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AMIR REPRESENTATIVE CALLS FOR PEACE, REFORM AT U.N.G.A.

Kuwait presses Iraq on pending maritime issues

NEW YORK, Sept 25, (KUNA): Representative of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah called on the brotherly Republic of Iraq to take tangible steps to address all pending issues between the two countries.

Delivering Kuwait's speech before the 80th session of UN General Assembly late on Wednesday, His Highness the Crown Prince said, "I'm pleased to convey to you congratulations of His Highness the Amir on the success of this session."

His Highness the Crown Prince stressed the importance of the demarcation of maritime boundary beyond the 162 mark with Iraq, in accordance with international laws and charters, as well as addressing the issues of POWs and missing persons, in addition to the country's national archive for the last three decades.

His Highness also appealed to the Iraqi brothers to abide by bilateral agreements related to security and technical aspects of Khor Abdullah issue.

His Highness the Crown Prince congratulated Annelena Baerbock on being elected as President of the 80th UNGA Session, extolling efforts made by the outgoing president Philemon Yang during his tenure.

He commended the constructive endeavors of UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres to maintain international peace and security amid accelerated global changes.



Representative of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah addresses the 80th session of UN General Assembly on Wednesday. (AP)

- Kuwait backs GCC solidarity after attack on Qatar
- Kuwait renews call for Palestinian statehood
- Crown Prince: Starvation used as tool of war
- Kuwait supports Syria, Lebanon sovereignty
- Kuwait calls on Iran for confidence-building steps
- Crown Prince highlights Kuwait Vision 2035 goals

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Banks maintain strong stability

Non-oil growth supports Kuwait's recovery: IMF

WASHINGTON, Sept 25, (KUNA): The International Monetary Fund affirmed on Wednesday that Kuwait's economy is recovering amid higher oil production and robust non-oil growth.

This came following an International Monetary Fund (IMF) mission in Kuwait City, led by Mr. Francisco Parodi, spanning from September 15 - 22, 2025.

Parodi said in a statement that Inflation continues to moderate, but lower oil prices are weighing on the fiscal and external balances.

Following a contraction in 2024, Kuwait's real GDP is projected to grow by 2.6 percent in 2025; This recovery is supported by a 2.4 percent rebound in oil sector output following the easing of OPEC+ production cuts, and a 2.7 percent rise in non-oil growth, underpinned by resilient private domestic demand.

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'Double-edged sword'

Fraudsters harness AI power

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 25: Artificial intelligence (AI) is no longer just a tool to assist in completing transactions and analyzing data in light of the accelerating developments in modern technology, as it has become a double-edged sword.



Zaman

If used correctly, AI enhances security and trust, but if misused, it may increase the risks of financial fraud, cybercrime, and manipulation of public opinion.

Although AI offers unprecedented opportunities for economic growth and innovation in various fields, it also opened the door wide to innovative methods of fraud and deception using AI tools in what is now known as 'deepfake', which threatens individuals and institutions.

Legal experts and businesspersons have warned about the escalation of global cyber fraud losses that exceed 33 percent in the United States of America, and cost the United Kingdom (UK) more than one billion sterling pounds in 2024.



Al-Ghanim

They confirmed to the newspaper that the solution lies in raising public awareness and enacting robust legislation that protects individuals and institutions and ensures the proper use of technology. They added that AI is a fundamental pillar of the economy and services, but it can also be a dangerous tool in the hands of fraudsters, if not properly monitored and regulated.

Dr. Safaa Zaman, a faculty member at Kuwait University and head of Kuwait Society for Information Security, emphasized that artificial intelligence is a double-edged sword. "If used correctly, it enhances security and trust, but if used incorrectly, it may increase the risk of financial fraud and cybercrime."



Haidar

She told the newspaper that AI has become an integral part of the world of finance and business, contributing to the acceleration of transactions and the detection of fraud attempts.

However, she warned against its exploitation to innovate complex fraud and hacking methods, such as developing smart malware that bypasses traditional security systems and creating phishing emails and

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KOC nears its 3rd offshore discovery

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 25: Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) is nearing the announcement of its third offshore discovery - the Jazzza offshore field - in the fourth quarter of this year or early next year

According to informed oil sources, this will mark the completion of 50 percent of the first phase of KOC's offshore exploration plan, which involves drilling six offshore wells.

KOC had previously announced its first offshore discovery, the "Nukhda-1" field, last year, with a production capacity of 2,800 barrels per day of light oil and seven million cubic meters of associated gas.

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KPC launches major Kuwaitization drive

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 25: As part of the ongoing and upcoming projects of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) to boost the nation's oil production capacity to four million barrels per day by 2035 and sustain it until 2040, along with the current operations at the Durra field and continued offshore and onshore exploration, most recently at the Matarba field, sources from the oil sector revealed that KPC has directed its subsidiaries to significantly increase Kuwaitization rates.

Simultaneously, contracting companies working on oil sector projects have been instructed to fully enforce provisions that protect the rights of Kuwaiti employees in the private oil sector. The sources confirmed that 2026 will mark the start of a major recruitment drive for newly graduated Kuwaitis in the oil sector.

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Kuwaiti, Saudi officials sign cooperation deals

RIYADH, Sept 25, (KUNA): The Kuwait-Saudi committee on coordination of the cultural, information, media and social development affairs, saw, during its third session, the signing of a range of initiatives to strengthen the long-standing cooperation between the two sisterly countries.

The session was co-chaired by Undersecretary of the Kuwaiti Ministry of Information Dr. Nasser Abdul-

Mheisen and Saudi Assistant Minister of Media Dr. Abdullah Al-Maghlouth.

The committee, an affiliate of the Kuwaiti-Saudi Coordination Council, provides an effective platform for advancing the strategic partnership and expanding cooperation, Dr. Abdul-Mheisen told KUNA on Thursday.

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Saudi's Crown Prince freezes Riyadh rents for five years after prices spike

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia, Sept 25, (AP): Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince on Thursday ordered rental prices on commercial and residential properties in the kingdom's capital, Riyadh, to be frozen for five years.

The decision by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman comes as rental prices have rapidly risen in Ri-

yadh after the coronavirus pandemic and as the kingdom pushes through major development projects.

Under rules announced by the kingdom's state media, violators may face fines of up to a year of rent for the property and additional compensation for tenants. Whistleblowers can receive up to 20% of collected fines.



Rush-hour traffic winds through Kuwait City as the skyline basks in warm, hazy sunlight, blending urban bustle with a scenic backdrop.

Photo by Samer Shiger

Nights to bring mild, pleasant relief

Kuwait weekend temps to hover around 40°C

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 25, (KUNA): The Meteorological Department has predicted that the country's weather during the weekend will be hot during the daytime, with temperatures easing to warm or mild levels at night.

The acting Director of the department Dhirar Al-Ali told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that Kuwait is currently experiencing the effects of the seasonal Indian monsoon low, which is gradually weakening, making way for a weak high-pressure system advancing from the northwest of the Arabian Peninsula, bringing with it a relatively hot and humid air mass.

On Friday, the daytime weather is expected to be hot and relatively humid, particularly in coastal areas. Winds will be light to moderate, ranging from variable to southeasterly at speeds between 8 and 32 km/h. Some high clouds may appear.

High temperatures are forecasted to range between 39°C and 41°C, with sea conditions remaining light to moderate, and wave heights between one and four feet.

During the night, the weather will be warm to mild and humid along coastal areas. Winds will be southeasterly to variable, light to moderate, at speeds between 8 and 30 km/h. Low temperatures are expected to range from 21°C to 23°C, and the sea will remain light to moderate with waves between one and four feet.

On Saturday, daytime weather will be hot and humid, accompanied by light to moderate winds ranging from variable to southeasterly at speeds between 6 and 28 km/h. Scattered clouds may be present at times. High temperatures are expected to range between 38°C and 40°C, and sea conditions will be light to moderate with wave heights between one and three feet.

During the night, the weather will turn warm to mild, with light to moderate winds shifting from variable to northwesterly at speeds between 8 and 28 km/h. Scattered clouds may continue to appear. Low temperatures are forecasted to range from 22°C to 24°C, and the sea will remain light to moderate, with waves between one and three feet.

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 25: The Criminal Security Sector, represented by the Drug Control General Department (DCGD) at the Ministry of Interior, has arrested two Asian nationals for operating a large-scale illegal liquor factory in Abdali.

According to security sources, the operation began with thorough surveillance by DCGD officers, eventually confirming suspicious activity inside a livestock pen in Abdali.

After several days of monitoring, the security team, led by Brigadier General Mohammed Qabazard and his deputy, Brigadier Sheikh Hamad Al-Yousef, carried out a late-night raid on the site.

They uncovered a fully equipped illegal liquor factory with modern machinery for manufacturing and bottling liquor, printed labels of well-known international alcohol brands, ready-for-distribution bottles, and various types of beer cans. The suspects were marketing locally produced alcohol as imported beverages using counterfeit packaging.

The sources affirmed that the operation was the result of meticulous investigations and continuous surveillance. The raid team uncovered a highly sophisticated setup, highlighting the scale and seriousness of the activities inside the livestock pen. The suspects and seized materials have been referred to the relevant authorities for further investigation.

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2 Have we boarded the wrong bus?

Moscow Seasons 12 in Kuwait: A cultural bridge to the Gulf

Prayer Timings			
Fajr	04:18	Asr	15:05
Sunrise ..	05:38	Maghrib ..	17:42
Zohr	11:40	Isha	18:58

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:
By Day: Hot and humid especially over coastal areas with light variable wind to light to moderate southeasterly wind, with speeds of 08-32 km/h and some high

Weather
clouds will appear.
By Night: Rather hot to mild and humid especially over coastal areas with light to moderate southeasterly wind to variable wind, with speeds of 08-30 km/h.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait Airport	40	22
Abdaly	40	20
Jahra	41	24
Salmiyah	37	29
Nuwaisib	41	24



Representing His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah receives Steve Schwartzman, Chief Executive Officer of The Blackstone Group.



Representing His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah receives David Zapolsky, Senior Vice President, Head of Global Affairs and Chief Legal Officer at Amazon.



Representing His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah receives Bruce Flatt, CEO of Brookfield Asset Management.

Crown Prince Diwan photos

Crown Prince holds talks with top CEOs, world leaders

Kuwait Amir Representative pushes for economic diversification

NEW YORK, Sept 25, (KUNA): Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received Thursday, Chief Executive Officer of Brookfield Asset Management Bruce Flatt, at Kuwait's Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York.

His Highness also received Chief Executive Officer of Blackstone Group Stephen Schwarzman, President and Chief Operating Officer of Blackstone Group Jonathan Gray, as well as Senior Vice President, Global Affairs and General Counsel of Amazon David Zapolsky.

During the meetings, His Highness conveyed His Highness the Amir of Kuwait's greetings and emphasized his commitment to strengthening global companies' presence in Kuwait, diversifying economic partnerships, opening new areas of cooperation, and leveraging expertise to train youth and transfer knowledge and technology.

The meetings were attended by Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya, Director General of Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority

(KDIPA) Sheikh Dr. Meshaal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs at the Amiri Diwan Mazen Al-Essa, Ambassador of Kuwait to the US Sheikhha Al-Zain Sabah Al-Nasser Al-Sabah, and Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the United Nations Ambassador Tareq 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 received on Wednesday the Commonwealth of The Bahamas Prime Minister Philip Edward Davis on the sidelines of the high-level 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

During the reception, both sides reviewed relations between Kuwait and the Commonwealth of The Bahamas, and means of backing and boosting them for the benefits of the two friendly peoples, along the latest developments, regionally and internationally.

The meeting featured Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya, Director General of Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) Sheikh Dr. Meshal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Undersecretary for Foreign

Affairs at the Amiri Diwan Mazen Al-Issa and Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Tareq Al-Bannai.

The Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah met on Wednesday President of the friendly Republic of Peru Dina Boluarte on the sidelines of the high-level 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

His Highness the Crown Prince relayed the greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to President Boluarte.

During the meeting, they reviewed relations between the two countries and their nations, and ways to bolster such partnership.

The meeting was attended by Director General of Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) Sheikh Dr. Meshaal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs at the Amiri Diwan Mazen Al-Issa, and Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Tareq Al-Bannai.

PAHW sees strong developer interest for housing projects

Prequalification window opens until October 1

By Mohammed Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 25: The Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) has reported a notable rise in interest from real estate developers in acquiring the prequalification booklet for the development of three residential projects under the Real Estate Development Law.

In a statement issued yesterday, PAHW confirmed that the window for developers to obtain the prequalification booklet remains open until October 1.

It indicated that it reserves the right to amend the scope of the projects, or to modify, cancel,

or suspend the prequalification or tendering process at any stage, without providing reasons or bearing any obligations toward the applicants.

Earlier, PAHW announced the offering of three residential development opportunities in accordance with Law No. 118/2023. These include projects in Al-Mutlaa City, East Saad Al-Abdullah City, West Saad Al-Abdullah City, and the service axis in Jaber Al-Ahmad City.

Meanwhile, PAHW announced the start of asphalt paving on main roads in the South Saad Al-Abdullah City project, marking a major milestone in the project's shift to an advanced stage of infrastructure development.

This phase follows the completion of land leveling and the preparation of road and service networks. It also sets the groundwork for connecting different areas of the project with an

integrated road system that will facilitate movement and support final preparations for delivery of housing plots to citizens.

PAHW engineers and project supervisors conducted a field inspection and praised the progress and quality of the work.

In addition, Director of the Second Region Projects Department Eng. Hussein Al-Kandari reported that as of September 2025, the actual completion rate reached 46.36 percent, well ahead of the contractual rate of 24.65 percent, reflecting a progress surplus of 21.71 percent.

Work is being carried out according to the highest technical and engineering standards, supervised by specialized teams to ensure quality and sustainability.

PAHW emphasized the contractor's commitment to meeting deadlines and accelerating implementation.

Other Voices

Have we boarded the wrong bus?

By Abdulaziz Al-Anjeri

In Kuwaiti informal speech there is a phrase used when people place their hopes in big promises that never come true. They say we boarded the bus. The image is simple. Citizens are told that change is on its way, they step on board full of hope, yet later discover that the bus has gone nowhere. For an English reader it may feel close to saying that people boarded a train that never left the station.

This image helps us understand the Kuwaiti political scene today. The past was far from ideal. Parliaments were often consumed by chaos, overreach, blackmail, and personal enrichment. Some parliamentarians acted as if they were local rulers only missing a private militia. To be fair, a few voices showed integrity and principle, and many remember them with pride. But more than a year after parliament was dissolved, these rare examples are being romanticized as if they represented the entire institution. That is a distortion that hinders honest self reflection.

The citizen has remained the constant



Al-Anjeri

casualty. He is often treated as though he participates in decision making, while in reality his role is closer to that of a child pleading for candy. The decision to grant or deny lies only with the executive.

If past turbulence and parliamentary noise once distracted the government from listening to sincere advice, what excuse exists today. The government now holds full authority to steer the country without institutional or popular obstruction. What prevents bold decisions, innovative policies, and real correction of mistakes.

Nation building requires constructive friction and a culture of meaningful debate. Honest criticism allows leaders to separate genuine advice from narrow self interest. When society is told to stay quiet and when silence is praised as loyalty, the result is wasted years, shallow victories, and growing frustration.

Silence in governance is not a sign of strength. It is weakness hidden behind guarded offices, tall walls, and scripted press statements. What Kuwait needs today is balance. The country should not return to the reckless noise of the past and should not accept the suffocating quiet of the present. It needs a culture of listening where a different opinion is seen as an asset rather than a threat.

The greatest danger to any government is not criticism. The greatest danger is the absence of criticism.

FM Al-Yahya chairs joint ministerial meeting

Kuwait leads GCC talks with US, UK at UNGA

NEW YORK, Sept 25, (KUNA): Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya, in his capacity as current Chair of the GCC Ministerial Council, presided over the joint ministerial meeting between the GCC and the United States, held Wednesday on the sidelines of the 80th UN General Assembly.

The Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry said in a statement that US Secretary of State Marco Rubio led the American side, with participation from GCC foreign ministers and GCC Secretary General Jassem Al-Budaiwi.

The meeting reviewed the close relations between the GCC and the US, and discussed ways to strengthen cooperation on all levels, particularly in regional and international issues of mutual interest.

The ministers emphasized the importance of advancing the GCC-US strategic dialogue and building on previous agreements to deepen their longstanding partnership, the statement continued.

Talks also focused on expanding cooperation in key sectors including economy, investment, technology, and energy, in addition to addressing regional and global developments and challenges.

The meeting further explored frameworks to intensify coordination in efforts to enhance re-

gional stability and promote peace.

The foreign ministers of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member countries and the United Kingdom convened a meeting in New York on Wednesday on the sidelines of the 80th Session of the UN General Assembly.

The meeting, co-chaired by Kuwait's Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya - the current chair of the GCC ministerial council, and UK Minister of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs Yvette Cooper, reviewed the progress of the GCC-UK strategic partnership.

Both sides reaffirmed commitment to promoting cooperation in all areas, and contributing to regional security and stability, according to the final statement issued following the meeting.

They renewed their determination to working together to address regional disputes and instabilities, praising the efforts of GCC member countries to promote dialogue and understanding.

They welcomed the election of the Kingdom of Bahrain as non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for 2026-2027.

Denouncing the recent Israeli occupation attack on Doha, the ministers reaffirmed support to the sovereignty and territorial safety of the

State of Qatar pursuant to the UN Charter.

They reaffirmed support to Qatar's vital role in the joint mediation between the Israeli occupation authorities and the Palestinian movement Hamas, alongside Egypt and the United States.

Warning against any attempts to hinder the negotiations on ceasefire in Gaza Strip, they said that ceasefire was on the only to durable peace in the region.

On the humanitarian disaster in Gaza, they denounced the restrictions placed by the Israeli occupation forces on delivery of famine relief, which led to exacerbation of the crisis and the suffering of the Palestinian civilians in the Strip.

They urged all parties to recommit themselves to the provisions of the International Humanitarian Law and avoiding any attacks on civilian lives or infrastructure, according to the statement.

The statement welcomed the recent decisions of the United Kingdom and several other countries to recognize the State of Palestine, noting that the recognitions signaled growing consensus among the international community on the two-state solution to the conflict.

The ministers renewed backing to the efforts of the Palestinian National Authority and the Kingdom of Jordan to maintain the historical status quo of the holy city of Jerusalem.

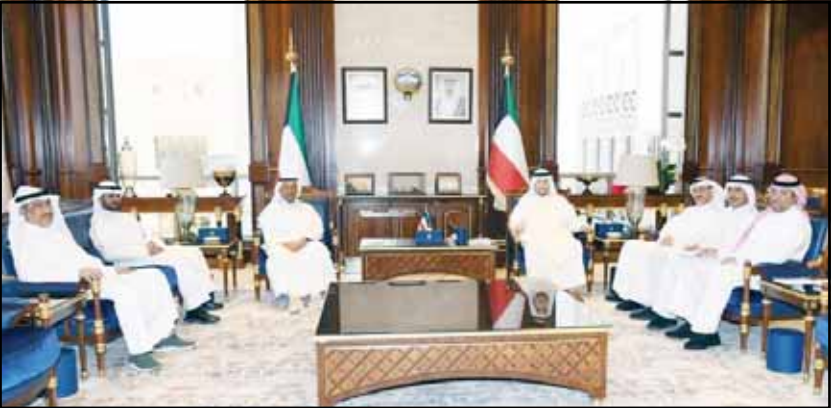
They reiterated support to the Palestinians' aspirations for self-determination and statehood, as well as their right to play a central role in the post-conflict recovery and rule in Gaza after ending Hamas rule.

The ministers urged deescalating the tensions and cessation of hostilities in the Middle East, and focusing on efforts to reach a durable ceasefire that could pave the way for the release of all hostages and safe delivery of assistance to the Palestinian civilians, the statement added.

Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya met on Wednesday Antigua and Barbuda's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Trade and Barbuda Affairs Everly Paul Chet Greene, on the sidelines of the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

The meeting discussed means of bolstering bilateral relations between the two friendly countries in varied fields, Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement.

Both sides also focused on the latest developments on regional and international arenas of common concern, it added.



KUNA photo
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs, Shereeda Al-Mousherji's reception of the governors.

Cabinet pledges full support

Governors present needs to improve public services

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 25, (KUNA): Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs, Shereeda Al-Mousherji, affirmed on Thursday that government supported the governors in their task to serve the people and run the affairs of the country's six governorates.

This came during Minister Al-Mousherji's reception of the governors at Seif Palace.

Governor of Farwaniya, Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah, the Capital District Governor Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, the Governor of Mubarak Al-Kabeer and Acting Governor of Hawalli Sheikh Bader Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, Governor of Al-Ahmadi Sheikh Humoud Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and Governor of Jahra Hamad Al-Hbeshi in addition to Director General of

the General Administration of Ministerial Committees and Governorates Affairs at the Ministry of Interior Sheikh Nasser Mohammed Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah were present at the reception.

For their parts, the Governors displayed some of the administrative needs required to boost their operations and better serve the public.

The Governors expressed gratitude to His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and the Cabinet for providing a platform to express their needs that would help develop services for citizens and residents in line with the directives His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.



KUNA photo
Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya chairs the joint ministerial meeting between the Gulf Cooperation Council and the United States.

diwaniya

ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Zero unemployment claim a cruel paradox for job-seeking graduates

“IF WE are to forget anything, let it not be that the livelihoods of Kuwaiti citizens rest in the hands of the esteemed men and women occupying offices in the building marked “Civil Service Council.” With a matter of minutes, they can secure you a respectable job, complete with an office room, a desk, a table, a phone, and even some fancy furniture.” Kuwaiti journalist **Hassan Ali Karam** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“To be clear, you may recall that the head of the council recently informed members of the Kuwaiti government that the unemployment rate in Kuwait had hit zero. This sparked hope among Kuwaitis, especially university graduates and those with high degrees, who believed that the council, under its new and distinguished leadership, was finally serious about eliminating unemployment and revitalizing a public sector plagued by over-staffing and low productivity.

“However, despite its high status, the council is not to blame for the overstaffing or the phenomenon of disguised unemployment. What it is responsible for, however, is the growing number of young people spending their days sitting idly in cafés. Try solving this paradox if you can.

“After the Civil Service Council boldly declared that unemployment rate was zero, dozens of Kuwaiti youth - men and women alike - stood outside the council’s building, clutching their diplomas and all the official documents required of job seekers. Stunned and disillusioned, they banged their heads against the wall and cried out in unison, “Oh God... how, when, and who? Is there someone more deserving of these jobs than us?”

“Of course, there wasn’t. But perhaps the council wanted to test their endurance, because in times of crisis, what is needed most is strength to hold on to one’s sanity... and not lose your mind.

“We don’t know what to say anymore. I have two grandsons who graduated from university two years ago, and they are still waiting, hoping for divine intervention or a long-awaited call from the Civil Service Council.

“Perhaps their luck will change with the council’s latest announcement, and their dreams will finally come true. Frankly, they are not concerned whether the job is as a manager or a janitor... What truly weighs on them is the daily frustration of watching their friends, who landed jobs earlier, head off to work every morning, singing along to Fairuz’s “Morning Dev”.

“Honestly, I feel sorry for the Civil Service Council. The burden placed on it is far too great, and managing it doesn’t require ministerial oversight. There is really no need for a separate authority to handle citizen employment. The simplest and most effective solution would be for each government ministry to handle its own hiring directly.

“The Civil Service Council is an Egyptian concept that was imported into Kuwait. But that is not the whole story. The number of university graduates in Kuwait, whether from public, private, or foreign universities, far exceeds the government sector’s ability to absorb them.

“Meanwhile, the private sector often refuses to hire Kuwaitis, claiming, “They don’t want to expose their shortcomings, and they are too demanding.”

“During the reign of the late Sultan Qaboos (May God have mercy on him), Oman faced a similar unemployment crisis. In response, he issued a royal decree to send all the unemployed into the army.

“Oman is a state where institutions like the military and other sectors can absorb surplus labor. But in Kuwait, the number of recruits accepted into the armed forces, police, or national guard is strictly limited and based on actual need. As for the oil sector, a large portion of its budget is already consumed by salaries, well beyond what its workforce requirements actually demand.

“Therefore, there is an employment dilemma in a country still burdened by a sluggish administrative system and a lack of effective planning. In many departments, expatriate officials continue to hold on to high positions and control those departments at a time when qualified Kuwaiti citizens should be taking the lead. There is a large pool of educated, capable, and intelligent young Kuwaitis ready to work.

“Before further burdening ministries with more unemployed individuals and inflating public budgets, it is necessary to revitalize the national mindset and redefine what a modern state truly requires. What worked in the past is no longer suitable today.

“Creative thinking yields new solutions every day. We don’t dream of competing with China, but we do aspire to stand on our own feet among

successful nations. Our youth are capable and driven, but the opportunities are very few.”

□ □ □

“Since its establishment, Kuwait University (KU) has embraced a clear vision, which is to serve as a hub for research, a center for education, and a strong bridge connecting science with society,” columnist Major General Engineer **Faisal Musaed Al-Jazzaf** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“However, anyone following the progress of the university in recent years will notice that this vital role has not fully materialized. On the contrary, its impact, particularly in serving society and confronting its evolving challenges, has noticeably diminished.

