooperation centers with the IAEA in the fields of medicine, marine environment, and radiation protection.

The Environment and Life Sciences Research Center at the KISR was re-designated as a cooperation center for monitoring marine radioactive pollution for the period 2025-2028 and the

Radiation Measurement Laboratory was also designated as a regional resource center within the Arab States in Western Asia group, bringing the total number of Kuwaiti centers cooperation with the IAEA to four, he indicated.

Al-Humaidan emphasized that the IAEA’s national technical cooperation program is a pivotal for building national capacities and ensuring the transfer of peaceful nuclear technologies.

The current national program covers five projects, in addition to four new projects that started in January 2025, encompassing areas such as the production



KUNA photos

capacities of the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

He commended the efforts of Kuwait’s Permanent Representative to the IAEA in Vienna Ambassador Talal Al-Fassam in consolidating cooperation with the agency.

For her part, Dr. Habiba Al-Mani’e, a researcher, stated in a separate statement to KUNA that continued cooperation with the IAEA in the field of nuclear security is in line with the approved National Integrated Nuclear Security Plan, which has proven effective in supporting a comprehensive approach to nuclear security in the country over the past few years.

She underlined that the National Integrated Plan plays a key role in directing national efforts towards building a strong and sustainable nuclear security infrastructure, and strengthening institutional, human, and technical capacities, including the monitoring and securing of radioactive sources, the national response plan, the prevention of illicit trafficking, and border control.

Al-Mani’e noted that the meeting held to review the National Integrated Nuclear Security Plan in the first quarter of 2025 included the participation of all relevant stakeholders, reflecting Kuwait’s commitment to implementing the highest standards of nuclear security and developing advanced procedures to ensure national safety and security.

Ministry of Islamic Affairs allows select employees to benefit from transfers, secondments exceptions

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

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 20: The Ministry of Islamic Affairs has opened the door for exceptions from its decision to suspend internal transfers and secondments in all departments and sectors.

Sources informed the newspaper that a decision was issued allowing certain categories of employees in the Holy Quran Affairs and Islamic Studies Sector and its affiliated centers to benefit from transfers or secondments as per the regulations.

Sources enumerated the three ex-

empted categories as follows:

- Those requesting transfer and secondment to and from Sabah Al-Ahmad, Wafra, Khairan and Mutlaa,
- Transfer and secondment requests submitted by people with special needs and their parents,
- Those relocating from one governorate to another.

Sources said this move aims to address the humanitarian and social needs of employees, while ensuring the availability of necessary personnel in places far from the urban area that require continuous job support.

Sources affirmed that these excep-

tions do not conflict with the efforts of the ministry to complete the link with the integrated system of the Civil Service Commission (CSC), which is underway to improve administrative performance and service efficiency.

Sources stated that the ministry temporarily suspended internal transfers and secondments several months ago, except those occupying supervisory positions. Sources revealed this is part of the plan to develop administrative work and link it electronically with civil service systems to instill discipline and improve institutional performance.



KUNA photo

Kuwait’s Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah speaks during the emergency meeting of the GCC Joint Defense Council in Doha on Thursday.

GCC defense ministers urge action on collective security

‘Israeli attack on Doha treacherous, unacceptable’

DOHA, Sept 20, (KUNA): Kuwait’s Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah conveyed to his counterparts from the other Gulf Cooperation Council member countries the greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

During the emergency meeting of the GCC Joint Defense Council in Doha on Thursday, the Kuwaiti minister expressed His Highness the Amir’s hopes for the Council members to succeed in serving the interests of the GCC peoples and protect the security and stability of the region.

The session was chaired by Qatari Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defense Affairs Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman, also gathered GCC Secretary-General Jassem Al-Budaiwi.

Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Jassem Al-Budaiwi affirmed on Thursday that GCC has operated on the principle that the security of its member states is indivisible.

“Therefore, Qatar’s security is an integral part of our shared Gulf security and any attack against it or any other Gulf state is an attack against our collective security,” Al-Budaiwi said in the extraordinary session of the GCC Joint Defense Council held in the Qatari capital Doha today.

The session was chaired by Qatari Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defense and President of the GCC Joint Defense Council’s current extraordinary session Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman Al Thani and was attended by defense ministers of the GCC member states and their representatives.

The GCC chief said the meeting comes in implementation of the directives of GCC leaders, to hold an urgent meeting of the GCC Joint Defense Council in Doha, preceded by a meeting of the Supreme Military Committee, to assess the defense situation of the GCC states and the sources of threat in light of the Israeli aggression against the sisterly State of Qatar.

He added that the GCC leaders has also directed the GCC Unified Military Command to take the necessary executive measures to activate joint defense mechanisms and the Gulf’s deterrent capabilities.

The Secretary General also described the Israeli airstrike on Doha as

Saad Al-Dousary; may Allah, the Almighty, have mercy on his soul.

He wished the wounded a quick recovery, the statement added.

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He added that the GCC leaders has also directed the GCC Unified Military Command to take the necessary executive measures to activate joint defense mechanisms and the Gulf’s deterrent capabilities.

The Secretary General also described the Israeli airstrike on Doha as

“a treacherous attack and a flagrant violation of Qatar’s sovereignty by the Israeli occupation forces, which targeted residential areas crowded with schools, kindergartens and diplomatic missions, resulting in the deaths of innocent victims.”

He affirmed that the Israeli aggressive act represented a dangerous and unacceptable escalation and a grave violation of the principles of international law and the United Nations Charter.

“This was embodied in the regional and international positions condemning this attack and the statements of solidarity and support for the State of Qatar. This international momentum confirms the prominent and distinguished status enjoyed by the State of Qatar, on the one hand, and, on the other, has made the world aware of the danger of reckless Israeli policies, which now significantly threaten security and stability in the region,” the Secretary General said.

He pointed out that integration and cooperation between GCC armed Gulf forces in confronting the crises and wars has proven to be a model to be emulated regionally and internationally.

“The joint heroic stances have served as a living testament to the unity of the Gulf ranks, sending a clear message to the world that the security of the GCC states is indivisible,” Al-Budaiwi clarified.

He added that the Joint Defense Agreement explicitly states that any attack against any of the GCC states is an attack against all of them.

“Based on this, we look forward today, through your esteemed meeting and your sound directives, to coming up with recommendations that will contribute to further strengthening the defense integration between our armed forces to confront various present and future challenges and threats, and to respond to any aggression targeting any GCC state,” he said.



KUNA photo

Group photo during the emergency meeting of the GCC Joint Defense Council in Doha on Thursday.

Continued from Page 1

Your Highness

Your Highness the Prime Minister, Kuwait’s industrial zones hold many opportunities, but they require support, reduced burdens, and a halt to impulsive decisions that serve neither the government, the investor, nor the citizens.

Many factories and farms contribute to the national economy, yet they need stability, not a series of obstructive decisions. These workers need a helping hand in the event of a slump.

With its prime geographical location, Kuwait has the potential to become an economic paradise if the Cabinet supports business owners and provides them with more incentives.

Some countries grant citizenship to investors, establish free zones, and encourage citizens to invest in all sectors.

When a country interferes with people’s livelihoods and projects, it condemns its economy to decline. Socialist countries have abandoned nationalization after its proven devastating and stifling effects on markets.

Your Excellency the Prime Minister, perhaps the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry should form teams to explain to the Cabinet the obstacles facing the national economy due to poorly considered decisions and their negative impact on both citizens and investors. The consequences of these decisions are akin to a slow death.

His Highness the Amir of Kuwait has launched several initiatives, such as the tree planting campaign, which have greatly delighted Kuwaitis, who also witnessed a noticeable change in the country’s path toward progress.

Therefore, ministers, each in their respective roles, should harness these Amiri directives to promote the national renaissance. Leadership is not achievable without a strong and competitive economy.

Your Highness the Prime Minister, I apologize for sharing these observations. My comments come from a place of deep patriotism and a genuine desire to see Kuwait regain its leadership role, as His Highness the Amir desires.

Finally, Your Highness the Prime Minister, if the government recognizes a mistake in any area, the proper course of action should be to correct it through partnership, not by suspending business operations.

Sabah Al-Salem,

According to the ministry, a number of violation citations were issued during the campaign and legal action was taken against the perpetrators, as part of ongoing efforts to guarantee the safety of road users and enforce the rule of law.

In a related development, an extensive security campaign was conducted in Dajeej in Farwaniya Governorate through the coordinated efforts of Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Kuwait Municipality and Public Authority for Manpower (PAM).

The campaign is in line with the commitment of the Criminal Security Sector to maintain security and arrest violators. Assistant Undersecretary for Public Security Affairs Major General

7 arrested

According to the investigation, authorities received information about the network’s activities through social media applications. A search and investigation team was formed, and a detailed field plan was implemented, which led to the arrest of seven suspects - six Egyptians and one Syrian - who were directly connected to these illegal activities.

The network exploited several companies as a cover for its operations, including general trading and finance companies, restaurants, and clothing and perfume stores.

It was found that money laundering activities were carried out through the illegal transfer of funds both inside and outside Kuwait, with each transaction involving amounts of up to KD 25,000. The total laundered amount exceeded KD 153,837.25 in a short period of time.

Coordination was made with the Financial Investigations Unit, and the funds linked to the seized crimes were frozen. The suspects have been referred to the Public Prosecution for the necessary legal action.

Kuwait enhances

The committee comprises of several institutions and ministries including the Kuwait Financial Intelligence Unit (KwFIU), the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK), the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to name a few.

Last July, the two MoUs were signed by state entities to reinforce cooperation within combating money laundering and terrorism financing.

The MoU signed between the Kuwait customs and Interior Ministry boosted cooperation in combating financial crimes in line with Financial Action Task Force (FATF), a policy-making body that works to generate the necessary political will to bring about national legislative and regulatory reforms in these areas.

The other MoU, signed between

the Capital Markets Authority (CMA) and the Kuwait Financial Intelligence Unit (KwFIU), ensured the exchange of information between the two sides within the field.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry prepared a guide to counter money laundering and terror financing in the gold, valuable minerals and gemstones sector in 2025.

The guide set the parameters for trade in such sector and included measures warning against trading online and recommending traditional means for payment in addition to other preventative steps.

On another level, the CBK approved an updated methodology on penal action and also the Central Bank notified banks to use the KwFIU guideline to report any suspicious transactions.

In addition to internal efforts, Kuwait hosted a workshop to prepare the unified GCC anti-money laundering strategy, which concluded its meetings on September 11.

A report issued by FATF last October said that the State of Kuwait has the required main framework to combat money laundering and terrorism financing through the country’s stable political, institutional, and governmental sectors.

The report affirmed that Kuwait has boosted its legal capabilities and penal action to prevent such crimes from occurring.

Celebrities swap

with the confiscated items.

The source added the officers also arrested another famous artist with a young woman, as they were found to be in an abnormal condition.

The source confirmed that the arrests happened after the Hawally Security Directorate deployed security forces throughout the governorate, ensuring the enforcement of the law against everyone, as “no one is above the law.”

World Cleanup

Al-Huwail praised the combined efforts of various public and private institutions in their cooperation in protecting and preserving the marine environment, reflecting environmental awareness and a belief in the necessity of its sustainability for future generations.

Meanwhile, activists of various ages have rolled up their sleeves to collect waste littered across the Kuwaiti Anjafa beach, marking the World Cleanup Day.

The group, including volunteers, civil servants and personnel from public and private institutions, assembled early today at the beach, collecting the waste in an activity sponsored and attended by Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governor and Hawally Acting Governor Sheikh Badr Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah.

The task, carried out in coordination with “KAFO” association, aimed at promoting the culture of volunteering and preserving beaches’ cleanliness.

Sheikh Badr called on all segments of the society to give a hand in the collective activities to safeguard the country’s environment.

WH threatens further sanctions in escalating fight with Harvard

Trump signs proclamation adding \$100K annual fee for H-1B visa applications

WASHINGTON, Sept 20, (AP): US President Donald Trump has signed a proclamation that will require a \$100,000 annual visa fee for highly-skilled foreign workers and rolled out a \$1 million “gold card” visa as a pathway to US citizenship for wealthy individuals, moves that face near-certain legal challenges amid widespread criticism he is sidestepping Congress.

If the moves survive legal muster, they will deliver staggering price increases. The visa fee for skilled workers would jump from \$215. The fee for investor visas, which are common in many European countries, would climb from \$10,000-\$20,000 a year.

H-1B visas, which require at least a bachelor’s degree, are meant for high-skilled jobs that tech companies find difficult to fill. Critics say the program is a pipeline for overseas workers who are often willing to work for as little as \$60,000 annually, well below the \$100,000-plus salaries typically paid to US technology workers.

Trump on Friday insisted that the tech industry would not oppose the move. Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick said “all big companies” are on board.

Representatives for the biggest tech companies, including Amazon, Apple, Google and Meta, did not immediately respond to messages for comment on Friday. Microsoft declined to comment.

Lutnick said the change will likely result in far fewer H-1B visas than the 85,000 annual cap allows because “it’s just not economic anymore.”

“If you’re going to train people, you’re going to train Americans,” Lutnick said on a conference call with reporters. “If you have a very sophisticated engineer and you want to bring them in ... then you can pay \$100,000 a year for your H-1B visa.”

Trump also announced he will start selling a “gold card” visa with a path to U.S. citizenship for \$1 million after vetting. For companies, it will cost \$2 million to sponsor an employee.

The “Trump Platinum Card” will be available for a \$5 million and allow foreigners to spend up to 270 days in the US without being subject to US taxes on non-US income. Trump announced a \$5 million gold card in February to replace an existing investor visa - this is now the platinum card.

Lutnick said the gold and platinum cards would replace employment-



White House staff secretary Will Scharf speaks as Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick and President Donald Trump listen as Trump signs executive orders in the Oval Office of the White House on Sept 19, in Washington. (AP)

based visas that offer paths to citizenship, including for professors, scientists, artists and athletes.

Critics of H-1Bs visas say they are used to replace American workers applauded the move. U.S. Tech Workers, an advocacy group, called it “the

next best thing” to abolishing the visas altogether.

Doug Rand, a senior official at US Citizenship and Immigration Services during the Biden administration, said the proposed fee increase was “ludicrously lawless.”

“This isn’t real policy - it’s fan service for immigration restrictionists,” Rand said. “Trump gets his headlines, and inflicts a jolt of panic, and doesn’t care whether this survives first contact with the courts.”

Lutnick said the H-1B fees and gold card could be introduced by the president but the platinum card needs congressional approval.

Historically, H-1B visas have been doled out through lottery. This year, Amazon was by far the top recipient of H-1B visas with more than 10,000 awarded, followed by Tata Consultancy, Microsoft, Apple and Google. Geographically, California has the highest number of H-1B workers.

Critics say H-1B spots often go to entry-level jobs, rather than senior positions with unique skill requirements. And while the program isn’t supposed to undercut US wages or displace US workers, critics say companies can pay less by classifying jobs at the lowest skill levels, even if the specific workers hired have more experience.

As a result, many US companies find it cheaper to contract out help desks, programming and other basic tasks to consulting companies such as Wipro, Infosys, HCL Technology

gies and Tata in India and IBM and Cognizant in the US. These consulting companies hire foreign workers, often from India, and contract them out to U.S. employers looking to save money.

Also:

WASHINGTON: The Trump administration escalated its fight with Harvard University on Friday, placing the Ivy League school under extra financial oversight and threatening sanctions if it does not provide additional data on its admissions practices.

Education Secretary Linda McMahon said the department was placing Harvard under “heightened cash monitoring,” forcing the school to use its own money to pay out financial aid for students and then seek reimbursement from the government.

She also threatened “further enforcement action” if the school does not turn over records to prove it no longer is considering race in admissions.

Harvard did not respond to a request for comment.

The moves are part of the administration’s crackdown on Harvard as President Donald Trump seeks to eradicate what he describes as liberal bias at colleges around the country.



Workers clean up the damage caused by mudslides after storms in Yucaipa, Calif., Friday, Sept. 19, 2025. (AP)

Sudden heavy rain in S.California unleashes mudslides

Sudden heavy rain east of Los Angeles unleashed mudslides that plowed into homes and trapped drivers for hours on roadways while floodwaters swept away a vehicle carrying a father who was later rescued and his-2-year-old son who drowned, authorities said Friday.

Authorities rescued 10 people traveling in at least six vehicles

who were stranded on state Route 38 in the area of Jenks Lake, near the San Bernardino National Forest, the fire district said. The route is narrow and winds through towering trees, curving back and forth up the mountainside and linking cities east of Los Angeles with the resort town of Big Bear Lake.

No one was hurt, and no one

is reported missing, Christopher Prater, a public information officer for the San Bernardino County Fire Protection District, said Friday.

Elsewhere in San Bernardino County, a 2-year-old boy drowned after his family’s vehicle was swept off the road by floodwaters Thursday night in Barstow, according to a statement from the city. (AP)

US Senate rejects competing bills to fund govt, increasing risk of shutdown on Oct 1

WASHINGTON, Sept 20, (AP): The Senate rejected competing measures on Friday to fund federal agencies for a few weeks when the new budget year begins on Oct. 1, increasing prospects for a partial government shutdown on that date.

Leaders of the two parties sought to blame the other side for the standoff. Democrats accused Republicans of not negotiating with them to address some of their priorities on health care as part of the funding measure, even though they knew Democratic votes would be needed to get a bill to the president’s desk.

Republicans said Democrats were making demands that would dramatically increase spending and were not germane to the core issue of keeping agencies fully running for a short period of time while negotiations continued on a full-year spending package.

It’s unclear how the two sides will be able to avoid a shutdown. Republicans are planning on what amounts to a do-over vote on their proposal close to the deadline in the hopes that more Democrats will have second thoughts. Democrats are repeating their demand that Republicans sit down with them and work on a compromise.

“The theater must end,” Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer, D-NY, said after the vote. “Let’s sit down and negotiate.”

Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-SD, gave no indication of a change



US Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., speaks during a news conference on Capitol Hill in Washington on Sept 19. (AP)

in course.

“All it takes is a handful of Democrats to join the Republicans in keeping the government open and funded, and to ensure we have a chance to get the appropriations process completed in the way it was intended,” Thune said.

The Senate action came after the House earlier in the day passed the Republican-led funding bill. The measure would extend government funding generally at current levels for seven weeks. The bill would also add

about \$88 million in security funding for lawmakers and members of the Supreme Court and executive branch in the wake of the assassination of conservative activist Charlie Kirk.

