



Kuwait Amir's Representative visits
Kuwait Permanent Mission to UN
Page 2



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INFORMATION MINISTER PROPELS YOUTH, NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT FORWARD

‘Visit Kuwait’ modern tourism pulse

Campaign sparks Kuwaiti pride, progress

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

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi revealed that the ‘Visit Kuwait’ platform will be launched on Nov 1, 2025, indicating the project is considered “a modern tourism pulse that opens horizons for an integrated experience.”

In his speech at the launch of the national campaign titled, “Leadership by Will”, in Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center on Sunday, Al-Mutairi explained the ‘Visit Kuwait’ platform “is a unified national vision that brings together government and private entities under one umbrella, opens doors to partnerships with the private sector in hotels, restaurants, transportation, entertainment and sports, and provides local and international investors with a single window for communication and marketing.”

Dean of Kuwaiti Journalism and Editor-in-Chief of the Arab Times and Al-Seyassah newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah attended the event.

Continued on Page 5



Left: Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi speaks during the launch of the national campaign titled, 'Leadership by Will', in Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center on Sunday. Right: Dean of Kuwaiti Journalism and Editor-in-Chief of the Arab Times and Al-Seyassah newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah in a group photo during the event.



Photos by Samer Shiqr



Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah
Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

President Ahmed al-Sharaa, ‘Glory to the Arabs’ is no longer valid

I WILL get straight to the point in addressing Syrian President Ahmed al-Sharaa. Since 1974, Syria has faced many events that have isolated it from the world, particularly due to sanctions. Despite this, the leadership at the time failed to grasp the full consequences of these events. Instead, it remained lost in unrealistic dreams, clinging to slogans that were impossible to achieve because they lacked a solid foundation.

Today, when you, President Ahmed al-Sharaa, declare that “concluding a security agreement with Israel is an unavoidable necessity,” you must acknowledge, as the late Egyptian President Anwar Sadat had said, that “99 percent of the cards are in the hands of the United States of America.”

Therefore, Syria’s status cannot be resolved without reaching an agreement with Israel, especially as the Arab states lack the political and military power and support to impose their own terms. This is compounded by the fact that 95 percent of their armaments come from Western countries, including the United States, while the nuclear systems supplied to Israel are far more advanced than those provided to the Arab states.

President Ahmed al-Sharaa, if Sadat had heeded the advice of Hafez al-Assad and other Arab leaders when he pursued peace with Israel under American patronage, Egypt would be under threat today. The Suez Canal, Sinai, and other territories would be under Israeli control, just as the Syrian Golan Heights has been occupied by Tel Aviv since 1981.

The former regime did nothing but condemn and “reserve its right to respond.” Over the course of 51 years, we saw no real response from the Syrian regime, which eventually collapsed and became a thing of the past.

Continued on Page 5

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Justice Ministry strengthens worker protection

Kuwait sets panel to expedite injury claim review

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: The Ministry of Justice’s decision to form a six-member committee to review claims for compensation related to work injuries was published on Sunday in the official gazette “Kuwait Al-Youm”, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Article 1 - A committee shall be formed to review compensation claims for work-related injuries. It will consist of the following members:
■ Counselor Khaled Mohammed Khalifa Al-Kharafi – Deputy Court of Appeal

(Chairman)
■ Sheikh Mohammed Al-Shamali – Representative of the Ministry of Finance (Member)
■ Counselor Toura Nasser Al-Roudhan – Representative of the Fatwa and Legislation Department (Member)
■ Dalal Abdul Rahman Al-Qattan – Head of the Secretariat Department (Rapporteur)
■ Shaima Mohammed Al-Jassem – Senior Assistant Administrative Coordinator (Transactions Secretary)

■ Dana Ali Hussein Al-Hilali – Senior Assistant Administrative Coordinator (Transactions Secretary)

Article 2 - The committee shall review claims for compensation related to death or disability resulting from or occurring during the course of work. It shall submit a detailed report, including its recommendations, to the Compensation Committee.

Article 3 - The committee shall establish its own procedures and workflow to

Continued on Page 5

Kuwait grants KNPC exclusive gas cylinder distribution rights

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: Minister of Commerce and Industry Khalifa Al-Ajeel has issued Decision No. 169/2025 for amending Decision No. 33/1986, which prohibits the import of gas cylinders of all types, sizes, and accessories, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The decision states the following:
Article 1 - Clause 2 of Decision No. 33/1986 shall be amended to read, “The Kuwait Oil Tanker Company (KOTC) and the Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) shall have the exclusive right to import and distribute gas cylinders and accessories in the State of Kuwait.”

Article 2 - Article 1 of Decision No. 83/2003 shall be amended to prohibit the local circulation of gas cylinders and accessories, including gas regulators, and hoses of various types, sizes, and shapes, unless imported by KOTC or KNPC.

Article 3 - KNPC shall replace KOTC in implementing the provisions of Decision No. 33/1986 and its amendments, following the completion of the executive and legal procedures related to the transfer of ownership of the gas cylinder filling plant assets to KNPC.

Continued on Page 5

Market sees sudden surges in fish prices

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

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: Shift A Supervisor at Sharq Fish Market Hamoud Al-Hamdi disclosed that more than 583.4 tons of fish have been pumped into local markets since the start of the fishing season in territorial waters in early September till date.

Al-Hamdi said the average total price of local fish increased slightly by KD1 per item, and by 3.8 percent compared to previous levels.

In a statement to the newspaper, Al-Hamdi revealed the fish market is witnessing price fluctuations in some types of fish. He confirmed the increase of prices for some types, such as Grouper, Balool and Sha’um, which in some cases exceeded 30 percent, indicating these price hikes overshadowed the decline in prices of other types like the Sea Bream, Nuwaibi and shrimp

Continued on Page 5

‘Inflation’ looms amid growth push: analysts



Al-Ghanim



Ramadan



Al-Oqab

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

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: In a move that reflects monetary policy directions in confronting the challenges of inflation and slowing growth, the Central Bank of Kuwait announced a 25 basis point cut in interest rates from 4.0 percent to 3.75 percent effective Sept 18, 2025.

This is in line with the decision of the US Federal Reserve to take a similar step. The decision sparked widespread debate in economic circles about its repercussions on various sectors in Kuwait, particularly the real estate, investment and the consumer sectors.

A number of economic experts stated that the decision will affect investment properties due to their connection to borrowing and financing costs, and on the economy as a whole. Lower interest rates improve the country’s economic situation because financing becomes available at a lower cost, which supports business expansion and whets the appetite of businesspersons for new investments -- whether in real estate or other sectors, thus, stimulating the economy.

At the same time, experts warned about the potential risks of the decision, specifically the rising inflation rates if price growth is not controlled.

Continued on Page 5



KUNA photo

The Jordanian Chief of Staff during the ceremony honoring Brigadier General Mohammad Al-Ayada with the Order of Military Merit in the presence of the Kuwaiti Ambassador to Jordan.

Kuwaiti general honored in Jordan

Jordan’s King Abdullah II on Sunday bestowed upon Kuwait’s former military attache in the Hashemite Kingdom Brigadier General Mohammad Al-Ayada the nation’s Order of Military Merit, in recognition of his efforts to bolster bilateral relations.

The former Kuwaiti military attache was decorated with the order by Jordan’s military chief Major General Yousef Hunaiti, in the presence of Kuwait’s Ambassador to Amman Hamad Al-Meri, who described his country’s ties with Jordan as based on common visions and aspirations.

Echoing his sentiments, the outgoing Kuwaiti military attache agreed that bilateral relations have been on an upward trajectory across pride over the honor bestowed upon him.

Continued on Page 5

Kuwait gold surges to KD36.27

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21, (KUNA): The price of a gram of 24-karat gold in the Kuwaiti market reached about KD36.270 (about \$111), and 22-karat gold reached about KD33.250 (about \$101), while a kilogram of silver reached about KD467 (about \$1,536), according to a special report issued by Dar Al-Sabayek on Sunday.

The report stated that gold continued to break records, with strong gains for the fifth consecutive week at \$3,685 per ounce, supported by the first US interest rate cut this year, as expectations are growing for another cut before the end of the year.

Continued on Page 5

Other Voices

Ambassador Adarsh Swaika’s legacy of friendship between Kuwait and India

By Nasser Al-Hajeri

As Ambassador Adarsh Swaika concludes his tenure in Kuwait, it is fitting to reflect on his remarkable contributions to strengthening the bonds between our two nations. His time in Kuwait has been defined by vision, commitment, and an unyielding dedication to advancing India-Kuwait relations at both the governmental and people-to-people level.

One of the most historic milestones under his leadership was the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Kuwait, the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister in 43 years. This momentous occasion not only renewed high-level dialogue but also resulted in the elevation of our bilateral relations to the level of a Strategic Partnership. During the visit, His Highness the Amir conferred upon Prime Minister Modi the Mubarak Al Kabere Order, Kuwait’s highest national honour, a rare distinction reserved for select Heads of State and Government.



Dr. Adarsh Swaika
India's Ambassador to Kuwait

This period also witnessed significant diplomatic exchanges, including reciprocal visits of the Foreign Ministers of both countries in 2024. The broadening of co-operation was further underscored by the establishment of seven new Joint Working Groups across diverse sectors, the signing of an MoU on Defence Cooperation, and Kuwait’s decision to join the India-led International Solar Alliance. Together, these steps reflect a shared vision of partnership that looks to the future with confidence.

The Ambassador placed strong emphasis on enhancing bilateral trade and investment. The Embassy organized high-level conferences in 2023 and 2024 to showcase opportunities for business, while also working to promote tourism. A landmark achievement was the launch of electronic visas for Kuwaiti nationals in July 2025, easing travel to India and further deepening exchanges.

Continued on Page 5

UK, Australia and Canada recognize Palestinian state

LONDON, Sept 21, (AP): The U.K., Australia and Canada confirmed Sunday that they are formally recognizing a Palestinian state despite vociferous opposition from the U.S. and Israel.

The coordinated initiative from the Commonwealth nations and long-time allies of Israel reflects growing outrage at Israel’s conduct of the war in Gaza and the steps taken by the Israeli government to thwart any efforts to create a Palestinian state, including by the continued expansion of settlements in the West Bank.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, who has faced pressure to take a harder

line on Israel within his own governing Labour Party, said the U.K.’s move is intended “to revive the hope of peace for the Palestinians and Israelis,” while insisting that it wasn’t a reward for Hamas.

“Today, to revive the hope of peace and a two-state solution, I state clearly as prime minister of this great country that the United Kingdom formally recognizes the state of Palestine,” Starmer said in his video message. “We recognized the state of Israel more than 75 years ago as a homeland for the Jewish people. Today we join over 150 countries who recognize a Palestinian state also. A pledge to the Palestinian and

Israeli people that there can be a better future.”

The announcement was widely anticipated after Starmer said in July that the U.K. would recognize a Palestinian state unless Israel agreed to a ceasefire in Gaza, allowed the U.N. to bring in aid and took other steps toward long-term peace.

More countries are expected to do so at the U.N. General Assembly this week, including from France, which like the U.K., is one of the five permanent members of the Security Council.

Continued on Page 5

Prayer Timings

Fajr	04:16	Asr	15:08
Sunrise ..	05:35	Maghrib ..	17:47
Zohr	11:41	Isha	19:03

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Hot with light to moderate northwesterly wind to northerly wind, with speeds of 08-32 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

By Night: Rather hot to mild with light to moderate freshen-

Weather

ing at times over coastal areas northwesterly wind to northerly wind, with speeds of 12-42 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	42	30
Kuwait Airport	41	30

Abdaly	42	24
Babyan	40	23
Jahra	43	30
Failaka Island	39	27
Salmiyah	36	30
Ahmadi	38	28
Nuwaisib	38	31
Wafra	40	27

High-level activities for 80th United Nations General Assembly begin in New York

Kuwait Amir's Representative visits Kuwait Permanent Mission to UN

NEW YORK, Sept 21, (KUNA): Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah visited the Permanent Mission of the State of Kuwait to the United Nations in New York on Saturday.

His Highness the Crown Prince was welcomed by Kuwait Permanent Representative to UN Tareq Mohammad Al-Banai and members of the mission, including the delegation to the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

His Highness Sheikh Sabah conveyed greetings on behalf of His Highness the Amir, including the guidance regarding their role in shedding light on Kuwait's leading role on international arenas.

His Highness the Amir's Representative also called on the mission to exert their utmost efforts in their work, and to benefit from the extensive diplomatic experience in serving the interests of their country.

The meeting was attended by Kuwait Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya, Director of Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) Sheikh Dr. Meshal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Assistant to Foreign Minister Office Affairs Ambassador Bader Al-Tunaib, Kuwait Ambassador to US Sheikhha Al-Zain Sabah Nasser Al-



Representative of His Highness the Amir of the country, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah at the Permanent Headquarters of the State of Kuwait at the United Nations in New York.

Sabah, and the official accompanying delegation.

The High-Level activities for the 80th UN General Assembly will kick off on Monday with the participa-

tion of prominent leaders including the Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled

Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

The activities will be held under the theme "Better together: 80 years and more for peace, development and human rights" amid growing interna-

tional challenges.

One of the major events of the activities is the commemoration of the 80th Anniversary of the UN on September 22.

Member states of the UN will continue discussions on the two-state solution, an event seen as a continuation of activities by the UNGA last July, which did not the participation of either the US or the Israeli occupation.

Leaders of the world will also touch on the Beijing+30 Action Agenda, a UN-led initiative launched in 2025 to boost gender equality and women's empowerment, contributing to the 2030 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

On Tuesday, the UNGA will hold general high-level discussions when leaders of 193 countries deliver their nations' visions for peace, development, and human rights from September 23-27. They will conclude on September 29.

The Climate Summit will be held on September 24 with leaders presenting new plans for climate action specifically national plans for combating climate change. This event will be held before November's 2025 United Nations Climate Change Conference -- or Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC, more commonly known as (COP 30) -- in Brazil.

Artificial intelligence will be part of the major discussions during the high-level activity week specifically on September 25 when world governments will discuss the global framework for AI governance.



Representative of His Highness the Amir of the country, His Highness the Crown Prince, with a number of members of the State of Kuwait's permanent delegation to the United Nations and the support team participating in the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly.



Crown Prince Diwan photos

Kuwait, Saudi Arabia advance energy and water cooperation

MEW pushes digital transformation

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: Officials at the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy discussed the paths and aspects of cooperation related to the electricity and water sectors in a recent videoconference with their counterparts in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Sources from the ministry disclosed that the two sides discussed more than 10 paths, some of which have been completed, while coordination is underway to benefit from the experience of Saudi Electricity Company in several areas, especially the rapid digital transformation. Sources added the meeting is held every month, starting June 20, 2024.

In another development, the Board of Directors of the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) approved the extension of the bid

study period for Subiya Power Plant (Phase Four) and Reverse Osmosis Desalination Plant (Phase Two) tenders by one month.

Sources said "the ministry is keen on completing the procedures related to these two tenders to improve its electricity and water production capacity in order to meet the electricity and water needs of the country, taking into consideration the present and future urban expansion in the country."

Sources indicated that if the tender procedures for the Subiya project are completed, it will be operational in 2028, that is, before the second and third phases of the

North Zour Power Plant start operating. Sources affirmed that the ministry is pushing towards completion of its production projects by overcoming obstacles in a bid to increase production capacity and strengthen the electricity and water networks.

Furthermore, the ministry announced Sunday the connection of electricity to Plot N1 in Al-Mutlaa Residential City, specifically some parts of Block Four, in cooperation with the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW). It added that it will soon receive applications for connecting electricity to 455 residential plots in the area.

Kuwait, Singapore boost ties in security, information exchange

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21, (KUNA): Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah on Sunday received Singapore's non-resident Ambassador to Kuwait Abu Bakar Bin Mohd Nor to discuss issues of mutual interest.

The ministry said the talks focused on partnerships to improve efficiency and information exchange among authorities. Sheikh Fahad reaffirmed Kuwait's commitment to strengthening ties with friendly nations through continued cooperation to promote security and stability.



KUNA photo

First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior discusses with the Ambassador of Singapore.

Kuwait sends 11th aid plane to Gaza

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21, (KUNA): The 11th relief plane of the second Kuwaiti air bridge departed Sunday, carrying 10 tons of food aid to Al-Arish Airport in Egypt, en route to the Gaza Strip.

The aircraft took off from Abdullah Al-Mubarak Air Base as part of the "Relief for Gaza" campaign, organized by Kuwait Red Crescent Society with Kuwaiti charities and coordinated with relevant ministries. KRCS Chairman Khaled Al-Mughamis told KUNA the Society remains committed to delivering humanitarian support to Gaza, under the directives of Kuwait's leadership and in response to the worsening humanitarian situation.

He noted KRCS works closely with the Ministries of Social Affairs, Foreign Affairs, and Defense, as well as Kuwait's Embassy in Egypt and the Egyptian Red Crescent to ensure smooth aid delivery.

He expressed gratitude to Kuwait's leadership for directing official bodies to cooperate and ease logistics, ensuring the urgent humanitarian aid reaches the Palestinian people affected by the ongoing crisis.

To date, the second Kuwaiti air bridge has delivered 200 tons of locally produced food aid to Gaza, coordinated with Kuwait Flour Mills and Bakeries Company to support affected families.



KUNA photo

Representatives of the official bodies participating in preparing the 11th relief flight of the second airlift.

Other Voices

The difference between dementia and Alzheimer's

By Ahmad alsarraf

ONE of the things said about Alzheimer's and dementia is that patients often are unaware of the true nature of their condition. However, for those who live with them or care for them, especially if they are elderly, it marks the beginning of a long and difficult journey.

As I have grown older, I have noticed more and more people suffering from, or on the verge of developing, memory-related disorders. This wasn't something I used to observe often, nor was it something I thought much about in the past.

The difference between dementia and Alzheimer's lies in the level of severity. Dementia is the more severe condition and involves a general decline in mental abilities, enough to interfere with daily life, such as forgetting to eat or use the bathroom.

Alzheimer's disease, on the other hand, is a specific brain disease that often leads to dementia. It usually starts with memory problems, confusion, poor judgment, and changes in behavior. These symptoms begin mildly but get worse over time. Alzheimer's makes up 60 percent to 80 percent of dementia cases.

There is currently no effective cure for Alzheimer's or dementia. No one is immune to these two incurable brain diseases. Medicine has not yet fully uncovered their causes, but there are medications and treatments that can temporarily ease symptoms or slow their progression.

The most common early symptoms include short-term memory loss,

forgetting recent conversations, events, or the location of everyday items. Long-term memories often remain unaffected at first. Other symptoms include difficulty in performing familiar tasks, such as managing money, following prescriptions, or using household appliances. People may also become confused about time or place, get lost in familiar areas, or be unsure of dates and the passage of time. Problems with language and communication are also common, such as struggling to find the right words, follow conversations, or understand what others are saying.

All of this is accompanied by poor judgment and unusual or incorrect decisions, such as carelessly wasting money or wearing inappropriate clothing. There are also changes in mood or personality, including increased anxiety, depression, fear, withdrawal from hobbies, or becoming easily upset in new or changing situations. In some cases, this may require supervision to prevent the patient from harming themselves or others.

In the early stages, it is important to choose the right time and place for conversations with the patient, such as in the morning and in a quiet setting. These talks should be approached with empathy, patience, and kindness. Keep in mind that the patient may not fully understand or accept the situation. Avoid addressing the patient directly by name; instead, discuss memory loss and forgetfulness in general terms, using phrases like "I have noticed..." or "I am afraid..." This approach can reduce the patient's defensiveness and focus the conversation on the speaker's feelings. It is essential to listen carefully, be patient, and avoid hurting the patient's feelings.

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diwaniya

ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Infrastructure pressure calls for smarter traffic strategies

“WHEN I send a message to a senior official, it is intended as a form of advice and constructive counsel for conveying public opinion through the press to help shape a scientific and technical vision on a given issue, particularly when that issue is based on facts or supported by studies,” columnist **Eng. Adel Al-Jarallah Al-Kharafi** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“We all know that infrastructure is planned according to strategies developed by various entities, including the Supreme Council for Planning and Development, and later implemented by the Ministry of Public Works. However, such studies must be based on accurate and reliable information that is held by the Ministry of Interior.

“We have all witnessed the recurring traffic congestion, especially during rush hours and at the beginning of the academic year. Traffic police officers and personnel deserve recognition for their daily efforts in managing the situation. Nevertheless, I would like to offer my own perspective - congestion impedes productivity and leads to a considerable loss of time, which is a valuable resource.

“First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef has the ability to coordinate among ministers, which is why I am addressing this article to him.

“Kuwait’s rapidly growing population is placing increasing pressure on infrastructure, particularly roads and streets. As a result, it has become urgently necessary to find innovative and practical solutions to manage this situation effectively.

“For example, numerous violations can be observed in the parking areas of Amiri Hospital in the capital, where vehicles are often parked in a disorderly manner.

“Hospital visitors are certainly in dire need of parking, not for recreation or leisure. Although the new building provides additional parking spaces, traffic congestion in the area persists.

“Here, I would like to once again thank the traffic police, who often show understanding and compassion. When they see an elderly person or a driver briefly parked in an irregular spot, they sometimes refrain from issuing a ticket, recognizing the circumstances. This humanitarian gesture is commendable and deserves appreciation.

“I hope that First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Al-Sabah, who possesses both the necessary information and the means, will contribute to finding effective solutions to this ongoing traffic problem. While it is true that the Ministry of Interior and the Capital Governor Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali are doing their best to fix the issue, resolving such challenges requires the collaboration and capabilities of all relevant parties.

“We hope that the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior will seek the support of Kuwaiti intellectuals and academics from engineering colleges, public benefit associations, and qualified scientific experts to help develop practical, science-based solutions, much like what was done at Darwaza Abdul Razzaq.

“These lines are not intended as criticism or blame, but rather as a constructive opinion aimed at modernizing the approach to solving the traffic problem and creating a program that can be implemented efficiently.

“Ensuring citizens’ comfort and road safety is one of the most important goals of any official in any country. I firmly believe that the necessary capabilities are available, but they require strong management and clear goals.”

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“For nearly three years, the government has been seeking a solution to the so-called “Chinese puzzle” that emerged following the signing of the memoranda of understanding between Kuwait and the People’s Republic of China.” Kuwaiti journalist **Hassan Ali Karam** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“A total of 128 meetings were held, attended by the His Highness Prime Minister, many ministers, and specialists involved in the Kuwaiti-Chinese agreement. The aim was to encourage the Chinese to visit Kuwait, not for tourism or to explore the land once known for its pearls, but for meaningful cooperation. However, the Chinese side continued to make excuses for reasons unknown to us, though perhaps known to some informed parties. So, what has come of these 128 meetings?

“The Chinese do not like wasting time or holding meetings to drink tea and coffee. So what is the point behind Kuwait’s weekly meetings if our counterparts in China have yet to begin implementing any part of the agreement?

“The Chinese have neither brought in the drilling and loading equipment nor laid a single brick in the construction of Mubarak Port. They have yet to show any serious commitment to completing the project, as long as it remains entangled in border disputes between two neighboring countries.

“When we observe the presence of major Chinese companies operating in Basra, we must realize that the competition is not merely between Kuwait and Iraq over a few stretches of sea. Rather, it is a struggle for strategic presence. The Iraqis aspire to transform Basra into a regional hub on par with Dubai, the French Riviera, Qatar, and Salalah in Oman.

“The new Iraq is no longer Saddam’s Iraq, defined by displays of power and brute force. It is now an Iraq focused on development and a promising future, one that seeks to encourage the return of the five million Iraqi expatriates to contribute to rebuilding and developing their homeland. There are dozens of Iraqi scientists and experts, such as the late, renowned architect Zaha Hadid, living abroad.

“On the other hand, time seems to hold little value in Kuwait. Many projects were proposed in the last quarter of last year and the first quarter of this year, yet most amounted to nothing more than promises that quickly evaporated.

“We often focus on less critical issues and neglect the ones that truly matter. Take, for example, the development of the islands, the northern region, and the free zones, which was once the visionary dream of the late Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad. Why have these projects been sidelined or indefinitely postponed? And for how much longer?

“Kuwait will not realize the aspirations of its people if we continue to rely on outdated thinking. We deceive ourselves when we claim that patience alone guarantees safety. Why do we remain idle while the rest of the world continues to move forward?”

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“Working in a professional environment that values appearances and bureaucracy over real achievement is like living in a jungle where survival favors the strongest, not the most capable,” Kuwaiti writer **Bandari Al-Ajmi** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“In such a setting, employees are drained of their energy and dedication, yet they face constant criticism. Their contributions are overlooked, and they are forced to conform to a rigid organizational structure without recognition or appreciation. There is no applause for success, no appreciation for teamwork... only a relentless race to protect one’s own position.

“It is unfortunate that environments which have undergone restructuring and welcomed new talent and are meant to be more collaborative and open, still suffer from isolation and stagnation. We see departments retreating behind their desks, replacing human interaction with cold emails, as if deliberately severing the last ties between people. And the excuse? “We have to be professional.”

“Here, bureaucracy becomes a shackle that stifles innovation and blocks change. It prioritizes form over substance and binds employees to the system rather than to fundamental human and ethical values. This creates a sense of alienation within the organization, leading especially in new management to departments working in different directions.

“The result is slowness, routine, and an inability to adapt to change. The philosopher John Stuart Mill warned of this danger centuries ago, noting that bureaucracy resists reform because it grants those within it power and knowledge they can use to thwart any change that threatens their positions.

“In contrast, major global corporations like Google and Microsoft have shown that success does not come from bureaucracy, but from open environments that encourage direct communication, empower employees to take part in decision-making, and view innovation as the engine of progress. This approach builds employee loyalty and a strong sense of belonging.

In short, if we want our organizations to thrive, we must break free from the constraints of stifling bureaucracy. We need to embrace open-door policies, cultivate genuine human connection, and prioritize teamwork. It is essence over appearance, and innovation over routine, that will shape a successful and sustainable future.”

— Compiled by Simi K. Kutty



Al-Kharafi

Mol deploys drones to catch reckless drivers

249 violations recorded in 24 hours

By Munif Naif
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: The General Traffic Department (GTD) in the Interior Ministry continues its intensive campaigns to monitor overtaking and traffic obstruction violations, which are among the most common violations that disrupt the flow of traffic.

These campaigns are carried out with the participation of security sectors in the ministry, including emergency patrols, public

security, traffic investigations, and central control room, using surveillance cameras and drones to monitor violations.

A security source disclosed that GTD issued 249 violation citations for overtaking and intentionally obstructing traffic within 24 hours.

In a related development, Head of the Northern Road Patrols Major Suleiman Al-Failakawi confirmed in an interview on Al-Akhbar Channel that overtaking and obstructing traffic are punishable by up to two months of vehicle impoundment.

Furthermore, the ministry announced on its X account Sunday that it continues to intensify efforts to raise the level of traffic safety, calling on the public to strictly comply with traffic laws and fully cooperate with security personnel to guarantee the safety of everyone.