“Kuwait University is not merely a classroom or exam hall; rather, it is a national center of expertise, housing the human and intellectual capital with the potential to offer solutions to pressing social, economic, and cultural issues.

“Yet, we must ask - Where is the tangible impact of research and academic theses on our daily lives? How can KU transform into an active force in tackling national challenges, be it in sustainable development, reinforcing national identity, or enhancing the quality of life?

“There is no doubt that KU holds vast opportunities to revitalize its role in the community. This can be achieved by establishing institutional partnerships with ministries, agencies, and government bodies, activating innovation and entrepreneurship programs for students and graduates, translating academic research into practical solutions that positively impact citizens’ lives, and reinforcing its position as a hub for national dialogue on major issues and critical challenges.

“We are confident that KU’s new leadership is aware of these challenges and is ushering in a new chapter of ambition that would leverage the university’s available human and material resources to realize its full potential.

“Perhaps the most important message is the belief that what is possible and achievable is far greater than we often imagine, so long as dedication, strategic planning, and a clear vision come together. With its wealth of resources and talent, Kuwait University has the potential to be a true champion of society and to reclaim its historic role as a beacon of knowledge, thought, and innovation.

“Meanwhile, I would also like to express my appreciation to the General Traffic Department at the Ministry of Interior for their efforts in managing traffic, particularly during peak hours.”

□ □ □

“Citizens’ complaints about some government institutions are no longer just individual impressions... they have become a reality for anyone trying to complete transactions.” Kuwaiti journalist **Waleed Khaled Al-Mutairi** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“These issues are repeatedly observed in certain government offices, including the Citizen Service Department, where the head, who should exemplify discipline and professionalism, unfortunately represents the opposite of what public service stands for.

“Transactions backed by connections (wasta) to senior officials or former MPs are completed in minutes, while ordinary citizens’ requests are delayed or tangled in red tape and procrastination.

“This is no longer a matter of isolated mistakes... it has become a systematic practice by employees, and even by the department head who should be a guardian of integrity and justice, not an obstacle to them.

“Citizens have come to believe that those without connections will not have their transactions completed. This behavior undermines the value of public office, turning it for some officials into a means of personal gain and service to a small circle of close associates.

“The persistence of such practices perpetuates a culture of administrative corruption and favoritism. Urgent intervention by oversight bodies and higher authorities is necessary to stop these violations, protect citizens’ dignity, and uphold the prestige of government institutions. Serving citizens is not a favor granted by an employee or a department head but it is a right guaranteed by law.”

— Compiled by Simi K. Kuty



Al-Jazzaf



Karam

Governor commends health zone's medical achievements

Farwaniya Hospital celebrates World Pharmacy Day

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 25: Under the patronage and in the presence of Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah, Farwaniya Hospital held a “Pharmacy Event” on Thursday morning in celebration of World Pharmacy Day.

According to a press release issued by Farwaniya Governorate, the event brought together distinguished figures, including Director of the Farwaniya Health Zone Dr. Mohammed Al-Rashidi, Director of Farwaniya Hospital Dr. Ali Al-Mutairi, Head of the Pharmacy Department Pharmacist Manal Mujawb Al-Rashidi, Pharmacist Nawal Al-Rashed, and a number of medical and administrative staff, along with local dignitaries and residents.

Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah attended the exhibition organized by the Pharmacy Department, where he was introduced to the latest advancements and innovations in pharmaceutical products and services designed to enhance patient care through modern practices.

He expressed appreciation for the efforts exerted by the Pharmacy Department, highlighting its role in delivering high-quality treatments in line with international standards.

The governor also praised the achievements of the Farwaniya Health Zone in developing medical services



Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah attends 'Pharmacy Event' at Farwaniya Hospital.



Farwaniya Governorate photos

and expanding specialized care. The event concluded with expressions of gratitude from the Director of the Farwaniya Health Zone and the Director of Farwaniya Hospital, who both acknowledged the governor’s continued support for health initiatives and his recognition of the vital contributions made by the medical staff in promoting public health awareness.

Court overturns acquittal, sentences citizen to 2 yrs

Anti-Monopoly Law faces judicial review

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

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 25: The Second Circuit of the Court of Appeals, presided over by Judge Nasser Salem Al-Haid, along with Judge Saud Al-Sanea and Judge Tariq Metwally, overturned the verdict issued by a lower court which acquitted a citizen who was charged with insulting and defaming the Amir. The court instead sentenced him to two-year imprisonment with hard labor.

The court upheld the acquittal of another individual involved in the same case, after State Security officers monitored their discussions on the “X” platform.

In a separate case, the same circuit upheld a life sentence for a Kuwaiti citizen and 15-year prison terms for an Iranian woman and two Egyptian nationals. The defendants were convicted of smuggling 58 kilograms of hashish by sea, and had been arrested in an ambush conducted by the Drug Control General Department.

Meanwhile, a detention renewal judge Wednesday denied the release of several members of a cooperative society and expatriates accused of money laundering and accepting bribes in exchange for approving company merchandise.

The suspects were apprehended in a well-planned operation conducted by Mubarak Al-Kabeer Investigations. Investigations revealed that the defendants face charges of receiving illegal payments and facilitating the placement of merchandise on the shelves of cooperative societies in violation of official procedures.

The Public Prosecution ordered their continued detention pending further investigation.

Also, the Constitutional Court has set the session of November 26 to issue its ruling on the appeal filed by Dr. Suad Al-Sabah and others, challenging the constitutionality of the Anti-Monopoly Law concerning undeveloped plots.

The disputed law imposes an annual fee of KD 10 per square meter for undeveloped residential plots exceeding 1,500 square meters, whether owned by individuals or legal entities, and regardless of whether the plots are in a single or multiple locations. This fee increases by KD 30 each year until it reaches a maximum of KD 100 per square meter.

PAM launches inspection campaign in Al-Rai

By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 25: The Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) carried out an extensive inspection campaign in Al-Rai, in cooperation with a joint committee comprising

Kuwait Municipality, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and the Immigration Investigation Department, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In an official report, PAM revealed that the campaign resulted in the issuance of 22 notices to remove safety violations, six vio-

lations for working outside designated work areas, and the arrest of four marginal workers.

It affirmed that inspection campaigns will continue to ensure a safe and orderly work environment and to protect the rights of both workers and employers.



Farwaniya Governorate photo
Sheikh Athbi Al-Athbi meets with Farwaniya Citizen Service Center Directors.

Farwaniya Governor pushes citizen services digitalization

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 25: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi received in his office the Director and Assistant Director of Farwaniya Citizen Service Center Department Colonel Thamer Khalid Al-Hashash and Lieutenant Colonel Saad Abdullah Al-Jalal, respectively.

According to a press release issued by Farwaniya Governorate, they discussed issues of mutual concern during the meeting, including the development of services provided by the Citizen Service Centers in Farwaniya, and the ongoing efforts to fully digitize all services and transactions at these centers.

A detailed explanation was given regarding the achievements along with statistics on the services provided by these centers.

The governor affirmed the importance of expanding and developing these services to keep pace with urban development and population growth in the governorate.

At the end of the meeting, the visitors expressed their gratitude to the governor for his warm welcome, his efforts to collaborate with various entities, and his commitment to improving public services in Farwaniya Governorate.

Kuwaiti jailed for life

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 25: The Court of Appeals, presided over by Judge Nasr Al-Haid, sentenced a Kuwaiti citizen to life imprisonment as well as an Iranian woman and two Egyptian men to 15-year prison terms each for smuggling 58 kilograms of hashish from Iran with intent to traffic, reports Al-Rai daily.

The defendants had confessed to the charges when interrogated by the Public Prosecution.

No more stopping

Hospitals targeted in traffic campaign

By Munif Nayef
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 25: The General Traffic Department has been carrying out campaigns in all hospitals to issue “No Stopping” and “Obstructing Traffic” tickets to reduce congestion.

According to security sources, the department issued 609 traffic tickets, including 233 in the Sabah Health Zone, 79 at Jaber Hospital, 46 at Farwaniya Hospital, 150 at Adan Hospital, and 101 at Jahra Hospital, within 24 hours recently. Traffic campaigns are ongoing at all hospitals to catch violators and issue tickets. Drivers were urged to park only in designated areas, especially since hospitals have multiple floors where parking is allowed.

In this regard, the daily observed that barriers have been installed at Jahra Hospital to prevent vehicles from stopping in front of the Accident and Emergency building, thus improving traffic flow and stopping vehicles from parking in prohibited areas.

In addition, as part of intensive security and traffic campaigns by the Ministry of Interior’s General Traffic Department (Security Control Department - Traffic Investigations), operations conducted in various regions from September 13 to September 20 resulted in 158 traffic citations issued and 21 individuals referred to precautionary detention.

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Municipal Committees greenlight sports, market and utility projects

Qurain Market access, rezoning proposals rejected

By Inaas Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 25: The Mubarak Al-Kabeer Committee of the Municipal Council, during its meeting on Wednesday, chaired by member Fahad Al-Khanin, approved four out of five items on its agenda.

Among the approvals was the Public Authority for Sports' request to allocate a site for the Kuwait Swimming Federation in Sabah Al-Salem, and a proposal by member Dr. Hassan Kamal

to evaluate and update the traffic study for plots 1, 2, and 3 of Sabah Al-Salem.

The committee also approved the Public Authority for Industry's request to amend a previous decision issued on July 30, 2013, to modify the boundaries and add an area to the site of the wastewater and industrial treatment plant in Subhan, plot 11.

In addition, the Ministry of Social Affairs' request to allocate a 180-square-meter site for gas cylinder exchange in Abu Futaira, along with the creation of a service lane, was approved.

However, the committee rejected a proposal by member Walid Al-Dagher to create an entrance and exit in the Qurain Markets area.

Meanwhile, the Hawally Committee of the Municipal Council, during its meeting on Wednesday, chaired by Nasser Al-Jadaan, approved one out of seven items on its agenda.

The approved item was the Ministry of Social Affairs' request to approve the external protrusions at the entrance of the central market of the Rawda and Hawally Cooperative Society in Block 2 as part of the market area, provided they are not used for commercial purposes.

The committee also confirmed the boundaries of the central market building based on its current status, and approved an amended plan to expand the total area of the market to 4,420 square meters.

In addition, the committee recom-

mented rejecting a real estate company's request to amend a previous decision of the Municipal Council regarding a property located on Al-Othman Street in Hawally Block 185, plots 19, 20, 21, to change its use to commercial.

The committee returned three items to the executive branch for updated responses. These included the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy's request to allocate two sites for secondary transformer stations in Salmiya Block 4, Stations 1 and 2.

The committee also requested that a real estate company amend the Municipal Council's decision issued on October 10, 2022, regarding the multi-story parking project adjacent to the Symphony Complex in Block 71 in Salmiya.

32,000 teachers to receive new skills

Education Ministry launches 225 teacher training courses

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 25: The Ministry of Education has announced the launch of 225 training courses, in co-operation with the Kuwait Teachers Society, for all educational categories, including teachers, department heads, technical supervisors, assistant principals, and school principals, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The training programs will be held from September 29 to November 16.

According to an official statement issued by the ministry, the courses are designed to equip current and aspiring supervisory staff with the skills, knowledge, and basic competencies needed to perform their

roles efficiently.

The 24-day training courses are expected to benefit more than 32,000 education professionals. Sessions will be held during both morning and evening hours at training centers of the ministry's Department of Education and Training, as well as at facilities of the Kuwait Teachers Society.

The ministry stressed that individuals seeking supervisory roles must meet the required conditions and complete registration through the official forms provided.

Registration is now open on the ministry's official website and will remain available until all seats are filled.

Farwaniya Governor pushes public transit upgrades



Farwaniya Governorate photo

Farwaniya Governor with senior officials from the public transportation sector.

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 25: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah received in his office Tuesday morning several senior officials from the public transportation sector.

According to a press statement issued by Farwaniya Governorate, the visiting officials included Director of the Public Transportation Department at the Kuwait Public Transport Company Waleed Al-Khalaf, Vice Chairman of the Kuwait Association Company (Mowasalat) Fadhel Al-Baghli, Secretary of the Kuwait Land Transportation Union Asaad Al-Enezi, and Director of Government Procedures and Public Relations at City Bus Company Mohammed Al-Otaibi.

During the meeting, Governor Sheikh Athbi affirmed the pivotal role that public transport companies play as strategic partners in supporting the local economy and promoting environmental sustainability.

He highlighted their contribution to easing pressure on infrastructure and improving mobility in Farwaniya Governorate.

The discussions during the meeting focused on developing the work mechanisms of public transport companies in the governorate, and enhancing joint coordination with government agencies to reduce traffic congestion.

They also stressed the importance of developing the parking areas at public transport stations, particularly in newly established residential areas.

At the end of the meeting, the attendees expressed their appreciation to the governor for his warm reception and his interest in advancing cooperation between the public and private sectors.



The presenter with a number of participants.

KUNA concludes English news writing course

The Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) Center for the Development of Media concluded on Thursday its English news writing training course with the participation of KUNA employees and participants from the Qatar News Agency (QNA), and the Public Authority for Sport.

The course, presented by Professor of translation at the American University of Kuwait (AUK), Murtaza Mollaei, tackled several important aspects of news writing and journalistic ethics.

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

Speaking to KUNA, Mollaei affirmed that news editing and translation play an

important part in conveying information to the masses.

Whether editing from English to Arabic or vice versa, training media personnel plays an important role in providing accurate news and information, he asserted.

He stressed that such courses help bolster media cadres abilities in both Arabic and English to serve the greater purpose of ethical journalism and accurate methods of reporting news.

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

Other Voices

From Mercator to Winkel Tripel: The quest for a true world map

By Ahmad alsarraf

IN school, I was, and still am, excellent in geography and history, but very poor in Arabic grammar and mathematics, and average in the other subjects.

The world map has been my passion ever since I bought one from Al-Ruwaihi Bookstore in the 1950s. I would look at it every night, yearning to visit the major cities. I have since fulfilled many of those dreams, with only a few places left unvisited, places I probably never will see.

Who was behind the creation of the world map, the only one most of us seem to know? Through research, I discovered the following interesting facts:

The modern map we use today was created by the Flemish cartographer Gerardus Mercator in 1569. His "projection" became the standard for maritime navigation because it represents lines of constant compass bearing as straight lines, which is crucial for sailors.

However, the Mercator map lacks geographical accuracy. Since the Earth is spherical and maps are flat, a method was needed to project the globe onto a two-dimensional surface. This projection inevitably introduced distortions in the shape and size of continents and countries, as well as in distance and direction.

The Mercator projection, like any cylindrical projection, wraps the globe within a cylinder that touches the Earth at the equator. All geographic features and points are projected onto the surface of this cylinder. Once projected, the cylinder is unrolled and flattened to form a rectangular map, with vertical lines representing longitude and horizontal lines representing latitude. These lines



alsarraf

are parallel and evenly spaced.

However, while the lines of latitude are straight and parallel, the spacing between them is uneven. They diverge as one moves closer to the poles. The more one moves toward the poles, the greater the distortion in the cylindrical projection.

This is where the importance of the Mercator projection lies, as it works to reduce this distortion.

The Mercator projection is originally a standard cylindrical projection, but the designer shortened the distance between the lines of latitude by a specific percentage as one moves toward the poles. This adjustment makes a straight line from any point on the map to the pole nearly equal to the actual distance, after accounting for the map's scale. This also makes compass bearings more accurate on the map. For this reason, maritime navigators always carry a Mercator map with them.

As is well known, the Mercator projection enlarges landmasses that are far from the equator. As a result, regions such as Europe, Greenland, and Iceland appear much larger than they actually are, while Africa and South America appear significantly smaller than their actual size.

These huge differences in size between Africa and Iceland, for example, have led some to believe in a conspiracy aimed at exaggerating the size of northwestern lands at the expense of others. This, however, is absurd.

New maps are now available, designed with the Winkel Tripel projection, which offers better balance and less distortion in both area and shape. The problem of aligning all calculations and drawings between a simplified, flat sheet of paper and a spherical shape remains a dilemma, perhaps even an unsolvable one.

The Tissot Indicatrix is a popular tool for illustrating how projections distort local areas. It shows how the size and shape of a small circle on the globe change in different regions of the map.

email: a.alsarraf@alqabas.com.kw

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Continued from Page 1

Kuwait raids

In an official statement, the Ministry of Interior confirmed the arrest of two Asian nationals who were running the illegal activity in a professional manner, deceiving consumers, and seeking illicit profits.

It described the raid as a major blow to those attempting to violate the law and endanger public health.

The ministry affirmed the continuation of security and inspection campaigns to protect society and preserve public health, pledging zero tolerance toward anyone who threatens public safety or exploits youth through such illegal practices.

Meanwhile, Customs officials at Doha Port, under the guidance of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, have intercepted a major drug smuggling attempt involving a ship-ment from Iran.

The General Administration of Customs (GAC) explained that inspectors discovered over 10,700 kilograms of methamphetamine hidden inside bags of animal feed on a ship carrying 216 tons of cargo.

After a thorough inspection of the entire shipment, customs officers seized the drugs and confirmed that no other illegal items were onboard.

The ship was immediately seized, and the authorities have taken the necessary legal steps. The seized drugs were handed over to the relevant authorities.

GAC affirmed its commitment to continue following the senior leadership's directives in terms of intensifying efforts to combat attempts to smuggle prohibited items and keep Kuwait safe from all threats.

In other news, the Anti-Counterfeiting and Forgery Crimes Department of the General Department of Criminal Investigation has arrested an individual for producing counterfeit 20-dinar banknotes at a chalet in the Sabah Al-Ahmad Marine Area.

According to an official statement issued by the Ministry of Interior, the arrest followed two complaints filed at Khaitan Police Station regarding an individual distributing fake 20-dinar notes.

Authorities identified and apprehended the suspect after carrying out investigations and obtaining a warrant issued by the Public Prosecution.

When interrogated, he admitted to committing these offenses, along with numerous similar incidents in different governorates.

The investigations revealed that the suspect had been producing counterfeit currency using advanced equipment inside a family-owned chalet in the Sabah Al-Ahmad Marine Area, where the fake money was also stored.

A search of the chalet uncovered more than 20 printers equipped with scanners, dozens of stamps, dyes, paper cutters, thousands of completed counterfeit banknotes, hundreds more in the process of being made, as well as adhesives, counterfeiting tools, chemicals, and drug paraphernalia.

The suspect, along with all seized materials, was referred to the relevant authorities for further legal action.

KOC nears

The second discovery was the "Julai'a" offshore field, with estimated reserves of 800 million barrels of medium-density oil and 600 billion cubic feet of associated gas.

Kuwait Petroleum Corporation has high hopes for offshore exploration, given the vast untapped oil and gas potential in the region.

The recent discoveries are expected to raise Kuwait's proven crude oil reserves from 102 billion barrels to at least 115 billion. Beyond boosting reserves, the discoveries will play a major role in enhancing domestic gas supplies, reducing reliance on imports, and creating opportunities for the recruitment of national talent.

KPC launches

They explained that a high-level meeting resulted in KPC agreeing to form a committee of senior leaders, chaired by CEO Sheikh Nawaf Al-Saud Al-Sabah and Managing Director for Human Resources and Comprehensive Services Hisham Al-Rifai. They met with a delegation from the Petroleum Workers Union, led by Union President Saud Al-Mutairi and Executive Council Chairman Abbas Awad.

The meeting focused on important issues such as increasing hiring rates to accommodate diploma holders and engineers who have passed exams in the oil sector, and developing appropriate solutions to implement the new promotion system for phased grades for oil companies.

A request was also discussed to expedite the commencement of status adjustment tests for eligible employees and to follow up on the transfer of gas plant workers at the Kuwait Oil Tankers Company (KOTC). KPC's CEO Sheikh Nawaf Al-Saud Al-Sabah expressed his full readiness, cooperation, and support for these demands.

As part of revitalizing KPC and its subsidiaries, and in line with its policy to increase national cadres in all specializations, KPC recently announced job openings for Kuwaitis holding a Bachelor's degree in Law, specializing in the Anglo-Saxon legal system.

According to the advertisement requirements, applicants must submit their civil ID and their nationality certificate obtained from the Sahel application.

They are required to have a minimum general graduation GPA of 2.67 on a 4-point scale, or 80 percent on the percentage scale, or a second-class level as per the verbal evaluation scale approved by the Ministry of Higher Education, equivalent to a "Very Good" rating, based on lists issued by the ministry up to September 18, 2025.

Kuwait presses

His Highness the Crown Prince said UN Secretary General launched the UN80 Initiative, which is compatible with reform efforts aiming to boost the UN efficacy to be able to face future threats and challenges.

"When speaking about reforms within the framework of a multilateral international system, reforming the UN must be on the top of these priorities.

"And we are fully convinced that there is a necessity to make reforms which consolidate just principles, transparency and credibility without double standards policies.

"This will strengthen the Security Council to confront contemporary threats for a structure that mirrors the world in which we live," His Highness the Crown Prince highlighted.

In the same vein, Kuwait is honored to preside over the current (45th) GCC Supreme Council, reiterating "our" firm resolve to carry on this blessed path, strengthen the strategic partnership with regional and international organizations and achieve desired goals, as the bloc proved being a cornerstone of stability and prosperity in the region, His Highness noted. His Highness also renewed the Council's solidarity with member state Qatar in the aftermath of the recent Israeli attack on its territory.

On the Middle East situation, His Highness said the region has been witnessing serious escalation of Israeli occupation military operations against the brotherly Palestinian people in the besieged Gaza Strip and the remaining parts of Palestine, including Jerusalem and the West Bank, His Highness the Crown Prince said.

These military operations, along the two-year long "collective punishment" of the Palestinian people, run counter to religion, law, and humanity, and claimed the lives of tens of thousands, most of whom are children and women, while using starvation as a tool of war undermine the pursue of peace in the region, which could only be achieved by the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, with East Jerusalem as its capital, on the borders of June 4, 1967, in accordance with the resolutions of international legitimacy and the Arab Peace Initiative, His Highness stressed.

Kuwait welcomes the recognition of the State of Palestine by many countries over the past year, and urges other countries to take similar steps, His Highness said, adding that Kuwait will keep backing Palestinians' rights, referring to Kuwait's supportive stances, especially to UNRWA.

His Highness the Crown Prince said Kuwait Vision 2035 aims to transform Kuwait into a financial, commercial and cultural hub, highlighting at the same time the role of Kuwaiti youth and women in this regard.

The State of Kuwait looks forward to working with developing and least developed countries to achieve global development since the establishment of the country's Fund for Arab Economic Development in 1961, extending hand to 107 countries, His Highness concluded.

Fraudsters harness

chaits, in addition to generating fake voices and images (deepfakes) to impersonate identities, manipulate transactions and financial data, and automate fraud operations on a large scale and at a speed that is difficult to track.

She cited recent international statistics showing the extent of deepfakes and financial fraud using artificial intelligence technologies, noting that they contributed to 33 percent increase in internet losses in 2024, according to FBI statistics, as well as the theft of more than a billion pounds in the same year, according to UK Finance. She noted that Deloitte, the world's largest professional services firm, expects AI-enabled losses to reach \$40 billion by 2027 due to the speed and accuracy of fraud.

Businessman and economist Qais Al-Ghanim, the latest victim of artificial intelligence, warned against falling into the trap of in-depth fraud. He disclosed "a video clip of myself using artificial intelligence technology recently went viral promoting the launch of a new social platform supported by local banks, promising weekly profits from home. Naturally, this clip is completely untrue and has no connection to me. The promises it contains include guaranteed fixed profits or official support, which are utterly false. Unfortunately, this is not the first time that the names of well-known figures are exploited and used in repeated attempts at fraud and deception."

Asked if current legal legislation is capable of addressing the growing practices of deep misinformation, Attorney Enaam Haidar pointed out that despite the existence of general penal and regulatory laws, current Kuwaiti legislation remains insufficient to control the use of artificial intelligence technologies in cyber fraud crimes.

Kuwaiti, Saudi

The discussions, held during the just-ended meeting, led to the signing of a range of joint initiatives for cooperation in the fields of culture, media, tourism, health, sports, scientific research and social development, he noted.

Non-oil

The fiscal deficit is forecasted to widen to 7.8 percent of GDP in FY2025/26, while the current account surplus is set to moderate to 26.5 percent of GDP.

Financial stability remains sound. Credit to the non-financial private sector is projected to grow by 6.1 percent in 2025. Kuwaiti banks continue to maintain solid capital and liquidity positions, with low levels of non-performing loans.

MPW to sign Kabd wastewater treatment contract mid-October

‘Expedite next phase of Kuwait-China agreements’



PM Diwan photo
His Highness the Prime Minister chairs a meeting of the ministerial committee overseeing the implementation of agreements and Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) between Kuwait and the People's Republic of China.

economic gains are expected under government strategies and the guidance of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Meanwhile, Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs and Committee

Rapporteur Ambassador Sameeh Johar Hayat said all technical reports from relevant ministries were presented.