The vote was 217-212. Rep Jared Golden of Maine was the lone Democratic member to support the bill. Rep. Marie Gluesenkamp Perez, D-Wash., also said she tried to vote for the bill but was not recognized by the presiding officer. She was listed officially as not voting.

Cyberattack disrupts check-in systems at major European airports – officials

BRUSSELS, Sept 20, (AP): A cyberattack targeting check-in and boarding systems has disrupted air traffic and caused delays at several of Europe’s major airports, officials said Saturday.

Brussels airport reported that the attack means that only manual check-in and boarding was possible there, and the incident was having a “large impact” on flight schedules.

“There was a cyberattack on Friday night 19 September against the service provider for the check-in and boarding systems affecting several European airports including Brussels Airport,” it said in a statement.

Authorities at Berlin’s Brandenburg Airport said a service provider for passenger handling systems was attacked on Friday evening, prompting airport operators to cut off connections to the systems.

London Heathrow Airport, Europe’s busiest, said “a technical issue” affected a service provider for check-in and boarding systems.

“Collins Aerospace, which provides check-in and boarding systems for several airlines across multiple airports globally, is experiencing a technical issue that may cause delays for departing passen-



An airport employee points at a departure board after a cyber attack caused delays at Brussels International Airport in Zaventem, Belgium on Sept 20. (AP)

gers,” Heathrow said in a statement.

The airports advised travelers to check their flight status and apologized for any inconvenience.

Formed in 2018, Collins is a U.S. aviation and defense technology company and a subsidiary of RTX Corp., which was formerly Raytheon Technologies.

Collins provides the technol-

ogy that allows passengers to check themselves in, print boarding passes and bag tags, and dispatch their own luggage, all from a kiosk.

Collins said it was “aware of a cyber-related disruption” to its MUSE (Multi-User System Environment) software at “select airports” but that manual check-in operations could still be used.

Russia launches large-scale attack on Ukraine, killing 3 and wounding dozens

KYIV, Ukraine, Sept 20, (AP): Russia launched a large-scale missile and drone attack targeting regions across Ukraine early Saturday, killing at least three people and wounding dozens more, Ukrainian officials said.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said attacks took place across nine regions, including Dnipropetrovsk, Mykolaiv, Chernihiv, Zaporizhzhia, Poltava, Kyiv, Odesa, Sumy and Kharkiv.

“The enemy’s target was our infrastructure, residential areas and civilian enterprises,” he said, adding that a missile equipped with cluster munitions struck a multi-story building in the city of Dnipro.

“Each such strike is not a military necessity but a deliberate strategy by Russia to intimidate civilians and destroy our infrastructure,” he said in a statement on his official Telegram.

Zelenskyy said he expected to meet US President Donald Trump on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly next week. He also said the first ladies of Ukraine and the United States would likely hold separate talks focused on humanitarian issues involving children.

His comments, which he made on



In this photo provided by the Ukrainian Emergency Services on Sept 20, a rescue worker puts out a fire of a barn destroyed by a Russian strike in Odesa region, Ukraine. (AP)

Friday, were embargoed until Saturday morning.

At least 30 people were wounded in the attack in Ukraine’s central Dnipropetrovsk region, local governor Serhiy Lysak said. Several high-rise buildings and homes were damaged in the east-

ern city of Dnipro.

In the Kyiv region, local authorities said there were strikes in the areas of Bucha, Boryspil and Obukhiv. A home and cars were damaged. In the western region of Lviv, Gov. Maxim Kozitsky said two cruise missiles were shot down.

Hungary to designate antifa terrorist organization

BUDAPEST, Hungary, Sept 20, (AP): Hungary will replicate a policy announced by US President Donald Trump and designate antifa a terrorist organization, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán said on Friday.

Antifa, short for “anti-fascist,” is an umbrella term for loosely affiliated far-left-activists and groups that resist fascism, fascists and neo-Nazis, especially at demonstrations. It resembles more an ideology than an organization, though some have embraced militant tactics.

Orbán, a right-wing populist and strong Trump ally, said in comments to state radio on Friday that he was “pleased” by Trump’s announcement that he plans to designate antifa as a “major terrorist organization” in the United States.

“Antifa is indeed a terrorist organization,” Orbán said. “In Hungary, too, the time has come for us to classify organizations such as antifa as terrorist organizations, following the American model.” It was unclear what prompted Orbán’s decision to make the move. Antifascist groups rarely engage in political actions in Hungary, where Orbán and his party have held near-total power for more than 15 years.

Yet in his statements Friday, Orbán referenced a 2023 incident in which antifascist activists engaged in assaults against several suspected participants in an annual far-right event in Budapest.

One of the alleged assailants, Italian antifascist activist Ilaria Salis, was jailed in Hungary for over a year following the assaults, resulting in a diplomatic dispute between Rome and Budapest over her treatment in detention.



US President Donald Trump meets with Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán in the Oval Office of the White House on May 13, 2019, in Washington. (AP)

Salis was released to house arrest in May 2024 before winning a seat in the European Parliament, as a result of which she gained legal immunity. Hungary continues to demand that she be returned to face trial, where prosecutors have sought an 11-year sentence.

Orbán on Friday bemoaned Salis’ release, saying antifa had “come to Hungary and beaten peaceful people in the street, some were beaten half to death, and then they became European members of parliament and from there lecture Hungary on the rule of law.”

Serbia stages large military parade to showcase tanks and missile systems

BELGRADE, Serbia, Sept 20, (AP): Serbia staged a large-scale military parade in the capital Belgrade, showcasing tanks, missile systems and fighter jets in what officials described as the country’s biggest display of army strength in its history.

President Aleksandar Vucic reviewed the parade, which included about 10,000 troops, saying the show of force underscored Serbia’s ability to defend its independence and sovereignty and act as a deterrent against any foreign aggressor. Serbia is mostly surrounded by NATO-member states.

Columns of troops marched through the New Belgrade district of the capital as crowds waved national flags, while aircraft roared overhead.

The event featured both domestically produced weapons as well as rocket launchers from Israel, drones purchased from the United Arab Emirates as well as tanks supplied by Russia and anti-aircraft systems from China, reflecting Belgrade’s close ties with Moscow and Beijing despite its declared goal of joining the European Union.

What caught most of the attention of military experts was the Israeli PULS system, a versatile rocket artillery platform capable of launching a range of munitions with varying ranges and payloads. Its range is up to 300 kilometers (185 miles), meaning it can reach most of the Balkan capitals.

Another surprise appearance was a couple of the French



Serbian Army soldiers perform during a military parade in Belgrade, Serbia on Sept 20. (AP)

air force’s Rafale fighter jets. Serbia has ordered 12 such multi-purpose aircraft that are due for delivery in the coming years.

Critics said the parade was designed less to showcase the strength of the military than to bolster Vucic’s populist rule that has been challenged by student-led protests and growing international scrutiny of his increasingly authoritarian grip on power.

Kuwaiti oil price drops to \$71.53 pb

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 20, (KUNA): Kuwait crude oil moved down by USD 1.13 to reach USD 71.53 per barrel on Friday compared with USD 72.66 pb the day before, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said on Saturday. Brent futures lost 76 cents dropping to USD 66.68 pb and the West Texas Intermediate crude fell by 89 cents, settling at USD 62.68 pb.

Business

Summit highlights role of AI, cloud, and data sovereignty in public sector transformation

ZainTECH, Microsoft host ‘AI-Ready Kuwait’ summit to accelerate Vision 2035



Al-Marzouq with leaders from ZainTECH, Microsoft, and government entities.



Microsoft Kuwait Country Manager Alaeddine Karim speaking.

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 20: ZainTECH, the integrated digital solutions provider of Zain Group, and Microsoft co-hosted the ‘AI-Ready Kuwait’ event, an exclusive gathering of senior government policy-makers and digital transformation decision makers. Held 17 September at the Waldorf Astoria, Kuwait the event focused on accelerating Kuwait’s national AI agenda through secure, scalable, and sovereign cloud technologies, aligned closely with Kuwait Vision 2035. Following successful editions in Riyadh, Dubai, and Amman, the Kuwait summit highlighted how AI and Microsoft Cloud technologies, deployed locally through ZainTECH’s industry expertise, are enabling governments to modernize operations, enhance citizen services, and meet national digital policy objectives.



Hamad Al-Marzouq speaking at the event.



The forum was attended by senior leaders from the government sector.

comes with AI. AI leadership for us means building capabilities and partnerships that scale across ministries and sectors. When policy, platforms, talent, and security are aligned, AI becomes a national capability that compounds over time and delivers what matters: faster public services, safer infrastructure, better health and education, stronger cyber resilience, and higher private sector productivity.” He added: “Through ZainTECH we integrate trusted connectivity with cloud, cybersecurity, data,

- Addressing mission critical challenges, event focused on expanding national AI capabilities and turning digital ambition into action
- Spotlighting government use cases to modernize operations and enhance citizen services through cloud solutions ahead of the Kuwait Azure Region launch
- Summit attended by policymakers and digital transformation decision makers

and AI into one coherent stack, and among them Microsoft, to bring we partner with global leaders, chief best-in-class platforms to Kuwait.

We will invest in infrastructure, bring the best technology to Kuwait, and grow local talent so AI becomes a trusted part of everyday life and a driver of sustainable growth.” Andrew Hanna, CEO of ZainTECH, said: “AI-Ready Kuwait was about execution - turning digital ambition into action. Kuwait’s public sector is ready to scale proven solutions, that address mission critical challenges. Together with Microsoft, we’re delivering secure, trusted, future-ready technologies that support Kuwait’s national goals

and meet the moment, build resilience, and serve citizens better - today.” Attendees engaged with a portfolio of solutions already landing in the market, including secure Azure Express Route connectivity, resilient cloud infrastructure for service continuity, OpenAI copilots for smarter public engagement, and sector-specific AI tools built for areas such as healthcare, education, and emergency services. These capabilities are underpinned by ZainTECH’s local delivery, compliance knowledge, and end-to-end cloud and AI expertise. Alaeddine Karim, Country Manager, Microsoft Kuwait, added: “With decisive steps taken by the Kuwaiti Government to position the nation as a regional AI hub, Microsoft’s collaboration with ZainTech reflects the private sector’s alignment with this national agenda. It’s a powerful example of how AI is transforming business, government, and daily life—accelerating Kuwait’s digital future.” ‘AI-Ready Kuwait’ reinforced both companies’ commitment to enabling sustainable government transformation through real-world innovation, responsible AI and secure digital infrastructure. With more collaborations planned across the region, the event marked a pivotal step in advancing Kuwait’s vision; delivering next-generation infrastructure, smarter services, and resilient ecosystems for the public sector.

Exports to Belgium rise 15%

Kuwait partakes in Arab-Belgian Economic Forum

BRUSSELS, Sept 20, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait participated in the 12th edition of the Arab-Belgian Economic Forum, held in Brussels under the title “Doing Business in Arab Countries.” Kuwait’s Ambassador to Belgium Nawaf Al-Enezi stressed on Friday the importance of Kuwait’s participation in the forum, which emerged from an initiative by the General Assembly of Observers and the Arab-Belgian-Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce. In a statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), Ambassador Al-Enezi explained that the forum had allocated a special session to discuss trade opportunities in the State of Kuwait within the framework of Kuwait Vision 2035. The ambassador, who heads Kuwait’s missions to the European Union and NATO, said that despite its small geographical area, Kuwait is a leading country in investment and trade worldwide, pointing to the deep ties that bind Kuwait to Belgium and the European Union. He added that the recent economic visit of the Belgian delegation to Kuwait, which included more than 40 companies and 60 businessmen, reflected growing interest in investment opportunities in the country, particularly in the areas of infrastructure, renewable energy, technology, and medical services. The ambassador also noted that Kuwait is witnessing a comprehensive digital transformation through electronic platforms and digital services, and that the Foreign Direct Investment Law allows foreign investors 100 percent ownership of their projects, enhancing the country’s competitive investment environment. Al-Anzi reviewed a number of major national projects within the framework of the New Kuwait Vision 2035, including the free zone in northern Kuwait, the new international airport, and Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port as a strategic hub for maritime trade. He also reviewed the Gulf Railway Project, the Air Cargo City, and the Shegaya Renewable Energy Project, which aims to produce 15 percent of Kuwait’s energy consumption from clean sources, in addition to the National Digital Transformation Initiative. He stressed that the European Union

is Kuwait’s largest trading partner, with trade volume reaching approximately USD 15.2 billion in 2024. He noted that Belgium attracts significant Kuwaiti investments and serves as a hub for technology and innovation. He also explained that Kuwaiti exports to Belgium increased by 15 percent in the first five months of 2025, reaching USD 437 million. Ambassador Al-Enezi stressed Kuwait’s support for a free trade agreement between the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the European Union, asserting that such an agreement would open new horizons for trade and investment cooperation and support innovation and economic growth for both parties. The forum featured a number of prominent contributions from international companies and institutions, including Kuwait Petroleum International, which addressed topics of sustainability and the low-carbon economy, followed by an interactive dialogue session with the speakers.

Also: **BRUSSELS:** Kuwait Ambassador to the Kingdom of Belgium and Head of Mission to EU and NATO Nawaf Al-Enezi said the exports of his country to Belgium went up by 10 percent to USD 437 million in the first five months of 2025. The State of Kuwait, though small in geographical size, is one of the leading countries in terms of investment and trade around the globe, he told KUNA on Friday. Kuwait’s GDP topped USD 160 billion, he said, attributing the prosperity and economic growth of Kuwait to firm partnerships with global corporations and major economies. Ambassador Al-Enezi made the comments after taking part in the 12th edition of the seminar of the Arab-Belgian-Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce (ABLCC). The annual event, themed this year “Doing Business with Arab Countries,” was held on September 17 in partnership between the ABLCC and SGS at the latter’s premises in Noorderlaan city, Antwerp Province, north Belgium. It focused on the business environments of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

Held at the Kuwait International Fairgrounds from Sept 22 to 27

Gulf Bank showcases exclusive offers and flexible financing at Auto World Exhibition

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 20: As part of its continued commitment to staying close to its customers, Gulf Bank has announced its participation in the “Auto World” Exhibition, one of Kuwait’s largest automotive events, taking place from September 22 to 27 at the Kuwait International Fairgrounds. The exhibition will bring together leading car dealerships, companies, and financial institutions under one roof. Through its strong presence at the exhibition, Gulf Bank reaffirms its dedication to providing best-in-class banking services and flexible financing solutions designed to meet customers’ diverse financial needs. Whether citizens or residents, customers will benefit from simple, accessible, and tailored financing options in collaboration with dealerships across Kuwait. In partnership with 10 of the country’s top car dealerships, Gulf Bank is offering car loans with 0% interest, financing amounts of up to KD 25,000, and repayment periods extending up to five years. Additionally, exclusive discounts of up to KD 500 will be available at other participating dealerships, along with special promotions valid throughout the exhibition days.



Gulf Bank’s Auto World Exhibition campaign.

- 0% interest car loans in partnership with 10 leading car dealerships, including discounts of up to KD 500.
- Car financing of up to KD 25,000 with flexible repayment terms of up to 5 years, along with exclusive discounts available during the exhibition.

Gulf Bank’s dedicated booth at the exhibition ensure a seamless customer journey, starting with financial consultation, offering both privacy and speed of service. The bank’s professional teams will be on-site to guide visitors in selecting financing packages that align with their personal financial requirements, ensuring convenience and flexibility at every stage. Beyond the exhibition, Gulf Bank

maintains a strong presence across Kuwait through permanent car finance stations in key regions including Al-Rai, Shuwaikh, Ahmadi, Fahheel, Qurain Markets, and Jahra. Operating during both morning and evening hours, these stations—alongside the bank’s website, mobile application, and extensive branch network—allow customers to easily access services and make informed decisions about their financing needs. Aligned with its vision to become Kuwait’s leading bank, Gulf Bank continues to focus on providing exceptional customer service, nurturing an inclusive workplace for its employees, and advancing its long-term community commitments. With a wide branch network and innovative digital platforms, the bank offers customers the freedom to choose how and where they complete their transactions—ensuring a fast, seamless, and user-friendly experience. Supporting the national objectives of Kuwait Vision 2035 – “New Kuwait”, Gulf Bank remains committed to driving impact across environmental, social, and governance (ESG) dimensions through targeted sustainability initiatives that extend beyond the banking sector and into the community.

EU-GCC Forum seen as strategic platform for trade & investment

Kuwait prepares to host 9th EU-GCC Business Forum

MADRID, Sept 20, (KUNA): Kuwait’s Ambassador to Portugal Hamad Al-Hazeem met with senior Portuguese business figures to review preparations for Kuwait’s hosting of the 9th EU-GCC Business Forum, scheduled for November. In a statement to KUNA on Friday, Ambassador Al-Hazeem highlighted the significance of the forum during talks with Portuguese Business Confederation (CIP) President Armindo Monteiro, attended by the confederation’s Director General, Rafael Alves Rocha, at the CIP headquarters in Lisbon. The Ambassador noted that the Kuwaiti Embassy in Lisbon had sent a formal invitation encouraging the CIP to participate in the event, stressing the importance of the forum as a major economic platform.

He underlined that the forum represents a vital opportunity to strengthen commercial cooperation between the GCC and the EU, while also emphasizing the importance of deepening bilateral economic and trade relations between Kuwait and Portugal. He pointed out that Kuwaiti private and commercial sectors are gaining a stronger presence in the Portuguese market, reflecting Kuwait’s interest in expanding investment partnerships. On his part, Monteiro welcomed Kuwait’s initiative to host the forum, describing it as a strategic platform for opening broader horizons of economic and trade cooperation between the GCC and the EU, stressing that boosting economic relations between Portugal and Kuwait is essential for cre-

ating new opportunities for Portuguese companies and enhancing bilateral cooperation to serve the interests of both nations. Monteiro noted that the CIP, established in 1974 to promote a market economy and private initiatives, is Portugal’s largest and most influential business organization. Representing over 150,000 companies and 1.8 million workers-equivalent to 71 percent of Portugal’s GDP-the confederation operates across multiple sectors nationwide. The EU-GCC Business Forum serves as a strategic platform to exchange perspectives, explore trade and investment partnerships, and highlight opportunities for non-oil growth in Gulf states in collaboration with European partners.

In the Banker’s Top 1000 Global Banks Rankings 2025

KFH ranks 1st for the Best Performing Bank in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 20: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has ranked 1st for Best Performing Bank in Kuwait, for The Banker’s Top 1000 Global Banks Rankings 2025.