PAI orders closure of 30 industrial plots

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

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: The Public Authority for Industry (PAI) closed 30 industrial plots for violating the regulations and laws approved by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

This step was taken after the issuance of reports for various violations, such as conducting business without a license, using the plots for

workers’ housing, constructing buildings without a license, using some plots for purposes other than those licensed, encroaching on plot boundaries of varying sizes, leasing plots, failing to transport industrial waste (solid and liquid) to designated facilities, discharging waste or materials not permitted to be discharged into sewage networks, rainwater networks or dirt yards, and dumping rubble and liquids in dirt yards outside the plot boundaries.

Traffic safety improves, juvenile violations drop

By Munif Naif
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: The General Traffic Department in the Interior Ministry recorded a remarkable decline in the number of juveniles caught driving without a license.

This development reflects the success of intensive traffic campaigns aimed at controlling traffic behavior and reducing violations. The newspaper obtained information that the number of juveniles caught driving without a license last week totaled 18, far from the 70 per week recorded in previous weeks.

According to the weekly statistics of the department, traffic campaigns resulted in recording 31,643 various violations, impoundment of 39 vehicles, referral of 34 individuals to the traffic police station, seizure of 75 wanted vehicles, and arrest of 53 violators of Residency and Labor laws.

Patrols also dealt with 1,282 traffic accidents resulting in 236 injuries, confirming that the speed of intervention and the accuracy of procedures contributed to reducing the losses and injuries resulting from such accidents.



KFF extinguishes Rawda house fire.

House fire in Rawda leaves one casualty

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: Fire broke out in a house in Rawda on Saturday afternoon, resulting in one casualty, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

According to a statement posted on its official X account, Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) explained that firefighting teams from the Shaheed and Hawally stations rushed to the location, evacuated the house, controlled the fire, and extinguished it. The casualty was handed over to paramedics for medical attention.

News in Brief

Municipality to implement two-shift funeral schedule

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: As part of its efforts to facilitate services and ease the burden on families of the deceased and mourners during funerals, prayers, and burials, Kuwait Municipality announced in Circular No. 3/2025 that funeral burials will now be scheduled in two daily shifts, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The two shifts are:

- Morning shift - 9:00 am
- Evening shift: after the Asr prayer

Kuwait Municipality stated that this regulation will take effect starting Sunday, and all cemetery officials must adhere to the designated schedules and ensure the availability of necessary supplies and support.

□ □ □

Domestic worker dies: A female domestic worker collapsed and died while carrying out her duties at her employer’s house in Bayan, reports Al-Anba daily.

Forensic medical examinations confirmed that the cause of death was heart attack.

□ □ □

2 expatriates to be deported: Security officers assigned in Hawally Governorate referred two expatriates for administrative deportation as they were caught begging in Mishref, claiming that one of them is suffering from cancer, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to a security source, officers discovered that the medical reports the expatriates carried were forged and that the man who claimed to be ill is in good health. Cash was found in their possession. The sources disclosed that the Operations Unit at the Ministry of Interior received several reports regarding two individuals frequently seen begging while dressed in traditional Kuwaiti attire. The reports indicated that the beggars alleged one of them has cancer and cannot afford treatment.

Man acquitted

Court sets limit on ‘general warrants’

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

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: The Court of Appeals established an important judicial principle, stating that “a general warrant does not justify arresting anyone with the accused for whom the search warrant is issued.”

Accordingly, the court overturned the prison sentence imposed on a man accused of drug trafficking and abuse, and acquitted him after he was arrested merely for being in the company of the person subject to the warrant.

The court emphasized in its ruling that the presence of the second accused alongside the first accused – who was the actual target of the search – did not constitute serious evidence of complicity or assistance in possessing the seized items. It clarified that the warrant granted to the officer was broad and vague, and did not permit the arrest and search of anyone accompanying the person authorized to be searched without solid evidence of involvement. The court pointed out that the first defendant’s statements, which attempted to attribute the seized items to the second defendant, lacked credibility and could not be relied upon, particularly since the latter had consistently maintained his denial from the start of the investigation.

Moreover, the toxicology report confirmed that his sample was free of any prohibited substances, definitively ruling out his connection to the seized items.

The court also observed that his admission to using shabu five days prior to his arrest pertained to a different incident, and therefore, could not be considered evidence of guilt in the present case.

Attorney Abdul Mohsen Al-Qattan, who represented the defendants in court, argued that the arrest and search procedures, as well as the confessions based on them, are invalid. He requested for his clients’ acquittal – a request the court granted in its ruling.



Ministry of Interior photo
First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef conducts an inspection visit to the Police Officers Club.

Interior Minister oversees final touches at Police Officers Club

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah conducted an inspection visit to the Police Officers Club in Abu Al-Hasaniya on Saturday as part of his ongoing oversight of various projects, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press statement issued by the Ministry of Interior, Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef emphasized that the visit reflects the ministry’s commitment to providing a comprehensive environment that strengthens social bonds and instills a sense of belonging and national loyalty.

He affirmed that the upcoming opening of the Police Officers Club facilities will be a huge development that will enhance the club’s social, cultural, and sporting roles as

a primary venue for activities and events serving members of the security establishment and their families.

Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef inspected the club’s various facilities, including chalets, swimming pools, and multi-purpose halls. He was briefed on the development work and modern equipment that have been completed to meet the aspirations of officers and their families for providing them with comprehensive and diverse services.

Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef was given a presentation by the club’s board chairman Brigadier General Abdul Mohsen Al-Akshan about the project’s development stages and the various facilities included. This reflects a comprehensive vision to create an ideal and integrated environment for family and social activities.

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Kuwait Amir congratulates Malta, Armenia and Belize on Nat'l Days

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Sunday a cables of congratulations to the President of Malta, Myriam Spiteri Debono; the President of Armenia, Vahagn Khachaturyan; and the Governor General of Belize, Froyla Tzalam, on the occasion of their countries' Independence Days. In his messages, His Highness wished the leaders good health and their nations continued progress, prosperity, and welfare.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh

Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also sent congratulatory cables to the same leaders, extending his wishes for further development, welfare, and prosperity to the people of Malta, Armenia, and Belize.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent cables of congratulations to the leaders of the three countries, reaffirming Kuwait's cordial relations and expressing hope for continued cooperation and friendly ties.



Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah poses for group photo of participants.



Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah sponsoring and attending the event.



KUNA photos

CSC OKs hiring expat teachers

324 posts still vacant

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: The Civil Service Commission (CSC) has asked the Ministry of Education to resume the process of contracting non-Kuwaiti teachers for the 2025/2026 academic year in the scientific and humanities disciplines specified in the latest job vacancy announcement of the ministry, provided the applicants meet the conditions, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The CSC underscored the importance of complying with the regulations and conditions governing these contracts, based strictly on actual manpower needs.

The daily obtained a copy of the letter addressed to the undersecretary of the ministry, in which the CSC stated that it nominated a number of Kuwaiti applicants registered in the employment system for teaching positions in the Ministry of Education from April 1 to Aug 1, 2025. It confirmed the nomination of 726 teachers (178 male and 548 female), while the ministry initially indicated it needs 776 teachers (401

male and 375 female).

The remaining vacancies include 25 positions for General Science, six for Chemistry, 13 for Biology and three for Geology.

The CSC requested the ministry to submit a report detailing the name, national identification number, gender, subject specialization, and type of contract for each remaining teacher to be appointed, with a separate letter issued for each, in accordance with the provisions of Circular No. 3/2017, which gives priority to non-Kuwaiti applicants born to Kuwaiti mothers.

According to the table attached by the CSC, the ministry still needs 324 teachers -- 236 males and 88 females as follows: two female English teachers, 15 male French teachers, 55 male Mathematics teachers, 60 female Mathematics teachers, 25 male General Science teachers, 17 male Physics teachers, 11 female Physics teachers, six male Chemistry teachers, 13 male Biology teachers, three male Geology teachers, 15 male Philosophy teachers, one male Computer Science teacher, 13 male Social Studies teachers, two male Interior Design teachers, seven male Electrical and Electronics teachers, nine male History teachers, and nine male Geography teachers.

Farwaniya celebrates World Cleanup Day

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21, (KUNA): Al-Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah affirmed Saturday that voluntary initiatives, particularly those related to the environment, represent a positive model for cooperation between state institutions, youth, and volunteers, which in turn enhances environmental awareness among various segments of society.

The remarks by the Governor came while sponsoring and attending an event in cooperation with KAFO platform in front of the Farwaniya Popu-

lar Cafe, marking the World Cleanup Day.

Sheikh Athbi expressed his joy to participate in such events, which foster a spirit of cooperation and community involvement.

The Governor also thanked KAFO Director Dr. Fatima Al-Mousawi for this initiative, as well as officials from various departments and volunteers, emphasizing the need to promote environmental values to create a healthy and clean environment that reflects on the beautiful depiction of the State of Kuwait.

Governor hails KAFO and volunteers

PAAET starts law certificate distribution

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: The Deanship of Admission and Registration at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) has announced the start of certificate distribution for only Law major graduates (male and female) of the College of Business Studies for the summer semester

of 2024/2025, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The Deanship explained that distribution will begin on Sunday, and continue until Tuesday, at the Records and Information Department in Adailiya, Building 12. Students must present their original civil ID and clearance form upon collection. Cer-

tificates will be handed over only to the graduate or to an authorized person with an official power of attorney. The certificate collection will be available during official working hours from 8:30 am to 12:00 noon. Dates for distributing certificates for other majors will be announced at a later time.

Asphalt scraping, paving advance in Mishref

MPW speeds up road projects

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan has affirmed that her ministry is keen on following up major road maintenance and asphalt works in various governorates.

Al-Mashaan



Dr. Al-Mashaan

said the concerned field teams continue to implement the road maintenance plans according to the specified timetables.

Meanwhile, Eng. Fahad Al-Rumaidhi, Project Supervisor for Mishref Contract No. 9 for the first zone in Hawally Governorate, revealed that based on the directives of the minister, asphalt scraping has been completed in Block Five, in addition to scraping in Block Three -- from Street One to Street Eight, while Street Two in the same block has been paved.



KUNA photo

The English news writing program, presented by Morteza Mollaei, professor of translation at the American University of Kuwait, brought together staff from KUNA, QNA, and the Public Authority for Sport.

QNA and PAS staff join program

KUNA Center holds workshop to sharpen news writing skills

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21, (KUNA): The Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) Center for Development of Media held on Sunday a training course focusing on English news writing.

The course features participation of KUNA employees, in addition to members from Qatar News Agency (QNA) and the Public Authority for Sport.

The course, presented by Professor of translation at the American University of

Kuwait (AUK), Murtaza Mollaei, lasts until September 25 and will tackle several important aspects of news writing.

The program includes theoretical and practical exercises aimed at sharpening the skills of news editors.

The Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) Center for Development of Media was established in 1995 with the goal of developing news personnel journalistic skills.

Firms must meet 3 key conditions

SMEs to gain structured access to public contracts under CAPT rules

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: The Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) is studying a number of regulations governing the participation of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in government tenders to ensure they are eligible to compete for contracts offered by public entities subject to the regulations of CAPT, reports Al-Rai daily quoting sources privy to the affairs of the Agency.

Sources disclosed that CAPT set three conditions for SMEs to bid for public sector contracts. Sources said the Agency will instruct public entities to confirm that the participating SMEs are registered with Kuwait National Fund for the Development of Small and Medium Enterprises, in addition to requiring them to submit financial state-

ments for the last three years to determine their revenues, and to verify their capital and ensure it matches the information registered with the Fund.

Sources pointed out that "requiring SMEs to fulfill the aforementioned conditions before they participate in public tenders creates a more structured environment, especially since some companies participate in tenders without meeting these requirements. The public entity awarding the tender has the right to disqualify any company that does not meet the conditions."

Sources added "the owners of SMEs benefit from several advantages, particularly being exempt from the tender price discount -- usually as high as 20 percent, compared to larger companies, thereby, helping them."

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Committee reaffirms commitment to advancing key national projects



Minister of Public Works and the committee Chairperson, Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan



Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah



Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, Minister of Finance and Acting Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment Dr. Subaih Al-Mukhaizeem



Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Housing Affairs Abdullah Al-Mishari



Minister of State for Communications Affairs Omar Al-Omar



The Minister of Public Works, Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan chairs the meeting of the Cabinet Public Services Committee in the presence of ministers, members of the committee, leaders and officials of a number of concerned government agencies.

Minister Al-Mashaan stresses unified efforts to boost efficiency

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21, (KUNA): Kuwait’s Cabinet Public Services Committee discussed on Sunday the latest procedural developments related to several vital projects in the country, said Minister of Public Works and the committee Chairperson,

Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan.

In remarks to KUNA, Minister Al-Mashaan stressed the importance of combining and unifying efforts and enhancing coordination among government agencies, in implementation of the political leadership’s directives to raise the efficiency of government work and

accelerate the pace of achievement.

The minister noted that today’s committee meeting witnessed a presentation of a set of practical ideas and proposals aimed at enhancing coordination between various government agencies in some development projects.

The Public Services Committee consists of Minister of State for Communications Affairs Omar Al-Omar, Min-

ister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah, Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Housing Affairs Abdullah Al-Mishari, and Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, Minister of Finance and Acting Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment Dr. Subaih Al-Mukhaizeem.

Continued from Page 1

President Ahmed

We must be pragmatic. Every Arab battle with Israel has benefited Israel more than the Arabs anticipated. The most recent example is Hamas’ reckless adventure in Gaza, which gave Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu everything he wanted, and then some.

Meanwhile, Hamas’ response has been limited to a few slogans and statements. Today, 1.9 million Palestinians are trapped in Gaza, facing the harshest conditions and facing death from starvation and thirst. What kind of victory are they really talking about?

The slogan “Glory, O Arabs, Glory” now reflects a stark reality; it speaks of historical glories that have long faded into the past.

Since 1917, beginning with the enforcement of the Sykes-Picot Agreement that divided the Arab world between Britain and France, and then the United States, which inherited British power, Arab “glory” has largely been reduced to patriotic slogans. The Arabs have not invented anything.

Therefore, Your Excellency President al-Sharaa, Syria today requires tremendous effort to revive itself and shake off the rubble of the outdated slogans. The Syrian people are talented, intelligent, and capable of achieving great things, if only they are provided with the necessary tools and opportunities.

It is time for the Syrian giant to rise from the depths of sanctions, and reclaim its long-awaited renaissance.

President al-Sharaa, I urge you not to listen to dreamers who have nothing to offer their own people, let alone the Arab world.

Continue on your path toward securing Syria’s supreme national interests, which require a realistic and pragmatic approach to dealing with these issues.

States operate on the principle of “the end justifies the means”, which means prioritizing national interests above all else, followed by the stability and strength of the state, both economically and socially, and then the interests of individuals.

This is precisely why Damascus is currently facing a major crisis. Failure is not an option, as it would mean the death of the emerging state. Therefore, it is crucial to stay the course, no matter how difficult. Every step forward makes the journey a little less arduous.

The path to achieving your goals begins with reconciliation with the international community. Even if you do not trust Israel, your commitment, as well as the assistance of major powers, will be in Syria’s best interests.

‘Visit Kuwait’

Al-Mutairi pointed out that “the platform is an institutional tourism memory consisting of everything related to visitors, citizens and residents -- from the electronic tourist visa to the interactive map that identifies destinations and introduces services, as well as the smart assistant ‘Rashid’, which answers inquiries at all times, and even provides offers and discounts in

partnership with the private sector to enrich the tourism experience for beneficiaries.”

He confirmed that once the platform is launched on Nov 1, it will reflect the spirit of Kuwaiti hospitality, saying “welcome” to every visitor from the first moment.

He went on to say that based on the methodology and vision of the ministry, Kuwait TV plays a vital role in stimulating the economic cycle of the arts by driving artistic production at all stages and strengthening its partnership with the private sector to provide a renewed programming map that reflects the spirit of creativity and achieve the goal of building a purposeful and sustainable media landscape.

He disclosed that Kuwait TV will launch a new programming cycle in October, featuring 18 diverse programs in the fields of culture, entertainment, art and other topics of interest to viewers. “These programs include those proven to be successful and have continued with new seasons, as well as those being shown for the first time, offering a fresh approach and topics that keep pace with the needs of society. These programs will be presented by a group of prominent media and creative professionals,” he stated.

He added “we are taking a qualitative step towards consolidating the presence of the ‘News Channel’, which we consider the voice of the citizen and a platform for obtaining reliable information.” He indicated that the ‘News Channel’ has 13 new programs to transmit news, analyze developments, and promote culture, in addition to the continuation of more than 15 developed programs that keep pace with modern standards in presenting news and interviews.

He emphasized that this diversity creates a comprehensive landscape, which parallels what news channels offer regionally and internationally, making the channel a comprehensive platform that conveys developments, answers questions, and documents Kuwait’s leadership in various fields. He said “it is a channel that does more than just transmit news, as it also creates stories depicting Kuwaiti society and present it through the voice of the citizens, serving as a mirror that reflects their reality and opens horizons of knowledge and awareness.”

Regarding the campaign, Al-Mutairi revealed “it aims to highlight the role of Kuwaiti willpower in various fields. Through this, our fathers and grandfathers had accomplishments that contributed to our leadership, and our sons continue the journey of construction and innovation in line with a national vision that extends from the past and shapes the future.”

He stressed that the launching of the campaign is an important milestone, during which “we will showcase a group of projects that reflect the strategic dimensions of the ministry and embody its vision of building modern media, creating a promising tourism scene, and establishing a cultural presence befitting Kuwait and its status. We are proceeding through our trust in Allah and determination derived from

our wise leadership, as per the directives of 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-Ahmad Al-Sabah, to better serve the nation and its people, and realized their aspirations.”

He stressed “these projects are not fleeting initiatives, as they are integrated steps that harmonize with each other to create a new image and open horizons for society, the private sector and youths, so that they become true partners in this journey.”

He explained that at the forefront of these projects is the national campaign, which stems from “our belief that what distinguishes Kuwait throughout its history is that its people have never known the impossible. Rather, they have faced challenges, created opportunities, and made willpower a path toward leadership in all our ambitions and endeavors, putting Kuwait at the forefront of development indicators. Kuwaiti people have inherited, generation after generation, a firm belief that Kuwait is a pioneering country. Its men and women have made exceptional marks in every field -- in the fields of humanity, science, economics, art and sports. These are shining names associated with Kuwait and depict its positive image to the world.”

He asserted that talking about the past is a source of pride and encouragement for more efforts and giving, affirming these iconic figures serve as a call for every young man and woman to strive to become the icons of tomorrow and to carry the banner of leadership into the future.

He added “the campaign is an integrated approach that reminds us of our past, makes our present an extension of the journey of giving and development, and opens the doors to the future we are shaping with our own hands, so that we can see Kuwait at the top, with its young men and women as distinguished ambassadors for their country in every forum.”

He revealed the campaign begins with each individual in their position, responsibility and ambition, transforming willpower into a unifying value that makes a difference. “Exercising willpower in our daily actions brings us closer to our goals. This approach is the path for the nation, families and individuals. It instills a sense of national responsibility and makes every step characterized by willpower contribute to building a distinguished present and a prosperous future,” he concluded.

Ambassador Adarsh

Equally significant was his championing of cultural diplomacy. The Festival of India in 2023, the exhibition commemorating 250 years of India-Kuwait friendship in 2025, concerts by Indian classical music maestros, the International Day of Yoga, and the vibrant Bharat Mela all stand as testament to his commitment to people-to-people linkages. These initiatives enriched the cultural fabric of Kuwait

while strengthening mutual understanding.

Above all, the Ambassador consistently highlighted the invaluable role of the large Indian community in Kuwait’s development, serving as a bridge of friendship between our peoples.

As he departs, we extend our deepest gratitude for his service and dedication. His legacy will endure in the strengthened bonds between India and Kuwait, and in the warm memories he leaves behind.

Kuwait sets

ensure the timely resolution of compensation claims submitted to it. Committee meetings will be held at the Ministry of Justice headquarters.

Article 4 - In carrying out its duties, the committee shall adhere to the procedures in force regarding compensation for death or disability arising during or as a result of work, in accordance with Civil Service Commission Circular No. 15/1983.

Article 5 - The committee may seek the assistance of any individuals or entities it deems necessary to conduct the studies required to fulfill its responsibilities.

Article 6 - The competent authorities, each within their respective jurisdiction, shall implement this decision and notify the concerned parties. This decision shall take effect from the date of its issuance.

Kuwait grants

Article 4 - The provisions of Decision No. 33/1986 and Decision No. 83/2003 shall remain in effect except as amended by this resolution.

Article 5 - All officials are obligated to implement this resolution within their respective jurisdictions. It shall take effect from the date of issuance and publication in the official gazette “Kuwait Al-Youm”.

Kuwaiti general

He went on to reiterate the “depth” of bilateral relations and the mutual ambitions of the two nations’ political leaders to serve their collective interests, he underlined. (KUNA)

Market sees

(Umm Na’ira and Shahamiya). He revealed the total quantity available since the start of the fishing season until now reached 583.4 tons, 257.6 tons of which are local fish and shrimp (44.2 percent), compared to 325.8 tons of imported fish (55.8 percent).

He pointed out these figures reflect the abundance of fish supply in the market, which helped stabilize prices and prevent significant price hikes despite the increase in demand at the start of the season.

Regarding the fluctuation of prices, Al-Hamdi explained that fishing is linked to the seasons, as each type has its own

season. Currently, the supply of certain types like Grouper, Baloul and Sha’um declined, compared to an abundance of other types like Umm Na’ira, Shahamiya, Sabaita and Nuwaibi. He stated this explains the overall increase in average prices despite the decline in the supply of some types.

He emphasized that the market is subject to close daily monitoring by the Ministry of Commerce and regulatory authorities to ensure balance in supply and demand, and the provision of high-quality local products at fair prices for consumers.

Average prices of local fish and shrimp (per basket)

- Grouper: KD20 to KD40
- Baloul: KD10 to KD30
- Sha’um: KD15 to KD43
- Nuwaibi: KD15 to KD35
- Sea Bream: KD10 to KD22
- Shrimp (Umm Na’ira): KD40 to KD60
- Shrimp (Shahamiya): KD18 to KD25

Average prices of imported fish and shrimp (per basket)

- Zubaidi: KD35 to KD110
- Hamour: KD15 to KD35
- Baloul: KD5 to KD18
- Sha’um: KD12 to KD30
- Nuwaibi: KD15 to KD25
- Sea Bream: KD8 to KD17
- Shrimp (Umm Na’ira): KD40 to KD65

‘Inflation’ looms

Economic expert Qais Al-Ghanim believes that the most obvious positive impact of the interest rate cut will be for investment in real estate, considering its close connection to borrowing activity and financing costs.

He said that investment in real estate always moves up or down depending on the interest rate. “With every reduction in interest rate, demand for borrowing to purchase housing units or expand investment projects increases, which increases sales and purchase rates and restores vitality to the market,” he elaborated.

He added that this step is not limited to the real estate sector alone, as it has a positive impact on the economy as a whole. He explained that whenever interest rates decrease, the economic situation improves, as financing becomes available at a lower cost, which supports business expansion. He pointed out “this policy is a vital incentive for businesspersons to enter new investments, whether in real estate or other sectors, thus, stimulating the economy.”

He said the delicate balance between encouraging growth and maintaining price stability is the greatest challenge in the current monetary policy, requiring close monitoring and coordination between monetary and fiscal authorities.

Economic expert Mohammad Ramadan linked the decision to cut interest rates to rising stock and real estate prices. He stated that “in general, lower interest rates are beneficial to the economy. When interest rates fall, stock prices rise because corporate profits increase as a result of lower borrowing costs, making new projects more feasible. Real estate prices also

rise because financing costs decrease and returns become more attractive.”

He explained that the role of the Central Bank is not limited to stimulating growth, as it includes maintaining the value of the Kuwaiti Dinar and controlling inflation rates. He pointed out that the primary function of the Central Bank is to balance the economy, inflation and protect the currency. “Lowering interest rates too much could weaken the currency’s attractiveness and lead to higher inflation. Therefore, the Central Bank sets appropriate interest rates based on local economic data,” he added.

He asserted that Kuwait, unlike some Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, has flexibility in making its monetary decisions -- free from total dependence on the US Federal Reserve. He said “we previously witnessed the Federal Reserve raising or lowering interest rates, while the Central Bank of Kuwait did not keep pace with these steps, taking into account the specificities of the local economy. This reflects the independence of monetary decision-making in Kuwait.”

Legal and economic researcher Imad Al-Oqab emphasized that Central Bank decisions are considered a pillar of fiscal and monetary policies in any country, indicating that reducing interest rates is part of a broader strategy to stimulate the Kuwaiti economy in the face of global and regional challenges.

He affirmed that lowering interest rates contributes to reducing the cost of borrowing and increasing liquidity in the financial system, which stimulates investment and consumer spending. He was quick to add though that it has potential risks, specifically rising inflation rates if price growth is not controlled.

UK, Australia

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said in his statement that the three announcements Sunday were “part of a coordinated international effort to build new momentum for a two-state solution.”

President Mahmoud Abbas welcomed Britain’s announcement, stressing that it constitutes an important and necessary step toward achieving a just peace in accordance with international law.

There was no immediate reaction from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, but ahead of the decision Sunday his spokeswoman, Shosh Bedrosian, said the leader considered the maneuver “absurd and simply a reward for terrorism.”

Kuwait gold

It added that gold futures for December delivery rose 0.74 percent to close at \$3,705 per ounce, while the spot price touched a record high of \$3,707 before settling within a range of \$3,660 to \$3,690 per ounce, affirming these developments are reflected in the Kuwaiti market.

Democratic leaders in Congress demand meeting with Trump

WASHINGTON, Sept 21, (AP): As a possible federal shutdown looms, the Democratic leaders of Congress are demanding a meeting with US President Donald Trump to negotiate an end to what they call “your decision” to shutter government offices if no action is taken by the end-of-the month deadline.

Sen Chuck Schumer and Rep Hakeem Jeffries said Saturday that Republicans, at Trump’s insistence, have refused to enter talks. Democrats are pushing to preserve health care programs as part of any deal to keep government running past the Sept. 30 funding deadline.

“We write to demand a meeting in connection with your decision to shut down the federal government because of the Republican desire to continue to gut the healthcare of the American people,” the two New York Democrats wrote.

“Democrats have been clear and consistent in our position,” they said. “We are ready to work toward a bipartisan spending agreement that improves the lives of American families and addresses the Republican healthcare crisis.”

Trump, in an exchange with reporters on Saturday evening, suggested that he remains open to a potential meeting but was dismissive of the Democratic leadership. “I’d love to meet with them, but



House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries and Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer (not seen) both of New York, tell reporters that they are united as the Sept. 30 funding deadline approaches, at the Capitol in Washington on Sept 11. (AP)

I don’t think it’s going to have any impact,” he said.

Congress, which is controlled by Republicans, failed to address the funding issue before lawmakers left town Friday for a break.

The House approved a Republican proposal to keep the federal government funded into November, but the measure failed in the Senate. A Democratic proposal that would have boosted health care funds also failed.

