



Amir's Representative partakes in 80th UNGA high-level week opening session  
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## Kuwait's Amir condoles Saudi King on Grand Mufti's passing

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 23, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of condolences on Tuesday to Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, over the passing of Head of the Saudi Council of Senior Scholars and Grand Mufti of the Kingdom Sheikh Abdulaziz Al-Sheikh.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir conveyed heartfelt condolences and recalled the virtues of the late scholar as well as his outstanding contributions in the service of Islam, praying to Al-mighty Allah to bestow mercy upon him.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah

Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also sent a similar cable to King Salman, offering heartfelt condolences and commending the Grand Mufti's legacy in serving Islam.

Likewise, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah conveyed his condolences to the Saudi monarch on the passing of Sheikh Abdulaziz Al-Sheikh.

Head of the Saudi Council of Senior Scholars and Grand Mufti of the Kingdom Sheikh Abdulaziz Al-Sheikh has passed away, said the Royal Diwan on Tuesday.

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# AI-powered patrol hits Kuwait streets

142 citations, multiple arrests in Jahra crackdown

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 23: The General Directorate of Security Systems Monday launched a new security patrol, affiliated with the Human Resources and Information Technology Sector, equipped with the most

advanced technologies to enhance field operations.

The Ministry of Interior announced on its X account that this initiative is based on the directives of the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, and under the follow-up of the acting Under-secretary of the ministry Major General Ali Al-Adwani, and

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## Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

## Minister of Electricity ... Thank you, this decision was truly needed

WHEN decisions are absent and senior officials and employees fall into complacency, chaos takes over, waste becomes rampant in all institutions and sectors, and creativity disappears.

However, with active follow-up, accountability, and the ability to make timely, informed decisions, performance improves and the state's interests are preserved.

This introduction was necessary to understand how negligence leads to waste of electricity, and indeed, waste in all sectors. The lack of accountability has led to the misuse of public resources in a country with a unique environment and harsh climate. Consequently, the government must ensure a continuous electricity supply every-day year-round to help people cope with the scorching heat.

It is worth noting that Kuwait has experienced power outages during the hot summer months for nearly 40 years, resulting in significant financial losses, wasted time, and health problems for patients.

The situation has been further exacerbated by the phenomenon of cryptocurrency mining, which consumes vast amounts of electricity.

Therefore, when you hear the Minister of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy and acting Minister of Finance Dr. Subaih Abdulaziz Al-Mukhaizeem explain the causes of the problem, it becomes clear that he is seeking a radical solution to the issue and to prevent waste.

However, since one hand cannot clap alone, the cooperation of everyone is required to ensure this crisis does not recur year after year.

It is true that the weather is currently improving, but that doesn't mean the problem has been resolved. While the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy has announced its plan for the next summer, successful implementation will require serious oversight from all parties to prevent any emergency that could disrupt

progress.

Shutting down cryptocurrency mining operations in Wafra has undoubtedly helped reduce the load, but the crisis is far from over.

According to sources close to the minister, the decision is just the first step on a long journey. It is aimed at curbing power outages caused largely by a lack of awareness about the importance of rationalization.

Leaving unused appliances plugged in, running air conditioners while on vacation abroad, and other forms of wasteful consumption contribute to increased costs, which forces the government to expand electrical infrastructure unnecessarily.

Neighboring countries such as Saudi Arabia, which is both larger in area and population than Kuwait, do not suffer from the same crisis. This is because they have followed parallel strategies that focus on the importance of energy conservation, strict monitoring, and enforcement to prevent mismanagement and waste.

Dr. Al-Mukhaizeem explained that the root cause of the crisis lies in years of delayed decision-making.

As an expert in the energy sector and its needs, the minister understands the urgency of this phase. Since we are all in the same boat, we must all cooperate to achieve success, not only to resolve the electricity crisis, but to achieve progress in all sectors.

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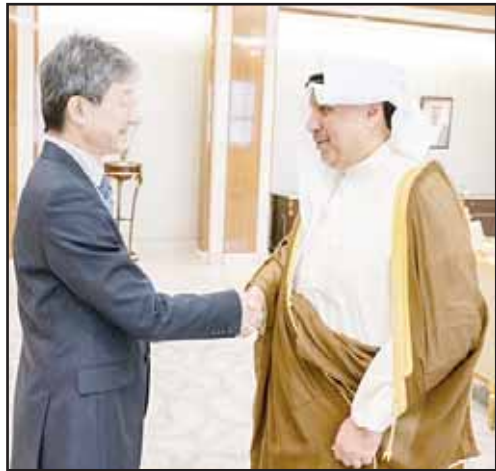
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Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs and Chief of His Highness the Crown Prince's Diwan receive the Ambassador of Japan.



Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs and Chief of His Highness the Crown Prince's Diwan receive the Ambassador of Turkiye.



Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs and Chief of His Highness the Crown Prince's Diwan receive the Ambassador of France.



Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs and Chief of His Highness the Crown Prince's Diwan receive the Ambassador of Jordan.



## Amiri Diwan Minister, Crown Prince Diwan Chief host ambassadors

Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs, Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Sabah, and Chief of His Highness the Crown Prince's Diwan Sheikh Thamer Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace on Tuesday Ambassadors of Jordan, France, Turkiye and Japan to the country.

They talked with Jordanian Ambassador to the country, Sinan Al-Majali of

the deeply rooted ties between the two nations and ways of boosting such ties across a multitude of avenues.

As for the French Ambassador, Olivier Gauvin, Minister Al-Sabah conveyed Kuwait's gratitude for President Emmanuel Macron's recognition of the Palestinian state, as they all discussed boosting cooperation.

They discussed developing economic ties and boosting economic cooperation creating more investment opportunities with the Turkish Ambassador, Tuba Nur Sonmez.

With the Japanese Ambassador, Mukai Kenichiro, they talked of augmenting relations between the two nations. (KUNA)

## Day by Day

DR. Ayed Al-Mana' and Fahad Al-Shleimi are prominent media figures with a strong and influential presence. Their voices can be heard on all radio and television stations. Both actively advocate for Kuwait's interests, clarify its international relations, and also support Arab causes.

Al-Mana' and Al-Shleimi are deserving of recognition by the Ministry of Information and should be provided with any necessary support or information. ... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

## Ministry of Commerce streamlines licensing to boost small businesses

By Marwa Al-Bahravi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 23: A week after the publication of the new regulations in the official gazette, 'Kuwait Al-Yaum', the Ministry of Commerce and Industry on Monday issued Ministerial Resolutions No. 168 and No. 175/2025 regulating the activities of micro-enterprises and other special-purpose activities.

This is part of efforts to support the entrepreneurial environment and provide clear legal frameworks for startups.

The ministry listed the new conditions for issuing a license to engage in these activities as follows: the company must be a one-

person company, the founder must be a Kuwaiti citizen with full legal capacity and the company's director, the founder must be at least 21 years old, and must not have been sentenced through a final judgment restricting freedom for a felony or crime involving moral turpitude or dishonesty, unless his reputation has been restored.

The new regulations also require registering an official email address with the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI), obtaining the property owner's approval if the business is located in a private residence, paying the prescribed fees, and signing the necessary pledge according to the forms approved by the ministry.

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## Kuwait hails 7 European nations for recognizing Palestinian state

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 23, (Agencies): Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced Tuesday, Kuwait welcomes the declaration by France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Malta, Denmark, Andorra, and Monaco recognizing the State of Palestine, describing this recognition as a significant and positive international step.

Kuwait commended these countries for supporting peace and the two-state solution, and further urged all remaining nations to join this path, enabling Palestinians to establish an independent state along 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as their capital.

As the Gaza war rages on, France

recognized Palestinian statehood on Monday at the start of a high-profile meeting at the United Nations aimed at galvanizing support for a two-state solution to the Mideast conflict. More nations are expected to follow, in defiance of Israel and the United States.

French President Emmanuel Macron's announcement in the U.N. General Assembly hall received loud applause from the more than 140 leaders in attendance. The Palestinian delegation, including its U.N. ambassador, Riyad Mansour, could be seen standing and applauding as the declaration was made.

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## UK reaffirms commitment to two-state solution



British Embassy photo of UK Chargé d'Affaires Stuart Summers meets Palestinian Ambassador Rami Tahboub following landmark recognition.

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 23: UK Chargé d'Affaires Stuart Summers met Palestinian Ambassador Rami Tahboub following UK recognition of the State of Palestine.

The meeting followed the United Kingdom's historic decision, announced by Prime Minister Keir Starmer on 22nd September 2025, to formally recognise the State of Palestine.

During their discussions, Mr Summers underlined the UK's firm commitment to a two-state solution as the only viable path to achieve peace, security, and dignity for both Palestinians and Israelis. He also stressed the UK's determination to work with international partners, to support efforts towards lasting peace and regional stability.



8 'InvestGB' participates in Al Hamra Second Career Fair

9 NBK receives Silver Award for Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion



Prayer Timings			
Fajr .....	04:17	Asr .....	15:07
Sunrise ..	05:37	Maghrib ..	17:44
Zohr .....	11:41	Isha .....	19:01

# Local

**Expected weather for next 24 hrs:**  
**By Day:** Hot with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind to northerly wind, with speeds of 12-45 km/h causing rising dust.  
**By Night:** Rather hot to mild

Weather			
with light to moderate northwest-erly wind, with speeds of 12-35 km/h.			
Station	Max Exp	Min Rec	
Kuwait City	40	29	
Kuwait Airport	40	29	
Abdaly	41	23	

Bubyan	37	21
Jahra	41	28
Fallaka Island	36	26
Salmiyah	36	29
Ahmadi	35	26
Nuwaisib	37	27
Wafra	39	26

## Amir’s Representative partakes in 80th UNGA high-level week opening session

Crown Prince spearheads multi-faceted mission

**NEW YORK, Sept 23, (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 took part in the opening session of the general debate of the high-level week of the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly.

The conference was sponsored by Saudi Arabia and France.

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 met with President Serdar Berdimuhamedov, of the Republic of Turkmenistan, at the UN HQ in New York on Monday.

During the meeting, held on the fringes of the 80th UN General Assembly session, he conveyed to the Turkmen leader the greetings of His Highness the Amir.

Both sides reviewed the progress of the friendly relations between their two countries and ways to promote the mutually beneficial cooperation.

Also in attendance at the meeting were Kuwait’s Foreign Minister, Abdullah Ali Al-Yahya, Undersecretary of the Amiri Diwan for Foreign Affairs Mazen Issa Al-Issa, and Kuwait’s Permanent Representative to United Nations Tareq Mohammad Al-Bannai.



KUNA photo  
Kuwait Amir Representative participates in 80th UNGA high-level week opening session.

Kuwait’s Amir Representative His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah met on Monday with various American CEOs here in Kuwait’s Office at the UN, in New York.

His Highness the Crown Prince met with CEO of Goldman Sachs David M. Solomon.

His Highness Sheikh Sabah also received CEO Michael Rubens Bloomberg of Bloomberg Company.

His Highness the Crown Prince received as well CEO Laurence Douglas Fink of Blackrock Company.

During the meetings, His Highness the Crown Prince conveyed greetings and wishes on behalf of His Highness the Amir to boost global companies presence in the State of Kuwait, and to benefit from their vast experience, which would coincide with Kuwait vision 2035.

The meeting also delved into discussion over economic and investment

topics, and bolstering cooperation.

The meetings, were also attended by Kuwait’s Foreign Minister, Abdullah Ali Al-Yahya, Director General of Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDPIA) Sheikh Dr. Meshal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and Undersecretary of the Amiri Diwan for Foreign Affairs Mazen Issa Al-Issa, Kuwait Ambassador to US Sheikh Al-Zain Sabah Al-Nasser Al-Sabah, Assistant to Foreign Minister Office Affairs Ambassador Bader Al-Tunaib, and Kuwait’s Permanent Representative to United Nations Tareq Mohammad Al-Bannai.

Kuwait’s Amir Representative His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah met on Monday with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, at the UN HQ in New York.

During the meeting, held on the sidelines of the 80th UN General Assembly session, he conveyed to the Turkish

leader greetings on behalf of His Highness the Amir.

Both sides reviewed the progress of the relations between their two countries and ways to promote the mutually beneficial cooperation.

Also in attendance at the meeting were Kuwait’s Foreign Minister, Abdullah Ali Al-Yahya, Undersecretary of the Amiri Diwan for Foreign Affairs Mazen Issa Al-Issa, and Kuwait’s Permanent Representative to United Nations Tareq Mohammad Al-Bannai.

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 met with President Jose Raul Mulino Quintero, of the Republic of Panama, at the UN HQ in New York on Monday.

During the meeting, held on the fringes of the 80th UN General Assembly session, he conveyed to the Panamanian leader the regards of His Highness the Amir.

Both sides reviewed the progress of the friendly relations between their two countries and ways to promote the mutually beneficial cooperation.

Also in attendance at the meeting were Kuwait’s Foreign Minister, Abdullah Ali Al-Yahya, Director-General of Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) Sheikh Dr. Meshal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Undersecretary of the Amiri Diwan for Foreign Affairs Mazen Isa Al-Isa, and Kuwait’s Permanent Representative to United Nations Tareq Mohammad Al-Bannai.

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 met with President Edgars Rinkevics, of Latvia, at the UN HQ in New York on Monday.

## ‘Convergence strengthens ties’

### Bahrain Ambassador congratulates Saudi Arabia on 95th National Day

**By Fares Ghaleb**  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 23: The Ambassador of the Kingdom of Bahrain, Salah Al-Maliki, extended his congratulations to Saudi Arabia on its National Day.

In a press statement, he said: “It is a great pleasure and joy for me to share with our brothers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia their precious celebration of the 95th National Day.

This glorious day represents a journey of giving and achievement under the unifying leadership of the founder, King Abdulaziz bin Abdulrahman Al Saud, a legacy carried forward by his righteous sons, the kings, up to the reign of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz, and his Crown Prince, Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

Saudi Arabia is witnessing an unprecedented developmental renaissance and an ambitious vision that places the Saudi people at the heart of the modernization and development process.

The comprehensive renaissance, civilizational progress, and regional and global leadership achieved by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are a source of pride for all of us in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries.

It reflects the wisdom of its leadership and the ambitious Saudi Vision 2030, which represents a major leap toward a prosperous future for both Saudi Arabia and the entire region.”

On this special occasion, I am pleased to extend my warmest congratulations and blessings to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, and the dear Saudi people. I wish the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia continued glory, security, and prosperity.

As I join my brother, Prince Sultan bin Saad Al Saud, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the State of Kuwait, and all members of the embassy on this auspicious day, I affirm



that the historical fraternal relations between the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia represent a deeply rooted model of unity and cohesion.

We are united by bonds of religion, blood, and shared destiny, strengthened by the sincere cooperation between our two countries in various forums.

On this precious occasion, we reaffirm our pride in these ties and our unwavering commitment to strengthening them to serve the interests of the two brotherly peoples and to achieve security and prosperity for the entire region.”

What distinguishes Saudi-Bahraini relations is their strategic depth, extending over decades of joint cooperation and coordination. This is reflected in the convergence of positions on various regional and international issues, as well as integration in the economic, security, and defense sectors.

These relations will continue to stand as a model of sincere fraternal partnership between two countries united by history, geography, and a shared destiny.”

## Other Voices

### The American cover and the destruction of Iraq

**By Ahmad alsarraf**

President Hosni Mubarak has a famous saying - “Whoever covers himself with America is actually naked.”

The shrewd politician Henry Kissinger once said, “You are in trouble if you are an enemy of America, and in even greater trouble if you are a friend of it.”

The Israeli airstrikes on Qatar’s sovereignty and security stand as the best proof of this reality, despite the treaties, alliances, and military bases that bind the two countries together.

America is a formidable power in terms of size, influence, and agility, largely due to the extensive powers of its president. Basically, America is a nation of institutions, but several groups have managed to penetrate and influence some of them. America’s strength, and its weakness, lies in the necessity of holding presidential elections every four years. Winning has become less about being the best candidate and more about who can raise the most money for their campaign and offer the most generous promises to powerful lobbying groups, including those backed by Israeli interests, military industries, and the extraordinarily wealthy.

The Jews who immigrated to America, especially during and after World War II, were among the first to recognize the weaknesses in American institutions, the influence of the media, and control over the White House, Capitol, and other government branches. Over time, they skillfully exploited these weaknesses to serve their own interests.

They possessed money, influence, and intelligence. They were patient and planned with secrecy and precision. They established AIPAC, which succeeded in indirectly acquiring control over the majority of media outlets and the forces shaping public opinion, from newspapers and television channels to the production of series and films. More importantly, they managed to secure the loyalty of most politicians and representatives.

In less than half a century, they succeeded in controlling many aspects of the United States, making it subservient to Israel. Jeffrey Epstein, with his notorious history, was one of their most dangerous tools.

It was therefore no surprise that the most controversial US President, Donald Trump, renamed the Department of Defense, after 150 years, to the Department of War, signaling the direction the future might take.

After gaining its independence, during its first 150 years, America fought wars against Britain, Spain, Mexico, and the Philippines, as well as committed massacres against indigenous peoples. The United States also participated in two world wars, dropped two atomic bombs on Japan, and engaged in conflicts in Korea, Guatemala (1954), Indonesia (1958), Cuba (1959), Congo (1964), Laos and Vietnam (1961), Cambodia (1969), Grenada (1983), Lebanon (1983-1984), Syria (1986), Libya (2011), El Salvador (1980), Nicaragua (1980), Panama (1989), Iraq during the Gulf Wars (1991 and 2003), Somalia, Bosnia, and Sudan (1998), Afghanistan (2001), Yugoslavia (1999), and Yemen, Syria, and Iran in 2025.

This is in addition to dozens of covert military interventions and regime overthrows, such as the coups against Mossadegh in Iran and Salvador Allende in Chile. It is often said, half-jokingly, “The only country that has never had a coup is America, the reason being there is no American embassy in the United States.”



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Most of the above is true, but it is also true that not all American wars were unjust. Some interventions brought relief to hundreds of millions of people, such as in the two World Wars and the Korean War. American policies have often changed depending on the views, moods, and “morals” of its most influential presidents.

The liberation of Kuwait, led by former US President George H.W. Bush, is a relatively just example. Thirty-five years later, it appears that this fact has not changed.

Kuwait was an ally of America before the liberation and remains so today. Kuwait did not pay a single dollar to America for its liberation beyond its share of the war costs, which totaled \$62 billion, of which Kuwait contributed only \$16 billion. Some sources estimate the total cost of the war to be around \$100 billion.

The entire coalition withdrew immediately after the liberation of Kuwait, refusing to enter Iraq. However, the situation changed drastically 12 years later, when US forces, under George W. Bush’s leadership, invaded Iraq, took control, and destabilized the country, perhaps permanently. The tragedy continues to this day.

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## Vietnam celebrates 80th National Day

**By Fares Ghaleb**  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 23: The Ambassador of the Republic of Vietnam to Kuwait, Nguyen Duc Thang, highlighted the special place Kuwait holds in Vietnamese history, as it was the first Gulf country to establish diplomatic ties with Vietnam in January 1976, shortly after the country’s reunification and victory in war.

He said this during a reception held to mark the 80th anniversary of Vietnam’s National Day, in the presence of Deputy Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Vietnam’s Deputy Foreign Minister Minh Hung Nguyen, a number of ambassadors, diplomats, and members of the Vietnamese community in Kuwait.

Ambassador Duc Thang said, “Kuwait was not only an early diplomatic partner but also a loyal friend who offered sincere support to Vietnam during its toughest times and continues to back us on our path toward development and peace.”

He praised the Kuwaiti leadership’s unwavering support and enthusiasm for bilateral cooperation.

Ambassador Duc Thang explained that relations between Kuwait and Vietnam are thriving in various sectors. Last year’s trade volume reached USD 7.3 billion, which is the highest for Vietnam in the Middle East, with growing exports of seafood, fresh fruits, textiles, furniture, electronics, and machinery.

Kuwait’s investment worth USD 4 billion in the joint Nghi Son Refinery project is a successful example of economic cooperation.

The ambassador said, “Cultural, educational, and tourism cooperation continues to grow steadily, along with local partnerships such as those between Ahmadi Governorate and Ho Chi Minh City, and Farwaniya Governorate and Thanh Hoa Province.”

He revealed that the fifth political consultations between the two countries, held Tuesday morning in Kuwait, resulted in an agreement to enhance cooperation in the fields of renewable energy, digital transformation, food security, agriculture, and fisheries.

Ambassador Duc Thang discussed the possibility of launching a direct flight between Kuwait and Hanoi, which would strengthen exchanges between the two peoples and both the public and private sectors.

On the occasion of the national celebration, the ambassador expressed his pride in marking the 80th anniversary of Vietnam’s National Day, recalling President Ho Chi Minh’s declaration of independence on September 2, 1945, and the subsequent journey of sacrifice to build a strong and prosperous nation.

Ambassador Duc Thang highlighted that Vietnam is an active member of more than 70 international political, economic, and social organizations and plays an active role in UN peacekeeping missions.

He emphasized that the country is globally admired for its stunning natural scenery, rich culture, and warm hospitality, adding, “In 2024, Vietnam



Photo by Rezk Tawfiq  
Marking Vietnam's 80th National Day with a symbolic cake-cutting at the Embassy in Kuwait.

welcomed 19 million tourists, and we expect that number to reach 25 million in 2025.”

The ambassador said, “As Vietnam celebrates its 80th National Day, we continue progressing toward a brighter future. We are committed to working with Kuwait to enhance practical cooperation, strengthen bridges of communication between Southeast Asia and the Gulf, and contribute to peace and prosperity in both regions.”

Regarding the economy, Ambassador Duc Thang emphasized that Vietnam has become a model of development and innovation, ranking 32nd globally with an annual growth rate of 6 to 7 percent since the COVID-19 pandemic, adding that the country aims to exceed 8 percent growth this year.

He revealed that Vietnam is now among the world’s top 20 countries in trade and foreign direct investment, having signed 17 free trade agreements and over 500 international trade deals, adding that Vietnam is committed to achieving net-zero emissions by 2050.

Meanwhile, in a press statement issued on the sidelines of the celebration, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs for Political and Diplomatic Affairs of Vietnam, Ambassador Nguyen Minh Hang, declared that she, along with senior officials from the Middle East Department of the Vietnamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, held the fifth round of political consultations recently at the headquarters of Kuwait’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the presence of Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs Ambassador Samih Hayat.

Ambassador Hang expressed her government’s satisfaction with the distinguished historical relations between Kuwait and Vietnam, emphasizing that the consultations included open dialogue and frank discussions on various issues of mutual interest.

She highlighted that the talks reflect the strong ties between the two countries and their shared desire to deepen bilateral cooperation.

The Vietnamese official indicated that she and Ambassador Hayat discussed areas of cooperation in light of Kuwait’s current presidency of the Supreme

Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

She revealed that the Vietnamese Prime Minister plans to make an official visit to Kuwait in mid-November, with coordination currently underway with Kuwait’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, affirming that this visit will mark an important milestone in advancing bilateral relations to a new level of development and prosperity.

Ambassador Hang explained that the political consultations between the two ministries yielded positive results, which will be reflected in the follow-up and expansion of cooperation between the two countries in the coming period. Both sides agreed to strengthen the bonds of historical friendship and expand areas of collaboration through practical and tangible measures, including consolidating political trust and enhancing mutual understanding.

She also emphasized that exchanging high-level visits will be a top priority in the coming phase, reflecting the commitment of the senior political leadership in both countries to elevating relations to new heights.

Ambassador Hang went on to explain that the consultations covered a wide range of bilateral cooperation areas, including political coordination in international forums, economic, trade, and investment sectors, as well as collaboration in culture, higher education, scientific research, and civil aviation. They also discussed cooperation in oil, renewable energy, industry, food security, and health and medical services.

In response to a question about the possibility of launching a direct air route between Kuwait and Vietnam, Ambassador Hang expressed hope that this would happen soon, emphasizing that such a step would strengthen humanitarian, cultural, and commercial ties between the two friendly countries and support efforts to expand cooperation in various fields.

In addition, the Turkish Ambassador to Kuwait Tuba Sonmez described the recent recognition of the State of Palestine by several countries as a “positive and promising development”, emphasizing that it marks “an important step in the right direction.”