This prestigious ranking underscores KFH’s exceptional financial performance, highlighting the unwavering commitment to excellence, innovation, and customer satisfaction.

The Banker magazine has developed a model which scores and ranks banks in 8 key performance categories and assigns an overall best performing bank score and ranking.

The performance categories and indicators include growth, profitability, operational efficiency, impairment charges to total operating income, return on risk, liquidity, soundness - capital adequacy ratio, and leverage.

Commenting on this ranking, Group Chief Executive Officer at KFH, Khaled Yousef AlShamlan stated: “It is with great pleasure that KFH received the highest ranking among banks in Kuwait for best performance.

“We will continue our endeavors to receive high rankings and

prestigious awards from prominent international institutions, which validate KFH’s exceptional performance and leadership and reflect the trust and confidence of our shareholders and customers in our institution.”

AlShamlan pointed out that KFH is continuing its efforts towards raising the pace of operational performance as well as moving forward on digital transformation and innovation, while putting forth extra efforts in serving customers and leading the Islamic financial services industry at the level of the Group that has a presence in 10 countries worldwide, including Kuwait, Bahrain, Egypt, Turkey, the UK, and Germany, supported by an extensive network of over 600 branches.

Financial performance in H1- 2025

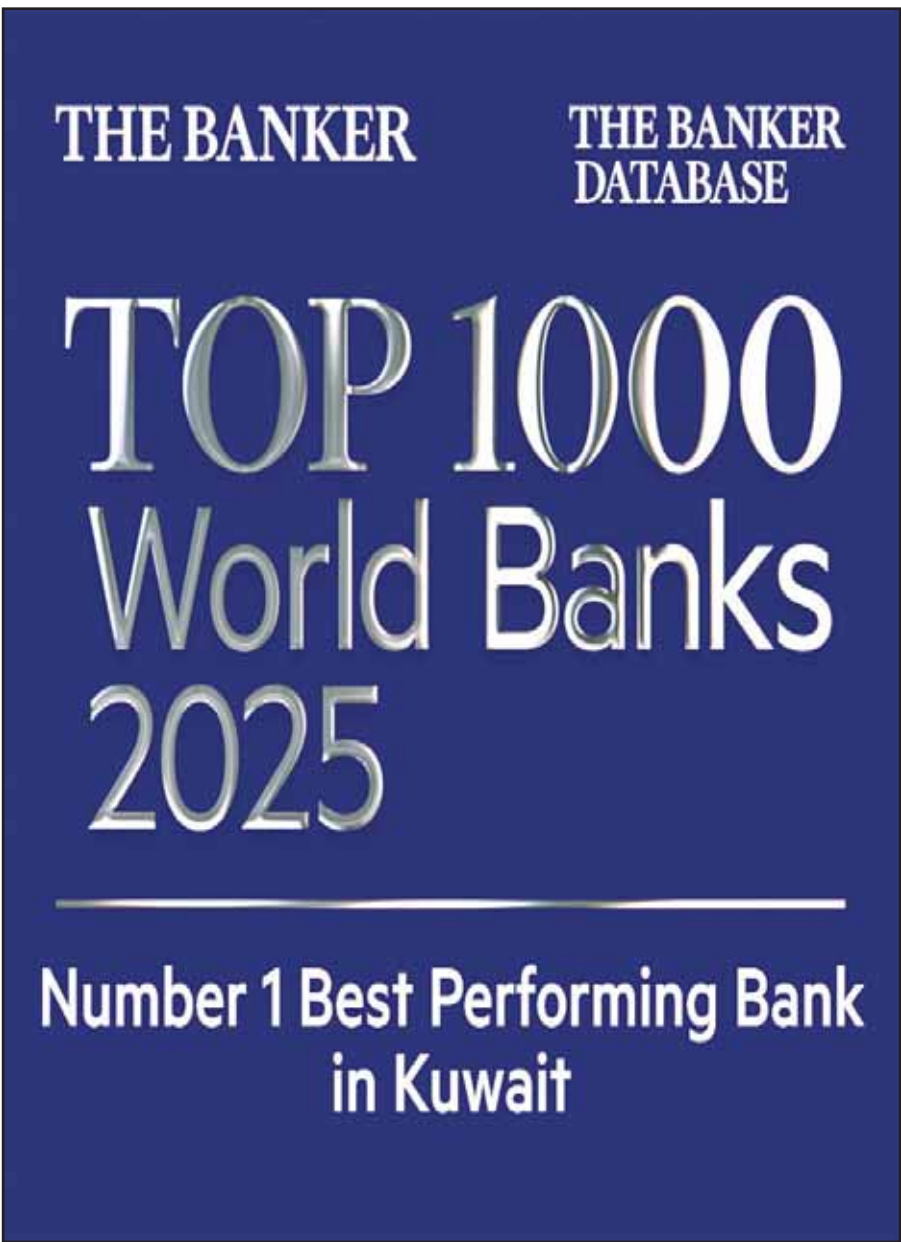
Speaking about the latest financial results, AlShamlan indicated that KFH topped the Kuwaiti banking sector in terms of net profits for H1-2025 that approximated KD 342.1 million.

KFH’s net financing income reached KD 607.3 million; an increase of 8.7% compared to the same period last year.



Khaled AlShamlan

■ **AlShamlan:** Ranking validates KFH’s exceptional performance and leadership
KFH accelerates operational performance and digital transformation



reached KD 20.4 billion, an increase of 7.1 % compared to the end of last year.

The Banker is an English-language international financial magazine owned by Financial Times Ltd and published in 1926.

It is an authoritative source of global financial analysis and data-driven intelligence.

The Banker’s Top 1000 World Banks ranking has been setting the industry benchmark since 1970, providing comprehensive intelligence about the health and wealth of the banking sector.

Qatar strike and Russia-Ukraine conflict drive oil prices up by 1.7%

Crude oil prices rise below \$70 amid geopolitical tensions & OPEC+ output hike

By KAMCO Invest

Crude oil prices recovered from the losses during the first week of the month but traded below the USD 70/b levels despite escalating geopolitical issues. Recent gains were led by smaller-than-expected increase announced by the OPEC+ for October-2025, the strike on Qatar, a renewed push to impose new sanctions on countries buying crude oil from Russia as well as the increase in aggression in the Russia/Ukraine conflict. There are also reports that show a decline in investments by energy companies in the US along with layoffs in the oil sector as the current oil prices makes it unprofitable for oil companies. However, the gains were capped by forecasts of weaker demand in the US after the release of recent economic data including higher than expected inflation, continued oversupply in the oil market led by countries outside the OPEC+ and higher US output and doubts on recovery in oil demand in China.

The recently release CPI in the US showed higher than expected monthly growth of 0.4% for August-2025. The data on the US labor market also sounded alarm on the economy with job growth almost flat during August-2025. The revised numbers for the 12 months until March-2025 also indicated weak trends. In addition, the weekly crude oil inventory report from the EIA showed and increase for the second consecutive week adding 3.9 million barrels during the week ended 5-September-2025. On the demand side, the EIA warned of a fall in gasoline demand this year followed by a marginal increase in demand next year to 8.93 mb/d supported by lower fuel prices. The agency also forecasted an increase in inventory build due to oversupply, especially after the OPEC+ announced increase in output.

On the geopolitical front, the strike on Qatar risked the ongoing efforts for a deal over Gaza, leading to a 1.7% increase in crude oil prices. On the other hand, the recent attacks on Russian energy infrastructure as well as earlier attacks from Ukrainian government offices as once again flared up the war between the two countries. Efforts from the US to force a deal between the two countries resulted in talks of renewed restrictions on Russian crude oil supply with the US and Europe imposing new tariffs on countries buying oil from Russia, especially India and China. The tariffs would be expected to further restrict the exports of Russian crude oil, although past efforts only had a minimal impact. The decision by Iraq and Saudi Arabia to stop supplying crude oil to one of Russia’s oil refineries in India also came as a result of the sanctions.

On the supply side, US oil output showed a steep increase last month adding 0.2 mb/d to reach 13.4 mb/d by the end of the month. The trend continued this month with output reaching 13.5 mb/d in the first week. OPEC+ also increased output last month after implementing the announced production hikes. Bloomberg data showed an increase of 0.4 mb/d last month by OPEC with total output reaching 28.55 mb/d, the highest since June-2023.

Oil Prices

The trend in crude oil prices remained volatile during September-2025 but oil traded below the USD 70/b level since the start of the month despite escalating geopolitical issues in the region as well as globally. The gains at the start of the month came after the announcement of sanctions on Iran and the ongoing threat of sanctions on Russia from the US and Europe. In addition, there were earlier speculations that OPEC+ would keep the output steady during October-2025 and would not implement a hike resulting in elevated prices. However, prices declined for three consecutive days towards the end of the first week after reports suggested that OPEC+ would continue to implement steeper hikes in output causing Brent to trade around the USD 65/b mark. Nevertheless, the decision of



a smaller-than-expected hike from OPEC+ led to gain in prices after the announcement. That said, warnings of increasing oil market glut in the coming months mainly due to the unwinding of OPEC+ cuts led to downward pressure on crude oil prices. This was also reflected in IEA’s latest monthly report that warned of record surplus next year, significantly boosting its oil supply forecast from last month.

In terms of monthly price trend, average crude oil prices declined across the board during August-2025. Average spot Brent crude oil price declined by 3.8% to reach USD 68.2/b during August-2025 as compared to an average of USD 71.0/b during July-2025. On the other hand, average OPEC reference basket price witnessed a relatively smaller decline of 1.7% to reach USD 69.7/b vs. USD 71.0/b last month while Kuwait export grade crude prices witnessed a decline of 1.0% to average at USD 70.7/b during August-2025. Meanwhile, the consensus estimate for Brent crude showed mixed revisions for the next six quarters. The median consensus forecast for brent crude grade for Q3-2025 and Q4-2025 were steady at USD 67/b and USD 64/b, respectively, according to data from Bloomberg. However, Q1-2026 is expected to see lower prices with the forecast now showing prices reaching USD 62/b from USD 63.5/b last month. The EIA, in its latest short term energy outlook, slightly raised the price forecast for Brent crude to USD 68/b for 2025 from around USD 67/b in its previous forecast.

World Oil Demand

Global oil demand growth forecast for 2025 was kept unchanged in the latest monthly report from OPEC at a growth of 1.3 mb/d with demand expected to reach 105.1 mb/d during the year. However, there were changes at the regional level that included an upward revision to demand forecast for the OECD region, albeit marginally by 0.02 mb/d, that was offset by an equivalent downward revision to forecast for the non-OECD region. The upward revision to OECD growth mainly included estimates for increase in demand in the Americas that was partially offset by lowered forecasts for Europe and OECD Asia Pacific regions. Revisions for the non-OECD were mainly made to the

Other Asia region that fully offset the upward adjustments to demand for the OECD region.

Meanwhile, the IEA, in its monthly report, raised its demand forecast for the year due to lower oil prices boosting consumption. According to the agency, oil demand is expected to increase by 740 tb/d this year, an upward revision of 60 tb/d from its previous forecast. The increase reflects steady deliveries in advanced economies as against comparatively subdued consumption in emerging economies. As per the IEA, oil demand growth in the OECD came in at 80 tb/d, which was higher than-expected supported by lower oil prices.

However, the forecast for 2H-2025 shows a contraction in demand resulting in a broadly flat y-o-y demand for the full year. The demand growth was also reflected in record refinery activity with global crude runs approaching an all time high level of 85.1 mb/d in August-2025 that utilized the excess supply of crude oil.

For 2026, global oil demand growth forecast was also kept unchanged by the OPEC after an upward adjustment in its previous month’s forecast. As per the OPEC report, demand growth for 2026 is expected to come in at 1.4 mb/d with total demand expected to reach 106.5 mb/d during the year. That said, there were revisions at the regional level with upward adjustments to forecast for the non-OECD region, mainly in Latin America, that was fully offset by downward revision to demand growth forecast for the OECD region.

World Oil Supply

World oil supply witnessed an increase during August-2025 as compared to the previous month reflecting the ongoing unwinding of output cuts announced by the OPEC+ countries. Total world oil supply reached a record level during the month and stood at 106.9 mb/d as compared to 105.6 mb/d during July-2025, according to data from the IEA. The increase also reflected an increase in non-OPEC+ supply that hovered at near record levels during the month. As per the IEA, world oil production is expected to increase by 2.7 mb/d this year to reach 105.8 mb/d and further increase by 2.1 mb/d next year to reach 107.9 mb/d in 2026. As per the report, non-OPEC+ coun-

tries are expected to account for almost half of the total increase during 2025 and 2026 at 1.4 mb/d and more than 1 mb/d, respectively.

Meanwhile, the OPEC kept its forecast for non-DoC liquids supply growth unchanged for 2025 in its latest monthly report. The supply from the group is expected to grow by 0.81 mb/d this year and average at 54.01 mb/d. There were revisions in quarterly data downward revision to demand forecast for Q1-2025 and Q4-2025 for the OECD regions that were largely offset by positive upward revision to forecast for Q2-2025, especially for the US market, as well as Q3-2025 for demand forecast was lowered for the first three quarters of the year that was almost offset by an upward revision to forecast for Q4-2025.

For 2026, non-DoC liquids supply growth forecast was also kept unchanged by the OPEC at 0.63 mb/d with average supply expected to come in at 54.64 mb/d during the year. At the regional level, however, supply forecast for the OECD region was lowered that was fully offset by an upward revision to supply forecast for the non-OECD countries outside of the DoC producer group.

OPEC Oil Production & Spare Capacity

OPEC crude oil production increased for the sixth consecutive month during August-2025 led by the unwinding of production cuts announced by the OPEC+ group. Data from OPEC secondary sources showed average OPEC production reaching 27.9 mb/d during August-2025, the highest in 26 months, after reporting an increase of 478 tb/d during the month. The increase was once again led by higher production mainly in Saudi Arabia, Iraq, UAE and Kuwait that accounted for a combined increase of 507 tb/d in August-2025 as compared to the previous month. Output in Venezuela also showed a marginal monthly increase during August-2025.

These increases were partially offset by a decline in output mainly in Iran coupled with marginal declines in the rest of the OPEC group. On the other hand, data from Bloomberg showed a slightly smaller increase of 0.4 mb/d during August-2025 to reach 28.55 mb/d during the month. Data from Bloomberg showed an increase in output mainly in Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Nigeria, Iran and Kuwait that was partially offset by lower m-o-m output from the UAE. Based on the data for July-2025, the spare capacity for OPEC producers stood at 5.15 mb/d or 15.3% of the total production capacity as per Bloomberg estimates.

Output from the broader DoC producers group showed a production growth of 509 tb/d to reach an average of 42.4 mb/d during August-2025. The growth reflected higher output from both OPEC and non-OPEC DoC countries. In the latter group of countries, Russia showed a sharp increase of 50 tb/d during month reaching average output of 9.2 mb/d, despite talks of sanctions. This increase was partially offset by a decline in production reported by Kazakhstan by 23 tb/d with average output reaching 1.8 mb/d during August-2025.

Meanwhile, defying expectations from oil watchers, the OPEC+ once again decided to increase production and unwind the 1.65 mb/d of halted crude oil production a year in advance hoping that the increase in volume would offset the impact of lower prices. The group decided to increase output by 137 tb/d starting October-2025 after much larger hikes in until September-2025. The group said that the remainder of unwinding would depend on market conditions and they could pause or even reverse hikes if needed. As per Bloomberg, the full reversal is expected to be gradually added in monthly stages over the next twelve months until September-2026.

Empowering customers with greater control and flexibility in managing their finances

NBK expands digital services with latest app updates

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 20: Building on its commitment to delivering cutting-edge, customer-focused digital solutions, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) has announced significant enhancements to its NBK Mobile Banking App.

The updates feature key additions, complemented by further enhancements designed to simplify customers' lives while empowering them with greater control and flexibility over their finances anytime, anywhere.

Fixed Saving Plan Account Opening

Eligible customers can now open a Fixed Savings Account seamlessly through the NBK Mobile Banking App, an option previously available only at branches. This account enables saving through regular monthly installments for up to 15 years via a standing payment order from the customer's primary NBK account. It offers competitive interest rates and guaranteed returns of up to 4%, making it a secure and rewarding long-term savings solution.

Customers can choose a savings plan tenure ranging from 5 to



Mohammad Al-Dakhil

15 years, with a minimum savings amount of KD 5,000 and a maximum of KD 50,000. The account offers a guaranteed interest rate, agreed upon at the time of opening, and fixed for the entire savings period. Interest is calculated daily on the end-of-day balance and capitalized monthly.

Simplified Standing Orders

Customers can establish standing orders in few taps with faster processing between their NBK Accounts or other local banks and getting instant final approval.

Al-Dakhil: We remain dedicated to delivering a seamless, smart, and efficient digital banking experience that evolves in step with our customers' needs

- Convenient electronic setup of fixed savings accounts, previously available only through branches
- Simplified the establishments of Standing Orders created in few taps with faster processing & approvals



Additional Enhancements

The latest updates to NBK Mobile Banking App have introduced enhancements to WAMD, providing greater flexibility by extending the refund period for transferred funds from one day to seven days. This feature allows customers to list the reason for refunding this payment. The process is quick,easy, and fully secure through NBK Mobile Banking App.

In addition, the app introduces an enhanced username and pass-

word recovery through Kuwait Mobile ID app, giving a faster and more convenient way to regain access whenever needed, ensuring seamless entry to the app and its full range of services.

Commenting on the new enhancements, Mr. Mohammad Al-Dakhil, AVP –Head of Digital Banking Channels at NBK said: “At NBK, we are committed to continuously enhancing NBK Mobile Banking App, whether by introducing new features or upgrading existing ones, as part of

our ongoing drive to deliver smart, fast, and easy digital banking solutions. Our goal is to keep pace with our customers' evolving needs, offering them an unmatched digital banking experience that empowers them to manage their finances with ease, convenience, and complete flexibility.”

He emphasized that the growing demand for the NBK Mobile Banking App has driven higher adoption and active engagement with its features, reinforcing its position as the preferred platform

for managing everyday banking needs.

Through the NBK Mobile Banking App, the Bank is committed to offering customers a secure and seamless way to manage their finances anytime, anywhere. The App offers a comprehensive suite of services, enabling users toopen new accounts, instantly issue and activate pre-paid and credit cards,and monitor account and credit card activity with ease. Customers can also track NBK Miles, NBK Rewards Points, andNBK KWT Points on their NBK KWT Visa Infinite Credit Card, benefit from cashback for their NBK 247 Cashback Visa Platinum Pre-paid Card, and conveniently settle credit card dues and pay a wide range ofe-bills. In addition, the app allows users to easily locate NBK branches, ATMs, and Cash Deposit Machines across Kuwait, update their personal information, and access a host of other convenient services.