Trump moves stirs anxiety \$100K H-1B visa fee won’t apply to existing holders: White House

WASHINGTON, Sept 21, (AP): US President Donald Trump’s latest plan to overhaul the American immigration system has left some immigrant workers confused, forcing the White House on Saturday to scramble to clarify that a new \$100,000 fee on visas for skilled tech workers only applies to new applicants and not to current visa holders.

The president on Friday, with Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick by his side, signed a proclamation that will require the new fee for what are known as H-1B visas - meant for high-skilled jobs that tech companies find hard to fill.

“Those who already hold H-1B visas and are currently outside of the country right now will NOT be charged \$100,000 to re-enter,” White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said in a posting on X. “This applies only to new visas, not renewals, and not current visa holders.”

The fee takes effect at 12:01 am ET Sunday. It is scheduled to expire after a year. But it could be extended if the government determines that is in the interest of the United States to keep it.

The White House in a social media post also sought to make clear the new rule “does not impact the ability of any current visa holder to travel to/from the US.”

But immigration attorneys said that the White House move threatened to



US President Donald Trump holds up the signed Gold Card executive order in the Oval Office of the White House on Sept 19, in Washington. (AP)

upend the lives of many skilled workers and has far-reaching impact on American business.

Kathleen Campbell Walker, an immigration attorney with Dickinson Wright based in El Paso, Texas, said in a posting on LinkedIn that the White House move “inserts total chaos in existing H-1B process with basically a day’s notice.”

Lutnick on Friday told reporters that the fee would be an annual cost for

companies.

But a White House official said Saturday that it’s a “one-time fee.” Asked if Lutnick’s comments sowed confusion, the official, who was not authorized to comment publicly about the matter and spoke on the condition of anonymity, said the new fee “currently does not apply to renewals but that policy is under discussion.”

Meanwhile, India’s government expressed concern Saturday that the Trump administration move would

dramatically raise the fee for visas that bring tech workers from there and other countries to the United States.

Trump also rolled out a \$1 million “gold card” visa for wealthy individuals. The moves face near-certain legal challenges amid widespread criticism he is sidestepping Congress.

To be certain, if the moves survive legal muster, they will deliver staggering price increases. The visa fee for skilled workers would jump from \$215.

India’s Ministry of External Affairs said Saturday that Trump’s plan “was being studied by all concerned, including by Indian industry. The ministry warned that “this measure is likely to have humanitarian consequences by way of the disruption caused for families. Government hopes that these disruptions can be addressed suitably by the US authorities.

More than 70% of H-1B visa holders are from India.

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 undercuts American workers, luring people from overseas who are often willing to work for as little as \$60,000 annually. That is well below the \$100,000-plus salaries typically paid to US technology workers.

ICE denies using excessive force as it broadens immigration arrests in Chicago

California bans most law enforcement officers from wearing masks during operations

WASHINGTON, Sept 21, (AP): California became the first state to ban most law enforcement officers, including federal immigration agents, from covering their faces while conducting official business under a bill that was signed Saturday by Gov Gavin Newsom and swiftly denounced by Trump administration officials.

The ban is a direct response to recent immigration raids in Los Angeles, where federal agents wore masks while making mass arrests. The raids prompted days of protest and led President Donald Trump to deploy National Guard troops and Marines to the area.

Newsom said at a news conference in Los Angeles, where he signed the bill flanked by state lawmakers, education leaders and immigrant community members, that California is unique in that 27% of its residents are foreign born.

“We celebrate that diversity. It’s what makes California great. It’s what makes America great. It is under assault,” he said.

The Democratic governor said the state is pushing back against the practice of masked agents without identification or badge numbers detaining people on the streets.

“The impact of these policies all across this city, our state and nation are terrifying,” Newsom said. “It’s like a dystopian sci-fi movie. Unmarked cars, people in masks, people quite literally disappearing. No due process, no rights, no right in a democracy where we have rights. Immigrants have rights, and we have the right to stand up and push back, and that’s what we’re doing here today.”

But it’s unclear how - or whether - the state can enforce the ban on federal agents.

Trump administration officials have defended use of masks, saying immigration agents face strident and increasing harassment in public and online as they carry out enforcement in service of Trump’s drive toward mass deportation. Obscuring their identities is necessary for the safety of the agents and their families, officials contend.

Bill Essayli, acting U.S. attorney for Southern California, said on the social platform X that the state does not have jurisdiction over the federal government and he has told agencies the mask ban has no effect on their operations. “Our agents will continue to protect their identities,” he said.

Essayli also criticized Newsom’s comment on X saying Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem was “going to have a bad day today,” adding that there is zero tolerance for “direct or implicit threats against government officials.” He referred the matter to the Secret Service, which said in a statement, also on X, that it could not comment on the specific case but must investigate any potential threat.

Tricia McLaughlin, Homeland Security assistant secretary for public affairs,



Mayor Karen Bass speaks during an immigration rally on Sept 20, in Los Angeles. (AP)

called it “despicable and a flagrant attempt to endanger our officers.”

“While our federal law enforcement officers are being assaulted by rioters and having rocks and Molotov cocktails thrown at them, a sanctuary politician is trying to outlaw officers wearing masks to protect themselves from being doxxed and targeted by known and suspected terrorist sympathizers,” she said via email.

The men and women of federal immigration agencies put their lives on the line to arrest violent criminal ille-

gal aliens, she said, and rhetoric like Newsom’s has contributed to a surge in assaults.

Newsom countered that concerns about doxing agents, or publishing their personal information online, are unfounded and unproven.

“There’s an assertion that somehow there is an exponential increase in assaults on officers, but they will not provide the data,” he said. “All they have provided is misinformation and misdirection.”

The new law prohibits neck gaiters, ski masks and other facial coverings

for local and federal officers, including immigration enforcement agents, while they conduct official business. It makes exceptions for undercover agents, medical masks such as N95 respirators or tactical gear, and it does not apply to state police.

Democrats in Congress and lawmakers in several states, including Tennessee, Michigan, Illinois, New York, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania, have introduced similar proposals calling for mask bans.

Proponents of the California law said it is especially needed after the Supreme Court ruled this month that the Trump administration can resume its sweeping immigration operations in Los Angeles. The law aims to boost public trust in law enforcement and stop people from impersonating officers to commit crimes, supporters said.

Also:

PARK RIDGE, Ill: It was 3:30 am when 10 US Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers gathered in a parking lot in the **Chicago** suburbs for a briefing about a suspect they were hoping to arrest. They went over a description of the person, made sure their radios were on the same channel and discussed where the closest hospital was in case something went wrong.

“Let’s plan on not being there,” said one of the officers, before they climbed into their vehicles and headed out.

Across the city and surrounding

suburbs, other teams were fanning out in support of “ Operation Midway Blitz.” It has unleashed President **Donald Trump**’s mass deportations agenda on a city and state that has had some of the strongest laws preventing local officials from cooperating with immigration enforcement.

ICE launched the operation on Sept. 8, drawing concern from activists and immigrant communities fearful of the large-scale arrests or aggressive tactics used in other cities targeted by the Republican president. They say there has been a noticeable uptick in immigration enforcement agents, although a military deployment to Chicago has yet to materialize.

The Associated Press went on a ride-along with ICE in a Chicago suburb - much of the recent focus - to see how that operation is unfolding.

A voice came over the radio: “He got into the car. I’m not sure if that’s the target.”

Someone matching the description of the man that ICE was searching for walked out of the house, got into a car and drove away from the tree-lined street. Unsure whether this was their target, the officers followed. A few minutes later, with the car approaching the freeway, the voice over the radio said: “He’s got the physical description. We just can’t see the face good.”

“Do it,” said Marcos Charles, the acting head of ICE’s Enforcement and Removal Operations.

Russian jets over Estonia ignored signals from NATO pilots: officials

TALLINN, Estonia, Sept 21, (AP): Russian pilots ignored signals from Italian jets responding from NATO’s Baltic Air Policing Mission when they violated Estonian airspace, a senior Estonian military official said Saturday.

The 12-minute incursion was the latest test of the alliance’s ability to respond to Russian airborne threats after around 20 Russian drones entered Polish airspace on Sept 10.

Russia’s Defense Ministry on Saturday denied its aircraft flew into Estonia’s airspace, after Tallinn reported three fighter jets crossed into its territory on Friday without permission.

Estonian officials dismissed the denial, saying the violation was confirmed by radar and visual contact and suggested it could be a tactic to draw Western resources away from Ukraine.

The Russian MIG-31 fighters entered Estonian airspace between 9:58



Estonia’s Foreign Minister Margus Tsahkna speaks with the media as he arrives for a meeting of NATO foreign ministers at NATO headquarters in Brussels on April 3. (AP)

a.m. and 10:10 a.m. local time Friday in the area of Vaindloo, a small island located in the Gulf of Finland in the Baltic Sea, the Estonian military said. A ministry statement said it was the fourth airspace violation by Russia this year.

It still “needs to be confirmed,” if the border violation was deliberate or not, Col. Ants Kiviselg, the commander of Estonia’s Military Intelligence Center, told The Associated Press. Regardless, he said, the Russian jets “must have known that they are in (Estonian) airspace.”

The Russian pilots didn’t pose a “military threat,” Kiviselg said.

But although they acknowledged communication from the Italian pilots flying F-35 fighter jets, they apparently ignored it and “didn’t actually follow the signs,” which is partly why they were in Estonian airspace for so long, he added.



A police vehicle burns as a right-wing demonstration erupted into violence and chaos as rioters clashed with police on Sept 20, in The Hague, Netherlands. (AP)

Violence erupts at right-wing demonstration in Netherlands

A right-wing demonstration in the Netherlands erupted into violence and chaos Saturday as rioters clashed with police and vandalized a political party’s office, just weeks before the country holds a general election.

Police used tear gas and a water cannon to disperse rioters who threw objects at officers and torched a police car. There was no

immediate word on injuries or arrests. Dutch media showed rioters also attacking an office of a centrist political party, D66.

“You keep your hands off political parties,” the party’s leader Rob Jetten said in a message on X. “If you think you can intimidate us, tough luck. We will never let extremist rioters take our beautiful country away.”

A smaller group of rioters headed for the Dutch parliament complex, which is currently fenced off as it undergoes a yearslong renovation. Police prevented them entering the largely deserted area.

The violence erupted at a demonstration attended by hundreds of people, many of them wearing black and waving flags, that called for tougher asylum policies. (AP)

US President Trump’s peace efforts falter as conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza escalate

WASHINGTON, Sept 21, (AP): A month after an Alaskan summit with Russian leader Vladimir Putin, President Donald Trump still seems surprised that his gambit did not pay off with peace in Ukraine.

“He’s let me down,” Trump said this week. “He really let me down.” There has been no more progress in the Middle East, where Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is beginning a new offensive in Gaza City and lashing out across the region.

“They have to be very, very careful,” Trump said after Israel targeted Hamas inside Qatar, a US ally that has been hosting diplomatic negotiations.

Trump’s disappointment and frustration is much different from the confidence and dominance he tries to project on the international stage, especially as he trumpets his diplomatic efforts and campaigns for the Nobel Peace Prize. Asked about his goals for the upcoming UN General Assembly, the president said “world peace.” But the most high-profile conflicts appear to be escalating instead of winding down.

“This whole last nine months of peace efforts was just a merry-go-round,” said Max Bergmann, a State Department official under Democratic President Barack Obama who now works at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington.

Although Trump prizes bold gestures - a stealth bomber strike in Iran, a sweeping tariff announcement - solving a global jigsaw puzzle is a far bigger struggle.

The fundamental truth, Bergmann said, is “trying to reach peace agreements is very hard,” and that Trump has not sur-



In this photo provided by Ukraine’s 65th Mechanized Brigade on Sept 20, Ukrainian soldiers camouflage an artillery vehicle after firing toward Russian positions at the frontline in Zaporizhzhia region, Ukraine. (AP)

rounded himself with experienced diplomats and foreign policy experts.

“It’s like if you were to tell me, ‘Go do a hotel deal,’” Bergmann said. “It would be a terrible deal. I would lose a lot of money.”

In Trump’s defense, the White House has pointed to comments from European leaders who have praised his efforts working to forge peace agreements. Trump often notes that he hires “only the best people.”

Europe

Disruption at 3 European airports continues: Fallout from a cyberattack that affected check-in systems at several European airports extended into a second full day on Sunday, as passengers faced dozens of cancelled and delayed flights and airport teams scrambled to limit the damage to travel plans.

Starting late Friday, major airports in Brussels, London and Berlin were hit by disruptions to electronic systems that snarled up check-in and sent airline staffers trying options like hand-writing boarding passes or using backup laptops. Many other European airports were unaffected.

It was not immediately clear who might be behind the cyberattack, but experts said it could turn out to be hackers, criminal organizations, or state actors.

The cyberattack affected software of Collins Aerospace, whose systems help passengers check in, print boarding passes and bag tags, and dispatch their luggage. The US-based company on Saturday cited a “cyber-related disruption” to its software at “select” airports in Europe.



Lekhli

While departure boards for London’s Heathrow and Berlin’s Brandenburg airports were showing signs of smoother arrivals and departures on Sunday, Brussels Airport was still facing considerable issues.

Ihsane Chioua Lekhli, a spokesperson for Brussels Airport, said 45 outbound and 30 inbound flights were cancelled on Sunday, more than double the number a day earlier: 25 departures and 13 arrivals cancelled. (AP)

□ □ □

IAEA inaugurates Seibersdorf visitor center: The 69th annual IAEA General Conference came to a close on Saturday with the inauguration of IAEA Visitor Center in Seibersdorf outside Vienna, Lower Austria, being one of the highlights of the five-day event.

With 33 interactive exhibits, the center will provide an immersive and interactive experience that showcases the Agency’s scientific and technical mandate, exploring the application of nuclear for health, food and agriculture, water, ocean protection, cultural heritage, energy and industry as well as its work for nuclear safety, security and non-proliferation. The center aims to receive students, researcher, diplomats, journalist and potential partners, according to a press release from the IAEA Office of Public Information and Communication.

“Today is more than the inauguration of a facility - it is the beginning of a new chapter in science outreach and education,” said Director-General of the UN nuclear watchdog Rafael Mariano Grossi. (KUNA)

Ragasa strengthens into super typhoon

Philippine police arrest 17 for hurling rocks as thousands peacefully protest corruption

MANILA, Philippines, Sept 21, (Agencies): Philippine police arrested 17 people - many dressed in black and wearing face masks - who set fire to the tires of a barricade truck and threw rocks at riot police securing a bridge and nearby roads leading to the presidential palace in Manila on Sunday.

The brief but chaotic incident did not involve the thousands of protesters who joined two large, peaceful anti-corruption demonstrations that took place elsewhere in the capital.

The violence prompted a security lockdown in the nearby Malacanang presidential palace, where access roads were blocked by security forces.

It was not immediately clear if those arrested by police had also joined the peaceful protests where some 18,000 people rallied in a nearby national park in Manila and at a democracy shrine along the main EDSA national highway.

Police said in a statement after making the arrests that the situation was “contained” but warned that violence and vandalism would not be tolerated.

“We respect the public’s right to peaceful assembly, but we strongly appeal to everyone to remain calm and refrain from violence,” the police said.

Dozens of fellow protesters of those arrested by police, however, later ran to another road near the presidential palace and sprayed graffiti on walls and concrete posts. Some waved Philippine flags and displayed posters with anti-corruption slogans. Police responded with tear gas and made more arrests.

The thousands of peaceful protesters took to the streets to express their outrage over a corruption scandal involving lawmakers, officials and businesspeople who allegedly pocketed huge kickbacks from flood-control projects in the poverty-stricken and storm-prone Southeast Asian country.

“I feel bad that we wallow in poverty and we lose our homes, our lives and our future while they rake in a big fortune from our taxes that pay for their luxury cars, foreign trips and bigger corporate transactions,” student activist Althea Trinidad told The Associated Press in Manila.

Trinidad lives in Bulacan, a flood-prone province north of Manila where officials said the most flood-control projects were being investigated either as sub-standard or nonexistent.



Protesters gather during an anti-corruption rally in Manila's Rizal Park, Philippines on Sept 21. (AP)

“Our purpose is not to destabilize but to strengthen our democracy,” Cardinal Pablo Virgilio David, the head of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines, said in a statement. He called on the public to demonstrate peacefully and demand accountability.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. first highlighted the flood-control corruption scandal in July in his annual state of the nation speech.

He later established an independent commission to investigate what he said

were anomalies in many of the 9,855 flood-control projects worth more than 545 billion pesos (\$9.5 billion) that were supposed to have been undertaken since he took office in mid-2022. He called the scale of corruption “horrible” and accepted his public works secretary’s resignation.

Public outrage erupted when a wealthy couple who ran several construction companies that won lucrative flood-control project contracts showed dozens of European and American luxury cars they owned during media interviews. The fleet included a British luxury car costing 42 million pesos (\$737,000) that they said they bought because it came with a free umbrella.

Under intense public criticism, the couple, Sarah and Pacifico Discaya, later identified during a televised Senate inquiry at least 17 House of Representatives legislators and public works officials who allegedly forced them to pay huge kick-backs so they could secure flood-control projects in an explosive testimony.

Two prominent senators were later implicated in the scandal in a separate House inquiry. All those named denied wrongdoing but they face multiple investigations.

Senate President Francis Escudero and House Speaker Martin Romualdez separately stepped down in the widening fallout from the scandal.

Also:

MANILA: Typhoon Ragasa intensified into a super typhoon on Sunday, packing maximum sustained winds of 185 km per hour and gusts of up to 230 km per hour, the Philippine weather bureau said.

In its 11 am bulletin, the bureau said Ragasa was located 535 km east of **Tuguegarao City in northern Luzon**, moving west-northwest at 15 km per hour. It may pass close or make landfall over **Batanes** or the **Babuyan Islands** on Monday.

The bureau warned that Ragasa could bring heavy rains and strong winds, potentially triggering the highest tropical cyclone wind signal.

It further warned, “There is a high risk of life-threatening storm surge with peak heights exceeding 3 meters within the next 48 hours over low-lying or exposed coastal villages of the provinces of **Batanes, Cagayan, Ilocos Norte, and Ilocos Sur.**”

United States lawmakers push for military dialogue in rare China visit

BANGKOK, Sept 21, (Agencies): A bipartisan group of US lawmakers pushed for more military-to-military dialogue in a meeting Sunday with China’s Premier Li Qiang, a rare congressional visit since the US-China relations soured.

The last trip by a group of senators was in 2023, and Sunday’s delegation was the first from the House of Representatives to visit Beijing since 2019.

Li welcomed the delegates led by Rep Adam Smith and called it an “icebreaking trip that will further the ties between the two countries.”

“It is important for our two countries to have more exchanges and cooperation, this is not only good for our two countries but also of great significance to the world,” Li said.

Smith, a Democrat on the House Armed Services Committee, said both sides were in agreement on the overarching aim of the visit.

“Certainly, trade and economy is on the top of the list ... (but also) we’re very focused on our military-to-military conversations,” he said in opening remarks. “As a member of the Armed Services Committee, I’m deeply concerned that our two militaries don’t communicate more.”

The delegation also included Michael Baumgartner, a Republican member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, as well as Ro Khanna and Chrissy Houlahan, both Democrats on the House Armed Services Committee. The

lawmakers are in China until Thursday.

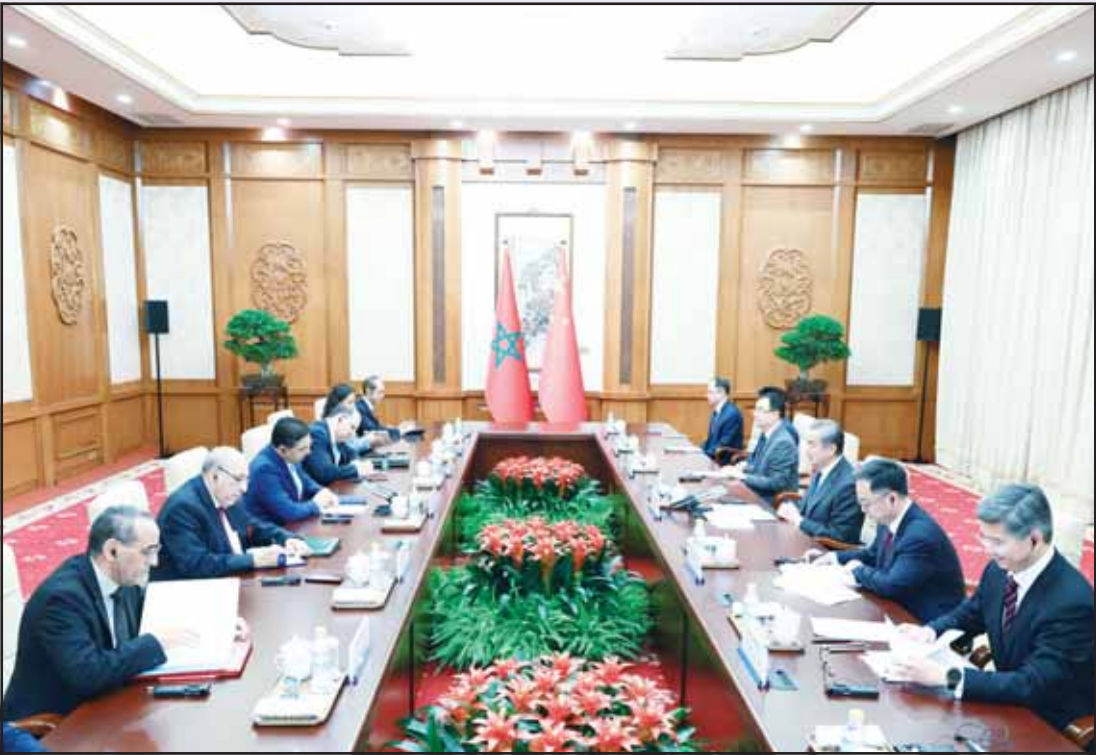
US-China relations have taken a downturn since President Donald Trump’s first term and have been hobbled by trade tensions, the status of the self-ruled island of Taiwan, which China claims as its own territory, Beijing’s support for Russia and China’s vast claims in the disputed South China Sea. Trump said he would meet Chinese leader Xi Jinping at a regional summit taking place at the end of October in South Korea and will visit China in the “early part of next year,” following a lengthy phone call between the two on Friday.

Also:

BEIJING: Chinese Foreign Minister **Wang Yi** held talks with Foreign Minister of Morocco **Nasser Bourita** on Friday in Beijing.

Wang, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, said **Morocco** is one of the earliest Arab and African countries to establish diplomatic relations with the **People’s Republic of China**.

Noting that next year marks the 10th anniversary of the establishment of the strategic partnership between **China** and Morocco, Wang said China is willing to work with Morocco to uphold the original aspiration of establishing diplomatic ties, maintain high-level exchanges, plan cooperation in various fields well, and jointly open up a brighter future for China-Morocco and China-Arab relations.



Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, holds talks with Foreign Minister of Morocco Nasser Bourita, in Beijing, capital of China on Sept 19. (Xinhua)

Hiked US visa fee to have humanitarian consequences, says Indian government

NEW DELHI, Sept 21, (Xinhua): The Indian government on Saturday strongly reacted to the Trump administration’s latest announcement raising the H1B annual visa fee to 100,000 U.S. dollars, saying the move could have “humanitarian consequences” and disrupt the families of Indian visa holders.

US President Donald Trump had on Friday signed a new rule requiring US companies to pay an annual fee of 100,000 U.S. dollars for each highly skilled foreign worker holding an H1B visa. The Trump administration had also announced that H1B visa holders would not be allowed to enter the United States unless this fee was paid.

“This measure is likely to have humanitarian consequences by way of the disruption caused to families. Government hopes that these disruptions can be addressed suitably by the U.S. authorities,” said India’s Ministry of External Affairs in a written statement.

Also:

NEW DELHI: An army trooper was killed in an ongoing gunfight with militants in Indian-controlled **Kashmir**, officials said Saturday. The gunfight broke out on Friday night inside the **Dudu Basantgarh** area of **Udhampur district**, about 276 km south of **Srinagar city**, the summer capital of Indian-controlled Kashmir.

According to officials, the trooper was wounded during the initial gunfight and succumbed to his wounds early Saturday.

Police said the gunfight broke out after joint contingents of police, army and paramilitary launched a search operation in the area following specific intelligence inputs suggesting the presence of militants.

NEW DELHI: Multiple schools in the Indian capital terri-



A poster showing the Trump Gold Card is pictured as President Donald Trump speaks in the Oval Office of the White House on Sept 19, in Washington. (AP)

tory, Delhi, on Saturday received bomb threats, prompting authorities to rush police teams and bomb disposal squads to these educational institutions, officials said.

The threats turned out to be hoaxes, according to officials. Reports said students and staff members at some schools were evacuated as a precautionary measure.

The incident comes amid a series of similar hoax threats targeting educational institutions and courts in the capital.

NEW DELHI: One worker was killed and four others injured in a blast inside a chemical factory in the western Indian state of Maharashtra, officials said Friday.

The explosion took place on Thursday evening at the factory in Palghar district, about 120 km north of Mumbai, the capital city of Maharashtra.

Africa

Guinea votes in constitutional referendum: Polls opened in Guinea on Sunday for a referendum on a draft constitution that could allow the leader of the country’s junta, who took power by force four years ago, to run for the presidency.

The referendum, a key step in the country’s transition from military to civilian rule, is being closely monitored in the coup-battered region, with critics calling it a power grab. Elections are expected to follow in December.

Guinea is one of a growing number of West African countries, including Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso, where the military has taken over. Some say Sunday’s referendum is a way for Gen. Mamadi Doumbouya to seek the presidency and legitimize his military rule.

There are 6.7 million eligible voters and the referendum needs a turnout of at least 50% to pass.

Polls opened at 7 am local time and are expected to close at 6 pm.

Dozens of residents wearing their best clothes were lining up in central Conakry before dawn, waiting for a polling station to open. “We came early, before the crowds come,” said Albert Nabi Youlla, a 55-year-old middle school teacher. “We are here to fulfill our civic duty,” he said, adding that the draft constitution “worked” for him. In contrast to the festive atmosphere inside the polling stations, tanks and military barricades in the streets were a stark reminder of the junta’s rule. (AP)

7 dead after boat capsizes in Uganda: Seven people drowned and 29 others survived after a boat carrying mourners capsized on Lake Kyoga in northern Uganda’s Amolatar District on Friday, police said Saturday.

The wooden vessel was traveling from Muchora Abino A village to escort a catechist to a burial ceremony when it overturned near Kiriyanga Village in Acii Sub-County at about 11:00 a.m. local time, police said in a statement.

“A total of 36 people were on board and 29 survived the accident. The incident happened approximately 400 meters from the Kiriyanga landing site when the engine boat hit a stationary tree stump, causing it to capsize,” the statement

Election officials check voter lists and prepare ballots at a polling station, in Conakry, Guinea on Sept 21. (AP)

Ecuador’s electoral council approves referendum on foreign military bases

QUITO, Ecuador, Sept 21, (AP): Ecuador’s electoral council approved Saturday a request by President Daniel Noboa to organize a referendum asking voters to approve key changes to the nation’s constitution, as its conservative government seeks more tools to fight drug-related violence.

Voters will be asked whether a prohibition against foreign military bases in Ecuador should be eliminated. And whether the state should no longer have an obligation to fund political parties.