Following diplomatic coordination, the Ministry of Public Works is slated to sign the Kabd wastewater treatment

Chinese Embassy celebrates 76th Nat’l Day with strong Kuwait ties

China pledges continued support for Palestine

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh
Arab Times/Al-Seyassah Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 25: The Chinese Embassy in Kuwait commemorated the 76th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China with a celebration held on Wednesday, September 24. The event was attended by members of diplomatic missions in Kuwait, as well as notable public figures.

The ceremony began with the national anthems of both China and Kuwait. Among the distinguished guests were the Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, Minister of Finance, and State Minister for Economic and Investment Affairs Dr. Subaih Abdulaziz Al-Mukhaizeem, and Chargé d'Affaires of the Chinese Embassy in Kuwait Liu Xiang.

Xiang delivered a speech in which he welcomed the guests on behalf of the embassy and expressed appreciation for the continued support of those who contribute to the development of the distinguished relationship between China and Kuwait.

He highlighted the 76th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, led by the Communist Party of China, noting that the Chinese people have achieved remarkable progress, particularly in economic development and social stability.

Xiang affirmed his country's commitment to push forward the economy and share available opportunities with the world.

He stressed that China ranks second globally in terms of economic size and first in industrial output and foreign currency reserves, adding that China is now a main partner for more than 140 countries and regions worldwide.

Xiang explained that people in over 150 countries have benefited from the Belt and Road initiative. China has also succeeded in lifting nearly 80 million people out of poverty over the past 40 years, in line with the United Nations' poverty reduction goals. China achieved this target a full decade ahead of the 2030 deadline set by the UN.

He shed light on China's commitment to peaceful development and to promoting the building of a community with a shared future for mankind.

Xiang stressed that this year marks the 80th anniversary of the victory of



Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, Minister of Finance, and State Minister for Economic and Investment Affairs Dr. Subaih Abdulaziz Al-Mukhaizeem, and Chargé d'Affaires of the Chinese Embassy in Kuwait Liu Xiang during the ceremonial cake-cutting.

the Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War, adding, "Not long ago, a grand military parade was held in Beijing, sending a strong message of remembering history, honoring fallen heroes, cherishing peace, and building a better future."

He reaffirmed China's keenness to support the restoration of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian community.

Xiang explained that Wang Yi, a member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and Foreign Minister, recently stated that Israel continues to push forward its plan to take over Gaza City, carries out airstrikes targeting Hamas members involved in peace talks in Qatar, and simultaneously accelerates its encroachment on West Bank territory. These actions constitute serious violations of international law. Also, Minister Wang Yi stressed that China is committed to achieving a ceasefire and an end to the war in Gaza, while promoting an early, comprehensive, just, and lasting resolution to the Palestinian issue based on relevant United Nations resolutions and the two-state solution.

He went on to say that China actively fulfills its responsibilities as a major global power and continues to provide public goods to the international community.

Xiang highlighted a recent proposal "The Global Governance Initiative" by the President of China that calls for upholding sovereign equality, abiding by international law, practicing multilat-

contract with the nominated Chinese state-owned enterprise (SOE) in mid-October, he added.

More signing dates will be set after China formally confirms completion of technical and environmental studies, he explained.

Kuwait has formally begun contracting procedures with the designated Chinese SOE for the Al-Abdaliyah and Al-Shaqaya phase 3 and phase 4 renewable-energy projects, he noted.

Attending were Chief of His Highness the Prime Minister's Diwan Abdulaziz Dakheel Al-Dakheel, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan, Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Housing Affairs Abdullatif Al-Mishari, Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy and Minister of Finance and Acting Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment Dr. Subaih Al-Mukhaizeem, Head of the Fatwa and Legislation Department, Counselor Salah Al-Majed, and Hayat.



Members of the Diplomatic Corps and guests attend the 76th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China celebration on Wednesday evening.

Photos by Mohammad Morsi

INTERNATIONAL

White House budget office tells agencies to draft mass firing plans ahead of potential shutdown

WASHINGTON, Sept 25, (AP): The White House is telling agencies to prepare large-scale firings of federal workers if the government shuts down next week.

In a memo released Wednesday night, the Office of Management and Budget said agencies should consider a reduction in force for federal programs whose funding would lapse next week, is not otherwise funded and is “not consistent with the President’s priorities.” That would be a much more aggressive step than in previous shutdowns, when federal workers not deemed essential were furloughed but returned to their jobs once Congress approved government spending.

A reduction in force would not only lay off employees but eliminate their positions, which would trigger yet another massive upheaval in a federal workforce that has already faced major rounds of cuts this year due to efforts from the Department of Government Efficiency and elsewhere in the Trump administration.

Once any potential government shutdown ends, agencies are asked to revise their reduction in force plans “as needed to retain the minimal number of employees necessary to carry out statutory functions,” according to the



Capitol Police officers adjust security barriers around the East Plaza at the Capitol in Washington on Sept 24. With just days to go before federal money runs out with the end of the fiscal year on Sept 30, Congress has failed to pass legislation to keep the government running after becoming deadlocked during votes late last week. (AP)

memo, which was first reported by Politico.

This move from OMB significantly increases the consequences of a potential government shutdown next week and escalates pressure on Sen-

ate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer and House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries. The two leaders have kept nearly all of their Democratic lawmakers united against a clean funding bill pushed by President Donald Trump

and congressional Republicans that would keep the federal government operating for seven more weeks, demanding immediate improvements to health care in exchange for their votes.

In statements issued shortly after the memo was released, the two Democrats showed no signs of budging.

“We will not be intimidated by your threat to engage in mass firings,” Jeffries wrote in a post on X. “Get lost.”

Jeffries called Russ Vought, the head of OMB, a “malignant political hack.” Schumer said in a statement that the OMB memo is an “attempt at intimidation” and predicted the “unnecessary firings will either be overturned in court or the administration will end up hiring the workers back.”

OMB noted that it held its first planning call with other federal agencies earlier this week to plan for a shutdown. The budget office plays point in managing federal government shutdowns, particularly planning for them ahead of time. Past budget offices have also posted shutdown contingency plans - which would outline which agency workers would stay on the job during a government shutdown and which would be furloughed - on its website, but this one has not.

Deadly shooting on Dallas ICE office reflects widely varying security levels

WASHINGTON, Sept 25, (AP): Some US Immigration and Customs Enforcement facilities are heavily secured, closed off behind metal fences, hardened doors and armed guards. Many are in federal buildings built with a focus on security.

Detainees are often moved in and out of buildings through underground parking garages.

And in other cases, the outer perimeter is little more than a chain-link fence topped with a few strands of barbed wire. That’s the situation in Dallas, where authorities say a gunman opened fire Wednesday on an ICE office from a nearby rooftop, spraying bullets into a transport van, killing one detainee and critically injuring two more.

The gunman then took his own life, authorities said.

John Torres, a former acting director of the agency and former head of what is now called its Enforcement and Removals Division, said ICE field offices - and the security around them - vary widely.



Torres

Torres noted that some facilities, like the one in Dallas, have exposed loading areas for detainee buses, which pose risks for escape and attack. Other potential vulnerabilities range from vantage points for snipers and long outdoor lines that are allowed to form without protection.

“I would assure you that ICE, after today, is going to be taking a hard look at physical security assessments for all of their facilities,” said Torres, now the head of security and technology consulting at Guidepost Solutions.

The range of offices can be startling: In San Diego, for example, ICE’s field office is on the second floor of a heavily secured federal building, with detainee buses loaded in a basement garage. In San Antonio, ICE shares a building with a bank.

Immigration facilities have seen a series of attacks in recent months, from a July 4 assault by attackers in body armor on a detention center southwest of Dallas to a man who fired dozens of rounds with an assault rifle at federal agents leaving a US Border Patrol facility in south Texas. At least 11 people have been charged in connection with the July 4 attack, which left a police officer injured. Authorities in south Texas say that attacker was shot and killed after injuring a police officer.

‘Turkey can play an essential role for European security’

Trump hosts Turkey’s Erdogan at White House as US considers lifting ban on F-35 sales

WASHINGTON, Sept 25, (AP): US President Donald Trump will hold talks with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan at the White House on Thursday as the Republican leader has indicated that the US government’s hold on sales of advanced fighter jets to Ankara may soon be lifted.

During Trump’s first term, the United States kicked out Turkey, a NATO ally, from its flagship F-35 fighter jet program after it purchased an air defense system from Russia. US officials worried that Turkey’s use of Russia’s S-400 surface-to-air missile system could be used to gather data on the capabilities of the F-35 and that the information could end up in Russian hands.

But Trump last week gave Turkey hope that a resolution to the matter is near as he announced plans for Erdogan’s visit.

“We are working on many Trade and Military Deals with the President, including the large scale purchase of Boeing aircraft, a major F-16 Deal, and a continuation of the F-35 talks, which we expect to conclude positively,” Trump said in a social media post.

The visit will be Erdogan’s first trip to the White House since 2019. The two leaders forged what Trump has described as a “very good relationship”

during his first White House go-around despite the U.S.-Turkey relationship often being complicated.

U.S. officials have cited concerns about Turkey’s human rights record under Erdogan and the country’s ties with Russia. Tensions between Turkey and Israel, another important American ally, over Gaza and Syria have at times made relations difficult with Turkey.

Erdogan has made clear he’s eager to see the hold on F-35s lifted.

“I don’t think it’s very becoming of strategic partnership, and I don’t think it’s the right way to go,” Erdogan said in an interview this week on Fox News Channel’s “Special Report with Bret Baier.”

Turkish officials say they have already made a \$1.4 billion payment for the jets.

President Joe Biden’s administration kept Erdogan, who has served as Turkey’s president since 2014 and was prime minister for more than a decade before that, at an arm’s length during the Democrat’s four years in office.

The reluctance to engage deeply was borne out of Turkey’s record of democratic backsliding as well as Ankara’s close ties to Moscow.

Opposition parties and human rights



US President Donald Trump shakes hands with Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan after a news conference in the East Room of the White House on Nov 13, 2019, in Washington. (AP)

organizations have accused Erdogan of undermining democracy and curbing freedom of expression during his more than two decades in power. International observers say that baseless investigations and prosecutions of human rights activists, journalists, opposition politicians and others remain a

persistent problem in Turkey.

But Trump sees Erdogan as a critical partner and credible intermediary in his effort to find ends to the wars in Ukraine and Gaza. The Trump administration is also largely in sync with Turkey’s approach to Syria as both nations piece together their pos-

ture toward the once isolated country after the fall of Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad last December.

Trump and European leaders have followed Erdogan in embracing Syrian President Ahmad al-Sharaa, who once commanded a rebel group that was designated a foreign terrorist organization.

Trump’s chief diplomat, Secretary of State Marco Rubio, met with al-Sharaa Monday on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly.

Erdogan has sought to position his country as a point of stability in a tumultuous moment. He believes Turkey can play an essential role for European security and is able to span geopolitical divisions over Ukraine, Syria and U.S. tariffs that have sparked a global trade war.

Turkey also believes it has emerged as a credible broker in the Black Sea region, preserving relations with both Ukraine and Russia.

Turkey is an influential actor in neighboring Syria as the rebel groups it supported during the civil war took power last December. However, the fall of Assad aggravated already tense relations between Turkey and Israel, with their conflicting interests pushing the relationship toward a possible col-

lision course.

Trump, for his part, has urged Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to be “reasonable” in his dealings with Ankara.

Erdogan on Tuesday took part in a group meeting hosted by Trump on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly. Trump gathered the leaders of eight Arab and Muslim countries to discuss the nearly two-year-old Gaza war.

The Turkish leader has been sharply critical of Israel’s handling of the war, which was launched after Hamas militants launched an Oct. 7, 2023, attack on Israel in which 1,200 were killed and 251 were taken captive. Over 65,000 Palestinians have been killed, according to Gaza’s Health Ministry, and about 90% of homes in the territory have been destroyed or damaged.

Erdogan in his Tuesday address at the UN once again laid into Israel, alleging its forces have committed genocide, an allegation rebutted by Israel and United States.

“This is not a fight against terrorism,” Erdogan said. “This is an occupation, deportation, exile, genocide and life destruction, mass destruction policy carried on by invoking the events of October the 7th.”



Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy addresses the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly on Sept 24. (AP)

Ukraine’s president says world is in ‘most destructive arms race in human history’

UNITED NATIONS, Sept 25, (AP): Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy told global leaders Wednesday that the world is in “the most destructive arms race in human history” and urged the international community to act against Russia now, asserting that Vladimir Putin wants to expand his war in Europe.

In a bleak view of today’s world, he told the annual high-level meeting of the UN General Assembly that weak international institutions including the United Nations haven’t been able to stop wars in Ukraine, Gaza, Sudan and elsewhere, and international law can’t help nations survive.

“Weapons decide who survives,” the Ukrainian leader said. “There are no security guarantees except friends and weapons.”

Zelenskyy spoke from the podium of the vast assembly chamber a day after he met with President Donald Trump, who expressed support for Ukraine’s efforts and criticized Russia. Trump said Tuesday that he believed Ukraine could win back all territory lost to Russia, a dramatic shift from the US leader’s repeated calls for Kyiv to make concessions to end the war sparked by President Vladimir Putin’s February 2022 invasion of its smaller neighbor.

Zelenskyy did not comment on the surprise US pivot, saying only that he had “a good meeting” with Trump and with many other “strong leaders.”

“Together, we can change a lot,” he said, expressing appreciation for support from the United States, and Europe and urging all UN member nations to condemn Russia while it “keeps dragging this war on.”

If Putin isn’t stopped now, the Ukrainian president warned the assembly that he will keep driving the war forward, “wider and deeper.”

“Ukraine is only the first, and now Russian drones are already flying across Europe, and Russian operations are already spreading across countries,” he said.

Zelenskyy said neighboring Moldova is defending itself again from Russian interference and should not be allowed to move toward dependency on Russia as Georgia and Belarus are. “Europe cannot afford to lose Moldova, too,” he said, stressing that the country needs funding and energy support, not just “political gestures.”

Since Russia invaded Ukraine, Zelenskyy said, weapons and especially drones “are evolving faster than our ability to defend ourselves.”

While drones previously were used by major countries, he said, “Now, there are tens of thousands of people who know how to professionally kill using drones.”

Recently, European airports had to shut down because of drones, Zelenskyy said, and last week North Korea announced the test of “a tactical drone”

which means even countries with limited resources can build dangerous weapons.

“We are now living through the most destructive arms race in human history, because this time it includes artificial intelligence,” he said. “Companies are already working on drones that can shoot down other drones, and it’s only a matter of time -- not much -- before drones are fighting drones, attacking critical infrastructure and attacking people all by themselves - fully autonomous and no human involved except the few who control AI system.”

Zelenskyy echoed UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres in calling for global rules on how AI can be used in weapons, stressing that “this is just as urgent as preventing the spread of nuclear weapons.”

Stopping Putin now is cheaper than trying to protect every port and airport and every ship from drone attacks, and having to build underground schools and health centers as Ukraine has been forced to do to protect its citizens, he said. “Stopping Russia now is cheaper than wondering who will be the first to create a simple drone carrying a nuclear warhead.”

“So we must use everything we have together to force the aggressor to stop, and only then do we have a real chance that this arms race will not end in catastrophe for all of us,” the Ukrainian leader said.

Paris court sentences Sarkozy to 5 years in jail for criminal conspiracy

PARIS, Sept 25, (AP): A Paris court on Thursday sentenced former French president Nicolas Sarkozy to five years in prison after finding him guilty of criminal conspiracy in an alleged scheme to finance his 2007 campaign with funds from government of then-Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi.

In a surprise decision, the court ruled that he will be incarcerated even if he appeals. But it also said the sentencing date would take place at a later time, sparing the 70-year-old the humiliation of being led from the courtroom in handcuffs.

The court found Sarkozy guilty of criminal association in a plot from 2005 to 2007 to finance his campaign with funds from Libya in exchange for diplomatic favors. But it cleared him of three other charges - including passive corruption, illegal campaign financing and concealment of the embezzlement of public funds. Sarkozy denounced the ruling, saying he was the victim of scandalous injustice and that he would appeal.

“This injustice is a scandal,” he said.

“I ask the French people - whether they voted for me or not, whether they support me or not - to grasp what has just happened. Hatred truly knows no bounds,” he said.

He said that if he does end up behind bars, he’ll do so “with my head held



Former French president Nicolas Sarkozy, next to his wife Carla Bruni Sarkozy, speaks after a Paris court sentenced him to 5 years in prison and said he’ll be incarcerated even if he appeals, after finding him guilty in his trial for alleged illegal campaign financing by Libya on Sept 25 in Paris. (AP)

high.” The court also found two of Sarkozy’s closest associates when he was president -- former ministers Claude Guéant and Brice Hortefeux - guilty of criminal association but likewise acquitted them of some other charges.

Overall, the ruling suggested that the

court believed that the men conspired to seek Libyan funding for Sarkozy’s 2007 campaign but that judges weren’t convinced that the conservative leader himself was directly involved in the funding effort or that any Libyan money ended up being used in his winning campaign.

Europe

‘Drones meant to sow fear, division’: Drones flew over four Danish airports overnight Wednesday into Thursday, the latest instance of unexplained drone activity that has raised concerns about security in northern Europe amid growing Russian aggression.

Defense Minister Troels Lund Poulsen called the incidents a “hybrid attack” because the flights all occurred within roughly the same timeframe.

It was not immediately clear who was behind the incidents, but Lund Poulsen said that it appeared a “professional actor” was behind the “systematic” flights. He did not provide more details during a news conference Thursday morning.

The goal of the flyovers was to sow fear and division, Danish Minister of Justice Peter Hummelgaard said Thursday, adding that the country will seek additional ways to neutralize drones. (AP)

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Russia uses Moldova poll to take power – PM: Moldova’s Prime Minister Dorin Recean warned on Wednesday that Russia is spending hundreds of millions of euros to “take power” in a pivotal parliamentary election that could derail the country’s course toward the European Union.

Recean’s remarks came days before the election on Sunday, when Moldovans will vote to choose a new 101-seat legislature in a ballot many view as a stark choice between East and West.

“The Republic of Moldova is in an electoral campaign. The Russian Federation is also in an electoral campaign,” he said in an address after a government session. (AP)

Leader of Belarus opp’n warns Trump: Beware of nation’s prez

UNITED NATIONS, Sept 25, (AP): The Belarusian president, whose iron-fisted rule earned him the nickname of “Europe’s Last Dictator,” wants to fool President Donald Trump with gestures like prisoner releases, the exiled leader of Belarus’ opposition told The Associated Press on Wednesday on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly.

Trump warned U.S. relations with President Alexander Lukashenko this month by easing sanctions in exchange for the three-decade president’s release of some political prisoners. The deal allows Belarus to repair and buy parts for its Boeing aircraft and other planes.

Trump praised the two leaders’ personal relationship, reporting a “wonderful talk” with Lukashenko, thanking him and saying he looked forward to another meeting with the man whom much of the Western world largely shuns. Lukashenko still holds about 1,200 political prisoners, according to human rights advocates, including Nobel Peace Prize laureate Ales Bialiatski and some top opposition activists.

Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya fled Belarus under government pressure after running against Lukashenko in 2020.



Tsikhanouskaya

DPRK FM to visit China from Sept 27 to 30

South Korea says North has 4 uranium enrichment facilities to build nuclear weapons

SEOUL, South Korea, Sept 25, (Agencies): A top South Korean official said Thursday that North Korea is operating a total of four uranium enrichment facilities, adding to outside assessments that it has multiple covert atomic plants along with the widely known site near the capital of Pyongyang.

The North's leader Kim Jong Un has called for a rapid expansion of his country's nuclear weapons program and recently said he would never make the arms a negotiating point in response to overtures by U.S. President Donald Trump.

The South's Unification Minister Chung Dong-young said uranium enrichment centrifuges at the four facilities - which would include the known site at Yongbyon, about 100 kilometers (60 miles) north of Pyongyang - are running everyday and stressed the urgency to stop the North's nuclear program.

Chung did not elaborate further on the location of the other, undeclared nuclear sites. He spoke about the North with local reporters, according to his ministry.

Chung cited an assessment that the North possesses 2,000 kilograms

(about 4,400 pounds) of highly enriched uranium. He first said that was based on intelligence but the ministry later clarified it was attributed to civilian experts.

If confirmed, the amount would also signal a sharp increase in North Korea's stockpile of nuclear material.

In 2018, Stanford University scholars, including nuclear physicist Siegfried Hecker who had previously visited the Yongbyon complex, said the North had about 250 to 500 kilograms (550 to 1,100 pounds) of highly enriched uranium, sufficient for 25 to 30 nuclear devices.

Nuclear weapons can be built using either highly enriched uranium or plutonium, and North Korea has facilities to produce both at Yongbyon. Last year, North Korea released photographs of what it said was a uranium enrichment facility, the first such disclosure since it showed the one at Yongbyon to Hecker and others in 2010.

The location and other details of the facility in the photographs remain unknown.

Foreign experts believe North Korea has built additional uranium-enrichment sites as Kim has been pushing



This undated photo provided on Sept 13, 2024, by the North Korean government shows its leader Kim Jong Un, (center), on an inspecting visit at what they say is an institute of nuclear weapons and a facility for nuclear materials at an undisclosed location in North Korea. (AP)

hard to expand his nuclear arsenal.

A plutonium plant is typically large and generates much heat, making it easier for outsiders to detect than a uranium enrichment plant, which is more compact and can be easily hidden from

satellite cameras. Centrifuges to enrich uranium can be clandestinely operated underground.

It's almost impossible to independently confirm how many nuclear weapons North Korea has manufac-

tured, based on nuclear fissile materials it has produced at Yongbyon and elsewhere.

In 2018, a top South Korean official told parliament that North Korea was estimated to have already manufactured 20-60 nuclear weapons, but some experts say the North likely has more than 100. Estimates of how many nuclear bombs North Korea can add to its arsenal every year vary, ranging from six to as many as 18.

International diplomacy on ending North Korea's nuclear program has stalled since 2019, when high-stakes summitry between Kim and Trump fell apart without any agreement.

At the time, Kim offered to dismantle the Yongbyon complex if he won extensive sanctions relief. But the American side rejected his proposal, because it would be a limited denuclearization step that would leave North Korea's other, already built nuclear weapons and nuclear facilities intact.

Kim has since shunned any diplomacy with the U.S. and South Korea and focused on running weapons tests and perfecting nuclear missiles that target his rivals.

Since returning to office, Trump has repeatedly expressed hopes of restart-

ing talks with Kim. Earlier this week, Kim said he still has good memories of Trump but urged the U.S. to drop its demand that the North surrender its nuclear arms as a precondition for resuming long-stalled diplomacy.

Analysts assess that Kim would likely perceive an enlarged nuclear arsenal as a source of greater leverage in potential talks with the US.

They say that in any potential negotiations, Kim would again seek to win sweeping sanctions relief and improved ties with the US in return for a partial surrender of his nuclear and missile programs.

Also:

BEIJING: Foreign Minister of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) Choe Son Hui will visit China from Sept 27 to 30, a Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson announced on Thursday.

Choe, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea, is visiting at the invitation of Wang Yi, a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and Chinese foreign minister, said the spokesperson.

Asia

Typhoon Ragasa weakens:

Typhoon Ragasa weakened into a tropical depression early Thursday as it entered northeastern Vietnam, but it is still expected to bring heavy rains across the country's northern provinces.

By Thursday afternoon, the typhoon's sustained winds had weakened to a maximum 55 kph (34 mph) and Ragasa was forecast to dissipate eventually while remaining a rain threat for Vietnam and other parts of Southeast Asia.

Officials in Vietnam warned of possible flash floods, landslides and flooding in low-lying areas.

Vietnam's Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh ordered government ministries and local authorities to protect infrastructure like dams and hospitals, secure fishing vessels and coastal assets, and ready evacuation and search and rescue operations. Some flights were canceled or rescheduled, and workers trimmed trees to avoid wind hazards in northern parts of the country. (AP)

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Singapore executes Malaysian drug trafficker:

A Malaysian man was hanged in Singapore on Thursday for drug trafficking, raising the number of executions in the city-state to 11 this year despite renewed calls to abolish the death penalty.

The execution of Datchinamurthy Kataiah, 39, occurred Thursday afternoon after an unexplained brief delay.

Datchinamurthy was arrested in 2011 and later convicted of trafficking about 45 grams (1.6 ounces) of heroin into Singapore. He was to be hanged in 2022, but won a last-minute reprieve pending a legal challenge that was dismissed by a court in August.

Surendran K.Nagarajan, a Malaysian lawyer represent-

ing his family, said the family was informed early Thursday that the execution due at dawn had been halted. But hours later, Singapore's prison authorities reversed the decision, informing the family that the execution would proceed and asking them to collect his body in less than two hours, he said. No reason was given for the brief postponement. (AP)

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Japanese court rejects Australian's appeal:

A Japanese court on Thursday dismissed an appeal by an Australian woman who said she was tricked into smuggling drugs by a man she hoped to marry, allowing a six-year prison sentence issued by a lower court to stand.

The Tokyo High Court said Donna Nelson, 59, from Perth, Australia, was guilty of violating the stimulants control and customs laws. The Chiba District Court in December sentenced her to six years in prison and a fine of 1 million yen (\$6,725).