The NBK Mobile Banking App is available for download via the Apple App Store, Google Play, and Huawei App Gallery.

Treasury moves ahead with Trump’s ‘no tax on tips’ rule

Up to \$25,000 in tips can be deducted

WASHINGTON, Sept 20, (AP): The Treasury Department is moving closer to making President Donald Trump’s “no tax on tips” promise a reality. But new guidance released Friday tends to limit the number of tipped workers who will be able to claim the benefit.

The agency on Friday submitted proposed regulations to the Federal Register that includes greater detail on the occupations covered by the rule and who will qualify and what counts as a “qualified tip.”

The “no tax on tips” provision in Republicans’ massive tax and spending law signed by Trump in July eliminates federal income taxes on tips for people working in jobs that have traditionally received them and allows certain workers to deduct up to \$25,000 in “qualified tips” per year from 2025 through 2028. The deduction phases out for taxpayers with a modified adjusted gross income over \$150,000.

To qualify as a tip, the tips must be earned in an occupation on Treasury’s list of qualified occupations. Among the jobs exempted from tax on tips are sommeliers, cocktail waiters, pastry chefs, cake bakers, bingo workers, club dancers, DJs, clowns, podcasters, influencers, online video creators, ushers, maids, gardeners, electricians, house cleaners, tow truck drivers, wedding planners, personal care aides, tutors, au pairs, massage therapists, yoga instructors, skydiving pilots, ski instructors, parking garage attendants, delivery drivers and movers.

The tip must be voluntarily given, so mandatory tips or auto-gratuities would not qualify for the “no tax on tips” benefit. However, tip pools and



A waiter delivers food to patrons at a restaurant, Jan. 21, 2022, in Miami Beach, Fla. (AP)

similar arrangements qualify, so long as they are reported to the IRS and voluntary. The benefit is not available to married individuals who file their taxes separately.

The tip must be given in cash, check, debit card, gift card or any item exchangeable for a fixed amount of cash, unlike digital assets. And any amount received for illegal activity, prostitution services, or pornographic activity does not qualify as a tip, according to the Treasury Department.

The “no tax on tips” provision will be implemented retroactively to Jan. 1, 2025.

The Yale Budget Lab estimates that there were roughly 4 million workers in tipped occupations in 2023, which amounts to roughly 2.5% of all jobs.

Congressional budget analysts project the “No Tax on Tips” provision would increase the deficit by \$40 billion through 2028. The nonpartisan Joint Committee on Taxation estimated in June that the tips deduction will cost \$32 billion over 10 years.

Von der Leyen calls to ‘turn off the tap’ on Russian LNG by 2027

EU proposes new sanctions targeting Russian LNG, banks, and shadow fleet

BRUSSELS, Sept 20, (AP): The European Union should slap new sanctions on Russia’s exports of liquefied natural gas, its shadow fleet of aging oil tankers and major energy companies over its war on Ukraine, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said on Friday.

“It is time to turn off the tap” on LNG, von der Leyen said in a video statement outlining her commission’s new sanctions proposals. They must be endorsed by the 27 EU countries before they can enter force.

“I now call on member states to quickly endorse these new sanctions. We want Russia to leave the battlefield and come to the negotiation table, and this is the way to give peace a real chance,” she said.

The bloc has already agreed on 18 packages of sanctions against Russia, but getting final agreement on who and what to target can take weeks.

More than 2,500 “entities” including banks, ministries, energy companies and officials have already been hit.

The officials include President Vladimir Putin and his associates, scores of Russian lawmakers and several oligarchs. Travel bans and asset freezes are the most common measures.

Energy revenue is the linchpin of Russia’s economy, allowing Putin to pour money into the armed forces without worsening inflation for everyday people and avoiding a currency collapse.

Von der Leyen insisted that EU sanctions are having an impact. “Russia’s over-

heated war economy is coming to its limit,” she said, noting in particular constant high inflation in Russia.

In a separate statement, EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said the aim is to usher in “a full prohibition of Russian LNG imports by January 2027.”

Europe is the biggest buyer of Russia’s LNG cargoes, taking about half of what Russia exports. Russian LNG took up about 16% of the EU’s total LNG imports last year. EU members Hungary and Slovakia have opposed any phase out and could pose an obstacle to the sanctions move.

The commission also proposed targeting 118 additional vessels from Russia’s shadow fleet of ships transporting oil, bringing the total hit to over 560.

“Major energy trading companies Rosneft and Gazprom Neft will now be on a full transaction ban, and other companies will also come under an asset freeze” if the measures are endorsed, the head of the EU’s executive branch also said.

Part of the plan would be to go “after those who fuel Russia’s war by purchasing oil in breach of the sanctions,” she said. Von der Leyen said that the commission wants to “target refineries, oil traders, petrochemical companies and third countries including China.”

The sanctions would also include export restrictions on “items and technologies” that can be used on the battlefield. A further 45 companies in Russia and elsewhere would be hit, for “providing direct or indirect support to the Russian military industrial complex,” the commission president said.

Japan’s central bank holds steady on key interest rate

TOKYO, Sept 20, (AP): Japan’s central bank kept its key interest rate unchanged at 0.5% Friday, in a decision that was widely expected, given recent inflation trends that have stayed above target.

The Bank of Japan issued its decision on the overnight call rate after a two-day meeting by its policy board.

“Japan’s economy has recovered moderately, although some weakness has been seen in part. Overseas economies have grown moderately on the whole,” it said in a statement.

The U.S. Federal Reserve cut its policy rate by 0.25 percentage points earlier this week, the Fed’s first cut since December, and lowered its short-term rate to about 4.1%, down from 4.3%.

Japan had been ailing from deflationary trends in recent years, but prices are gradually rising. Recent government data show consumer prices rising above the central bank’s target of 2%, at between 2.5% and 3%.

The Bank of Japan noted exports will be hit by higher tariffs, which have come about because of U.S. President Donald Trump’s policies. There was an increase in trade in anticipation of the tariffs, but those rises are now tapering off, it said.

Also mentioned as a risk factor was the uncertainty in domestic politics. Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba is stepping down, and the ruling party is holding an election to choose a new leader.

Five candidates are expected to enter the race, with a party vote coming early next month. The grip on power by the Liberal Democratic Party, which has ruled postwar Japan almost incessantly, appears to be unraveling lately.

The Japanese stock market has been booming recently, with the benchmark Nikkei 225 hitting another record Thursday, cheered by the Fed’s rate cut. Shares were falling slightly in Friday morning trading.

Michigan farmers test new ‘electric tractor’ prototype

EAST LANSING, Sept 20, (AP): In the soft dirt of an indoor horseback riding ring last month, a group of farmers got ready to test drive a new piece of equipment: an electric tractor.

As they took turns climbing in - some surprised by its quick acceleration - they gave real-time feedback to the Michigan State University researchers who have been developing it for over two years.

The farmers remarked on the motor’s quiet whir. Most were intrigued, or at least open to the idea. Some were concerned that the battery on the underside of the carriage would mean a lower clearance over the field, while others worried that it would simply be too expensive.

“What we hope to do when we retire is we want to get everything electric on the farm. The tractor is the last electric implement to get,” said Don Dunklee, one of the farmers to provide feedback. He runs a small organic vegetable farm that’s relied on wind and solar for decades.

The market is fairly new, but some researchers and entrepreneurs think electric tractors will be ideal for small farmers who care about sustainability and want to market their products that way. The small cherry-red, open-cab machine is well-suited for tasks like weeding fields of specialty crops like carrots or asparagus, or squeezing between the tight rows of orchard trees. Farmers with solar panels can avoid the cost of diesel.

Agriculture is among the largest sources of climate-warming emissions worldwide. Though tractors are a small culprit, experts believe an environmentally friendly machine would still attract buyers interested in sustainability.

“There’s reduced emissions, but before you get there, you have to be solving for other problems,” including noise, ease of use and cost, said Derek Muller, business manager for battery electric systems at John Deere.

There are downsides - electric tractors are aimed at filling a niche, not overturning the status quo. And while battery technology has come a long way, they can’t last all day or match the massive horsepower of a diesel engine that sets giant tractors cruising through the sprawling grain and soybean operations of the Midwest.

In addition to battery limitations, there are other structural obstacles. Most farmers do not have fast electric chargers, nor do they have solar panels to supply those chargers with free electricity - diesel would need to be much more expensive for the economics to turn sharply in favor of electric. But companies are starting to see an opportunity.

“For John Deere, it is not the only solution,” Muller said. “It’s not going to be where we lead our efforts. It’s going to be one of many options.”

The company has built a small utility electric tractor prototype. It joins a limited set of offerings from other companies like Monarch Tractor, which started in 2019 with the aim to help farmers, who have traditionally struggled with razor-thin profits, save money, work sustainably and more efficiently.

Ajit Srivastava, an agricultural engineer and Michigan State professor who hosted the farmer feedback session, wants to help smallholder farmers across the world. Such farmers grow about a third of the world’s food but many do it with only hand tools. He started trying to emulate a pair of oxen made of off-the-shelf parts, so anyone could build it themselves.

“If we were to mechanize all the smallholder farmers in the world, there isn’t enough diesel out there to power them. So we have to find some other source,” Srivastava said.

It’s still a work in progress. Rain had postponed the feedback session, originally planned for the spring, because the tractor hadn’t been waterproofed yet. It also doesn’t have enough power for some jobs like tilling. But farmers generally like what Srivastava had developed. He hopes it could eventually be sold for roughly \$30,000, substantially cheaper than some of the competition.

“The steering is really responsive. It just seems to run really smooth,” said Dunklee, adding, however, that it might not do everything he needs on a farm yet. “Probably the biggest thing would be it’s relatively quiet.”

Muller said they’re seeing demand for electric tractors from Europe, where farming policies are sometimes more progressive. And there’s also a market at universities in other countries where researchers are studying agriculture, said Brendan Dowdle, chief business officer of Bonsai Robotics, which sells modular, automated electric farm robots that can work together to mimic some tasks ordinarily done by a tractor.

One possible customer is the so-called “gentleman farmer” who has a small operation of specialty crops or vegetables and farms for fun, not necessarily to make a living.

“They want to be self-sustaining,” said Patrick Woolcock, an associate engineering professor and agriculture expert at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls.

Plus, without harmful diesel emissions, they can work in greenhouses and, with fewer parts, there’s hope repairs won’t be as complicated, at least once a readily available supply is established.

Some entrepreneurs see electric tractors as a step on the path to automation - fewer workers, more efficiency and less cost. Engineers are now designing machines that will drive themselves and power precise weeders and planters.

For example, Monarch Tractor CEO Praveen Penmetsa noted that if a self-guided tractor gets stuck and has to notify the farmer, electric power has clear benefits. A diesel tractor would sit there idling, but an electric one doesn’t waste fuel while waiting.

Srivastava also said he’s just trying to make people’s lives easier - looking backward all day to make sure a plow is operating properly is grueling. So, a self-driving tractor would let farmers pay more attention to ensuring harvesting is happening properly, or the weeder isn’t accidentally digging up crops.

“Not that we want to take the operator off the tractor, the operator would be there, but they can focus on how well the operation is going rather than making sure the tractor is in the rows,” he said.

Still, some aren’t so sure electric has such a big advantage when it comes to automation. Tim Bucher, CEO of Agtonomy, a company focused on bringing autonomy software to farm vehicles, was all-in on electric a few years ago. But the technology has gotten so good that now his customers can pick and choose the energy source for their tractor and see similar results, he said. And with government electric vehicle subsidies disappearing, there’s less incentive for most farmers to go that route.

On his own farm, though, he opts for electric, and he says he’s seen economic returns.

And from an environmental perspective, “it also just makes me feel better,” he said.

Business and politics cloud TV host's fate

Kimmel's late-night future rests on far more than his jokes

NEW YORK, Sept 20, (AP): The decision about whether to keep Jimmy Kimmel on his late-night ABC show depends on far more than his jokes. The choice is complicated by a web of business and regulatory considerations involving ABC's parent company, other media companies and the Trump administration.

It's the inevitable result of industry consolidation that over years has built giant corporations with wide-ranging interests.

ABC owner Walt Disney Co., a massive organization with far-flung operations, frequently seeks federal regulatory approval to expand, buy or sell businesses or acquire licenses. And the Trump administration has not spared the company from investigations, opening multiple inquiries in just the past few months to probe possible antitrust, programming and hiring violations.

Kimmel was suspended from his show this week following comments suggesting that fans of Charlie Kirk were trying to capitalize on the conservative activist's assassination. Federal Communications Commission Chairman Brendan Carr called the remarks "truly sick" and suggested his agency would look into them.

Carr answers to President Donald Trump, who's already on record as disliking Kimmel's comedy.

Two companies that operate roughly a quarter of ABC affiliates nationwide, Nexstar Media Group and Sinclair Broadcasting, also said they would not air Kimmel's show.

Disney took a step last December to avoid a confrontation with Trump by paying \$15 million to settle the president's defamation lawsuit against ABC News and George Steph-

nopoulos. It also made moves to dismantle some of its diversity, equity and inclusion practices, including removing references in its annual report to its Reimagine Tomorrow program aimed at "amplifying underrepresented voices."

Apparently that wasn't enough. In April, the FCC sent a blistering letter to Disney CEO Bob Iger saying it suspected the company was so thoroughly "infected" with "invidious" practices favoring minorities that it had no choice but to open an investigation.

Among other questions, the probe sought to determine whether Disney had really ended policies designed to ensure characters in its shows and its hiring practices favored "underrepresented groups."

Meanwhile, a Disney deal struck in January to buy a stake in the streaming service FuboTV fell under scrutiny, too, with several reports that the Justice Department was investigating possible antitrust violations.

The Federal Trade Commission also launched a probe into whether Disney broke rules by gathering personal data from children watching its videos without permission from parents. Disney settled the case earlier this month by paying \$10 million and agreeing to change its practices.

Disney also needs approval from the Trump administration for ESPN to complete its acquisition of the NFL Network.

It hasn't helped that Disney was a target for many conservatives well before the current controversy. Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis battled with the company over its criticism of a DeSantis-backed law that restricted discussion of sexual orientation in schools.

Kirk wasn't a fan, either, criticizing Disney when it closed



Host Jimmy Kimmel speaks at the Oscars in Los Angeles on Feb. 26, 2017. (AP)

Splash Mountain rides at theme parks three years ago because they were based on a 1946 film about the plantation life in the South. The move, his website posted, was "destructive to our cultural and societal fabric."

The companies with ABC stations that put out statements disavowing Kimmel have their own business before the government. Nexstar needs the Trump administration's

approval to complete its \$6.2 billion purchase of broadcast rival Tegna.

Sinclair has its own regulatory challenges. In June, it entered into an agreement with the FCC to fix problems with paperwork filed to the agency and to observe rules about advertising on children's shows and closed captioning requirements. It has also petitioned the regulator to relax rules limiting broadcaster ownership of stations.

The companies are being asked by advocates and others to put aside financial concerns to stand up for free speech.

"Where has all the leadership gone?" ex-Disney CEO Michael Eisner wrote Friday on social media. "If not for university presidents, law firm managing partners and corporate chief executives standing up to bullies, then who will step up for the First Amendment?"

The administration's attacks on Kimmel have also been criticized in some unexpected places, such as the Wall Street Journal and Bari Weiss' website, the Free Press, both known for their conservative editorial voices.

The comedian's comments don't justify the right wing's move toward regulatory censorship, the Journal wrote in an editorial. "As victims of cancel culture for so long, conservatives more than anyone should oppose it," the Journal wrote. "They will surely be the targets again when the left returns to power."

"When a network drops a high-profile talent hours after the FCC chairman makes a barely veiled threat, then it's no longer just a business decision," the Free Press wrote in an editorial. "It's government coercion. Is it now Trump administration policy to punish broadcasters for comedy that doesn't conform to its politics?"

Pakistani dating show ignites public outcry

ISLAMABAD, Sept 20, (AP): A dating show modeled on "Love Island" that features Pakistani contestants has sparked anger in the Muslim-majority country, despite no episodes being aired yet, and the series being only accessible on YouTube.

The country's broadcasting regulator said Saturday it was not in a position to act on the public complaints because it had no authority over the streaming platform.

Lazawal Ishq, or Eternal Love, is hosted by Pakistani actress Ayesha Omar and filmed in Istanbul. Adapted from the Turkish format, Ask Adasi, and resembling the successful "Love Island" international franchise, it brings together four Pakistani men and women in a luxury villa where their every interaction is filmed. In Pakistan, extra-marital relationships are illegal, and there are stigmas around dating.

Last week, Omar shared a teaser of her cruising along the Bosphorus before welcoming contestants into the villa. But the promo quickly drew criticism online, with detractors labeling the format "un-Islamic" and accusing it of copying Western culture.

The flood of public complaints about the Urdu-language show prompted Pakistani regulators to issue a clarification, saying they were unable to do anything.

Muhammad Tahir, a spokesperson for the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority, said Saturday that the program was neither being broadcast on mainstream media nor on any television channel licensed by the authority.

"It does not fall within our domain," Tahir told the Associated Press. "We do not regulate YouTube, and this content is not from any television channel. The general public is not aware that YouTube lies outside our regulatory scope."

The host, Omar, told the Pakistan-based Fashion Times magazine last week that the project was "a first of its kind for Pakistani and Urdu-speaking viewers."

She said the show would feature "love, bonding, and competition," with audiences witnessing "every spark, every fight, and every heartfelt connection." Over the course of 100 episodes, the eight contestants compete in challenges and form alliances until one couple emerges as the winner.

Italian rapper Fedez sorry for Sinner lyrics

MILAN, Sept 20, (AP): Italian rapper **Fedez** has apologized for publishing musical lyrics saying that tennis player Jannik Sinner speaks with "Adolf Hitler's accent," which prompted the musician to be accused of inciting racial hatred. Fedez recently posted an Instagram story featuring lyrics of a new song that said in Italian: "Italian has a new idol named Jannik Sinner. Pure-blooded Italian with Adolf Hitler's accent."



Fedez

A city council member in Bolzano - the capital of the German-speaking autonomous province of Alto Adige in northern Italy where Sinner is from - on Thursday filed a formal complaint with prosecutors over Fedez's lyrics based on an article in Italy's penal code that sanctions incitement of racial hatred and propaganda.