Noboa called for the referendum through a decree issued earlier this week, which also said that voters should be asked if the nation should rewrite its constitution by organizing a constituent assembly.

On Friday, Ecuador’s Constitutional Court suspended the request for voters to decide on a constituent assembly as it reviews several lawsuits against the move.

But Noboa issued a second decree on Saturday calling once again for a referendum on a constituent assembly. Salim Zaidan, an Ecuadorean constitutional lawyer, says the move could give the electoral council, which has declared that Ecuador is now preparing for an election, the ability to block any efforts by the constitutional court to stop the referendum.

“(Noboa) is trying to elude the court’s efforts to control” the referendum, Zaidan said.

Noboa, 37, was elected earlier this year to a second term. The conservative politician, heir to one of the nation’s largest fortunes, has implemented iron-fisted policies against drug cartels that include militarizing some of the nation’s most violent cities, suspending some civil liberties and declaring drug gangs enemy combatants.

Located between Colombia and Peru, Ecuador was once one of the safest countries in South America.



Ecuador’s President Daniel Noboa acknowledges supporters from the balcony of the presidential palace after his swearing-in ceremony for a second term in Quito, Ecuador on May 24. (AP)

Also:

BOGOTA, Colombia: The YouTube account of Venezuelan President **Nicolas Maduro** was offline Saturday, with Venezuelan state-run channel Telesur claiming in a message on X that it was “eliminated” late the previous night without justification.

YouTube’s parent company Google did not immediately respond to questions on the apparent termination of the Venezuelan president’s account. It comes amid rising tensions between **Venezuela** and the **United States** over the deployment of American warships and fighter jets in the southern **Caribbean**.

Afghan officials rebuke US Bagram demands, vow defense of sovereignty

KABUL, Sept 21, (Xinhua): Afghan officials have sharply rejected US threats to reclaim Bagram Air Base, emphasizing that any attempt to re-establish a foreign military presence would be met with unyielding resistance.

Mullah Tajmir Jawad, first deputy of the General Directorate of Intelligence, responded to calls for US retaking the strategic airfield by saying the Afghan government would preserve the current system.

Echoing this resolve, Afghan Defense Minister Mohammad Yaqoob Mujahid told media, “Our answer is, if you don’t leave and want bases, we are ready to fight you for another 20 years.”

Zakir Jalaly, political director of the Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, dismissed the notion of a US return, stating that Afghans have “never accepted foreign troops on their territory” and that any dialogue with Washington must exclude military reoccupation.

The Bagram Air Base, located about 50 km north of Kabul, served as the epicenter of US and NATO operations during the two-decade war.

US President Donald Trump on Saturday threatened Afghanistan with “bad things” if it doesn’t “give Bagram



A gate is seen at the Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan on June 25, 2021. (AP)

Airbase back.”

“If Afghanistan doesn’t give Bagram Airbase back to those that built it, the United States of America, **BAD THINGS ARE GOING TO HAPPEN!!!!**” the president wrote on his Truth Social account.

Located about 50 km north of Kabul, the Bagram Airbase was the hub of US and NATO operations during the two-decade-long War in Afghanistan.

The withdrawal of American forces in 2021 resulted in the Taliban taking control of the base.

During his recent visit to Britain, Trump said that the United States is “trying to take back” the Bagram Airbase. The remarks have attracted widespread attention and sparked speculation about whether the United States intends to redeploy troops to Afghanistan.

Boursa Kuwait closes lower

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait ended Sunday's session in the red, with the All Share Index slipping 26.08 points, or 0.30 percent, to close at 8,794.74 points. Trading activity saw 499.8 million shares change hands across 24,465 transactions, with a total value of KD

96.11 million (USD 292.17 million). The Main Market Index recorded the sharpest decline, dropping 62.48 points, or 0.77 percent, to settle at 8,039.44 points. This came on the back of 304.4 million shares traded through 15,795 deals, valued at KD 45.2 million (USD 137.4 million).

Business

During the orientation event for new students at the American University of Kuwait

Gulf Bank showcases its banking services and red account benefits for youth



A group photo of the Gulf Bank team.



Bank employees explain to students the benefits of Gulf Bank accounts.



Students learn about the benefits of the red account.

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: Gulf Bank announced its sponsorship and participation in the orientation event for new students organized by the American University of Kuwait, as part of its ongoing commitment to engage with new students and introduce them to its banking services tailored specifically for youth. This initiative aligns with the bank's continuous efforts to support the educational journey and enhance financial literacy within the community.

The Gulf Bank booth at the American University witnessed a strong turnout from students interested in learning more about the bank's services – particularly the red Account for youth and the red Plus pre-paid card, both specifically designed to meet the needs of individuals aged 15 to 25. These offerings provide numerous benefits that help students manage their finances efficiently from the very start of their academic journey.

Gulf Bank emphasized that this participation reflects its commitment to supporting education and empowering Kuwaiti youth by offering innovative banking solutions that promote financial awareness and help students make sound financial decisions that positively impact their futures.

In the same context, Gulf Bank recently participated in other orientation events held by Kuwait University, Abdullah Al-Salem University, and the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET), continuing its efforts to connect with the youth segment. At these events, the bank provided visitors with comprehensive information about its banking services and financial tips to help them begin their university lives with confidence and financial independence.

During these participations, the bank's team focused on highlighting services that meet the aspirations of young people and align with their

fast-paced lifestyles, in addition to supporting educational initiatives that contribute to building a more aware and sustainable society.

Gulf Bank's vision is to be Kuwait's leading bank by engaging its employees in an inclusive and diverse work environment to deliver exceptional customer service while maintaining a strong commitment to sustainable community service. Thanks to its wide network of branches and innovative digital services, the bank enables its customers to choose how and where they complete their banking transactions—ensuring a smooth and fast banking experience.

As part of its support for Kuwait Vision 2035 – “New Kuwait”, and its dedication to collaborating with various stakeholders to achieve it, Gulf Bank remains committed to driving significant progress in sustainability across environmental, social, and governance (ESG) levels through strategically selected initiatives both within and outside the bank.



Photo during the training session.

Insider definition and legal framework clarified

Union of Investment Companies holds training on insider trading regulations

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: The Union of Investment Companies (UIC) announced that, as part of its ongoing commitment to raising levels of transparency and strengthening governance standards in the financial and investment sector in line with regulatory requirements, it organized a specialized training program through its training arm – the Investment Studies Center (ISC) – on: “Regulating Securities Trading by Insiders in Accordance with the Requirements of the Capital Markets Authority.” The program was held on Wednesday, September 17, 2025, at UIC's headquarters, targeting a select group of professionals from the financial and business sectors.

The Importance of the Program and Its Role in Enhancing Governance

This program directly responds to the requirements of Law No. (7) of 2010 regarding the establishment of the Capital Markets Authority and the regulation of securities activity. The law established clear principles for handling insider information that could affect investor decisions and market confidence. The program's significance lies in its ability to bridge the gap between legal provisions and practical application, equipping participants with accurate knowledge and practical mechanisms that ensure compliance with laws and regulations, while avoiding violations that could expose companies and individuals to serious disciplinary liability.

Who is an Insider?

According to the legal definition, an insider is any individual who has access, directly or indirectly, to internal information of a listed company or its clients. This includes members of the board of directors, administrative staff of the company or its subsidiaries or parent company, auditors, banking entities, and parties engaged in securities lending or borrowing agreements. This broad definition reflects the legislator's recognition of the sensitivity of insider information and the need for strict controls governing its use.

Illegal Trading and Prohibited Practices

The program addressed in detail situations that constitute unlawful trading while in possession of insider information. Among the most notable are:

- An insider buying or selling securities for their own benefit or on behalf of others while in possession of such information.
- Using third-party accounts to execute trades.
- Disclosing insider information to others for the purpose of benefiting from it.
- Trading in a company's shares while aware of an impending merger or acquisition involving the company, except in legally permitted circumstances.

When is Trading Permissible?

Conversely, the executive bylaws to the law clarify certain exceptions where trading is allowed despite insider status. Examples include executing buy or sell orders strictly under job-related instructions without exploiting insider information, fulfilling court judgments

or inheritance transfers, or trading on behalf of a legal entity that is not aware of the insider information at the time of execution.

Responsibilities of Listed Companies

The program shed light on the essential duties of listed companies toward their insiders, including:

- Maintaining strict confidentiality of insider information.
- Establishing contractual arrangements with related parties to ensure confidentiality compliance.
- Preparing and regularly updating a list of insiders, and providing the Capital Markets Authority and the stock exchange with any changes within five business days.
- Obtaining written acknowledgements from insiders affirming their legal responsibility for any misuse of insider information.

Responsibilities of Insiders

The law also places direct obligations on insiders, notably:

- Preserving the confidentiality of insider information obtained through their positions or professional relationships.
- Abstaining from trading securities based on insider information during blackout periods (such as the last ten days of each quarter until financial results are announced).
- Providing prior disclosure of their intention to trade, and post-trade disclosure of any transactions executed within two business days of the deal.

Disciplinary Board Decisions: Practical Lessons

To reinforce practical understanding, the program reviewed cases from the Capital Markets Authority's Disciplinary Board, highlighting violations such as:

- Failure to include certain board members or advisory firms in insider lists despite their eligibility.
- Delays by companies in updating insider lists or disclosing the entry or exit of new insiders.
- Executing trades during blackout periods, resulting in illicit gains.

These real-life examples provide crucial lessons, emphasizing that noncompliance with regulatory requirements is not a theoretical risk but leads to real accountability and disciplinary penalties that can harm both a company's reputation and its employees.

Conclusion and Call for Participation

In conclusion, Ms. Fadwa Darwish, Secretary-General of the Union of Investment Companies (UIC), stressed that this program is not just a one-off training course, but a strategic initiative aimed at fostering a culture of transparency and protecting markets from practices that could undermine their integrity. She emphasized that participation in such programs represents an investment in human capital and in the future of the Kuwaiti market, empowering national professionals with advanced skills that reinforce Kuwait's standing as a leading regional financial hub.

Boursa Kuwait extends partnership with KACCH and BACCH

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: Reaffirming its long-standing commitment to corporate social responsibility, Boursa Kuwait extended its strategic partnership with the Kuwait Association for the Care of Children in Hospital (KACCH) and Bayt Abdullah Children's Hospice (BACCH) for the eighth consecutive year, supporting a series of impactful initiatives designed to improve the quality of healthcare services provided to children that reflect its dedication to making a lasting positive impact on the community.

Among the most heartfelt initiatives of this partnership was Boursa Kuwait's contribution to the design and furnishing of a dedicated ‘Family Room’ within the Intensive Care Unit at Al-Adan Hospital for Maternity and Childhood. Unlike traditional ward settings, the room offers families a private and comforting space where they can remain close to their children during illness or medical procedures, helping to meet their emotional and psychological needs in difficult times. It also provides a supportive environment for families to have essential conversations with medical staff about their child's condition and treatment plan.

The exchange also provided electric wheelchairs for children suffering from Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy (DMD), enabling them to move independently and safely. In addition, Boursa Kuwait supplied My Lecky Walker devices to children with developmental delays, muscle weaknesses, and ligament laxity, in an effort to help them improve their balance and gradually train their mobility.

Additionally, the company equipped doctors, nurses, and healthcare specialists across nine hospitals in Kuwait with specialized tools designed to help children prepare for medical procedures simply and reassuringly, while also encouraging them to express their feelings. These efforts were instrumental in supporting thousands of young patients and their families throughout 2024.

“Our partnership with the Kuwait Association for the Care of Children in Hospital (KACCH) and Bayt Abdullah Children's Hospice (BACCH) reflects Boursa Kuwait's unwavering commitment to supporting the community and creating a tangible, lasting impact. It represents an investment in initiatives that contribute to building a brighter and more sustainable future,” said Boursa Kuwait's Senior Director of Marketing and Communication, Mr. Naser M. Al-Sanousi.

This collaboration stems from Boursa Kuwait's commitment to providing a safe and supportive environment that meets the emotional and psychological needs of children with illnesses and their families. In previous years, the exchange contributed to the renovation and maintenance of the children's ward at Al-Sabah Hospital, which serves more than 100 children annually.



Praising Boursa Kuwait's continued commitment and support.

It has also supported the purchase of medical equipment designed to ease the pain of children receiving intravenous injections, reflecting its dedication to improving the patient experience and ensuring the highest quality of healthcare services for children.

In 2024 alone, Boursa Kuwait's support touched the lives of thousands of children and their families, enabling the delivery of nearly 34,000 services across eight hospitals. These included therapeutic play environments that gave children a safe space to express their feelings, ease their fears and find the courage to face medical challenges with hope and resilience.

“Boursa Kuwait continues its humanitarian mission by collaborating with institutions that share its vision and values, driven by a common belief in the importance of creating a safe and supportive environment for children facing difficult health conditions. This collaboration helps enhance their emotional and psychological well-being and improves their treatment journey through innovative settings. I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Kuwait Association for the Care of Children in Hospital and Bayt Abdullah Children's Hospice for their unwavering humanitarian efforts, and I look forward to continuing this strategic partnership to achieve even greater milestones in the future,” added Al-Sanousi.

Boursa Kuwait's continuous support for KACCH & BACCH and its mission in hospitals and in Bayt Abdullah Children's Hospice comes in line with the objectives of the ‘Community’ pillar of its Corporate Sustainability (CS) strategy and is in line with Goal 10 – Reduced Inequalities – and Goal 17 – Partnership for the Goals – of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

CEO and Director of Clinical Services at Bayt Abdullah Children's Hospice (KACCH and BACCH) Dr. Tala Al-Dabbous, praised Boursa Kuwait's continued commitment and expressed her sincere gratitude to the exchange for its sustained support within the framework of their strategic partnership.

“Our partnership with Boursa

Kuwait dates back to 2017, and their generous support of our initiatives have made a transformative impact in developing therapeutic environments for children in hospitals across Kuwait, positively affecting their lives, easing their suffering and providing vital psychological and emotional support to both the children and their families,” she said.

KACCH & BACCH currently operate child life programs in eight hospitals: Al Amiri, Al Farwaniya, Al Jahra, Jaber Al Ahmed, Al Adan, Ibn Sina, Al Razi, and NBK Specialized Children's Hospital, providing specialized child life and therapeutic play programs for children and their families in hospital wards, playrooms, bedside, and other hospital departments where children are treated, working closely with doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals to support children undergoing difficult procedures.

Bayt Abdullah Children's Hospice also provides support for children in Kuwait facing life-threatening health conditions, focusing on multidisciplinary palliative care to ensure the best possible quality of life for these children.

Boursa Kuwait's Corporate Sustainability strategy stipulates ensuring initiatives apply and fall in line with the company's corporate social responsibility (CSR), industry best practice standards, and investor expectations, creating strong and sustainable partnerships that ultimately achieve success and allow Boursa Kuwait to leverage the capabilities and strengths of other companies or organizations that have experience in different fields, and integrating sustainability efforts with the company culture, to achieve longevity and ongoing impact that is carried on and instilled in the day-to-day operations of the stock exchange.

As part of the strategy, Boursa Kuwait has launched many initiatives in partnership with local and international organizations, focusing on support for nongovernmental organizations and charity programs, financial literacy and capital market awareness, the empowerment of women, and environmental protection.

At hotels, restaurants, and gift shops

KFH offers cardholders exclusive discounts of up to 25%

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) is offering its cardholders a wide range of exclusive discounts of up to 25% on hotels, restaurants, and gift shops, enabling them to enjoy invaluable benefits when shopping locally. Full details are available on the bank’s website (kfh.com).

In the hotel sector, cardholders can enjoy a 25% discount at Millennium Hotel, and 15% at Courtyard by Marriott Hotel. These offers are valid until December 31, 2025.

For restaurants, KFH cardholders can enjoy 20% at Treek and Tuning restaurants, a 5% at Dhahia Cafeteria, Petra, J’s Bakery, Mujezat Al Shifa stores, On Go, Caldo, and Bora Bora, in addition to a 12% at Ciervo, with the offers running until December 31, 2025.

Additionally, cardholders can avail themselves of a 10% discount at Dabdood until December 31, 2025, and on all Tigro products until June 30, 2026.

KFH aims to provide its credit cardholders with a variety of benefits and added value to boost customer loyalty and rewards. It also seeks to enhance the competitiveness of KFH’s cards by connecting them to numerous benefit programs and services that align with customers’ expectations. Furthermore, the range of discounts reflects KFH’s dedication to meeting the diverse interests of its customers.

It is worth noting that KFH credit and prepaid cards are recognized as some of the best in the industry, receiving commendations from prominent companies such as Visa and Mastercard. In addition, KFH cards consistently earn awards for their excellence and efficiency within the banking sector.



KFH cards displayed.

‘Customer-centric banking solutions’

ABK marks 3rd consecutive year at Auto World Show ’25

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: As part of its commitment to presenting the latest exclusive offers and strengthening its connection with customers, Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) continues its prominent presence at Auto World Show for the third consecutive year. The event kicks off today and runs until 27September 2025.

The exhibition features a wide range of innovations in the automotive industry and offers visitors exceptional opportunities to engage with representatives from global automotive brands in the local market.

ABK has set up a dedicated booth at the event to highlight its financing solutions offered in partnership with car companies, catering to all customer segments.

The Bank’s team is also available to answer visitors’ inquiries regarding its diverse banking products, services, and solutions.

On this occasion, Johair Marafi, General Manager of Retail Banking at ABK, stated, “Our participation in this event reflects our passion for the automotive sector and opens new avenues for developing banking solutions and offers specifically designed to meet our customers’ needs.”

She added that during the event, the Bank will provide exclusive car offers, including car loans of up to KD 25,000 under the Central Bank of Kuwait’s guidelines, along with special discounts in cooperation with local dealerships.

She emphasized the Bank’s ongoing commitment to strengthening its presence in the sector through new partnerships aimed at delivering a superior banking experience to all customer segments.

Marafi also noted that ABK employees are present at several car showrooms across Kuwait to assist clients and provide all the necessary information.

In conclusion, Marafi affirmed that ABK will participate in several key upcoming events to further enhance its presence across society and strengthen its competitive position in the local banking sector.

She highlighted that these engagements allow ABK’s team to better understand client needs and develop new offers, campaigns, and solutions that enhance customer satisfaction and position the Bank as their preferred banking partner for financial and banking transactions of the highest standards.

Since its establishment in 1967, ABK has progressed to become one of the leading Kuwaiti banks



Johair Marafi, General Manager



in the region that offers a wide array of personal, corporate, and private banking products and services.

ABK also provides a broad range of local, regional, and global investment solutions and services through its subsidiary, ABK Capital.

Across the region, the Bank offers individuals and corporates the convenience of comprehensive banking and financial services in the Egyptian market through ABK-Egypt’s network of 46 branches.

This is in addition to ABK’s three branches located in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) in the United Arab Emirates, servicing both Kuwaiti and Emirati individual and corporate clients.

ABK is a strong supporter of Central Bank of Kuwait and Kuwait Banking Association’s ‘Let’s Be Aware’ awareness campaign.

Through its various initiatives, the Bank aims to promote financial inclusion by educating Kuwaiti society about customer rights, responsibilities, and the different types of banking and special needs services.

Additionally, ABK consistently provides strategic information on how to avoid banking and financial fraud, loan application requirements, digital services, and more.

For more information about ABK, please follow the Bank’s Instagram account @abk_kuwait, visit eahli.com, contact Ahlan Ahli 1 899 899 or visit one of the Bank’s branches across Kuwait.

‘Reduce oil dependency’

Iraqi PM launches Vision 2050 to diversify economy

BAGHDAD, Sept 21, (Xinhua): Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia’ al-Sudani announced Saturday the launch of a national development vision, stressing that the country “cannot continue relying solely on fossil fuels as the cornerstone of its national economy.”

According to a statement by al-Sudani’s media office, the prime minister attended a launching ceremony of the Iraq Vision 2050 for Development and the Future, an event also joined by senior government officials, diplomats, and private sector representatives, among others.

The vision aims to diversify Iraq’s economy, reduce oil dependency, and increase private sector participation through structural reforms, read the statement.

Key projects include positioning Iraq as a transit hub for 20 percent of Asia-Europe trade through the

Al-Faw Grand Port and the Development Road project, which is expected to create 1.5 million jobs, read the statement.

The vision also targets 70 percent self-sufficiency in food, water and energy through sustainable green initiatives, read the statement, adding that an upcoming development roadmap for the vision will be submitted to the Council of Ministers for approval.

As technological transformations and artificial intelligence are reshaping global economies, “Iraq aspires in the coming decades to be liberated from oil dependency, with a diversified and stable economy,” al-Sudani said.

“Iraq Vision 2050 represents a unifying national orientation, with the participation of state institutions, the private sector, universities, civil society, and youth,” he said.

By National Bank of Kuwait

This week saw pivotal key central bank decisions, political developments, and key economic data releases, driving market movements. In North America, the Federal Reserve cut the federal funds rate by 25bps to 4.00-4.25%, marking its first reduction this year after five consecutive holds. The 11-1 decision reflected labour market softness, with unemployment rising to 4.3% and job growth slowing below replacement levels, whilst PCE price inflation held at 2.6% in July. Updated “dot plot” projections signalled two further quarter-point cuts in 2025. DXY closed the week at 97.644. The Bank of Canada also cut its policy rate by 25bps to 2.50% following a -1.6% annualised contraction in Q2 GDP and with unemployment at 7.1%. Markets now expect a further cut by December, with USD/CAD stable near 1.38. In Europe, Germany’s ZEW survey showed sentiment improving to 37.3 but current conditions weakening sharply to -76.4, reflecting continued fragility. Meanwhile, the Bank of England held rates at 4% (7-2 vote) as inflation remains elevated at 3.8% and wage growth slowed to 4.8% YoY. Quantitative tightening will be reduced to GBP 70B over 12 months from GBP 100B, with adjustments skewed to protect the gilt long end. The United Kingdom also secured GBP 250B (USD 338B) in US investment pledges during a state visit, though tariff disputes persist. EUR/USD and GBP/USD closed the week at 1.1745 and 1.3471 respectively. In Asia-Pacific, Chinese data weakened across industrial output (+5.2%), retail sales (+3.4%), and fixed-asset investment (+0.5%), whilst unemployment edged up to 5.3%, underscoring downside risks to the 5% growth target. USD/CNY closed the week at 7.1182. Australia’s unemployment rate held at 4.2% in August, supporting market expectations for the RBA to keep the cash rate at 3.6% later this month. New Zealand GDP contracted -0.9% in Q2, with unemployment at 5.2%, increasing speculation of further RBNZ easing in October. AUD/USD ended the week at 0.6593. Meanwhile, the Bank of Japan held rates at 0.5%, and announced ETF sales of JPY 620B annually. USD/JPY closed the week at 147.97. US equities advanced as the yield curve steepened modestly, with the 2s10s and 5s30s widening by 5 bps and 2 bps respectively. Brent crude settled at USD 66.68 per barrel, whilst spot gold finished the week higher at USD 3685.30 per ounce.

United States and Canada Federal Reserve Cuts Rates by 25bps to 4-4.25%, Signals Two More 2025 Cuts Amidst Labour Market and Inflation Risks

The Federal Reserve lowered the federal funds rate by 25bps to a target range of 4% to 4.25%, its first reduction this year after five consecutive holds. The decision, supported 11-1, reflected concerns over labour market softness, with unemployment rising to 4.3%, the highest in nearly four years, and job creation falling below the break-even pace. Chair Jerome Powell emphasised that the move was a “risk-management cut” whilst reiterating caution given inflationary pressures, with the Fed’s preferred gauge, Personal Consumption Expenditures (PCE), at 2.6% YoY in July. Updated “dot plot” projections signalled two further quarter-point cuts in 2025, one more than projected in June, alongside modestly stronger growth forecasts. Market reaction to Powell’s comments was mixed: the US dollar firmed, two-year Treasury yields rose 5bps to 3.55%, and 10-year yields climbed 6bps to 4.09% on the day. DXY closed the week at 97.644.

Trump Seeks Supreme Court Approval to Remove Fed Governor Cook; Proposes Semi-Annual Corporate Reporting

President Donald Trump has requested the US Supreme Court to allow the removal of Federal Reserve Governor Lisa Cook amidst unresolved allegations of mortgage fraud, following a lower court ruling that permitted her to remain in office. Cook participated in the Fed’s September meeting, where policymakers approved a 25bps rate cut, with only one dissent. The Justice Department argues the removal is “for cause” whilst courts have limited oversight under the Federal Reserve Act. Separately, Trump has proposed reducing corporate earnings reporting from quarterly to semi-annual, with the SEC prioritising review of the initiative. The move could affect transparency standards across US markets, investor information flow, corporate focus on long-term strategy, and market volatility. Both actions underscore significant political intervention in financial and regulatory frameworks.

US Jobless Claims Fall to 231K, Retail Sales +0.6% MoM, NY Empire Manufacturing Index Drops to -8.7

Weekly initial jobless claims unexpectedly fell 33K to 231K tempering expectations for additional Federal Reserve rate cuts this year. Whilst this reversed the prior week’s surge, labour market conditions have softened with decreases in both the demand for and supply of workers. Separately, retail sales data came in at +0.6% MoM in August, exceeding forecasts, with sales ex-autos up 0.7%, reflecting sustained consumer spending across nine of 13 categories, including online retail, clothing,

Federal Reserve signals two more cuts in 2025

Central Banks face complex economic, political, and trade challenges ahead

FX Rates - September 21, 2025							
Currencies	Previous Week Levels				This Week’s Expected Range		3-Month Forward
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	
EUR	1.1734	1.1716	1.1919	1.1745	1.1630	1.1850	1.1807
GBP	1.3556	1.3463	1.3726	1.3471	1.3335	1.3560	1.3473
JPY	147.68	145.49	148.28	147.97	147.15	148.85	146.61
CHF	0.7966	0.7829	0.7973	0.7955	0.7900	0.8035	0.7872

and sporting goods. Meanwhile, the New York Empire State Manufacturing Index plunged to -8.70, sharply below the 4.30 forecast and down from 11.90 previously, indicating a contraction in regional manufacturing activity. The divergence between solid consumption and weakening manufacturing highlights uneven economic momentum. Market participants are monitoring these metrics, which influence the trajectory of Fed policy, Treasury yields, and the US dollar, given the implications for growth, inflation, and employment stability.

BoC Cuts Rate to 2.5% as Q2 GDP Contracts -1.6% YoY, Unemployment Up to 7.1%, Retail Sales Rebound 1% in August

The Bank of Canada reduced its benchmark overnight rate by 25bps to 2.5% in September, its first cut since March, citing mounting growth and employment pressures amidst US tariffs. Policymakers highlighted a contraction in Q2 GDP of -1.6% annualised, led by declines in exports and business investment, alongside cumulative job losses of more than 106K in July and August. The unemployment rate rose to 7.1%, its highest in nearly four years, with hiring weakness broadening beyond trade-sensitive sectors. Core inflation eased to 3.05% in August from 3.1%, whilst headline CPI rose 1.9% YoY, supported by fuel prices. Retail sales rebounded 1% in August after a 0.8% decline in July, though volume remained soft and underlying consumption trends appear lacklustre. Officials offered limited forward guidance, signalling a cautious approach as the policy rate fell below the estimated neutral range of 2.25%-3.25%. Market pricing implies around 50% probability of another cut in October. USD/CAD closed the week at 1.3785.