Nelson was arrested at Japan's Narita International Airport, near Tokyo, on Jan. 3, 2023, after customs officials found about 2 kilograms (4.4 pounds) of amphetamines, a stimulant, hidden under a false bottom in a suitcase she was carrying as checked luggage. (AP)

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Wall collapse kills 3 students in Myanmar:

Three students were killed and four others injured when a monastery wall collapsed during heavy rain in Mon state, southern Myanmar, on Wednesday afternoon, an official from a local rescue organization said.

The incident occurred around 3 pm on Wednesday in Konepawmywarhit village in Lamaing township, Mon state, chairman of the Hnitkayin rescue organization told Xinhua. It was raining heavily, and people had gathered to watch a football match, he said, adding that the children were standing near the monastery's brick wall. (Xinhua)



A fallen tree sits inside the park in Ho Man Tin area, as super typhoon Ragasa approaches in Hong Kong on Sept 24. (AP)

Former president Mutharika wins Malawi election to oust longtime rival Chakwera

BLANTYRE, Malawi, Sept 25, (AP): Former president Peter Mutharika was declared the winner of Malawi's election Wednesday, ousting incumbent Lazarus Chakwera to return as leader of one of Africa's poorest countries.

Chakwera conceded defeat in a speech on national television hours before the final results were announced, and supporters of Mutharika and his Democratic Progressive Party had already gathered in the streets of the commercial capital, Blantyre, to celebrate.

The 85-year-old Mutharika, who was president from 2014-2020, won 56% of the vote, according to the Malawi Electoral Commission. Chakwera was second with 33%.

The winning candidate needed to receive more than 50% of the vote to avoid a runoff.

"This outcome is a reflection of your collective will to have a change of government, and so it is only right that I concede defeat out of respect for your will as citizens and out of respect for the constitution," Chakwera said in his earlier address to Malawians conceding defeat.

Mutharika's return to the presidency came after he lost to Chakwera in a historic election rerun five years ago.



Supporters of former president Peter Mutharika celebrate in Blantyre, Malawi on Sept 24. (AP)

As president he was initially declared the winner of a 2019 vote, but that election was nullified months later by a court and ordered to be redone because of irregularities.

Chakwera won the redo in 2020, and Mutharika became the first leader in Africa to be removed from office in an election rerun.

Chakwera's 2020 election was also greeted at the time by street celebrations. But the 70-year-old former evangelical preacher lost popularity in his first term, largely due to an ongoing economic crisis in a country of 21 million in southern Africa already struggling as one of the least developed in the world.

Indian authorities impose security restrictions in Ladakh after clashes

SRINAGAR, India, Sept 25, (AP): Authorities in India enforced security restrictions in two main districts in the remote Ladakh region on Thursday. The restrictions came a day after four people were killed and dozens injured when police clashed with hundreds of protesters demanding greater autonomy from the Indian government for the Himalayan territory.

Officials banned assembly of more than five people in Ladakh's Leh and Kargil districts following the violent clashes Wednesday. Hundreds of police and paramilitary soldiers patrolled streets Thursday and enforced a curfew in Leh. Police detained at least 40 people overnight in Leh following the clashes, officials said.

Shops and businesses shut in Kargil as a local group called for a strike against Wednesday's killings.

Sajjad Kargili, a local leader, urged the government to "act with wisdom, resume dialogue at the earliest and address people's aspirations."

Lt. Gov. Kavinder Gupta, New Delhi's top administrator in Ladakh, called Wednesday's violence "heart-wrenching."

"Curfew has been imposed as a precautionary measure to prevent more casualties," Gupta said, according to the Press Trust of India news agency.

Wednesday's clashes erupted after



A police vehicle is set on fire during a protest by locals demanding federal statehood from the Indian government, in the high-altitude Leh town, in the region of Ladakh, India on Sept 24. (AP)

protesters threw stones at officers trying to stop them from marching in the high-altitude town of Leh. Others set ablaze police and paramilitary vehicles and the local office of India's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party and some other government buildings, police said.

Police fired bullets and tear gas and swung batons at demonstrators, killing four people and injuring dozens more,

police and residents said.

Nestled between India, Pakistan and China, Ladakh was split from Indian-controlled Kashmir after New Delhi removed the disputed region's statehood and semiautonomy in 2019. While Kashmir has largely been silenced through a crackdown on dissent and a slew of new laws, demands for political rights in Ladakh have intensified in recent years.

Brazil-United States ties see feeble thaw despite Lula's upbeat tone

UNITED NATIONS, Sept 25, (Agencies): Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva voiced optimism on Wednesday after a brief meeting with US President Donald Trump, even as ties between the two countries remain tense.

At a press conference on Wednesday, Lula said that he believed Trump was ill-informed about Brazil and that a meeting between the two heads of state would clear up any misunderstanding.

"Let's bring everything to the table -- everything that we think we should talk about," he said, adding that what is not discussable is Brazil's sovereignty and democracy, obviously referring to the sentencing of his immediate predecessor, Jair Bolsonaro.

Trump, in his speech to the general debate of the UN General Assembly on Tuesday, said that he had a brief exchange with Lula, and they agreed to meet next week. Trump said there was "chemistry" between him and Lula.

Amid growing tensions with the United States over new tariffs and digital regulations, Lula has recently rejected US pressure over the conviction of Bolsonaro, saying Brazil "is not a banana republic" that bows to foreign interference.

Lula said Wednesday he was as surprised as Trump when they met by chance and "there was some chemistry," given the deteriorating relations between the two largest economies in the Americas.



Brazil President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, (left), attends a climate summit on Sept 24 at UN headquarters. (AP)

Lula told a news conference that their first-ever encounter made him "very happy" and "optimistic" about the possibility of Brazil and the US holding a meeting as soon as possible and doing away with the "bad feeling" in Brazil-US relations.

The Trump administration has slapped sanctions on judges and others and imposed 50% tariffs on many of Brazil's exports to the United States over the arrest and conviction of the president's ally, former President Jair Bolsonaro, who was sentenced this month to 27 years in prison for attempting a coup in the South American nation.

Trump and Lula ran into each other as the Brazilian leader was walking out after delivering his speech to the annual gathering of world leaders at the UN General Assembly on Tuesday and the US president was walking in and about to step to the podium.

"I saw him, he saw me, and we embraced," Trump said in his speech to the leaders. "We didn't have much time to talk, like about 20 seconds. ... We had a good talk, and we agreed to meet next week."

Lula "seemed like a very nice man," and "I liked him," the US president said. "We had excellent chemistry. It's a good sign."

Lat/Am

Mexico slams US for immigration raids: Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum on Wednesday condemned the immigration raids carried out in the United

States by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), saying a diplomatic note was sent to Washington requesting an investigation into the recent deaths of two Mexican nationals.

"Yesterday a diplomatic note was sent on this case, requesting that all investigations be carried out, and if anyone is responsible for human rights violations, that they be punished," the president said at her daily press conference.

Mexican migrants Ismael Ayala-Urbe and Silverio Villegas Gonzalez died following ICE raids and detention in the United States.

Sheinbaum lamented the criminalization of migrants in the United States and stressed her government's initiatives in support of Mexicans living there, including establishing an emergency hotline, and strengthening services that offer technical and legal advice. (Xinhua)

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Quake hits northwest Venezuela: A 6.2-magnitude earthquake jolted northwest Venezuela on Wednesday,

day, the US Geological Survey said.

The agency said the epicenter was 15 miles (24 kilometers) east-northeast of the community of Mene Grande in Zulia state, more than 370 miles (600 kilometers) west of the capital, Caracas. It reported the earthquake had a depth of 5 miles (7.8 kilometers).

People felt the earthquake in several states, and in neighboring Colombia. Many evacuated residential and office buildings in areas near the border. No damages were immediately reported in either country.

State-owned television did not interrupt its programming, including a science-focused segment led by President Nicolás Maduro, during or after the evening earthquake. (AP)

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23 miners rescued in Colombia: Twenty-three workers were rescued Wednesday after spending 43 hours trapped in a collapsed underground gold mine in northern Colombia. The miners were met with applause as they emerged from the La Reliquia mine, located in the Antioquia department.

Colombia's National Mining Agency reported that the main entrance to the mine had collapsed on Monday due to a "geomechanical failure." A video released by the ANM shows the first rescued miners walking out under their own power, using a rope to climb the steep entrance to the shaft. Their health status was not immediately disclosed. The miners' families had been waiting for hours and celebrated their rescue with tears and applause.

The mine is on land belonging to Canada's Aris Mining Corp. but is operated by a local mining cooperative. (AP)



Sheinbaum

Dollar stable at KD 0.304

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 25, (KUNA): The US dollar remained stable on Thursday against the Kuwaiti Dinar at KD 0.304 and the Euro went down by 0.35 percent to KD 0.358 compared to yesterday's exchange rates.

The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) said in its daily bulletin that the sterling pound decrease by 0.28 percent to KD 0.410, the Swiss Franc also decreased by 25 percent to KD 0.383, while the Japanese Yen remained stable at KD 0.002.

Private sector deposits up 0.6%

CBK: Kuwait's broad money supply (M2) rises 0.5% in Aug

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 25, (KUNA): The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) announced on Thursday that broad money supply (M2) rose by 0.5 percent to reach KD 42.2 billion (around USD 139 billion) in August on a monthly basis.

Local banks' private sector deposits rose up by 0.6 percent to reach KD 38.4 billion (about USD 126.7 billion), said the CBK's economic research department and statistical tables.

Private sector deposits in foreign currency decreased by 0.2 percent to reach KD 2.1 billion (about USD 6.3 billion), while total local banks claims on the CBK represented by CBK bonds dropped by 50 percent settling at KD 401 million (about USD 1.3 billion).

Total local banks' assets rose by 1.2 percent to reach KD 99.9 billion (around USD 329 billion), while the net foreign assets increased by 3.2 percent to KD 15.4 billion (around USD 50.8 billion).

Meanwhile, time deposits with the CBK dropped by 12.5 percent, in August, to KD 700.2 million (around USD 2.3 billion), whereas balance of utilized cash credit (loans) rose by 1.0 percent to KD 61.7 billion (around USD 203.6 billion).

Financing of Kuwaiti imports decreased by one percent to KD 820 million (around USD 2.7 billion), while the average US dollar exchange rate against the dinar edged up by 0.1 percent to 305.4 fils.

Narrow money supply indicates total volume of money in circulation including notes, coins and operational money deposits, whereas the broad money supply includes time deposits and saving accounts, as well as liquid money.

No activity in handicrafts sector

Kuwait records 107 real estate deals worth KD 65m in a week

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 25, (KUNA): Statistics released by the real estate and documentation division at the Ministry of Justice showed that there were 107 real estate transactions in less than a week, valued at KD 65 million (USD 215 million).

The figures posted on the ministry website alluded to the transactions between September 14 and 18, with private property contracts coming on top with 73 plots valued at KD 30 million (USD 99 million).

Investment plots deals came second with trades in 23 units valued at KD 21.2 million (USD 69.9 million). There were also trades in five commercial plots with a value of KD 4.3 million (USD 14 million).

Additionally, there were five contracts in warehouses worth KD 8.8 million (USD 25 million), a single plot at the coastal region, valued at KD 675,000 (USD 2.2 million), while the handicrafts sector witnessed no activity.

Kuwait crude oil up \$72.03 pb

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 25, (KUNA): Kuwait crude oil gained USD 1.58 during Wednesday's trading to reach USD 72.03 per barrel compared with USD 70.45 pb the day before, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said Thursday.

Brent Futures also rose USD 1.68 to USD 69.31 pb and West Texas Intermediate jumping USD 1.58 to USD 64.99 pb.

Solar panels installed at Kuwait Airport

Kuwaiti official praises launch of 'Beirut Energy Week 2025'

BEIRUT, Sept 25, (KUNA): A visiting Kuwaiti official lauded Wednesday's launch of Beirut Energy Week 2025 saying the forum signals the Arabs' ability to move forward in investing in renewable energy.

This event is a platform that affirms investment in clean energy is the ideal path to attain sustainable development, boost energy security and protect the environment, said Ahmad Al-Dosari, the director of the department of renewable energy and energy efficiency at the Kuwaiti Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy.

He was speaking at the inaugural session of the forum, attended by the Lebanese Minister of Energy and Water Joe Saddi.

Al-Dosari, chairperson of the board of trustees of the Regional Center for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency, said the center since its founding has sought to turn into a platform of cooperation among the Arab governments, the private sector and the research institutions.

The center had worked out broad partnerships with the European Union and the United Nations to launch projects and programs in the Middle East.

In remarks to KUNA, on the forum sidelines, Al-Dosari said Kuwait is taking rapid leaps in boosting the renewable energy and energy efficiency as part of its sustainable development strategy, revealing that it aims to lift contribution of this energy to 30 percent of the overall energy output by 2030.

He singled out, among the tangible accomplishments, Al-Shagaya Project for the Renewable Energy, with a total output capacity of 3,000 megawatts, in addition to Al-Abdali venture. Elaborating, he mentioned installment of solar energy panels on the roofs of Kuwait airport, with a 20 MW capacity, Sedra, ten MW, Al-Shagaya, 70 MW.

Moreover, the government has secured ten percent of the energy at public buildings from renewable resources, provided incentives for consumption rationing and drafted legislations to lure international investments in the sector. Recently, Kuwait hosted a meeting of the Gulf Committee for Renewable Energy, organized Kuwait Week for Sustainable Energy in May and planned holding the second edition

in the second quarter of 2026.

Furthermore, the government encourages citizens and the various sectors to invest in the solar energy.

Meanwhile, Pierre Khoury the secretary of Lebanon's branch of the World Energy Council, said in his speech at the session that the forum grouped elite decision makers and experts to assess achievements in the sector and draft new plans.

He mentioned that Lebanon enacted the renewable energy law in 2023.

Also:

BEIRUT: The Board of Trustees of the Regional Center for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency on Thursday held discussions on future projects and programs that serve the member states.

The 27th meeting at this level was chaired by the head of the board, director of the renewable energy and energy efficiency at the Kuwaiti Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, Ahmad Al-Dosari. It was organized on the fringes of the Beirut Energy Week 2025 that kicked off on Wednesday.

In a statement to KUNA, Al-Dosari said he and his peers discussed the center's projects, support for the member states and other countries that had suffered consecutive crises. He indicated at the center's vital role in recovering countries namely Syria and Iraq, in addition to the occupied Palestinian territories.

The center's basic goal is boosting the renewable energy and energy efficiency in the Arab region and for this sake it has been launching projects of promising partnerships with the European Union and the Union for the Mediterranean and the UN Development Program.

He affirmed its role in boosting capacities of personnel and technicians in the member states through courses, workshops and know-how swap.

"Our presence in Beirut is intended to demonstrate support for Lebanon that has begun to recover namely support for its efforts in the energy projects," he said alluding to a declaration earlier by the Lebanese Minister of Energy Joseph Al-Saddi of the National Plan for Renewable Energy in Lebanon for 2025-2030.

Business

Boursa Kuwait closes lower

All Share Index down 48.49 points



Boursa Kuwait

reach 8,162.56 points, through 418.2 million shares traded through 20,651 transactions, valued at KD 57.8 million (USD 175.7 million). The Premier Market Index also fell 59 points, or 0.63 percent, to reach 9,365.37 points, through 250 million shares traded through 13,432 transactions, valued at KD 85 million (USD 258.4 million).

Meanwhile, the Main 50 Index fell 49.60 points, or 0.59 percent, to reach 8,407 points, through trading of 306.2 million shares through 13,202 cash transactions, worth 43.8 million dinars (about 133.15 million dollars).

Transactions jump 28% week-on-week to KD 65.2 mln

Kuwait real estate market rebounds in mid-Sept

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 25: The real estate market experienced a significant recovery in the third week of September with the return of activity following the end of the summer vacation, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The value of real-estate transactions increased by approximately 28 percent compared to the second week, driven by a qualitative rise in private property deals, a quantitative and qualitative increase in commercial transactions, and a strong resurgence in warehouse deals after weeks of inactivity, particularly amid expectations of a decline in interest rates.

According to the weekly report from the Real

Estate Registration and Documentation departments at the Ministry of Justice, total real estate transactions from September 14 to September 18 reached approximately 107, valued at KD 65.2 million, compared to KD 51 million from 99 transactions in the previous week.

This marks a weekly increase of KD 14.2 million (27.8%).

Despite a decrease in the number of private transactions this week from 79 to 73 compared to the previous week, their value rose from KD 26.5 million to KD 30 million, indicating increased demand for high-value properties or those in more prime locations.

Investment deals saw a decline in value, dropping from KD 23.9 million for 19 deals to KD 21.2 million for 23 deals.

Meanwhile, commercial real estate witnessed significant growth, increasing from one deal worth half a million dinars to five deals valued at KD 4.4 million, representing a 400 percent increase in the number of deals and a 780 percent increase in value.

This week's real estate transactions were notably marked by a strong presence in the warehousing sector, with five deals worth KD 8.9 million, accounting for approximately 14 percent of the total value and reflecting growing demand for storage space.

Talks cover cooperation, regional issues

Kuwait Amir's envoy delivers message to Chinese President



KUNA photo

Kuwait Amir's envoy delivers written message to Chinese President.

anticipation of His Highness the Amir's visit to China for the Second Arab-China Summit in 2026.

He conveyed his gratitude and appreciation for the message of His Highness the Amir, affirming that he would deliver it to President Xi Jinping.

Sheikh Nawaf Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah was

accompanied at the meeting by Ambassador of Kuwait to the People's Republic of China Jassem Al-Najem, and from the Embassy of Kuwait in Beijing Counselor Abdulaziz Al-Dakheel, and Counselor Faisal Al-Mouda from Kuwait Embassy in the People's Republic of China.

2.8m social media conversations reflect growing consumer engagement

GCC banking sentiment declines despite surge in online activity

DUBAI, Sept 25: The latest GCC Banking Sentiment Index, published by PwC Middle East in collaboration with DataEQ, reveals a notable decline in consumer sentiment towards GCC banks despite a sharp increase in online conversations across the region.

This year's index analysed consumer sentiment towards leading banks across Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Oman, Kuwait and Bahrain. The volume of online conversations about GCC banks reached 2.8 million between September 2024 and February 2025. This escalation in activity, driven in part by promotional campaigns, reflects the growing role of social media as a primary channel for consumers to engage with banks in the region.

PwC Middle East noted in its report that while reputational sentiment remained strong across all banks, there were areas that required further attention, particularly operational challenges in customer service and product performance. Key areas for improvement included response times, staff training and communication channels, which were identified as contributing factors to customer dissatisfaction. Addressing these operational challenges will be essential for enhancing overall service quality and the customer experience.

Jean Abouassi, Financial Services Consulting Leader at PwC Middle East, added:

"The region's retail banking sector is at a turning point, shaped by rapid digitisation and rising

■ Online conversation volume about GCC banks reaches 2.8 million mentions across six markets
■ Yet, consumer sentiment declines as service delays, digital failures, and fraud concerns escalate

consumer expectations. The winners will be those that combine innovation with service excellence, transparent pricing and secure digital platforms. Listening to customer feedback at scale is now a business imperative, and those who act proactively will be better positioned to build trust, foster loyalty and contribute to the region's long term economic transformation."

Jamie Botha, Head of Global Partnerships at DataEQ, said:

"Unstructured customer feedback, particularly from social media, offers banks a real-time view of how their services are experienced. By making sense of millions of these conversations, banks can identify the issues that matter most, from digital reliability to perceived fraud risks and service responsiveness. Turning these signals into action enables banks to resolve pain points faster, strengthen digital trust, reduce risks and ultimately improve the day-to-day banking experience for

their customers."

The study also revealed notable gaps in customer experience delivery, with operational shortcomings threatening to undermine reputational gains achieved through promotional campaigns and brand partnerships. Addressing these issues will be vital if banks are to align with national digitisation and financial inclusion agendas. The index further found that banks responded to only 57 per cent of priority conversations, down from the previous year. This decline highlights the difficulty banks face in managing the rising volume of social media interactions, a challenge that continues to weigh on overall consumer sentiment.

About PwC

At PwC, we help clients build trust and reinvent so they can turn complexity into competitive advantage. We're a tech-forward, people-empowered network with more than 370,000 people in 149 countries. Across audit and assurance, tax and legal, deals and consulting we help build, accelerate and sustain momentum. Find out more at www.pwc.com.

With over 12,000 people across 12 countries in 30 offices, PwC Middle East combines deep regional insight with global expertise to help clients solve complex problems, drive transformation, and achieve sustained outcomes. Learn more at www.pwc.com/me.

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Saudi Fund for Development & Qatari Fund for Development launch \$89m joint initiative with UNDP to sustain essential services in Syria

NEW YORK, Sept 25, (KUNA): Saudi Fund for Development (SFD) and Qatari Fund for Development (QFFD), in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), have launched a joint initiative worth USD 89 million aimed at sustaining the delivery of essential services in Syria over a three-month period.

The announcement was made on Wednesday on the sidelines of the 80th session of the UN General Assembly at UNDP headquarters in New York.

SFD's Chief Executive Officer Sultan Al-Marshad said, following the signing ceremony, that the initiative reflects Saudi Arabia's commitment to advancing developmental support in Syria.

He emphasized that the SFD works alongside international partners to bolster development efforts and promote stability in the country.

On his part, UNDP Regional Director for Arab States Abdallah Al-Dardari stated that the trilateral cooperation is expected to advance recovery and foster socio-economic stability in Syria after many years of conflict.

Al-Dardari noted that the initiative stems from multilateral international cooperation with UNDP in Syria, highlighting that the financial support from Saudi Arabia and Qatar will cover salaries and wages for workers in the social services sector who provide essential services to local communities.

Layoffs remain low despite signs of weakening labor market

US unemployment claims drop to 2-month low at 218,000

WASHINGTON, Sept 25, (AP): U.S. jobless claim applications fell to their lowest level in two months last week as layoffs remain low despite mounting evidence of a softening labor market.

The number of Americans filing for unemployment benefits for the week ending Sept. 20 fell by 14,000 to 218,000, the Labor Department reported Thursday.

Analysts surveyed by the data firm FactSet had forecast 235,000 new applications.

Though layoffs remain historically low, recent government data has raised concerns about the health of the American labor market, leading the Federal Reserve to cut its key interest rate by a quarter-point last week.

The rate cut is a sign that the central bank’s focus has shifted quickly from inflation to jobs as hiring has ground nearly to a halt in recent months. Lower interest rates can spur growth and hiring as individuals and businesses benefit from reduced borrowing costs. The catch is that it can also exacerbate inflation, which remains above the Fed’s 2% target.

Stubborn inflation could make future interest rate decisions tricky for the Fed, whose dual mandate is to support full employment in the labor market while keeping inflation at bay.

Earlier this month, the Bureau of Labor Statistics issued a massive preliminary revision of U.S. job gains for the 12 months ending in March, revealing that the labor market has not been as strong as previously thought.

The BLS’s revised figures showed that U.S. employers added 911,000 fewer jobs than originally reported in the 12 months ending in March 2025. Job gains were shown to be tapering long before President Donald Trump rolled out his far-reaching tariffs on U.S. trading partners in April.

The department issues the revisions every year, with final revisions due in February of 2026.

The updated figures came after the agency reported earlier this month that the economy generated just 22,000 jobs in August, well below the 80,000 economists were expecting.

Earlier this month, the government reported that U.S. employers advertised 7.2 million job openings at the end of July, the first time since

April of 2021 that there were more unemployed Americans than job postings.

The July employment report, which showed job gains of just 73,000 and included huge downward revisions for June and May, sent financial markets spiraling and prompted Trump to fire the head of the BLS, which compiles the monthly data.

The various labor market reports have bolstered fears that Trump’s erratic economic policies, including the unpredictable taxes on imports, have created so much uncertainty that businesses are reluctant to hire.

The four-week average of claims, which softens some of the weekly volatility, declined by 2,750 to 237,500.

The total number of Americans collecting unemployment benefits for the previous week of Sept. 13 inched down by 2,000 to 1.93 million.

Weekly applications for jobless benefits are considered representative of layoffs and have mostly settled in a historically low range between 200,000 and 250,000 since the U.S. began to emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic nearly four years ago.

US GDP revised up to 3.8% in Q2, exceeding estimates

Consumer spending rises 2.5%

WASHINGTON, Sept 25, (AP): The U.S. economy expanded at a surprising 3.8% from April through June, the government reported in a dramatic upgrade of its previous estimate of second-quarter growth.

U.S. gross domestic product - the nation’s output of goods and services - rebounded in the spring from a 0.6% first-quarter drop caused by fallout from President Donald Trump’s trade wars, the Commerce Department said Thursday. The department had previously estimated second-quarter growth at 3.3%.

The first-quarter GDP drop, the first retreat of the U.S. economy in three years, was mainly caused by a surge in imports - which are subtracted from GDP - as businesses hurried to bring in foreign goods before Trump could impose sweeping taxes on them. That trend reversed as expected in the second quarter: Imports fell at a 29.3% pace, boosting April-June growth by more than 5 percentage points.

Consumer spending rose at a 2.5% pace, up from 0.6% in the first quarter and well above the 1.6% the government previously estimated.