"I wanted to take a paradox and it came off terribly, about athletes who are born and raised in Italy but often are not considered Italian due to the color of their skin and apply it to Italy's top athlete," Fedez said during a concert in Milan on Friday, according to the Gazzetta dello Sport.

"I wasn't able to pull it off and all I can do is apologize," Fedez added. "If something like this isn't understood, it's because of a mistake made by whoever wrote it. So I take responsibility." The reference to "pure-blooded Italian" recalls Italian fascist propaganda from the 1930s, according to Giuseppe Martucci, the city council member, who added that the reference to Hitler was unacceptable.

"I felt it my duty to act and hold up the founding values of our constitution," Martucci said. "We can't allow language that evokes racism and hate to be normalized by public figures."

By winning four Grand Slam titles over the last two years, Sinner has exceeded Italy's soccer stars to become the country's most popular athlete. He lost the U.S. Open final to Carlos Alcaraz this month and lost the No. 1 ranking to his Spanish rival.

This is not the first time that Sinner has faced an underlying sentiment that he isn't fully Italian.

Before he won his first Grand Slam title and opted not to play Davis Cup for Italy in September 2023 - saying he hadn't recovered in time from tournaments in North America - he was widely criticized. "Caso Nazionale" (National Issue), said the front-page of Sportweek, the Gazzetta dello Sport's weekly magazine, in a headline with a double meaning.

Film



Leonardo DiCaprio, (from left), Chase Infiniti and Benicio Del Toro, pose during a photo call for the film 'One Battle After Another' in Mexico City, Thursday, Sept. 18. (AP)

DiCaprio's most unpolished role yet

'One Battle After Another' is an American masterpiece

LOS ANGELES, Sept 20, (AP): In Paul Thomas Anderson's gloriously messy, madcap roller coaster ride through modern America, objects in the rear view may go out of sight, but they don't disappear.

Political struggles never die in "One Battle After Another," they just repeat. Or maybe they grow older and become paranoid, pot-smoking, pajama-wearers like Bob Ferguson (Leonardo DiCaprio), a washed-up revolutionary living off the grid with his daughter, Willa (Chase Infiniti). The cycles of oppression and resistance are palpably felt in Anderson's film, a decades-spanning odyssey where gun violence, white power and immigrant deportations recur in an on-going dance, both farcical and tragic.

But "One Battle After Another" could also be fairly described as a sweet movie about a father coming to terms with his teenage daughter having a phone - which is one example of how Anderson's destabilizing approach to big themes can turn poignant and revelatory. "Sweeping" would normally be a way to characterize a nearly three-hour-long, multigeneration saga like this, but Anderson works in a more rough-hewn, compassionate register that burrows strangely but acutely into the American psyche.

"One Battle After Another" is arriving after months of speculation and some skepticism because it's easily Anderson's biggest budgeted, largest scaled film yet. But scale is an interesting thing when it comes to Anderson's movies. "Magnolia" is modest by most metrics, but you'd be hard pressed to find a more ambitious movie. "There Will Be Blood" didn't feature much spectacle beyond some rickety wooden oil rigs, but it feels about as large as the frame of Daniel Day-Lewis' Daniel Plainview, which is to say terrifyingly enormous.

Likewise, "One Battle After Another," shot on VistaVision, is big and long but feels intimate and fast. That's partly due to the propulsion of its opening prologue and the absurd knockout vigor of Teyana Taylor as a scorching, potent screen presence. Her Perfidia Beverly Hills is at the center of the movie's beginning. And she makes such a powerful mark that it takes half an hour for "One Battle After Another" to pick up the pieces after it moves on. (My personal recovery time is ongoing.)

We first see Perfidia, dressed in all black, striding across an overpass. Below is an im-



This image released by Warner Bros. Pictures shows Leonardo DiCaprio in a scene from 'One Battle After Another.' (AP)

migration detention center. The atmosphere is tumultuous. Bob is there, ready to set off fireworks or bombs, but has little clue of the plan. She assures him: "Make it big, make it bright. Inspire me."

They and their co-conspirators soon announce their intentions, freeing the immigrants, tying up the military guards and declaring that they're the radical group the French 75. This is the start, Perfidia says, of a revolution. Their cause is righteous, but their drive is visceral and sexual. Bomb-making and sex go hand in hand. Bob trails after Perfidia, in love with her but also in awe. Perfidia's mother doesn't give them much of a chance as a couple. "She's a runner and you're a stone," she tells him.

At the same time, Perfidia comes in contact with Col. Lockjaw (Sean Penn), a rock-jawed military man who, too, swoons for Perfidia. When they first meet, she holds him at gunpoint and tells him to "Get it up," and she doesn't mean his hands. These charged scenes, followed by Perfidia's pregnancy and new police trouble for the French 75, set the table for the drama to come, set 16 years after this opening salvo, a frenetic eruption of Black and female power.

By then, the forces fought by the radicals have clawed back their advantage. Lockjaw (this is a taut, drained, maniacal Penn) now moves with impunity, directing troops on illegal raids where he chooses. Some of those in power like what he's doing. A secret white supremacist group called the Christmas Adventurers (they speak of cleansing

the Earth and greet each other with "merry Christmas") offers him a membership.

The French 75 are essentially no more. Bob is now alone with their 16-year-old daughter. He's grown less connected with the world. He calls his daughter's friend "Homie," has trouble with pronouns and usually has a roach going. It's the most Lebowsky-esque performance by DiCaprio, whose recent gravity toward less polished, error-prone characters ("Killers of the Flower Moon," "Once Upon a Time in Hollywood") has made for some of his most interesting movies.

Willa, though, is said to have her mother's courage. (Infiniti, a newcomer, has an inner strength that comes across clear as day.) When Lockjaw comes looking for Willa, a new cycle of state-sponsored violence is set off. That brings in a delightful Benicio Del Toro as a combination sensei and Harriet Tubman-like figure to immigrants who shepherds Bob when the authorities are closing in. This is probably the most symbolic section of the movie, but Del Toro's Sergio St. Carlos is also the film's most resonate encapsulation of freedom. He's free because his purpose is clear and principled.

This is a movie filled with police convoys across the land and military tactics that effectively turn modern-day America into a battlefield. The film, inspired by Thomas Pynchon's "Vineland," shares some of the culture clash of Anderson's earlier Pynchon adaptation, "Inherent Vice." But "One Battle After Another," graced with a swelling score by Johnny Greenwood that gives the movie a hint of epic, feels more urgently contemporary and more morally motivated.

That makes "One Battle After Another," as a major studio release clattering with straightforward representations of racism, xenophobia and vigilantism, an exception in almost every way to modern-day Hollywood. I'm sure that will bring debate, just as any good movie does. And I'm sure some will find its American portrait muddled and chaotic. But those aspects feel true, too, just as does the movie's abiding fighting spirit.

"One Battle After Another," a Warner Bros. release is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for pervasive language, violence, sexual content, and drug use. Running time: 170 minutes. Four stars out of four.

Variety

TORONTO: The Canadian government banned the Irish-language rap group Kneecap from the country Friday, saying the group has endorsed political violence and terrorism.

The group has faced criticism for political statements seeming to glorify militant groups like Hamas and Hezbollah. Hungary previously banned the group.

Liberal lawmaker Vince Gasparro, parliamentary secretary for combating crime, said Kneecap has "publicly displayed support for terrorist organizations such as Hezbollah and Hamas" that goes beyond artistic expression.

"Canada stands firmly against hate speech, incitement to violence and the glorification of terrorism," Gasparro said in a video on social media. "Political debate and free speech are vital to our democracy, but open endorsements of terrorist groups are not free speech."

Kneecap has accused critics of trying to silence the band because of its support for the Palestinian cause throughout Israel's war in Gaza. They say they don't support Hezbollah and Hamas nor condone violence.

Kneecap responded in an Instagram post, saying that Gasparro's comments are "wholly untrue and deeply malicious." "We have today instructed our lawyers to initiate legal action against you," the band's statement said. (AP)

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ST. PETERSBURG, Fla.: A Florida federal judge on Friday tossed out a \$15 billion defamation lawsuit filed by President Donald Trump against The New York Times.

US District Judge Steven Merryday ruled that Trump's 85-page lawsuit was overly long and full of "tedious and burdensome" language that had no bearing on the legal case. The judge gave Trump 28 days to file an amended complaint that should not exceed 40 pages.

"A complaint is not a megaphone for public relations or a podium for a passionate oration at a political rally," Merryday wrote in a four-page order. "This action will begin, will continue, and will end in accord with the rules of procedure and in a professional and dignified manner." Trump's legal team plans to continue the lawsuit "in accordance with the judge's direction on logistics," spokesman Aaron Harrison said. The lawsuit named four Times journalists and cited a book and three articles published within a two-month period before the last election.

The Times had said it was meritless and an attempt to discourage independent reporting. "We welcome the judge's quick ruling, which recognized that the complaint was a political document rather than a serious legal filing," spokesman Charlie Stadlander said Friday.

Merryday noted that the lawsuit did not get to the first defamation count until page 80. The lawsuit delves into Trump's work on "The Apprentice" TV show and an "extensive list" of Trump's other media appearances.

"As every lawyer knows (or is presumed to know), a complaint is not a public forum for vituperation and invective - not a protected platform to rage against an adversary," wrote Merryday, an appointment of former President George H.W. Bush. "Although lawyers receive a modicum of expressive latitude in pleading the claim of a client, the complaint in this action extends far beyond the outer bound of that latitude."

The lawsuit named a book and an article written by Times reporters Russ Buettner and Susanne Craig that focuses on Trump's finances and his pre-presidency role in "The Apprentice." Trump said in the lawsuit that they "maliciously peddled the fact-free narrative" that television producer Mark Burnett turned Trump into a celebrity. - "even though at and prior to the time of publications defendants knew that President Trump was already a mega-celebrity and an enormous success in business." (AP)

Mexican artist’s work may set female artist auction record

Frida Kahlo portrait could sell for \$60 million at Sotheby’s

LONDON, Sept 20, (AP): Frida Kahlo’s face is one of the best known in art, thanks to her bold and challenging self-portraits.

A lesser-seen self-depiction by the Mexican artist is going up for auction at Sotheby’s in what could be a record-setting sale.

With an estimated price of \$40 million to \$60 million, “El sueño (La cama)” - in English, “The Dream (The Bed)” - may surpass the top price for a work by any female artist when it goes under the hammer on Nov. 8. That record currently stands at \$44.4 million, paid at Sotheby’s in 2014 for Georgia O’Keeffe’s “Jimson Weed/White Flower No. 1.”

The highest price at auction for a Kahlo work is \$34.9 million, paid in 2021 for “Diego and I,” depicting the artist and her husband, muralist Diego Rivera. Her paintings are reported to have sold privately for even more.

“It’s not just one of the more important works by Kahlo, but one of a few that exists outside of Mexico and not in a museum collection,” said Julian Dawes, vice chairman and

head of impressionist and modern art for Sotheby’s Americas. “So as both a work of art and as an opportunity in the market, it could not be more rare and special.”

Kahlo vibrantly and unsparingly depicted herself and events from her life, which was upended by a bus accident at 18. She started to paint while bedridden, underwent a series of painful surgeries on her damaged spine and pelvis, then wore casts until her death in 1954 at age 47.

Painted in 1940, “El sueño (La cama)” shows the artist, wreathed in vines, lying in a four-poster bed floating in a pale blue sky. A skeleton wired with dynamite and clutching a bouquet of flowers lies atop the canopy.

The image is exploding with symbolism and feels like an allegory - but the artist really did have a papier-mâché skeleton on top of her bed.

Dawes said it’s a psychological self-portrait by an artist at her peak.

“Her greatest works derive from this moment between the late 1930s and the early 1940s,” he said. “She has had a va-

riety of tribulations in her romantic life with Diego, in her own life with her health, but at the same time she’s really at the height of her powers.”

Last exhibited publicly in the late 1990s, the painting is the star of a sale of more than 100 surrealist works by artists including Salvador Dalí, René Magritte, Max Ernst and Dorothea Tanning. They are from a private collection whose owner has not been disclosed.

A century after Andre Breton’s “Surrealist Manifesto” defined a revolutionary artistic movement characterized by unsettling juxtapositions and paradoxical statements, interest in - and prices for - surrealist art are booming. Surrealism’s share of the art market rose from 9.3% to 16.8% between 2018 and 2024, according to Sotheby’s. Magritte’s “L’empire des lumières” sold last year for \$121.2 million, a record for a surrealist work.

Kahlo resisted being labeled a surrealist, but Dawes said her “fascination with the subconscious” and use of otherworldly imagery place her squarely in that tradition.



A painting by Frida Kahlo called El sueño (La cama) is displayed at Sotheby’s auction rooms, the painting estimated at 40-60 million US dollars is part of a collection of surrealist masterpieces unveiled in London ahead of their sale in New York, Friday, Sept. 19. (AP)

Fashion



Models display creations at the Patrick McDowell show, in Control Room A at Battersea Power Station, during London Fashion Week, in south London, Saturday, Sept. 20. (AP)

Book about 2024’s campaign against Trump

Harris stops biting her tongue in ‘107 Days’

WASHINGTON, Sept 20, (AP): When it was all over, Kamala Harris couldn’t believe it. “I could barely breathe,” she writes in her new book about learning she had lost the 2024 presidential election to Donald Trump.

One of her aides peeled “Madame President” off celebratory cupcakes before serving them to crushed staffers. Harris kept asking, “My God, my God, what will happen to our country?”

The next morning was no easier. “I was ashamed to realize I was in the denial and bargaining stages of grief, a very long way from acceptance,” she wrote.

It’s one of several raw admissions in Harris’ book, “107 Days,” that is scheduled for release Tuesday. The title refers to the length of the hyperspeed campaign that the former vice president launched against Trump after Joe Biden dropped out of the race.

Although Harris earned a reputation as guarded and circumspect, the book has the tone of someone who is finished biting her tongue. She concedes mistakes, reveals frustrations and details some of the stranger moments from her race.

The book isn’t a winding memoir or a political treatise, and Harris doesn’t disclose any future plans. Instead, it reads like a ticking time bomb, with each chapter counting down to Election Day.

Here’s some memorable moments.

Harris insists in the book that she had no concerns about Biden’s ability to serve as president. “If I believed that, I would have said so.”

“But at eighty-one, Joe got tired,” Harris wrote. “That’s when his age showed in physical and verbal stumbles.”

Harris wrote that Biden’s inner circle “should have realized that any campaign was a bridge too far.” However, “it seemed that the worse things got, the more they pushed him.”

The tenuous situation unraveled when Biden and Trump faced off with each other. “As soon as he walked onto the debate stage in Atlanta, I could see he wasn’t right,” Harris wrote.

Biden’s team appeared to be in denial. Afterward, they gave Harris talking points that said “JOE BIDEN WON.”

Harris wrote warmly of her partnership with Biden, but there were frosty moments too. As Biden



Then Vice President Kamala Harris attends a Department of Defense Commander in Chief farewell ceremony at Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall, Jan. 16, 2025, in Arlington, Va. (AP)

faced calls to drop out of the race, he invited Harris to join him for a Fourth of July celebration at the White House.

First lady Jill Biden pulled Harris’ husband Doug Emhoff aside. “What’s going on?” she asked. “Are you supporting us?”

Later, in private, Emhoff erupted in anger. “They have to ask if we’re loyal?”

Another difficult episode came after Harris had replaced Biden at the top of the ticket and was preparing for her own debate with Trump.

Shortly before she took the stage, Biden called to see he heard from his brother that Harris had been badmouthing him, upsetting some power brokers in Philadelphia. Then he rambled about his own debate performances while Harris was “barely listening.”

“I just couldn’t understand why he would call me, right now, and make it all about himself,” she wrote.

Harris admits some mistakes of her own, particularly a damaging appearance on “The View” talk show. When one of the hosts asked what she would have done differently than Biden during the previous four years, Harris blanked on the talking points she had prepared and simply said, “There is not a thing that comes to mind.”

“I had no idea I’d just pulled the pin on a hand grenade,” Harris writes. Around the studio, “my staff

were besides themselves” about how she had just given a “gift to the Trump campaign.”

Harris wrote that she didn’t want to criticize Biden or litigate any of the areas where they disagreed. But she also didn’t understand how much her association with the president was holding back her candidacy.

David Plouffe, a senior adviser, told Harris bluntly that “people hate Joe Biden.”

There’s plenty of grist in the book that could make the next Democratic convention a little more awkward.

Harris wrote that Pete Buttigieg, Biden’s transportation secretary and a former mayor from Indiana, was her first choice to be her running mate. He’s also gay, and Harris thought it was “too big of a risk” to pick him while already asking voters to accept a Black woman as president.

Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro was another possibility. But Harris “had a nagging concern that he would be unable to settle for a role as number two and that it would wear on our partnership.”

She ended up going with Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, but his debate performance against JD Vance left her yelling at the television screen. “You’re not there to make friends with the guy who is attacking your running mate,” she said.

There’s only one reference to California Gov. Gavin Newsom in the book. When Harris reached out to him after Biden ended his reelection campaign, he texted, “Hiking. Will call back,” but he never did.

Harris’ brother-in-law is Tony West, a former top Justice Department official and member of her inner circle of political advisers. While Harris was serving as vice president, West put together what was known as the “Red File,” a collection of plans in case something happened to Biden.

West argued that it would be foolish not to prepare. Harris writes that she “didn’t want to dwell on such an eventuality” and “I left it in his hands.”

He kept refreshing the document as people pressured Biden to drop out, which came in handy when Biden finally pulled the plug on his reelection campaign.

Harris writes that Biden was planning to wait a day before endorsing her as his successor, an idea that horrified her.

Writer of country hits

Songwriter Brett James dies in plane crash at 57

LOS ANGELES, Sept 20, (AP): Grammy award-winning country songwriter Brett James, whose string of top hits includes “Jesus, Take the Wheel” by Carrie Underwood and “When the Sun Goes Down” by Kenny Chesney, died in a plane crash in North Carolina, authorities said Friday. He was 57.

The small plane with three people aboard crashed Thursday afternoon “under unknown circumstances” in the woods in Franklin, the Federal Aviation Administration said in a preliminary report. There were no survivors, the North Carolina State Highway Patrol said in a statement.