She also expressed hope that all nations worldwide would follow suit in recognizing the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

In press statements issued on the sidelines of her participation in the Vietnamese ceremony, Ambassador Sonmez said, “We hope to see more actions from countries around the world, not only in terms of recognition but also by lifting sanctions and blockades, and halting the daily military operations in Gaza. We are tired of seeing images of Palestinian children in the news every day. Every step, no matter how small, is important.”

She called on the international community, world leaders, and every conscientious individual to take practical stances to end the “humanitarian tragedy in Palestine”.



KUNA photo

Helds of diplomatic missions and international organizations in Kuwait on Vietnam's National Day in Kuwait.



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A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Afia health insurance program:  
A gambling scheme in disguise

“THE government has officially canceled the “Afia” health insurance program for retirees. This is a decision that seems logical given the manipulation of millions of dinars, along with substantial sums paid in commissions,” Kuwaiti journalist **Hassan Ali Karam** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“It was never a charitable endeavor aimed at serving the public or pleasing God. Instead, it was a deeply flawed concept that turned citizens’ health into a commercial venture and a profit-driven system generating billions and offering a fast track to enrichment at the government’s expense, all under the guise of providing quality healthcare to citizens.

“From day one, it became clear that this program resembled a gambling scheme that was operating legally, within a government-run and government-supervised healthcare system.

“In “Afia” pharmacies, the prices of medicines were nearly double. Pharmacies outside the “Afia” network were left scrambling to retain their customers and pharmaceutical agents, doing everything possible to avoid losing business.

“The rise of the private healthcare sector was not a result of providing good service, but rather by the speed of securing appointments and consultations with specialist doctors.

“I assert that doctors in government hospitals are much more competent than their counterparts in the private sector. The evidence lies in the fact that government doctors routinely perform high-risk, complex surgeries, while private hospitals often transfer difficult cases to government facilities for further treatment, where more advanced resources and expertise are available.

“There is no real need for a health insurance system in Kuwait, as citizens already receive free medical treatment at all government hospitals and clinics, ranging from a simple Panadol prescription to the most complex surgeries and the most expensive medications, without paying a single dinar. When hospitalization is required, they are provided with hotel-like services at no cost.

“In countries where health insurance systems are implemented, there is typically a co-pay system in which citizens contribute a portion of the insurance premium, while the government covers the majority. In contrast, Kuwaiti citizens pay nothing, yet some continue to express dissatisfaction with hospitals, doctors, and even the meals provided to patients.

“I believe that if citizens were to contribute a certain percentage of healthcare costs, they would become true partners in the healthcare system, and in its financial outcomes.

“Healthcare services in Kuwait are costly. With the government’s recent decision, the “Afia” program has effectively been closed, and the healthcare system has returned to its original foundations. However, this calls for a reassessment of the system’s capacity, as it is likely to bring back the pressure and overcrowding in hospitals.

“The government should not be burdened with patients who require nothing more than a Panadol tablet or some cough syrup to recover. What most citizens truly need is timely access to surgery or specialist consultations. Kuwait’s healthcare budget is high compared to its population, and the healthcare services must be aligned with the scale of such a substantial budget.”

□ □ □

“On September 23, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia celebrates its National Day, a cherished occasion that embodies unity and national pride for millions. This day symbolizes a glorious history and honors the efforts of our forefathers in building a strong, unified nation,” journalist **Hamed Al-Hamli** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“This year, Saudi Arabia marks the 95th anniversary of its unification by its founder, King Abdulaziz Al Saud (May God have mercy on him). National Day commemorates the royal decree issued by King Abdulaziz bin Saud in 1932, declaring the unification of the country under the name “The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia”.

“That moment was a turning point in the history of the Arabian Peninsula, transforming it from scattered regions into a unified state, bringing tribes and cities together under one flag. This achievement was not merely a political decision but it was the result of decades of struggle, wis-



Karam

dom, and the visionary leadership of a leader who knew how to unite the nation.

“Saudi National Day is more than just an official holiday; it is a time for reflection and pride. It is the day when Saudis remember the sacrifices of the founder and his companions and celebrate their country’s achievements, which have placed it among the world’s most advanced nations.

“Through Saudi Vision 2030, launched by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Saudi Arabia continues its journey toward progress and prosperity while preserving its ancient cultural and religious identity.

“On September 23, the streets of Saudi Arabia are filled with green and white, the colors of the Saudi flag, which are symbols of unity and pride. Major cities host dazzling events, including air shows, fireworks, and concerts featuring renowned artists. Public squares transform into open-air theaters for folklore performances such as “Al-Ardha” and “Al-Samri,” celebrating authentic Saudi heritage.

“However, the celebrations extend beyond grand entertainment. Everyone experiences National Day in their own way. Families gather, friends exchange greetings, and children wave small flags in schools and streets. Social media also becomes a platform for expressing love and pride for the country, with young people sharing photos and videos that reflect their sense of belonging.

“National Day reminds us of the importance of unity and solidarity in building a strong nation. It is an opportunity for the people to renew their commitment to contributing to Saudi’s renaissance.

“The 95th National Day is not just a remembrance but it is a celebration of a nation’s journey from the desert to becoming a beacon of progress and prosperity. It is a day that unites a glorious past, a prosperous present, and a promising future.

“Today, the Kuwaiti people join their sister nation, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in celebrating National Day, looking forward to a brighter tomorrow for the Saudi people under the leadership of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz, the Ambassador of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, Prince Sultan bin Saad bin Khalid Al Saud, and the generous Saudi people.

“May God grant lasting security and safety to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on this National Day.”

□ □ □

“I am currently in Bahrain on a business trip. Earlier, I developed a toothache and went to a private dental clinic. After registering at the reception, I waited my turn and saw the dentist. He examined my teeth, took an X-ray, and prescribed some medication. When I went to pay, the total cost was only 25 Bahraini Dinars,” columnist **Ahmad Al-Dawas** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“This made me wonder - why do we pay KD 15, sometimes KD 20 or KD 30, at the reception desk of a dental clinic in Kuwait, and then pay an additional KD 23 after the examination, making the total cost between KD 40 and KD 53? Does the Ministry of Health have the authority to regulate private clinics and hospitals to protect the financial well-being of citizens?

“Secondly, at government health centers, the dental clinic operates both morning and evening, while the eye clinic is open only in the morning. Why is this? Please consider extending the eye clinic’s hours to the evening to make it more convenient for people.

“Thirdly, this issue has been raised several times before. Back in 1971, when we were university students, one of our professors told us that in Denmark, ambulances responding to emergencies could change red traffic lights to green by pressing a button, allowing them to reach the hospital without delay. Yet, 54 years later, this technology still has not been implemented in Kuwait. Ambulances here are forced to wait in traffic like any other vehicle, for the red signal to turn green. The wait time at some intersections feels like a quarter of an hour.

“This raises a pressing question: Why does the government continue to invest in infrastructure projects abroad in funding bridges, hospitals, and roads in other countries, while neglecting necessary improvements in Kuwait, especially those that could save lives?

“Setting aside the second and third issues for now, we urge the government to prioritize protecting the standard of living of its citizens by thoroughly studying this matter and working to alleviate their financial burden.”

— Compiled by Simi K. Kuty



Al-Dawas

New PAM inspectors sworn in

Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef stresses integrity, trust and accountability

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 23: The First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef highlighted the vital national role played by inspectors of the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM).**

Speaking during the swearing-in ceremony of 95 newly appointed PAM inspectors, he said their integrity and commitment represent a fundamental pillar for upholding justice and strengthening trust in the labor market.

Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef affirmed the state’s full support for the inspectors in carrying out their duties with professionalism and efficiency.

In his speech, he said, “You are entrusted with a great national responsibility, which is to protect the labor market and safeguard the rights of both workers and employers. The oath you have taken is a solemn covenant, first between you and Allah, and then between you and your nation, to work diligently and sincerely while upholding integrity, transparency, and justice as guiding principles in every step you take. Your role is not merely a job, but a noble mission to uphold justice and promote social and economic stability. Fair and honest



Public Authority for Manpower photo

First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef poses for a group photo with newly-appointed PAM inspectors.

inspections build trust and help create a safe, equitable work environment for all.”

Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef urged those honored to serve as role models of discipline and integrity, and place the interests of Kuwait and the dignity of every individual at the forefront of their mission.

He emphasized that they are the first line of defense in protecting rights and a source of reassurance in the workplace.

Meanwhile, the Public Authority for Manpower emphasized the vital role of labor inspectors

in regulating the labor market and protecting the rights of both workers and employers.

It also highlighted the efforts of inspectors from the National Center for Occupational Health and Safety in promoting a safe work environment that meets international standards.

The meeting concluded with a group photograph of the labor inspectors and occupational health and safety inspectors along with the Minister Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef, symbolizing the unity of efforts and the integration of roles in serving the nation.

Court orders landlord to pay KD 35,000

Media figure fined for incitement

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 23: The Court of Appeals fined media figure Aisha Al-Rasheed KD 30,000 for inciting sectarian strife and insulting Shiite citizens.**

In January, the Criminal Court fined Al-Rasheed KD 50,000, while the Public Prosecution released her on bail of KD 500. She was charged with violating the National Unity Law and insulting a segment of society (the Shiite sect) through her YouTube channel.

Meanwhile, the Commercial Circuit of the Court of First Instance ordered a property owner to pay a citizen KD 35,000 and seven percent annual interest from the due date until full payment because the property owner had refused to hand over the apartment he sold to her in 2012.

Lawyer Nasser Al-Farhoud explained that his client paid for the apartment with a cheque received by the defendant.

The defendant’s refusal to hand over the apartment constituted a breach of contract, prompting his client to file a lawsuit.

Also, the Court of Cassation has issued a ruling to reject an appeal and uphold the rulings of both the Court of First Instance and the Court of Appeals, which dismissed a lawsuit seeking the removal of a director from a prominent company.

In its reasoning, the court explained that a director may only be removed if it is proven that they committed fraud, gross negligence, intentionally harmed the company’s interests, gained personal benefit at the company’s expense, or en-

gaged in activities that conflict with the company’s objectives. The appellants, the court noted, failed to substantiate any such claims in the case at hand.

The mere lack of profits or the underperformance of certain activities does not justify dismissing a director, unless there is clear evidence of misconduct, breach of duty, or mismanagement.

The appellants, despite holding a relative majority of 51 percent, failed to follow the proper legal procedure of convening an extraordinary general assembly as required by the Companies Law and the company’s Articles of Association. This procedural lapse rendered their claim legally unfounded.

The court reiterated that a director may only be dismissed if there is clear evidence of fraud, gross negligence, intentional harm to the company’s interests, personal gain at the company’s expense, or involvement in activities that conflict with the company’s objectives, none of which the appellants were able to substantiate in this case.

Commenting on the ruling, Lawyer Dr. Fawaz Al-Khatib, who represented the director, explained that the decision reinforces the principle of stability in companies, and affirms that the removal of a director is not an arbitrary right held by partners, even if they form a majority. Such removal is subject to strict legal controls aimed at protecting the business entity and ensuring its sustainability within the investment environment. The ruling underscores the importance of following proper legal procedures as outlined in the Companies Law.

376 fines issued

Traffic Dept cracks down on illegal hospital parking

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 23: The General Traffic Department in the Interior Ministry continues its campaign to track down those who park in front of hospitals and in areas designated for emergency and ambulance vehicles.**

A security source disclosed the campaign covered hospitals in the six governorates after a large number of drivers were observed parking in prohibited areas.

He said the campaign was launched last Saturday and within 24 hours, 376 citations for various traffic violations were issued, including prohibited parking and obstructing traffic. He affirmed that traffic campaigns are ongoing at all locations.

He urged drivers to adhere to traffic rules and regulations and not to stop in front of hospitals, pointing out that most hospitals have multi-storey parking lots.



Interior Ministry photo

Traffic authorities tow a vehicle caught parked in a prohibited area.

News in Brief

**Actress sentenced to 5 years:** The Criminal Court sentenced an actress to five years in prison with hard labor for insulting former Deputy Speaker of Parliament and MP Ahmad Al-Shuhumi, reports *Al-Anba* daily.

The court also imposed a fine of KD5,000 on the defendant, while the civil aspect of the case was referred to the competent court for further proceedings.

□ □ □

**Two expatriates arrested:** An expatriate man and woman were detained at Khaitan Police Station for allegedly insulting two security officers and using abusive language, reports *Al-Anba* daily.

A security source pointed out that deportation for the accused is inevitable, as any court sentence imposed on them will most likely include such move.

Ministry rolls out new asphalt projects across governorates

By Mohammed Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 23: Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan affirmed the ministry’s commitment to following up major road maintenance and asphalt works in all governorates.**

She said field teams are actively implementing their plans according to a set schedule for ensuring efficiency and high-quality execution of the projects.

Engineer Noura Al-Mutairi, supervisor of Contract No. 18 in Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate, explained that ministry teams were recently present in Al-Masayel, Block 5, to monitor progress under the new road maintenance contracts. The current phase includes laying a 5 cm thick layer of asphalt of Type 3. Road work has already been completed in Abu Futaira Blocks 6, 7, and 8 and Al-Masayel Block 4. Work is ongoing in Al-Masayel Block 5.



KFF photo

Firefighters contain Jabriya house blaze.

Basement fire in Jabriya house quickly controlled

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 23: Fire broke out in the basement of a house in Jabriya on Tuesday morning, reports Al-Seyassah daily.**

Firefighters from Hawally and Salmiya Central stations rushed to the location, and evacuated the entire house, after which the fire was brought under control. No casualties were reported.

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KUNA photo  
Official bodies participating in the 12th relief flight of the second airlift to aid the Gaza Strip.

### KRCS delivers 10 tons of food

## Kuwait sends 12th Gaza aid flight

CAIRO, Sept 23, (KUNA): The 12th Kuwaiti plane carrying humanitarian aid for Gaza landed at Al-Arish airport in northern Sinai on Tuesday, delivering ten tons of urgently needed food supplies to the beleaguered population of the Gaza Strip. Each shipment represents more than just cargo – it is a lifeline for families enduring severe shortages amid the ongoing blockade and regional instability.

Mohsin Al-Boloushi, a representative of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS), told KUNA that the relief cargo, prepared in close collaboration with Kuwait Flour Mills and Bakeries Company, included essential food baskets aimed at meeting the most pressing needs of civilians. “Every package reflects Kuwait’s unwavering commitment to stand with the Palestinian people,” he said.

The delivery is part of the “Fazaa for Gaza” campaign, organized under KRCS supervision with active support from Kuwait’s Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Social Affairs. KRCS Chairman Khaled Al-Maqamis emphasized that these efforts mirror the directives of Kuwait’s national leadership, demonstrating solidarity and extending tangible support to families whose daily lives are marked by hardship and uncertainty.

Since the launch of the second Kuwaiti air bridge, more than 200 tons of food aid have

been dispatched, highlighting the country’s sustained humanitarian engagement. KRCS teams stationed in Egypt carefully monitor the shipments to ensure they reach Gaza as intended, coordinating closely with the Egyptian Red Crescent to strengthen regional cooperation and maximize the impact of relief efforts.

Tuesday’s shipment also included aid prepared by the Al-Kanadrah Association, which has previously organized eight planeloads to support Gaza. Altogether, Kuwait’s humanitarian contributions now total 210 tons, a testament to the nation’s leadership in charitable and humanitarian action across the region.

Through these coordinated efforts, Kuwait not only delivers critical supplies but also reinforces hope and resilience among the Palestinian population. Each flight embodies the country’s dedication to alleviating suffering and showcases how structured regional collaboration can bring relief to communities facing extraordinary challenges.

In a world where crises often leave civilians vulnerable and overlooked, Kuwait’s continuous aid serves as a reminder that coordinated humanitarian action, guided by compassion and commitment, can make a life-changing difference.

# Kuwait, Vietnam pledge deeper cooperation across key sectors

Consultations pave way for Vietnamese PM's Kuwait visit

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 23, (KUNA): The foreign ministries of Kuwait and Vietnam convened the fifth round of their political consultations in Kuwait on Monday.

The talks were co-chaired by Kuwait’s Assistant Foreign Minister for Asia Affairs Sameeh Hayat and Vietnam’s Deputy Foreign Minister Nguyen Minh Hang.

Both sides agreed to adopt tangible measures to strengthen the bilateral relations in various fields, and enhance the mutual understanding and political trust through high-level visit exchanges, Ambassador Hayat told KUNA.

The meeting reflected the keenness of the political leaderships of both countries on



Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs Ambassador Sameeh Hayat and Vietnamese Deputy Foreign Minister Nguyen Hang during consultations.

opening new horizons for cooperation. The consultations dealt with various as-

pects of political collaboration, including ways to coordinate the stances of both sides at the international forums and promote cooperation in such areas as economy, trade, investment culture, energy, industry, food security, civil aviation, higher education and scientific research, he disclosed.

On her part, Nguyen Minh Hang expressed satisfaction with the progress of the distinguished relations with Kuwait, describing today’s talks as candid and transparent.

She noted that Vietnamese Prime Minister plans to pay an official visit to Kuwait in min-November to push the bilateral relations to a new height.

Earlier, Deputy Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received Vietnamese senior official to discuss ways to strengthen the bilateral relations in various fields.



Ministry of Foreign Affairs photos  
The foreign ministries of Kuwait and Vietnam hold the fifth round of political consultations.

Land allocations, market expansions on agenda

## Mubarak Al-Kabeer, Hawally councils review major development proposals

By Inaas Awadh  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 23: The Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate Committee at the Municipal Council, chaired by Fahad Al-Khanin, will hold its first meeting for the fourth session on Wednesday to discuss the following:

- Request of the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy to allocate two sites for a secondary transformer station in Salmiya
- Request of a real estate company to amend the Council’s decision regarding the property located on Al-Othman Street in Hawally to change it into commercial use,
- Approval of the request of the Ministry of Social Affairs to include the external protrusions at the entrance to the central market of Al-Rawda and Hawally Co-operative Society, Block 2, within the market area, provided they are not used commercially,
- Consider the establishment of the boundaries of the central market building in accordance with the current situation, and amending the plan with an expansion to bring the total area of the central market to 4,420 square meters,
- Discuss the regulatory impact of properties located in the administrative and commercial center (1-2), Block 7, in Salmiya.

In addition, the Hawally Governorate Committee, headed by Nasser Al-Jadaan, will hold its second meeting for the fourth session on the same day to deliberate on the following:

- Request of the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy to allocate two sites for a secondary transformer station in Salmiya
- Request of a real estate company to amend the Council’s decision regarding the property located on Al-Othman Street in Hawally to change it into commercial use,
- Approval of the request of the Ministry of Social Affairs to include the external protrusions at the entrance to the central market of Al-Rawda and Hawally Co-operative Society, Block 2, within the market area, provided they are not used commercially,
- Consider the establishment of the boundaries of the central market building in accordance with the current situation, and amending the plan with an expansion to bring the total area of the central market to 4,420 square meters,
- Discuss the regulatory impact of properties located in the administrative and commercial center (1-2), Block 7, in Salmiya.

### KU opens on-campus PACI office

## Private Universities Council approves September social allowance transfer

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 23: The Board of Directors of Private Universities Council approved the transfer of social allowance to local bank accounts of continuing students at all private universities and colleges for the current month of September, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The board reaffirmed its commitment to the regular disbursement of financial entitlements for eligible students with the aim of enhancing their academic stability and ensuring a suitable learning environment.

Meanwhile, Kuwait University (KU)

has opened an office for the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) in the administration building, the ID Issuance Center. The office will handle all transactions related to civil ID cards.

KU explained that the office will operate from 8:00 am to 1:00 pm to serve university members only. Students, faculty, and administrative staff must present their university ID cards when requesting services. This initiative aims to facilitate transaction processing on campus for students, faculty, and administrative staff.

## CSC to launch large-scale hiring in Nov

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 23: The Civil Service Commission is preparing to receive new job needs from government entities as part of a large-scale hiring campaign set to begin on November 1 and continue through November 30, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to CSC’s official commitment made on September 16, job seekers holding secondary or intermediate school certificates will be nominated for employment immediately after successfully completing the required training courses. This step paves the way for their appointment in relevant government agencies. The training courses began on September 21, and will continue for one month, in cooperation with the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET).

CSC’s commitment applies exclusively to individuals enrolled in courses on secretarial skills, typing, and hospitality services.

Job seekers with the same qualifications who have already been nominated for positions in certain government agencies are not required to enroll in the PAAET courses, as they will receive training directly from the respective agencies.

CSC has approved a set of specializations for nominating candidates with less than a university degree for employment. These include typing, secretarial skills, hospitality services, customer service, food preparation, student services assistance, security assistance, administrative assistance, and residence hall supervision.

It offered two registration periods for secondary and intermediate school certificate holders to enroll in courses in typing, secretarial skills, and hospitality services. The first was from September 8 to 14, and the second was from September 17 to 21.

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Your Excellency, the Ministry of Finance, which you are currently leading in an acting capacity, is now in urgent need of not one decision, but of many decisions.

## AI-powered

The ministry explained that the patrol is equipped with cutting-edge technologies developed by specialized national experts, including Artificial Intelligence (AI) applications in security and surveillance systems. It also includes a smart mobile camera connected to facial recognition and vehicle license plate recognition systems.

Present during the campaign were the Head of the Security Directorates Sector Major General Hamad Al-Munaifi, the Assistant Jahra Security Director Brigadier General Faisal Abdulaziz and Taima Commander Colonel Mohammed Saleh Al-Enezi.

KRCS, ICRC  
deepen collab

He alluded to present joint projects, namely aiding the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh.

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The American Baccalaureate School (ABS) in Khaitan is seeking proposals from experienced cafeteria operators to serve our 1,100 students and 300 faculty/staff across all school divisions.

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- Submit by Email: [cafe@abs.edu.kw](mailto:cafe@abs.edu.kw)
- Submit by Hand: ABS School (Reception Area), Abraq Khaitan, Block 6, Street 59, Ibn Zuhair Street.
- For Questions: WhatsApp +965 6902 4498
- **Deadline: October 10, 2025** (End of Day Kuwait Time)

- Subject line format for email submissions (ABS Cafeteria RFP – <Company Name>).
- File formats allowed: PDF or DOCX for menus / credentials.
- File-naming convention: <CompanyName>\_ABS\_RFP\_2025.



Scan to Get Application Form





America

**N.Carolina Republicans push for tougher bail rules:** North Carolina Republican legislators are poised this week to approve criminal justice measures designed to toughen bail rules, restrict magistrates' powers and evaluate offenders' mental health after the fatal stabbing of a Ukrainian refugee on a Charlotte commuter train. The bill also could help get the death penalty carried out again in the ninth-largest U.S. state.

Senate and House Republicans unveiled legislation that their leaders previously signaled would surface when the General Assembly reconvened on Monday after nearly two months away from Raleigh.

The Aug. 22 death of 23-year-old Iryna Zarutska - her attack caught on camera - and subsequent charges against a suspect who had previously been arrested more than a dozen times caused public outrage. An array of Republicans, President Donald Trump among them, have attempted to blame Zarutska's death on Charlotte-area leaders and Democratic state officials for what they call soft-on-crime policies. (AP)

**White House backs 'border czar':** The White House stood behind "border czar" Tom Homan on Monday following reports that he had accepted \$50,000 from undercover agents posing as businesspeople during an undercover FBI operation last year, leading to a bribery investigation that was shut down by the Trump administration Justice Department.

Press secretary Karoline Leavitt characterized Homan's encounter with the undercover agents as an effort by the Biden administration to "entrap one of the president's top allies and supporters, someone who they knew very well would be taking a government position."

"The White House and the president stand by Tom Homan 100% because he did absolutely nothing wrong, and he is a brave public servant who has done a phenomenal job in helping the president shut down the border," she said.

MSNBC first reported Saturday that Homan had accepted the cash during a 2024 encounter with undercover agents who were posing as business people seeking gov-



A train passes a stop where community members gather for a vigil honoring the life of Iryna Zarutska, who was fatally stabbed on a commuter train last month on Sept 22, in Charlotte, NC. (AP)

ernment contracts that Homan suggested he could help them get in a second Trump term. (AP)

**Boston Mayor Wu to run unopposed in re-election bid:** Boston Mayor Michelle Wu will run unopposed for in her reelection bid after a challenger didn't garner enough votes to advance to the general election, the city's election department announced Monday.