Since returning to the White House, Trump has overturned decades of U.S. policy in support of freer trade. He’s slapped double-digit taxes - tariffs - on imports from almost every country on earth and targeted specific products for tariffs, too, including steel, aluminum and autos.

Trump sees tariffs as a way to protect American industry, lure factories back to the United States and to help pay for the massive tax cuts he signed into law July 4.

But mainstream economists - whose views Trump and his advisers reject - say that his tariffs will dam-

age the economy, raising costs and making protected U.S. companies less efficient. They note that tariffs are paid by importers in the United States, who try to pass along the cost to their customers via higher prices. Therefore, tariffs can be inflationary - though their impact on prices so far has been modest.

The unpredictable way that Trump has imposed the tariffs - announcing and suspending them, then coming up with new ones - has left businesses bewildered, contributing to a sharp deceleration in hiring.

From 2021 through 2023, the United States added an impressive 400,000 jobs a month as the economy bounded back from COVID-19 lockdowns. Since then, hiring has stalled, partly because of trade policy uncertainty and partly because of the lingering effects of 11 interest rate hikes by the Federal Reserve’s inflation fighters in 2022 and 2023.

Labor Department revisions earlier this month showed that the economy created 911,000 fewer jobs than originally reported in the year that ended in March. That meant that employers added an average of fewer than 71,000 new jobs a month over that period, not the 147,000 first reported. Since March, job creation has slowed even more - to an average 53,000 a month.

On Oct. 3, the Labor Department is expected to report that employers added just 43,000 jobs in September, though unemployment likely stayed at a low 4.3%, according to forecasters surveyed by the data firm FactSet.

Seeking to bolster the job market, the Fed last week cut its benchmark interest rate for the first time since December.

Thursday’s GDP report was Commerce Department’s third and final look at second-quarter economic growth. It will release its initial estimate of July-September growth on Oct. 30.

Forecasters surveyed by the data firm FactSet currently expect the GDP growth to slow to an annual pace of just 1.5% in the third quarter.

Company fined 500m under DMA for App Store practices

Apple urges EU to repeal DMA, calling it cumbersome and delaying new features

LONDON, Sept 25, (AP): Apple wants the European Union to repeal its digital competition rule book, saying the regulations are cumbersome and are delaying new features for Europeans such as live translation for AirPods.

The European Commission, the 27-nation bloc’s executive branch, said Thursday that’s not going to happen.

“There is absolutely no intention from the Commission’s side to repeal the DMA,” said Commission spokesman Thomas Regnier, referring to the Digital Markets Act.

The iPhone maker outlined its complaints the day before in a response to a consultation on the DMA, a sweeping set of rules designed to stop Big Tech companies from dominating markets.

The company said “the DMA should be repealed” or scaled back, saying it’s undermining innovation and eroding privacy and security.

Apple has long opposed the law and was one of the first companies to be fined after the rules took effect last year, with a 500 million euro (\$587 million) penalty in an app store case.

Apple said Europeans are being left behind the rest of the world because it has to spend more time trying to figure out how to get new features to comply with the rule book.

“The DMA requires Apple to make certain features work on non-Apple products and apps before we can share them with our users,” the company said in a blog post. “Unfortunately, that requires a lot of engineering work, and it’s



Apple logo (AP)

caused us to delay some new features in the EU.”

For example, under the DMA, the live translation feature that Apple unveiled earlier this month for use with AirPods would also have to work with wireless earbuds from other brands. The feature uses an iPhone’s on-device AI to translate when other languages are spoken around the person using them. Apple says it needs more work to make sure conversations, which are processed on the device, stay private if used with non-Apple products.

Other features affected include iPhone Mirroring with Mac computers, and Apple Maps’ Visited Places and Preferred Routes.

Apple also said EU requirements to allow alternative app marketplaces and payment systems onto

iOS expose users to security risks such as online scams and malware disguised as games.

And DMA provisions requiring Apple to comply with rivals’ request to access “user data and core technologies” creates “serious risk” for its users, it said.

Apple said it’s complying with the regulations but asked regulators to take a closer look at how they’re affecting Europeans.

At a regular European Commission press briefing in Brussels, Regnier pushed back against Apple’s complaints.

“Nothing in the DMA requires companies to lower their privacy standards, their security standards,” Regnier said. “To the opposite, it’s just about giving our users more choice.”

Both sides agree no winners in trade wars but remain open to talks

US lawmaker backs renegotiating global economic rules to reflect China’s ascent

SHANGHAI, Sept 25, (AP): The head of a U.S. congressional delegation visiting China said he backed renegotiating the rules governing the global economy to take into account China’s rise and that of others such as India and Brazil.

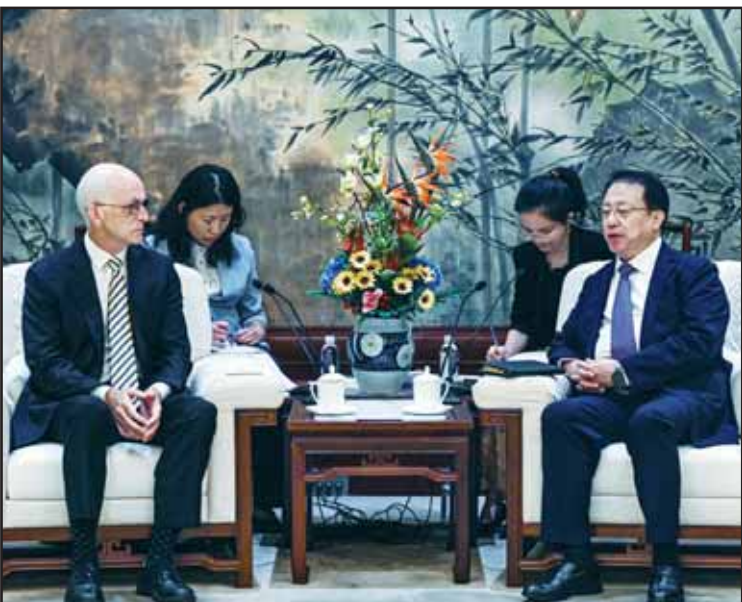
Rep. Adam Smith, a Democrat from Washington state, told the mayor of Shanghai on Thursday that the U.S.-led post-World War II order has worked well for many countries, including China, but that “we understand that things have changed.”

His remarks, at end of a five-day trip to China, dovetailed with Chinese leader Xi Jinping’s recent announcement of an initiative to build a more equitable global governance system.

They also reflected the reality that though the U.S. remains the most powerful country in the world, China is emerging as a potential challenger for global leadership.

The delegation of three Democrats - Smith, Rep. Ro Khanna from California and Rep. Chrissy Houlahan from Pennsylvania - and Republican Rep. Michael Baumgartner from Washington state, wrapped up their trip in Shanghai after three days of meetings with government leaders in Beijing.

The main purpose of the visit - the first by members of the U.S. House of Representatives since 2019 - was to open up lines of communication between the governments, Smith said. A U.S. Senate delegation visited in 2023.



Citing the expansion of McDonald’s outlets in China, Smith said his biggest takeaway from the trip was that a lot of business is going on between the two economies despite the ongoing trade and tariff war.

“We have a lot of work to do to resolve those issues,” he told a small group of journalists after a meeting with the American Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai. The trade conflict is creating difficulties for companies on both sides of the Pacific, he said.

The lawmakers were later seen at a Starbucks, another U.S.-headquartered company, in the lobby of the office building.

The exchange with the Shanghai Mayor Gong Zheng started

after Smith politely interrupted Gong about 10 minutes - including time for translation - into the mayor’s introduction to Shanghai as an economic and financial center.

How is the U.S.-China tariff war impacting Shanghai’s economy, Smith wanted to know, and how does the mayor think it should be resolved.

Gong said that Shanghai, a major shipping port, is among those most affected because of its high exposure to international trade.

“We’re very glad to see that we already have talks and negotiations,” Gong said, citing the four rounds of meetings since May in Geneva, Stockholm, London and, most recently, Madrid.

He stated the Chinese government position that there are no winners in trade wars, but China will fight back if there is a war while remaining open to negotiation.

Smith expressed hope that both tariffs and other barriers to imports would be reduced. He then called for a robust debate about how to renegotiate the rules governing the economy.

“China and the U.S. are the two most important players in how we resolve that,” he said. “How do we get to an international rules based order that is more agreeable to everyone?”

China maintains that the current international order favors the U.S. and other rich nations. The government says it doesn’t want to overturn that order but make it better serve the interests of all countries, particularly developing ones.

“The collective rise of emerging markets and developing countries necessitates boosting the representation of the Global South,” a Foreign Ministry document says, using a catch-all term for those nations.

The three Democrats in the delegation are members of the House Armed Services Committee, and Smith repeated his call from the outset of the trip for more communication between the U.S. and Chinese militaries.

“Two of the largest nuclear powers in the world need to be talking to each other, particularly considering the fact that we do have some disagreements,” he said.

EU automakers to save 500-600m monthly after US cuts tariffs to 15%

BRUSSEL, Sept 25, (AP): European automakers will save around 500-600 million euros (\$585-700 million) a month dating back to Aug. 1 after the Trump administration implemented the U.S. end of its trade deal with the European Union, the EU’s top trade negotiator said Thursday.

Trade Commissioner Maros Sefcovic said that the deal establishing a 15% tariff on most EU goods took effect with publication in the U.S. Federal Register instructing customs officials what to charge. That would reduce the tariff from a painfully high 27.5% rate set earlier by Trump.

The reduction eases a major burden on EU automakers and is a chief selling point for the deal as presented by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

The deal is retroactive to Aug. 1 so “what we expect now is that the tariffs will be returned

to the automakers as of the first of August, which is something like 500, 600 million euros per month,” Sefcovic said ahead of a meeting with Southeast Asian trade ministers in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

The 15% tariff is still much higher than tariffs from before Trump took office, which averaged in the single digits, and the trade deal has been criticized by business associations and some members of the European Parliament.

Sefcovic said most member states supported the deal and that after detailed exchanges and presentations on the details he expected lawmakers would support it as well.

He said it was “the best deal available” after difficult talks with Trump administration officials. “Any other alternative would be much worse,” he said. Trump threatened even higher rates during the talks.



European Commissioner for Trade and Economic Security Maros Sefcovic gestures as he speaks during a press conference after the signing ceremony of a trade deal between Indonesia and the EU, in Nusa Dua, Bali, Indonesia on Tuesday, Sept. 23, 2025. (AP)

What's On

SPOTLIGHT



Got a birthday or event?
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Exclusive discounts on groceries, meats, seafood, and home essentials

Lulu World Food Festival introduces global flavors to Kuwait



Photos during the event.

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 25: Lulu Hypermarket has launched its much-anticipated two-week World Food Festival, which kicked off on September 24, across all Lulu outlets in Kuwait. The festive curtain-raiser took place on September 24 at Lulu Hypermarket Al Rai, with South Indian film star Aneswara Rajan adding a touch of glamour to the occasion in the presence of Lulu Kuwait's top management and representatives from the event sponsors to mark the beginning of the celebrations.

Later in the day, the festival spirit and the excitement spread to Lulu Fahaheel, where a special event featuring the inauguration of the biggest burger was held in the presence of Lulu management and senior officials from Seara, one of the key sponsors. The festival brings shoppers an exceptional chance to enjoy exclusive deals and discounts on everything from daily groceries, farm-fresh fruits and vegetables, and

high-quality meat and seafood, to chilled and frozen delights, dairy products, home appliances, and must-have kitchen essentials. To make the festival even more exciting, Lulu has lined up a series of interactive competitions and contests designed for all age groups. At the Al Rai outlet, children can showcase their creativity in a lively burger-making competition; while aspiring chefs can take part in the 'Make Your Signature Dish' contest. Winners walked away with valuable prizes, and the children who participated in the Burger Competition have received their consolation prizes. Across other Lulu branches, a variety of unique activities and competitions continue to keep the festive spirit alive throughout the two-week celebration.

Adding flavor to the festival, Lulu is presenting themed highlights such as Global Foodie (World Cuisines), Healthy Eats (Salads, Cheese & Olives), Meet a Meat, Go

Fish, The Best Bake, Snack Time, Biryani World, Desi Dhaba, Cake & Cookies, NaadanThattukada, Arabian Delights & More.

Among the festival's most anticipated attractions is the Global Cuisine Food Street, where visitors can embark on a culinary journey and savor flavors from every corner of the world. Adding to the experience, specially curated counters featuring aromatic coffees, premium dried fruits, and a rich selection of nuts will be showcased across all outlets, making the food festival a true feast for the senses.

The festival is made possible with the support of several renowned sponsors. With its blend of food promotions, entertainment, and global flavors, Lulu's World Food Festival promises a memorable shopping and dining experience for families and food enthusiasts across Kuwait.

Gandhi Jayanthi Blood Donation Drive – Be a Hero, Save a Life

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 25: In commemoration of Mahatma Gandhi's legacy of compassion and service, Blood Donors Kerala – Kuwait Chapter is organizing a Blood Donation Drive on Friday, October 3, 2025, at the Al Adan Blood Transfusion Center, Adan, from 9:00 am to 12:30 pm.

This initiative offers a meaningful way for the community to honor

Gandhi Jayanthi by giving the gift of life. Every donation provides hope to patients in need, and every donor becomes a hero in someone's life story.

Community members are encouraged to register via the QR code on the campaign poster and participate in this noble cause.

For more information, please contact: 90041663 / 96602365

PBFPK organizes training session on fraud and cybersecurity risk

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 25: The Executive Committee of the Pakistani Banking & Finance Professionals in Kuwait (PBFPK) successfully organized an insightful training session on the critical topics of Fraud and Cybersecurity Risk on 20th September 2025.

The session began with a warm welcome by Hasan Bilal, Executive Committee member of PBFPK, followed by the recitation of the Holy Quran.

The first presentation was delivered by Shahzad Saleem, who highlighted key aspects of Fraud Risk, its implications, and preventive measures. The second session was presented by Shahzad Khan, focusing on Cyberse-

curity Risk and the growing importance of safeguarding digital platforms in today's business environment.

The training concluded with an interactive Q&A session, where participants actively engaged with the trainers.

In his concluding remarks, Ahsan Ashraf, President of PBFPK, extended a vote of thanks to all participants and commended the trainers for their dedication, hard work, and valuable knowledge sharing. He also encouraged members to continue participating in such sessions, reinforcing PBFPK's commitment to professional growth and community learning.



Photo during the event.

Quizmaster Barry and Riasa O'Brien lead engaging sessions

FAIPS brings home coveted KITCO Quiz Cup

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 25: The 29th edition of the KITCO Interschool Quiz 2025 was held on Friday, 19th September, at the Innova International School, Mahboula. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from 36 teams representing 18 Indian schools in Kuwait.

FAIPS secured a resounding victory by amassing a remarkable 150 points in the finals. The winning team, comprising Swajit Biswas (Grade VIII) and Adithi Bipin (Grade VII), showcased exceptional knowledge and composure, ultimately clinching the title in style.

In the preliminary round, the FAIPS teams stood out by scoring the highest points among all teams. The second team, represented by Gerson Franklin (Grade VIII) and Jude Saju (Grade VII), finished second in the prelims. However, in accordance with competition rules, which allow only one team per school in the finals, the second team could not participate. Their outstanding performance was acknowledged and praised by the quizmaster, Mr. Barry O'Brien.

Mr. O'Brien, a renowned quizmaster, was accompanied by his daughter, Ms. Riasa O'Brien, an accomplished quizmaster and educator in her own right, kept the event lively, engaging, and intellectually stimulating.

FAIPS played tactfully and steadily climbed to the top, eventually securing a commanding 150 points. Their victory was not just a display of brilliance but also a testament to the school's enduring legacy in the quizzing arena.

The Principal, Mr. Ravi Ayanoli, congratulated the winners on behalf of the school management, commending their phenomenal achievement. This victory not only highlights the



Photos from the event.

students' brilliance but also reflects the dedication of the senior student mentors and Quiz club teachers, who

worked tirelessly behind the scenes to prepare the team. This stupendous win reinforces FAIPS's reputation as

a powerhouse in the quizzing circuit, continuing its legacy of excellence and intellectual achievement.

KEA hosts grand Onam celebration with 2025-26 inauguration at Aspire International School

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 25: The Keralite Engineers Association (KEA), a fraternity of Malayali engineers graduated from various engineering colleges outside Kerala state, organized a grand Onam celebration along with the official inauguration of its activities for the year 2025-26.

The event, held on September 19, 2025, at Aspire International School, Abbasiya, commenced at 10:00 AM under the theme "Athirukalillathe" (Beyond Boundaries). The festivities commenced at 10 a.m. with a traditional lamp-lighting ceremony led by the women members of the association. KEA President Renji Varghese presided over the function. Vice President Christy Thomas and Treasurer Jimmy Jose Arickatt graced the occasion. General Secretary Vijayalakshmi Govind delivered the welcome speech, while Arts Secretary Neeraj Rajasekharan proposed the vote of thanks.

Adding further significance to the occasion, Mr. Gangaprasad, General Convener of Kuwait Engineers Forum (KEF), delivered a heartfelt felicitation speech, extend-



Photo during the event.

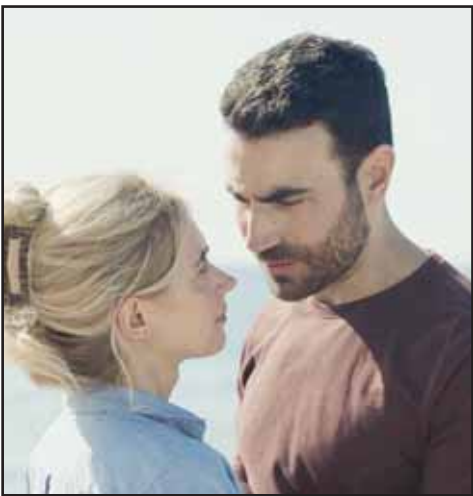
ing his greetings and best wishes to KEA.

KEA also proudly inaugurated its much awaited Kids' Club, a dynamic platform designed to inspire creativity, nurture talent, and foster teamwork among the younger members of the KEA community.

The cultural segment of the day showcased the vibrant spirit of Onam with energetic dances by children and adults, instrumental music performances, and traditional Kerala art forms. In a special felicitation ceremony, KEA honored students from member families who excelled in their Grade 10 and 12 board examinations. Prizes were also distributed to winners of competitions held earlier as part of KEA's World Environment Day programs and Fitness Challenge.

With a lively crowd of over 400 plus attendees, colorful performances, and heart-felt fellowship, the celebrations concluded at 4 p.m., leaving participants with cherished memories of Onam away from home.

Film



This image released by Apple TV+ shows Brett Goldstein, (right), and Imogen Poots in a scene from 'All of You.' (AP)

Soulmate vs best friend

Goldstein's 'All of You' will break your heart

LOS ANGELES, Sept 25, (AP): Brett Goldstein might want to break your heart. Or at least give you a proper ugly cry.

In the new film "All of You," streaming on Apple TV+ Friday, audiences are presented with a sticky conundrum: What if your soulmate, and your best friend, were different people?

Reactions might differ about the choices Simon (Goldstein) and Laura (Imogen Poots) make in the film, which is a kind of rom-com-dram, if you will. But one thing Goldstein has noticed is that a lot of people who see it think that it's about them.

"I think everyone has this friendship," Goldstein said. "There's someone in their life that is not their partner that they have a connection that feels more than friends, but what is that? What is love? And does it take away from the other? We just wanted to explore all of that over time."

The idea came out of a getting to know you conversation with William Bridges, an Emmy winner for "Black Mirror" whose episodes include "USS Callister." He co-wrote the film with Goldstein, and directed. At the time of the chat, Goldstein was single. Bridges was not. And Goldstein asked him if the woman he was seeing was "the one." It got them thinking about the idea of a soulmate test, something that could just take all the guesswork, all the bad dates, all the lost time, out of the equation.

Dystopia

"All of You" begins with a moment of truth as Simon accompanies Laura, his best friend from university, on her way to take the test. He even pays for it, and soon enough she's off making plans with a husband to be.

Though the film has a bit of a science fiction element to it, it's decidedly less dystopian than a "Black Mirror." Some, like Laura, take the test. Some, like Simon, try to do it the old-fashioned way. But many are left wondering if they made the right choice. The film is told linearly, but skips over months and sometimes years in the saga of Laura and Simon.

"I was really conflicted, but I also felt great compassion for each of the characters," Poots said. "All a person is the choices they make or don't make, and I think that feelings and desire and love, these are completely out of your control. And I don't think you can vilify a person for sort of having them. It's just when they follow through it obviously complicates things."

Part of the equation involved making sure that Laura's soulmate, and husband, wasn't easy to dismiss. Not only did they write him as kind, loving and a good father. They also cast a handsome Scottish actor, Steven Cree, to play him.

"One thing we didn't want to do that I think romantic comedies do a lot is they make the other guy boring or a (expletive)-head. So you're going, 'Oh, obviously not him,'" Goldstein said. "You have to kind of stack the odds against all of them because that is more real and it's much more challenging. I think, for an audience because I think you are going 'I want this thing to happen and I also don't want this thing to happen.'"

"When Harry Met Sally" was a kind of unintentional touchstone in thinking about the idea of friendships between straight men and women that only became clear to them after they made the film. An even less intentional reference was "Atonement." Unbeknownst to the filmmakers, they set a pivotal scene between Laura and Simon in the same cottage on the English Channel in East Sussex that Joe Wright used for his classic tearjerker.

While movie fans might bemoan the lack of the Nora Ephron-style romantic comedies of the 1990s on our screens, modern movies are grappling with the state of relationships in serious, satirical and genre-skewing ways, with films like "Materialists."

"Splitsville," "All of You" and more. The distinction, Bridges said, is perhaps audiences today are craving stories not about aspirational, unattainable romance, but about love - however complicated and messy it might be.

"We have seen the movie where somebody runs to the train station at the end and confesses undying love and the movie ends and the idea is they live happily ever after. But I'm not quite sure that that's the experience of love that a lot of people have," Bridges said. "I think they're looking for love stories rather than romance stories."

Variety

LOS ANGELES: Rihanna and A\$AP Rocky have announced the birth of their third child, a girl.

Rihanna announced the birth of Rocki Irish Mayers in an Instagram post Wednesday. The post featured one photo of the multihyphenate, 37, with the baby and another photo of baby shoes. It was captioned simply with Rocki's name, a date - Sept. 13 - and an emoji ribbon.

The couple announced their pregnancy during the Met Gala in May, where Rihanna appeared in a pinstripe look and a huge hat, her baby bump on display. Rocky, 36, who served as a gala co-chair, told reporters, "It's time that we show the



Rihanna

people what we was cooking up. And I'm glad everybody's happy for us 'cause we definitely happy, you know."

The couple has a track record for starry pregnancy announcements, with Rihanna emerging on the 2023 Super Bowl stage with a baby bump on full display. Their son Riot Rose was born later that year.

The birth comes just months after A\$AP Rocky was acquitted on firearms charges in Los Angeles, in February. He leaped with joy into Rihanna's arms when the verdict was read. She was consistently present during the trial, and brought their two sons to the closing arguments. (AP)

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NEW YORK: Sean "Diddy" Combs returns to court Thursday for a hearing that could help decide how long the Grammy-winning producer will stay in prison.

Judge Arun Subramanian plans to listen to arguments from lawyers on points of law that could help him decide a sentence for the Bad Boy Records founder, who was convicted of prostitution-related charges in July.

Int'l film festival in China to screen movies from 25 countries

5th Annaba Mediterranean Film Fest opens in Algeria

ALGIERS, Sept 25, (Agencies): The fifth edition of the Annaba Mediterranean Film Festival has kicked off in Algeria, featuring 76 films from 20 countries competing until September 30.

The festival was inaugurated Wednesday evening with Spain as the guest of honor. This year's edition also has three Academy Award winners presiding over the juries of the official competitions.

Competing films will vie for a number of awards, most notably the Golden Gazelle for Best Feature Film, along with prizes for Best Director, Actor, Actress, and Screenplay.

The festival also features awards for short films and documentaries, including the Ammar Askari Award for Best Short Documentary, and, for the first time, an award dedicated to Artificial Intelligence in cinema.

The Commissioner of the Annaba Mediterranean Film Festival, Mohammad Allal said during the opening ceremony that the large and diverse selection of films-spanning official competitions and parallel screenings-aims to make the festival a space for cultural dialogue, and cinematic exchange.

The opening night also honored several renowned figures in Mediterranean and international cinema, including Algerian director Ghaouti Bendedouche, Spanish actress Pilar Bardem, and Egyptian actor Khaled Al-Nabawy.

Participating countries include Palestine, Tunisia,

Libya, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Spain, Italy, Turkey, and Greece, underscoring the festival's richness of cinematic production across the Mediterranean region.

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The ninth Pingyao International Film Festival opened in the ancient town of Pingyao in north China's Shanxi Province on Wednesday evening, with 53 films from 25 countries and regions to be screened.

Works from countries and regions such as China, Nigeria, Iraq, Norway, Japan, Iran, Brazil, Singapore and Bulgaria will make their debut in the Chinese mainland. Over half of the films will have their Asian premieres and 30 percent global premieres.