James was on a Cirrus SR22T, which was registered to him under his legal name of Brett James Cornelius, according to information provided by the FAA. It was not known if he was the pilot. The patrol confirmed his death. The FAA and National Transportation Safety Board said they will investigate the crash.

The other two people on the plane were Melody Carole and Meryl Maxwell Wilson, the patrol confirmed.

The plane had taken off from John C. Tune Airport in Nashville. James was inducted into the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame in 2020. The organization posted an online statement of mourning.

A native of Oklahoma City, James left medical school to pursue a music career in Nashville, according to his biography on the Hall of Fame’s site.

His first No. 1 hit was “Who I Am” in 2001, by Jessica Andrews. “Jesus, Take the Wheel,” which he co-wrote for Underwood, earned the 2006 Grammy for Best Coun-



Musician Brett James and his wife Sandy appear at a pre-CMA Awards event in Nashville, Tenn., on Nov. 5, 2006. (AP)

try Song, among other honors.

James had more than 500 of his songs recorded, for albums with combined sales of more than 110 million copies, according to his Grand Ole Opry biography online.

Other artists who sang his songs include Faith Hill, Kelly Clarkson, Luke Bryan, Keith Urban, Nick Jonas and Meghan Trainor.

Additional hits include “Cowboy Casanova” by Underwood, “Out Last Night” by Chesney and “Summer Nights” by Rascal Flatts.

“Heartbroken to hear of the loss of my friend Brett James tonight,” country singer Jason Aldean posted on X. “I had nothing but love and respect for that guy and he helped change my life. Honored to have met him and worked with him.”

James recorded his own album in 2020.

“At my stage in life, I’m not going to write about driving around in pickup trucks, chasing girls,” he was quoted as saying on the Opry site. “It needed to feel more classic, lyrically. They all wound up being love songs, but hopefully love songs with a twist, that haven’t all been written before.”

Star-studded collabs

Cardi B finally releases her new album ‘Am I the Drama?’

LOS ANGELES, Sept 20, (AP): Seven years after her landmark debut “Invasion of Privacy,” Cardi B has returned. And, in typical fashion, she’s doing it with plenty of spectacle.

The Grammy winner made her long-awaited sophomore album “Am I the Drama?” released Friday, feel like prime-time theater.

Friday’s release arrived days after she revealed her fourth pregnancy - her first child with New England Patriots wide receiver Stefon Diggs - and barely two weeks after she emerged victorious from a Los Angeles courtroom.

With a title that nods to the scrutiny that has trailed her career, Cardi B channels the swirl of headlines into music that doubles down on her strengths: blunt confidence, playful wit and sharp-edged bravado. The 23-track project features collaborations with Janet Jackson, Lizzo, Selena Gomez, Megan Thee Stallion, Cash Cobain, Kehlani, Summer Walker and Tyla.

Cardi B threads in past hits like “Up” and “WAP” with Megan Thee Stallion. That choice sparked criticism online for padding the album with older material.

However, Cardi B, never one to duck an argument, clapped back on X in June: “This will be the last and only time I’m gonna address this... ‘WAP’ and ‘Up’ are two of my biggest songs...



Cardi B

they deserve a home.” She added, “These two songs don’t even count for first week sales so what are yall even crying about???... Now let them eat cake. Go cry about it!!!”

Alongside those chart-toppers, Cardi unleashed fresh tracks too. The chest-thumping “Outside” and the breezier “Imaginary Playerz” showcase her range between hard-hitting anthems and smoother, radio-ready flows.

Cardi’s personal life has only amplified the spotlight. Her relationship with Diggs - who joined the Patriots this season after years as one of the NFL’s top receivers - has drawn as much attention off the field as on it. The couple kept a low profile until this week’s pregnancy reveal, marking their first child together.

The announcement capped a turbulent stretch for Cardi B, who also prevailed this month in a lawsuit filed by a security guard alleging assault during a doctor’s visit while she was secretly pregnant years ago. The courtroom win and public reveal only sharpen the backdrop for “Am I the Drama?”, an album that leans into the very question that has hovered over her career.

The rap star has three children from her previous marriage with rapper Off-set: daughters Blossom, 1, and Kulture, 7, and son Wave, 4. Diggs also has a daughter from a previous relationship, Nova, who was born in 2016.

Cardi B will now take all of her momentum into the Little Miss Drama Tour, her first arena tour. The 30-plus date trek begins Feb. 11 in Palm Desert, California, and wraps in Atlanta in April, with stops in Los Angeles, Chicago, New York and Toronto.

Muhammad Ali’s Vietnam-era unsigned draft card heads to auction

NEW YORK, Sept 20, (AP): Muhammad Ali’s refusal to sign his Vietnam-era military draft card upended the boxing champ’s life and added a powerful voice to the anti-war movement. Now that piece of history is coming up for sale.

There’s a blank line on the card where Ali was supposed to sign in 1967 but refused to do so - a polarizing act of defiance as the Vietnam War raged on. It triggered a chain of events that disrupted his storied boxing career but immortalized him outside the ring as a champion for peace and social justice.

“Being reminded of my father’s message of courage and conviction is more important now than ever, and the sale of his draft card at Christie’s is a powerful way to share that legacy with the world,” Rasheda Ali Walsh, a daughter of Ali, said Thursday in a statement issued by the auction house.

The card identified him by his birth name - Cassius Marcellus Clay Jr. - but misspelled his given middle name. Upon his conversion to Islam, he was given a name reflecting his faith, the Muham-

mad Ali Center in Louisville says on its website. Meanwhile, the top of the draft card reads: “(AKA) Muhammad Ali.”

The auction house said it will hold the online sale Oct. 10-28, adding the card came to it via descendants of Ali. A public display of the card began Thursday at Rockefeller Center in New York and will continue until Oct. 21. The document could fetch \$3 million to \$5 million, Christie’s estimated.

Ali, the three-time heavyweight boxing champion, died in 2016 at age 74 after a long battle with Parkinson’s disease. An estimated 100,000 people chanting, “Ali! Ali!” lined the streets of his hometown of Louisville, Kentucky, as a hearse carried his casket to a local cemetery. His memorial service was packed with celebrities, athletes and politicians.

The draft card, typewritten in parts, conjures memories from when Ali wasn’t universally beloved but instead stood as a polarizing figure, revered by millions worldwide and reviled by many.

For refusing induction into the US Army, Ali was convicted of draft

evasion, stripped of his boxing title and banned from boxing. Ali appealed the conviction on grounds he was a Muslim minister. He famously proclaimed: “I ain’t got no quarrel with them Viet Cong.”

During his banishment, Ali spoke at colleges and briefly appeared in a Broadway musical. He was allowed to resume boxing three years later.

He was still facing a possible prison sentence when in 1971 he fought Joe Frazier, his archrival, for the first time in what was labeled “The Fight of the Century.” A few months later the US Supreme Court overturned the conviction on an 8-0 vote. The draft card was issued the day the draft board in Louisville ordered Ali to appear for induction, Christie’s said Thursday in a news release. The card was signed by the local draft board chairman but pointedly not by Ali.

The Ali Center features exhibits paying tribute to Ali’s immense boxing skills. But its main mission, it says, is to preserve his humanitarian legacy and promote his six core principles: spirituality, giving, conviction, confidence, respect and dedication.



This image provided by Christie’s Auction House shows Muhammad Ali’s draft card. (AP)

HEALTH/SCIENCE

Global pact on marine life moves closer to ratification

Nations ratify world's first treaty to protect international waters

SEATTLE, Sept 20, (AP): A major agreement to protect marine diversity in the high seas was struck Friday when Morocco became the 60th nation to sign on, paving the way for the treaty to take effect next year.

The High Seas Treaty is the first legal framework aimed at protecting biodiversity in international waters, those that lie beyond the jurisdiction of any single country. International waters account for nearly two-thirds of the ocean and nearly half of Earth's surface and are vulnerable to threats including overfishing, climate change and deep-sea mining.

"The high seas are the world's largest crime scene - they're unmanaged, unenforced, and a regulatory legal structure is absolutely necessary," said Johan Bergenas, senior vice president of oceans at the World Wildlife Fund.

Still, the pact's strength is uncertain as some of the world's biggest players - the U.S., China, Russia and Japan - have yet to ratify. The U.S. and China have signed, signaling intent to align with the treaty's objectives without creating legal obligations, while Japan and Russia have been active in preparatory talks.

Ratification triggers a 120-day countdown for the treaty to take effect. But much more work remains to flesh out how it will be implemented, financed and enforced.

"You need bigger boats, more fuel, more training and a different regulatory system," Bergenas said. "The treaty is foundational - now begins the hard work."

The high seas are home to an array of marine life and are crucial in regulating Earth's climate - they absorb heat and carbon dioxide and generate half the oxygen we breathe. The treaty is also essential to achieving what's known as the "30x30" target - an international pledge to protect 30% of the planet's land and sea by 2030.

The treaty creates a legal process for countries to establish marine protected areas in those waters, including rules for potentially destructive activities like deep-sea mining and geoeengineering schemes. It also establishes a framework for technology-sharing, funding mechanisms and scientific collaboration among countries.

Crucially, decisions under the treaty will be made multilaterally through what are known as conferences of parties, rather than by individual countries acting



A wandering cratena, or nudibranch, is visible in the protected area of France's Porquerolles National Park ahead of the UN Ocean Conference on June 6, 2025. (AP)

alone.

Within one year of the treaty taking effect, countries will meet to make decisions about implementation, financing and oversight, and only countries that ratify before then will have voting rights.

Some experts warn the treaty's impact could be blunted if the most powerful players on the high seas remain outside it.

"If major fishing nations like China, Russia and Japan don't join, they could undermine the protected areas," said Guillermo Crespo, a high seas expert with the International Union for Conservation of Nature commission. "It will be interesting to see how the implementation of the treaty will work without those who have historically made the most use of high seas resources."

The treaty does not create a punitive enforcement body of its own. Instead, it largely relies on individual countries to regulate their own ships and companies. If a ship flying a German flag violates the rules, for example, it's Germany's responsibility to act, said Torsten Thiele, founder of the Global Ocean Trust and an adviser on ocean governance and blue finance. That makes universal ratification essential, he said: "If somebody hasn't signed up, they'll argue they're not bound."

Enric Sala, founder of National Geographic Pristine Seas marine reserve project, warned that some nations may now point to the treaty as a reason to delay or avoid conservation efforts within their own waters.

"There are countries that are using the process to justify inaction at home," he said.

Lisa Speer, director of the Natural Resources Defense Council's international oceans program, said failing to protect the high seas could mean damage for any individual nation's waters.

"Marine life doesn't respect political boundaries. So fish migrate across the ocean," Speer said. "Same with turtles, with seabirds, and a whole host of other marine life. And so what happens in the high sea can really affect the health and resilience of the ocean within national jurisdiction, within our coastal waters."

Ocean exploration pioneer Sylvia Earle welcomed the ratification, but urged leaders not to see it as a finish line.

"This is a way station - not the end point," she said. "If we continue to take from the ocean at the scale we presently are, and use the ocean as a dump site as we presently are, yes we're putting the fish and the whales and the krill in Antarctica and the high seas at risk, but mostly, we are putting ourselves at risk."

For small island nations like Vanuatu, the treaty marks a major step toward inclusion in decisions that have long been beyond their reach.

New restrictions on MMRV vaccines

US vaccine panel revises COVID-19 shot advice, letting people decide

ATLANTA, Sept 20, (AP): Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s new vaccine advisers added confusion Friday to this fall's COVID-19 vaccinations - declining to recommend them for anyone and leaving the choice up to those who want a shot.

Until now, the vaccinations had been recommended as a routine step in the fall for nearly all Americans - just like a yearly flu vaccine.

The Food and Drug Administration already had placed new restrictions on this year's shots from Pfizer, Moderna and Novavax, reserving them for people over 65 or younger ones who are deemed at higher risk from the virus.

In a series of votes Friday, advisers to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention took the unprecedented step of not recommending them even for high-risk populations like seniors. Instead they decided people could make individual decisions after talking with a doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

The panel also urged the CDC to adopt stronger language around claims of vaccine risks, despite pushback from outside medical groups who said the shots had a proven safety record from the billions of doses administered worldwide.

The divided panel narrowly avoided urging states to require a prescription for the shot. The move came after protests from some of the advisers that the extra step would block access to vaccination.

"I have to wait a year" to see his primary care provider, said panelist Dr. Cody Meissner of Dartmouth College. "It's essentially going to be a barrier."

The meeting represented the latest example of Kennedy's monthslong effort to reshape the nation's vaccine policies to match his long-standing suspicions about the safety and effectiveness of well-established shots.

Independent public health experts reacted with relief that the panel didn't add more roadblocks to vaccination, but they said the lack of a recommendation will prove confusing for people who don't know if a shot might benefit them.

"The good news is anyone can get this vaccine. The bad news is that no one is encouraged to get it even if you're in a high-risk group," said Dr. Paul Offit, a Children's Hospital of Philadelphia vaccine researcher and former government adviser who has sparred with Kennedy for years.

Dr. Sean O'Leary of the American Academy of Pediatrics said the panel's daylong debate involved clear efforts to sow distrust about vaccines that would have "real-time impacts on American children."

But he said people could instead follow guidelines from his and other medical groups that still make specific recommendations for the vaccines.

"It was a very, very strange meeting," O'Leary said.

Several states have announced policies to try to assure that access, worried about Friday's decision. And a group representing most health insurers, America's Health Insurance Plans,



Pharmacy manager Aylen Amestoy administers a patient with a COVID-19 vaccine at a CVS Pharmacy in Miami, Tuesday, Sept. 9. (AP)

said earlier this week that its members will continue covering the shots through 2026.

The panel's decision still must go to the CDC's interim director, Jim O'Neill, for sign-off. A former investor, critic of health regulations and Kennedy's deputy at HHS, O'Neill recently took the lead at the agency following the firing of its Senate-confirmed director, Susan Monarez.

COVID-19 remains a public health threat. CDC data released in June shows the virus resulted in 32,000 to 51,000 U.S. deaths and more than 250,000 hospitalizations last fall and winter. Most at risk for hospitalization are seniors and young children, especially those who were unvaccinated.

The COVID-19 vaccines are not perfect, but CDC data shows they provide the strongest protection against severe infection and death, even if people still become infected. Likewise, people can get COVID-19 repeatedly as the virus continues to evolve.

Like flu vaccines, COVID-19 shots now are being updated yearly, but only about 44% of seniors and 13% of children were up-to-date on the coronavirus vaccinations last year, the CDC said.

The meeting was more freewheeling and chaotic than in the past. Many committee members challenged CDC's data, and raised questions about studies in mice or other concerns that the agency's own safety surveillance hadn't deemed credible.

The panel did recommend that the CDC add more information about risks and uncertainties to vaccine sheets that are given to patients.

"I don't think the effects on access are as dramatic as they could have been," said Dr. Jesse Goodman of Georgetown University, a former FDA vaccine chief. "But there's a lot that's uncertain and the negative effect on public trust will continue."

One risk that already is on the vaccines' label is a rare side effect called myocarditis, a kind of heart inflammation, that was discovered in the early days of vaccination in 2021. On

Friday, a scientist studying whether people with certain genes are uniquely susceptible to that risk told the panel the Trump administration had canceled his grant before the research could be finished.

The COVID-19 debate was only one issue the panel tackled during its two-day meeting. In other steps:

The advisers postponed a decision on whether to end a longstanding CDC recommendation that all newborns be vaccinated at birth against a liver virus, hepatitis B.

The panel had been considering whether to recommend delaying that initial vaccination - something doctors and parents already can choose to do - but pulled back amid criticism from independent pediatric and infectious disease specialists who say the vaccine is safe and has helped infant infections drop sharply.

On Thursday, the panel recommended a new restriction on another childhood vaccine.

They recommended that for children under 4, their first dose of protection against MMR - measles, mumps and rubella - and chickenpox should be in separate shots, not a combination version known as MMRV. Since 2009, the CDC has said it prefers separate shots for initial doses of those vaccines and 85% of toddlers already do.

On Friday, the committee also recommended that the government's Vaccines for Children program - which covers vaccine costs for about half of US kids - align its guidance with that narrower MMRV usage.

President Donald Trump was asked Friday if he was comfortable with the CDC advisers' recommendation or if he'd like Americans to take the shots that were developed under his Operation Warp Speed at the height of the pandemic. Trump, who got the virus in October 2020 before the vaccine was available, said he remained "very proud" of Operation Warp Speed, and was not upset that Kennedy was skeptical of the vaccine.

"I had the vaccine and I was very happy with it," Trump said.



Activities Coordinator Melissa Delaney interacts with Robin the Robot as it visits patients' rooms at the HealthBridge Orange Specialty Pediatric Hospital in Orange, Calif., on Friday, Sept. 12. (AP)

Robot brings relief to patients and medical staff

A 'childlike' robot helps combat fear and loneliness in hospitals

NEW YORK, Sept 20, (AP): Days after Meagan Brazil-Sheehan's 6-year-old son was diagnosed with leukemia, they were walking down the halls of UMass Memorial Children's Medical Center when they ran into Robin the Robot.

"Luca, how are you?" it asked in a high-pitched voice programmed to sound like a 7-year-old girl. "It's been awhile."

Brazil-Sheehan said they had only met the 4-foot-tall (1.2-meter-tall) robot with a large screen displaying cartoon-like features once before after they were admitted several days earlier.

"His face lit up," she said about the interaction in June in Worcester, Massachusetts. "It was so special because she remembered him."

Robin is an artificial intelligence -powered therapeutic robot programed to act like a little girl as it provides emotional support at nursing homes and hospital pediatric units while helping combat staffing shortages. Five years after launching in the US, it has become a familiar face in 30 health care facilities in California, Massachusetts, New York and Indiana.

"Nurses and medical staff are really overworked, under a lot of pressure, and unfortunately, a lot of times they don't have capacity to provide engagement and connection to patients," said Karen Khachikyan, CEO of Expper Technologies, which developed the robot. "Robin helps to alleviate that part from them."

As AI increasingly becomes a part of daily life, it's found a foothold in medical care - providing everything from note-taking during exams to electronic nurses. While heralded by some for the efficiency it brings, others worry about its impact on patient care.

Robin is about 30% autonomous, while a team of operators working remotely controls the rest under the watchful eyes of clinical staff. Khachikyan said that with each interaction, they're able to collect more data - while still complying with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, or HIPAA - and get closer to it being able to function

independently.

"Imagine a pure emotional intelligence like WALL-E. We're trying to create that," he said, referencing the 2008 animated film.