Wu, the city's first Asian and female leader and a frequent target of the Trump

administration, is seeking a second four-year term. She was expected to face Josh Kraft, a nonprofit leader and son of Patriots owner Robert Kraft, but he dropped out after losing badly to her in the preliminary election earlier this month.

Since the top two vote-getters advance, attention turned to third-place finisher Domingos DaRosa. But after a recount of several wards by the city's election board was completed Monday, DaRosa, a community activist who was born in the Cape Verde Islands, did not garner the 3,000 votes needed to qualify to be on the ballot in November. (AP)

**Man charged with shining laser pointer at Marine One:** A man accused of shining a laser pointer at Marine One with President Donald Trump aboard the helicopter has been arrested on a federal criminal charge, according to a court filing on Monday.

Jacob Samuel Winkler, 33, of Washington, DC, is charged with aiming the beam of a laser pointer at an aircraft, a felony punishable by a maximum prison sentence of five years. Online court records don't list an attorney representing him.

Marine One was airborne on Saturday near the White House when a US Secret Service patrol officer spotted Winkler walking on a sidewalk, shirtless and loudly talking to himself, the officer wrote in an affidavit. The officer said he shone a flashlight at Winkler, who apparently retaliated by flashing a red laser beam at the officer's face. (AP)

**Gabrielle becomes at Category 4 hurricane:** People in the Azores archipelago were advised Monday to monitor the progress of Hurricane Gabrielle which is now a Category 4 hurricane in the Atlantic Ocean, the National Hurricane Center said.

Gabrielle had maximum sustained winds of 140 mph (220 kph) on Monday afternoon as it skirted to the east-southeast of Bermuda, according to a hurricane center advisory. It was centered 180 miles (290 kilometers) away from Bermuda and moving to the north-northeast at 12 mph (19 kph).

The major hurricane was still over 2,000 miles (3,230 kilometers) west of the Azores, however forecasters project that the system will continue to the north and east over the next several days. The hurricane could approach the islands by the end of the week. (AP)

Judge orders WH to restore \$500 million in federal grant funding to UCLA

Trump cancels WH meeting with Schumer, Jeffries despite risk of govt shutdown

WASHINGTON, Sept 23, (AP): US President Donald Trump has abruptly canceled this week's planned meeting with congressional Democratic leaders, refusing to negotiate over their demands to shore up health care funds as part of a deal to prevent a potential looming federal government shutdown.

In a lengthy Tuesday social media post, Trump rejected the sit-down the White House had agreed to the day before. It would have been the first time the Republican president met with the Democratic Party's leaders, Sen. Chuck Schumer and Rep. Hakeem Jeffries, since his return to the White House.

"I have decided that no meeting with their Congressional Leaders could possibly be productive," Trump wrote in the post.

The president complained the Democrats "are threatening to shut down the Government of the United States" unless the Republicans agree to more funding on health care for

various groups of people he has criticized. Trump did not close the door on a future sit-down with the Democratic leaders, but he warned of a "long and brutal slog" ahead unless Democrats dropped their demands to salvage health care funds.

With Congress at a stalemate, the government is headed toward a federal shutdown next week, Oct 1, if the House and the Senate are unable to approve the legislation needed to fund offices and services into the new fiscal year. Lawmakers left town amid the logjam, and they are not due back until Sept 29.

Trump has been unafraid of shutting down the government and, during his first term, was president over the nation's longest federal closure, during the 2018-19 holiday season, when he was pushing Congress to provide funds for his long-promised U.S.-Mexico border wall.

The president insisted over the weekend that essential services, including for veterans, would remain



US President Donald Trump speaks in the Roosevelt Room of the White House on Sept 22, in Washington. (AP)

open.

Republicans, who have the majority in both the House and the Senate,

funding measure, which would have kept government offices running into November while talks get underway.

That's the typical way to buy time during funding fights, but the measure failed in the Senate.

**Also:**

**LOS ANGELES:** A federal judge has ordered the Trump administration to restore \$500 million in federal grant funding that it froze at the University of California, Los Angeles.

US District Judge Rita Lin in San Francisco granted a preliminary injunction on Monday, saying the government likely violated the Administrative Procedure Act, which requires specific procedures and explanations for federal funding cuts. Instead, the government informed UCLA in generalized form letters that multiple grants from various agencies were being suspended but offered no specific details.

In August, UCLA announced that the Trump administration had suspended \$584 million in federal grants

over allegations of civil rights violations related to antisemitism and affirmative action.

Lin issued a ruling later that month that resulted in \$81 million in grants from the National Science Foundation being restored to UCLA. She ruled that those cuts had violated a June preliminary injunction where she ordered the National Science Foundation to restore dozens of grants that it had terminated at the University of California, which operates 10 campuses across the state.

The White House did not immediately respond to an email from The Associated Press requesting comment on Monday's ruling.

The Trump administration has used its control of federal funding to push for reforms at elite colleges that the president decries as overrun by liberalism and antisemitism. The administration also has launched investigations into diversity, equity and inclusion efforts, saying they discriminate against white and Asian American students.



US President Donald Trump addresses the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly on Sept 23. (AP)

Trump in speech to UN says world body 'not even coming close to living up' to its potential

UNITED NATIONS, Sept 23, (AP): US President Donald Trump returned to the United Nations on Tuesday to boast of his second-term foreign policy achievements and lash out at the world body as a feeble institution.

World leaders listened closely to his remarks at the UN General Assembly as Trump has already moved quickly to diminish US support for the world body in his first eight months in office. Even in his first term, he was no fan of the flavor of multilateralism that the United Nations espouses.

After his latest inauguration, he issued a first-day executive order withdrawing the US from the World Health Organization. That was followed by his move to end US participation in the UN Human Rights Council, and ordering up a review of US membership in hundreds of intergovernmental organizations aimed at determining whether they align with the priorities of his "America First" agenda.

Trump escalated that criticism on Tuesday, saying it's "empty words don't solve wars."

"What is the purpose of the United Nations?" Trump said. "I've always said (the UN) has such tremendous, tremendous potential, but it's not even coming close to living up to that poten-

tial."

Trump offered a weave of jarring juxtapositions in his address to the assembly.

He trumpeted himself as a peacemaker and enumerated successes of his administration's efforts in several hotspots around the globe. At the same, Trump heralded his decisions to order the US military to carry out strikes on Iran and more recently against alleged drug smugglers from Venezuela and argued that globalists are on the verge of destroying successful nations.

The US president's speech is typically among the most anticipated moments of the annual assembly. This one comes at one of the most volatile moments in the world body's 80-year-old history. Global leaders are being tested by intractable wars in Gaza, Ukraine and Sudan, uncertainty about the economic and social impact of emerging artificial intelligence technology, and anxiety about Trump's antipathy for the global body.

Trump has also raised new questions about the American use of military force in his return to the White House, after ordering US airstrikes on Iranian nuclear facilities in June and a trio of strikes this month on alleged

drug-smuggling boats in the Caribbean Sea.

The latter strikes, including at least two fatal attacks on boats that originated from Venezuela, has raised speculation in Caracas that Trump is looking to set the stage for the ouster of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro.

Some US lawmakers and human rights advocates say that Trump is effectively carrying out extrajudicial killings by using US forces to lethally target alleged drug smugglers instead of interdicting the suspected vessels, seizing any drugs and prosecuting the suspects in US courts.

"This is by far the most stressed the UN system has ever been in its 80 years," said Anjali K. Dayal, a professor of international politics at Fordham University in New York.

Trump touted "the renewal of American strength around the world" and his efforts to help end several wars. He peppered his speech with criticism of global institutions doing too little to end war and solve the world's biggest problems.

General Assembly President Annalena Baerbock on Tuesday said that despite all the internal and external challenges facing the organization, it is not the time to walk away.

Moldova's election faces AI-driven flood of disinformation from Russia

CHISINAU, Moldova, Sept 23, (AP): Moldovans are facing a flood of disinformation driven by artificial intelligence ahead of a critical parliamentary election, which will determine whether the small country can stay on its path toward the European Union or is pulled back into Moscow's orbit.

Ahead of Sunday's vote to choose a new 101-seat legislature, multiple online monitoring groups have tracked propaganda and disinformation campaigns attributed to Russia. Their aim is to diminish support for the ruling pro-European Party of Action and Solidarity, or PAS, in a vote many view as a geopolitical choice between East and West.

Researchers say the coordinated campaigns mark a new phase in Russian influence operations, built on fresh infrastructure and heavy use of AI. Spoof websites impersonate legitimate Western media and pay "engagement farms" in Africa, while AI bots are deployed to flood comment sections deriding PAS and the EU.

Moldovan President Maia Sandu warned that Sunday's vote will be the "most consequential" in her country's history, which will determine whether Moldova becomes a stable democracy or whether Russia pulls the country away from Europe.

She said joining the EU will protect Moldova "from the greatest threat we face: Russia."

Police on Monday arrested 74 people in 250 raids as part of an investi-



A man looks out of the window while sitting in a bus in Chisinau, Moldova on Sept 23, ahead of parliamentary elections taking place on Sept 28. (AP)

gation into an alleged Russia-backed plan to incite mass riots and destabilize the country.

The pro-European PAS, which Sandu founded in 2016, won a clear majority in the 2021 parliamentary election but risks losing it on Sunday, with no viable pro-European alternatives on the ballot but several Russia-friendly ones.

In the wake of Russia's full invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Moldova applied to join the EU and was granted candidate status that year, and Brussels agreed to open accession negotiations last year.

Moldovan authorities have long

warned that Russia is conducting a hybrid war - meddling in elections, disinformation campaigns, illicitly funding pro-Russian parties - to try to derail the country's path toward EU membership. Moscow has repeatedly denied meddling in Moldova.

Reset Tech, a global not-for-profit that monitors digital threats to democracy and Russian online influence operations since 2022, investigated an English-language AI-generated platform Restmedia, which proclaims to be "committed to exposing and addressing the critical issues shaping Europe's future."

Germany hopes to attract tens of thousands army recruits as NATO strengthens defenses

ROSTOCK, Germany, Sept 23, (AP): Germany has committed billions to beefing up its military's equipment after years of neglect. Now it's trying to persuade more people to join up and serve.

More than 3½ years after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine kick-started efforts to revitalize the Bundeswehr, the challenge of strengthening the German military has grown along with fears of the threat from Moscow.

Alongside the higher military spending that Germany and NATO allies agreed on this year, the alliance is encouraging members to increase personnel numbers. Berlin wants to add tens of thousands of service members.

Chancellor Friedrich Merz says that "because of its size and its economic strength, Germany is the country that must have the strongest conventional army in NATO on the European side." He hasn't defined that goal in detail, but the tone underscores a shift in a country that emerged only gradually from its post-World War II military reticence after reunification in 1990.

Earlier this month, the military's top brass watched as a ferry packed with armored vehicles was escorted out of the Baltic port of Rostock, drones were intercepted in the air and on the water and fighter jets circled above. That was part of an exercise focused on moving troops and equipment to Lithuania - an ally on NATO's eastern flank where



A woman takes pictures of new recruits of the German Army Bundeswehr who are going to attend a ceremony to take their oath in front of the North Rhine-Westphalia state parliament in Duesseldorf, Germany on Sept 4. (AP)

modern Germany is stationing a brigade abroad on a long-term basis for the first time.

"Credible deterrence requires operational readiness," said the Bundeswehr's chief of staff, Gen. Carsten Breuer. "And operational readiness requires matériel, personnel, training and ... exercising, exercising, exercising."

There's plenty to do on both matériel and personnel, in a country where

the military was often viewed with indifference or suspicion given the legacy of the Nazi past.

Germany suspended conscription for men in 2011 and subsequently struggled to attract large numbers of short-term volunteers. In recent years, the number of military personnel has hovered just above 180,000 - compared with 300,000, more than a third conscripts, in 2001.

Europe

**Danish police investigate incident:** A skilled drone pilot flew two to three large unidentified drones over Copenhagen Airport on Monday night, shutting down the airspace for hours as the unknown perpetrator appeared to be showing off their capabilities over Scandinavia's largest airport, police said Tuesday.

Officials chose not to shoot down the drones because the risk was too great because of the airport being full of passengers, the planes on the runways and nearby fuel depots, Jes Jespersen, senior police inspector of the Copenhagen Police, said during a news conference.

Jespersen called the pilot "a capable actor" and said the culprit seemed intent on showing off their skills and possibly practicing their techniques. The drones disappeared

after several hours.

There were no signs that the drone pilot intended to cause harm to anyone, he added. The drones' lights turned on and off and appeared to engage in different flight patterns. (AP)

**Hungarian PM Orban warns EU:** Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban on Monday warned that the European Union (EU) faces decline unless it undertakes an urgent change of course, while also stressing Hungary's positions on Ukraine, migration, and energy security in his opening speech to parliament's autumn session.

This is the Hungarian Parliament's last autumn session with the current party structures, as Hungary's general elections will be held next spring, presumably in April 2026.

"If the Union does not carry out an urgent and sharp turn, its story will come to an end," Orban said, comparing the EU's trajectory to that of the Roman Empire. (Xinhua)



# Southern China cancels schools, flights as Super Typhoon Ragasa approaches

HONG KONG, Sept 23, (AP): Southern Chinese cities scaled back many aspects of daily life on Tuesday with school and business closures and flight cancellations as the region braced for one of the strongest typhoons in years that has already killed three people and displaced thousands in the Philippines.

Residents living in flood-prone areas put sandbags and barriers at their doors, while others taped windows and glass doors to brace for strong winds. Many people stockpiled food and other supplies on Monday, and some market vendors reported their goods were selling out fast. Some Hong Kongers gathered on a promenade to watch waves as high as 2 to 3 meters (6.5 to 9.8 feet) splash onto the pedestrian area before the weather worsens.

Hong Kong’s observatory said Super Typhoon Ragasa, which was packing maximum sustained winds near the center of about 220 kph (137 mph), is expected to move west-northwest at about 22 kph (14 mph) across the northern part of the South China Sea and edge closer to the coast of Guangdong province, the southern Chinese economic powerhouse.

China’s National Meteorological Center forecast the typhoon would make landfall in the coastal area between Zhuhai and Zhanjiang cities in Guangdong between midday and eve-



Passengers rest at the Hong Kong International Airport ahead of the super typhoon Ragasa approaching Hong Kong on Sept 23. (AP)

ning on Wednesday.

The observatory in Hong Kong issued storm warning signal No. 8, the third-highest in the city’s weather alert system. The city categorizes tropical cyclones with maximum sustained winds near the center of 185 kph (115 mph) or above as super typhoons to make residents extra vigilant about the approach of more intense storms.

The water level was forecast to rise about 2 meters (6.5 feet) over coastal areas in the Asian financial hub on Wednesday morning, and the maximum level in some areas could hit 4 to 5 meters (13.1 to 16.4 feet) above the typical lowest sea level.

The government said the water levels could be similar to those recorded during Typhoon Hato in 2017 and Typhoon Mangkhut in 2018 - estimated to have caused the city direct economic losses worth over 1 billion Hong Kong dollars (\$154 million) and 4.6 billion Hong Kong dollars (about \$590 million), respectively.

Schools were closed in Hong Kong and the neighboring casino city of Macao. Other cities such as the Chinese tech hub of Shenzhen, Guangzhou and Foshan in Guangdong province and Haikou in Hainan province ordered class cancellations and a gradual suspension of other businesses, production and transportation.

Hundreds of flights were canceled in Hong Kong. Shenzhen airport will halt all flights from Tuesday night. The Macao government was evacuating residents and tourists and ordered bridges to close in the evening.

At least six people were injured and over 7,000 people were evacuated in Taiwan when the typhoon swept south of the island, the Central News Agency reported.



Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, meets with a US congressional delegation led by Representative Adam Smith in Beijing, capital of China on Sept 22. (Xinhua)

## US and China ‘talking past each other’ on key issues: Rep Smith

The United States and China are talking past each other on key issues, said a US lawmaker leading a bipartisan congressional delegation to Beijing on Tuesday.

The visit, led by Rep Adam Smith, a Democrat on the House Armed Services Committee, is the first from the House of Representatives to China since 2019, and comes as tensions have risen be-

tween the two countries over trade, technology and opposing views on global conflicts.

The aim of the trip, Smith said, is to increase dialogue between the two sides.

“You have to be willing to start the process of saying, ‘Okay, this is where I’m coming from, where are you coming from?’ And we’re not even at that point yet. We’re

still sort of talking past each other,” Smith said Tuesday.

The US delegation said they hoped China would take meaningful action to reduce the inflow of fentanyl into the US and they expressed concern over China’s restrictions on the global supply of rare earths, according to a readout from the House Armed Services Committee on Monday. (AP)

## Asia

**S.Korea’s Unification Church leader arrested:** The 82-year-old leader of the Unification Church was arrested in South Korea early Tuesday as investigators probe allegations that the church bribed the wife of jailed former president Yoon Suk Yeol and a conservative lawmaker.

**Hak Ja Han,** the widow of the church’s South Korean founder, Sun Myung Moon, has denied allegations that she directed church officials to bribe Yoon’s wife, Kim Keon Hee, and the lawmaker.



Han

The Seoul Central District Court approved investigators’ request for an arrest warrant for Han, saying she posed a risk of destroying evidence.

Han did not speak to reporters as she arrived at the Seoul court on Monday for a hearing on the warrant request. After an hourslong hearing, the court issued its decision in the early hours of Tuesday as Han awaited the verdict at a detention center near Seoul, where she will now be held.

The Unification Church had criticized investigators’ attempt to arrest Han, noting that she appeared for questioning last week while still recovering from a heart procedure earlier this month, and accused them of disrespecting an “internationally respected religious leader.”

Kim was arrested and charged last month on allegations including bribery, stock manipulation and meddling in the selection of a legislative candidate. (AP)

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**New Zealand woman convicted of murder:** A jury in New Zealand on Tuesday found a woman guilty of murdering her two children and leaving their bodies in suitcases for

years before they were discovered.

The verdict meant the jury at the High Court in Auckland rejected a defense of insanity made by lawyers for Hakyung Lee, who fled to South Korea after the killings before being extradited to face trial. The swift verdict arrived hours after jurors were sent to deliberate on Tuesday morning.

Lee was charged with killing Minu Jo, 6, and Yuna Jo, 8, in June 2018. The children’s remains were found inside luggage at an abandoned storage unit in Auckland in August 2022.

Lee, who is a New Zealand citizen, had traveled to South Korea and changed her name in 2018, shortly after the children are believed to have been killed. She was born in South Korea and went by the name Ji Eun Lee previously.

The 45-year-old woman was extradited from South Korea in November 2022. She denied the charges, with her lawyers arguing that she was insane at the time of the murders. (AP)

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**2 bodies found after Indonesia mine landslide:** Two of seven workers who had been trapped after a landslide struck the Grasberg Block Cave mine in Indonesia’s Central Papua province on Sept. 8 have been found.

PT Freeport Indonesia, the company operating the mine, said in a statement on Monday that rescuers retrieved two bodies in the incident last Saturday and identified the victims who worked as electrical technicians from another company PT Cita Contract.

“On behalf of the company and myself, I extend my deepest condolences to the bereaved family. PT Freeport Indonesia will continue to stand by and provide full support to the family during this difficult time,” said Freeport Indonesia president director Tony Wenas, adding that the rescue team continued their search for the five others.

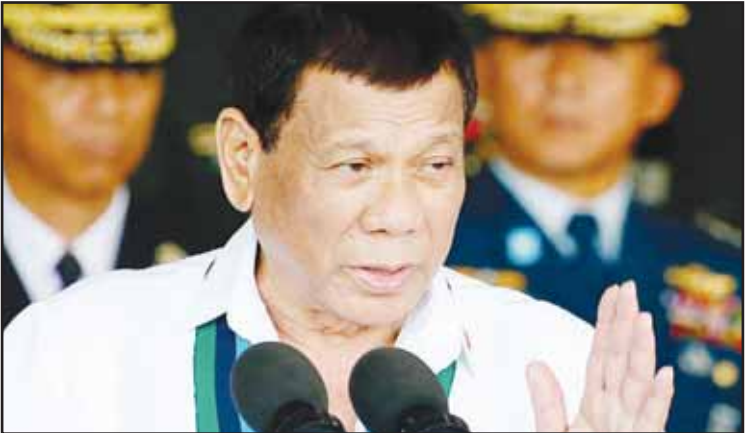
“The rescue team is working non-stop to open access to the location, deploying all the resources, equipment, and expertise at our disposal, despite continuing to face enormous challenges and very high safety risks,” he said. (Xinhua)

# Crimes against humanity charges against ex-Philippine prez Duterte detailed by ICC

THE HAGUE, Netherlands, Sept 23, (AP): The crimes against humanity charges against former Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte allege his involvement in the killings of at least 76 people while he was president and earlier a southern mayor, the International Criminal Court has revealed.

The redacted charges were made public Monday after prosecutors submitted a 15-page charge sheet to the court on July 4. Among other things, they allege Duterte instructed and authorized “violent acts including murder to be committed against alleged criminals, including alleged drug dealers and users.”

The first charge cites 19 victims killed while Duterte was mayor of Davao City between 2013 and around 2016. The second involves 14 who died in targeted killings between 2016 and 2017 when Duterte was president. The third cited the killings of 43 people during so-called “clearance operations” between 2016 and 2018.



Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte addresses the troops during the 82nd anniversary celebration of the Armed Forces of the Philippines in suburban Quezon city northeast of Manila, Philippines on Dec 20, 2017. (AP)

roads and bridges leading to the presidential palace Sunday while a peaceful anti-corruption rally took place in the capital, officials and witnesses said.

The melee outside the country’s seat of power unfolded while more than 33,000 other protesters rallied in a historic park and a democracy monument

in Manila. They expressed outrage over a corruption scandal involving lawmakers, officials and construction company owners who allegedly pocketed huge kickbacks from flood-control projects in the impoverished Southeast Asian country that is regularly buffeted by storms and typhoons.

## Subcontinent

**5 die from electrocution in India:** At least five persons died from electrocution amid heavy rains in Kolkata, the capital city of India’s eastern state of West Bengal, during the past 24 hours, confirmed a local police over the phone on Tuesday.

The heavy rainfall has severely impacted daily life in Kolkata, leading to waterlogging on the city’s roads and streets.

The take-off and landing of flights at Kolkata Airport have been disrupted. (Xinhua)

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**4 ministers introduced into Nepal cabinet:** Nepali President Ram Chandra Poudel on Monday administered the oath of office to four additional ministers of the interim government.

In a televised ceremony held at the Office of the President in Kathmandu, former Justice of the Supreme Court Anil Kumar Sinha was sworn in as minister for industry, commerce and supplies and minister for land management, cooperatives and poverty alleviation.

Sinha also oversees the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, which was originally put under the charge of Home Minister Om Prakash Aryal. (Xinhua)

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**Sri Lanka seizes truck carrying drugs:** Sri Lankan police on Monday seized a truck transporting about 200 kilos of crystal methamphetamine (ICE) and heroin, said a police spokesman.

Police spokesman F.U. Wootler told the media that the vehicle was taken into custody in Tangalle in Sri Lanka’s Southern province, with the drugs being hidden among a load of watermelons. (Xinhua)

## Lat/Am

**Ecuador prison riots kills 14:** At least 14 people were killed and 14 others injured in a riot at a prison in southwestern Ecuador early Monday, according to the National Police.

Gunfire and explosions were reported around 2 a.m. local time (0700 GMT) at the Machala Social Rehabilitation Center in the city of Machala, capital of El Oro province.

El Oro police chief William Calle told local TV network Ecuavisa that 13 inmates and one guard died in the incident. The wounded were taken to nearby hospitals.

Calle said most of those killed belonged to Los Choneros, one of Ecuador’s most violent groups.

Several inmates escaped during the clashes, Calle said, adding that authorities were working to determine the exact number of fugitives. (Xinhua)

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**US sanctions wife of Brazilian judge:** The US government Monday sanctioned the wife of the Brazilian Supreme Court justice who led the investigation into former president Jair Bolsonaro, who was sentenced this month to 27 years in prison for attempting a coup in the South American nation.