With the theme of "Meeting Point," the festival will run until Sept. 30, focusing on discovering and promoting exceptional works by young directors, especially those from emerging and developing countries.

Founded in 2017, the Pingyao International Film Festival is held annually in Pingyao, a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site. It aims to enhance communication among filmmakers from all over the world to promote global film creation.

Over the past nine years, the film festival has attracted more than 5,000 filmmakers and 450 works from over 50 countries and regions, as well as 2 million tourists from home and abroad.

Meanwhile, Taiwanese cinema is shining brilliantly

on international stages in the second half of the year, with screenings at film festivals across Europe and North America showcasing a diverse range of works and underscoring the growing prominence of Taiwanese filmmakers worldwide.

At the 78th Locarno International Film Festival in Switzerland, the animated short "Force Times Displacement" won the Medien Patent Verwaltung AG Award. Directed by Angel Wu, the piece combines biological imagery, hand-drawn illustration, stop-motion techniques, and live-action footage, accompanied by music composed with yueqin.

At the 24th New York Asian Film Festival, Pan Keyin's "Family Matters" clinched the Uncaged Award for Best Feature Film-the first Taiwanese production to earn the honor. The film offers a poignant exploration of family dynamics in Taiwan. Additionally, actor Vivian Sung received the Best from the East Award for her performance in Taiwan-South Korea co-production "The Secret House."

The 82nd Venice International Film Festival also witnessed significant contributions from Taiwanese filmmakers. Singing Chen's virtual reality work "The Clouds are Two Thousand Meters Up" won the Grand Prize of Venice Immersive. Tsai Ming-liang's documentary "Back Home" was featured in the official selection, while his classic "Vive l'amour" was included in Venice Classics.

Fashion

Dell'Acqua layers softness with strength

Max Mara delivers lightness with edge

MILAN, Sept 25, (AP): Max Mara takes a sexy power turn for next summer, showing lots of skin with a touch of fetishism in a collection previewed Thursday during Milan Fashion Week.

Creative director Ian Griffiths created soft volumes out of organza and technical mesh that enhanced shoulders and hips with a twirling ruffle effect. Leaf-shaped organza cutouts were tailored into fluttery skirts and jackets - long and short - that whispered down the runway

The backbone of the collection was the power suit with a hint of fetishism. Pencil skirts and trousers out of stretch jersey were paired with cropped knitwear that showed off belts accenting the bare midriffs. Griffiths linked the fetishistic reference to British style "at its best," even when elegant and formal.

While the main silhouette was slim and sexy, the wide-legged palazzo pant also had a cameo role.

The collections hewed to Max Mara's camel and black trademark monochromes, with just one print featuring faded rococo shell and coral images.

Griffiths said his pursuit of lightness was a response to both rising global temperatures and tensions.

"The theme for Max Mara this season is lightness and strength, and capriciousness and playfulness. Playfulness with power," Griffiths said. "I think everyone is looking for a little bit of escapism and poetry in their clothes right now."

Alessandro Dell'Acqua's No. 21 collection for next spring and summer, presented Wednesday during Milan Fashion Week, is a study in lightness, as a hedge against the heavy times.

"I believe that in moments of heaviness and uncertainty, sometimes taking a moment of lightheartedness and clearing your mind a bit can be good for you," Dell'Acqua said backstage. "This is why I made it so light."

Nowhere was the concept more at play than in chiffon petal cutouts that were sewn together in ruffles on dresses, or as a collar around the neck, rustling delicately with the movement. Dell'Acqua also created wilted flowers out of chiffon that he pinned on garments, "as if forgotten by time."

The lightness allowed Dell'Acqua to layer amply. Plaid kilts were underpinned by petticoat layers. Prairie



A model wears a creation as part of the Fendi Spring/Summer 2026 collection presented in Milan, Italy, Wednesday, Sept. 24. (AP)



A model wears a creation part of the Max Mara women's Spring-Summer 2026 collection, presented in Milan, Italy, Thursday, Sept. 25. (AP)

skirts with a big hem ruffle were tied prettily at the waist. Silken slip dresses were worn one atop the other.

Silvia Venturini Fendi has taken full creative control of her family's fashion house, unleashing her powers on a co-ed Spring-Summer 2026 collection previewed during Milan Fashion Week on Wednesday that displayed the heritage Italian brand's craft and fantasy.

A color block Peekaboo bag with the opening look set the stage for the joyous, youthful collection that burst with color and floral detailing. The palette featured deep reds, bright turquoise, bubblegum pinks with black and brown neutrals.

Cut-out daisy petals on jackets and dresses popped with contrast piping. A soft stuffed flower was stuck on a handbag like a favorite toy or totem. Blurred floral prints on sheers lending a dreamy effect. Pleats were layered into skirts and worn with sheer floral lace blouses. And in the technical pinnacle: a fur coat fashioned from adjoining florets. In short, a marvel of technique with every look.

"It's about a relaxed and colorful sense of ease with a romantic elegance," Venturini Fendi said in notes, adding that she was attracted by the duality of combining "simple gestures and complex work."

Perforated leather coats, jackets and sporty side-zipped skirts combine durability and workmanship in a way that transcends trends and seasons.

The Jil Sander silhouettes for next spring and summer previewed Wednesday during Milan Fashion Week were

light, crisp and inviting, broken by subtle flashes of skin that gaped only briefly.

The brand's new creative director Simone Bellotti returned the runway show to the brand's modernist headquarters overlooking the historic Sforzesco Castle -- part of his studious approach to unlocking the tailoring and structure behind Jil Sander's minimalist codes. Bellotti made it look easy.

Coats and jackets held their shape as if suspended on the frame, curved for her, or straight for unisex looks. Hidden embroidery cinched coats, jackets and shirts at the waist with origami-like folds. Body hugging knits tucked into double-faced leather skirts featuring a slight peek-a-boo slit across the front. Trousers hugged the hips, sometimes with an ever-so-slightly suggestive slit along the waistband.

Cropped knitwear had an almost shrunken feel, with three-quarter length sleeves layered over lighter plies. Slits across the bodice burst open into to gaping holes that revealed sequin or pleated bralettes. A series of Georgette crepe dresses appeared assembled from raw-edged strips, which the studious designer said were meant to recall the pages of a book.

Bellotti, who joined Jil Sander from Bally in March, said he sought "a balance between ... structure and tailoring and classicism, that to me, is like the castle outside. I really think that this brand always has these elements. And so I'm just trying to understand how to make it."

Chastain, who is also the show's executive producer, took to Instagram Wednesday to say she was "not aligned on the decision to pause the release," arguing that the show is "so relevant" and she's never "shied away from difficult subjects."

A media contact for the show did not immediately comment on Chastain's post.

In the eight-part limited series, Chastain plays a suburban mother-of-two and a military veteran who works at the Anti-Hate Alliance. There, she secretly visits 4Chan-like message boards posing as a white nationalist and tries to draw out possible terrorists. The series includes sniper fire and the bombing of a government building.

Apple TV+ did not elaborate why it choose to postpone the show's release, only that it did so after "careful consideration." The series was to debut Friday but Apple TV+ postponed it Tuesday to an unknown date in the future.

The decision came in the wake of the shooting death of conservative leader Kirk. Prosecutors have charged a 22-year-old and said he sent text messages appearing to show the act was motivated by wanting to stop Kirk's "hatred." (AP)



Immersive experience at the Moscow pavilion



An immersive cultural encounter awaits at the Moscow pavilion.



Maestro Ivan Rudin to lead the Moscow State Symphony Orchestra in a Gulf debut.

Russian heritage comes alive in Kuwait's heart

Moscow Seasons in Kuwait: A cultural bridge to the Gulf

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 25: In an exclusive Arab Times feature, senior Moscow officials and cultural leaders share the story behind the landmark “Moscow Seasons in Kuwait” festival—the first of its kind in the Middle East. Speaking with Arab Times, Evgeny Kozlov, First Deputy Head of the Office of the Mayor and the Government of Moscow and Chairman of the Moscow City Tourism Committee, describes this initiative as a unique opportunity for Kuwaiti audiences to discover the rich heritage, vibrant energy, and legendary hospitality of the Russian capital. The visit also marks the Kuwait debut of the Moscow State Symphony Orchestra, led by Artistic Director and Conductor Maestro Ivan Rudin, who spoke about the universal language of music and the festival’s message of cultural connection.

Bringing Moscow to Kuwait: A cultural first

Kozlov revealed that Kuwait was chosen as the festival’s launchpad in the Middle East due to “a tenfold increase in Kuwaiti tourists to Moscow since 2019,” highlighting the country’s growing significance as a travel partner. He stated, “The Festival ‘Moscow Seasons in Kuwait’ is a wonderful opportunity to discover Moscow’s rich culture, beauty, energy, and hospitality. We are confident this festival will inspire even more residents of Kuwait to experience

our city firsthand.”

The Moscow Tourism Committee’s prior business missions and partnerships with Kuwait’s tourism sector and cultural institutions paved the way for this collaboration. “Kuwait is a key partner for us. We cooperate with Kuwait’s tourism sector and cultural institutions, and earlier this year, we agreed to bring this festival to Kuwait. We are grateful for the chance to present the vibrant spirit of Moscow in this important part of the region,” Kozlov continued.

Festival highlights: Music, virtual journeys, and Russian flavors

Kuwaiti audiences can look forward to an immersive experience at The Avenues Mall. “The Moscow pavilion will immerse visitors in the atmosphere of the Russian capital. Guests will enjoy live music, explore a winter-themed photo exhibition, taste our signature ‘Moscow’ tea with traditional sweets, and learn about the Moscow Tea Time project. At our Tourist Information Center stand, visitors can take virtual walks through Moscow using VR technology and gather all the information needed for travel,” Kozlov explained.

The festival will reach its crescendo on September 27 with a grand concert by the Moscow State Symphony Orchestra at Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Centre, where the program will feature Rimsky-Korsakov’s “Sche-



Evgeny Kozlov, First Deputy Head of the Office of the Mayor and the Government of Moscow and Chairman of the Moscow City Tourism Committee

noted. “We now have over 150 certified guides fluent in English, Arabic, and other languages. All five tourist information centers in Moscow provide services in both English and Arabic. We’ve created a specialized guide for Middle Eastern visitors featuring key attractions and hotels with halal dining options. Arabic is being increasingly integrated throughout the city’s tourist infrastructure.”

Building long-term cultural bridges

Beyond the festival, Moscow is investing in sustainable ties. “The Moscow Seasons in Kuwait festival elevates our cultural exchange to a new level. We are already building strong partnerships with Kuwait’s tourism circles and influencers. This year, we hosted two Kuwaiti bloggers in Moscow as part of these efforts,” Kozlov shared, emphasizing ongoing business missions and familiarization trips to foster mutual cultural discovery.

The Orchestra’s Kuwait Debut: Music as a universal language

For Moscow State Symphony Orchestra’s Artistic Director, Maestro Ivan Rudin, the Gulf debut is more than a concert — it’s a statement of unity through art. “This program introduces Kuwaiti audiences to some of the greatest masterpieces of Russian classical music. Rimsky-Korsakov’s ‘Scheherazade’ reflects Eastern richness

through Russian eyes. Tchaikovsky’s ‘Nutcracker’ is an emblem of Russian art, while Stravinsky’s ‘Firebird’ shows our nation’s artistic evolution,” Rudin said. “Together, these works reveal the power of music to connect times, cultures, and nations.”

Rudin also highlights the orchestra’s educational outreach: Pianist Tatyana Sukhareva will lead a masterclass, and Kuwaiti university students are invited to attend open rehearsals. “Such exchanges allow young musicians to witness the creative process up close and foster deeper understanding between our cultures.”

Looking Ahead: cultural diplomacy in action

Rudin asserts that international tours enrich both the artists and global audiences, building bridges of respect and inspiration. “Each time we perform abroad, we enrich our orchestra and those we play for. Cultural exchange fosters respect, cooperation, and ensures that our art remains a living bridge across societies.”

The “Moscow Seasons in Kuwait” festival stands as both an invitation and a promise—a celebration of shared stories, music, and discovery, solidifying a new chapter in the cultural partnership between Moscow and Kuwait.

On Sept 25, the Moscow Seasons Festival held its grand opening in Kuwait, bringing the Russian capital’s

most celebrated cultural event to the Middle East for the very first time. From 25 to 27 September, visitors of The Avenues Mall — one of the largest and most vibrant shopping centers in the region — will be immersed in Moscow’s rich cultural heritage, modern attractions, and warm hospitality.

The Moscow pavilion, set up in the bustling Grand Plaza of The Avenues, offers guests a unique interactive experience. Visitors will discover:

- A cultural exhibition and photo zone “Moscow Winter Fairytale”, where guests can leave winter wishes in Arabic and English and explore Moscow’s seasonal magic.
- The Moscow Tea Time stand, inviting everyone to taste traditional sweets, candies, and signature “Moscow” tea blend.
- A tourist information stand, complete with VR headsets for virtual tours of the Russian capital, Arabic-language brochures, guides to halal-friendly infrastructure, and souvenir sticker packs.
- The Discover Moscow Quest, an interactive challenge for guests with different prizes each day.

Daily evening performances on the festival stage will create a vibrant atmosphere. The ensembles Balalaikes and Vselena Folk will perform live from 19:00 to 22:00, blending Russian folk traditions with modern music styles.

Media

Summit to host 400 speakers and 300 activations this December

UAE launches Bridge Summit ... world’s largest platform for media, entertainment

ABU DHABI, Sept 25: The UAE National Media Office (NMO) has announced the launch of the BRIDGE Summit, scheduled to take place in Abu Dhabi from December 8 to 10, 2025, at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre (ADNEC). The summit will become the world’s largest gathering of leaders in media, cultural, and creative industries, alongside policymakers, offering a global platform for collaboration and knowledge exchange.

Set within the region’s largest venue, spanning over 1.65 million square feet across six zones, within seven content tracks, the event is expected to attract more than 60,000 participants, including creators, producers, artists, publishers, entrepreneurs, investors, universities, and research centres. The summit will feature over 400 global speakers and 300 exhibitors, forming the largest collective marketplace for media, content, and entertainment worldwide.

Across three days, BRIDGE Summit will host more than 200 activities and activations, including 200 panel discussions and talks, 50 workshops, and interactive sessions, designed to foster cross-sector collaboration. Participants will have the opportunity to forge deals and partnerships, develop production ecosystems and value chains, and exchange expertise with leading global industry figures.

The largest debut media event in the world

The BRIDGE Summit welcomes participants from across the entire media and content ecosystem, spanning music and performing arts, cinema, television, digital platforms, and social media, as well as literature, publishing, and translation. The summit will also shine a spotlight on emerging industries, including gaming, augmented and virtual reality, while extending to design, architecture, crafts, and cultural products. Traditional and modern media institutions, alongside universities, research centres, and innovation hubs, will play a central role in shaping the conversations.

By bringing together leaders, decision-makers, and forward-looking visionaries, the summit offers a shared space for dialogue, the exchange of experiences, and the launch of new initiatives, bridging sectors and geographies in a unique global forum.

Transforming discussions into opportunities

BRIDGE Summit is conceived as an open laboratory where ideas are translated into practical pathways and connections evolve into long-term partnerships. The event provides creators, entrepreneurs, and investors with an environment beyond conventional frameworks, fostering innovation and future-focused collaboration. Individual initiatives will be nurtured into scalable projects, while knowledge exchange will be leveraged to generate tangible cultural and economic value.

The summit will feature joint production labs, platforms for dialogue between regulators and industry leaders, and spaces that connect projects with finan-



A graphic rendering for the upcoming BRIDGE Summit 2025.

ciers, investors, and distributors. Dedicated zones will showcase research and artistic work, promoting cross-border expertise exchange. In-depth sessions will focus on establishing unified professional standards, building new competencies, and strengthening a global network based on trust and shared vision, transforming cross-cultural encounters into sustainable economic, cultural, and investment opportunities.

A global discussion for meaningful and sustainable content

The impact of the BRIDGE Summit will extend well beyond the event itself, setting in motion strategic pathways for lasting progress. Economically, it will support the growth of creative sectors, transforming individual talent into viable enterprises, fostering business creation and sustainability, and attracting forward-looking investment. Socially, the summit will reinforce values of inclusion and cultural diversity, ensuring equal representation for all creatives while promoting a culture of positive competition in acquiring future skills.

Culturally and artistically, it will enrich creative content and emphasise diversity and difference as enduring civilisational and aesthetic values. At an organisational level, it will help reshape the global frameworks that govern these industries, supporting the development of cross-border infrastructure capable of driving sustainable growth.

A driver of development and a

bridge of understanding

His Excellency Abdulla bin Mohamed bin Butti Al Hamed, Chairman of the UAE National Media Office and Chairman of the UAE Media Council, Chairman of Bridge said: “BRIDGE Summit is a transformative milestone for the global media and creative industries. It redefines the role of media, content, and creative platforms as strategic drivers of development, while strengthening national identity and opening new bridges of understanding and exchange between nations.”

The Chairman added: “The summit reinforces the value of content as the true capital of nations and a renewable resource for creativity and growth. In today’s world, the balance of power is shaped not only by economies and technology, but also by the ability of societies to create meaningful and impactful content. BRIDGE Summit is more than a gathering of specialists; it is a step towards building a shared global consciousness that recognises the lasting influence of content on minds, markets, and the future.”

H.E. emphasised that the partnerships, initiatives, and joint projects launched through the BRIDGE Summit will leave a lasting mark on the global creative landscape, contributing to a leading model for shaping the future and reinforcing the UAE’s role as a hub for positive influence and transformative change.

7 content tracks spanning 1.65 million square feet shaping the future of media, content, and entertainment.

At BRIDGE Summit, the experience unfolds across seven content tracks that together map the full spectrum of media, content, and entertainment. The Media Track explores the evolution of newsrooms, social platforms, story formats, audience dynamics, and distribution models. The Creator Economy Track examines how creators generate value, from revenue streams and brand deals to fan subscriptions and platform tools. The Music Track dives into digital production, streaming economies, fan communities, rights and royalties, and the rise of AI composers.

The Gaming Track immerses participants in esports arenas, virtual worlds, interactive play, modding culture, and evolving game economies. In the Tech Track, attention shifts to breakthroughs in AI models, generative tools, mixed reality, automation, and the future of data. The Marketing Track highlights the strategies shaping performance ads, story-driven brands, consumer insights, omni-channel engagement, and influencer playbooks. Finally, the Picture Track showcases the power of visual storytelling through cinematic tech, short-form videos, streaming originals, immersive visuals, and cross-media narratives. Together, these tracks create a panoramic view of the forces driving the future of global media and entertainment.

By launching BRIDGE Summit, the UAE reinforces its mission to create spaces for positive influence and constructive exchange among cultures, cementing its role as a global platform for shaping major transformations in media, content, and creativity. By convening policymakers, creators, and influencers, the summit will set new agendas, create opportunities, and develop purposeful narratives that amplify the positive impact of media and drive sustainable change in public discourse and behaviour.

Registration for the BRIDGE Summit 2025 is now open at: <https://www.worldmediabridge.com/en/>



A graphic rendering for the upcoming BRIDGE Summit 2025.



KUNA photos
Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History in Washington

Smithsonian Museum: Global gateway to earth’s wonders

WASHINGTON, Sept 25, (KUNA): The Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History in Washington, founded in 1910, remains one of the world’s most visited museums, dedicated to scientific research, education, and inspiring curiosity about Earth’s remarkable natural heritage and biodiversity.

The museum building itself is both an architectural and cultural landmark, serving simultaneously as a scientific institution and cultural treasure, combining advanced research, engaging exhibitions, and public outreach to enhance understanding of natural history and the importance of environmental awareness.

With free admission and convenient access, the museum welcomes millions of visitors every year, making it a top destination for students, families, tourists, and researchers eager to explore and better understand the history and diversity of our planet.

Housing over 145 million specimens, including fossils, minerals, plants, animals, and cultural artifacts, the museum preserves one of the world’s largest natural history collections, featuring the Hope Diamond, human evolution exhibits, and geological milestones across Earth’s history.

The museum not only displays natural wonders but also educates visitors about environmental challenges, emphasizing humanity’s role in the global ecosystem and inspiring reflection on preserving Earth’s fragile ecological balance and invaluable natural resources.

Serving as a leading research institution in anthropology, paleontology, zoology, mineralogy, and environmental sciences, the museum combines advanced laboratories and global programs to study biodiversity, climate change, and evolution while connecting scientific knowledge to communities worldwide.

Whether visiting to admire the Hope Diamond, explore human origins, or marvel at biodiversity, the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History provides a profound experience, deepening respect for nature, inspiring curiosity, and encouraging reflection on the wonders of Earth.

World leaders commit to stronger climate action at UN summit

China announces new climate goal to cut emissions

UNITED NATIONS, Sept 25, (AP): With China leading the way by announcing its first emission cuts, world leaders said Wednesday they are getting more serious about fighting climate change and the deadly extreme weather that comes with it.

At the United Nations' high-level climate summit, Chinese president Xi Jinping announced the world's largest carbon-polluting country would aim to cut emissions by 7% to 10% by 2035. China produces more than 31% of the world's carbon dioxide emissions, and they have long been soaring.

The announcement came as more than 100 world leaders gathered to talk of increased urgency and the need for stronger efforts to curb the spewing of heat-trapping gases.

With major international climate negotiations in Brazil 6½ weeks away, the United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres convened a special leaders summit Wednesday during the General Assembly to focus on specific plans to curb emissions from coal, oil and natural gas.

After more than six hours of speeches, promises and announcements, about 100 nations - responsible for about two-thirds of the world's emissions - gave plans or some kind of commitments to further curb fossil fuel emissions and fight climate change, Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed said.

In a video address, Xi pledged that China would increase its wind and solar power sixfold from 2020 levels, make pollution-free vehicles mainstream and "basically establish a climate adaptive society."

Europe then followed with a less detailed and not quite official new climate change fighting plan. Ursula von der Leyen, president of the European Commission, said last week, member states agreed that their emissions cutting targets would range between 66% and 72%. The EU will formally submit its plan before the November negotiations.

While the new promises are in the right direction and show stronger commitment to fighter climate change, "these targets will not be enough to keep us safe from climate destruction," said Jake Schmidt, senior strategic director for international climate at the Natural Resources Defense Council.

Xi and Brazil's leader also made statements on Wednesday afternoon that may have referred to U.S. President Donald Trump's attacks a day earlier on renewable energy and the concept of climate change. "While some countries are acting against it, the international community should stay focused on the right direction," Xi said.



Secretary General Antonio Guterres leads a climate summit, Wednesday, Sept. 24, at UN headquarters. (AP)

Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, who is hosting the upcoming climate conference, said, "no one is safe from the effect of climate change. Walls at borders will not stop droughts or storms," Lula said. "Nature does not bow down to bombs or warships. No country stands above another."

Said Guterres: "The science demands action. The law commands it. The economics compel it. And people are calling for it."

Marshall Islands President Hilda Heine said she was there to issue "a demand for us all to wake up from a community whose hospitals and schools are being destroyed" by rising tides. She said she has regularly been awakened by floods and drought emergencies in her small island nation and that it will soon be others' turn.

"If we fail to wake up now and end our dependence on fossil fuels the leaders of

every country in this room will be woken up by calls about catastrophes of wild fires, of storms, of heatwaves, and of starvation and drought," she said.

Pakistani Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif said his country knows this all too well, with recent floods that have affected 5 million people across over 4,000 villages, killing over 1,000.

"As I speak to you, my country is reeling from intense monsoon rains, flash floods, mudslides and devastating urban flooding," he said. "We are facing this calamity at a time when the scars of the 2022 floods that inflicted losses exceeding \$30 billion and displaced millions are still visible across our land."

Anthony Albanese, prime minister of Australia, called this a decisive decade for climate action and said Australians know the toll of more frequent and extreme weather events like cyclones, floods, bush fires and droughts. "Australia knows we are not alone," he said.

"Warming appears to be accelerating," climate scientist Johan Rockstrom said in a science briefing that started the summit. "Here we must admit failure. Failure to protect peoples and nations from unmanageable impacts of human-induced climate change." "We're dangerously close to triggering fundamental and irreversible change," Rockstrom said.

Texas Tech climate scientist Katharine Hayhoe told leaders that every tenth of a degree of warming is connected to worsening floods, wildfires, heat waves, storms and many more deaths: "What's at stake is nothing less than everything and everyone we love."

In a news conference, Lula said he invited both Trump and Xi to the November climate negotiations, saying it's important that leaders listen to scientists.

Under the 2015 Paris climate accord, 195 nations are supposed to submit new more stringent five-year plans on how to curb carbon emissions from the burning of coal, oil and natural gas.

U.N. officials said countries really need to get their plans in by the end of the month so the U.N. can calculate how much more warming Earth is on track for if nations do what they promise. Former U.S. President Joe Biden submitted America's plan late last year before leaving office and the Trump administration has distanced itself from the plan.

Before 2015, the world was on path for 4 degrees Celsius (7.2 degrees Fahrenheit) of warming since pre-industrial times, but now has trimmed that to 2.6 degrees Celsius (4.7 degrees Fahrenheit), Guterres said.