On a recent Friday, a staff member at HealthBridge Children's Hospital in Orange County, California, read off a list of patients she needed Robin to visit, along with the amount of time to spend with each one.

The robot with a sleek white triangle-shaped frame that Khachikyan said was designed for hugging, rolled into a room with a teenager injured in a car accident. The robot played what it described as his favorite song - "No Fear" by DeJ Loaf - and he danced along. In the hallway, Robin cracked up a young child held by her mother when it put on a series of silly glasses and a big red nose. In another room, the robot played a simplified version of tic-tac-toe with a patient.

Samantha da Silva, speech language pathologist at the hospital, said patients light up when Robin comes into their room and not only remembers their names but their favorite music.

"She brings joy to everyone," da Silva said. "She walks down the halls, everyone loves to chat with her, say hello."

Robin mirrors the emotions of the person it is talking with, explained Khachikyan. If the patient is laughing then the robot laughs along, but if they're sharing something difficult, its face reflects sadness and empathy.

In nursing homes, Robin plays memory games with people suffering from dementia, takes them through breathing exercises on difficult days and offers them a form of companionship that resembles a grandchild with a grandparent.

Khachikyan recalled a moment last year at a facility in Los Angeles where a woman was having a panic attack and asked specifically for the robot. Robin played songs by her favorite musician and videos of her favorite animal - Elvis Presley and puppies - until she had calmed down.

31 deaths in 38 Congo Ebola cases: WHO

Bangladesh reports six new dengue deaths

DHAKA, Sept 20, (Xinhua): The number of dengue fever cases has continued to grow in Bangladesh, with six new deaths reported Thursday, the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) said.

In the last 24 hours as of 8:00 a.m. local time Thursday, Bangladesh reported 647 new infections.

With the newly reported infections, the total number of dengue cases has surged to 40,461 in Bangladesh so far this year, the DGHS said.

According to figures released by the DGHS under the Ministry of Health, the death toll this year reached 167.

The fresh infection tally indicates the fast-rising trend of the mosquito-borne disease in parts of the country.

The June-September monsoon period is the season of dengue fever in Bangladesh, which is considered a high-risk nation prone to mosquito-borne diseases.

□ □ □

Cholera: Zambia has recorded a total of 174 cholera cases, including two deaths, since the outbreak emerged in the country's north last month, health authorities said Thursday.



In this photo provided by Doctors Without Borders, a man wearing protective clothing stands outside an Ebola treatment center in the remote Bulape Health Zone, Kasai province, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sept 7, 2025 that was set up following the outbreak of the Zaire strain of the Ebola virus. (AP)

Speaking at a press briefing, Minister of Health Elijah Muchima said that 156 patients have been discharged, while 16 remain hospitalized in three districts in northern Zambia.

The outbreak, which began on Aug. 5 in Mpulungu District, the epicenter,

has since spread to Kipwa, a neighboring town in Tanzania. "We have confirmed cases linked to travel for a funeral and fish trading in Tanzania, underscoring the need for regional co-operation," he said.

He added that the ministry, in collaboration with partners, has scaled up response efforts, opened cholera treatment centers, and intensified surveillance. Plans are also underway to vaccinate another 200,000 people with the oral cholera vaccine in the next two weeks.

Muchima said that challenges remain, particularly poor sanitation and unsafe water supplies in affected communities.

□ □ □

Ebola: The World Health Organization said Thursday that 31 of 38 confirmed Ebola cases have resulted in deaths in southern Congo, where authorities are battling a new outbreak of the deadly virus.

The latest figures show the casualty rate has nearly doubled since last week - from 16 - and that the disease is spreading rapidly as more than 900 contacts have been identified so far, according to the WHO.

Lymph nodes key to immunotherapy: experts

Advanced breast cancer therapy in final trial

MELBOURNE, Sept 20, (Xinhua): An Australian-discovered therapy has reached a significant milestone, with Pfizer Inc. beginning a Phase 3 clinical trial of a potential new treatment for advanced breast cancers.

The first-in-class therapy is being studied as a treatment in adults with HR+, HER2-advanced or metastatic breast cancer whose disease progressed following prior treatments, according to a statement released Thursday by Australia's Monash University.

Known as PF-07248144 and co-invented by scientists at Monash Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences (MIPS) and the government-funded Cancer Therapeutics Cooperative Research Center (CTX), the therapy blocks two proteins, KAT6A and KAT6B, which help control how genes are switched on and off, it said.

Because these proteins influence how cells grow and develop, finding ways to block them can "turn down the volume" on those genes and slow the cancer's ability to grow and spread, the statement said.

In earlier Phase 1 studies, PF-07248144 combined with fulvestrant, a type of hormone therapy, achieved a 37 percent objective response rate in patients.

Pfizer licensed the KAT6 platform in 2018 through Oncology One, CTX's commercialization partner, and developed PF-07248144.

"The discovery of PF-07248144 is an important scientific advance. For the first time, selective targeting of KAT6 opens new avenues for the treatment of advanced breast cancers," said MIPS medicinal chemist Paul Stuppel.

Meanwhile, research showed lymph nodes are critical for cancer immunotherapy success, challenging the long-standing practice of routinely removing them during surgery.

Researchers from Australia, Germany, Switzerland and Italy explored the cellular and molecular interactions revealing how lymph nodes play a crucial role in the fight against chronic infection and cancer, according to a statement released Wednesday by Australia's Peter Doherty Institute for Infection and Immunity.

The research showed that lymph nodes provide the right environment for stem-like T cells, an important type of immune cell, to survive, multiply and produce killer cells that can fight cancer or viruses.

Men in Blue remain unbeaten

Arshdeep gets 100th T20 wicket as India beats Asia Cup newcomer Oman

ABU DHABI, United Arab Emirates, Sept 20, (AP): Arshdeep Singh became the first India bowler to take 100 Twenty20 wickets as Asia Cup newcomer Oman was beaten by 21 runs.

Fast bowler Arshdeep's only wicket was picked up in the last over to restrict Oman, playing India for the first time in any format of cricket, at 167-4.

India made 188-8 after experi-



Oman's Aamir Kaleem celebrates after scoring fifty runs during the Asia Cup cricket match between India and Oman at Zayed Cricket Stadium in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. (AP)

menting with its batting order ahead of its first Super 4 game against Pakistan on Sunday. Captain Suryakumar Yadav demoted himself to No. 11.

Sanju Samson led with 56 runs off 45 balls and Abhishek Sharma was typically flamboyant with 38 off 15.

India and Sri Lanka were unbeaten in the group stage with three wins each. Pakistan and Bangladesh were the others to qualify for the Super 4 stage.

In the absence of rested fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah and new world No. 1-ranked T20 bowler Varun Chakravarthy, the India bowlers struggled to dismiss Oman.

Suryakumar tried eight bowlers but only Hardik Pandya (1-26) and Arshdeep bowled out their full quota of four overs.

Amir Kaleem top-scored for Oman with 64 with support from Hammad Mirza (51) and captain Jiten Singh (32).

Abhishek, dropped on 21, gave India brisk start with two sixes and five boundaries.

Samson was slow to begin with and brought up his half-century in the death overs before holing out at deep midwicket. India scored only 21 off the final three overs that featured just one boundary.

Fast bowler Faisal Shah (2-23) led Oman. Jiten Ramanandi and Amir Kaleem also picked up two wickets each.



India's Tilak Varma plays a shot during the Asia Cup cricket match between India and Oman at Zayed Cricket Stadium in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. (AP)

Thomas has triple-double as Mercury eliminate defending champion Liberty



Phoenix Mercury guard Kahleah Copper, left, drives against New York Liberty forward Kennedy Burke, right, during the first half of Game 3 in the first round of the WNBA basketball playoffs in Phoenix. (AP)

Phoenix faces Minnesota in second round

PHOENIX, Sept 20, (AP): Alyssa Thomas had a 20 points, 11 rebounds and 11 assists in her fifth career playoff triple-double, and the Phoenix Mercury advanced to the second round of the WNBA playoffs by eliminating the defending champion New York Liberty 79-73 in Game 3.

Satou Sabally added 23 points and 12 rebounds for the fourth-seeded Mercury, who play at top-seeded Minnesota on Sunday to start the best-of-five semifinal round.

Thomas has five of the seven WNBA playoff triple-doubles.

Sami Whitcomb scored 13 points and Kahleah Copper had 12 points and nine rebounds for the Mercury, who had a 49-33 advantage on the boards. DeWanna Bonner had eight rebounds to pass Candace Parker for the most boards in playoff history with 614.

Breanna Stewart, five days after spraining the MCL in her left knee in overtime of a Game 1 win, scored 30 points, including the last 14 in the fourth quarter for the Liberty. Sabrina Ionescu added 22 but the rest of the Liberty struggled.

There were five ties and 13 lead



Phoenix Mercury forward Alyssa Thomas celebrates after defeating the New York Liberty in Game 3 in the first round of the WNBA basketball playoffs in Phoenix. (AP)

changes through three quarters, which ended with Phoenix on top 60-59, but New York never led in the fourth.

Stewart's three-point play had the Liberty within 65-64 with 6:51 to play. But Thomas had a basket, two assists and a rebound to get her ninth triple-double of this season, as the Mercury surged ahead 72-64 with 5:36 to play.

Stewart made two free throws - she

was 12 of 15 from the line - to make it 76-73 with 1:10 to play. The Liberty had a turnover and three misses in the last minute and finished 7 of 32 from 3-point range, including 1 for 17 in the second half.

The Mercury led by 12 in the second quarter but with Ionescu scoring 12 points the Liberty cut it to 45-41 at halftime.

The WNBA semifinals are set and a new champion is guaranteed after all four remaining teams were challenged in the opening round.

Minnesota, Las Vegas and Phoenix have all made it this far in the past few years, while Indiana, even without the injured Caitlin Clark, won a playoff series for the first time in a decade. The Lynx will face the Mercury, and the Aces will play the Fever in best-of-five series that begin Sunday.

The Lynx is looking for its first championship since 2017. Minnesota reached the WNBA Finals last year before losing to New York in overtime in a decisive Game 5. The Lynx was the only team to sweep its first-round series, but was pushed hard by Golden State.

It'll face a confident Phoenix squad that knocked out the Liberty in three games. Minnesota, which had the best record in the regular season, won three of the four matchups during the regular season, but the Mercury weren't completely healthy for most of those meetings.

"It hasn't played us at full strength

yet," said Phoenix forward Alyssa Thomas, who had her fifth postseason triple-double in the Game 3 win over New York.

Minnesota is led by Napheesa Collier, who is a leading candidate for the league's MVP. The Lynx also have a solid group around her including co-Defensive Player of the Year Alanna Smith, Courtney Williams and Kayla McBride.

The Lynx also has the advantage of a bit more rest than the Mercury, having finished off their series with Golden State on Wednesday.

"We've matched up with Minnesota pretty well all season. We're going to celebrate tonight and worry about them tomorrow," Phoenix coach Nate Tibbetts said.

The other matchup will have the experienced Aces playing a short-handed Indiana team. The sixth-seeded Fever shocked Atlanta in the opening round, winning without Clark, who is sidelined for the playoffs with a right groin injury that kept her out of the last 2 1/2 months of the regular season. Indiana is led by Kelsey Mitchell, who had the best season of her career, and Aliyah Boston.

It'll face an Aces team that needed a go-ahead basket on a follow shot with 12 seconds left to beat Seattle and reach the semifinals. Reigning MVP A'ja Wilson has been stellar all season long and raised her game during the Aces' winning streak and first round of the playoffs.

'Nothing has changed from Paris'

IOC confirms Russians competing as neutrals at Milan-Cortina Games

MILAN, Sept 20, (AP): Russians will be allowed to compete at next year's Milan-Cortina Winter Games but the International Olympic Committee said it had never discussed banning Israel.

The IOC confirmed after an executive board meeting in Milan that it will follow the system it used at the Paris Games last year, allowing Russians to compete as Individual Neutral Athletes - using the French acronym AIN.

"We also spoke about the individual neutral athletes at Milano-Cortina, this will be nothing new for all of you," IOC president Kirsty Coventry said. "The executive board will take the exact same approach that was done in Paris, so it's just a continuation ... nothing has changed from Paris."

The Russian Olympic Committee has been suspended since 2023 by the IOC for breaking the Olympic charter by using an administrative land grab to incorporate regional sports bodies in occupied eastern Ukraine.

IOC restrictions bar Russia from team sports and individual Russian athletes who are in the military or publicly support the invasion of Ukraine. Those who are given neutral status must compete without their national identity, flag, anthem and colors.

Of the 32 "neutral" athletes at the Paris Olympics, 17 previously represented Belarus and 15 represented Russia.

It is still up to each sport's governing body, which run their own Olympic competitions, to assess and enforce neutral status of individual athletes.

"We are working with the international federations to understand with the decision we have placed today, what is the fast way for a number of athletes to still qualify for the games," the IOC Olympic Games operations director Pierre Ducrey said. "Some of the federations ... have not opened the door themselves to the participation of AIN athletes."

"So we'll have to work with those which still have a decision to make or have made a decision. This is the case, for example, of the Skating Union federation, the Ski Mountaineering Federation. ... So we are working closely with them to understand where are possibilities to still qualify for the Games moving forward."

Russia has been banned from international sporting events - such as soccer competitions - since its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 and there have been growing calls to do the same with Israel, too, as the civilian toll of the war in Gaza grows.

When specifically asked if the IOC had ever considered excluding Israeli athletes, Coventry said, "This executive board and in no other executive board have we discussed not having NOCs (National Olympic Committees) represented."

The IOC previously said Israel hasn't breached the Olympic charter like Russia, when it annexed territories in eastern Ukraine.

Still there will be heightened security concerns, especially after pro-Palestinian protests interrupted the final stage of the Spanish Vuelta last Sunday and forced organizers to cut short the cycling Grand Tour event.

Coventry added: "The priority for the organizing committee, for the host country, and for the IOC is to ensure safety of all our athletes and fans, and anyone that comes into contact with the Games and those processes have not been changed and they will continue as per normal."

The Milan-Cortina Games will take place across a large swath of northern Italy from Feb. 6-22.



Executive Board and the IOC President Kirsty Coventry, center, visits the Olympic and Paralympic Village in Milan, Italy. (AP)

Best of the Rest

Neymar suffers fresh injury blow: Santos forward Neymar has suffered a new setback in his bid to regain form and fitness after sustaining a thigh injury, the Brazilian club said.

The 33-year-old, who is Brazil's all-time leading scorer, left training on Thursday with pain in his right thigh. Subsequent tests confirmed an injury to the rectus femoris muscle.

"Neymar Jr. has already begun treatment under the guidance of Santos FC's medical department," the club said in a statement, without giving a timetable for his return. (Xinhua)

China secures figure skating pairs berth: Chinese pair skaters Zhang Jiaxuan and Huang Yihang finished first in the figure skating pairs at the ISU Figure Skating Olympic Qualifier here on Saturday to clinch a berth for China in the 2026 Milan-Cortina Winter Olympics.

The top three pairs in the event were awarded Winter Olympic berths. As Zhang and Huang ranked first in the short program on Friday, they maintained their momentum in the free skating and remained top of the rankings with a total score of 191.52 points.

Zhang, 18, expressed his excitement after finishing the show, saying, "We made our utmost efforts in training, and it was an honor for us to skate on this international stage and win the berth." (Xinhua)

Messi stays silent on Inter Miami contract extension

MIAMI, Sept 20, (AP): Lionel Messi went to watch some soccer. He didn't say a word about his own future.

The Inter Miami star - who is closing in on a contract extension that will keep him with his Major League Soccer club through at least the 2026 season and likely beyond - showed up to watch the global finals of the 1v1 soccer tournament that he helped create and is sponsored by a hydration drink that he co-founded.

His appearance came days after he and Inter Miami closed in on an extension, one that the sides have

been working on for months and would assure him of being with the club when it plans to open its new stadium near Miami International Airport next year.

Messi watched both the men's and women's semifinals and then the finals of his event. He greeted the winners on stage and signed autographs for fans, even taking a large group selfie with the entire crowd at the end.

But there were no hints about the contract - he did not address reporters - and no news was coming from his team on Friday, either.

"I hope it happens soon, because I think it's great

news not only for the club but for MLS in general, right?" Inter Miami coach Javier Mascherano said earlier Friday at the team's training base in Fort Lauderdale, when asked about the extension.

"I don't think it's just for the team," Mascherano said. "Obviously, for the team, for the club, for the history of this club, it's something unique. But I think for soccer in general in the United States, it would be very, very important news. They could have the best player who has ever played this sport here for a while longer."

SPORTS

Police Sports Union awards Jiu-Jitsu champions Al-Salem and Al-Khalifi

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 20: The Police Sports Union has recognized Major Ali Al-Salem and First Lieutenant Anas Al-Khalifi for their outstanding performances in martial arts, particularly Jiu-Jitsu. The ceremony was presided over by Brigadier Sheikh Mubarak Ali Youssef Al-Sabah, Chairman of the Police Sports Union, and Vice Chairman Brigadier Mohammed Jassim Al-Mansouri, highlighting the union's commitment to supporting top athletes from the Ministry of Interior.

Al-Salem was honored for winning a silver medal at the 2025 Asian Professional Championship, part of the AJP tour held in the UAE. Al-Khalifi was celebrated for earning four medals in various tournaments in Egypt:

- Silver** – 85 kg (Masters, Gi)
- Bronze** – 94 kg (Professionals, Gi)
- Silver** – 94 kg (Masters, No-Gi/Wrestling)
- Bronze** – 85 kg (Professionals, No-Gi/Wrestling)

The Police Sports Union emphasized



Police Sports Union Chairman Brigadier Sheikh Mubarak Ali Youssef Al-Sabah, joined by Vice Chairman Brigadier Mohammed Jassim Al-Mansouri, honored Major Ali-Salem following his silver-medal achievement at the 2025 Asian Professional Championship.

that the awards reflect its appreciation for athletes who have raised the profile of Kuwait Police in regional and international competitions. The union also reaffirmed its commitment to nurturing talent, encouraging competitive excellence, and supporting future achievements.

Ministries soccer League draw sets stage for exciting season

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 20: The 2025/2026 Ministries, Authorities, and Government Institutions Football League draw was recently held, bringing together representatives from all participating government entities.

The draw set up some exciting clashes, with the Ministry of Education facing the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Interior taking on the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy. The league will follow a two-round format (home and away), with the nine participating teams divided into two groups – four teams in Group A and five in Group B.