The Trump administration also revoked the U.S. visa of another Brazilian official, Solicitor-General Jorge Messias, who criticized the decision on his social media channels.

The wife of Justice Alexandre de Moraes, Viviane Barci de Moraes, was sanctioned under the Global Magnitsky Act used by the United States against human rights abusers. Her husband was targeted by the same measure as he oversaw the case against Bolsonaro. (AP)

# Drone attack in Haiti’s gang-controlled slum kills at least 8 kids, injures 6 others

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti, Sept 23, (AP): Explosive drones targeting a suspected gang leader killed at least eight children inside a slum in Haiti’s capital and seriously wounded six others, relatives and activists told The Associated Press on Monday, as they blamed police for the attack.

The explosions happened Saturday night in Cité Soleil, which is controlled by Viv Ansann, a powerful gang coalition that the US has designated as a foreign terrorist organization.

One of its leaders, Jimmy Chérizier, best known as Barbecue, vowed to avenge the attacks, with a total of at least 13 people killed, according to residents. “This is my daughter,” said Claudia Bobrun, 30, as she showed the AP a video of her 8-year-old girl lying in a pool of blood.

Tears rolled down her face as she replayed the video.

Michelin Florville, 60, said the explosion killed two of his grandchildren, ages 3 and 7, and his 32-year-old son. “People were running right and left,” he recalled, noting that he was standing near where one explosion occurred.

Meanwhile, Nanouse Mertelia, 37, said she was inside her house on Saturday night and ran out to see what happened after hearing an explosion. Her son had left their home several minutes earlier to get something to eat.

She found him on the ground, his leg and arm blown off.



A child does her homework at a church-turned-shelter for people displaced by gang violence in Port-au-Prince, Haiti on Sept 17. (AP)

“Come get me, come get me, please mama,” she said he told her, but he had lost too much blood. “By the time we got to the hospital, he died.”

Haiti’s National Human Rights Defense Network accused police of launching two exploding drones in the Simon Pelé community of Cité Soleil as suspected gang leader Albert Steevenson, known as Djouma, prepared to celebrate his birthday.

The group said that Steevenson was distributing gifts to children when the attack occurred.

Romain Le Cour, head of Haiti Observatory at the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, said the attack raises “urgent questions of accountability.”

“It has now been 48 hours since the incident, and the authorities have yet to issue any official communication or assume public responsibility. Who, ultimately, will assume responsibility for this attack? The prime minister? The transitional presidential council? Private security companies? The leadership of Haiti National Police?” he asked.

# Military-run Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger pull out of international court

BAMAKO, Mali, Sept 23, (AP): Ruling military juntas in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger say the three countries are withdrawing from the International Criminal Court, accusing the global tribunal of what they say is selective justice. The pullout was not unexpected in the wake of the coups that brought the juntas to power in the three western African countries. The ICC, based in The Hague, is the world’s permanent global tribunal for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.

Since the coups, the three countries’ military leaders abandoned longtime partners, including the West and the West Africa regional bloc. They have established new alliances, mainly with Russia, whose President Vladimir Putin faces an arrest warrant by the ICC over Russia’s war in Ukraine.

**Also:**

**CONAKRY, Guinea:** Over 90% of Guineans voted ‘yes’ in a constitutional referendum that could allow the leader of the country’s junta to run for president, according to provisional results announced Monday evening by the electoral body overseeing the vote count.

Guinea is one of a growing number of West African countries, including Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso, where the military has taken over. The referendum, which is a key step



Exterior of the International Criminal Court in The Hague, Netherlands on June 26, 2024. (AP)

in the country’s transition from military to civilian rule, is being closely monitored in the coup-battered region, with critics denouncing it as a power grab and opposition parties calling for a boycott.



Nicaragua’s President Daniel Ortega and his wife and Vice President Rosario Murillo attend a rally in Managua, Nicaragua on Sept 5, 2018. (AP)

posing the authorities may be subjected to retaliation,” the report said.

Andrés Sánchez Thorin, the UN Human Rights Office representative in Central America, said Ortega and Murillo had essentially wiped out Nicaraguan civil society.

“Since 2018, eight of every 10 organizations have been canceled or had to close, many of them religious and their assets confiscated,” he said.

“Add to this a reform to the electoral system that puts political pluralism in serious danger, and with it, people’s fundamental right to participate in the democratic life of the country.”

The crackdown started with violent government repression of 2018 protests that left more than 300 dead and led to an exodus of journalists and civil society. Ortega has framed those protests as an attempted coup with foreign backing.



## Kuwaiti oil price down to \$70.92 pb

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 23, (KUNA): The price of Kuwaiti oil went down by 61 cents to USD 70.92 per barrel on Monday, compared to USD 71.53 pb last Friday, said the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on

Tuesday.

In global markets, the price of Brent crude down by 11 cents to USD 66.57 per barrel, while West Texas Intermediate also declined by four cents to USD 62.64 pb.

# Business

As part of its ongoing commitment to supporting Kuwaiti youth

## ‘InvestGB’ participates in Al Hamra Second Career Fair

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 23: As part of its ongoing commitment to supporting Kuwaiti youth and its dedication to effective engagement with graduates and professionals, Gulf Capital Investment Company “InvestGB,” the investment arm of Gulf Bank, participated in the Al Hamra Second Career Fair held last week at Al Hamra Shopping Center. The fair brought together leading companies from both the public and private sectors, offering a dynamic platform for employment and professional networking.

During the career fair, InvestGB’s Human Resources team introduced visitors to the company while also offering them the opportunity to receive a complimentary professional headshot. In addition, they provided guidance and advice on writing resumes for LinkedIn. Representatives from the Company’s various departments, including Asset Management, Wealth Management, and Investment Bankingalso attended to showcase career and development opportunities available at the Company.

Mrs. Sara AlMuzaini, Senior Vice-President of Human Resources at InvestGB, expressed the company’s commitmentto participate in such events, stating:“We view career fairs as one of the most ef-



From right: Mohamed Abed, Nazem Al-Ghabra, Sara AlMuzaini, Ammar Hajeyah and Ahmed AlBarrak in a group photo

fective channels for engaging with graduates and professionals while better understanding labor market needs. At InvestGB, we believe human capital is a fundamental driver in delivering the best services to our clients. That’s why fostering a healthy, supportive, and motivating work environment is a cornerstone for achieving long-term

sustainable success. We are always keen on attracting and supporting ambitious talents who are eager to pursue careers in the investment sector.”

She further emphasized that InvestGB remains committed to supporting and developing the community through multiple initiatives, including youth empowerment and

workplace enhancement. Through training and development programs, the company offers practical opportunities for employees to acquire the skills needed in the labor market, reinforcing its strategy of investing in human capital as a means of driving sustainable growth.

AlMuzaini also highlighted that InvestGB is characterized by a cor-



Glance of the exhibition.

porate culture rooted in inclusivity, national development, and investment in human capital. Women make up 43% of the company’s workforce, while Kuwaitization has reached 70% of the total team.

The company’s innovative work culture has contributed to notable achievements in the workplace, including higher employee retention

rates and improved performance indicators across departments.

AlMuzaini concluded, “At InvestGB, we are cultivating more than a workplace; we are building a community. Our culture is rooted in well-being, continous development, and shared purpose, which directly contributes to our organizational excellence.”

### IVSC, RICS international standards

## KIB enhances role in real estate feasibility studies

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 23: Amid the rapid transformations in Kuwait’s real estate market, Kuwait International Bank’s (KIB) Real Estate Advisory Department continues to play a pivotal role in delivering comprehensive feasibility studies that align with international standards, enhancing investor confidence and supporting sound investment decisions.

The Real Estate Advisory Department at KIB is recognized as one of Kuwait’s leading providers of economic feasibility studies for real estate projects. Through its services, the department equips customers with precise, comprehensive analytical tools that enable well-informed investment decisions, helping them achieve their financial goals while mitigating real estate investment risks.

Backed by more than fifty years of experience, KIB delivers real estate feasibility studies that adhere to international benchmarks, including the standards of the International Valuation Standards Council (IVSC) and the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) Global Valuation Standards. These benchmarks ensure that all studies conducted by the Bank are accurate, reliable, and transparent, reinforcing customers’ trust in the data and recommendations provided.

KIB’s services encompass market analysis and the assessment of economic and social factors influencing all types of real estate projects, including residential, investment, commercial, and industrial developments. They also extend to educational facilities such as schools and universities, as well as medical properties including private clinics and hospitals. Each feasibility study is grounded in evaluating the balance between supply and demand, forecasting expected rental levels, and analyzing both direct and indirect costs of proposed projects. This methodology provides customers with a clear, transparent, and accurate picture of anticipated costs and revenues, enabling them to fully understand the financial viability of their investments.

Fahad Adel Al-Saleh, Senior Manager of Real Estate Advisory and Digital Solutions at KIB’s Real Estate Department, said: “The Bank’s Advisory Department brings together a team of experts in engineering and real estate consulting with extensive experience and deep knowledge of Kuwait’s property market, ensuring the delivery of tailored solutions that align with local market demands. We recognize that every real estate project is unique; therefore, we rely on three core pillars that combine science, art, and expertise. Feasibility studies and project evaluations are based on scientific methods that enable us to determine a fair value for a property or a comprehensive vision for a future development project.”

Al-Saleh highlighted that the department also works to raise awareness across both the public and private sectors about the importance of economic feasibility studies in reducing market risks and increasing the chances of project success. He emphasized that reliance on accurate and reliable real estate data is a core requirement of international standards. In this regard, the Bank has



KIB’s Fahad Al-Saleh

recently developed the largest digital real estate database in Kuwait, encompassing essential data from its establishment in 1976 through to the present day. This database now serves as a strategic resource for feasibility studies, as well as for informed financing and investment decisions.

Al-Saleh pointed to the wide range of additional services provided by KIB’s Real Estate Advisory Department, including monitoring projects under construction to ensure investor compliance with building permits and the proper use of construction materials. The Department also reviews construction projects for the Corporate Finance Division, conducts site inspections to approve letters of guarantee for contractors, and verifies adherence to project timelines. KIB further sets itself apart with the introduction of a pioneering real estate classification mechanism—the first of its kind in Kuwait’s banking sector—designed to mitigate financing and investment risks.

#### About KIB

Kuwait International Bank (KIB) is a bank that operates according to the Islamic Shari’ah, based in the State of Kuwait. Incorporated in 1973, and originally known as Kuwait Real Estate Bank, KIB made the transition to its current Islamic operating model in 2007. In 2018, KIB embarked on a new phase of its journey full of innovation and development. As part of its new strategic direction, the Bank focuses on offering a next-level customer experience under the slogan: “Bank for Life”.

Through a network of branches spread across the State of Kuwait,KIBoffers a broad range of banking products and services, as well as innovative digital banking solutions in line with international best standards. As part of its duty towards the community, the Bank also encompasses a leading social responsibility program that aims at positively impacting all members of the community through a wide range of impactful initiatives and activities.

Today, KIB has taken concrete steps in implementing its new strategic objectives. The Bank has cemented its role as a key player in the local banking industry and has continued to maintain its strong financial performance; enabling it to be globally recognized for its strong credit rating and financial position.

## Boursa Kuwait ends Tuesday higher

All Share Index up 0.86%

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 23, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait closed on Tuesday with strong gains across key indices, led by active trading in both the Main and Premier markets.**

The All Share Index climbed 75.43 points, or 0.86 percent, ending the session at 8,884.23 points. Trading activity remained robust, with 621.4 million shares changing hands in 31,344 transactions, generating a turnover of KD 130.12 million (USD 395.5 million).

The Main Market Index advanced 57.96 points, or 0.72 percent, to close at

8,141.54 points. A total of 424.6 million shares were traded through 20,738 deals, worth KD 57.2 million (USD 173.8 million).

The Premier Market Index also recorded notable gains, rising 83.51 points, or 0.89 percent, to settle at 9,508.45 points. Trading volume reached 196.7 million shares across 10,606 transactions, with a value of KD 72.8 million (USD 221.3 million).

Meanwhile, the Main 50 Index edged up 61.82 points, or 0.74 percent, to stand at 8,380.84 points. The benchmark saw 227.5 million shares exchanged in 12,250 transactions, with a total turnover of KD 40.3 million (USD 122.5 million).

### Event continues until Sept 27 at Kuwait Fair Ground

## KFH showcases financing services at Auto World Show

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 23: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) is participating as a strategic partner in the Auto World Show, which runs from September 22nd to 27th at Mishref – Kuwait Fair Ground. This involvement highlights the bank’s commitment to offering premier financing solutions and actively supporting major economic events.

The Auto World Show, Kuwait’s premier automotive exhibition, unites all major brands in one location, saving attendees time and effort. This gives car enthusiasts a unique opportunity to explore the latest industry trends and developments, along with special offers that KFH provides to its customers.

A dedicated team from KFH is available at the bank’s booth to answer customer questions. They’ll also explain the financing services and guide customers through the process of buying or leasing new and used cars.

The event provides an excellent opportunity for KFH to connect directly with customers, showcase its financing solutions, and strengthen relationships with suppliers and merchants. This participation not only boosts the performance of the bank’s agents and suppliers but also supports the local market by helping customers achieve their financing needs. This aligns with KFH’s commitment to delivering outstanding customer service, retaining its large customer base, attracting new customers, and increasing market share. It also highlights the bank’s crucial role in supporting the economy.

The event coincides with the “Back-to-School” campaign, themed “KFH Auto/Various Financing Solutions,” which runs until the end of September at all KFH showrooms. The campaign offers numerous benefits, including zero-profit financing on selecting new car brands and joint offers on specific models. These special deals, a collaboration with several car dealerships, are designed to meet the needs of customers looking for both luxury and economy vehicles. Additionally, KFH provides competitive rates on a wide range of new and used vehicles through its lease-to-own product, which includes maintenance.

Among the main services highlighted in the campaign is the Trust Sale Service, allowing customers to sell



Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Marwa Al-Jaidan, at the Kuwait Finance House pavilion.



KFH attending customer inquiries.

their cars at KFH Auto showrooms. Under this service, customers can authorize KFH to sell their cars through its widespread showrooms and various sales channels across Kuwait.

Moreover, KFH provides a car valuation service, one of its core auto services that allows customers to sell their cars without the need to make a

new purchase.

Customers opting for finance against collaterals can enjoy flexible repayment terms extending to 10 years with competitive profits and diverse payment schemes. The financing is offered against a full collateral covering the total indebtedness and secured by booking the customer’s



KFH pavilion.

fixed deposits. This product caters to retail customers’ commercial needs, whether for cars, boats, or motorcycles, with a financing limit determined by the deposit value. The service provides other advantages including continuous deposit profits throughout the credit period, expedited processing and competitive rates.

## KIPIC awards KD 152,700 tender to replace pressure relief valves

By Najeh Bilal  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 23: Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company (KIPIC) announced the award of the tender for replacing pressure relief valves with a high-quality type in Units 1, 12 and 22 to a private company, which offered the second lowest price and met the terms and specifications, for KD152,700.

Meanwhile, Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) invited consulting firms

specializing in intellectual property management to express their interest in participating in a study aimed at developing a prototyping strategy for the company’s patents. The company stated that applications should be submitted no later than Oct 1, 2025.

In addition, the Higher Procurement Committee for Tenders at Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) and its Subsidiaries, at the request Kuwait Oil Tankers Company (KOTC), announced the award of the contract for the construction, completion, and maintenance of the new security building project at Umm Al-Aish LNG Filling Branch to a private company for KD475,000.



For its NBK RISE Program from the American Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)

# NBK receives Silver Award for Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 23: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) has received the Silver Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion Award from the prestigious Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) for its NBK RISE Program, during MENA Awards Annual Conference 2025 held at Madinat Jumeirah, Dubai.

The recognition underscores the Bank's ongoing efforts to enhance the work environment and reaffirms its steadfast commitment to fostering a culture of diversity and inclusion across the Group.

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Awards honor organizations that demonstrate a strong commitment to advancing diversity and inclusion through transparent goal-setting, measurable accountability, and meaningful initiatives. These awards celebrate institutions that actively involve employees in shaping ideas and solutions, creating workplaces where individuals feel safe, respected, and valued. They also highlight efforts dedicated to empowering women and equip-

ping female leaders with the skills needed to achieve their next career milestones.

As one of the first private sector institutions in the region to endorse the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs), the Bank has adopted a distinctive approach to ensuring equal opportunities for all employees without exception, an approach reflected in the fact that female employees accounted for approximately 43.2% of the Group's total workforce by the end of 2024, while the representation of women in senior management positions reached 27.4%, with NBK ensuring equal pay for both male and female employees in these roles.

In parallel, the Bank partners with leading global universities and training institutions to provide specialized programs and workshops aimed at developing women leaders, raising awareness of gender diversity, and leveraging these differences to enhance productivity and innovation. Its commitment to diversity and inclusion also extends to customers, offering bespoke



NBK receiving the Silver Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion Award from the prestigious Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM).

products and services tailored to women and entrepreneurs, while steadily advancing these efforts as part of its broader pursuit of financial inclusion.

NBK RISE, an innovative initiative launched in 2022 by Ms. Shaikha Al-Bahar, Deputy Group CEO at NBK, is designed to support female leaders and empower them to attain the highest leader-

ship positions.

The initiative aligns with NBK's ambitious strategy to strengthen women's leadership across institutional, national, regional, and global levels, driven by the Bank's conviction that DEI are essential pillars for ensuring the sustainable success of organizations.

The program has evolved into

- The recognition underscores NBK's ongoing commitment to fostering a supportive work environment and ensuring equal opportunities for all employees
- NBK firmly believes that diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) are fundamental pillars for driving sustainable success in the future

an inspiring movement that extends beyond NBK's individual efforts, reaching a number of leading institutions in Kuwait that collectively signed a pledge to increase women's representation in leadership positions, reaffirming their joint commitment to advancing the goals of this global initiative.

NBK stands out as one of the few institutions in Kuwait that offers a work environment on par with leading international organizations, distinguished by exceptional opportunities for continuous professional development. Through advanced training and practical experience programs delivered in collaboration with world-class educational institutions, the Bank equips its employees with the skills and

expertise needed to navigate future challenges. This commitment not only enhances employee loyalty but also underscores NBK's strong appeal in an increasingly competitive labor market.

The American Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) stands as the world's leading organization dedicated to fostering better workplaces where employers and employees thrive together. As the voice of all things work, workers and the workplace, SHRM is the foremost expert, convener and thought leader on issues impacting today's evolving workplaces. With nearly 325,000 members in 165 countries, SHRM impacts the lives of more than 235 million workers and families globally.

## Economic growth hits 5% as capital inflows and a weaker US dollar boost the pound

By National Bank of Kuwait

Egypt's economy is showing further concrete signs of improvement. GDP growth hit a more than 3-year high of 5% y/y in Q2 2025 despite still-high (if easing) inflation, tight financing conditions and regional geopolitical tensions. Moderating inflation has provided space for 525bps of interest rate cuts by the central bank YTD, with another 300bps in play by year-end in our view. An IMF mission is due in Cairo in October to conduct the combined fifth and sixth reviews of Egypt's \$8bn Extended Fund Facility, which runs until late 2026. The program remains focused on maintaining exchange rate flexibility, reducing inflation to single digits, narrowing the fiscal deficit, lowering debt service, and creating space for private sector growth. So far, Egypt has received \$3.2bn under the program, with another \$2.5bn likely following the reviews. These flows, with the Fund's endorsement, should help reinforce confidence in the external financing position against a backdrop of continued current account deficits and debt repayments. The Egyptian pound has already strengthened by 5% this year against a generally weaker US dollar.

### Latest developments

■ GDP grew by 4.4% in FY24/25, exceeding the government's target of 4.2% and a substantial improvement on the 2.4% recorded in FY23/24, as announced by the minister of finance. The preliminary estimates for Q2 2025 show further acceleration to 5% y/y – the fastest rate since Q1 2022. While growth remains largely consumption-driven, private investment has returned to positive territory after two years of contraction. (Chart 6.) At the industry level, growth was driven by the manufacturing sector, followed by financial intermediaries, tourism, agriculture, and the wholesale & retail sectors.

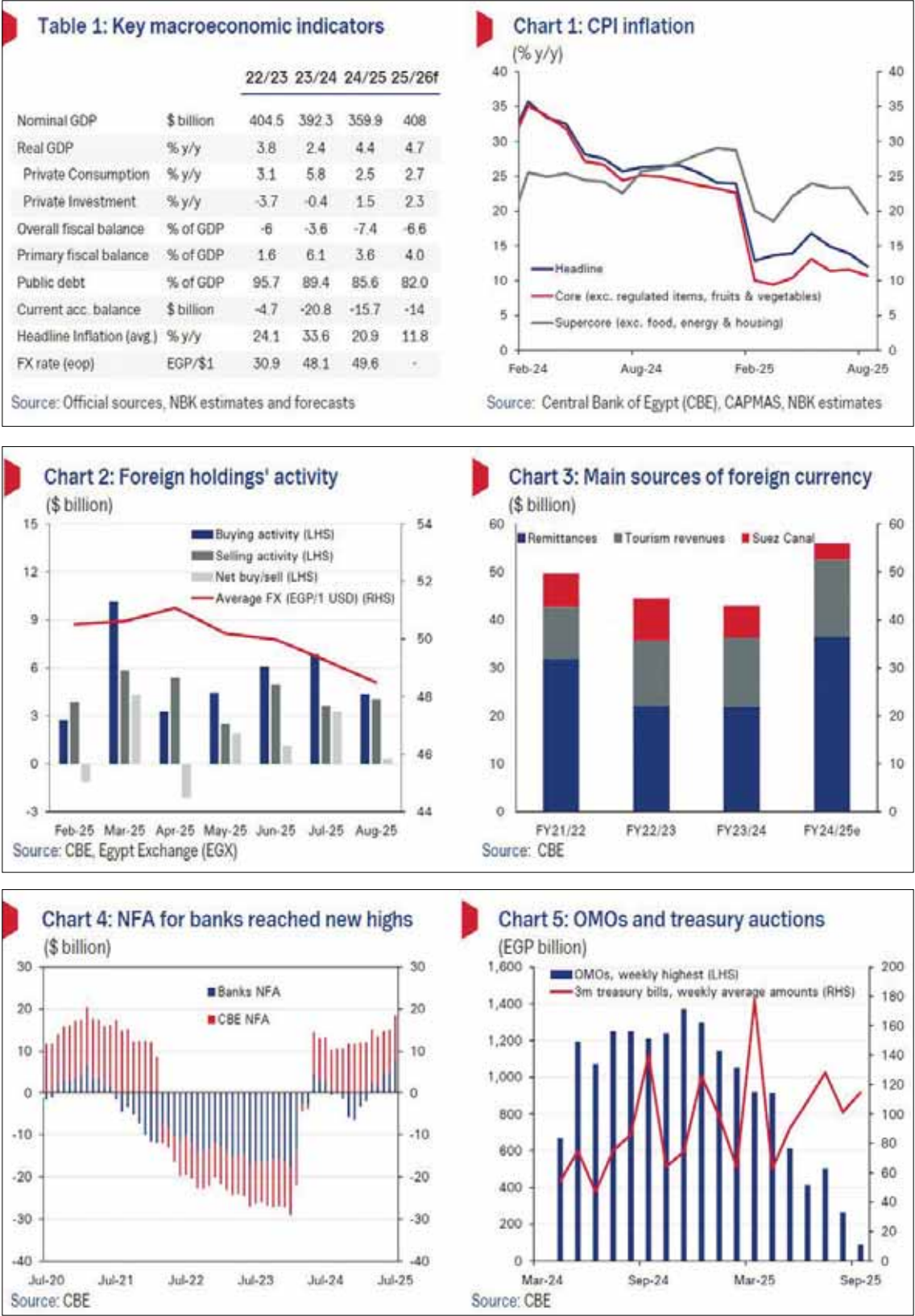
■ Inflation slowed for the third consecutive month in August, though the core rate remains sticky. Headline inflation eased to 12% y/y (0.4% m/m), down from 13.9% in July. This is the lowest reading in nearly three years, with the decline driven by disinflation in the food, transport and recreation categories – the latter two also recorded their first monthly deflation in years. Consequently, the core inflation rate, which excludes the volatile and regulated items, eased to 10.7% y/y from 11.6% in July. (Chart 1.) However, the 'supercore' inflation rate, which excludes food, energy and housing items, remains above 20% y/y, underscoring the persistence of services-related price pressures and raising concerns ahead of the planned fuel subsidy cut. The deceleration in inflation exactly matched the size of the interest rate cut made in the same month by 200 basis points (bp). Therefore, the real interest rate remains stable at 11% – one of the highest in the world.