Focus on what matters most to you

Start small for a stronger, healthier you

NEW YORK, Sept 25, (AP): Wellness advice seems to be everywhere these days, but change can be hard. How do you start a journey toward better health that you can stick with, and not be overwhelmed?

Among the experts' advice: Start with a little and it can turn into something big. Be consistent. Try to find people who can help you stay the course.

Kristina Schuldt is a family medicine physician and wellness director for about 14,000 employees of the Mayo Clinic Health System.

"Wellness means different things to people. There's fitness and physical wellness, but there's also mental wellness, financial wellness, spiritual wellness," she said. "A person should define what their wellness goal is."

Don't take on the entire wellness universe at once, she warned. Start with small steps.

Increase water intake, for example, using a bottle or jug big enough to hold a day's worth, with markings on the side to let you see how much you drink. If quitting smoking is the goal, cut down by one cigarette until it feels



Jenny Watson works out at Titan Training in Forney, Texas on Sept. 12, 2025. (AP)

comfortable, then do the same thing again and again.

That goes for getting your steps in, too. If you're not used to long walks, start with a few blocks and increase by two every week.

In the kitchen, experiment with healthy foods to find out which ones

you like. Will it be pumpkin but not kale? Flaxseed but not cranberries? Don't force yourself to eat foods you don't like. At the table, eat slowly. Savor each bite and try to recognize when you're nearly full.

"Go with what we call the low-hanging fruit at first," Schuldt said of first steps overall.

At her heaviest, Jenny Watson weighed 420 pounds. In January 2023, she said, "I was at a point where I was like, I can't do this anymore. I'm tired. My body hurts. I had hit rock bottom."

Watson, a 36-year-old mom of two and a hairstylist in suburban Dallas, tried a lot of fitness programs before finding one that stuck. While she's still not at her ideal weight, the pounds she lost have stayed off. She works out, including weightlifting, and has started eating more whole foods, cutting processed foods from her diet.

Her biggest supporter, she said, is her husband, who has made changes in solidarity. She used to be a night owl, but both of them now head to bed at 10 p.m.

Andrea Leigh Rogers, a fitness trainer who has worked with celebri-

ties like Gisele Bündchen and Nicole Scherzinger and has written a new book, "Small Moves, Big Life," urges people trying to achieve a healthier lifestyle: Don't fall for whatever wellness trend is making the rounds.

"There's the game of comparison. I don't look like her. I can't do that if I don't look like her. Other barriers also feel heavy, like I have to pay \$50 to do one class," she said.

You don't. What you do need is to be consistent. That might mean mindful breathing, followed by a few minutes of stretching and a 10-minute workout in the morning. Or it could be a new approach to breakfast, or a rethink on the crush of daily responsibilities.

"We all have 10 minutes," Rogers said. A good plan, she added, follows the acronym FEEL: "It's fast, it's enjoyable, it's effective and there's longevity." James Keppel, in Fort Collins, Colorado, nearly lost his liver to cirrhosis. That was in 2019. His first order of business was to get sober, which he did through rehab. Then, he worked on becoming healthier overall by making a series of nutritional and other life changes.

Cost, quality and safety key

Kuwait hosts workshop to develop analysis tool for drug procurement

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

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 25: The Ministry of Health held a workshop titled "Developing a Multi-Criteria Analysis Tool for Post-Patent Drug Procurement", as part of its ongoing Health Technology Assessment Project.

The event was held in the presence of Assistant Undersecretary for External Health Services and Project Director Dr. Hisham Kalandar, as well as representatives from the pharmaceutical and drug control sectors, specialized medical departments, and experts from inside and outside the ministry.

Dr. Kalandar affirmed that drug procurement decisions should not rely solely on cost, highlighting the importance of a balanced approach that considers quality, safety, and supply reliability along with pricing.

He explained that the newly developed tool aims to enhance governance and streamline decision-making to better serve patients and strengthen the healthcare system.

During the workshop, participants discussed setting specific criteria and assigning weights using established scientific methodologies, as part of the preparation for field testing the tool by the ministry's procurement teams. A second workshop will follow to review the results and finalize the tool for integration into official regulations and procedures.

The initiative is expected to produce a user-friendly digital tool that provides decision-makers with accurate data, visual comparisons, and detailed graphs. Also, the outcomes will include the preparation of a peer-reviewed scientific paper documenting Kuwait's experience, and contributing to its growing regional leadership in pharmaceutical governance and health technology assessment.



A Smart Dragon-3 rocket blasts off from the sea near the city of Rizhao, east China's Shandong Province, Sept. 24. (Xinhua)

3 space weather missions

China launches IoT satellites for 'worldwide' connectivity

BEIJING, Sept 25, (Xinhua): A Chinese satellite constellation for Internet of Things (IoT) operations has deployed its first-phase network with 64 satellites, enabling real-time, global surface communications excluding polar regions.

It came after a rocket lifted off on Wednesday from the sea in east China's Shandong Province, sending 11 Geely-06 satellites into a preset orbit.

Geespace, the private satellite arm of automaker Geely Holding Group, deployed its constellation with six launches from 2022 to 2025, delivering full satellite reliability and network availability.

The constellation is designed to serve 20 million users worldwide, capable of handling up to 340 million messages per day. Serving up to 5 million high-frequency users and 15 million medium- and low-frequency users, it transmits 1,900-byte packets for text, voice and images.

The first-phase network is poised to expand to 72 satellites, thereby boosting capacity and enhancing service reliability. Geespace then plans to have 264 satellites in orbits in Phase Two for direct-to-smartphone links and 5,676 in Phase Three for global broadband. With its first phase complete, Geespace is planning to roll out commercial satellite-IoT connectivity worldwide.

Built for space-based connected-vehicle networks, the constellation enables real-time positioning and messaging, keeping cars continuously linked.

Geespace has partnered with China Unicom, Geely Auto, and construction machinery giant Zoomlion to pilot satellite-IoT fusion in smart vehicles,

marine fisheries, heavy machinery, and logistics.

Supported by the constellation, some Geely Zeekr and Galaxy electric vehicles now feature space communication. Users can send and receive messages via satellite when ground networks are disrupted.

China is now rapidly advancing the development of intelligent connected vehicle technologies. This pivotal platform integrates automotive technology with AI, information and communication, cloud computing, and big data, serving as the strategic compass guiding the global automotive industry's transformation.

□ □ □

Weather mission: NASA launched three new space weather missions on Wednesday, sending them on a million-mile journey to study the Sun's influence on Earth and its space environment.

A SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket lifted off at 7:30 a.m. Eastern Time (1130 GMT) from NASA's Kennedy Space Center in the US state of Florida, carrying the trio of spacecraft.

NASA later confirmed that all three missions were successfully deployed and are now en route to their destination at the first Earth-Sun Lagrange point, located about 1 million miles (1.6 million kilometers) from Earth toward the Sun.

The three missions are NASA's Interstellar Mapping and Acceleration Probe, NASA's Carruthers Geocorona Observatory, and Space Weather Follow-On-Lagrange 1 spacecraft of the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Protect women
Pakistan offers free HPV shot

ISLAMABAD, Sept. 25, (Xinhua): Pakistani Minister of State for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination Malik Mukhtar Ahmad Bharath said that the country's ongoing cervical cancer vaccination drive is not just a health campaign, but a promise of a healthier future for women in the South Asian country.

"The Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine is safe, free, and available to every eligible girl. By protecting their health today, we are safeguarding their education, their future, and their ability to contribute to society," he said during an event on Wednesday.

He said that cervical cancer is the third most common cancer among women in Pakistan, with two out of three women diagnosed not surviving, adding that the HPV vaccine is effective and scientifically proven, preventing more deaths per person vaccinated than any other immunization. The minister said that Pakistan's HPV vaccination initiative is aligned with the World Health Organization's Cervical Cancer Elimination Initiative, which aims to vaccinate 90 percent of girls worldwide against HPV by 2030.

In Pakistan, he said the campaign has been launched and to be executed in three phases, with eastern Punjab and southern Sindh being covered in the first phase, and the drive will be expanded to northwest Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and southwest Balochistan provinces in 2026 and 2027, respectively.

Meanwhile, cancer, heart disease and pneumonia were South Korea's top three causes of death in 2024, statistical office data showed Thursday.

Cancer caused 174.3 deaths per 100,000 South Koreans in 2024, up from 166.7 deaths in the previous year, according to Statistics Korea. It continued to rank first since relevant data began to be compiled in 1983.

Among the cancer-caused deaths, the death rate from lung cancer marked the highest with 38.0 deaths per 100,000 people, trailed by liver cancer with 20.4, colorectal cancer with 19.0, pancreatic cancer with 16.0, and gastric cancer with 14.1.

‘Head lice common but not dangerous’
Lice concerns rise as children return to school: Here’s what parents can do

NEW YORK, Sept 25, (AP): Children have returned to school and are bringing home stories about the things they learned and the friends they made. But some parents are concerned they could also be bringing home a tiny nuisance - lice.

Though schools are not the only place transmission occurs, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says head lice infestations in the US are most common among preschool and elementary-age children.

Since the middle of August when students began returning to school, more people have searched Google for information about the blood-sucking parasites and are seeking answers to common questions about how to prevent and treat infestations, according to Google Trends. The CDC estimates there are up to 12 million head lice infestations annually in the U.S. infecting children between 3 to 11 years old.

Experts say there is a lot of misinformation about lice. Here are the experts' answers to commonly asked questions:

Head lice are parasitic insects that feed on human blood, but they are difficult to find because they are very small, move quickly and avoid light. The hallmark symptom that indicates there might be an infestation is new and onset itching of the scalp, said Dr. Danilo C. Del Campo, a dermatologist in Chicago and a fellow of the American Academy of Dermatology.

The eggs, commonly called nits, can be yellow, brown or tan and look like tiny seeds, but when hatched will appear clear, experts say. An infestation can often be confused with dandruff or seborrheic dermatitis.

Becky Boudreau, a head lice technician in New Hampshire, says because lice are most active at night, parents may notice their children scratching more then or not sleeping well. She said it may take longer to recognize a lice infestation in children who have a high pain tolerance or are less reactive to insect bites.

There is no set number of lice that would classify as an infestation, either you have lice, or you don't, experts say.

Treatments to get rid of the insects include medication and specialists who use different methods to manually remove the eggs and adult lice. Depending on the age and temperament of the child, access to clinics or technicians, the cost and the severity of the infestation, including any sensitivities, will determine the most ap-



Jacob Anthon demonstrates the use of an FDA-cleared device that uses a combination of airflow temperature, speed, and direction to kill lice and eggs at Lice Clinics of America in Sugar Land, Texas, Monday, Sept. 22. (AP)

propriate treatment option. Many people hire nit pickers or visit clinics because they don't want to handle the insects, Boudreau said.

"It is still successful, but it is time consuming," said Boudreau, who became a head lice technician about six years ago after her child had an infestation.

Dr. Krista Lauer, national medical director for Lice Clinics of America, says their clinics have become another option. They use an FDA-cleared medical device that uses a combination of airflow temperature, speed and direction to kill lice and their eggs. Technicians consider children's heat sensitivity or restlessness, but for the treatment to be successful, they must use the device in a specific pattern before combing out the dead debris and using a washable topical substance, she said.

Boudreau, who uses shampoo, olive oil and a special comb to assist in combing out the insects, says many of the over-the-counter kits "are designed to fail" and often require multiple uses for this reason. Guidelines from the American Academy of Dermatology Association recommend retreating for any product that can be bought without a prescription, and that no approved method can kill lice and their eggs during the first treatment.

As long as people are using products, like shampoos, as indicated on their labels they should be OK, said Del Campo, who is board certified by the American Board of Dermatology. He emphasized that many of these products have been tested and

approved by the Food and Drug Administration. Some of those products include benzyl alcohol lotion which only kills lice and not the eggs, ivermectin lotion, malathion lotion, and lindane shampoo which can be toxic if used incorrectly.

But he said many dermatologists don't jump to using the lice combs or other procedure-based treatments because it often takes a lot of time and energy for parents, requires multiple applications and is not consistent across hair types. Instead, he said there are "effective over-the-counter medications that require no prescription, require no doctor guidance and are a wonderful first step for parents."

There is no scientific evidence that home remedies like smothering hair with oil, mayonnaise or something occlusive can kill lice or their eggs, experts say.

Adult lice can live for about 30 days on their hosts' heads. However, experts say they will die within two days if they fall off a person and cannot feed. Their eggs can take up to nine days to hatch and from there another seven days to mature into adult lice.

Lice cannot hop, jump or fly and are mostly spread through head-to-head contact where the parasites can crawl from one host to another, experts say.

The CDC suggests machine wash and dry clothing, don't use infected hair products, furniture or toys, and clean where infested people were. But their guidance also says it is less likely that lice could be spread through used products.

Savea to captain New Zealand

Wallabies veteran Slipper set for 150th test milestone against NZ



In this file photo, All Blacks Ardie Savea, top, is tackled by South Africa's Damian Willemse during their Rugby Championship test match in Wellington, New Zealand. (AP)

WELLINGTON, New Zealand, Sept 25, (AP): Ardie Savea will lead New Zealand against Australia in Saturday's Bledisloe Cup and Rugby Championship test in Auckland in the absence of injured regular captain Scott Barrett.

Head coach Scott Robertson otherwise made only four personnel changes to the starting lineup which suffered New Zealand's worst-ever test defeat at the hands of South Africa two weeks ago. New Zealand lost 43-10 after leading 10-7 at halftime.

Veteran hooker Codie Taylor returns and Fabian Holland is at lock in place of Barrett, who has a shoulder issue. Cam Roigard returns from injury at scrumhalf and Caleb Clarke has been named on the left wing for his first test in 2025.

Leroy Carter moves to the right wing and Will Jordan moves from winger to fullback.

On the bench, lock Patrick Tuipulotu and scrumhalf Cortez Ratima return and back-rower Peter Lakai is included for the first time this season.

Meanwhile, prop James Slipper will become the first Wallaby to play 150 tests after being named in Australia's starting lineup.

James O'Connor will start at flyhalf with Tane Edmed on the bench. Max Jorgenson will play a test at fullback for the first time after being moved from the wing to replace the injured Andrew Kellaway.

Scrumhalf Tate McDermott will start for the first time this year, combining with O'Connor in his 50th test while Ryan Lonergan could make his potential test debut from the bench.

Lock Lukhan Salakaia-Loto also starts for the first time in 2025, joining Nick Frost in the second row. Tom Hooper is at blindside flanker in the absence of Rob Valetini.

For the All Blacks, Beauden Barrett has been retained at flyhalf though his form this season has been poor and his kicking game continues to provide opponents with attacking opportunities. Jordie Barrett also has been retained in midfield.

The All Blacks' forward pack was overwhelmed at set-pieces against South Africa, yet Robertson made only two changes to the tight five, one of which was forced by injury. He hopes Taylor's return will improve the line-out.

After four rounds all four teams are 2-2 and with a chance of winning the Rugby Championship. Australia leads the tournament with 11 points, ahead of South Africa and New Zealand with 10 and Argentina with nine.

Lineups:
New Zealand: Will Jordan, Leroy Carter, Billy Proctor, Jordie Barrett, Caleb Clarke, Beauden Barrett, Cam Roigard; Wallace Sititi, Ardie Savea (captain), Simon Parker, Tupou Vaa'i, Fabian Holland, Tyrel Lomax, Codie Taylor, Ethan de Groot. Reserves: Samisoni Taukei'aho, Tamaiti Williams, Fletcher Newell, Patrick Tuipulotu, Peter Lakai, Cortez Ratima, Quinn Tupaea, Damian McKenzie.

Australia: Max Jorgensen, Harry Potter, Joseph-Aukuso Sua'ali'i, Len Ikitau, Corey Toole, James O'Connor, Tate McDermott; Harry Wilson (captain), Fraser McReight, Tom Hooper, Lukhan Salakaia-Loto, Nick Frost, Taniea Tupou, Billy Pollard, James Slipper. Reserves: Brandon Paenga-Amosa, Angus Bell, Allan Alaalatoa, Jeremy Williams, Carlo Tizzano, Ryan Lonergan, Tane Edmed, Filippo Daguino.

Renato Gaucho leaves Fluminense

Lopez, Roque fire Palmeiras into Libertadores semifinals



Maximiliano Salas of Argentina's River Plate, left, and Piquerez of Brazil's Palmeiras battle for the ball during a Copa Libertadores quarterfinal second leg soccer match at Allianz Parque stadium in Sao Paulo. (AP)

SAO PAULO, Sept 24, (Xinhua): Jose Manuel Lopez scored two late goals as Brazil's Palmeiras reached the Copa Libertadores semifinals with a 3-1 home win over Argentine side River Plate.

River Plate, which lost last week's first leg 2-1 in Buenos Aires, leveled the tie in the ninth minute through Maximiliano Salas' bullet header from Juan Fernando Quintero's set piece.

Former Barcelona forward Vitor Roque equalized just after halftime by tapping home from close range after his initial header was palmed away by goalkeeper Franco Armani.

The visitors were reduced to 10 men in the 87th minute when Marcos Acuna was shown a second yellow card for bringing down Facundo Torres in the penalty area.

Lopez converted the resultant spot-kick and added a second goal with a long-range effort in the 94th minute after combining with Raphael Veiga.

"This team has shown for years that it never gives up," Lopez said after the match. "We knew it was going to be a tough match because of what River Plate is and represents. We had a spectacular first half in Argentina and we suffered an early goal tonight due to a lapse in concentration. But we showed what we're made of by fighting back." Palmeiras is seeking a fourth Copa Libertadores title and third in the past six seasons. Abel Ferreira's team will meet the winner of the quarterfinal tie between Sao Paulo and LDU Quito in the semifinals next month.

Meanwhile, Renato Gaucho has stepped down as manager of Fluminense after the Brazilian club's elimination from the Copa Sudamericana.

In a statement, Fluminense said assistants Alexandre Mendes and Marcelo Salles had also tendered their resignations.

"The club thanks the professionals for all their dedication throughout their tenure and wishes them success in their careers," read a statement on the club's official website.

It added that former Fluminense midfielder Marcao would assume the job on an interim basis until a permanent replacement is named.

The announcement followed Fluminense's 1-1 home draw with Lanus in their Copa Sudamericana quarterfinal second leg on Tuesday, a result that condemned the Rio outfit to a 2-1 aggregate defeat.

"I always tried to do the best I could for the club in every competition," Renato told reporters. "I'll step aside to clear my head and let a few geniuses on the internet keep talking about football, since they know so much." Renato guided the four-time Brazilian Serie A champions to 21 wins, seven draws and 12 losses after taking charge of the club for a seventh time in April.

The former Brazil international forward also had spells as manager in 2014, 2009, 2007-08, 2003, 2002-03 and in 1996 when he filled the dual role as player-coach.

Fluminense has 31 points from 22 games in Brazil's Serie A, 20 behind leaders Flamengo, and is in the Copa do Brasil semifinals.

Juventus takes on Atalanta

Modric and De Bruyne set for first Serie A battle as Milan hosts Napoli



AC Milan's Luka Modric celebrates after scoring his side's opening goal during a Serie A soccer match between AC Milan and Bologna at San Siro stadium in Milan, Italy. (AP)



ROME, Sept 25 (AP): Luka Modric and Kevin De Bruyne have grown accustomed to facing each other in the Champions League. On Sunday at the San Siro, the two midfield standouts will have their first meeting in Serie A since their recent moves to Italy.

When Modric's AC Milan hosts De Bruyne's Napoli, it will also be a showdown between two of the Italian league's best-performing teams.

At age 40, Modric has helped transform Milan into a potential title challenger. De Bruyne, who is 34, has helped defending champion Napoli remain the team to beat.

Napoli will be looking to extend its perfect start, while Milan will be aiming for its fifth straight win across all competitions.

Modric's move to Milan came after 13 seasons at Real Madrid. De Bruyne spent a decade at Manchester City.

For club and country, Modric and De Bruyne have met 13 times, with De Bruyne's teams winning five, Modric's teams winning four, and four draws.

Both players have made an immediate impact in Serie A.

Modric scored in Milan's 1-0 win over Bologna, provided an assist in a victory over Lecce and has played 335 minutes in four Serie A matches - twice appearing from start to finish.

De Bruyne has scored twice in four Serie A games and seamlessly joined a stellar Napoli midfield featuring Scott McTominay, Stanislav Lobotka, and Frank Anguissa. He has also provided key leadership for the southern club's return to the Champions League.

It's not all about Modric and De Bruyne. Milan vs. Napoli also marks a meeting between coaches who have accounted for 11 of the past 15 Serie A titles.

But Allegri and Conte have not met for 12 years - since Conte's Juventus beat Allegri's Milan in October 2013. A few months later, Allegri was fired by Milan as Conte went on to win his third straight title at Juventus. Then Allegri replaced Conte at Juventus after that season and guided the Bianconeri to five consecutive titles.

On Saturday, Juventus hosts Atalanta, and unbeaten Cremonese visits Como.

Inter Milan center forward Pio Esposito hasn't yet scored in Serie A, but the 20-year-old is gaining admirers for his physical play and being touted as Italy's next great center forward.

Last weekend against Sassuolo, the 1.91-meter (6-foot-3) Esposito used his physical presence to hold off defenders and three times came close to scoring.

On Saturday, Inter visits Cagliari, which features Pio's older brother, Sebastiano Esposito. Another older brother, Salvatore, plays a midfielder for Spezia in Serie B.

United States forward Christian Pulisic has scored five goals in six matches across all competitions for Milan this season.

Milan winger Rafael Leão has been out with a right calf injury since exiting an Italian Cup match on Aug. 17, but could return against Napoli - likely off the bench.

The often-injured Roma playmaker Paulo Dybala is still out with a muscle issue for a game against Hellas Verona on Sunday. But the Giallorossi have performed well without him, winning the Rome derby last weekend and beating Nice in the Europa League on Wednesday.

Milan's city council was due to start discussing the sale of the San Siro to Milan and Inter on Thursday, with a vote scheduled for Monday.

If the sale is approved, the teams plan to tear down the 99-year-old stadium and jointly build a new arena.

India storms into Asia Cup final



India's captain Suryakumar Yadav plays a shot during the Asia Cup cricket match between India and Bangladesh at Dubai International Cricket Stadium in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. (AP)

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates, Sept 25, (AP): India reached the Asia Cup final after Abhishek Sharma struck 75 off 37 balls and Kuldeep Yadav picked 3-18 in four overs in a 41-run win over Bangladesh in their Super Four encounter. Sharma hit five sixes en route to his fourth T20 half-century as he powered India to 168-6 in 20 overs, after Bangladesh won the toss and opted to field.

Hardik Pandya's 38 off 29 balls helped India recover from a middle-order hiccup and finish with a par score on a slow wicket at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium.

In reply, Bangladesh was restricted to 127 all out despite a fourth T20 half-century from Saif Hassan. He scored 69 off 51 balls but couldn't help his side to a second victory chasing a similar target to when Bangladesh beat Sri Lanka here on Saturday. India's fielding left much to be desired again - it dropped five catches - but dominant



India's Abhishek Sharma celebrates his fifty runs during the Asia Cup cricket match between India and Bangladesh at Dubai International Cricket Stadium in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. (AP)

displays from Sharma and its spinners were enough to book a spot in the final. It is the second time India has reached the Asia Cup T20 final, hav-

ing won the title in 2016 after beating Bangladesh. India's win meant Sri Lanka was eliminated. The Indian openers made a watchful start but soon hit top gear as 21 runs came in the fourth over and Sharma-Gill added 77 off 38 balls for the first wicket. The powerplay yielded 72-0, and Gill scored 29 off 19 balls with two sixes. He fell in the seventh over, caught off Rishad Hossain at long off.

Hossain struck again as promoted Shivam Dube was out for two, caught in the same manner, and India was down to 83-2 in 8.1 overs. But there was no stopping Sharma, who belted sixes at will against the spinners and pacers alike, bringing up a second consecutive half-century off 25 balls. India crossed 100 just past the halfway stage as Sharma put on 29 off 18 balls for the third wicket, even though skipper Suryakumar Yadav only contributed four runs to the partnership. Sharma scored 25 off the next 12 balls, but a big moment came in the 12th over when Hossain made a good stop and ran out the opener, who was stranded midway. Yadav (5) was out caught five balls later as India lost all momentum at 114-4.

Pandya helped string together a valuable partnership with the lower-middle order and push India past 150 in the

18th over. He hit four fours and a six, adding 39 off 33 balls with Axar Patel, who scored 10 not out. Despite wickets in hand, India managed only four runs in the last over and finished short of an intended 180-target. Jasprit Bumrah got India's bowler off to a good start when he dismissed Tanzid Hassan for one. Saif Hassan and Parvez Emon put on 42 off 30 balls to put the chase back on track, but things changed as soon as India deployed its spinners, as all of them struck in their first spells.