Meanwhile, the government futsal league will feature ten teams split into two groups of five, also competing in a home-and-away round-robin format.

Youssef Al-Jassim, head of the football league's technical committee, praised the Public Authority for Sport for supporting these



A scene from the league draw.

tournaments. He highlighted that such initiatives promote the authority's "sports for all" policy, giving government employees the chance to participate in organized sporting competitions.

Verstappen takes pole



Red Bull driver Max Verstappen of the Netherlands in action during the qualifying for the Azerbaijan Formula One Grand Prix in Baku, Azerbaijan, Saturday. (AP)

Rain-soaked session sees Piastri and Leclerc crash in Baku

BAKU, Azerbaijan, Sept 20, (AP): Max Verstappen took pole position and championship leader Oscar Piastri crashed out in qualifying for Formula 1's Azerbaijan Grand Prix in a marathon session with constant crashes, rain and a record six red flags.

Red Bull's Verstappen was fastest by .478 from Carlos Sainz, Jr. of Williams in a session that ran an hour past its scheduled time, longer than most races. Liam Lawson of Racing Bulls starts Sunday's race a career-best third.

"You just have to send it," Verstappen said of his final lap, trying to beat a time Sainz had set in much drier conditions.

Piastri slammed into the barrier while chasing pole position on a track left slippery by earlier

rainfall. His McLaren teammate Lando Norris was only seventh after clipping the wall on his final lap and couldn't take full advantage of Piastri's error.

"I just braked a little bit late," Piastri told broadcaster Sky Sports. "Disappointing way to end."

The Australian briefly perched on a chair track-side near a drinks fridge as he took in the consequences of a rare mistake in the title race. He leads Norris by 31 points.

Piastri qualified ninth ahead of Sunday's race after Ferrari's Charles Leclerc also crashed earlier while seeking what would have been a fifth consecutive pole position in Azerbaijan.

Lewis Hamilton showed he had strong pace by going fastest in Friday's second practice session, but it was yet another disappointing qualifying session for the seven-time champion as he ended up 12th.

For a few minutes, the Williams team dreamed of a first pole position in 11 years.

Sainz was fastest of only three drivers who'd

set valid times when Leclerc crashed as the rain started to fall. If it kept raining during the red-flag stoppage, no one would be able to beat his time.

"You can start dancing to see if it rains a bit harder, no?" Sainz told Williams over the radio as the session was stopped.

Sainz's chances went up when there was a second red flag for Piastri's crash, just as Verstappen was poised to beat his time, but the Dutch driver - known for his skill in the rain - snatched pole with his final attempt.

The first of the six red flags was for Alex Albon stopping his Williams after he clipped the wall, another came when Nico Hulkenberg slid into a barrier and left half of his Sauber's front wing there, before a third red flag for a bizarre incident involving both Alpines.

Pierre Gasly missed a turn and stopped in an escape road. Seconds later, his teammate Franco Colapinto hit the wall nearby, seemingly in surprise at seeing Gasly stuck at the side of the track.

Minister of Information meets Sports Media Coordinators Association head

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 20: Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, recently met with Manawar Al-Mutairi, President of the Association of Sports Media Coordinators, to discuss key developments in the sports sector.

Manawar Al-Mutairi described the meeting as highly productive, noting that the minister welcomed the dialogue and promised a follow-up session to address important points regarding the association's official registration, its activities, and the role of media coordinators within local clubs and sports federations.

The association head also highlighted that Minister Al-Mutairi expressed strong moral support for the initiatives



Information Minister Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi receives Manawar Al-Mutairi, and events organized by the Association of Sports Media Coordinators.

Arabi challenges Qadsia's victory for breaking foreign player rule

By Khaled Al-Enezi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 20: Al-Arabi has lodged an official protest with the Kuwait Handball Federation against Qadsia, accusing the club of fielding three foreign professionals in their recent league clash. The match, played on September 15 as part of the fourth round of the Premier League, ended in a 29-25 victory for Qadsia.

In its complaint, Arabi argued that Qadsia violated a directive issued by the Public Authority for Sports (No. 11163/2025), which had nullified two Handball Federation meeting decisions and prohibited the use of three professionals in league matches. Arabi has requested the result be overturned, with Qadsia deemed losers by a 0-10 scoreline in accordance with league rules and regulations.

The fourth-round fixtures, held at Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex, also saw Qadsia defeat Al-Nasr 33-23, while Burgan and Arabi played out a thrilling 39-39 draw.

The current league standings place Kuwait Club on top with six points, level with Burgan but ahead on goal difference. Kazma follow with five points, Qadsia sit on four, while Arabi, Salmiya, and Sulaibikhat share three points each. Al-Nasr remains without a win.

Kuwait Club, Kazma, and Sulaibikhat



Qadsia player goes for a shot on goal as the defender tries to block.

were absent from the round due to their participation in the ongoing 40th Arab Club Championship in Kuwait, which concludes tomorrow.

Meanwhile, Qadsia announced the termination of Croatian professional Nadim Hadzic's contract. Sami Bouyabes, head of the club's handball operations, confirmed that the Yellow Castle is seeking a replacement capable of meeting the team's ambitions to challenge for the league title.

Pep praises Arsenal's progress under Arteta

Guardiola raises doubt about Rodri fitness for Arsenal-Man City game

LONDON, Sept 20, (AP): Manchester City star Rodri still is not fully comfortable on his return from a serious knee injury and might not be risked against Arsenal in the Premier League on Sunday at the end of an intense week of games, Pep Guardiola said.

Rodri, the reigning Ballon d'Or winner, was out for eight months last season with an ACL injury and is still recovering his full fitness after a setback during the summer at the Club World Cup.

After missing the start of the season, Rodri played the majority of the 3-0 win over Manchester United in the league on Sunday and started again against Napoli in a 2-0 win in the Champions League on Thursday, before asking to come off in the 60th minute.

Asked if Rodri would be ready to play another huge match at Arsenal this weekend, Guardiola said: "It's a good question. I don't know yet."

Guardiola pointed out that Rodri said he didn't feel comfortable during training on Wednesday, nor before coming off against Napoli.

"Of course he comes from a tough, tough injury - we have to be alert and we will decide on Sunday how he feels," said Guardiola, who added that Rodri's confidence in his knee isn't completely back.



Napoli's Andre-Frank Zambo Anguissa, right, and Manchester City's Jeremy Doku challenge for the ball during the Champions League opening phase soccer match between Manchester City and Napoli at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester, England, Thursday. (AP)

"With the greatest, greatest players I have trained in my managerial career, even as a player, I see it's here," Guardiola said, pointing to his head, "that they are incredibly self-confident, and Rodri is that. But the knee is completely different to how you think. The knee needs its process and as long as you are patient with that - and we are patient with him - he will be back."

Being without Rodri against Arsenal would be a huge blow to City, which lost 5-1 on its most recent league trip to Emirates Stadium last season.

Arsenal spent approximately 250 million pounds (\$335 million) on new players in the summer transfer window, a big statement of intent in the club's bid to win a first major trophy since 2020 after three straight runner-up finishes in the Premier

League and a semifinal exit in the Champions League last season.

It puts added pressure on Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta, who was once assistant to Guardiola at City.

"Only I want to say to my friend Mikel Arteta, if he wins the title, it will just (be) because he spent (a lot), not because he works a lot or (because of) his players," Guardiola said with a smile that suggested his playful comments were tongue-in-cheek.

"A bit like Liverpool - if Arne (Slot) wins again (the Premier League), it's because he spent a lot of money, right? Because it's not just at Man City where that happens, right? Listen, any club can do whatever it wants. I know how I have been treated - it's completely different but what he (Arteta) wants to spend is because he wanted to and that's fine."

Guardiola said Arsenal's spending has put Arteta's team among the best in Europe.

"Step by step, window by window, Arsenal is getting better," he said. "Last season in Europe, they make an incredible step forward and they are, for me, the most solid team ... in every department, what a team."

Arsenal is in second place in the league, three points behind Liverpool, and three points ahead of eighth-placed City.

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NEWS



United States' Anna Hall reacts after winning the heptathlon 800 meters at the World Athletics Championships in Tokyo. (AP)

Sports

Al-Arabi eyes revenge

Kuwait Club looks to continue dominance

By Hassan Mosa
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 20: The third round of the Zain Premier League kicks off tonight with a high-stakes encounter between Kuwait Club and Al-Arabi, set for 7:30 p.m. at Sabah Al-Salem Stadium.

Both teams sit atop the league table with six points each, with Kuwait Club leading on goal difference. Tonight's match will also mark the return of Mohamed Daham (Kuwait Club) and Anabo Iwala (Al-Arabi), who missed the first two rounds.

Defending champion Kuwait Club has started strong, beating Al-Tadamon 3-1 and Al-Jahra 4-1. Al-Arabi, meanwhile, secured wins over Al-Shabab (2-0) and Al-Fahaheel (3-0).

Kuwait Club is looking to reaffirm its dominance over Al-Arabi following last season, when the White team captured both the league title and the Crown Prince Cup, edging Al-Arabi in the final stages.

Despite its strong start, Kuwait Club knows tonight's victory won't come easily. Coach Montenegrin Nebojsa Jovanovic is aware that Al-Arabi, with recent squad and coaching changes, will be a tough opponent. The team will need full concentration and effort to secure another win.

Al-Arabi, under Portuguese coach Marco, aims to maintain its positive momentum and challenge for the top spot. Players are motivated to avenge last season's defeats, when Kuwait denied them both league and Crown Prince Cup glory.

Al-Arabi has finalized a deal with Palestinian forward Zaid Al-Qannabr, who will replace Belgian player Julien Ngoy.

Club officials worked quickly to secure his international transfer certificate ahead of the foreign player registration deadline, which closed at 9:00 p.m. Saturday. The 23-year-old Al-Qannabr previously played for Al-Ahly Benghazi in Libya, featuring in 24 matches last season and scoring 10 goals.



A file photo of Kuwait Club and Al-Arabi players battling for the ball.

Liverpool maintains perfect start



Liverpool's Mohamed Salah, left, challenges for the ball with Everton's Vitaliy Mykolenko during the English Premier League soccer match between Liverpool and Everton at Anfield stadium in Liverpool, England. (AP)

Real Madrid hands Espanyol first loss

LIVERPOOL, England, Sept 20, (AP): Liverpool maintained a perfect start to its Premier League season when Ryan Gravenberch scored and set up a first-half goal in a 2-1 win over Everton on Saturday in the Merseyside derby.

Seeking to win consecutive league titles for the first time since the 1980s, Liverpool is 5-0.

Liverpool was listless and sloppy for large stretches of the second half and Idrissa Gueye scored in the 58th minute for the Toffees, who lost for the first time since their opener at Leeds.

Liverpool has won five consecutive home games against the Blues for the first time since 1933-37. Everton has not won a match at Anfield attended by fans since 1999, its only victory since then behind closed doors in 2021 during the coronavirus pandemic.

Everton manager David Moyes remained winless

in 23 games at Anfield with the Toffees, Manchester United, Sunderland and West Ham.

Liverpool's top two summer signings, Alexander Isak and Florian Wirtz, entered as second-half substitutes, Wirtz in the 61st and Isak in the 67th.

Gravenberch put Liverpool ahead in the 10th minute of the 247th Merseyside derby when Mohamed Salah lofted a one-hop pass into his path. The 23-year-old defensive midfielder extended his right leg and on the half volley lifted the ball over the outstretched arm of goalkeeper Jordan Pickford.

Gravenberch made a perfect through-pass in the 29th and Hugo Ekitike slotted the ball through Pickford's legs and inside the far post.

Gueye scored on a long-range shot after Iliman Ndiaye tapped back Jack Grealish's cross. Just shy of his 36th birthday next Friday, Gueye became the second-oldest Everton player to score in a Merseyside derby behind 37-year-old Sam Chedgoy in 1926, according to Opta.

Liverpool fans repeatedly serenaded Everton supporters with chants of "You haven't won a trophy

since 1995."

Also:

BARCELONA: Kylian Mbappé and Éder Militão scored from well outside the area to help Real Madrid ease past Espanyol 2-0 in La Liga on Saturday, dealing the Barcelona-based side its first loss.

Espanyol gave Militão a smidgen of space and the Brazil defender fired a right-footed screamer into the top corner in the 22nd minute. A diving Marko Dmitrovic got his fingers on the ball but couldn't stop the powerful strike.

It was Mbappé's turn in the 47th when he had time to pick a spot in the bottom corner and smashed a strike that Dmitrovic could only watch nestle into the net.

Mbappé has seven goals in six games for Madrid this season, including a double in its 2-1 win over Marseille to start the Champions League on Tuesday.

Madrid moved five points clear of Espanyol and Barcelona, which hosts fifth-placed Getafe at its 6,000-seat Estadi Johan Cruyff on Sunday.

Fatima Al-Nama wins uneven bars gold for Kuwait in Egypt

CAIRO, Sept 20: Kuwaiti artistic gymnast Fatima Al-Nama delivered a standout performance at Pharaoh International Championship in Cairo, claiming gold in the uneven bars and silver in the under-14 all-around competition.

Fahad Al-Soula, President of both the Kuwaiti and Arab Gymnastics Federations, congratulated Al-Nama on her achievement, praising her commitment and tireless training efforts.

He stressed that the federation is deeply invested in developing young male and female gymnasts, adding that Al-Nama's success will inspire her teammates to push harder and bring further recognition to Kuwaiti gymnastics on the international stage.

The Kuwaiti squad in Cairo also features Abdullah Behbehani, along with gymnasts Farida Al-Shalfan and Dana Hussein. The championship runs until next Monday.

The federation views this participation as a vital opportunity for ath-



Al-Soula with champion Fatima Al-Nama.

letes to gain experience, compete at a high level, and target more medals — boosting Kuwait's long-term ambitions of regularly reaching the podium in global competitions.



Players fighting for the ball during the league match between Al Ahli and Al Hilal.

Al-Ahli stuns Al-Hilal with a dramatic 3-3 comeback

RIYADH, Sept 20: The Round 3 Roshn League showdown between Al-Ahli and Al-Hilal ended in stunning fashion, as the host staged a late comeback to snatch a 3-3 draw after trailing by three goals.

Al-Hilal appeared in full control, racing to a 3-0 lead by the 78th minute. But in a remarkable turnaround, Al-Ahli struck three times in the closing stages, sending home fans into raptures and leaving the visitors shell-shocked.

For Al-Ahli coach Matthias Jaissle, it was a night to savor: "I believed we could come back. I expected a miracle, and we made one

happen against a very strong team. Despite mistakes, we never stopped fighting. I'm proud of the energy and aggression we showed in the second half."

On the other side, frustration was written all over Simone Inzaghi's face. The Al-Hilal coach lamented the collapse: "We played brilliantly for 80 minutes, scored three goals, created chances, but what happened after the 80th minute was unacceptable. Injuries and the loss of players like Malcom and Neves affected our balance, but defensive lapses cost us dearly. These endings are hard to accept — it was a painful lesson."

Kane grabs another hat trick for Bayern

BERLIN, Sept 20, (AP): That man again.

Harry Kane scored his second hat trick of the season to steer Bayern Munich to a 4-1 win at Hoffenheim in the Bundesliga on Saturday.

The England captain scored before the break and converted two penalties after it to take his club tally to 12 goals in six games across all competitions - 13 goals in seven games including the German Supercup.

Kane's other hat trick was in the Bundesliga-opening 6-0 rout of Leipzig.

Bayern was fortunate Hoffenheim did not capitalize on its early dominance after Bayern coach Vincent Kompany opted to rotate his squad after the 3-1 win over Chelsea in the Champions League on Wednesday - when Kane scored twice.

Nicolas Jackson made his first start since his switch from Chelsea, and the 17-year-old Lennart Karl made his first Bundesliga start for Bayern.

Chebet completes golden double at Tokyo worlds

TOKYO, Sept 20, (Agencies): Kenya's Beatrice Chebet capped a golden double at the World Athletics Championships on Saturday, storming down the final straight to win the women's 5,000 meters.

The 25-year-old Olympic champion, who broke the world record earlier this year in Eugene with 13:58.06, added the 5,000m crown to her 10,000m title in 14:54.36.

Her compatriot and defending champion Faith Kipyegon, already the 1,500m winner in Tokyo, settled for silver just 0.71 seconds behind.

Italy's Nadia Battocletti, the 2022 European champion, claimed bronze in 14:55.42.

Anna Hall became America's second winner of the world heptathlon title - joining Jackie Joyner-Kersey - by wrapping up a wire-to-wire endurance test and cruising into the finish line Saturday to celebrate her biggest victory.

It's the first major title for Hall, one of the world's most consistent performers in the seven-part event, after years of close calls and disappointments. She finished with 6,888 points.

Three years ago at worlds, she won bronze. Two years ago, she lost the title by a scant 20 points, falling less than 2 seconds short in the last event, the 800



Kenya's Beatrice Chebet celebrates as she wins the gold medal in the women's 5,000 meters final at the World Athletics Championships in Tokyo. (AP)

meters, from taking the gold. Then, last year, she was forced to rush back from an Achilles injury to get ready for the Olympics, where she finished fifth.

On a calm cool evening on Day 8 of the world championships in Tokyo, Hall finally made it to the top.

"Ever since I came on the circuit

and won my first medal, that's been something I've been trying to do," Hall said. "Jackie and I have talked about it, and we were like, 'The USA does make great heptathletes.'" Among her biggest fans is Joyner-Kersey herself, who has said she sees potential for the 24-year-old from Colorado to rewrite

some of the history she still owns.

Joyner-Kersey is the only U.S. athlete to win the event at the Olympics (1988, '92) and she holds both the world record from 1988 and the record at world championships from her victory in Rome in 1987.

Hall cracked the vaunted 7,000-point mark at a meet in June and a run at JJK's records looked in play over the two days in Tokyo. All a product of not giving up, even after the injury and close calls.

"That entire time, I just put my head down and I worked," Hall said.

Any hopes there got tripped up by a less-than-great long jump, but the overall result was never in doubt. Hall went into the final event, the 800 meters, with a 122-point edge over eventual silver medalist Kate O'Connor of Ireland, and as one of the fastest runners in the 20-woman race, nobody was going to catch her.

Defending champion Katarina Johnson-Thompson finished in a rare tie for third place with American Taliyah Brooks. They finished exactly 3.61 seconds apart in the 800 to both end up with 6,581 points.

The Netherlands' Jessica Schilder clinched the women's shot put gold medal.