Europe and the United Kingdom BoE Holds Rates at 4%, CPI at 3.8% YoY, Wage Growth 4.8% YoY, Retail Sales at 0.5% MoM, QT Slowed to GBP 70B

The Bank of England (BoE) maintained the Bank Rate at 4% in a 7-2 vote, with two members supporting a 25 bps reduction. Headline CPI remained at 3.8% YoY in August, nearly double the 2% target, whilst private sector wage growth slowed to 4.7% and total wage growth to 4.8% YoY, the lowest in three years but still above levels consistent with target inflation. Labour market conditions showed signs of stabilisation, with unemployment steady at 4.7% and payroll declines moderating. Retail sales rose 0.5% MoM in August, marking a third consecutive monthly increase. The BoE also reduced its quantitative tightening programme, lowering planned gilt sales to GBP 70B over 12 months from GBP 100B, with a shift away from long-dated issuance to support market functioning. GBP/USD closed the week at 1.3471.

UK Agrees GBP 250B of US Bilateral Investments Amidst State Visit, Tariff Disputes Persist

US President Donald Trump’s state visit to the United Kingdom concluded with symbolic unity but limited policy progress. Prime Minister Keir Starmer emphasised the “unique bond” between the two nations, whilst both leaders underscored cooperation in technology and energy. A central outcome was the announcement of GBP 250B (USD 338B) in bilateral investment pledges from US firms including Microsoft, Nvidia, and Blackstone, highlighting technology infrastructure as a growth driver. However, no resolution was reached on US tariffs affecting UK steel and Scotch whisky exports, which remain a structural impediment to trade relations. On foreign policy, divergences persisted over Palestine and Ukraine, although rhetoric remained conciliatory. Overall, the visit reinforced transatlantic ties but left material trade and policy issues unresolved, with markets attentive to future negotiations.

German ZEW Investor Expectations Rise to 37.3 in September, Defying Forecasts; Current Conditions Deteriorate to -76.4

German investor sentiment improved in September, with the ZEW economic expectations index rising to 37.3 from 34.7 in August, significantly above the consensus forecast of 26.3. The assessment of current economic conditions, however, worsened sharply, falling to -76.4 from -68.6, underscoring continued weakness in Europe’s largest economy. The divergence reflects cautious optimism among financial market experts despite Germany’s underperformance relative to G7 peers, having recorded no growth over the past two years. Structural challenges persist, including elevated uncertainty surrounding U.S. tariff policy and domestic re-

form implementation. Economists highlighted the risk that sentiment improvements may not translate into corporate activity unless conditions stabilise, though the uptick in expectations provides some scope for a gradual recovery in coming quarters. EUR/USD closed the week at 1.1745.

Asia-Pacific China August Data Weakens: Industrial Output +5.2% YoY, Retail Sales +3.4% YoY, Fixed-Asset Investment +0.5% YTD

China’s economy decelerated further in August 2025, underscoring rising expectations for additional policy support. Industrial output grew 5.2% YoY, the slowest expansion since August 2024, whilst retail sales rose 3.4%, easing from 3.7% in July. Fixed-asset investment expanded only 0.5% in the first eight months of the year, the weakest pace outside 2020. Export growth slowed to 4.4%, whilst the surveyed urban jobless rate edged higher to 5.3%. Credit growth also weakened, registering its first monthly slowdown of the year, whilst investment contracted across key industries including pharmaceuticals, machinery, and raw chemicals. The broad-based slowdown, compounded by weakening housing and infrastructure investment, heightens risks to meeting the government’s 5% growth target and increases pressure on policymakers to calibrate further fiscal and monetary easing in coming months. USD/CNY closed the week at 7.1182.

BOJ Holds Rate at 0.5% in 7-2 Vote, Announces ETF Sales of JPY 620B Annually from JPY 75T Stockpile

The Bank of Japan (BOJ) maintained its policy rate at 0.5% in a 7-2 decision, with two board members dissenting in favour of a 25bps hike, marking the strongest push for tighter policy since Governor Kazuo Ueda took office in 2023. Simultaneously, the BOJ unveiled plans to gradually unwind its exchange-traded fund (ETF) holdings, valued at over JPY 75T (USD 508B) at market prices, by selling around JPY 620B annually - a process projected to take more than a century at the stated pace. The move, aimed at reducing the BOJ’s market footprint without destabilising conditions, follows the end of its ETF purchases last year. Markets reacted with equities reversing earlier gains, the Nikkei-225 closing down 0.6%, bond yields rising, and yen gains fading against the US dollar. USD/JPY closed the week at 147.97.

Australian Unemployment Holds at 4.2% in August as Full-Time Jobs Decline 40.9K, Part-Time Roles Rise 35.5K

Australia’s labour market remained tight in August, with the unemployment rate steady at 4.2%, in line with forecasts, despite a net decline of 5.4K jobs. Full-time employment fell by 40.9K whilst part-time roles increased by 35.5K, and the participation rate edged down to 66.8% from 67.0%. Underemployment eased to 5.7%, whilst the employment-to-population ratio declined to 64.0%. Hours worked contracted 0.4% as fewer full-time hours were recorded. The data reinforce the Reserve Bank of Australia’s cautious stance on policy easing, supporting market expectations for the RBA to maintain the cash rate at 3.6% in September, with swap markets now shifting toward a fourth reduction in November. Elevated global uncertainty, including trade tensions and slowing Chinese demand, continues to influence the RBA’s outlook. AUD/USD closed the week at 0.6593.

New Zealand GDP Contracts 0.9% in Q2, Unemployment Rises to 5.2%, Prompting RBNZ Rate-Cut Speculation

New Zealand’s economy contracted 0.9% in the second quarter, exceeding the expected 0.3% decline, following a revised 0.9% expansion in Q1, according to Statistics New Zealand. Annual GDP fell 0.6%, whilst GDP per capita dropped 1.1% QoQ. The downturn was driven by a 1.8% fall in construction and a 3.5% decline in manufacturing, with exports and investment also retreating. Household spending increased 0.4%, down from 1.4% in Q1, amidst rising cost-of-living pressures. Unemployment rose to a five-year high of 5.2%, compounded by subdued consumer confidence and reduced immigration. The Reserve Bank of New Zealand, which has lowered the Official Cash Rate by 250bps since August 2024, faces mounting pressure to deliver further easing, with market expectations now factoring in a potential 50bps cut in October. NZD/USD closed the week at 0.5860.

Kuwait
USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30455.

Unemployment hits 7.5% in 2025, highest since 2021

Black job losses rise amid economic strains under Trump Admin

WASHINGTON, Sept 21, (AP): At one of his final rallies before the 2024 election, then-candidate Donald Trump warned that Black Americans were losing their jobs in droves and that things would get even worse if he did not return to the White House.

“You should demand that they give you the numbers of how many Black people are going to lose their job,” Trump said. “The African American population, they’re getting fired at numbers that we have never seen before.”

But with Trump back in office since January, an already fragile financial situation for Black Americans has worsened. Upset by inflation and affordability issues, Black voters had shifted modestly toward the Republican last year on the promise that he could boost the economy by stopping border crossings and challenging foreign factories with tariffs. Yet a recent spate of economic data instead shows a widening racial wealth gap.

Black unemployment has climbed from 6.2% to 7.5% so far in 2025, the highest level since October 2021. Black homeownership has fallen to the lowest level since 2021, according to an analysis by the real estate brokerage Redfin. Earlier this month, the Census Bureau said the median Black household income fell 3.3% last year to \$56,020, which is roughly \$36,000 less than what a white household earns and evidence of a bad situation becoming worse.

That creates a major political risk for the president as well as an economic danger for the nation because job losses for Black Americans have historically foreshadowed a wider set of layoffs across other groups.

“Black Americans are often the canary in the coal mine,” said Angela Hanks, a former official at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and the Labor Department who is now at The Century Foundation, a liberal think tank.

The Trump White House stressed that some of these downward trends, such as a relative decline in Black wealth, began under Democratic President Joe Biden. It emphasized that the “diversity, equity and inclusion” policies pushed by Democrats failed to deliver economic gains.

“Despite his lunatic obsession with DEI, Joe Biden’s disastrous economic agenda reduced the Black share of household wealth by nearly 25%,”

said White House spokesman Kush Desai. “His inflationary policies caused interest rate hikes that froze Americans out of homeownership, and his open borders policies flooded the country with tens of millions of illegals who drove down wages.”

Some Black voters who stayed on the sidelines in 2024 feel they need to be more engaged politically.

Josh Garrett, a 30-year-old salesperson in Florida, said he could not find a candidate last year with whom he agreed. He is frustrated by Trump’s layoffs of federal workers and sees a government more geared toward billionaires than the middle class.

“I don’t understand how you could be for the American people and have Americans lose their jobs when they have families, have bills,” Garrett said.

While the financial outlook for Black Americans is deteriorating, the net worth of white households is largely holding steady or increasing, largely due to stock market performance.

Hanks notes that the “chaotic effects” of Trump’s tariffs and spending cuts are hitting more vulnerable populations right now but that the damage could soon spread beyond.

The federal layoffs appear to have disproportionately hit Black Americans because they make up a meaningful share of the government workforce. The administration maintains that its income tax cuts, tariffs and deportations of immigrants who are in the United States illegally will help Black Americans, but there is little evidence so far in the data of that.

At the same time, Trump has said that he would like to deploy the National Guard to Chicago, New Orleans, Baltimore and Memphis, Tennessee - cities led by Black mayors. The president has called for redrawing congressional districts to favor Republicans, which could dilute the ability of Black voters to shape elections. He has sought to diminish the legacy of slavery and segregation from the Smithsonian museums.

“The message that they are sending is very clear: In these places, these people are incapable of governing themselves,” Baltimore Mayor Brandon Scott said. “They are incapable of helping to solve their own issues. And make no mistake about it, it’s partly due to how we look.”

The Democrat warned that the mounting economic challenges could contribute to crime in the future, reversing progress that cities have made in recent years to lower homicide rates.

Black Americans are the dominant core of the Democratic base, though Trump has improved his standing with them. In 2024, Trump won 16% of Black voters, doubling his 2020 share, according to AP VoteCast, an extensive survey of the electorate. One of the key differences appeared to be frustration over inflation and affordability.

Roughly one-third of Black voters (36%) in the 2024 presidential election said the economy and jobs was the most important issue facing the country, up from 11% in 2020, when the coronavirus pandemic was the top issue.

In a July poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, about half of Black adults (52%) said the amount of money they get paid was a “major” source of stress in their life right now, slightly higher than for U.S. adults overall (43%) and significantly higher than for white adults (37%).

When it comes to incomes, some associated with the conservative movement suggest that Black households are more vulnerable because fewer of them are in married families, which generally tend to have higher incomes.

Delano Squires, a fellow at the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank, said the “connection between family structure and financial stability is one that is fairly consistent across time.”

The immediate political reality is that Trump had a mandate to improve the economy for the middle class, including Black voters. But many of those voters now see an administration more focused on deporting immigrants and expanding its own grip on power, possibly threatening Republicans’ chances of holding onto the House and key Senate seats in next year’s elections.

“We’re in a new era,” said Alexis Rodgers, political director at the Black to the Future Action Fund. “There are people who obviously believed his promises, that Trump was going to do something about the cost of eggs, the cost of housing. They’ve seen the focus instead is on ICE raids and downsizing the government.”

National average credit score falls to 715

Gen Z credit scores drop most among all generations in 2025

NEW YORK, Sept 21, (AP): Gen Z has seen its credit scores drop more than any other generation over the past year, largely because of student loan debt, according to a new report out this week.

The total national average credit score dropped two points this year to 715, according to the report from credit scoring company FICO. But Gen Z’s average score dropped three points to 676, the largest year-over-year decrease among any age group since 2020.

A credit score is a mathematical formula that helps lenders determine how likely you are to pay back a loan. Credit scores are based on your credit history and range from 300 to 850.

The report found that 34% of Gen Z consumers have open student loans, compared to 17% of the total population, and the decline in credit scores is primarily due to the resumption of student loan delinquency reporting.

The U.S. Department of Education paused federal student loan payments in March 2020, offering borrowers relief during the economic chaos of the coronavirus pandemic. Though payments were set to resume in 2023, the Biden administration provided a one-year grace period that ended in October 2024.

This summer, the Trump administration restarted the collection process for outstanding student loans, with plans to seize wages and tax refunds if the loans continue to go unpaid. Roughly 5.3 million borrowers who are in default could have their wages garnished by the federal government.

Between student loans, a tough job market, and high inflation, young consumers are struggling to make payments on time, according to the report. A low credit score makes it more complicated or more expensive to obtain car loans, mortgages, credit cards, auto insurance, and other financial services.

“They’ve had so many different ongoing causes of economic instability that have really been with them as they’ve been growing up; those

factors make it a lot harder for this generation to stay financially stable,” said Courtney Alev, consumer advocate at Credit Karma.

However, younger consumers also have the advantage of having the most potential for score improvement, Tommy Lee, senior director at FICO.

If your credit score has dropped recently, here are some experts’ recommendations:

It’s common to be afraid of checking your credit score, but it’s best not to avoid it, Alev said. Knowing your current score, whether it’s good or not great, can help you make a plan for the future.

“You need to know where you stand to be able to take action,” Alev said.

Experian, FICO and Credit Karma are among the companies that let you check your credit score for free.

While your credit score is essential to keep your financial life healthy, it’s important to remember that it’s just a number and it doesn’t define you as a person, added Alev.

When it comes to the score calculation, one of the most critical factors is paying on time, whether that’s the minimum payment or the full balance.

“The one most important factor in the FICO score calculation is whether you make your payments on time. And that’s about 35% of the score calculation,” Lee said.

If you’re juggling several credit card payments and other debts, Alev recommends that you set automatic payments.

Keeping your credit utilization low and avoiding acquiring new debt can help you increase your credit score. Credit utilization is the percentage of the credit you’re currently using from across all your available credit.

While a low percentage is good for your credit score, it’s not recommended to have your credit utilization at 0%. Instead experts recommend you keep it between 10% and 30%.

If you’re struggling to pay off the debt you currently have, it’s best if you don’t acquire more debt if you can avoid it.

Census Bureau interim leader picked amid census controversy

WASHINGTON, Sept 21, (AP): A Trump appointee has been picked to be the acting head of the U.S. Census Bureau, replacing a career economist in the interim job, at a time when the Republican president is calling for a new census that excludes people in the U.S. illegally.

George Cook, who is chief of staff for the economic affairs undersecretary at the Department of Commerce, which oversees the Census Bureau, has been performing the duties of bureau director as of this week, according to an email sent Friday to agency employees and shared with The Associated Press.

He is also performing the duties of the undersecretary for economic affairs, according to the email.

“George is eager to see the Census Bureau represent the very best of American operational and technological prowess, remain a pillar of our constitutional system by defending the integrity and accuracy of data, and continue to be a hub for America’s most accomplished economic, demographic, and statistical experts to research, train, grow, and serve,” the email said.

Rob Santos, who was appointed the bureau’s director by former Democratic President Joe Biden in 2022, resigned in January following the swearing-in of Donald Trump to

a second term. Since Santos’ departure, the nation’s largest statistical agency has been led on an interim basis by Ron Jarmin, the bureau’s deputy director and chief operating officer.

Trump last month instructed the Commerce Department to have the Census Bureau start work on a new census that would exclude immigrants who are in the United States illegally from the head count that determines political power and federal spending.

Experts have said it would be very difficult to conduct a mid-decade census because any changes would require alterations to the Census Act and approval from Congress, which has oversight responsibilities, and there likely would be a fierce fight.

The federal law governing the census permits a mid-decade head count for things like distributing federal funding, but it can’t be used for apportionment or redistricting and must be done in a year ending in 5. Additionally, the 14th Amendment says that “the whole number of persons in each state” are to be counted for the numbers used for apportionment, and the Census Bureau has interpreted that to mean anybody residing in the United States regardless of legal status.

TikTok deal nears completion with US control over algorithm & board

Oracle to manage TikTok’s data and security

WASHINGTON, Sept 21, (AP): An emerging TikTok deal with China will ensure that U.S. companies control the algorithm that powers the app’s video feed and Americans will hold a majority of seats on a board overseeing U.S. operations, the White House said Saturday.

A central question to the tug of war between Washington and Beijing has been whether the popular social video platform would keep its algorithm after the potential divestment of Chinese parent company ByteDance.

Congress passed legislation calling for a TikTok ban to go into effect in January, but President Donald Trump has repeatedly signed orders that have allowed TikTok to keep operating in the United States as his administration tries to reach agreement for ByteDance to sell its U.S. operations.

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said tech giant Oracle would be responsible for the app’s data and security and that Americans will control six of the seven seats for a planned board. Oracle did not respond to a request for comment.

“We have great American patriots that are buying it - very, very substantial people, people that love our country,” Trump told reporters on Saturday evening, the day after discussing the TikTok deal with China’s Xi Jinping in a lengthy phone call. “And they’re very smart technologically, and they will not let anything bad happen to TikTok.”

Leavitt, in a Fox News “Saturday in America” interview, said “the algorithm will also be controlled by America as well,” offer-



The TikTok Inc. building is seen in Culver City, Calif., March 17, 2023. (AP)

ing more detail about how the deal, at least in the eyes of the White House, is taking shape.

TikTok’s algorithm fuels what users see on the app. American officials have warned the algorithm is vulnerable to manipulation by Chinese authorities, who can use it to shape content on the platform in a way that’s difficult to detect.

“We are 100% confident that a deal is done, now that deal just needs to be signed and the president’s team is working with their Chinese counterparts to do just that,” Leavitt said.

Trump said after his call with Xi that American investors were lined up and that the Chinese leader has

been “a gentleman” about the matter. The Republican president was vague on the crucial question of whether China would control the algorithm.

“It’s all being worked out,” Trump said. “We’re going to have very good control.”

A statement from the Chinese government after that phone call did not clarify what Xi had agreed to regarding a sale of a controlling stake by TikTok’s Chinese parent company to avoid a U.S. ban.

Leavitt said Trump “recognized the need to protect Americans’ privacy and data while also keeping this app open,” adding that “TikTok is a vital part of our democratic process.”

A recent Pew Research Center survey found that about one-third of Americans said they supported a TikTok ban, down from 50% in March 2023. Roughly one-third said they would oppose a ban, and a similar percentage said they weren’t sure.

Among those who said they supported banning the social media platform, about 8 in 10 cited concerns over users’ data security being at risk as a major factor in their decision, according to the report.

Leavitt expressed confidence that the agreement would be finalized soon. “Now we just need this deal to be signed,” she said. “And that will be happening, I anticipate, in the coming days.”

Unemployment hits four-year high at 4.7% amid recruitment slowdown

UK labor market shows signs of cooling with slower wage growth

LONDON, Sept 21, (Xinhua): Britain’s labor market continues to cool as wage growth and labor demand show signs of slowdown.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) reported on Tuesday that from May to July, average regular pay (excluding bonuses) rose 4.8 percent year-on-year, down from 5 percent in the April-June period. Data show that labor demand declined in 9 out of 18 industrial categories between June and August, which aligns with the ongoing contraction in Britain’s manufacturing.

Stressing that the unemployment rate has reached a four-year high of 4.7 percent, Monica George Michail, associate fellow at the National Institute of Economic and Social Research, said that the recruitment momentum is slowing rapidly, and predicted that pay growth could slow further to around 4 percent by yearend.

The weakening labor market has been a trend for several years. While cyclical factors explain part of the slowdown, long-standing challenges -- from rising labor costs to tighter regulation and persistent skills mismatch -- continue to weigh on Britain’s labor market.

The Confederation of British Industry (CBI) reported on Sunday that about 73 percent of businesses see labor costs as the biggest threat to competitiveness in the British

labor market -- the first time it has ranked as the top concern since the survey began.

Higher costs stem from increases in National Insurance contributions and the statutory minimum wage. According to the CBI, the rise in National Insurance and three consecutive hikes in the National Living Wage have together added more than 24 billion pounds (32 billion U.S. dollars) annually to business costs. “Our latest survey shows labor costs remain the biggest cost pressure for SMEs (small and medium enterprises) in the United Kingdom, with 73 percent of firms reporting this issue,” said Jane Gratton, deputy director of public policy at the British Chambers of Commerce, adding that the ongoing impact of business cost pressures, most notably from the national insurance hike will continue to hit the labor market.

Regulatory changes have compounded employers’ difficulties.

First, post-Brexit reforms aim to reduce reliance on the European Union (EU) workers, with higher visa fees and raised minimum wage thresholds reshaping labor supply. Industries such as hospitality, agriculture, construction and care, once reliant on EU workers, now face difficulties hiring staff. Even when staff are recruited, higher costs follow.

Second, the Employment Rights Bill,

which aims to strengthen worker protections, is imposing tighter restrictions on employers regarding dismissals, benefits and workplace flexibility.

The CBI’s report showed that nearly 78 percent of companies believe the bill will negatively affect economic growth, investment, jobs or discretionary benefits. More than 86 percent of businesses said stricter dismissal rules increase the likelihood of being taken to tribunal by employees during probation, forcing employers to be more cautious in hiring.

Despite labor oversupply, many employers, especially in skill-intensive sectors, struggle to recruit qualified staff. Surveys show that around 76 percent of companies faced hiring difficulties in Q1 this year, with only a slight decline to 73 percent in Q2. Logistics, hospitality, construction and manufacturing were among the hardest-hit industries.

A report by City & Guilds found that 76 percent of construction firms struggle to recruit skilled workers, and 84 percent believe the industry faces a severe skills shortage. The Construction Industry Training Board estimated that the sector will need to recruit 239,300 additional workers by 2029 to meet the government’s target of building 1.5 million new homes.

Swift to share intimate song insights and BTS footage

Release party for Swift’s ‘Showgirl’ coming to AMC theaters

LOS ANGELES, Sept. 21, (AP): Taylor Swift is heading back to the big screen next month, and fans are already lining up for tickets.

AMC Theatres announced on Friday that it will host a release party for Swift’s 12th studio album, “The Life of a Showgirl,” which is set to debut Oct. 3.

The nearly-90-minute show, aptly titled “The Official Release Party of a Showgirl,” will play at all 540 AMC theaters in the US from Oct. 3 through Oct. 5, the company said. AMC will also air the show that weekend in Mexico, Canada and across Europe.

“Looks like it’s time to brush off that Eras Tour outfit or orange cardigan,” Swift wrote in an Instagram post, later adding: “Dancing is optional but very much encouraged.”

“The Life of a Showgirl” follows last year’s “The Tortured Poets Department” and Swift’s record-breaking tour, which raked in over \$2.2 billion across two years and five continents, making it the highest-grossing tour of all time.



Taylor Swift performs at Wembley Stadium as part of her Eras Tour, June 21, 2024, in London. (AP)

Following the tour, Swift partnered with AMC and released a concert movie, which had the biggest opening for a concert film to date. By working directly with AMC

Theatres, she circumvented Hollywood studios.

This time around, AMC will be releasing a music video for one of her new album tracks, “The Fate of Ophelia.”

Moviegoers will also get to see behind-the-scenes footage of Swift, who is known for creating intricate music videos. Other lyric videos and “Taylor’s never-before-seen personal reflections on songs” will also be aired, according to AMC.

Tickets are available online.

“The Life of the Showgirl” is Swift’s first release since she regained control over her entire body of work. The pop star said in May that she purchased the catalog of recordings of her first six albums from private equity firm Shamrock Capital, their most recent owner.

Swift’s fiancé, Kansas City Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce, and his brother, former Philadelphia Eagles center Jason Kelce, helped roll out the new album by hosting her on their podcast “New Heights” in August.

Swift and Travis Kelce announced their engagement later that month.

Music

Singer on her first new album ‘Better Broken’ in 11 years

McLachlan heals, inspires through music

NEW YORK, Sept. 21, (AP): Sarah McLachlan’s first album in over a decade was supposed to be her last.

At least, it felt that way to her for a short while. Out Friday, the release, titled “Better Broken,” has been many years in the making. “It had been so long since I’d made a record,” she told The Associated Press. “I kind of thought, maybe this is my last one.” But working with a new team of collaborators reignited her enthusiasm for music discovery in the studio. These 11 tracks are the result - but they’re not a swan song.

“Some of these songs are 14 years old. Some of them were written last year,” she said. “I was a dance mom for a bunch of years, and I was also the principal fundraiser for my music schools ... Music took a backseat. So that’s why it took 11 years.”

Now, music has clutched the steering wheel. In November, she’ll tour “Better Broken” across nine US cities, beginning in Washington on Nov. 16 at The Anthem and ending Nov. 29 at Los Angeles’ The Orpheum Theatre. She’ll hit Philadelphia, New York, Boston, Chicago, Minneapolis, Seattle and San Francisco as well. General ticket sales begin Sept. 26 at 10 a.m. local time.

“Music is very healing, and it has healed me over and over and over again,” she said. With the “Better Broken” album and tour, she hopes her music can heal listeners, too, “in some small way. I hope it can lift them and connect them to their emotional worlds.”

In an interview with the AP, McLachlan discussed her new album, a forthcoming Lilith Fair documentary and yes, that ASPCA commercial.

This interview has been edited for brevity and clarity.

AP: What’s the process of revisiting older material? Did it feel relevant to who you are — still?

McLachlan: ‘Better Broken’ is the oldest song. And it actually became the title track for the record as well, just because of that sentiment of resiliency, and reclamation of self, and picking up the pieces after things fall apart and rebuilding yourself. You know, figuring out a new way forward, which seemed like a great, sort of recurring theme on the record.

AP: There’s a sense of hope that exists throughout the album.

McLachlan: I’m glad to hear you say that because I don’t have a lot of objectivity about it. I mean, I feel hopeful after hearing it, even though there’s some more heavy and intense subject matter. For me, music has always been this beautiful outlet, this therapy. It’s so cathartic to write and be able to find a place to put it. I feel so much better after it. It’s like medicine. So, I hope there’s some hope in it.

AP: I hear it in songs like “Rise,” and the line about a woman’s right to choose. It makes me wonder: Is this an exercise in humanity, or are you naturally an optimistic person?

McLachlan: I’m very optimistic. That optimism has been challenged a lot lately. But I believe in humanity. I believe in the good in people. And I believe in continuing to seek out the good in people. And I think if you stay open and curious in that manner, I think there’s a lot of positive shifts that can continue to happen.

AP: In addition to a new album and tour, you founded the legendary, all-women ’90s festival Lilith Fair. A new documentary “Lilith Fair: Building a Mystery – The Untold Story” details the tour. Several decades on, how do you view Lilith Fair’s legacy?

McLachlan: We changed attitudes within the music business. We dispelled any myth that you can’t put two women back-to-back on the radio or on stage. Clearly, we got rid of that idea. I think we created an amazing community for us, as women in the music business. I think we helped to create a safe space for fans.

And to show that when you lift each other up instead of tear each other down, you can create something beautiful. I think that’s a really lasting legacy. And I think a really important message, perhaps even more important today.