■ The Egyptian pound has appreciated on strong portfolio inflows, especially to short tenor treasuries, which reached \$6.6 billion in (May-August). August saw a fourth consecutive month of net inflows, pushing the pound to EGP48/\$1. (Chart 2.) The appreciation has been underpinned by US dollar weakening, albeit not matching the magnitude of the dollar's decline. The USD has depreciated by 10.5% YTD against the major currencies in the world and by 7.2% YTD against EM currencies; however, the EGP only appreciated by 5.6% YTD against it. The banking sector has consequently become flush with foreign currency liquidity.

■ Workers' remittances and tourism revenues hit record highs in FY2024/25. Remittances from Egyptians working abroad increased significantly in FY2024/25, rising by 66% y/y to an all-time high of \$36.5 billion where the month of June alone recorded \$3.6 billion (41% y/y) – a monthly record. A base year effect was one of the reasons behind this annual surge that brought remittances back to their old levels north of the \$30 billion threshold. Egypt also witnessed a 23% y/y increase in tourist arrivals over the first 8 months of 2025, and potentially up to 20% for the year as a whole. Hotel occupancy rates exceeded 80% on average in tourist areas across the country, as per the latest announcements from the minister of tourism. Both remittances and tourism revenues represent two of the main sources of foreign currency inflows for Egypt and play an important role in closing the trade deficit while supporting the foreign currency position in the financial sector. (Chart 3.)

■ Commercial banks' net foreign assets (NFAs) reached \$8 billion in July (64% m/m), their highest level since November 2014. Total banking system NFAs, which include the central bank, rose by 24% m/m to \$18.5 billion by the end of July, the best reading since February 2021. While largely driven by carry trade inflows, other FX sources such as remittances and tourism revenues are also expected to provide support going forward, partly offsetting risks from future outflows. NFAs in the banking system work as a first line of defense in times of turbulence and provide a buffer for the CBE to maintain a stable level of official foreign currency reserves. (Chart 4.)

■ There has been a significant drop in the volume of deposits by banks at the central bank via Open



Market Operations (OMOs). The weekly amounts submitted by banks in fixed rate deposits represent the excess liquidity they have after tapping the interbank market. The CBE typically absorbs this excess liquidity to maintain the stability of the banking system. Submissions in the CBE's weekly fixed-rate deposit auction in mid-September dropped 75% w/w to EGP87 billion, from EGP344 billion the week before. (Chart 5.) Earlier in 2025, high interest rates had driven OMO balances above EGP1 trillion. With policy easing underway since April, liquidity is shifting toward the treasury bill market, where yields have decoupled from OMO rates that are directly affected by the policy rate. This trend could persist in 2026, with banks increasingly incentivized to start using repos to capture higher treasury returns as OMO fixed rates decline.

This direction towards the treasury market can be seen also in the sluggish real growth in domestic credit, which reached only 7% y/y in July compared to 6% y/y in June, despite significant real growth in domestic demand deposits of 37% y/y during the same month. This growing short-term liquidity inside the banking sector has not been directed at the domestic business community but rather at investments in the treasury primary market, tightening domestic liquidity for many firms.

■ The government has taken notable steps toward fulfilling its commitments under the IMF program, yet progress has been uneven. One of the main sticking points has been delays in structural reforms, particularly the privatization of state-owned (SOEs) and military-owned enterprises (MOEs). The privatization program, which was first launched in March 2023 with the aim of selling stakes in 40 entities across 18 sectors, was originally scheduled to wrap up by March 2024. However, the timeline has been repeatedly pushed back, with explanations ranging from undervaluation concerns to hurdles in due diligence. In addition, the authorities requested to postpone certain fiscal consolidation measures to

help ease social pressures. These delays prompted the IMF to merge its fifth and sixth program reviews – initially planned separately – into a single review now scheduled for October 2025.

**Forecast**

**Stronger growth ahead, driven by consumption**

After GDP growth exceeded our expectations in FY24/25, our forecast for FY25/26 has been revised upward to 4.7% from 4.2%. Growth is expected to be driven primarily by consumption, supported by improving purchasing power, but also by private investment, which is forecast to rise for a second consecutive year, encouraged by lower borrowing costs amid ongoing monetary easing. The expected reduction in borrowing costs, allied to lower-trending inflation, higher social spending as well as accelerating public and private sector wage growth will underpin economic growth in the medium term. Remittance inflows, also, are projected to remain strong and support household demand, while foreign direct investment inflows are expected to continue their recovery, especially following recent steps to address distortions in the foreign exchange market.

**Privatization approach shifts to minority stakes**

According to media reports, a planned government privatization drive will include the sale of 30–35% of Banque du Caire, alongside partial listings of several SOEs and MOEs such as Safi (bottled water), Wataniya (petroleum), Silo Foods (food manufacturer), Chill Out (fuel retail), Midor (refining), Gabal El Zeit (wind energy), Al-Amal Al-Sharif (plastics), as well as CID Pharma and Misr Pharma (pharmaceuticals). The revised program shifts the emphasis toward minority stake offerings on the Egyptian Exchange generally between 10–40% with only a handful of strategic sales expected. The authorities now aim to raise about \$3 billion from privatization proceeds in FY25/26, lower than the earlier \$5–6 bil-

lion target, reflecting a more measured pace. Beyond revenue generation, the program seeks to deepen Egypt's capital market, attract new equity inflows, and reaffirm commitment to structural reform in the eyes of international partners.

**Inflation to accelerate before declining in 2026**

Inflation will likely rise to 13–15% by end-2025, reflecting subsidy removals, before easing to 9.5% by Q4 2026. The CBE is expected to continue its easing cycle, with 300bps of cuts in 2025 and 600bps more in 2026, fully reversing the steep hikes in 2024. Real interest rates are projected to fall to 4–5% by 2026 but remain among the world's highest, keeping Egypt attractive for carry trade investors despite global risks.

**External balance improves, reserves on the rise**

Exports are recovering, aided by competitiveness gains from last year's EGP devaluation and resilient US demand for apparel and food despite tariffs. The current account deficit narrowed to \$2.3bn in Q1 2025. For the full FY24/25, the deficit is estimated at \$15.7 billion (4.3% of GDP), with a further narrowing to \$14 billion (3.3% of GDP) anticipated in FY25/26. Stronger exports, Suez Canal receipts, remittances, and tourism revenues (likely above \$16bn) will drive this improvement. The \$20bn financing gap will be covered by FDI, debt issuance, and IMF disbursements. Reserves are expected to surpass \$50bn in 2026, well above the IMF adequacy threshold, currently estimated at \$44 billion as of Q3 2025.

**Egyptian pound holds firm amid risks**

The Egyptian pound is benefitting from strong portfolio inflows, a narrower current account deficit and a generally weaker US dollar, which should help it preserve recent gains and trade within the range of EGP47-50/\$1 through the end of 2025. Still, several headwinds could weigh on the currency in the coming year. These include the persistence of the current account deficit, elevated inflation relative to main trading partners, and the potential for recent weakness in the US dollar to abate. In addition, an expected decline in local interest rates could lower appetite for portfolio inflows, reducing an important source of FX liquidity.

**Fiscal deficit narrows, debt pressures ease**

The government's overall fiscal deficit is projected to narrow to 6.6% of GDP in FY25/26, compared with an estimated 7.1% in FY24/25. The expected improvement will be driven mainly by three factors. First, revenues are anticipated to rise by 23%, supported by ongoing tax reforms. The authorities have already introduced adjustments to the VAT system and are finalizing a broader plan to overhaul the tax framework. While no new taxes are being introduced, the reforms focus on simplifying tax payments, reducing exemptions, and curbing evasion, all of which are expected to widen the tax base and strengthen collections.

Second, the ongoing monetary easing cycle is expected to push yields lower, helping to reduce the government's debt service burden. Average yields in FY25/26 are projected at around 20%, down from an average level of 27% in FY24/25. This shift in the yield curve will have a positive impact on the budget given that interest payments remain the single largest expenditure item, accounting for roughly half of total spending and absorbing about 73% of total revenues. Third, lower global oil prices are expected to persist through the fiscal year, lowering subsidy costs and allowing the government to avoid cuts in capital spending. Looking ahead, strong nominal GDP growth and a sustained primary surplus are expected to bring down the public debt ratio from 85.6% of GDP at end-June 2025 to around 82% by end-June 2026.

**Risks to the outlook**

Upside risks to the fiscal outlook include the conclusion of any new investment deals like Ras El-Hekma or a sharper-than-expected drop in debt servicing costs. Also, portfolio inflows have been strong across EMs including Egypt in 2025 amid improving risk appetite. If this appetite continues in 2026, it might underpin the recent strengthening in the pound.

Downside risks include treasury yields staying higher for longer or fiscal revenues underperforming, which could widen the deficit and put upward pressure on debt levels. Moreover, ongoing delays in the privatization process run the risk of not meeting the IMF's performance criteria, which may affect reform credibility in the eyes of the global financial community. Meanwhile, foreign holdings of short-term Egyptian government debt have risen to an estimated \$42 billion, leaving the currency more exposed to potential outflows. Reliance on these flows underscores sensitivity to shifts in investor sentiment.

Finally, a slowdown in global demand could weigh on exports, while renewed risk-off sentiment towards EMs or an escalation in geopolitical tensions could reduce Suez Canal receipts, tourism revenues and remittances. Such pressures could weaken the pound, reversing the recent decline in inflation and interest rates, and potentially push the economy into a period of greater stress.



Reaffirming its leading role in advancing the national digital agenda and supporting Kuwait Vision 2035

## Burgan Bank launches specialized digital transformation training program for MOI



The Burgan Bank and MOI teams



The Burgan Bank and MOI teams



Naqeeb Amin, General Manager – Human Resources and Development for the Group at Burgan Bank



Brigadier General Anwar Ahmed Al-Yatama, Head of the Human Resources and IT Sector at MOI honoring Naqeeb Amin, General Manager – Human Resources and Development for the Group on behalf of Burgan Bank



Brigadier General Anwar Ahmed Al-Yatama, Head of the Human Resources and IT Sector at MOI, Naqeeb Amin, General Manager – Human Resources and Development for the Group at Burgan Bank, and Ms. Danah Faisal AlJasem – General Manager of Corporate Communications at Burgan Bank during one of the presentations.

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 23: In a new step to help advance Kuwait’s digital transformation and empower Kuwaiti talents, Burgan Bank launched a specialized training program to support Kuwait’s Ministry of Interior (MOI) in meeting the demands of the digital era. The initiative is designed to prepare national talents to lead in technology and innovation, directly supporting the goals of Kuwait Vision 2035. During the three-month training program, Burgan Bank’s digital transformation experts will mentor MOI employees on essential digital skills through 29 engaging, hands-on sessions.

On this occasion, Brigadier General Anwar Ahmed Al-Yatama, Head of the Human Resources and IT Sector at the MOI, said: “Guided by the vision of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and under the directives of His Excellency the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah, with the support of the H.E. Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior Major General Ali Misfer Al-Adwani, we are committed to propelling Kuwait toward a brighter future by advancing the path of digital transformation. Our objective is to empower national talents and enhance their digital competencies, thereby transforming the Ministry into a leading digital institution aligned with global best practices and the goals of New Kuwait Vision 2035. As a frontline government institution, our success relies on serving our citizens and all residents of Kuwait swiftly, securely, and efficiently – all of which are core features of the digitization of government services. With the support of Burgan Bank digital transformation experts, this training program will play an integral role in equipping our staff with the mindset, skills, and knowledge to lead the ministry’s transformation journey.”

Also commenting on the collaboration, **Bashar Al-Qattan**, Executive



Barrak Jassem Al-Mattar, General Manager – Information Technology at Burgan Bank



Bashar Al-Qattan, Executive Manager – Learning and Talent Development at Burgan Bank

Manager – Learning and Development at Burgan Bank, said: “We are proud to share our digital transformation expertise with a government body as central as the Ministry of Interior. This program reflects Burgan Bank’s commitment to developing national talent and contributing to Kuwait’s

progress toward Vision 2035. We fully believe that strengthening collaboration between the private and public sectors is essential to fast-tracking our country’s development as both a regional economy and business hub – just as we are doing today.”

On his part, **Barrak Al-Mattar**, General Manager – IT at Burgan Bank, said: “As a Bank, we fully believe in Kuwait’s vision of establishing a digital-first economy. That is why we continue to invest heavily in adopting the latest technologies and training our people to use them effectively. In doing so, we’ve built deep insight into Kuwait’s digital infrastructure and the market’s readiness for transformation. By sharing this knowledge with our partners, we ensure that our digital efforts are tailored to Kuwait’s needs while supporting sustainable growth and innovation.”

Building on the Burgan Bank’s market-leading learning and talent development program, this initiative is designed with participants’ varying learning styles in mind, guaranteeing the highest degree of engagement, long-term benefit, and ability to become champions of digital transformation within their teams. Among the key areas that the training program will cover are software development, analytical thinking and problem-solving, and global best practices for designing secure applications.

Earlier this year, Burgan Bank launched the Data Champion internal bootcamp, a first-of-its-kind program in Kuwait designed to upskill employees from across Burgan Bank’s departments with essential data analytics capabilities, enabling them to extract insights, drive smarter decisions, and accelerate customer-centric innovation. This initiative, among many others, is a testament to Burgan Bank’s robust digital transformation strategy and forward-thinking approach to extending its expertise to other institutions across Kuwait.

# Oracle to oversee TikTok algorithm

Security under US deal

WASHINGTON, Sept 23, (AP): Tech giant Oracle will spearhead U.S. oversight of the algorithm and security underlying TikTok’s popular video platform under the terms of a deal laid out this week by President Donald Trump’s administration.

All the final details still need to be nailed down among several joint venture partners that will include Oracle, investment firm Silver Lake Partners and possibly two billionaires – media mogul Rupert Murdoch and personal computer pioneer Michael Dell. The U.S. administration would not have a stake in the joint venture nor be part of its board, according to a senior White House official.

President Trump is expected to issue an executive order later this week that declares that the terms of the deal meet the security concerns laid out by the law, the senior White House official said. China still needs to sign off on the framework proposal, and any final deal would still require regulatory approval.

The proposal is aimed at resolving a long-running effort to wrest TikTok’s U.S. operations from its Beijing-based parent company, ByteDance, because of national security concerns. TikTok has become a high-profile topic during conversations between Trump and China President Xi Jinping as they continue to spar in a trade war that’s roiled the global economy for much of the year.

For now, the two sides are progressing on a framework deal that calls for a consortium of investors, including Oracle and Silver Lake, to take over the U.S. operations of TikTok in a process that might not be completed until early next year under a timeline laid out Monday by the Trump administration. That could mean TikTok’s divestment might not be completed until a year after it was supposed to be banned under a law that had bipartisan support but was repeatedly bypassed by Trump.

Under the current terms of the proposal, the new U.S. joint venture would receive a licensed copy of the recommendation algorithm that keeps TikTok users endlessly scrolling through clips on their smartphones. Oracle would review, monitor and secure U.S. data flowing through the service.

American officials have previously warned that

ByteDance’s 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.

“It wouldn’t be in compliance if the algorithm is Chinese. There can’t be any shared algorithm with ByteDance,” said a spokesperson for the House Select Committee on China.

The algorithm has been a central issue in the security debate over TikTok. China previously maintained the algorithm must remain under Chinese control by law. But a U.S. regulation passed with bipartisan support said any divestment of TikTok must mean the platform cuts ties – specifically the algorithm – with ByteDance.

Although the details remain sketchy, a Trump administration official said that the licensed copy will be “retrained” with U.S. data to make sure the system is “behaving appropriately.”

That makes it unclear if the U.S. version of TikTok will look different from what users are seeing in the rest of the world. Any noticeable changes made to a social media platform’s service raises the risk of alienating its audience, said Jasmine Enberg, an analyst for the research firm eMarketer.

“Social media is just as much about the culture as it is the technology, and how users will take to new ownership and potentially a new version of the app is still an open question,” Enberg said.

In a Monday briefing, White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said the change in control won’t change the experience. “TikTok users in the U.S. will be able to see videos posted by users in other countries and vice versa,” Leavitt said.

In a prime example of how a change of control can reshape a once-popular social media platform, billionaire Elon Musk triggered an almost immediate backlash after he completed his \$44 billion takeover of Twitter nearly three years ago.

But Musk made extremely visible changes, including eventually dropping the Twitter brand and changing its name to X. The changes that gradually occur while different data is fed into the U.S. copy of TikTok’s algorithm could be subtle and unnoticeable to most of its audience.

What’s clear, for now, is that both Oracle and Silver Lake will be major players in TikTok’s future in the U.S. if the deal is finalized by the Trump administration.

Founded nearly 50 years ago, Oracle’s success was built on database software that helps manage a wide variety of information crucial to business, and has since expanded into hardware, including data centers that help power artificial intelligence.

### ‘Stay true, stay consistent, stay strong’

Kuwaiti artist Abrar Zenkawi blends heritage and modernity in IQOS ILUMA i accessories

We sat down with Kuwaiti artist, Abrar Zenkawi, to explore the inspirations behind her work and her recent collaboration with IQOS. Known for blending tradition with modernity, her designs for the ILUMA i accessories celebrate Kuwait’s rich cultural heritage while reflecting her own evolving artistic identity. In this conversation, Abrar shares with us how Kuwait has shaped her creative journey, why innovation excites her, and the advice she offers to the next generation of artists.

1. Your art has always carried a unique blend of culture and modern aesthetics. How do you describe your artistic identity today?

It’s not easy to capture my art in a single definition because it evolves as I do. What remains constant is the way it blends culture with modernity, while carrying my own personal stamp. Every piece reflects who I am, inspires others and radiates positive energy.

2. Kuwait has a rich artistic and cultural fabric. How has growing up here shaped the way you express yourself through your work?

When I first began, the art scene in Kuwait wasn’t as open and accepting as it is today. About 15-20 years ago, it felt tied to certain styles, which is why I chose to take my own path. Thankfully, then came the rise of social media, which became my platform to share my work without restrictions. Today, I’m proud to see how quickly the scene has grown; it’s far more diverse, dynamic and free, allowing artists to truly express themselves.

3. Tell us how this collaboration with IQOS came about, what drew you to work with a brand rooted in innovation?

It was such a fresh idea and concept, and I love exploring new challenges. This collaboration pushed me to think differently and experiment with new mediums, which I always find refreshing and inspiring.

4. The designs you created for the



Innovation inspires Zenkawi’s creative journey with IQOS.

ILUMA i accessories are deeply inspired by Kuwaiti heritage from Sadu weaving to the waves of the Gulf. Why was it important for you to bring these cultural elements into this project?

The aim of this collaboration was to represent Kuwait through art, so it was natural to highlight elements deeply tied to our identity. Sadu weaving and the sea are both iconic symbols of Kuwait, and they felt like the perfect way to bring our heritage into a modern context.

5. IQOS is about embracing transformation and moving towards a smoke-free future. As an artist, how do you see the connection between innovation, change, and creativity?

The world is always changing, and we must evolve with it while staying true to ourselves. For me, creativity thrives when we embrace transformation. My art reflects how we keep up with the world while holding on to our own identity.

6. Lifestyle brands are increasingly collaborating with artists to create deeper meaning. What do you think

partnerships like this bring to both the brand and to the cultural scene in Kuwait?

For artists, it’s one of the most rewarding things. It says: we see you, we value your work, and we want people to experience it. Collaborations like this remind us that art is woven into everyday life, and that it’s not a passing trend. The way Kuwait is embracing these movements shows we’re headed in a positive direction.

7. Looking ahead, do you see yourself continuing to bridge art, culture, and innovation in future collaborations?

A million times, yes! It’s what I live for and what I want to keep doing for as long as I can.

8. Finally, what advice would you give to young creatives in Kuwait who want to see their art reach beyond borders?

Stay true to your identity and be consistent. Most importantly, love what you do and never let anyone bring you down.



Our long national, late nightmare is over: Colbert

## ABC ends Jimmy Kimmel’s suspension and his show to return

NEW YORK, Sept 23, (AP): ABC will reinstate Jimmy Kimmel’s late night show in the wake of criticism over his comments about the assassination of conservative activist Charlie Kirk, officials with the network said Monday.

“We have spent the last days having thoughtful conversations with Jimmy, and after those conversations, we reached the decision to return the show on Tuesday,” ABC said in a statement.

ABC suspended Kimmel indefinitely on Wednesday after comments he made about Kirk, who was killed Sept. 10, in a monologue. Kimmel said “many in MAGA land are working very hard to capitalize on the murder of Charlie Kirk” and that “the MAGA gang” was “desperately trying to characterize this kid who murdered Charlie Kirk as anything other than one of them.”

Kimmel has hosted “Jimmy Kimmel Live!” on ABC since 2003 and has been a fixture in television and comedy for even longer. He is also well known as a presenter, having hosted the Academy Awards four times.

Backlash to Kimmel’s comments was swift. Nexstar and Sinclair, two of ABC’s largest affiliate owners, said they would be pulling “Jimmy Kimmel Live!” from their stations. Others, including several fellow comedians, came to his defense.

Sinclair said Monday that it would not air Kimmel’s show Tuesday and would broadcast news programming instead. “Discussions with ABC are ongoing as we evaluate the show’s potential return,” the company said. There was no immediate comment from Nexstar on its plans for Kimmel’s return.

Andrew Kolvet, a spokesperson for Turning Point USA,

the organization founded by Kirk and now headed by his widow, posted on X about Kimmel’s reinstatement: “Disney and ABC caving and allowing Kimmel back on the air is not surprising, but it’s their mistake to make. Nexstar and Sinclair do not have to make the same choice.”

Stephen Colbert joyfully reacted to the news during the opening of his “Late Show,” telling his audience that “our long national, late nightmare is over.”

Colbert, whose late show is being canceled by CBS after this season, said he was happy for his friend and the “Jimmy Kimmel Live!” staff. Grabbing his recently-won Emmy Award for outstanding talk series, the comedian could hardly contain his glee. He added, “Once more, I am the only martyr on late night!”

President Donald Trump, one of Kimmel’s frequent targets, posted on social media that Kimmel’s suspension was “great news for America.” He also called for other late night hosts to be fired. He has yet to comment on Kimmel’s reinstatement. Kimmel’s suspension arrived in a time when Trump and his administration have pursued threats, lawsuits and federal government pressure to try to exert more control over the media industry. Trump has reached settlements with ABC and CBS over their coverage.

Trump has also filed defamation lawsuits against The Wall Street Journal and The New York Times. Republicans in Congress stripped federal funding from NPR and PBS.

Brendan Carr, the head of the Federal Communications Commission, issued a warning prior to Kimmel’s suspension that criticized Kimmel’s remarks about the Kirk assassination. “We can do this the easy way or the hard way,” Carr said. “These companies can find ways to change conduct,



Jimmy Kimmel appears at the Disney/ABC/Freeform 2018 Upfront Party in New York on May 15, 2018. (AP)

to take action, frankly, on Kimmel, or there is going to be additional work for the FCC ahead.”

Carr denied on Monday that he threatened to revoke ABC’s local station licenses because of Kimmel’s remarks.

“Jimmy Kimmel is in the situation he’s in because of his ratings. Not because of anything that’s happened at the federal government level,” Carr said at the Concordia Annual

Summit.

Kimmel’s suspension has cast a spotlight on the web of business interests that require approval from the US government. Disney, for instance, needs approval from the Trump administration for ESPN to complete its acquisition of the NFL Network, while Nexstar needs the administration’s approval to complete its \$6.2 billion purchase of broadcast rival Tegna. Sinclair has petitioned the FCC to relax rules limiting broadcaster ownership of stations.