And now I look at, you know, artists like Brandi Carlile, who are constantly championing women. Or Taylor Swift having women open up for her - Phoebe Bridgers and Boy-



Sarah McLachlan poses for a portrait on Tuesday, Sept. 16, in New York. (AP)

genius and there are all these bands that, you know, are working together and supporting other women. I love that, and I feel like maybe we had a small hand in that.

AP: What would it take to revive Lilith Fair for the current moment? Could it exist in 2025?

McLachlan: I think it could. I think it’d be very dangerous. I think we’d have a target on our backs. And I think it would need to look different.

It would need to be championed by someone who was coming up today. It needs some youthful energy.

AP: In addition to Lilith Fair, for a certain population, you are inextricably connected to the ASPCA for its continued use of your song “Angel” in their commercials. What do you make of that reputation?

McLachlan: I’m grateful I did it. ... But that’s my song. I retain ownership of that song. But yeah, I’m definitely aware that it brought me to a whole new fan base and changed the face of fundraising.

Variety

ADDISON, Vt.: Celine Thouin learned a lot as a student at Franklin Pierce University, and one of the skills she has held onto the longest is how to use an ancient spear-throwing tool.

She got to share that skill with fellow Vermonters on Saturday. Thouin, 38 and a veteran of the Franklin Pierce atlant team, was one of a few dozen participants in the Northeast Open Atlant Championship in Addison, Vermont.

Humans invented the atlant thousands of years ago for use as a spear-throwing hunting tool. They were used to hunt massive animals such as woolly mammoths in the days long before recorded history.

Now, they are the passion of a group of hobbyists and anthropology lovers who see the atlant as a way to learn about history and have fun.

“I think it’s just a low-pressure sport. Really, really fun,” said Thouin, who won the 2020 competition and whose children are also atlant enthusiasts. “It’s also experimental archaeology, which is incredibly fun. We get to use the same weapons that were used 15,000 years ago all over the world.”

The competition took place at Chimney Point State Historic Site in Addison, near Lake Champlain and the New York state border. It was the thirtieth annual event and a part of Vermont’s Archaeology Month, organizers said.

The contest was open to all ages and allowed participants to shoot for accuracy and distance. Throws of more than 800 feet (244 meters) have been recorded, though even a much shorter throw than that takes a good degree of skill.

For Douglas Bassett, a past president of the World Atlant

Association and another participant in Saturday’s event, the history of the atlant is as interesting as its use. He described it as “a stick by which you can throw another stick,” and he said it was used all over the ancient world. (AP)

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PHNOM PENH: Cambodia on Sunday began to celebrate the three-day traditional Pchum Ben festival, or Ancestor’s Day.

In a special video message, Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet said Pchum Ben festival is a Cambodian tradition that has been observed annually since ancient times.

“It is an occasion that the Cambodian people are engaged in alms-giving and merit making in order to dedicate to their relatives and loved ones who had passed away,” he said. “It is also a joyful occasion for family reunions.”

Pchum Ben festival is the second-biggest celebration for Cambodian people after the Lunar New Year.

During the celebrations, the Cambodian Buddhists go to pagodas and make offerings to monks in order to dedicate to their deceased relatives and loved ones.

They believe that everything they offer to the monks will reach their dead ancestors or relatives and in return, the dead will bless them with good luck.

Buddhists account for approximately 95 percent of the kingdom’s population of 17 million, according to the Ministry of Cults and Religions.

During the holiday, hundreds of thousands of migrant workers leave the capital, Phnom Penh, for their hometowns in various provinces across the Southeast Asian country.

Hun Manet said on the occasion that the Phnom Penh City Bus Authority has arranged 597 buses to transport people to

and from their hometowns for free of charge from Sept. 20 to Sept. 25.

“The free bus services aim to facilitate people’s travel and help reduce travel costs for them,” he said. (Xinhua)

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WARSAW: A lecture on Chinese poetry was held Friday at the House of Literature in Warsaw, Poland, drawing more than 50 Polish writers, scholars and literature enthusiasts.

The event, supported by the China Writers Association and the Chinese Embassy in Poland, was co-hosted by the Polish Chinese Literature Readers Club and the Polish Writers Association.

During the lecture, Chinese poet Yang Ke said contemporary Chinese poetry is seeking new ways to connect with tradition, moving from the tonal rhythm of classical verse toward structural experimentation influenced by the West.

Li Xun, a Chinese poet living in Europe, said that Chinese and European poetry have influenced each other for over a century, with Western techniques enriching Chinese verse and Chinese poetry offering European readers fresh aesthetic and philosophical perspectives.

Among those attending were Wei Jiao, cultural counselor at the Chinese Embassy in Poland, Anna Nasilowska, president of the Polish Writers Association, and Polish sinologist Malgorzata Religia.

Zbigniew Zbikowski, head of the Warsaw branch of the Polish Writers Association, said he recently visited China and translated several Chinese poems into Polish. He said the lecture would help strengthen literary exchange and promote translation between the two countries. (Xinhua)



NBC Sports play-by-play announcer Mike Tirico, (left), sits next to color commentator Cris Collinsworth before an NFL football game between the Los Angeles Chargers and the Miami Dolphins on Dec. 11, 2022, in Inglewood, Calif. (AP)

NBC’s powerhouse

‘SNF’ marks 20 years of prime-time glory

NEW YORK, Sept. 21, (AP): Dick Ebersol helped change comedy and late-night television when he teamed up with Lorne Michaels to create “Saturday Night Live” in 1975.

When it comes to sports television, Ebersol’s creation of “Sunday Night Football” on NBC in 2006 also has had a significant impact.

It is fitting then that both are celebrating milestones this year. “Saturday Night Live” celebrated its 50th season in February, while “Sunday Night Football” is in its 20th season.

“We were really aware that we weren’t just doing a football game, we were doing an important football game, that we would have all the bells and whistles,” Ebersol said about “Sunday Night Football” before accepting the Pete Rozelle Radio-Television Award from the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 2019.

This week’s game is a full-circle moment as the New York Giants host the Kansas City Chiefs. SNF began at the Meadowlands in 2006 with the “Manning Bowl,” when Peyton Manning and the Indianapolis Colts faced younger brother Eli and the Giants.

“Sunday Night Football” has been the highest-rated prime-time show for 14 consecutive seasons. The next closest was “American Idol,” which had a six-year streak from 2005-06 through the 2010-11 television season.

NBC’s first three games this season - including the Sept. 4 NFL Kickoff game - are averaging 24.9 million viewers for its best start since 2015.

The Sunday night package put NBC back in the NFL. NBC was without pro football for eight seasons, from 1998 to 2005, after CBS took over the AFC package.

The late Pat Bowlen, who owned the Denver Broncos and chaired the NFL’s broadcast committee, called Ebersol in 2004 to gauge his interest.

“I think it’s exceeded everyone’s even very high expectations going in, and they’ve gone through the roof,” said Hans Schroeder, the NFL’s executive vice president of media distribution. “They’ve really never stopped innovating and focused on how to make Sunday night feel like a huge event and a great way to end the day.”

Mike Tirico called “Monday Night Football” on ESPN from 2006 through ’15 before joining NBC in 2016. He was the host of “Football Night in America” until taking over as the play-by-play announcer from Al Michaels in 2022.

Cris Collinsworth, who got his start at NBC after retiring as a player, returned to the network in 2006. He was on the studio show for three years before moving into the booth in 2009 after John Madden’s retirement.

Even though MNF had a 35-plus-year head start as the NFL’s seminal prime-time package, Tirico said it didn’t take long for SNF to supplant it because of the matchups and feel of the broadcast.

Purpose

“I think ‘Sunday Night Football’ has become everything ‘Monday Night Football’ was and more now in a much more saturated TV environment,” Tirico said. “So I think without Monday night, you don’t have what Sunday night has, but it took a special group of people, great planning and purpose to get Sunday night to where it is now. This run of being the No. 1 show in prime-time television for almost a decade and a half now, that’s extraordinary.”

Fred Gaudelli, who produced “Sunday Night Football” from 2006 through 2022 after working on “Monday Night Football” for five years, said the success of Sunday night’s package at the start was due to Ebersol’s constant attention to the game schedule.

“There’s never been a network president, I’m very confident in saying this, that made the schedule a bigger priority than Dick Ebersol did,” said Gaudelli, the executive producer for the past three seasons. “If you check our schedules like the first five or six years, I think we had (Tom) Brady versus (Peyton) Manning four of the five times, and we had all the big Cowboys games. So all of a sudden, every Sunday night is a big game. Monday night was ingrained in the American culture, but literally within two or three years, we had reversed it.”

Something that Gaudelli sold Ebersol on, though, was having a musical open to the show, especially when Gaudelli mentioned how much NBC could earn from having a sponsor.

Gaudelli went to his iPod, heard Joan Jett’s “I Hate Myself for Loving You,” and started to come up with lyrics that have been a staple of the show. Pink performed “Waiting All Day for Sunday Night” before it switched to Faith Hill and now Carrie Underwood.

“I’ve had a front-row seat as the team created a sports presentation that went far beyond sports, with the integration of storytelling, pop culture and a musical show open that has become iconic,” NBC Sports President Rick Cordella said.

Sunday night also introduced flex scheduling, allowing a less-appealing matchup late in the season to be swapped for a better game with at least 12 days’ notice. The only exception is the final week of the regular season, when the matchup is set one week out to ensure the final game has playoff implications.

Flex scheduling has expanded to Monday and Thursday nights.

Even though Ebersol left as president of NBC Sports in 2011, many of his innovations and attention to storytelling still resonate.

“I had been at NBC for almost 10 years prior to starting on ‘Sunday Night Football’. You do a good show, get a pat on the back and move on to the next show,” said Rob Hyland, the coordinating producer of SNF. “This was so different in that we basically did forensics on our presentation each week, during the season, during the offseason, and it really helped me learn that the standard for this show, even from Day 1, was going to be different than anything I’d ever worked on.”

“Nothing has changed in terms of that standard. It’s only gotten higher.”

NBC has aired Sunday night games from 40 stadiums, with Dallas playing in the most games in the series at 61. The most-viewed game was the 2012 season finale between the Cowboys and Washington, which averaged 30.3 million.

NEWS/FEATURES

Legendary songwriter wrote hits for Buddy Holly, The Crickets

Sonny Curtis, who penned 'Mary Tyler Moore Show' theme, dies at 88

LOS ANGELES, Sept 21, (AP): Sonny Curtis, a vintage rock 'n' roller who wrote the raw classic "I Fought the Law" and posed the enduring question "Who can turn the world on with her smile?" as the writer-crooner of the theme song to "The Mary Tyler Moore Show," has died at 88.

Curtis, inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame as a member of The Crickets in 2012, died Friday, his wife of more than a half-century, Louise Curtis, confirmed to The Associated Press. His daughter, Sarah Curtis, wrote on his Facebook page that he had been suddenly ill.

Curtis wrote or co-wrote hundreds of songs, from Keith Whitley's country smash "I'm No Stranger to the Rain" to the Everly Brothers' "Walk Right Back," a personal favorite Curtis completed while in Army basic training. Bing Crosby, Glen Campbell, Bruce Springsteen and the Grateful Dead were among other artists who covered his work.

Born during the Great Depression

to cotton farmers outside of Meadow, Texas, Curtis was a childhood friend of Buddy Holly's and an active musician in the formative years of rock, whether jamming on guitar with Holly in the mid-1950s or opening for Elvis Presley when Elvis was still a regional act. Curtis' songwriting touch also soon emerged: Before he turned 20, he had written the hit "Someday" for Webb Pierce and "Rock Around With Ollie Vee" for Holly.

Curtis had left Holly's group, the Crickets, before Holly became a major star. But he returned after Holly died in a plane crash in 1959 and he was featured the following year on the album "In Style with the Crickets," which included "I Fought the Law" (dashed off in a single afternoon, according to Curtis, who would say he had no direct inspiration for the song) and the Jerry Allison collaboration "More Than I Can Say," a hit for Bobby Vee, and later for Leo Sayer.

Meanwhile, it took until 1966 for "I Fought the Law" and its now-immortal



From left: Sonny Curtis, Bobby Vee, Joe B. Maudlin and Jerry J.I. Allison perform at the Stillman auditorium in Clear Lake, Iowa on Friday Jan. 30, 2009. (AP)

refrain "I fought the law - and the law won" to catch on: The Texas-based Bobby Fuller Four made it a Top 10 song. Over the following decades, it was covered by dozens of artists, from punk (the Clash) to country (Johnny

Cash, Nanci Griffith) to Springsteen, Tom Petty and other mainstream rock stars.

"It's my most important copyright," Curtis told The Tennessean in 2014.

Curtis' other signature song was as

uplifting as "I Fought the Law" was resigned. In 1970, he was writing commercial jingles when he came up with the theme for a new CBS sitcom starring Moore as a single woman hired as a TV producer in Minneapolis. He called the song "Love is All Around," and used a smooth melody to eventually serve up lyrics as indelible as any in television history:

"Who can turn the world on with her smile? / Who can take a nothing day, and suddenly make it all seem worthwhile? / Well it's you girl, and you should know it / With each glance and every little movement you show it."

The song's endurance was sealed by the images it was heard over, especially Moore's triumphant toss of her hat as Curtis proclaims, "You're going to make it after all." In tribute, other artists began recording it, including Sammy Davis Jr., Joan Jett and the Blackhearts and Minnesota's Hüsker Dü. A commercial release featuring Curtis came out in 1980 and was a modest success, peaking at No. 29 on

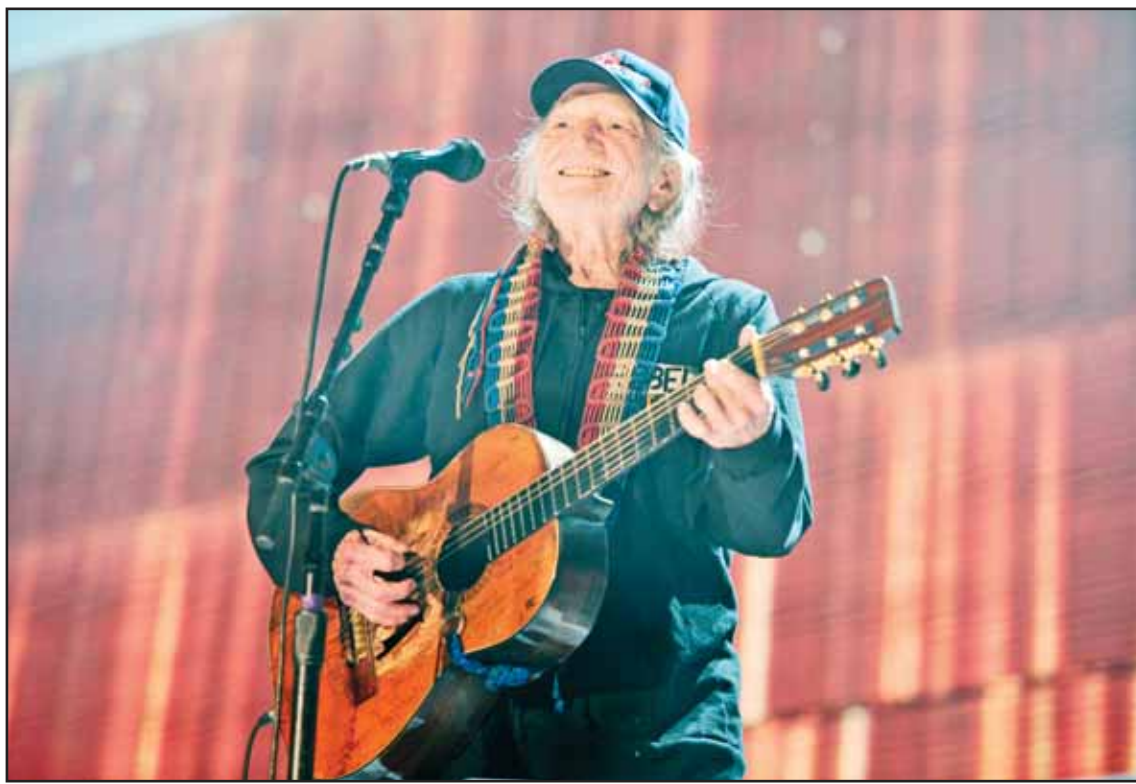
Billboard's country chart.

Curtis would recall being commissioned by his friend Doug Gilmore, a music industry road manager who had heard the sitcom's developers were looking for an opening song.

"Naturally I said yes, and later that morning, he dropped off a four-page format - you know 'Girl from the Midwest, moves to Minneapolis, gets a job in a newsroom, can't afford her apartment etc.," which gave me the flavor of what it was all about," said Curtis, who soon met with show co-creator (and later Oscar-winning filmmaker) James L. Brooks.

"James L. Brooks came into this huge empty room, no furniture apart from a phone lying on the floor, and at first, I thought he was rather cold and sort of distant, and he said 'We're not at the stage of picking a song yet, but I'll listen anyway,'" Curtis recalled. "So I played the song, just me and my guitar, and next thing, he started phoning people, and the room filled up, and then he sent out for a tape recorder."

Music



Willie Nelson performs at Farm Aid 30 in Chicago on Sept. 19, 2015. (AP)

Star-studded fest supports struggling farmers

Legends Willie Nelson, Neil Young highlight historic 40th Aid concert

MINNEAPOLIS, Sept 21, (AP): Farm Aid - the annual fundraising concerts launched by Willie Nelson, Neil Young and John Mellencamp during the farm crisis of the 1980s - celebrated its 40th anniversary on Saturday in Minneapolis.

The star-studded festivals are still raising public awareness of the challenges facing family farmers, and assisting struggling producers connect with help.

Nelson is now 92, Young is 79 and Mellencamp is 73, but they're still going strong. Organizers announced Wednesday that Minnesota native Bob Dylan will be joining them. Others taking the stage at the University of Minnesota's football stadium will include Dave Matthews,

Margo Price, Kenny Chesney, Wynonna Judd, and Nathaniel Rateliff.

This year's concert comes at a worrying time for American farmers. Farm profitability has been falling. Crop prices are low while production costs are rising. And the Trump administration's trade wars have added to the insecurity. China has not bought any of the 2025 U.S. soybean crop so far and has turned to America's competitors, such as Brazil, to meet its needs.

A labor dispute nearly derailed the festival this year. Organizers said they would not cross the picket lines of striking teamster service workers at the university, saying "the farm and labor movements are inseparable." Nelson got on the phone with Gov. Tim Walz. The university and union reached a deal late last week.

Agreement

"The Governor knows how important this event is to farmers and farm country," Walz spokesperson Claire Lancaster said. "He worked with all parties involved, including Willie Nelson, to find a solution."

Farm Aid is thrilled that the show will go on. "For four decades, Farm Aid has stood with farmers and workers," organizers said in a statement that called the agreement "a reminder of what can be achieved when people come together in the spirit of fairness and solidarity."

CNN carried five hours of programming from 6 p.m. to 11 p.m. CDT, featuring live performances by Nelson, Young, Mellencamp, Dylan, Matthews and Price. CNN will also stream it live on CNN.com, and on its apps without requiring a cable login. Sirius XM will carry it on satellite radio starting at noon CDT. Beginning at 11:30 a.m. CDT, it will

also stream on the nugs live music platform and YouTube channel, and at FarmAid.org and on Farm Aid's YouTube channel.

This will be the ninth Farm Aid for Rateliff, whose music combines rock, soul, country, gospel, folk and Americana. He said he joined because he has long felt a connection to farming and the land.

"I grew up in rural Missouri, and grew up with agriculture around me, and we didn't have much money as a family," Rateliff recalled in an interview. "So we had a huge one-acre garden, and my mom canned a lot of stuff, and my dad and I would hunt squirrel and rabbit and deer and whatever else we could eat."

Solutions

Jennifer Fahy, Farm Aid's co-executive director, said the founders never expected 40 years ago that they would be able to raise enough money to pay off all the debts and solve all the other problems of struggling farmers. She said their bigger hope was to foster systemic solutions.

"Farm Aid was kind of the first rallying point for farmers publicly," Fahy recalled. "It was the first time that farmers would reach out and call a number."

That hotline - 1-800-FARM-AID (1-800-327-6243) - was one of their first initiatives. Operators mostly come from agricultural backgrounds. Fahy said they can help with immediate needs, then connect farmers with other resources, such as financial and business counseling, legal advice or mental health support, or help them navigate federal farm programs.

While emergency grants aren't the main focus of Farm Aid - they're \$500 per farmer and totaled just around \$50,000 last year - Fahy said the money may help a family in financial straits buy groceries or keep the heat on in a barn while they seek longer-term solutions.

Farm Aid has raised over \$85 million over the years, making it one of the largest in a line of famed benefit concert series.

It awarded grants totaling just over \$1 million in 2023, mostly to allied groups across the country, including the Missouri Rural Crisis Center that was launched with the help of a \$10,000 grant.

Farm Aid also works with grassroots groups, such as the Land Stewardship Program in Minnesota, to organize rural communities, help maintain local control, and train new farmers.

Kimmel joins global trend of silencing satirists

In battles over free speech, comedians are often center stage

NEW YORK, Sept 21, (AP): Bassem Youssef, the Egyptian satirist whose "Daily Show"-like program was canceled after the military seized the once pro-democracy government, watched the suspension of Jimmy Kimmel with an immediate sense of familiarity.

"My Fellow American Citizens," Youssef wrote on X. "Welcome to my world."

Youssef's show skewering public figures led to a criminal investigation in 2013 after complaints that he had insulted then-President Mohammed Morsi. When a military coup followed, pressure on Youssef intensified. He announced that the climate in Egypt was "not suitable for a political satire program." Youssef fled the country and resettled in the United States.

In all the stunning things about

ABC's swift removal of Kimmel, its longtime late-night host and Oscars-hosting face of the network, perhaps the least surprising was that a comedian was at the center of a battle over free speech.

As long as jokes have been told, comedians have drawn the ire of the powerful. That has often put comedians on the front lines of free-speech battles, from George Carlin violating obscenity laws to a satirical puppet show trying to exist in Vladimir Putin's Russia. In authoritarian regimes, crackdowns on speech usually make comedy a target.

"Comedy doesn't change the world, but it's a bellwether. We're the banana peel in the coal mine," Jon Stewart said in 2022 at the Kennedy Center, with Kimmel looking on from the audience. "When a society is under threat, comedians are the ones who get sent away

first."

Kimmel's indefinite suspension followed comments he made about the Republican response to Charlie Kirk's killing. Conservatives said Kimmel misrepresented the political beliefs of Tyler Robinson, who is accused of assassinating Kirk.

Federal Communications Commission chairman Brendan Carr responded to Kimmel's comments with the threat: "We can do this the easy way or the hard way." After a group of ABC-affiliated stations said they wouldn't air "Jimmy Kimmel Live!" The Walt Disney Co. pulled the show Wednesday just before air, prompting a firestorm of debate over free speech. Comedians have been among the passionate protesters.

"If you have any concern or belief



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

in real freedom or the Constitution and free speech, this is it," said the stand-up comedian and podcaster Marc Maron.

Saudi Arabia to host next year's contest

Vietnam's Duc Phu wins Russia's revamped Intervision song contest

MOSCOW, Sept 21, (AP): When Vietnamese singer Duc Phuc held aloft the crystal cup trophy in Moscow's Live Arena on Saturday night, he became the inaugural winner of new song contest Intervision - a Russian answer to Eurovision that some say is as much about politics and power as it is about performance.

In a show overflowing with thundering vocals and pyrotechnics, Duc Phuc's song "Phu Dong Thien Vuong," a heady mix of pop, rap and dubstep, saw off second-place Kyrgyzstan to take home the grand prize of 30 million rubles (about \$360,000).

The final also brought the unexpected. Moments before the US entrant, Australian-born Vassy, was due to take to the stage, the show's presenters announced that she would not be able to perform due to "political pressure" from the Australian government. Another act, singer-songwriter Brandon Howard, had been slated to perform for the US until three days before the final show. He ultimately dropped out due to "unforeseen family circumstances."

Vassy told the Associated Press that she was not able to currently comment on the incident.

Then, as Russian singer Shaman finished his act, he delivered a passionate speech asking for Russia's performance not to be considered by the international jury.

"Russia has already won by inviting so many countries to join us," he said.

National

For decades, the sequin-encrusted pinnacle of international music competitions has been Eurovision - the European Broadcasting Union's continent-spanning celebration of song. Intervision wants to claim that crown. Much like Eurovision, the contest sees acts perform under their national flag in front of thousands in a bid to win votes and glory.

But beneath the glitter, geopolitics bubbles. Signed into life by special presidential decree in February - three years after Moscow was barred from Eurovision for its full-scale invasion of Ukraine - the Russia-hosted Intervision gives Moscow a self-built platform back on the global cultural stage.

Kremlin officials insist that Intervision is not an example of Russian soft power. "What we are doing is diametrically opposite to the attempts to use sports, art, and any other human activities for political gains," Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov told journalists in a pre-contest press conference.

Yet high-level Russian politicians have been consistently linked to promoting Intervision. President Vladimir Putin discussed the contest during his state visit to China at the start of September and recorded a special video message screened before the show began. Lavrov also appeared at the show, holding an interview between the first and second acts.

The competition's importance in



Vietnam's Duc Phuc, (center), celebrates after winning the International Music Competition 'Intervision' at the Live Arena outside Moscow, Russia, Sunday, Sept. 21, with Russia's SHAMAN, (left), and Belarus' Nastya Kravchenko. (AP)



India's Rauhan Malik performs the song 'Love' at the International Music Competition 'Intervision.' (AP)

showing a Russia that has been embraced, not ostracized, by the world at large, despite its 3½-year war, is impossible to avoid.

"Eurovision pales in comparison to Intervision," lawmaker Leonid Slutsky told Russian state news agency Tass. "(It) destroys the myth of Russian isolation."

Attract

Czechoslovak and Polish television "saw Intervision as a bridge between East and West," Vuletic says. "They wanted to attract the attention of Western media, Western record companies."

Foreign artists also used Intervision to build their global profile. Boney M famously featured as an interval act in 1979, where they performed their hit "Rasputin."

In 2025, there are still plenty of artists ready to embrace a global audience, although most of the performers involved are from countries that take at least a neutral stance to Russia's war in Ukraine.

The Intervision lineup featured 23 acts, including China, South Africa, Brazil, the UAE, India, Cuba, Ethiopia and Venezuela. Vassy, representing the United States, was a noticeable outlier.

The selection process for individual acts, however, is difficult to track. In its rules, Intervision says

that co-organizers - the legal entity in charge of nominating acts, organizing broadcasts and promoting the contest in its home country - can range from national broadcasters to individuals, but there's no public list to confirm who these co-organizers are.

As a result, some performers outweigh others for cultural clout, despite Intervision's stipulation that all acts should be a "national star." Russia's entry, the ultra-patriotic Shaman, is one of the country's most heavily promoted acts.

Egypt's Moustafa Saad is best known as a soloist at the Alexandria Opera House, a relatively niche genre in the country.

Yet if Intervision hopes to build a real legacy, the contest doesn't need to win over musicians, but fans.