The suspension also happened at a time when the late night landscape is shifting. CBS announced the cancellation of Colbert’s show over the summer.

Kimmel’s contract with The Walt Disney Co.-owned network had been set to expire in May 2026. His representative did not return a message seeking comment Monday.

Word of the reinstatement came as hundreds of Hollywood and Broadway stars - including Robert De Niro, Ben Affleck, Jennifer Aniston, Selena Gomez, Lin-Manuel Miranda, Tom Hanks and Meryl Streep - urged Americans “fight to defend and preserve our constitutionally protected rights” in the wake of Jimmy Kimmel’s suspension.

More than 430 movie, TV and stage stars as well as comedians, directors and writers added their names to an open letter Monday from the American Civil Liberties Union that argues it is “a dark moment for freedom of speech in our nation.”

Also Monday, ABC’s “The View” weighed in on the controversy after not raising it for two episodes after Kimmel was suspended. Co-host Whoopi Goldberg opened the show saying: “No one silences us” and she and her fellow hosts condemned Disney’s decision.

### People

#### Leniency sought

#### Combs done with jail time: defense

NEW YORK, Sept 23, (AP): Lawyers for music mogul **Sean “Diddy” Combs** urged a New York federal judge Monday to sentence him early next month to no more than 14 months in prison for his conviction on two prostitution-related charges, meaning he’d go free almost immediately if the judge agreed.

The lawyers made their arguments in a written submission to Judge Arun Subramanian, who has already rejected a proposed \$50 million bail package, signaling that he doesn’t believe the Grammy-winning artist is close to being released.

“Mr. Combs’s celebrity status in the realms of music, fashion, spirits, media, and finance has been shattered and Mr. Combs’s legacy has been destroyed,” the lawyers wrote, saying their client has been punished enough.

The submission provided new information about what life behind bars for nearly 13 months has been like for Combs, what’s happened to his businesses and other interests and explains why he turned down a plea-deal offer from prosecutors prior to his trial.

Combs faces an Oct. 3 sentencing after his July conviction by a Manhattan jury on two Mann Act charges that outlaw interstate commerce related to prostitution. Each charge carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison.

The Bad Boy Records founder was exonerated on more serious racketeering conspiracy and sex trafficking charges that would have required a minimum of 15 years in prison and the possibility of a life sentence.

In their submission, Combs’ lawyers argued that a jury sent a loud message to the judge by exonerating him of the most serious charges.

“Put simply, the jury has spoken. Its verdict represents an ‘affirmative indication of innocence,’” the lawyers said.

“He has served over a year in one of the most notorious jails in America - yet has made the most of that punishment. It is time for Mr. Combs to go home to his family, so he can continue his treatment and try to make the most of the next chapter of his extraordinary life,” they added.

Prosecutors, who will submit their recommendations prior to the Oct. 3 sentencing, have already said they’ll urge Combs stay imprisoned substantially longer than the four to five years they originally thought.

Defense lawyers, though, wrote in their submission Monday that prosecutors “have lost all perspective.” “Mr. Combs’s career and reputation have been destroyed,” they wrote. “His life outside of jail has been systematically dismantled.”

Among other things, they noted that he had to let go over 100 employees from his businesses and many of them have been unable to get new jobs because of their past association with Combs.

### Film



This image released by Universal Pictures shows Marlon Wayans, (left), and Tyriq Withers in a scene from ‘Him.’ (AP)

Horror thriller explores the dark side of football

## ‘Him’ fumbles a potent premise

LOS ANGELES, Sept 23, (AP): American society probably puts more pressure on producing a good quarterback than anything else, which makes it all the more confounding that the Jets can never have one.

OK, OK. So that’s not necessarily the takeaway from “Him,” a new horror thriller about the religious fervor that goes with football. For some of us long-suffering fans, football inspires less Messianic zeal than an annual reminder that this is a dark and cruel world and any delusional preseason hope will be quickly and thoroughly snuffed out.

But Jets fan or not, “Him” has a decent point to make about QB hero worship. These are modern gladiators. But if the issue of some thrillers is that they have nothing to say, the problem with “Him” is that it has exactly one thing to say, which it does again and again and again.

“Him” does have some style, though. Directed by Justin Tipping (“Kicks”) and produced by Jordan Peele, “Him” was made with the potent premise of bringing the kind of dark, satirical perspective that characterizes a Monkeypaw production to our violent national pastime. But that promise gets fumbled in an allegorical chamber play that grows increasingly tedious.

Cameron “Cam” Cade grew up idolizing Saviors quarterback Isaiah White (Marlon Wayans). As a boy, he watches White win a game on a highlight-reel play that also leaves the QB with a career-threatening injury. “That’s what real men do,” his father (Don Benjamin) tells him. “They make sacrifices.”

Fourteen years later, Cam (Tyriq Withers) is on the cusp of entering the pros as a top draft pick. Just before the combine, though, Cam, while practicing alone at night, is struck in the head by a strange pagan spirit-slash-mascot that emerges out of the shadows. The trauma to the head adds a new risk to Cam’s football playing. But if you’re expecting a horror version of 2015’s “Concussion,” that’s a small part of what “Him” aspires to be about.

The Saviors reach out to Cam’s agent (Tim Heidecker) and offer a unique opportunity: Come to Isaiah’s Texas desert compound to train with him for a week. Isaiah is still in the league and by now, despite the long-ago injury, has gone on to win a Tom Brady-like haul of championships. After a week, the Saviors will decide if they’ll draft Cam.

But what follows over seven days is less a boot camp than a disorienting psychodrama -- a kind of football ayahuasca - in which the very intense Isaiah pushes Cam to extremes to test whether he has it

in him to be the GOAT. The atmosphere is surreal and the editing hallucinatory. Cam is injected with unknown serums, blood gets transfused and pocket-passing drills turn grisly. This is not a game, Cam is told more than once. To paraphrase Dani Rojas, football is life (and maybe death, too).

By settling the movie into Isaiah’s Brutalist estate, “Him” take what could have been something grander and turns into effectively into a battle for QB1 - albeit one with more primal underpinnings than your average depth-chart contest.

But it’s probably a bad sign for your satire if you have to take reality completely out of it and instead hole up inside a haunted house. There are a few folks around, including Isaiah’s influencer wife (Julia Fox), but somewhere far outside of the frame of “Him” is an enormous football world of arenas, screaming fans and broadcasters - the world that a movie like “Any Given Sunday” rushed to capture, not evade. “Him” ends up feeling like a gladiator movie that forgot the Colosseum.

“Him,” a Universal Pictures release, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for strong bloody violence, language throughout, sexual material, nudity and some drug use. Running time: 96 minutes. One and a half stars out of four.

Duchess of York faces backlash for ‘friend’ email

## UK charities cut ties with Ferguson over Epstein email

LONDON, Sept 23, (AP): A number of charities on Monday severed ties with Sarah Ferguson, the ex-wife of Prince Andrew, after British newspapers published an email that she reportedly wrote to the late convicted sex offender and financier Jeffrey Epstein, describing him as a “supreme friend.”

Julia’s House, a children’s hospice, said that the reported correspondence made it inappropriate for Ferguson, also known as the Duchess of York, to remain a patron.

A spokesman for Ferguson said that she sent an email on the advice of her lawyers after Epstein threatened to sue her for associating him with sexual abuse in a media interview, Britain’s Press Association reported.

“Following the information shared this weekend on the Duchess of York’s correspondence with Jeffrey Epstein, Julia’s House has taken the decision that it would be inappropriate for her to continue as a patron of the charity,” the charity said. “We have advised the Duchess of York of this decision and thank her for her past support.”

A food allergy charity, The Natasha Allergy Research Foundation, and Prevent Breast Cancer, were also among the charities that cut ties in light of recent revelations. The Teenage Cancer Trust, which had an association with Ferguson for 35 years, also dropped



Sarah Ferguson waves to the crowd as she attends the Easter Matins Service at St. George’s Chapel, Windsor Castle, England, on April 20, 2025. (AP)

her as a patron.

The email referred to a 2011 interview with the Evening Standard newspaper in which she apologized for accepting 15,000 pounds from Epstein.

“I abhor paedophilia and any sexual abuse of children and know that this was a gigantic error of judgment on my behalf. I am just so contrite I cannot say,” Ferguson said in the interview. “Whenever I can, I will repay the money and have nothing ever to do with Jeffrey Epstein ever again.”

But the following month, Ferguson sent an email to Epstein in which she “humbly apologized” for linking him to sex abuse, saying “you have always been a steadfast, generous and supreme friend to me and my family.” The Sun newspaper reported over the weekend.

The Associated Press couldn’t independently confirm that the email is authentic.

The story comes less than a month after Andrew himself was criticized for staying in touch with Epstein for five years longer than previously claimed.

Leaked email correspondence between Epstein and former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak indicated that the prince had been in touch with Epstein as late as 2015, the Times of London reported. Andrew told the BBC in 2019 that he ceased all contact with Epstein in December 2010, after the late financier pled guilty to sex crimes in Florida.

Andrew and his ex-wife have faced a series of scandals amid concerns that the prince has tried to profit from his royal status.

### Variety

**SACRAMENTO, Calif.:** A man suspected of firing a gun into the ABC affiliate’s office in California’s capital had written notes in his car that were critical of **Donald Trump’s** administration and a calendar reminder on his fridge to “do the next scary thing,” prosecutors said Monday.

Nobody was hurt in the shooting Friday into the lobby of the studios of A B C 10 near downtown Sacramento. Local authorities arrested Anibal Hernandez Santana, 64, on Friday on suspicion of assault with a deadly weapon and shooting into an occupied building. He was released hours later on \$200,000 bail.

Hernandez Santana was rearrested Saturday night by the FBI and will also face federal charges related to interfering with a federally licensed station and discharging a firearm within a school zone. His defense attorney, Mark Reichel, said Hernandez Santana would plead not guilty in both the state and federal cases. He’s next due back in court on Thursday.

“He is innocent unless and until he is found otherwise,” Reichel said in a statement. (AP)



Trump

**MEXICO CITY:** The bodies of two Colombian musicians reported missing last week have been identified after being found outside Mexico City, authorities said Monday.

Singer Bayron Sánchez Salazar, known professionally as B-King, and Jorge Luis Herrera, known as DJ Regio Clown, were found on Sept. 17 in Cocotitan, in neighboring Mexico state, but only recently identified, the Mexico City prosecutor’s office said. The two friends had left for a gym in Mexico City’s high-end Polanco neighborhood on Sept. 16 and never returned, authorities said. Local press reports said a message from a local criminal organization was found with their remains.

Relatives of Sánchez Salazar identified his remains on Monday, the prosecutor’s office said.

Mexico’s federal security apparatus said on X that the military would assist the civilian investigators in finding the perpetrators.

Colombia President Gustavo Petro railed against the drug war in condemning their killings.

“International mafia strengthened by the stupid militaristic and prohibitionist policy called the ‘drug war,’” he wrote on X. (AP)

**NEW YORK:** New York City mayoral candidate Zohran Mamdani said Monday evening he’s willing to appear at a town hall hosted by a local ABC station now that the national network says it will reinstate Jimmy Kimmel’s late night show.

Earlier in the day, Mamdani announced he was pulling out of the event following ABC’s decision to suspend the late-night host.

“Last week, Disney/ABC caved to Trump administration pressure. Millions of Americans helped them find their backbone. Whether you watch Jimmy Kimmel or not, today’s decision is a victory for free speech,” the Democrat wrote on X. “We’ve reached out to WABC to reschedule the town hall,” he added.

Earlier in the day, Mamdani said he canceled his appearance at the town hall after ABC pulled Kimmel’s show off the air due to backlash over the host’s comments about the killing of conservative activist Charlie Kirk.

“I am withdrawing not as an indictment of the local affiliate or the hardworking journalists, but rather in response to the corporate leaders who have put their bottom line ahead of their responsibility in upholding the freedom of the press,” Mamdani said in a statement. (AP)



Former VP reflects on accountability in first post-election TV interview

Harris opens up about Biden’s 2024 run, her role behind scenes

WASHINGTON, Sept 23, (AP): Former Vice President Kamala Harris said Monday evening that she regrets not expressing her concerns about then-President Joe Biden running for a second term when a majority of Americans felt he was too old for the job.

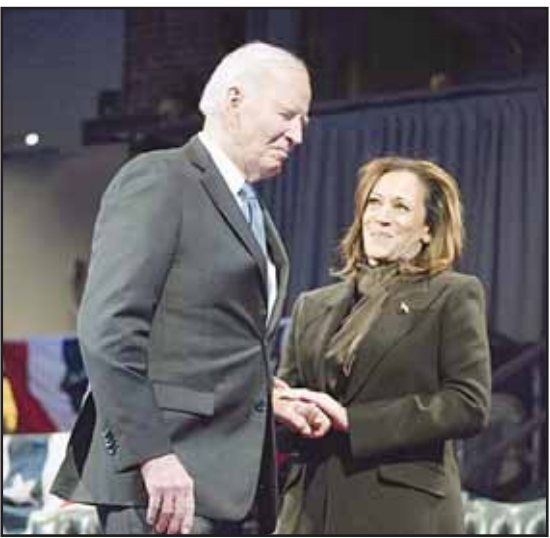
“I have and had a certain responsibility that I should have followed through on,” Harris told Rachel Maddow on MSNBC in her first live television interview since the election.

Such a conversation, even if it happened privately and behind the scenes, would have been an extraordinary breach in a relationship between a president and vice president.

Harris’ comments expand on a passage in her book, “107 Days,” that looks back on her experience replacing Biden as the 2024 Democratic presidential nominee after he dropped out of the race. Harris ultimately lost to Republican candidate Donald Trump.

In the book, Harris wrote that everyone in the White House would say “it’s Joe and Jill’s decision” about running for reelection, referring to the president and first lady.

“Was it grace, or was it recklessness? In retrospect, I think it was recklessness,” she wrote. “The stakes were simply too high. This wasn’t a choice that should have been left to an individual’s ego, an individual’s



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

ambition. It should have been more than a personal decision.”

In her interview with Maddow, Harris said, “when I

talk about the recklessness, as much as anything, I’m talking about myself.”

Harris said in the interview she was concerned that “it would come off as completely self-serving” if she had counseled Biden not to seek reelection. She had competed against him for their party’s 2020 nomination, and she was well positioned to run again.

A representative for Biden declined comment.

Although Harris wrote that she wasn’t worried about Biden’s ability to continue doing the job, she had concerns about him campaigning.

“His voice was no longer strong, his verbal stumbles more frequent,” she wrote. Before Biden dropped out, there were plans for him to run a White House-centric campaign while Harris did more traveling. A week after Biden’s disastrous debate against Trump, she wrote that “he felt so frail.”

Harris turns 61 next month, and she hasn’t detailed her future plans. Asked about running for president again in 2028, Harris said “that’s not my focus right now.” She’s already passed on an opportunity to run for governor of her home state of California.

She backed a plan by Gov. Gavin Newsom to redraw congressional districts to counteract a similar plan by Republicans in Texas that was intended to help Trump keep control of the House in next year’s midterms.

“We tend to play by the rules,” Harris said. “But I think this is a moment where you got to fight fire with fire.”

She spoke harshly about Trump in the interview, criticizing him as acting like “a tyrant” and “Communist dictators,” saying “that’s what we’re dealing right now in Donald Trump.”

Harris also pointed the finger at business leaders who she accused of capitulating to the president.

“These titans of industry are not speaking up,” she said.

Maddow referenced a passage in Harris’ book where she wrote that Pete Buttigieg was her first choice for vice president but she was worried that Americans weren’t ready to vote for a ticket featuring a Black woman and a gay man.

“It’s hard to hear ... he couldn’t be on the ticket, effectively, because he was gay,” Maddow said.

Harris said “it wasn’t about any prejudice on my part” but “we had such a short period of time, and the stakes were so high.”

“It made me very sad, but I also realized it would be a real risk,” she said. Harris conceded “maybe I was being too cautious.”

Buttigieg told Politico he was “surprised” by the passage in the book about him. He also said he believes in “giving Americans more credit.”

Fashion



Models on the catwalk at the Burberry show in Perks Field, Kensington Gardens, in London, during London Fashion Week, Monday, Sept. 22. (AP)

More women are embracing the natural look

Pamela Anderson leads the way for women who choose to go makeup free

NEW YORK, Sept 23, (AP): Pamela Anderson has nothing against makeup. It’s just that she’s been there, done that in her younger years. That’s why now, at 58, she’s attending fashion shows and film premieres with a blissfully bare face.

It’s a look, especially for older women, that serves to plague and perplex. Do we chase youth (and relevancy) with a full face, or do we foster radiant skin and march on makeup free?

“I’m not trying to be the prettiest girl in the room,” Anderson told Vogue ahead of a recent show she attended during Paris Fashion Week. “I feel like it’s just freedom. It’s like a relief.”

Down here in the non-celebrity world, is it just as easy and comfortable to go makeup free? Some proponents of the look, along with style and beauty experts, weigh in.

Women, particularly older women, are not universally giving up makeup, but Anderson, Alicia Keys and other celebrities who have publicly shown off bare faces have certainly inspired some to cast it off.

Working women, however, acknowledge difficulties doing that on the job - especially in traditional, less creative work spaces.

“I do still think that there are some politics associated with it. More around feeling and looking polished,” said Deborah Borg, the chief of human resources for a creative-leaning company that has roughly 25,000 employees.

She said she’s seen more women come into work makeup-free since COVID, and thinks the pandemic significantly altered the workplace dynamic.

Borg, 49, gave up makeup four years ago, save an occasional swipe of her bold, signature red lipstick. At Dalya, a cozy clothing shop in New York’s trendy Soho neighborhood, she lent herself as a model to demonstrate how to help one’s bare skin glow and how to use attire and accessories to accentuate the look.

Makeup artist Rebecca Robles counseled Borg and others with mature skin to think hydration when choosing products to make the most of their bare faces.

Robles recommends a five-step workday routine: A gentle cleanser that doesn’t strip the skin; a vitamin C serum to brighten and mitigate fine lines; a moisturizer with sun protection; a separate broad-spectrum sunscreen for an extra boost (don’t forget



Pamela Anderson appears at the premiere of the film ‘The Naked Gun’ in London on July 22, 2025. (AP)

to apply that to the ears); and a glossy lip balm for a bit of added polish.

No mascara? No problem. Use a lash curler to offer a bit of pop to the eye, Robles said. And gently brush brows into place to complete the look.

Find products with hyaluronic acid and ceramides, Robles suggests, and always swipe up with skincare products. Minimize tugging and pulling on the skin.

“When your skin is glowing, one thing that’s really fun to keep in mind is that light reflects off that moisture in the skin and can help blur out any fine lines or enlarged pores. So it’s win-win,” Robles said.

She advised that each product should sit for a minute or two before the next step is applied.

Borg emphasized the ease of her morning routine since going makeup free. She used to spend about 30 minutes just on makeup. Now, she does hair and face in half that time.

Natalie Tinchler, a personal stylist and founder of Bu Style, praised Anderson, Keys and other celebrities who have gone without makeup both publicly and on social media.

“They look beautiful and they’re so confident in their natural persona and who they are that I feel like it’s really giving an example for all of us women to say, ‘Hey, what am I hiding? I don’t have to do that. I

can make the choice if I want to go no makeup, minimal makeup, full glam. I can have those choices,” she said.

For her clients going makeup free, she uses a three-prong approach.

First, with clothes, “use a lot of color. I call it our filter,” Tinchler said.

Secondly, play with texture; it determines how light will be reflected. “So if you have something more matte, that is going to create a more soft lighting on you. If you have more silk satin, like say something like a blouse, it’s going to be more like a laser beam,” she said.

Finally, accessorize. Tinchler said added touches like lapel pins, earrings and necklaces can provide a finished polish - especially if that polish is still expected at work. A considered style can offset judgments about going makeup free, she said.

“Think of your outfit as the big picture. When you walk in, what is the statement that it’s making? It’s not just about one part of you, it’s your whole presence in a room,” she said.

Colleen Gehoski Steinman, who lives near Lansing, Michigan, recently pivoted from a career in public relations and fundraising to professional sewing. During the pandemic, she stopped coloring her hair, then gave up wearing makeup much of the time.

But at 59, she’s not a stickler about it if she’s going to be in lighting that will wash her out.

“This is who we really are, and you can be beautiful just as you are,” Steinman said.

In South Carolina, Cate Chapman manages a bagel shop and sells her homemade custards at farmers markets in the Greenville area. As a teen, she was all-in on makeup but has been happily free of it since the early 1990s.

“I just thought, for one, makeup is expensive,” said Chapman, 57. “Putting it on is time-consuming. As a female, I’m making less, and my male counterparts don’t have to put out this expense. It isn’t fair. It feels expected, and it’s not right.”

Makeup, she said, “felt like prison.” She stopped gradually, giving up foundation first. But still, she’s not above applying a bit of mascara on special occasions.

“If you enjoy it, do it,” Chapman said. “But if you feel like a slave to it, let it go.”

Books

‘Sci-fi without science’

McEwan blends mystery, dystopia in his new book

LONDON, Sept 23, (AP): When novelists look to the future, the view is often grim. There are a lot more fictional dystopias than utopias.

Ian McEwan has good news and bad news about what lies ahead in “What We Can Know,” a book he calls “science fiction without the science.”

The British author’s 19th novel, published Tuesday in the US by Knopf, is set in 2119 and follows a professor of literature researching a famed 21st-century poet and his circle.

So far, so cozy. But it’s a world in which nuclear war, pandemics, economic collapse and climate change - a period known as The Derangement - have halved the global population. The United States is a lawless land of feuding warlords. Nigeria is the global superpower. Inundated England has been reduced to a string of small island republics.

McEwan, 77, said that his working assumption is that humanity will “just scrape through” the next century of crises and catastrophes. The novel seeks “to look at the present through the rather envious eyes of someone in the future.”

Those eyes belong to Tom Metcalfe, an English academic studying the famous (fictional) poet Francis Blundy, and a legendary lost poem that he read aloud at a dinner party in 2014.

As dystopias go, it’s a gentle one. Tom sifts through reams of 21st-century social media detritus for nuggets of information gold that may lead to the missing poem. He later undertakes an adventur-

ous journey with touches of “Treasure Island.”

To Tom, our era is a barely imaginable time of abundance, natural diversity and human folly.

“What brilliant invention and boneheaded greed,” he says.

Readers may hear the author’s voice in the sentiment.

“There is something very reminiscent to me of the ninth century about contemporary life: passionately superstitious, even as we have extraordinary discoveries in biomedicine and in cosmology,” McEwan told The Associated Press. “At one point I describe the process of social media as if some medieval horde had run onto the wrong stage.”

Partway through the book, McEwan delivers a twist that dramatically shifts the reader’s perspective. It’s something he has done before, notably in 2001’s “Atonement” - his bestselling novel, which many consider his best.

The book’s second half delivers surprise, violence, betrayal and - another McEwan trademark - evidence of the “terrible things that perfectly ordinary people can do.”

McEwan said that he wants readers “to be, not disoriented, but just to pass through a different mirror turning the page from part one to part two.

“I hope to bring the reader back to the title.”

McEwan says he’s not an “issues novelist,” although his books often touch on social problems and world affairs: the 2003 invasion of Iraq in “Saturday,” climate change in “Solar,” artificial intelligence in “Machines Like Me.”



Ian McEwan, British novelist and screenwriter, gestures as he speaks to press during an interview in London, Friday, Sept. 12. (AP)

Cardi B replaces The Weeknd at 2025 Global Citizen Festival

NEW YORK, Sept 23, (AP): Fresh off her sophomore album release and the announcement of her fourth pregnancy, **Cardi B** has another thing to celebrate: She’s joining the 2025 Global Citizen Festival. The annual event, held in New York’s Central Park, supports campaigns to improve energy access across Africa and defend the Amazon against deforestation.

The Weeknd, who was originally slated to headline Saturday’s festival alongside Shakira, had to drop out of the event due to personal reasons, according to organizers.

“We are incredibly grateful to Cardi B, who has joined the Global Citizen Festival lineup,” wrote Global Citizen CEO and co-founder Hugh Evans in a statement. “She’s an outstanding performer, who will light up Central Park in spectacular fashion. We wish The Weeknd support and want to thank

him and his fans for all taking action with us to help end extreme poverty.”

“This one’s not like other music festivals - this one is about coming together to help children around the world, and I’m so proud to support such an important cause,” Cardi B shared in a statement. “New York City - see you Saturday. Let’s get it!!!”

The 2025 Global Citizen Festival will be hosted by actor Hugh Jackman and features a number of performances, including sets by Tyla, Ayra Starr and Mariah the Scientist.

The festival’s goals involve securing commitments to bring clean, reliable energy to 1 million people in Africa; mobilizing \$200 million for Indigenous and local entrepreneurs to protect an Italy-sized chunk of the Amazon rainforest; and raising at least \$30 million to help community-based education programs improve children’s literacy.

Tickets to the festival are free, but fans must earn them by taking actions through the Global Citizen app.

The festival will also be available to stream Saturday on YouTube, Apple Music and the Apple TV app, iHeartRadio and many other platforms.



Cardi B



Over 113,000 cholera cases, 3,000 deaths across Sudan

# Cholera outbreak in Sudan at ‘concerning’ levels, WHO warns

GENEVA. Sept 23, (KUNA): The World Health Organization (WHO) warned on Tuesday that Sudan’s cholera outbreak has reached a concerning level spreading to all 18 states with more than 113,600 cases and over 3,000 deaths reported nationwide.

WHO’s deputy representative in Sudan Hala Khudari speaking from Port Sudan at a Geneva press briefing said, “this is really a concerning case fatality rate of 2.7 percent well above the global threshold of 1 percent.”

She warned that the situation in Darfur is deteriorating rapidly, noting that as of two days ago the region had recorded 12,739 cases and 358 deaths across 36 of its 64 localities, highlighting severe regional distress.

She explained the overall case fatality rate in Darfur is 2.8 percent, but among children and elderly it exceeds 5 percent, while in West Darfur alone the rate has alarmingly risen as high as 11.8 percent.

She reported that a cholera vaccination campaign launched Sunday in South and East Darfur aims to protect 1.86 million people in six priority localities including Nyala North and South, Abu Jabra and Adain.



Patients sit outside the malnutrition ward of Bunj Hospital in Maban, South Sudan, Tuesday, Aug. 19, 2025. (AP)

She added that plans are also underway to extend the campaign to Tawila in North Darfur, which hosts nearly 576,000 displaced people mostly from El-Fasher and has reported over 7,400 cases 61 percent of all infections in Darfur.

Khudari stressed that while vaccination is critical, it is “only one part of a comprehensive cholera response” that also requires surveillance, treatment, clean water, sanitation, and community engagement.

WHO has delivered 77 metric tons of medical supplies in 2025 to support treatment centers and continues to coordinate with partners on the ground.

For his part UNICEF spokesperson Ricardo Pires added that children are disproportionately affected with 380 under the age of five 240 aged five to ten and 290 between ten and twenty have already died.

Pires said the situation is very dire, stressing that over 70 percent of hospitals in conflict-affected areas are nonfunctional due to attacks, shortages of supplies or staff, while millions, including children, lack safe water and depend on contaminated sources.



In this photo provided by NASA, NASA's 10 newest astronauts, US Army CW3 Ben Bailey, (from left), Rebecca Lawler, Anna Menon, Dr. Lauren Edgar, US Navy Lt. Cmdr. Erin Overcash, Yuri Kubo, and US Air Force Maj. Cameron Jones, (back left), Katherine Spies, US Air Force Maj. Adam Fuhrmann and Dr. Imelda Muller, pose at NASA's Johnson Space Center, Sept. 17, in Houston, Texas. (AP)

More women than men in new class

# NASA unveils its 10 new astronauts

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla., Sept 23, (AP): NASA introduced its newest astronauts Monday, 10 scientists, engineers and test pilots chosen from more than 8,000 applicants to help explore the moon and possibly Mars.

For the first time, there were more women than men in an incoming astronaut class. They included a geologist who worked on NASA’s Curiosity Mars rover and a SpaceX engineer who’s already rocketed into orbit, flying on a billionaire-sponsored mission that featured the world’s first private spacewalk last year.

The six women and four men will undergo two years of training before becoming eligible for spaceflight.

Acting Administrator Sean Duffy said one of them could become one of the first to step on Mars. He also stressed that the U.S. will win this second race to land astronauts on the moon.

“You are America’s best and brightest, and we’re going to need America’s best and brightest because we have a bold exploration plan for the future,” Duffy said at Monday’s ceremony at Johnson Space Center in Houston. “Some are challenging our leadership in space, say like the Chinese ... We are going to win.”

It is the 24th astronaut class for NASA since the original Mercury Seven made their debut in 1959. The previous class was in 2021.

Only 370 people have been selected by NASA as astronauts, making it an extraordinarily small and elite group composed mostly of men. The latest additions will join 41 active U.S. astronauts currently serving in the corps.

NASA’s flight operations director Norm Knight said competition was stiff and called the newcomers “distinguished” and “exceptional.” They include several military pilots, a



This aerial photo taken on Jan. 17, 2023 shows the cracked lake bottom of Selkapani Dam Lake in Ankara, Türkiye. Türkiye is experiencing severe drought as dams around the country’s major cities have reached low levels amid a lack of precipitation and an unusually warm winter stemming from global climate change. (Xinhua)

Europe’s heat deaths climb

# Türkiye faces severe drought as rainfall hits record lows

ISTANBUL, Sept 23, (Xinhua): Türkiye is facing one of its most severe droughts in decades, with national rainfall plunging far below long-term averages and threatening water supplies and agriculture across the country.

According to data released Monday by the State Meteorological Service, between October 2024 and August 2025, the country received 401.1 kilograms of rainfall per square meter, 27 percent below the long-term average and 29 percent lower than the same period last year, marking the lowest rainfall in Türkiye in 52 years, the data showed.

The decline was particularly severe in Southeastern Anatolia, where rainfall fell over 53 percent below seasonal norms.

Meanwhile, the Mediterranean region recorded its lowest rainfall in 51 years, while the Marmara and Aegean regions saw their lowest levels in 18 years. In the capital, Ankara experienced its driest water year in 47 years. Only parts of the Black Sea region reported above-average rainfall, providing limited relief.

Halim Orta, an academic at Tekirdag Namik Kemal University and a local wheat farmer, described the drought as unprecedented in recent memory. He told Xinhua that both surface and groundwater resources are declining sharply, intensifying the hydrological drought.

Orta warned of severe socioeconomic consequences, noting that resi-

dents struggle to access sufficient water for daily needs and hygiene, while reduced agricultural yields are already driving up food prices and threatening food availability.

Heat-related deaths: Europe recorded 181,000 heat-related deaths over the past three summers, according to a new study done by the Barcelona Institute for Global Health (ISGlobal) published Monday in Nature Medicine.

The report warns that climate change is driving a sharp rise in deadly heat across the continent. The summer of 2024 alone, the hottest on record, saw 62,775 heat-related deaths between June and September. Italy was the hardest hit 19,038 deaths, followed by Spain with 6,743 and Germany with 6,282.

Analyzing data from 654 regions across 32 European countries, researchers found Greece had the highest heat-related death rate in 2024, with 574 deaths per million people, followed by Bulgaria with 530 and Serbia with 379. In total, 15 countries experienced their highest-ever heat-related mortality rates.

“Europe is warming faster than any other continent due to climate change, at twice the global average. The Mediterranean and Southeast regions are most affected, with significant health impacts and rising heat-related mortality,” said ISGlobal researcher Natalia Shartova.

New weapon

# ‘Nano-vinegar’ kills superbugs

SYDNEY, Sept. 23, (Xinhua): Adding microscopic particles to vinegar enhances their effectiveness against dangerous bacterial infections and may help combat antibiotic resistance, new research led by researchers at the QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute, Flinders University in Australia, and the University of Bergen in Norway shows.

The research shows that antimicrobial nanoparticles made from carbon and cobalt can enhance the natural bacterial killing qualities of acetic acid, commonly known as vinegar, according to a statement released Tuesday by the QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute.

The statement says that vinegar has been used as a disinfectant for centuries, but it is effective only against certain bacteria, and it does not kill the most dangerous types.

The researchers found that the antimicrobial nanoparticles made from carbon and cobalt could kill several dangerous bacterial species, and their activity was enhanced when added to a weak vinegar solution. The findings have been published in the international journal ACS Nano.

As part of the research, the researchers added cobalt-containing carbon quantum dot nanoparticles to weak acetic acid to create a potent antimicrobial treatment. They used this mixture against several pathogenic species, including the drug-resistant Staphylococcus aureus, Escherichia coli (E. coli) and Enterococcus faecalis.

The acidic environment from the vinegar made bacterial cells swell and take up the nanoparticle treatment, said molecular biologist Adam Truskewycz, who is the study’s co-author.

“Once exposed, the nanoparticles appear to attack dangerous bacteria from both inside the bacterial cell and also on its surface, causing them to burst,” Truskewycz said, adding the approach was non-toxic to human cells and was shown to remove bacterial infections from mice wounds without affecting healing.

No proven link between vaccines and autism

# Experts warn against unproven claims on pregnancy painkillers and autism

WASHINGTON, Sept 23, (AP): Many doctors and scientists were reeling Monday after President Donald Trump went on TV to insist that pregnant women should never take Tylenol and revive debunked theories about vaccines and autism.

Trump went beyond his own Food and Drug Administration’s more modest advice that doctors “should consider minimizing” the painkiller acetaminophen’s use in pregnancy - amid inconclusive evidence about whether too much could be linked to autism. His comments came as the administration also moved to make more available a possible but unproven autism treatment - and also announced more research into the disorder.

Dr. Steven Fleischman, president of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, worried that the Tylenol claims would terrify mothers-to-be and parents of children with autism.



In this Dec. 12, 2007 file photo, Tylenol drugs are shown in the drug department at Costco in Mountain View, Calif. (AP)

Medication

“I don’t want you going back and looking and saying to yourself, ‘I shouldn’t have done this, I shouldn’t have done that.’ It’s nothing you did. It really is not,” he said. “Not treating the fever probably has more adverse effects that you need to worry about than taking the medication.”

As for vaccines, “studies have repeatedly found no credible link between life-saving childhood vaccines and autism,” said American Academy of Pediatrics president Dr. Susan Kreslly. “Any effort to misrepresent sound, strong science poses a threat to the health of children.”

Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. promised earlier this year to determine the cause of autism by September. That baffled brain experts who say there is no single cause and that the rhetoric appears to ignore decades of science into the genetic and environmental factors that can play a role.

Here’s what we know about autism and the Trump administration’s new steps to address it.

Autism isn’t a disease. It’s a complex developmental condition better known as autism spectrum disorder that affects different people in different ways.

It can include delays in language, learning or social and emotional skills.

For some people, profound autism means being nonverbal and having intellectual disabilities, but the vast majority of people experience far milder effects.

There are two main reasons. First, the definition of autism broadened as scientists expanded their understanding of its wide range of traits and symptoms. That led to changes in the criteria doctors use to diagnose autism and improvements in screening.

At the same time, parents increasingly sought a diagnosis as autism became better known and schools began offering educational services they hoped could help their kids.

Symptoms

As late as the 1990s, only children with the most profound symptoms were considered to have autism. In the early 2000s, as the definition began changing, the autism rate was estimated to be 1 in 150 children. The latest count found 1 in about 31 children are affected by autism spectrum disorder.

The increase isn’t among the profound cases; it’s an increase in the milder cases that weren’t historically considered autism, said expert Helen Tager-Flusberg of Boston University.

There is no single test for autism, which is diagnosed mostly through developmental and behavioral assessments.

It’s hard to tell if there may be additional factors behind the increase.

Science has shown autism is mostly rooted in genetics, with the discovery of several hundred genes that play a role. Those genes can be inherited, even if the parent shows no signs of autism, or mutations can occur as the brain is developing and its rapidly dividing cells make mistakes.

Experts say different combinations of genes and other factors can all affect how a fetal brain develops. They include such factors as the age of a child’s father, preterm birth and whether the mother had health problems during pregnancy such as fevers, infections or diabetes.

Some studies have raised the possibility that taking the over-the-counter painkiller in pregnancy might be associated with a risk of autism - but many others haven’t found a connection. In addition, the Coalition of Autism Scientists said Monday that acetaminophen use during pregnancy hadn’t increased in recent decades like autism rates have. Acetaminophen is known in most countries outside the US as paracetamol.

But untreated fevers in pregnancy, particularly the first trimester, increase the risk for miscarriages, preterm birth and other problems, according to the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine.

New screwworm case detected near US border

# More shrimp products recalled across US over possible radioactive contamination

NEW YORK, Sept 23, (AP): A Seattle seafood distributor has recalled more cooked and frozen shrimp sold at Kroger grocery stores across the US because of ongoing concerns about potential radioactive contamination.

Aquastar Corp. on Saturday recalled nearly 157,000 additional pounds of shrimp because of possible contamination with cesium 137, a radioactive isotope. The new recall includes nearly 50,000 bags of Kroger Raw Colossal EZ Peel Shrimp, about 18,000 bags of Kroger Mercado Cooked Medium Peeled Tail-Off Shrimp and more than 17,000 bags of AquaStar Peeled Tail-on Shrimp Skewers.

The products were sold between June 12 and Sept. 17 at grocery stores in more than 30 states. They include Bakers, City Market, Dillons, Food 4 Less, Foodscos, Fred Meyer, Fry’s, Gerbes, Jay C, King Soopers, Kroger, Mariano’s, Metro Market, Pay Less Supermarkets, Pick ‘n Save, Ralph’s, Smith’s and QFC.

The company previously recalled shrimp products in August.

The new recall is the latest action in an ongoing investigation of potential contamination with cesium 137, a by-product of nuclear reactions, according to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. The risk appears to be small, but the shrimp could pose a “potential health concern” for people exposed to low levels of cesium 137 over time, FDA officials said.

The FDA issued a safety alert in August warning consumers not to eat certain frozen shrimp imported from PT. Bahari Makmur Sejati, an Indonesian company doing business as BMS Foods. Cesium 137 was detected in shipping containers from the company sent to several U.S. ports and in a sample of frozen breaded shrimp.



Cattle feed at a ranch that exports livestock to the US, in Zamora, northern Mexico, July 29, 2025, with the US border closed to Mexican cattle imports over screwworm concerns. (AP)

Associated Press about the source or extent of the contamination.

Experts in nuclear radiation agree that the health risk is low, but they say it’s important to determine the contamination’s source and share that information with the public.

The level of cesium 137 detected in the frozen shrimp was about 68 becquerels per kilogram, a measure of radioactivity. That is far below the FDA’s level of 1,200 becquerels per kilogram that could trigger the need for health protections.

Screwworm: Mexico activated emergency controls Monday after detecting a new case of New World screwworm in cattle in the northern border state of Nuevo Leon state, the closest case to the US border since the outbreak began last year.

The animal, found in the town of Sabinas Hidalgo, came from the Gulf state of Veracruz, Mexico’s National Health for Food Safety and Food Quality Service said. The last case was reported July 9 in Veracruz, prompting Washington to suspend imports of live Mexican cattle.

The parasite, a larva of the Cochliomyia hominivorax fly, attacks warm-blooded animals, including humans. Mexico has reported more than 500 active cases in cattle across southern states.

The block on cattle imports has spelled trouble for Mexico’s government, which has already been busy trying to offset the brunt of U.S. President Donald Trump’s tariff threats this year.

The government and ranchers have sought to get the ban lifted. If it stays in place through the year, Mexico’s ranching federation estimates losses up to \$400 million.



Simeone concerned about forward Alvarez

No room for slip-ups for Atletico in first of two Madrid derbies this week

MADRID, Sept 23, (Xinhua): Atletico Madrid will play a derby against Rayo Vallecano on Wednesday in the sixth round of La Liga.

The game is the first of two derbies for Atletico this week, and Diego Simeone's side needs to win both, otherwise this season's title could already slip out of reach before September ends.

With Atletico hosting Real on Saturday, anything other than two wins would leave Simeone's team with fading hopes of competing for the title.

Atletico striker Alexander Sorloth will miss Wednesday's game after his red card in Mallorca, while Simeone is also concerned about forward Julian Alvarez, who has not scored since the opening game of the season.

Wednesday's fixtures begin with Getafe at home to Alaves, with both sides returning from weekend defeats.

Getafe could have expected a difficult trip to Barcelona, but Alaves disappointed in a home loss to Sevilla, and coach Eduardo Coudet may add more strength to his midfield against demanding opposition.

There is also likely to be tension in San Sebastian as 18th-ranked Real Sociedad and 19th-placed Mallorca meet in search of their first win of the season.

Sociedad arrives after three consecutive defeats and ahead of a weekend visit to Barcelona, while Mallorca showed fighting spirit to take a point against Atletico.

Key players are expected to be Sociedad forward and captain Mikel Oyarzabal, and Mallorca striker Vedat Muriqi.

La Liga sides Real Betis and Celta Vigo make their UEFA Europa League debuts this week, with Betis at home to Nottingham Forest and Celta away to German side Stuttgart.

Betis reached last season's Conference League final before losing to Chelsea, and Manuel Pellegrini's team goes into Thursday's match after a 3-1 home win against Real Sociedad at the weekend.

Last season Pellegrini rotated heavily between La Liga and the Conference League, but the greater demands of the Europa League are expected to limit changes this time.

Even so, with players such as Marc Bartra, Rodrigo Riquelme, Cedric Bakambu and Marc Roca available after starting on the bench at the weekend, the Chilean coach still has options, although key playmaker Isco remains sidelined with a fractured fibula.

Nottingham Forest travel to Seville after recently replacing Nuno Espirito Santo with Ange Postecoglou, who guided Tottenham Hotspur to last season's Europa League title.

Postecoglou has overseen two defeats and a draw in his three matches in charge of Forest, but the 1-1 draw at Burnley last weekend offered signs that the side is adapting to his high-intensity approach.

Celta will be without the injured trio of Marcos Alonso, Williot Swedberg and Mihailo Ristic for Thursday's visit to Stuttgart, but coach Claudio Giraldez welcomed the club's return to European competition.

"We are living a dream come true and something that we haven't been able to enjoy for a long time," he said in an interview with Spanish sports paper Marca on Tuesday.

Celta's last European campaign saw the club reach the semifinals of the 2016-17 Europa League, losing 2-1 on aggregate to Manchester United after drawing 1-1 at Old Trafford in the second leg.

"I was in the stands at Old Trafford and enjoyed that game, and now I'm in the dugout of a team I have always supported. That is a real luxury," said Giraldez.

Napoli returns to top of Serie A



Pisa's Antonio Caracciolo, left, and Napoli's Rasmus Højlund fight for the ball during the Italian Serie A soccer match between Napoli and Pisa at the Diego Armando Maradona Stadium in Naples, Italy. (AP)

Gilmour opens account in win over Pisa

NAPLES, Italy, Sept 23, (AP): **Leonardo Spinazzola and Lorenzo Lucca scored late and Napoli bounced back from a Champions League defeat at Manchester City to beat Pisa 3-2 and return to the top of Serie A.**

Billy Gilmour scored his first of the season

just before halftime and it looked like reigning champion Napoli was set for an easy victory against a side that has yet to win this season.

Napoli was pegged back by a M'Bala Nzola penalty on the hour but Pisa's hopes were extinguished in the final quarter.

Spinazzola fired a low shot into the bottom corner to regain Napoli the lead in the 73rd minute and Lucca took a cute flick from Scott McTominay before slamming in the ball eight minutes from time.

Brazilian midfielder Lorrán converted a Samuele Angori cutback in the 90th for Pisa but it remained joint bottom of the league with Lecce on one point and without a win in Napoli since 1986.

Napoli's fourth victory in a row took it back to the top of Serie A, two points ahead of Juventus.

'This is going to be a difficult challenge'

Ryder Cup off to emotional start for Team USA

FARMINGDALE, N.Y., Sept 23, (AP): The Ryder Cup had moments of inspiration in vastly different forms during a quiet Monday start to golf's most chaotic week. There were tears for the Americans as they gathered on the first tee at sunrise and a strong reminder for Europe as it goes after a rare road win.

U.S. captain Keegan Bradley had his entire team on the first tee before the gates open, no one in the massive grandstands that come Friday will be packed with flag-waving fans.

He had Chris Mascali, a New York firefighter whose father died during the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, speak to the team. Mascali brought his uniform, along with the helmet of his father, Joe Mascali. Those now are in the team room for the Americans.

Bryan Robinson from FDNy Ladder 16 sang the national anthem as the large video board showed great moments in Ryder Cup history.

"I had this vision of doing that for about a year," Bradley said. "And to be out there and see it, and see how emotional the guys got, was a really special time for our team."

The Americans walked solemnly across the bridge from the first tee complex, headed to the practice area,



In this file photo, Europe's Justin Rose celebrates on the 15th green during his singles match at the Ryder Cup golf tournament at the Marco Simone Golf Club in Guidonia Montecelio, Italy. (AP)

then played 18 holes of the Black Course.

Team Europe spent two days at Bethpage Black a week ago and then dispersed - some to American homes, others playing some of Long Island's best golf courses - until returning to Bethpage for what it expects to be a big challenge.

The Americans have lost at home

only four times since the Ryder Cup began in 1927. European captain Luke Donald had his team wear salmon-colored pullovers or sweater vests, a subtle reminder of what can be done.

That was the Sunday color for the European team in 1987 when it stunned the Americans at Muirfield Village to win its first Ryder Cup away from home. Europe has won three

more times on U.S. soil since then, the most recent 13 years ago.

Europe is coming off a resounding win at Marco Simone and returns 11 of the 12 players from the Italy matches in 2023 - the exception is Rasmus Højgaard, the identical twin of Nicolai Højgaard, who played in the last Ryder Cup.

But the Europeans lost by nine points in 2021 at Whistling Straits, by six points at Hazeltine in 2016 and by five points at Valhalla in 2008.

"I think it's always important to rally around something," Donald said. "We always have things that we come up with that are important to us. History and our unity and celebrating what we've done in the past and the legends that have kind of come before us is really important. "This is going to be a difficult challenge."

There were not many surprises in the way Bradley grouped his three groups of four players for the only full practice round they play this week.

Justin Thomas and Cameron Young were together, as they were in the Procore Championship two weeks ago in Napa, California. Ben Griffin, one of four Ryder Cup rookies, was with Bryson DeChambeau, who was not in Napa because he's with LIV Golf and thus ineligible for PGA Tour play.

Best of the Rest

**Eliasch appointed to two IOC groups:** The International Ski and Snowboard Federation (FIS) announced Monday that its president, Johan Eliasch, has been appointed to two roles within the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

Eliasch, an IOC member, will serve on the Commercial Partnerships and Marketing Working Group, one of four new working groups created under IOC President Kirsty Coventry's Fit For the Future initiative. He has also been named to the IOC Coordination Commission for the French Alps 2030 Olympic Winter Games.

According to the FIS, the Commercial Partnerships and Marketing Working Group will review the IOC's programs, platforms and systems, assess how it engages with partners, and explore opportunities to remain competitive in the global market.

"It is an honor to contribute to shaping the future of the Olympic Movement through these important roles," Eliasch said in a statement. "Both the development of innovative commercial strategies and the successful delivery of the French Alps 2030 Games are vital to ensuring the continued growth, relevance and impact of the Olympic Winter Games." (Xinhua)

**Two-time luge medalist to miss Games:** Two-time Olympic luge medalist Madeleine Egle will miss the 2026 Winter Games after being banned for 20 months because of missed doping tests, the International Testing Agency said Monday.

"The athlete did not challenge the (rules violation) and agreed with the consequences proposed," the testing agency said in a statement, confirmed her ban through October 2026.

The 27-year-old Egle won silver and bronze medals for Austria in the luge team relay at the Beijing and Pyeongchang Olympics.