As the 2025 show drew to a close, organizers announced that next year's Intervision would be held in Saudi Arabia.

For now, Kremlin enthusiasm is in no short supply for the competition's planned 2026 edition.

"In Soviet times, the party and government made decisions to promote a positive image of Russia abroad. Today, we must advance an objective portrayal," Lavrov said. "Indeed, some of our perceived shortcomings provoke envy among many foreign counterparts."

Delaying hepatitis B vaccine leaves babies at risk: doctors

Newborn Hep B shot nearly ends child infections in US

The Conversation is an independent and nonprofit source of news, analysis and commentary from academic experts.

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By David Higgins

University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus

Before the United States began vaccinating all infants at birth with the hepatitis B vaccine in 1991, around 18,000 children every year contracted the virus before their 10th birthday - about half of them at birth. About 90% of that subset developed a chronic infection.

In the US, 1 in 4 children chronically infected with hepatitis B will die prematurely from cirrhosis or liver cancer.

Today, fewer than 1,000 US children or adolescents contract the virus every year - a 95% drop. Fewer than 20 babies are reported infected at birth.

I am a pediatrician and preventive medicine specialist who studies vaccine delivery and policy. Vaccinating babies for hepatitis B at birth remains one of the clearest, most evidence-based ways to keep American children free of this lifelong, deadly infection.

On Sept. 18, 2025, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, an independent panel of experts that advises the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, debated changing the recommendation. According to the proposed language of the vote, infants whose mothers test positive for hepatitis B would still receive the vaccine at birth. Infants whose mothers do not test positive for hepatitis B would get the vaccine at 1 month of age, though parents would have the choice for them to receive it earlier. On Sept. 19, however, the committee tabled the vote, delaying it to the next committee meeting, scheduled for Oct. 22-23.

Although such a proposed change sounds small, it is not based on any new evidence. It would undo more than three decades of a prevention strategy that has nearly eliminated early childhood hepatitis B in the US.

While the committee regularly reviews vaccine guidance, nothing is business as usual about this meeting. In June 2025, Secretary of Health and Human Services Robert F. Kennedy Jr. disbanded the entire committee and hand-picked new members. The committee has long-standing procedures to evaluate the evidence supporting the risks and benefits of a given vaccine, as well as other parameters of its use. But in this case, these procedures are not being followed.

Hepatitis B is a virus that infects liver cells, causing inflammation and damage. In adults, it is spread through blood and bodily fluids, which can happen through unprotected sex, contaminated needles or contact with open cuts or sores of someone who is carrying it.

The hepatitis B vaccine has been available since the early 1980s. Before 1991, public health guidance recommended giving newborns and young children the hepatitis B vaccine only if they were at high risk of being infected - for example, if they were born to a mother infected with hepatitis B or living in a household with someone known to have hepatitis B.

That targeted plan failed. Tens of thousands of children were still infected each year. Some newborns were exposed when their mothers weren't properly screened or if their mothers got infected late in pregnancy. Children also became infected through household contacts or in child care settings by exposures as ordinary as shared toothbrushes or a bite that breaks the skin. Because hepatitis B can survive for a week on household surfaces, and many carriers are unaware they are infected, even babies and toddlers of uninfected mothers remained at risk.

Recognizing these gaps, in 1991 the CDC recommended hepatitis B vaccination for every child starting at birth, regardless of maternal risk.

The greatest danger for infants contracting hepatitis B is at birth, when contact with a mother's blood can transmit the virus. Without preventive treatment or vaccination, 70% to 90% of infants born to infected mothers will become infected themselves, and 90% of those infections will become chronic. The infection in these children silently damages their liver, potentially leading to liver cancer and death.

About 80% of parents choose to follow the CDC's guidance and vaccinate their babies at birth. If the CDC's recommendations change to delaying the first dose to 1 month old, it would leave babies unprotected during this most vulnerable window, when infection is most likely to lead to chronic infection and silently damage the liver.

The hepatitis B vaccines used in the US have an outstanding safety record. The only confirmed risk is an allergic reaction called anaphylaxis that occurs in roughly 1 in 600,000 doses, and no child has died from such a reaction. Extensive studies show no link to other serious conditions.

The current recommendations are designed to protect every child, including those who slip through gaps in maternal screening or encounter the virus in everyday life. A reversion to the ineffective risk-based approach threatens to erode this critical safety net. (AP)

A geriatrician explains new vaccine rules

Pneumonia vaccines for adults are now recommended starting at 50

The Conversation is an independent and nonprofit source of news, analysis and commentary from academic experts.

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By Laurie Archbald-Pannone

University of Virginia

Autumn brings a chill in the air - and the start of another season of respiratory illnesses, which can be especially hard for older adults.

Although vaccine recommendations have been in flux, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's recommendations on respiratory vaccines for older adults remain robust.

As a geriatrician treating primarily patients age 65 and older, I've found that my patients are often unsure which of the various types of pneumonia vaccines is the best option for them.

Until recently, the CDC recommended that everyone age 65 and older get a pneumonia vaccine. A year ago, in October 2024, the CDC lowered the recommended age from 65 to 50 due to a growing recognition that pneumonia can cause serious illness in people ages 50-65 - especially people who have other conditions that make them particularly vulnerable.

Pneumonia most commonly occurs when a bacterium called Streptococcus pneumoniae infects the lungs. The infection can spur an outsized immune response and damage cells.

The first vaccine for pneumonia was developed more than 100 years ago, at the request of the South African mining industry, which was losing a startling 5% to 10% of workers to the disease each year.

For decades the most widely used pneumonia vaccine for adults was the so-called 23-valent vaccine, or PPSV23, which was approved in 1983 and protected against 23 strains of pneumococcal bacteria. In 2014, the PCV13 vaccine, which protected against 13 types of these bacteria, became the first pneumonia vaccine to be routinely recommended for adults age 65 and older.



Clinic support supervisor May Fengmei Lin, CMA, displays a syringe of the Fluarix flu vaccine at International Community Health Services, Wednesday, Sept. 10, in Seattle. (AP)

This vaccine was made using a newer technology that is thought to be more effective.

Since then, three other pneumonia vaccines for adults, also made using the newer technology, have been licensed and added to the list of those recommended for older adults. The most recent of these is PCV21, which was approved in 2024 and specifically targets strains that usually affect adults rather than children.

Which specific pneumonia vaccine you get will depend on your medical conditions and other health factors. Your health care provider will determine the most appropriate option, but you can learn more about pneumonia vaccines on the CDC's website and bring specific questions to your next health care visit.

As the population of older adults rises, research suggests that without intervention, the number of people hospitalized with pneumococcal pneumonia could nearly double by 2040. About 150,000 Americans are hospitalized with pneumococcal pneumonia each year.

Although the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, the independent body that advises the CDC on vaccines, had previously considered lowering the recommended age to receive the vaccine from 65 to 50, the approval of PCV21 provided a push. Because the rate of pneumococcal pneumonia was so high in this age group, they moved to adopt the recommendation.

The pneumonia vaccine boosts the immune system's ability to fight off this bacterium and lowers the likelihood of getting pneumonia - and of getting seriously ill, getting hospitalized, being put on a breathing machine or dying from a pneumonia infection.

According to the CDC, the old vaccine, PPSV23, is 60% to 70% effective in preventing invasive pneumonia, the more serious version of the disease in which pneumococcal bacteria infect the major organs and the blood. Although new, its mechanism and the strains it covers suggest it is even more effective, especially for people living in nursing homes or other long-term care facilities. (AP)

Corruption, aid cuts and violence fuel a hunger crisis in South Sudan

JUBA, South Sudan, Sept 21, (AP): At 14 months, Adut Duor should be walking. Instead, his spine juts through his skin and his legs dangle like sticks from his mother's lap in a South Sudan hospital. At half the size of a healthy baby his age, he is unable to walk.

Adut's mother, Ayan, couldn't breastfeed her fifth child, a struggle shared by the 1.1 million pregnant and lactating women who are malnourished in the east African country.

"If I had a blessed life and money to feed him, he would get better," Ayan said at a state hospital in Bor, 200 kilometers (124 miles) from the capital, Juba.

A recent UN-backed report projects that about 2.3 million children under 5 in South Sudan now require treatment for acute malnutrition, with over 700,000 of those in severe condition. The report attributes the rising numbers to renewed conflict in the northern counties and reduced humanitarian assistance.

Independent since 2011, South Sudan has been crippled by violence and poor governance. United Nations investigators recently accused authorities of looting billions of dollars in public funds, as 9 million of South Sudan's almost 12 million people rely on humanitarian assistance. Now, funding cuts, renewed violence, climate change and entrenched corruption are converging to deepen the unfolding hunger crisis.

In the basic ward at the hospital in Bor, dozens of mothers cradle frail children. Malnutrition cases have more than doubled this year, a crisis worsened by recent staff cuts. Funding cuts this spring forced Save the Children to lay off 180 aid staff, including 15 nutrition workers who were withdrawn from Bor in May.

Funding cuts have also hit supplies of ready-to-use therapeutic food, RUTF, the peanut paste that has been a lifeline for millions of children around the world. USAID once covered half global production, but Action Against Hunger's Country Director Clement Papy Nkubizi warns stocks are now



Adut Duor, 14 months old, sits on his mother's lap in the malnutrition ward of Bunj Hospital in Maban, South Sudan, Monday, Aug. 18, 2025. (AP)

running dangerously low.

"Twenty-two percent of children admitted for malnutrition at Juba's largest children's hospital have died of hunger," Nkubizi said. "Triangulating this to the field... there are many children who are bound to die."

He explains that families now walk for hours to reach support after the organization closed 28 malnutrition centers. UNICEF says more than 800 (66%) of malnutrition sites nationwide report reduced staffing.

Violence in South Sudan's northern states has compounded the crisis, blocking humanitarian access and driving hundreds of thousands from their farmland.

Although a 2018 peace deal ended the country's five-year civil war, renewed clashes between the national army and militia groups raise fears of a return to large-scale conflict. In Upper Nile State, where the violence has resurged, malnutrition levels are the highest.

The U.N. said intensified fighting along the white Nile River meant no supplies reached the area for over a month in May, plunging more than

60,000 already malnourished children into deeper hunger.

In June, the South Sudanese government told The Associated Press it turned to U.S. company Fogbow for aidrops to respond to needs in areas hit by violence. Although the company claims to be a humanitarian force, U.N workers question the departure from the established system.

Global humanitarian group Action Against Hunger had to abandon warehouses and operations in Fangak, Jonglei State, after an aerial bombing of a Doctors Without Borders hospital left seven dead in May.

"Our sites in these locations are now also flooded, submerged as we speak," said Nkubizi.

Around 1.6 million people are at risk of displacement from flooding, as submerged farmland and failed harvests compound hunger in the climate-vulnerable country.

"Malnutrition is not just about food insecurity - cholera outbreaks, malaria and poor sanitation compound the problem," says Shaun Hughes, the World Food Program's regional emergency coordinator.

Lake count drops from 250 to 180

As climate risks rise, India's Bengaluru is trying to save its disappearing lakes

BENGALURU, India, Sept 21, (AP): Sunil Kumar rowed his small boat, moving a few feet at a time, while he spread a fishing net across the weeds floating like a green carpet on Doddajala Lake. The ends of the net were then carried ashore and tied to a tractor and an earthmover, which pulled the bundled plants toward laborers ready to drag them out with pitchforks.

Once each netful of weeds was scooped out, they repeated the process. Kumar, a fisherman who grew up nearby, and the others have been working 10 hours a day for two weeks to clean this water as part of a wider effort to restore polluted lakes that are in danger of disappearing around Bengaluru, India's fast-growing tech hub.

"Once the weed grows, all fish die. This is because the weed cuts out oxygen flow below the water and, of course, nothing can survive in the water after that," he said.

City authorities and volunteers have cleaned and restored dozens of lakes in recent years, but much work remains. Bengaluru had more than 250 lakes in the 1970s. Today, roughly 180 remain and many are in a poor state. Water experts said the city's explosive growth and mismanagement of sewage have severely damaged a centuries-old network of cascading lakes that sustained communities in this otherwise dry plateau.

Doddajala Lake, a 94-acre (38 hectares) body of water, sits along the city's northern outskirts near its airport in an area where multistory residential buildings, resorts and offices are interspersed with older mud-tiled houses and farmland. R. Byregowda, the head of the nearby Doddajala village, attributed the growth to the area's proximity to the airport.

"You can't imagine the kind of changes in my village in just the last five years," said Byregowda, who's been helping with the lake cleanup effort.



Laborers use bamboo poles to remove weeds from Doddajala Lake on the outskirts of Bengaluru, India, Saturday, Aug. 23, 2025. (AP)

fort.

The lake cleaning is a joint effort by citizen groups focused on weed removal and local government officials who built a walking path with benches and planted trees with help from private donors.

Kumar, who has helped clean four other lakes, said rampant growth of weeds fed by nitrogen and phosphorous from sewage can be disastrous for the lake and its fish. Entangled in the weeds and on lake shores, the volunteers also encounter plastic bottles, clothes and other garbage.

"When I was a child, the water in the lake was clean and we used to swim in it, but now it's mixed with sewage water," Kumar said.

The lakes' health can have wide-ranging implications for a region facing weather extremes amid a warming climate. Experts and advocates say long-term planning is needed to ensure

the lakes can defend against flooding by collecting excess rainwater and bolster the city's water supply by gradually releasing their contents into groundwater sources. The lakes can also keep surrounding areas cooler in the summer.

"Lakes can act as cooling zones during extreme heat events, and they can act as a flood buffer when there are extreme rainfall events," said Shashank Palur, a Bengaluru-based hydrologist with the think tank Water, Environment, Land and Livelihood Labs.

The series of lakes and reservoirs were developed in the 16th century to support fishing, agriculture and domestic use in an otherwise dry region. The cascading system connected by water channels and stormwater drains conformed to natural valleys. Palur noted that the city has no major river running through its boundaries to feed it.

As the region urbanized in recent decades, many rain-fed lakes, which were dry in the summer months, were built over. Meanwhile, poorly built or maintained sewage pipes or new buildings without proper connections caused leaks that resulted in sewage water being swept into stormwater drains. When this reaches the lakes, it spurs algal blooms and invasive weeds.

A 2017 study by the Bengaluru-based Indian Institute of Science, the latest such data available, found that 85% of Bengaluru's water bodies are polluted.

Palur said city officials are often playing "catch-up" as newer homes and offices are occupied before sewer connections are installed, resulting in sewage being stored locally and then illegally dumped into lakes or stormwater drains.

"Sewer connections and water supply connections haven't reached the entire city. So, lakes become polluted," he said.

Patient data

AI spots future disease risks

LONDON, Sept 21, (Xinhua): A new artificial intelligence (AI) tool has shown the ability to forecast an individual's risk of developing more than a thousand diseases up to 20 years in advance, according to a study published Wednesday in Nature.

Named Delphi-2M, the model marks a major advance over earlier AI-based risk predictors, which typically focus on a single illness, said study co-author Moritz Gerstung, a data scientist at the German Cancer Research Center in Heidelberg. He noted that Delphi-2M could help doctors identify high-risk patients early, opening opportunities for preventive measures long before symptoms appear.

In the study, researchers adapted a large language model to forecast the likelihood of 1,258 diseases based on a person's medical history, combined with factors such as age, sex, body mass index, and lifestyle habits like tobacco and alcohol use. The tool was trained on health data from 400,000 participants in the UK Biobank, which tracks long-term biomedical information.

Results showed that Delphi-2M matched or exceeded the accuracy of conventional single-disease models and outperformed algorithms relying on biomarker data to estimate risk across multiple conditions. The AI excelled in forecasting illnesses with predictable progression, including certain cancers, and could calculate disease probabilities decades in advance depending on medical records.

To test its broader applicability, the team validated Delphi-2M using health data from 1.9 million people in the Danish National Patient Registry, a database of nearly 50 years of hospital records.

Water resources shrink

Jordan struggles with water crisis amid climate change

AMMAN, Sept 21, (Xinhua): Jordan is grappling with one of the world's most severe water crises caused by climate change, over-pumping, and rising demand, as local authorities are trying to manage scarcity with a rotation system and large-scale infrastructure projects.

Jordan's annual renewable water resources fall below 75 cubic meters per person, far under the global water scarcity threshold of 500 cubic meters, Jordanian environmental specialist Omar Shoshan told Xinhua recently.

"The crisis is worsening due to climate change, over-pumping, and rising demand," Shoshan warned. He cited Jordan's Fourth National Communication on Climate Change, a report published in October 2023 by the UN Development Programme, that projected a 15-percent decline in average annual rainfall and a 5-percent rise in evaporation over the next 20 years in Jordan.

"Declining rainfall and higher temperatures mean less groundwater recharge, more droughts, and shrinking surface water supplies," Shoshan said, adding that demographic pressures, including a large refugee population, further strain resources.

Currently, groundwater provides about 60 percent of Jordan's supply, surface water stored in dams for about 25-30 percent, and treated wastewater for the rest.

To manage scarcity, a rotation system is implemented in the capital, Amman, where households typically receive piped water two days a week. Some governorates receive supply only once every two weeks. Families rely on rooftop storage tanks, and many turn to private tankers at additional cost when supplies run out.

Residents report adapting to the rationed system with careful planning. "I always hear that Jordan is one of

the most water-poor countries, but in my home the water comes regularly on scheduled days, and we manage without problems," said Kareema Othman, a 64-year-old housewife in Amman.

"Still, we cannot do all the big household chores at once. We must spread them out so we don't empty the tanks," she told Xinhua.

Mahdy Obada, from eastern Amman, noted inconsistencies. "The water in my neighborhood comes once a week, but sometimes the pressure is too low. Less water reaches the upper floors of our building, and sometimes the whole neighborhood suffers from weak flow," he told Xinhua.

Jordanian officials have acknowledged the system's fragility, citing over-pumping, illegal wells, high extraction costs, and water losses nearing 50 percent through leakage, theft, or metering gaps.

"The current distribution model is unsustainable in the medium and long term," a source at Jordan's Ministry of Water and Irrigation told Xinhua.

In response, Jordan is advancing large-scale infrastructure projects. The National Water Carrier Project aims to desalinate Red Sea water in the coastal city of Aqaba and transport it 445 km north to Amman and other cities, potentially supplying about 300 million cubic meters annually, roughly one-third of Jordan's needs by 2030.

Additional measures, outlined in Jordan's national water strategy and economic development vision, include reducing network losses, expanding wastewater reuse, and extending sewage coverage.

Jordan is pursuing an integrated approach combining advanced technology, sustainable supply, and institutional reform, to secure water access under mounting environmental, climatic, and demographic pressures, the ministerial source told Xinhua.

Wanjiru holds off Dida for women’s title

Sawe wins Berlin Marathon but record attempt foiled by unseasonable heat

BERLIN, Sept 21, (AP): Sabastian Sawe of Kenya finished far ahead of his rivals to win the Berlin Marathon on Sunday, when unseasonable warmth thwarted his effort to break the course record.

The 29-year-old Sawe finished in a year’s best time of 2 hours, 2 minutes and 16 seconds - four minutes ahead of Japan’s Akira Akasaki and more than 4½ minutes ahead of Ethiopia’s Chimesha Debele.

“I did my best,” Sawe said. “I’m so happy.”

Sawe’s compatriot Rosemary Wanjiru won the women’s race in 2:21:05, just ahead of Ethiopia’s Dera Dida.

Sawe looked exhausted as the top three were presented with giant alcohol-free beers during their award ceremony.

He had been targeting Eliud Kipchoge’s course record of 2:01:09 from 2022, a world record at the time. Kelvin Kiptum’s time of 2:00:35 from the 2023 Chicago Marathon is still the world’s best. Kiptum was killed in a car crash in February 2024.

On Sunday, temperatures climbed to 24 degrees Celsius (75.2 Fahrenheit) as summer made an unexpected return to the German capital.

“You can’t do anything about the weather. I was ready for everything,” said

Sawe, who said he’d be back next year.

It was already 18 degrees Celsius (64.4 Fahrenheit) when Sawe and the other elite runners made a blistering start, completing the first kilometer faster than any of their predecessors in just 2:44.

Sawe quickly dropped his rivals - and some of his pacemakers. Only two remained when he completed the half marathon in 1:00:16. Soon, Sawe was alone but for the crowds cheering him on with no pacemakers for the last 19 kilometers. But his pace dropped as the temperature climbed and it became apparent after 35 kilometers that the world record and course records would survive for another day.

Security was increased for the race with more than 800 police officers working around the course and stewards on bicycles staying close to the leading runners to shield them from any unwanted interruptions.

The Spanish Vuelta cycling race was repeatedly disrupted by protests against an Israeli-backed team from taking part, and the marathon was previously the target for environmental campaigners because of its sponsorship by the automobile manufacturer BMW.

Some 55,000 runners started Sunday’s race.



Kenya’s Sabastian Sawe crosses the finish line to win the Berlin Marathon in Berlin, Germany. (AP)

Messi takes Golden Boot lead as Inter Miami edges DC United



New York Red Bulls’ Tim Parker (26) defends against CF Montreal’s Dante Sealy (25) during the first half of an MLS soccer match in Montreal. (AP)

NYCFC clinches playoff spot behind Martínez’s brace

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla., Sept 21, (AP): Lionel Messi had a first-half assist before scoring two goals in the second half to take over the league lead and propel Inter Miami to a 3-2 victory over D.C. United.

Messi scored the go-ahead goal in the 66th minute before adding some insurance in the 85th. He has 22 goals this season, one more than Nashville SC’s Sam Surridge in the race for the Golden Boot Award.

Defender Jordi Alba collected his 10th assist on Messi’s first goal and Sergio Busquets notched his seventh for the brace.

First-year midfielder Tadeo Allende scored his eighth goal - with an assist from Messi - in the 35th minute and Inter Miami took a 1-0 lead into halftime. It was Messi’s 12th assist this season - tied for fourth most in the league.

DC United pulled even in the 53rd minute when Christian Benteke took a pass from Brandon Servania and scored. It was the ninth goal for the 2024 Golden Boot winner and the 47th of his career. It was the third assist for Servania, matching his career high.

DC United got within 3-2 seven minutes into stoppage time on Jacob Murrell’s second goal this season. Benteke and Rida Zouhir both picked up their second assist.

Oscar Ustari finished with four saves for Inter Miami (15-6-7) in his 22nd start.

Alonso Martínez scored two penalty-kick goals and goalkeeper Matt Freese made a penalty-kick save as New York City FC beat Charlotte FC 2-0 to clinch a playoff spot.

New York City (17-9-5), which won



Inter Miami forward Lionel Messi (10) comes under pressure from D.C. United midfielder Jackson Hopkins during the first half of an MLS soccer match in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. (AP)

just its second game in eight meetings with Charlotte, extended its overall unbeaten run to three.

Charlotte (17-13-2), which clinched a playoff spot last weekend, had its nine-game winning streak halted. Charlotte tied the post-shootout era record for longest winning streak with a victory last Saturday.

Martínez opened the scoring in the 11th minute with a shot down the middle, with goalkeeper Kristijan Kahlina diving to his right.

Martínez added another in the 58th with a shot into the upper-right corner for his 17th goal of the season.

Freese, who signed a contract extension this week, dove to his right to make a save of Wilfried Zaha spot kick in the 69th. It was Freese’s eighth clean sheet of the season.

Duncan McGuire scored his second goal of the season in second-half stoppage time to give Orlando a 3-2 victory over Nashville.

Tyrese Spicer started the game-winning sequence with a run down the left side to get into the box for a pass across the goal to find McGuire for a redirection.

Orlando (14-7-9) moved ahead of Nashville (15-11-5) in the Eastern Conference standings with 51 points.

Bruno Damiani scored in the 71st minute for his sixth goal of the season. Andre Blake made a key save in stoppage time and the Philadelphia Union beat the New England Revolution 1-0.

Philadelphia (18-7-6), which had lost two straight games for the first time since July, extended its league-leading points total to 60.

Tim Parker and Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting each scored a goal, Carlos Miguel Coronel had six saves, and the New York Red Bulls beat the CF Montreal 2-0.

Coronel has 10 shut outs this season, tied with Charlotte’s Kristijan Kahlina for second most in MLS. Vancouver’s

Yohei Takaoka has 13 shut outs.

New York (12-12-7) has 43 points this season, 10th in the Eastern Conference. The Red Bulls went into the match two points behind ninth-place Chicago for the final playoff spot.

Petar Musa and Chris Capps scored first-half goals to lead FC Dallas to a 3-1 victory over the Colorado Rapids.

Dallas (9-11-10) moved a point in front of Houston for the final playoff spot in the Western Conference with the Dynamo having a match in hand. Colorado (11-14-6) is eighth - two points in front of Dallas having played an extra match.

Édier Ocampo scored two minutes into the match, Kenji Cabrera scored his first goal in his third appearance and Yohei Takaoka needed just one save for his league-leading 13th clean sheet of the season in the Vancouver Whitecaps’ 2-0 victory over Sporting Kansas City.

Vancouver (16-6-7) pulled within two points of first-place San Diego FC in the Western Conference with two matches in hand.

Ezequiel Ponce scored his third goal in the last four games four Houston, Jonathan Bond had four saves, and the Dynamo beat the Portland Timbers 1-0.

Jack McGlynn played arcing corner kick to the back post and Ponce went up high between two defenders for a headed to make it 1-0 in the 44th minute.

Houston (9-13-9) has 36 points and went into the game two points behind ninth-place San Jose for the final playoff spot in the Western Conference, while Salt Lake had 34 points. Dallas, which beat Colorado 3-1 earlier Saturday, has 37 points.

Portland (11-10-9) is sixth in the Western Conference with 42 points. Austin (41 points) hosts fifth-place Seattle (45) on Sunday.

Fiji wins Pacific Nations Cup

SALT LAKE CITY, Sept 21, (AP): Fiji scored five tries in a 20-minute spell on either side of halftime, then held on to beat Japan 33-27 in the final of the Pacific Nations Cup.

Japan started and finished strongly, scoring first and adding the last 17 points of the match. But in between Fiji produced a series of spectacular tries to build a 33-10 lead which only just survived Japan’s late comeback.

Two of those tries went to winger Joji Nasova, who scored just before and just after halftime while lock Mesake Vocevoce scored one try and helped to create another. Captain Tevita Ikanivere also scored in the period between the 23rd and 43rd minutes when Fiji took the game away from Japan.

Fiji was hard-pressed to hold on in the second half against a resurgent Japan team which scored tries through hooker Heyate Era - his second of the match - and fullback Ichigo Nakakuso to close the margin to six points.

Japan had Fiji under enormous pressure when it was reduced to 13 men in

the second half with backrower Vil-iame Mata and prop Eroni Mawa in the sin-bin. “We overcame a tough Japan team who came back in the second half because of the pace they brought and the ill-discipline we had,” Ikanivere said. “We saw the 13 boys who were on the field, the 14 boys just working hard for each other.

“We talked all five weeks of this competition about plowing the field and coming to harvest today.”

All of Japan’s tries were spectacular but perhaps the best of all was finished by center Inia Tabuavu in the 35th minute. It began inside the Fiji 22 with a deft behind-the-back pass to scrum-half Simone Kuruvoli who broke out and was joined by Vocevoce.

Fiji took the ball almost the length of the field and then from one side of the field to the other before Tabuavu scored.

“We’re a bit disappointed,” Japan captain Warner Dearn said. “We probably let them get away from us a little bit in the first half and we couldn’t bring it back in the second.”

Wang/Liu secure ice dance berth

Petr wins Oly figure skating qualifier as neutral athlete

BEIJING, Sept 21, (Agencies): Russian figure skater Petr Gumennik showed he could be a contender for the Olympic podium at next year’s Milan-Cortina Games after he won the final qualifying event by a vast 34-point margin Sunday.

Competing as an Individual Neutral Athlete, Gumennik performed five high-scoring quadruple jumps in the free skate, despite some shaky landings, on his way to a total score of 262.82, securing him a place at next year’s Olympics. That score would have placed him 10th at last season’s world championships.

Among the other skaters in the top five qualifying men’s spots Sunday were Mexico’s Donovan Carrillo, a fan favorite on his Olympic debut in 2022, and Ukrainian Kyrlo Marsak.

Neutral athletes qualify for Olympic spots for themselves as individuals, while other skaters qualify quota places for their country.

Gumennik’s win came a day after fellow Russian skater Adeliia Petrosian won the women’s event at the qualifier ahead of two former European champions. Petrosian is expected to contend for the gold medal at the Milan-Cortina Olympics.

Also Sunday, Allison Reed and Saulius Ambrulevicius won the ice dance event for Lithuania.

That means the Michigan-born Reed, who gained Lithuanian citizenship last year, is set to return to the Olympics for the first time in 16 years. She competed for Georgia in 2010 at the age of 15.

The ISU followed other Olympic sports bodies in excluding Russian skaters from its competitions following the Russian invasion of Ukraine shortly after the 2022 Olympics.

In December, it announced a pathway for Russians to receive “Individual Neutral Athlete” status to compete without symbols like the national flag and anthem. They had to go through the final Olympic qualifier because they weren’t eligible to qualifying spots via the world championships.

There were no Russian entries with ISU-approved neutral status in pairs and ice dance for the qualifier.

Ice dance veterans Wang Shiyue and Liu Xinyu have secured an Olympic berth for China after finishing fourth.

The duo, who placed sixth in the rhythm dance with a score of 67.59 points on Friday, scored 101.24 points to rank fifth in Sunday’s free dance. Their total score of 168.83 points was enough to secure the fourth position, narrowly edging out Sweden’s Milla Ruud Reitan and Nikolaj Majorov, who finished fifth just 0.23 points behind.

In addition to the Chinese pair, three other pairs have also secured their places for the 2026 Winter Olympics: Lithuania’s Allison Reed and Saulius Ambrulevicius, Australia’s Holly Harris and Jason Chan, and Spain’s Sofia Val and Asaf Kazimov.

This tournament marks Wang and Liu’s return to the international stage after nearly two years. During this period, the pair had faced various challenges, including injuries.

“Since the start of the 2023 season, we’ve been dealing with many injuries. Last year, we focused on Liu’s asthma treatment and recovery. We weren’t sure if we would ever return to the competition until this year, when we realized we had a chance to fight for an Olympic berth. This opportunity to represent our country and earn an Olympic berth gave us the motivation to push forward,” Wang said.

Wang and Liu previously made history by finishing 12th at the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics, a record best for Chinese ice dancers in Olympic history. Now, with both athletes in their 30s, whether they can achieve greater success remains an open question.

“Anything is possible,” Liu said. “After my asthma issues last year, we thought we might never compete again. But through treatment and hard work, we’re here today, securing our Olympic qualification.” Wang added, “It’s not just us who’s gone through such challenging period. Every ice dancer experiences lows. For us, it’s about believing in ourselves and taking it one step at a time. We can’t compare ourselves to our peak performance, but we believe we can widen our path and show everyone a new side of us through our more mature experience.”



Gold medalist winner Jiaxuan Zhang and Yichang Huang of China, centre, pose with silver medalist winner Karina Akopova and Nikita Rakhmanin of Armenia, left, and bronze medalist winner Yuna Nagaoka and Sumitada Moriguchi of Japan, right, after competing in Pairs free skating at the ISU Skate to Milano figure skating qualifier 2025, in Beijing, China. (AP)

Hillmon makes history as Dream’s first Sixth Player of the Year

ATLANTA, Sept 21, (AP): Atlanta forward Naz Hillmon was named the WNBA’s Sixth Player of the Year on Saturday, making her the first Dream player in franchise history to win the award.

Hillmon averaged 8.6 points and 6.2 rebounds for the Dream and made 53 3-pointers after hitting just one across her first three WNBA seasons.

“Naz embodies everything we want the Atlanta Dream to stand for - toughness, consistency and growth,” Dream general manager Dan Padover said.

“Her ability to embrace any role and make winning plays has elevated not only her own game, but our entire team. Credit also goes to Karl (Smesko) and our coaching staff for helping take Naz’s game to another level and putting her in positions to thrive.” Hillmon came off the bench in 27 of the Dream’s 44 games and set a franchise record by appearing in 150 consecutive contests.

Hillmon, who played college basketball at Michigan, was second in the league in plus-minus (+7.6 per game) and helped Atlanta earn the No. 3 seed and win

a franchise-record 30 games in its 17th season.

She won the AP Sixth Woman of the Year award earlier this month.

Caitlin Clark said referees couldn’t stop her Indiana Fever. The WNBA made her pay for it.

The Fever’s All-Star guard, who is sidelined for the postseason with a right groin injury, posted on social media Saturday that she was fined \$200 for tweeting “Refs couldn’t stop us” after Indiana’s Game 2 win over Atlanta in the first round of the playoffs.

Over 3,000 athletes from 57 nations set to compete

Riyadh’s top sports venues ready for 2025 Islamic Solidarity Games

RIYADH, Sept 21: Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia, is set to host the sixth edition of the Islamic Solidarity Games from November 7 to 21, 2025. Over 3,000 athletes from 57 member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation are expected to participate, as the city showcases its top sports facilities and modern landmarks to deliver a world-class sporting experience.

The Games will take place across a mix of Olympic stadiums, open fields, and state-of-the-art entertainment venues, offering athletes and spectators a unique combination of high-level competition and spectacular event organization.

Prince Faisal bin Fahd Sports City stands out as one of Riyadh’s premier sporting venues, renowned for hosting major competitions with its advanced facilities and comprehensive infrastructure. Renovations have prepared the complex to host both regional and international championships. In the 2025 edition, it will host athletics, para-athletics, judo, karate, taekwondo, and jiu-jitsu events, making it a central hub for Olympic sports and martial arts.

An additional integrated sports complex will provide stadiums, indoor arenas, and training facilities, catering to a variety of competitions and reflecting Saudi Arabia’s commitment to modern sports infrastructure. During the Games, this venue will also host futsal, handball, and swimming events, positioning it as a key location for both team and aquatic sports.



Overview of Riyadh’s Prince Faisal bin Fahd Sports City.

Verstappen cruises to victory



Red Bull driver Max Verstappen of the Netherlands leads at the start of the Azerbaijan Formula One Grand Prix in Baku, Azerbaijan. (AP)

Piastri crashes on lap 1

BAKU, Azerbaijan, Sept 21, (AP): Max Verstappen looked to be back at his title-winning best. McLaren’s title-chasing drivers looked like also-rans.

Verstappen cruised to victory in the Azerbaijan Grand Prix on Sunday as championship leader Oscar Piastri’s first-lap crash allowed Lando Norris to trim his Formula 1 points advantage - but not deal a decisive blow.

Verstappen was in control from start to finish after taking pole position in a chaotic qualifying session Saturday and had a vast lead by the time he made his only pit stop.

“The car was working really well,” Verstappen said. “It was pretty straightforward. Of course, it’s not easy around here, very windy today so the car is always moving around a little, but of course, incredibly happy with this performance.”

George Russell said he was “pretty glad” to see the checkered flag after taking second for Mercedes while battling illness and Carlos Sainz, Jr. was third for Williams’ first podium finish in four years.

“Best podium in my career,” the former Ferrari driver told the team.

Verstappen made it back-to-back wins for the first time since the Spanish Grand Prix of June 2024 as McLaren’s dominance this season came under threat for the second race in a row.

Norris was seventh as he missed the chance to fully exploit Piastri’s error and slash the Aus-



Red Bull driver Max Verstappen of the Netherlands stands on the podium after winning the Azerbaijan Formula One Grand Prix in Baku, Azerbaijan. (AP)

tralian’s lead in the Formula 1 title fight, which drops from 31 points to 25, the value of a race win. Verstappen still has a slim chance of a fifth consecutive title in third, 69 points off the lead.

Norris struggled to pass cars on track and spent the final lap behind Red Bull’s Yuki Tsunoda, but could have finished as high as fourth if not for losing time - and likely three places - in a slow McLaren pit stop for the second race running.

At the start, Piastri nearly stalled on the grid and dropped to the back of the field, before slid-

ing into the barrier as he tried to recover places. The Australian crashed for the second day running in Baku after also hitting the barrier in qualifying, and failed to pick up any points for the first time since May 2024.

McLaren could have secured the constructors’ title Sunday with seven races to go, but will now have to wait until at least the next race in Singapore in two weeks’ time. It was McLaren’s worst combined performance of an otherwise dominant season, and lowest points haul from a Grand Prix since 2023.

Hiring Sainz was part of Williams’ ambitious plans to return to competing at the front of the grid, and it paid off in Azerbaijan.

There was good fortune Saturday as Sainz benefited from the weather and red flags to qualify second, but he and the car showed genuine pace Sunday to hold on to finish third, allowing only Russell past.

Sainz climbed out of the car and sprinted over to a group of friends and team staff, leaping into their arms.

“We’ve had a lot of bad luck, a lot of incidents,” Sainz said. “Now I understand why it all happened because the first podium needed to come like this. It’s just life, you know? Life just sometimes brings you those bad moments to give you a very nice one.”

Williams was on the podium for the first time since Russell’s second place at the 2021 Belgian Grand Prix, when heavy rain meant no green-flag racing was possible. Excepting that result, it was Williams’ best finish in a competitive race since 2014.

Milan crushes Udinese

Pellegrini redeems himself with derby winner as Roma pips Lazio

ROME, Sept 21, (AP): Stripped of the captaincy. His contract nearing expiration without a renewal proposal. No minutes played in the opening three matches.

Nothing seemed to be going Lorenzo Pellegrini’s way. Until the Rome derby.

The Roman-born Pellegrini cast aside all the issues surrounding him and scored the decisive goal for Roma in a 1-0 win over Lazio in Serie A on Sunday.

After being derided by Gian Piero Gasperini a day earlier when Roma’s new coach said that at 29 Pellegrini has “got to become an athlete and start running,” the midfielder was perfectly positioned to strike from the center of the area after Dwayne Rensch had stripped the ball from Lazio left back Nuno Tavares and rolled it across to the ex-captain.

Pellegrini, who is also trying to regain his spot in Italy’s squad, celebrated with a kiss toward the Curva Sud where Roma’s hard-core “ultra” fans sit.

Moments before the goal, a banner popped up in the Curva Sud that said, “Welcome back, captain.”

After the goal, Roma’s end of the Stadio Olimpico erupted with yellow-and-red smoke bombs.



AC Milan’s Christian Pulisic scores his team’s third goal during the Serie A soccer match between Udinese and AC Milan at the Bluenergy Stadium in Udine, Italy. (AP)

It was Pellegrini’s fourth career goal in the Derby della Capitale - but his first since January in any competition.

Before the season, Gasperini gave the captain’s armband to Stephan El Shaarawy based on seniority.

Pellegrini got the start with Paulo Dybala out injured.

The derby was moved to a lunch-

time start to discourage fan violence after 24 police officers were injured during clashes likened to “urban warfare” at the previous derby, which was played at night in April.

Christian Pulisic is in fine form nine months before a home World Cup.

The United States forward scored twice and was involved in another goal as AC Milan won at previously

unbeaten Udinese 3-0. Earlier, Bologna came from a goal down to beat visiting Genoa 2-1 with a penalty kick from Riccardo Orsolini nine minutes into stoppage time.

It was just the type of performance that American fans will be hoping to see at the 2026 World Cup that the U.S. is co-hosting with Canada and Mexico. Pulisic and U.S. coach Mauricio Pochettino recently indicated they had moved on from some controversy after the top American player skipped the CONCACAF Gold Cup.

Since joining Milan in 2023, Pulisic has scored 36 goals and provided 21 assists in 105 matches - meaning he has produced a goal in more than half of his matches.

Milan’s third win in four matches moved the Rossoneri level with defending champion Napoli, one point behind leader Juventus, which had its perfect start ended in a 1-1 draw at Hellas Verona.

Under returning coach Massimiliano Allegri, who was suspended for the Udinese game, it’s already looking like Milan has improved after an eighth-place finish last season that left the seven-time European champion out of continental competition.

Qadsia and Kazma look to rebound after mixed starts

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: The third round of the Zain Premier League continues today with two key matchups, as Jahra host Kazma at Mubarak Al-Ayar Stadium at 6:10 p.m., followed by Qadsia taking on Fahaheel at Mohammed Al-Hamad Stadium at 8:25 p.m.

All four sides enter the round looking to bounce back from disappointing results last week. Kazma was held to a goalless draw by Tadamon, Jahra suffered a 4-1 defeat to Kuwait Club, Qadsia dropped points in a 1-1 stalemate with Shabab, and Fahaheel fell 3-0 to Arabi.

Kazma, led by Croatian coach Dragan Tadic, will aim to take advantage of Jahra’s struggles and hand it a third straight loss, while chasing its second win after edging Salmiya 1-0 in the opener.

Jahra, meanwhile, will be buoyed by the long-awaited registration of its new foreign players, who were sidelined for the first two rounds due to a FIFA sanction related to unpaid dues. Their reinforcements — Antonio Silva (Angola), Filip Dangubić (Croatia), Oliver Stojanovski (North Macedonia), Mimola Hysen (Italy), along with Tunisian Omar Ben Zakri — could provide a much-needed boost for Croatian coach Rodion Gasanin “Radan.”

Later in the evening, Qadsia (4 points) know only victory will satisfy its fans after last week’s draw. Tunisian coach Nabil Maaloul will be eager to steer his side back to winning form as the club continues its pursuit of a league title that has been missing for several years.

Qadsia will be without Mubarak Al-

Fanini, who faces more than a month on the sidelines with a muscle injury. On the positive side, Congolese star Neeskens Kebano returns to the squad, while Algerian defender Sofiane Bouchar is set for his debut following suspension.

Fahaheel (3 points), who opened their campaign with a win over Jahra before stumbling against Arabi, are also looking for a response. Syrian coach Firas Al-Khatib believes his side must stay sharp and capitalize on the pressure Qadsia are facing from their demanding supporters.



In this file image, Qadsia forward Badr Al-Mutawa holds the ball after scoring.

Kuwaiti skater takes part in Berlin Inline Marathon

BERLIN, Sept 21, (KUNA): Kuwaiti athlete Abdulrazaq Al-Najjar took part on Sunday in the BMW Berlin 2025 Inline Skating Marathon, one of the sport’s longest endurance events, drawing thousands of participants from around the world.

Speaking to KUNA, Al-Najjar expressed pride in representing Kuwait on the international stage. He noted that inline skating is still relatively uncommon in the Arab world, highlighting the country’s growing support for emerging sports and calling for increased resources to encourage youth participation and wider competitive involvement.

The marathon, held across central Berlin, spanned more than two and a half hours, earning recognition as one of the longest-distance events in the sport of inline skating.



Abdulrazaq Al-Najjar of Kuwait poses for a photo at the BMW Berlin 2025 Inline Skating Marathon.

Hamburg fans celebrate first Bundesliga win in seven years

BERLIN, Sept 21, (Xinhua): For Hamburg sports board member Stefan Kuntz, little has changed despite the club’s first win of the 2025-26 Bundesliga season.

“It is a great relief for everyone, and we can use the energy unleashed, but things haven’t changed significantly for the club,” Kuntz said after HSV’s 2-1 victory over Heidenheim.

“The challenge remains as we start from the bottom and aim to secure our first-division spot with an entirely restructured squad,” added the former Germany international.

Despite HSV’s rich history, Kuntz, 62, warned of a difficult road ahead after seven years in the second division. The club’s six national championships - the last in 1983 - and its European Cup triumph 1983, he said, “belong to the past, even as we enjoy the energy triggered by our fans.”

The setbacks of recent years have not

dented HSV’s popularity. One of the Bundesliga’s founding members in 1963, the club continues to draw huge crowds and enjoys nationwide support. But Kuntz compared the road back to stability to “walking a tightrope,” describing HSV as one of the league’s outsiders battling for survival. He called for “a new humility” to bridge the gap between past glory and present struggles.

HSV’s squad rebuild includes 11 new players, among them Fabio Vieira and Luka Vuskovic, both signed on loan from Premier League sides Arsenal and Tottenham Hotspur respectively. Vuskovic, an 18-year-old Croatian defender, opened the scoring after 42 minutes with HSV’s first Bundesliga goal since May 12, 2018 - the year of the club’s first-ever relegation. French striker Rayan Philippe added the second before Heidenheim scored a consolation effort.

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NEWS



Norway's Jakob Ingebrigtsen, center, races in the men's 5,000 meters final at the World Athletics Championships in Tokyo. (AP)

Sports

Kuwait draws with Iraq, Saudi Arabia routs Bahrain in U-17 Gulf Championship opener



Hayder Adnan Al-Shammari (right) of Iraq vies with Ali Kh Almaraghi of Kuwait during the Arab Gulf Cup Football Federation (AGCFF) U-17 Gulf Cup Qatar 2025 Group B football match between Iraq and Kuwait in Doha. (Xinhua)

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

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: Kuwait's under-17 national team played out a dramatic 1-1 draw with Iraq in the opening match of the Gulf U-17 Championship at Hamad Al-Kabeer Stadium.

Iraq struck first in the 9th minute through Amir Haider, but Kuwait snatched a late equalizer in the 96th

minute, thanks to Mohammed Al-Salama, ensuring both teams shared a point in Group B.

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia made a statement at Suhaim Bin Hamad Stadium with a dominant 4-0 victory over Bahrain. The Green Falcons began strongly, as Walid Al-Nour scored two early goals in the 5th and 7th minutes, followed by Sabri Dahl's third in the 44th minute to give Saudi Arabia a comfortable 3-0

lead at halftime.

Al-Nour completed his hat-trick in the 56th minute, cementing his status as one of the tournament's early stand-out players.

With this comprehensive victory, Saudi Arabia sent a clear message to the competition, establishing themselves as one of the top favorites to claim the inaugural Gulf U-17 Championship title, hosted this year in Doha, Qatar.

Kuwait cruises past India in Futsal Asian Cup qualifying opener, Aussies overwhelm Mongolia



Kuwait futsal players pose for a group photo.

By Hassan Mosa
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: Kuwait's national futsal team defeated India 4-1 in the opening match of Group A of the 2026 AFC Futsal Asian Cup qualifiers, held at Al-Nasr Club Hall.

Al-Azraq's goals were scored by Saleh Al-Fadhel, Abdulaziz Al-Sarraj, Mohammed Al-Ajmi, and Ali Al-Abbasi, earning the team its first three

points of the qualifiers.

In the other match of the same group, Australia swept past Mongolia with an 8-1 victory to top the standings on goal difference ahead of Kuwait.

Today, the second round of matches will be played, with Australia facing India at 4:00 p.m., while Kuwait takes on Mongolia at 8:00 p.m., looking to continue its winning momentum and strengthen its qualification chances.

Jefferson-Wooden caps triple gold, US dominates 'final' day of worlds



United States' Noah Lyles, Kenneth Bednarek, Christian Coleman and Courtney Lindsey celebrate taking gold in the men's 4x100 meters relay final at the World Athletics Championships in Tokyo. (AP)

Botswana pulls off stunning upset in 4x400m

TOKYO, Sept 21, (Xinhua): Melissa Jefferson-Wooden capped a dazzling campaign with her third gold medal on Sunday, guiding the United States to victory in the women's 4x100-meter relay on a rain-soaked final day of the World Athletics Championships.

Jefferson-Wooden, already a double sprint champion in Tokyo, led off for a U.S. squad that also featured Twanisha Terry, Kayla White and Sha'Carri Richardson. The quartet clocked 41.75 seconds, edging Jamaica by just 0.04s. Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce, Tia Clayton, Tina Clayton and Jonielle Smith combined for a season's best 41.79, while Germany took bronze in 41.87.

"It's crazy to be going home with three gold medals," Jefferson-Wooden

said. "I added my name to the history books once again. I am right where I want to be." After the race, Jefferson-Wooden embraced Fraser-Pryce, who now has 19 medals - 10 golds, eight silvers and a bronze - across nine world championships.

"I have had an amazing career and today's medal is the icing on the cake," said the Jamaican sprint great. "It feels like a full-circle moment. I was just a reserve at my first world championships in Osaka in 2007, and I couldn't have asked for a better journey. I am grateful for the medals, the stadiums and the crowds where I've competed throughout my career." The United States closed out the meet in dominant fashion, winning four gold medals on the final day to finish atop the medal table with 16 titles.

Noah Lyles collected his seventh career world gold, anchoring the men's 4x100m relay team to victory after Jamaica failed to reach the final following a baton mishap in qualifying. Canada earned silver and the Netherlands bronze.

"We did our job," said Lyles. "This

is great. I'm humbled. We've had struggles with the baton in the past, but I'm so proud to be part of this relay squad." The U.S. also stormed to victory in the women's 4x400m relay, setting a championship record of 3:16.61, with Jamaica second and the Netherlands third.

In the men's 4x400m, Botswana pulled off a stunning upset as Busang Collen Kebinatshipi surged past U.S. hurdler Rai Benjamin in the final meters. Joined by 100m silver medalist Letsile Tebogo, the squad claimed Botswana's first world relay title. South Africa, led by world record-holder Wayde van Niekerk, took bronze.

Another American highlight came in the men's 5,000m, where Cole Hocker, the 2024 Olympic 1,500m champion, ran 12:58.30 to earn his first world crown. Belgium's Isaac Kimeli took silver, while France's Jimmy Gressier added bronze to the 10,000m title he won earlier in the week.

Elsewhere, Kenya's Lilian Odira won the women's 800m ahead of Great Britain's Georgia Hunter Bell and Olympic champion Keely Hodgkinson.

In the women's high jump, Australia's Nicola Olyslagers cleared 2.00 meters to capture her first world title. Poland's Maria Zdzik, also at 2.00m, settled for silver on countback, while Olympic champion Yaroslava Mahuchikh of Ukraine and Serbian teenager Angelina Topic shared bronze at 1.97m.

Germany's Leo Neugebauer secured the men's decathlon with 8,072 points, edging American Kyle Garland (8,075) and Puerto Rico's Ayden Owens-Delorme (7,958).

In the men's discus throw, delayed by heavy rain, Sweden's Daniel Stahl, the 2021 Olympic champion, delivered a dramatic final throw of 70.47 meters to snatch gold from Lithuania's Mykolas Alekna (67.84).

By the close of competition, the United States led the medal table with 16 golds, five silvers and five bronzes. Kenya finished second with seven titles, and Canada placed third with three. China earned two silvers and two bronzes, while host Japan collected two bronzes. No Asian country or region won a gold medal.

Kuwait Club eyes hat-trick as Kazma targets first title

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

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: The 40th edition of the Arab Clubs Handball Championship for league and cup winners concludes today at Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex, with the final of the Arab Cup set for 6:30 p.m. between defending champion Kuwait Club and Kazma.

Earlier, at 4:00 p.m., Egypt's Al Ahly Bank will face Iraq's Al-Hashd in the third-place match.

Kuwait Club aims to secure its third consecutive Arab Cup, having first lifted the trophy in 2023 with a 33-24 win over Egypt's Zamalek in Dammam, and a second in 2024 by defeating Al-Salmiya at Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex. Kuwait Club also holds two international titles: Gulf Champion and Asian Champion.

Kazma is chasing its first Arab Cup, having previously won the Asian Club Championship twice. Today's final promises a fierce "Kuwaiti derby" in Arab handball.

The two sides previously met in the preliminary stage of Group A, with Kuwait Club winning 33-24. But today's final leaves no margin for error—the winner lifts the Arab Cup, while the loser settles for second place.

Kuwait Club topped Group A with full points, defeating Al-Taliya, Kazma, Al-Shabab, and Naft Al-Basra. They beat Qatar SC in the quarter-finals and overcame Al-Hashd 35-24 in the semi-finals. Mohamed Amer was named Best Player.

Kazma finished second in the preliminary stage with wins over Al-Shabab, Naft Al-Basra, and Al-Taliya. The team defeated Al-Salibikhat 31-24 in the quarter-finals and claimed a 29-23 semi-final victory over Al Ahly Bank. Hani Kaki



A Kuwait Club player finds himself trapped between two Kazma opponents.

earned the Best Player award.

Esperance of Tunisia leads the championship's all-time winners list with seven titles, followed by Egypt's Al Ahly with five. Tunisia's Etoile du Sahel and Algeria's MC Oran have three each. Two titles each have been claimed by MC Alger (Algeria), Al-Ahli (Saudi Arabia), Club Africain (Tunisia), Al-Khaleej (Saudi Arabia), and Kuwait SC.

Single-title winners include UAE's Al Ain, Qatar's Al Rayyan and Al-Gharafa, Egypt's Zamalek and Sporting, Bahrain's Al-Ahli, and Tunisia's Saaqiya Al-Zeit.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's U-17 national handball team was eliminated from the first Asian U-17 Championship in Amman, Jordan, a qualifier for next month's World Cup in Morocco, following a 26-22 defeat to Qatar.

The team had played four matches, winning its opener against Hong Kong but losing three, including two losses to Bahrain and Iran in the preliminary round.

Aston Villa ends EPL goal drought

LONDON, Sept 21, (AP): Aston Villa ended its goal drought in the Premier League but still couldn't beat 10-man Sunderland in a 1-1 draw on Sunday, while Newcastle was held 0-0 at Bournemouth.

Matty Cash blasted a swerving shot from 25 meters that Sunderland goalkeeper Robin Roefs could only parry into his own net in the 67th, giving Villa its first goal after five games in the league.

However, Sunderland - playing with 10 men from the 33rd minute after Reinildo's red card for kicking out at Cash - equalized in the 75th through Wilson Isidor to leave Villa without a victory and in third-to-last place.

Newcastle rotated its team after a Champions League loss to Barcelona on Thursday and struggled to create many clear-cut chances at Vitality Stadium against a Bournemouth team seeking a fourth straight win.

Bruno Fernandes struck his 100th goal for Manchester United in a chaotic 2-1 win against Chelsea and helped ease pressure on coach Ruben Amorim on Saturday.

Fernandes and Casemiro struck in a wild first half at Old Trafford where both teams went down to 10 men and Chelsea lost star player Cole Palmer to injury.

Fernandes hit a century of goals in his 200th Premier League appearance. But the biggest celebration came after the final whistle as United won for only the second time this season.