She previously acknowledged her disciplinary case in a social media post titled: "The Moment Your Olympic Dream and Life Collapse in a Heartbeat." Egle, the European champion and world championships bronze medalist in women's singles last year, broke anti-doping rules by being unavailable to give a doping control sample three times in a 12-month period. (AP)

'It's time to pass the torch'

Auburn basketball coach Pearl retires after record-setting career

AUBURN, Ala., Sept 23, (AP): Auburn coach Bruce Pearl announced his retirement Monday less than six months after finishing the Tigers' best season in program history with another trip to the Final Four.

Pearl's 38-year-old son Steven Pearl, who has been on his father's coaching staff for all 11 seasons at Auburn, will take over as coach.

"I just feel when I can't give 100% it's time to pass the torch," Bruce Pearl said in a 14-minute video posted on social media.

Pearl, 65, is the school's winningest men's coach and took the Tigers to their only two Final Four appearances. He will move into an ambassador role as an assistant to Auburn's athletic director, and isn't going into politics after rumors had circulated about a potential senate run.



In this file photo, Auburn head coach Bruce Pearl celebrates with a net after the Elite Eight of the NCAA college basketball tournament against Michigan State in Atlanta. (AP)

"Many of you know that I thought and prayed about maybe running for United States Senate, maybe to be the next great senator from the state of Alabama," said Pearl, who was a college head coach for over 30 seasons with four schools. "That would have required leaving Auburn, and instead the university has given me the opportunity to stay here and be Auburn's senator. I need to focus now on being a great husband, being a great father, being the best grandfather I possibly can be."

Pearl advanced the Tigers to their first Final Four in 2019, defeating Kansas, North Carolina and Kentucky in successive games. They lost to eventual-champion Virginia by one point. Last season, led by All-American Johni Broome, the Tigers earned the No. 1 overall seed in the NCAA Tournament and had a school-record 32 wins before losing to Southeastern Conference rival Florida in the national semifinal.

SEC Commissioner Greg Sankey credited Pearl with helping to elevate the competitive level and popularity of men's basketball in the league with his "dynamic leadership and relentless energy."

"While his on-court achievements are well documented, it is his genuine connection with fans, media and the broader community that truly distinguishes his impact," Sankey said.

Pearl and Rick Pitino, who ushered in a quick turnaround at St. John's, last season shared The Associated Press men's college basketball coach of the year award. It was the first tie in the 58-year history of the award.

Pearl had a 246-125 record at Auburn, but the school recognizes only 232 of those wins after vacating games from the 2016-17 season because of NCAA infractions involving former assistant coach Chuck Person. Pearl received a two-game suspension for failure to monitor his assistant and adequately promote compliance.

Tennessee had fired Pearl in 2011 after the NCAA charged him with unethical conduct and then additional violations surfaced. He was 145-71 and made the NCAA Tournament all six seasons with the Volunteers from 2005-11, getting to the Sweet 16 three times, and advancing to their first regional final in 2010.

Gesture massively popular

Dow's crochet gifts win hearts at Women's Rugby World Cup

LONDON, Sept 23, (AP): Here's the irony: Abby Dow is not a hugger.

"I'm not," says the England winger whose crocheted art, which she calls little acts of love, has made lifelong friends of opponents at the Women's Rugby World Cup and earned the admiration of thousands, including Kate, the Princess of Wales.

Dow told the podcast The Good, The Scaz & The Rugby this month that she's awkward about hugs and much happier if the other person initiates.

But she's been getting a ton of hugs in the World Cup thanks to her crochet. Dow makes tiny game jerseys detailed with the number and colors of her same-numbered opposite to present after games as a bespoke key ring. The gesture is massively popular.

There was one for U.S. winger Emily Henrich - "It was the whole reason I wanted to start (the game)," Henrich joked - Australia's Maya Stewart and Scotland's Rhona Lloyd. For that same Scotland quarterfinal in which Dow bagged a try, a charge-down, and a 50:22, she also presented crocheted whistles for the three on-field officials.

She joked to them: "I made one and I was like, there's three of them (officials), so I'm going to have to (make three). Don't tell the fourth official, though!"

Dow began crocheting in 2020 to fill time while she was dilly-dallying about completing her Masters degree in mechanical engineering, with honors. She taught herself from YouTube. She took crochet into the England team camp, and players and staff have taken it up, even some men.

"It's just nice to be able to make something," Dow says. "My love language is gift-giving, and now I'm getting all these crochet gifts from the crowd, all the fans are giving me their love, and I love it, it's very cute. You can make all sorts of things with your imagination."

Her scrunchies and hats evolved into gifts of roses for teammates' milestones.

"Normally we get given a real rose for our (milestones)," she says, "but if you're away (from home), sometimes it's hard to preserve that rose, so, fortunately, with a crochet rose you don't have to worry about that because it should last and not need water."

For first caps, Dow presents a red rose with leaves, for the 50th a silver rose, and the 100th a gold one.

"It's really brought out a different side to her that we didn't really know much about before," teammate Rosie Galligan says.

When Dow's fellow winger Jess Breach got the silver rose after the win against Australia, she asked Dow, "Can I hug you?"

Teammates repaid Dow after her 50th test in April with a crocheted bouquet of white roses centered by a silver one.



England's Abby Dow controls the ball during the Women's Rugby World Cup 2025 quarterfinal match between England and Scotland in Bristol, England. (AP)

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Exciting season ahead

Kuwait youth team joins 1st Division League

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

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 23: The Kuwait Volleyball Association's Competitions Committee has completed the draws for the 2025-2026 General League and Super Cup, held at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Complex in the presence of committee chairman Aref Al-Subaihi, secretary and international referee Nayef Al-Humaidan, and club representatives.

Ten clubs will compete in the General League this season: Kuwait Club, Kazma, Qadiya, Arabi, Burgan, Shabab, Sulaibikhat, Yarmouk, Sahel, and Nasr. The competition will kick off following the conclusion of the Federation Cup, which begins tomorrow.

The opening round of fixtures will see Shabab face Qadsia, Sulaibikhat meet Nasr, Kazma clash with Kuwait Club, Sahel take on Yarmouk, and Arabi play Burgan. At the end of the General League, the top six clubs will qualify for the Premier League, while the seventh- to tenth-placed sides will move into the First Division. They will be joined there by the Kuwait national youth team, which is set to participate in the division this season.

Meanwhile, the Super Cup will be contested by four teams: Kuwait, Burgan, Arabi, and Qadisiya. The semifinals pit Burgan against



The draw in progress.

Arabi, while Kuwait Club will take on Qadsia for a place in the final.

Al-Subaihi praised the clubs for their cooperation with the federation, noting the strong preparations ahead of the new season. He expressed confidence that the upcoming competitions would be highly competitive and wished success to all teams.

Unbeaten Yarmouk stays top of the First Division League

**By Hassan Mosa**  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 23: Yarmouk continued its perfect start to the First Division League after defeating Shamiya 2-0 at Al-Shabab Stadium in the second round of action. The "Sons of Mishref" remain at the top of the standings with six points from two matches, edging Sulaibikhat on goal difference.

Hazem Haj Hassan opened the scoring in the 8th minute, before Abdullah Al-Shami doubled the lead in the 64th to secure Yarmouk's second straight victory. Shamiya, meanwhile, are still without a point.

In the other match of the round, Jazeera claimed its first win of the season with a comfortable 3-0 triumph over Sporty at Al-Sadaqa and Al-Salam Stadium. Ulrich Donovan (15'), Matbos Henrique (61'), and Fahad Al-Rajhi (78') were all on target. Jazeera now sit third on four points, while Sporty remains rooted to the bottom of the table.

Yarmouk board member and head of football operations, **Othman Al-Failakawi**, praised the players' performance, highlighting the progress shown compared to the opening round. He credited the coaching staff for addressing weaknesses and emphasizing individual training and tactical



Othman Al-Failakawi

discipline in daily sessions.

Al-Failakawi also called on the Kuwait Football Association to coordinate with Kuwait TV, particularly Channel 3 Sports, to broadcast First Division League matches and give greater exposure to the competition.

PSG stumbles in Marseille



PSG's Warren Zaire-Emery kicks the ball ahead of Marseille's Emerson Palmieri during the French League One soccer match between Marseille and Paris Saint-Germain at Orange Velodrome in Marseille, France. (AP)

De Zerbi sent off after exchanging words with referee

**MARSEILLE, France, Sept 23, (AP): Marseille beat Paris Saint-Germain 1-0 to snap a 12-game home losing streak against the reigning champion and knock it off the top of Ligue 1.**

In a game that was rescheduled after storm warnings in the south of France on Sunday, Marseille took the lead after just five minutes and never looked like relinquishing it.

Nayef Aguerd jumped highest for a cross and goalkeeper Lucas Chevalier came out and missed, allowing the Moroccan center back to nod the ball into the empty net.

PSG had most of the possession but the home

side was more dangerous and was unlucky to go in only one up at halftime.

Amine Gouiri's shot crashed off the crossbar after 25 minutes and seconds later another goal was ruled out for offside.

The second half was a repeat of the first with PSG having most of the ball but unable to break down a stuffy Marseille defense, for which keeper Geronimo Rulli excelled.

"We should have won," PSG midfielder Ilia Zabarnyi told broadcaster DAZN. "We controlled the game, played good, just maybe something was missing."

Marseille celebrated the three points with gusto, even after coach Roberto De Zerbi was sent off after exchanging words with the referee.

The win extended Marseille's fine home league start to three wins in three games. It has nine points from five matches and moved up to sixth.

It was the first time it has kept consecutive clean sheets at home in Ligue 1 since December 2023 and its first goal against PSG at home in the last six matchups.

PSG fell to joint second, equal on points with Monaco, which moved above it on goals scored. Both teams have 12 points, as do Lyon and Strasbourg.

Many PSG players were unable to attend the Ballon d'Or ceremony in Paris on Monday. Nine PSG players were nominated for the men's award.

Oly champ Roberts bounce back in boulder at IFSC Climbing Worlds

SEOUL, Sept 23, (Xinhua): Olympic champion Toby Roberts recovered from a disappointing start at the 2025 IFSC Climbing World Championships, advancing to the men's boulder semifinals on Tuesday after finishing third in the qualification.

Roberts, who failed to reach the semifinals in the men's lead qualification on Monday, topped three of the five boulder problems and secured a fourth scoring zone to join South Korea's Lee Do-hyun in third place. Japan's Sorato Anraku, the 2024 Paris Olympic silver medalist, and compatriot Meichi Narasaki shared the top spot.

A total of 95 men and 76 women entered the boulder qualification round, with the top 24 from each advancing to the semifinals.

20-year-old Roberts has endured an uneven season following his gold medal performance in Paris last year. After missing the finals at the first four World Cup stops this season, he returned to the podium in Innsbruck in June but faltered again in the lead qualification here in Seoul.

"It's been up and down, basically the whole season really, but not making the lead semifinals, I am really disappointed with as I am more of a lead climber," Roberts said. "But to bounce back and make semifinals in boulder - I'm pretty psyched. I need to reset and focus and try to get into the boulder final. The lead didn't go how I wanted, but I can't let that affect my Boulder competition."

In the women's event, Japan's Futaba Ito and 17-year-old Tamar Cohen of Israel shared first place. Cohen, the reigning European Youth Cup champion, is making her World Championships debut after competing in just two senior World Cup events. China fielded four men and four women in the boulder event, with Pan Yufei, a World Cup winner, finishing 12th in men's qualification, and Zhang Yuetong tying for 13th in the women's category. Both of them advanced to the semifinals scheduled for Saturday.



Toby Roberts of Britain in action in the men's boulder qualification at the 2025 IFSC Climbing World Championships in Seoul, South Korea. (Xinhua)

Estudiantes, Belgrano notch wins

BUENOS AIRES, Sept 23, (Xinhua): Estudiantes rose to third in Group A of Argentina's Primera Division with a 1-0 home victory over Defensa y Justicia.

The hosts were gifted the lead in the 76th minute when Rafael Delgado inadvertently turned the ball into his own net while trying to keep out Alexis Castro's cross.

The visitors looked more threatening in the final minutes as they pressed for an equalizer, but lacked incisiveness in attack.

The result leaves Estudiantes with 15 points from nine games, a point behind group leader Union Santa Fe. Defensa y

Justicia is eighth, three points further back.

In Monday's only other Argentine top-flight fixture, Belgrano cruised to a 3-0 home win over 10-man Newell's Old Boys.

Francisco Gonzalez struck in the first half before Nicolas Fernandez and Lucas Zelarayan added second-half goals for the Cordoba-based side.

Newell's played most of the second half with a numerical disadvantage after Gonzalo Maroni's rash challenge on Elias Lopez.

Belgrano is now seventh in Group A with 12 points, three ahead of 14th-placed Newell's Old Boys.

'I gave my life to cricket'

England's legendary umpire Bird dies at 92

LONDON, Sept 23, (AP): Harold "Dickie" Bird, the charismatic and much-loved former cricket umpire from England who officiated in 66 test matches and three World Cup finals, has died. He was 92.

Bird's death was announced on Tuesday by English club Yorkshire, his home county where he was made president in 2014. Yorkshire said he died "peacefully" at his home.

Yorkshire called Bird a "national treasure" who was "known not only for his umpiring excellence but also for his eccentricities and warmth."

"He leaves behind a legacy of sportsmanship, humility, and joy - and a legion of admirers across generations."

Bird's first-class playing career, which included spells with his beloved Yorkshire and Leicestershire, was cut short by injury at the age of 32 with an average of 20.71.

He went on to become arguably the world's most famous umpire, standing in an English county match for the first time in 1970 and his first test three years later.

In 1975, Bird took charge of the inaugural men's Cricket World Cup final. At his final test in 1996,



In this file photo, former umpire Dickie Bird rings the bell ahead of the first day of the first Test match at Lord's cricket ground in London, Thursday, May 21, 2015. (AP)

a guard of honor by the players of England and India at Lord's reduced him to tears.

"Dickie enjoyed an illustrious career as an umpire," the Lord's-based Marylebone Cricket Club said, "and was one of the most popular officials in the history of the game."

An umpire long before the introduction of technology to cricket, Bird - whose name resonated beyond the world of cricket - was

renowned for being cautious with his decisions and making few clear mistakes, telling the BBC that his parents "installed this mental strength to believe in myself."

In his pomp - and in his later years - he was as popular as the players he officiated, never refusing to sign an autograph and often seen waiting patiently to do so even when lines were long. His autobiography chalked up more than a million sales, becoming

Britain's biggest-selling sports book in the process.

It was his idiosyncrasies that made him so loved - the way he raised his finger to give a batter out, his warmth and conversational approach with players, his grin, his stooping gait, how he twitched his arms and tugged at his umpire's jacket.

Bird listed Garfield Sobers, Sunil Gavaskar, Viv Richards and Dennis Lillee as the best players he ever umpired.

"Remembered for your fairness, integrity, humour, and true Yorkshire spirit," former India player Dinesh Karthik posted on X. "A legend forever."

In his post-umpire life as after-dinner speaker and occasional TV personality, he wasn't short of anecdotes - not least when he was in the middle when the pitch at Yorkshire's home ground, Headingley, once flooded because of a problem with the drainage system - and he remained a proud Yorkshireman to the end.

His one regret in life, Bird told The Guardian newspaper in 2013, was not having a family.

"I gave my life to cricket, it's as simple as that," he said. "I never got married because I was married to the game."

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NEWS





Europe's Rory McIlroy, of Northern Ireland, tosses balls in the air during a practice round for the Ryder Cup golf tournament in Farmingdale, N.Y., at Bethpage State Park's Black Course. (AP) - See Page 14

# Sports

## Kuwait Club dominates Kazma for historic three-peat



Kuwait Club celebrates after beating Kazma to win the 40th Arab Handball Club Championship.

KUNA photo

### Ghanim: We've submitted bid to host Gulf and Asian handball championships

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 23: Kuwait Club secured the title of the 40th Arab Handball Club Championship for League and Cup winners on Monday, defeating fellow Kuwaiti side Kazma 32-22. The tournament had kicked off on September 12.**

The final, held at Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex, began with Kazma taking an early lead of five goals. However, Kuwait Club maintained composure and led 14-12 at the end of an intense first half.

In the second half, Kuwait Club dominated proceedings, controlling the game to secure its third Arab Championship title in history. The club's foreign player Vladan was named "Man of the Match" for his outstanding performance.

Kuwait Club board member and assistant secretary Dheen Al-Din expressed pride in seeing two Kuwaiti teams reach the final, highlighting that it reflects the strength of the Premier League and the hard work of the local federation.

Kazma's board member, treasurer and head of handball Omar Al-Mulla also praised the achievement, calling it a major milestone for Kuwaiti handball and emphasizing the high technical level of the tournament.

In other results, Egypt's Al-Ahly Bank Club claimed third place with a 30-27 victory over Iraq's Al-Hashd. Sulaibikhat (Kuwait) finished fifth,



Al-Ghanem poses with Al-Nimr.

Qatar Club sixth, Basra Oil Club (Iraq) seventh, and Syria's Al-Shabab came in eighth.

Kuwait Club President Khaled Al-Ghanem confirmed that the club has submitted applications to host both the Gulf Handball Club Championship and the Asian Club Championship.

The announcement follows Kuwait Club's historic victory at the 40th Arab Club Championship the day before yesterday, where the team secured the title for the third consecutive year. With this win, Kuwait Club becomes the most successful local club in international competitions, holding one Asian title, one Gulf title, and three Arab titles (2023, 2024, 2025), alongside two appearances in the Handball Club World Cup.

Al-Ghanem highlighted the success of hosting the recent Arab Championship, as well as the previous edition in Kuwait, as a key factor motivating the club to pursue hosting rights for the Gulf and Asian tournaments. Ap-

proval from the relevant continental federations is now awaited.

Reflecting on the Arab Championship victory, Al-Ghanem said the win was well-deserved, resulting from the dedication of players, technical and administrative staff, support from the club management, and the unwavering backing of fans. He added that the club is determined to continue pursuing international success this season, which promises both domestic and regional challenges. Al-Ghanem also extended his congratulations to Saudi Arabia, represented by King Salman bin Abdulaziz, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, and the Saudi people, on their National Day.

Arab Handball Federation President Fadel Al-Nimr thanked Kuwait for its hospitality and praised the successful organization of the Arab Club Championship. He commended the Kuwait Handball Federation, Kuwait

Club, and associated governmental and media bodies for their exceptional efforts in making the tournament a resounding success.

The federation also congratulated Kuwait Club on their championship win and praised Sulaibikhat's strong performance, noting that it reflected positively on Kuwaiti handball and showcased the quality of local clubs in international competitions.

In the fifth round of the Premier League today at Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex, Sulaibikhat will face Kuwait Club at 5:00 PM, followed by Al-Salmiya against Kazma at 6:30 PM.

Kuwait Club leads the Premier League with six points, edging Burjan on goal difference. Kazma has five points, while Qadsia, Arabi, and Al-Salmiya each have four points. Sulaibikhat has three points, and Nasr remains winless.

### Yamal given the Kopa award

## PSG's Dembélé wins Ballon d'Or, Bonmatí secures third consecutive women's award

PARIS, Sept 23, (AP): Ousmane Dembélé won the Ballon d'Or for leading Paris Saint-Germain to its first Champions League title, and Aitana Bonmatí received the women's award for a third successive year.

Dembélé succeeded Manchester City midfielder Rodri to become the sixth Frenchman to win it after Raymond Kopa, Michel Platini, Jean-Pierre Papin, Zinedine Zidane, and Karim Benzema.

Bonmatí won ahead of her Spain teammate Mariona Caldentey. She's only the third player in the award's history to win three in a row after Platini (1983-85) and Lionel Messi (2009-12).

The award capped a remarkable turn of fortune for Dembélé, who at one point last season was snubbed by PSG coach Luis Enrique for disciplinary reasons. But once repositioned as a No. 9, he became a scoring machine and was inspirational in PSG's historic Champions League campaign. The French club also completed a quadruple last season.

Dembélé was praised after the Champions League final for his contributions to PSG's pressing and his defensive abilities during the 5-0 rout of Inter Milan. He delivered 35 goals and 16 assists in 53 official matches last season, and was involved in 14 goals (8

goals, 6 assists) in the Champions League in 15 appearances. Dembélé received the Ballon d'Or from former winner Ronaldinho and teared up during his acceptance speech, in which he asked his mother to join him on the stage.

"It's incredible to win a trophy like this," he said in French. "I worked for the team to help win PSG's first Champions League (...). To then be rewarded with an individual trophy like the Ballon d'Or is truly exceptional." Dembélé won ahead of teenage star Lamine Yamal. The forward, who turned 18 in July, helped Barcelona win La Liga and the Copa del Rey last season and reach the Champions League semifinals. Yamal was given the Kopa award for the best under-21 player for the second straight year.

"I need to keep on working to win other awards in the future," Yamal said through a translator.

Dembélé was injured and able to attend the ceremony in Paris while his team lost at Marseille 1-0 in the French league. He was one of nine PSG players nominated for the men's award, including goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma, forward Désiré Doué, who scored twice in the Champions League final, and winger Khvicha Kvaratskhelia.

Although Bonmatí lost to England in a penalty shootout in the Women's European Championship final last summer, she was named the best player of the tournament, which she began just days after being hospitalized by viral meningitis.

Bonmatí's spot kick in the shootout was one of two saved by England's Hannah Hampton, who was voted the best women's goalkeeper.

"Third time in a row here and I still can't believe it," Bonmatí said, "I owe Barcelona everything, this is the club of my life."

She won a domestic treble with Barcelona and also reached the Champions League final.

Barcelona has won the last five women's awards, but it was expected that an Englishwoman would win for the first time. England won the Euros, and Arsenal took the Women's Champions League. However, with five England players among the women's top 10 nominees, the highest-placed was Alessia Russo at third. Barcelona forward Vicky Lopez won the women's Kopa trophy, and Sarina Wiegman, who led England to European victory, took the Johan Cruyff award for best women's coach. On a great night for PSG, Luis Enrique won in the men's category.



Paris Saint-Germain's Ousmane Dembélé receives the 2025 Men's Ballon d'Or during the 69th Ballon d'Or awards ceremony at the Theatre du Chatelet in Paris. (AP)



Barcelona's Aitana Bonmatí receives the 2025 Women's Ballon d'Or during the 69th Ballon d'Or awards ceremony at the Theatre du Chatelet in Paris. (AP)

### Dumars extols Williamson's work

## Two-time MVP Nash joins Phoenix as senior adviser

PHOENIX, Sept 23, (AP): Former Phoenix Suns star Steve Nash is joining the franchise as a senior adviser, owner Mat Ishbia announced Monday.

"Steve Nash was an amazing player and exactly what the Phoenix Suns are all about," Ishbia wrote on social media. "His grit, toughness, and winning mentality have defined our organization in the past, and I'm so excited to share that Steve is formally joining the Suns as a senior advisor and will help us define our future for years to come!"

Nash had some of his best seasons as a player with the Suns, winning back-to-back MVPs in 2005 and 2006. The eight-time All-Star was inducted into the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame in 2018.

The 51-year-old Nash was also the coach of the Brooklyn Nets for more than two seasons from 2020 to 2022, finishing with a 94-67 record before being fired following a 2-5 start in 2022.

The Suns finished with a disappointing 36-46 record last season and rebuilt their roster in the off-season, trading star Kevin Durant to the Houston Rockets and buying out Bradley Beal's contract.

Zion Williamson's off-season work ethic and the healthy returns of Herb Jones and Trey Murphy III have Joe Dumars sounding optimistic as the Pelicans prepare to open training camp this week.

Dumars is getting a first look at his new team following a 21-61 season in which Williamson missed 52 games, Jones missed



In this file photo, Brooklyn Nets head coach Steve Nash smiles during the second half of an NBA preseason basketball game against the Milwaukee Bucks in Milwaukee. (AP)

most of the season and Murphy was lost in March.

The former NBA headquarters executive was hired to replace Executive Vice President of Basketball Operations David Griffin during the offseason.

With Williamson, a high-flying talent who has struggled to stay on the court, at the Pelicans' core, Dumars wants to make sure priorities are in the right place.

"Let me set the expectations for you right now, so there's no misunderstanding," he recalled saying in a meeting with the coaching staff. "There's no amount of wins. There's no: 'You've got to make the play-in.' None of that. ... If we play as hard as we can play every night, we're going to get enough wins where we're going to be happy."