Kuldeep Yadav sent back Emon, out caught at square leg for 21 off 19 balls. Varun Chakravarthy then bowled Shamim Hossain for a three-ball duck. In between, Patel had Towhid Hridoy caught for seven as Bangladesh slipped to 74-4 in 10.4 overs. Any hope of a turnaround was put out as Suryakumar Yadav ran out his counterpart Jakir Ali in the 13th over. Saif Hassan put up resistance, though, as he reached a second consecutive half-century off 36 balls, including three fours and six sixes. He enjoyed some luck along the way, dropped by Indian fielders on 40, 60, 65, and 69. But he didn't get enough support from the other as the Indian spinners - including part-timer Tilak Varma - shared seven wickets to help their side reach the final.

'I have unfinished business'

Booker's influence keeps Suns grounded in turbulent season

PHOENIX, Sept 25, (AP): There's a lot of new people surrounding the Phoenix Suns these days, from first-year coach Jordan Ott to first-year general manager Brian Gregory to new players like Jalen Green, Dillon Brooks, Mark Williams and Khaman Maluach.

One thing hasn't changed - Devin Booker plans on being a force for this franchise.

The four-time All-Star is entering his 11th season with the Suns, growing from a 19-year-old rookie to one of the most respected and accomplished shooting guards in the league. Still in his prime, the 29-year-old is the unquestioned leader of a team that's trying to bounce back from a string of tough seasons.



Booker

"The leadership aspect is going to be more important than ever this year - just realizing our roster, the age of our roster and the experiences I've had and what I've seen," Booker said. "I'm going to do what I can and I'm always going to use my voice."

Booker - who signed a \$145 million, two-year extension during the offseason that will keep him in Phoenix through 2030 - is already the leading scorer in franchise history, passing greats like Walter Davis, Kevin Johnson, Shawn Marion, Amar'e Stoudemire and Steve Nash.

Now he's working to lead the franchise back to the NBA Finals for the first time since 2021. That's an ambitious goal considering where the Suns are at in their current rebuild, but he's optimistic that the team's young core will gel quickly.

He's seen it happen before.

"Although we didn't get it done in '21, I was able to see it go from the bottom almost to the top," Booker said. "It wasn't easy, but just understanding that it's an everyday grind and it starts right now."

Later, he added: "I have unfinished business here."

Phoenix remade its roster after last year's 36-46 debacle, firing coach Mike Budenholzer and shipping 15-time All-Star Kevin Durant to the Houston Rockets. The Suns also bought out the contract of three-time All-Star Bradley Beal, who is with the Clippers.

Now Booker is surrounded by a much younger core that includes Green, Brooks and the 19-year-old Maluach, a 7-foot-2 center who was drafted with the No. 10 overall selection. The three players were all part of the return from the Rockets in the Durant trade.

Green is a promising young guard who averaged 20.1 points per game over four seasons in Houston after being drafted No. 2 overall in 2021. Brooks is known as a defensive stopper and an emotional leader, but also averaged 14 points per game for the Rockets last season while shooting nearly 40% from 3-point range.

The Suns dealt for 7-foot center Mark Williams, a 23-year-old who was productive when healthy during his first three seasons with the Charlotte Hornets. Phoenix is gambling that he can stay on the floor and grow into one of the game's better big men.

There's also a handful of holdovers who played quite a bit last season, including Grayson Allen, Royce O'Neale, Ryan Dunn and Oso Ighodaro.

The Suns are now led by the 40-year-old Ott, who comes to the Suns after spending more than a decade rising up the ranks of the NBA coaching world. He's spent time with the Hawks, Nets, Lakers and most recently the Cavaliers, who had the best record in the league's Eastern Conference last season.

Ott said Booker's deep commitment to the franchise is a luxury that most teams don't have.

"How lucky am I?" Ott said. "First year head coach, to have a superstar, a guy that's proven in this league, a guy that's done it at every single level in the NBA, the Olympics. I think whatever's happened in the past has happened in the past."

Top spot on the line as Kuwait Club, Al-Qadisia lock horns

Al Arabi poised to pounce

By Hassan Mosa
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 25: Soccer fans will turn their eyes to Jaber International Stadium today for the fourth round of the Zain Premier League, where defending champion Kuwait Club faces Al-Qadisia at 6:00 PM in a high-stakes clash that could shake up the league standings.

The round continues tomorrow with Al-Fahaheel hosting Al-Shabab at Abdullah Al-Khalifa Stadium and Kazma taking on Al-Arabi at Al-Sadaqa and Al-Salam Stadium. The round concludes on Sunday with Al-Nasr vs Al-Tadamon and Al-Salmiya vs Al-Jahra.

Three teams currently share the top spot with seven points each: Al-Qadisia, Kuwait Club, and Al-Arabi, with Al-Qadisia leading on goal difference. Al-Salmiya follows in fourth with six points, Kazma fifth, Al-Shabab sixth, and Al-Fahaheel seventh. Al-Nasr sits at the bottom with zero points, while Al-Tadamon and Al-Jahra occupy eighth and ninth place with one point each.

Kuwait Club comes into today's match after a 1-1 draw with Al-Arabi, a game that saw their captain Sam Morsi sent off in the first half; he later left the club. The team will depend on key players such as Reza Hani, Ahmed Al-Dhafiri,

and Ali Hussein in midfield, along with standout performances from Bahraini Mohamed Marhoon and Tunisian Taha Khenissi, who have scored three goals each in the opening rounds.

Al-Qadisia bounced back strongly after a previous loss to Al-Shabab, thrashing Al-Fahaheel 5-1. Its attack is led by Eid Al-Rashidi, Libyan Mohamed Soula, and Egyptian Mahmoud Kahraba. However, midfielder Talal Al-Fadel will miss the game due to a muscle injury sustained during his debut appearance after moving from Kuwait SC.

The two teams have met six times at Jaber Stadium, with Kuwait Club winning four, Al-Qadisia once, and one match ending in a draw. Kuwait Club has scored 10 goals against Al-Qadisia at Jaber, compared to Al-Qadisia's four goals.

Al-Arabi will monitor today's match closely, hoping for a favorable result ahead of its Saturday clash with Kazma. Despite a strong start in the first two rounds, it has struggled to convert chances into goals and is eager to return to title contention under coach Marco Alves. Kazma, meanwhile, seeks consistency after a mixed start—two draws with Al-Tadamon and Al-Jahra following a win over Al-Salmiya. It aims to secure all three points against Al-Arabi to stay near the top.

In the other fixture, Al-Fahaheel meets Al-Shabab in the "Tenth District Derby" at Abdullah Al-Khalifa Stadium. Both sides aim to overcome recent setbacks: Al-Shabab holds a one-point advantage after a win and a draw in previous rounds, while Al-Fahaheel comes off back-to-back losses following an opening-round victory over Al-Jahra.



Al-Qadisia and Kuwait Club players battle for the ball during a match.

Ali Naseer joins Kazma

Kuwait Club looks to extend unbeaten start against Kazma in Premier League

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

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 25: The fifth round of the Premier Handball League concludes today at Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex with two high-stakes matches. The main highlight sees Kuwait Club, last season's Arab champions, take on Kazma, the league runners-up, at 6:30 PM in a rematch just four days after their previous encounter. Earlier, at 5:00 PM, Al-Sulaibikhat faces Burgan.

In the previous round, Kuwait Club recorded a 37-29 victory over Al-Sulaibikhat, while Al-Salmiya narrowly defeated Kazma 35-34. The standings before today's matches are: Kuwait Club 8 points, Burgan and Al-Salmiya 6 points each, Kazma 5 points, Al-Qadisia and Al-Arabi 4 points

each, Al-Sulaibikhat 3 points, and Al-Nasr 0 points.

Kazma's squad today features a major boost: Ali Naseer, formerly of Al-Arabi. Following approval from the Sports Arbitration Authority, Naseer gained the freedom to sign with any club and officially joined Kazma. A talented wing player with extensive experience at the local and national levels, Naseer is expected to make an immediate impact for the "Orange team."

Today's match promises to be fiercely competitive. Kuwait SC aims to maintain its unbeaten start and continue dominating the league, having already defeated Kazma twice in the recent Arab Championship – once in the preliminary stage and again in the final. Kazma, meanwhile, looks to exact revenge, halt Kuwait Club's momentum, and climb temporarily to second place in the standings.



Ali Naseer

United eyes another victory following Chelsea drama

Isak in line to lead Reds' attack against Palace

MANCHESTER, England, Sept 25, (AP): Alexander Isak could make his first Premier League start for Liverpool against Crystal Palace on Saturday.

Liverpool coach Arne Slot has been easing the Sweden striker into the action since he completed a British record \$170 million deadline day transfer to Anfield. Until then, Isak had a disrupted offseason.

The suspension of Hugo Ekitike, who was red-carded for taking his shirt off during a goal celebration against Southampton on Tuesday, means Isak could be called upon at Selhurst Park.

The forward has already started games in the Champions League and English League Cup, where he scored his first goal for Liverpool on Tuesday. Isak has yet to be given 90 minutes for Liverpool and was taken off at halftime midweek.

Slot said he does not expect Isak to be up to full match sharpness until after the international break next month.

Federico Chiesa is another option in place of Ekitike after the Italian impressed with two assists against Southampton.

Liverpool is the only team in the



Manchester City's Phil Foden, left, plays the ball next to Huddersfield's Marcus Harness during the English League Cup third round soccer match between Huddersfield and Manchester City at the John Smith's stadium, in Huddersfield, England. (AP)

top flight with a 100% record. But the defending champion lost to Palace on penalties in the Community Shield in August.

The tests keep on coming for Arsenal. Mikel Arteta's team travels to Newcastle on Sunday having already faced Manchester United,

Liverpool and Manchester City.

The trip to St James' Park against Champions League rival Newcastle ends that brutal run of fixtures at the start of the campaign. Arsenal doesn't then meet one of the traditional English heavyweights until Tottenham in November.

United will be aiming to build on last week's dramatic win against Chelsea when it travels to Brentford on Saturday.

Whether from the start or off the bench, Isak will draw all eyes after his first goal for Liverpool. His 32 goals for Newcastle and Sweden last season earned him a reputation as one of Europe's deadliest finishers and his strike on Tuesday should be the first of many.

Speaking of goal machines, Erling Haaland has 13 in eight appearances for Man City and Norway. A home game against newly promoted Burnley could extend that record if he overcomes a back issue picked up against Arsenal last week.

Ekitike is suspended for his red card midweek and so is Casemiro for his sending off against Chelsea.

Arsenal will be without Noni Madueke for weeks because of a knee injury.

Tensions are rising at West Ham after four losses, with fans staging protests last week and calling for changes at board level.

Pressure is also mounting on manager Graham Potter, with growing speculation about his future after just nine months in the job.

Home of Champions: Athletes' village in Riyadh ready to host world's best

RIYADH, Sept 25: Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, will host the sixth edition of the Islamic Solidarity Games from November 7 to 21, 2025, welcoming over 3,000 athletes from 57 countries. At the heart of the event is the Athletes' Village, designed to accommodate more than 3,500 athletes and officials in a fully integrated environment, reflecting the Kingdom's commitment to delivering a world-class sporting experience.

The village features three residential buildings with nearly 1,200 rooms, including single, double, and triple occupancy options. Special attention has been given to accessibility, ensuring comfort and readi-

ness for all participants, including those with disabilities.

Beyond accommodations, the village offers administrative offices, meeting rooms, modern medical facilities, and 24/7 service centers. These facilities allow athletes to focus fully on their competitions in a safe and comfortable environment.

The Village Plaza serves as the social and cultural hub, combining sports and entertainment. With cafés, shops, events, and live performances, it offers athletes, media, and visitors a vibrant space for interaction and cultural exchange throughout the Games.



Authorities conduct inspection of Athletes' Village for 2025 Islamic Solidarity Games.

Bremen hopes to capitalize on Bayern hangover in Bundesliga

BERLIN, Sept 25, (AP): Bayern Munich will be hoping Oktoberfest doesn't upset its record start to the Bundesliga when Werder Bremen visits.

The 190th edition of the beer-filled festival started last weekend in Munich and Friday's match will be Bayern's only one at home before the celebrations end on Oct. 5.

Vincent Kompany's side will play in special Oktoberfest-themed kits for the occasion but the coach will be wary of the club's traditional drop in performance during the festivities. Bayern has only a 64% winning rate at home during Oktoberfest when it usually wins 76% of its home games in the Bundesliga.

Bremen defeated Bayern 5-2 in Munich during the 2008 Oktoberfest and Bayern has won only five of its last 11 games at home during the festival. Bayern also scores fewer goals and concedes more during Oktoberfest.

Having said that, Bayern's 12 points with

a goal difference of 15-plus is a record after four rounds.

Bayern's potential Oktoberfest hangover offers a glimmer of hope for unpredictable Bremen. Horst Steffen's team lost at home to Freiburg 3-0 last weekend after winning at Borussia Mönchengladbach 4-0 the week before.

Unbeaten Borussia Dortmund visits Mainz on Saturday buoyed by Germany defender Nico Schlotterbeck's return from injury and a new-found resilience under coach Niko Kovač. Dortmund won its last three Bundesliga games without conceding a goal.

Transformed after a coaching change, Gladbach hosts Eintracht Frankfurt on Saturday when the visitors will want to atone for a surprising 4-3 loss at home to Union Berlin last weekend. Gladbach produced an encouraging performance under interim coach Eugen Polanski to draw at Bayer Leverkusen 1-1 last weekend.

Soccer body prepares vote

Israel faces UEFA suspension

GENEVA, Sept 25, (AP): European soccer body UEFA is moving toward a vote to suspend its member federation Israel over the war in Gaza, people familiar with the proposal told The Associated Press on Thursday.

A majority of UEFA's 20-member executive committee is expected to support any vote in favor of suspending Israeli teams from international play, two sources told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the subject.

Such a step would prevent Israeli national and clubs teams from playing in international competitions including next year's World Cup. Israel's men's team is set to resume its World Cup qualifying campaign in two weeks with away games against Norway and Italy.

It is unclear whether world soccer body FIFA will support excluding Israel given the close relations between FIFA's leader, Gianni Infantino, and President Donald Trump.

The Trump administration's support to secure the World Cup, and process visas for players, officials and potentially hundreds of thousands of visiting fans, is seen as key to FIFA delivering a successful tournament in the U.S., Canada and Mexico next year.

A State Department spokesperson said it will work to stop any efforts that tried to ban Israel's team from the World Cup.

FIFA's ruling council is scheduled to meet in Zurich next week. The 37-member council includes eight from UEFA.

Calls to exclude Israel from soccer and other sports have increased in recent weeks amid an outcry over the humanitarian toll of its military campaign in Gaza. Last week Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez said Israel should be banned from international sports events just like Russia, which was sidelined after its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

Earlier this week seven independent experts working with the U.N. Human Rights Council urged FIFA and UEFA to suspend Israel from international competitions.

UEFA and its president Aleksander Ceferin signaled a tougher view on Israel last month when banners saying "Stop Killing Children. Stop Killing Civilians" were placed on the field in front of the Paris Saint-Germain and Tottenham teams ahead of the Super Cup game in Udine, Italy.

The discussion about whether to ban Israel from international sports comes as Israel faces increasing criticism and isolation over its military campaign, launched in response to the Hamas-led attack on Oct. 7, 2023.

Last week, Israel was accused of committing genocide in Gaza by an inquiry commission commissioned by the United Nations Human Rights Council.

Israel's sports and culture minister, Miki Zohar, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the head of Israel's soccer federation, Moshe Zuares, have been working "intensively behind the scenes" to block efforts to oust Israel from UEFA, Zohar's office said Thursday. "The right step now is to

act responsibly with the professionals and not to make statements, and this is how all the parties involved in the efforts are acting. We will address this later."

The decision to ban Russia in 2022 was partly driven by a swath of UEFA member federations refusing to play scheduled games against Russian opponents. No national or club team in Europe has so far refused to play an Israeli opponent, though soccer leaders in Norway and Italy have publicly expressed their unease in recent weeks.

The Norwegian soccer federation also pledged to give its profits from ticket sales for the Oct. 11 game in Oslo to humanitarian work in Gaza by Doctors Without Borders.

Both Italy's Gabriele Gravina and Lise Klaveness of Norway are elected members of the UEFA executive committee which could vote on suspending Israel. Zuares, the Israeli soccer federation president, is also on the panel as is Nasser Al-Khelaifi, a member of the Qatari government who is president of European champion Paris Saint-Germain.

Israel enraged Qatar, an influential U.S. ally that has been a key mediator throughout the war, with a Sept. 9 airstrike targeting Hamas leaders in Doha, the Qatari capital.

At the Champions League final in May, PSG fans displayed a banner saying "Stop Genocide in Gaza" in French. UEFA did not open a disciplinary case despite having rules against political messaging inside stadiums.

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NEWS



Jannik Sinner, of Italy returns a back-hand shot to Marin Cilic, of Croatia during the men's singles match of the China Open tennis tournament, at the National Tennis Center, in Beijing. Sinner won 6-2,6-2. (AP)

Sports



Al-Sumai'i, Al-Habib, and Al-Omran crown the winners

Gul crowned champion of 17th National Squash Championship

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 25: Khaitan's Qadeer Gul claimed the men's open title at the 17th National Squash Championship, which concluded recently at the glass court of the Kuwait Squash Federation in South Surra. Joul triumphed in a thrilling final, defeating Al-Qurain's Abdulrahman Al-Maghribi 3-2. Yarmouk's Jassem Al-Gharib secured third place, while Al-Qurain's Shaheen Osama finished fourth.

Following the final, Federation President Waleed Al-Sumai'i, Vice Presi-

dent Khaled Al-Habib, and Secretary General Hamed Al-Omran presented the trophies and medals to the winners.

In the youth categories, Al-Qurain dominated: Khaled Al-Fawzan won the U-19 title, Abdullah Hani took the U-17 crown, and Ahmed Ranjin clinched first place in the U-15 competition. Teammate Salman Al-Saleh added another trophy by winning the U-13 division.

The U-11 category saw Khaitan's Fahad Joul claim top honors, followed by

Al-Qurain's Mohammed Bilal in second and Al-Arabi's Abdulwahab Asad in third.

In the women's division, promising young player Aisha Al-Muthen impressed with a strong performance to secure the title. Salwa Club's Sarah Al-Ali placed second, while her teammate Farida Hazem finished third.

Prizes for the women's competition were awarded by Squash Women's Committee member Asmaa Ashour.

Kuwait approves 7 stadiums for official soccer matches

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 25: The Kuwait Public Authority for Sports has announced the approval of seven primary stadiums to host official matches for local football competitions, with four additional venues designated as backup options. The remaining sports facilities will be reserved for club and national team training sessions.

According to a press statement, the decision follows directives from the Minister of Information, Culture, and State Minister for Youth Affairs, Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, aiming to ensure player readiness and maintain the quality of the pitches. The Authority will also manage maintenance and reorganization of the stadiums and sports grounds to support this initiative.

The seven main stadiums selected for official matches are:

- Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium (60,000 capacity)
- Mohammed Al-Hamad Stadium – Al-Qadisiya Club
- Sabah Al-Salem Stadium – Al-Arabi Club



A general view of Jaber Al-Mubarak Stadium in Al-Sulaibikhat.

- Jaber Al-Mubarak Stadium – Al-Sulaibikhat Club
- Ali Sabah Al-Salem Stadium – Al-Nasr Club
- Naif Al-Dabbous Stadium – Al-Fahaheel Club
- Al-Ahmadi Stadium – Al-Shabab Club

- The backup stadiums include: Al-Sadaqa and Al-Salam Stadium – Kazma Club
- Thamer Stadium – Al-Salmiya Club
- Abdullah Al-Khalifa Stadium – Al-Yarmouk Club

- Mubarak Al-Ayyar Stadium – Al-Jahra Club
- This move ensures that official soccer competitions in Kuwait will have well-prepared venues while keeping training facilities accessible for teams.

Third-placed Villarreal welcomes Bilbao

Mbappé on fire for Real ahead of Madrid derby

BARCELONA, Spain, Sept 25, (AP): Only six weeks into La Liga and Atletico Madrid already faces what seems to be a must-win derby when it hosts Real Madrid on Saturday.

Despite revamping a significant part of the squad this summer, Atletico is off to its worst start - two wins in six matches - since coach Diego Simeone took over more than a decade ago. It takes on its top rival well behind in the standings: Real Madrid leads the league and Atletico Madrid is eighth, nine points adrift.

Madrid is the only team to have won all six rounds. That run has been fueled by the prolific Kylian Mbappé.

The France striker has seven goals, three more than the next best scorer, and has failed to find the net only in one game. He scored twice on Tuesday, a 4-1 victory over Levante.

Atletico's poor form comes after a busy summer in which it bought the likes of Villarreal playmaker Alex Baena, United States midfielder Johnny Cardoso, and defenders David Hancko and Matteo Ruggeri. Injuries to Baena and Cardoso, among others, have not helped Simeone.

It will be Xabi Alonso's first Spanish capital derby as Madrid's coach after he spent 2009-14 playing for the club.

Second-placed Barcelona hosts Real Sociedad on Sunday, a day after third-placed Villarreal welcomes Athletic Bilbao. Fourth-placed Espanyol visits Girona, which is winless at the bottom of the table, on Friday.

Madrid's Vinicius Junior will be



Real Madrid's Kylian Mbappe, celebrates after scoring his side's fourth goal with a penalty kick during the Spanish La Liga soccer match between Levante and Real Madrid at the Ciutat de Valencia stadium in Valencia, Spain. (AP)

in the spotlight both for the reactions of Atletico's fans, some of whom have subjected him among the worst racial abuse he has experienced, and because of speculation regarding his long-term future with the club.

Once a set starter under former coach Carlo Ancelotti, Vinicius has seen his playing time reduced by Alonso. That comes amid media reports that his talks with Madrid about renewing his contract set to expire in June 2027 have broken down.

Atletico will also recover striker Alexander Sorloth, who often plays as a substitute, after his one-game suspension.

Madrid will be without injured defenders Trent Alexander-Ar-

nold, Antonio Rudiger and Ferland Mendy.

Atletico will likely be without midfielder Thiago Almada and defender José María Giménez due to injuries. Cardoso has missed three games with an ankle problem.

Julián Alvarez scored a late winner to complete a hat trick and lead Atletico Madrid to a 3-2 victory over Rayo Vallecano.

It was only a second league win for Atletico, which entered the match enduring one of its worst starts to a season since coach Diego Simeone took over in late 2011.

Alvarez scored the winning goal in the 88th minute with a left-foot shot from outside the area that hit the

top corner.

"He is extraordinary, our best player," Simeone said. "We need him at his best."

The Argentina international had put the hosts ahead in the 15th and added the second in the 80th.

"We needed to win to gain some confidence," Alvarez said. "We had been playing well but the results weren't coming because of details. We need to keep working to try to keep winning."

"It will be a fantastic game, against a rival that has been playing well," Simeone said. "It's going to be a tough opponent."

Alvarez missed a penalty kick in Atletico's 1-1 draw at Mallorca last weekend. He hadn't scored since the team's 2-1 loss at Espanyol in the Spanish league opener.

"It's part of soccer," he said. "Sometimes you make mistakes and sometimes you score the goals. Today I did things well. We are on the right track."

It was the first hat trick for Alvarez since he moved to Europe in 2022 to join Manchester City from River Plate. This is his second season with Atletico.

Atletico is nine points behind Madrid, which on Tuesday won 4-1 at Levante with a pair of goals by Kylian Mbappé to maintain a perfect start to the season after six matches.

Atletico's only win so far had been 2-0 against Villarreal. It had also drawn 1-1 against both Elche and Alaves after opening with the loss at Espanyol. It lost 3-2 at Liverpool in its Champions League opener.

Messi double seals Miami playoff berth

Whitecaps extend unbeaten streak

NEW YORK, Sept 25, (AP): Lionel Messi had two goals and an assist to reach 37 goal contributions this season and Inter Miami clinched a playoff spot with a 4-0 victory over New York City FC.

Miami (16-6-7), which won its third straight game, extended its league-leading goal total to 64 this season. Five of Miami's last six MLS matches have featured at least three goals, most recently a 3-2 victory over D.C. United.

After his first-half assist, Messi became the first player in MLS history to record at least 35 goal contributions in consecutive seasons. After two second-half goals, Messi became the fourth player in MLS history to record eight multi-goal games in a single season.

Messi made it 2-0 in the 74th minute when he chipped it over Matt Freese, who had come out of his area on a breakaway.

Luis Suárez, coming off a suspension, converted a penalty kick in the 83rd and Messi added another goal three minutes later.

Oscar Ustari recorded his sixth clean sheet of the season.

New York City (16-10-5) had its three-game winning streak come to an end.

New York City had two good scoring chances in the first half. Thiago Martins was left alone at the far post on a corner kick but his header went right at Ustari. Nicolás Fernández cut back his defender in the box and got Ustari to dive the wrong way, but his shot went just wide off the post.

Brian White scored in the 88th minute for his 15th goal of the season and the Vancouver Whitecaps extended their unbeaten streak to seven games with a 1-1 draw against the Portland Timbers.

Vancouver (16-6-8) is in second place in the Western Conference standings with 56 points, one back of San Diego. The Whitecaps have already broken the team record of 53 points in a season, set in 2015.

Portland (11-10-10) is seventh with 43 points after going 1-3-3 in its last seven games.

White, who entered as a second-half substitute after missing games with a hamstring injury, deflected in a Sebastian Berhalter shot.

Portland defender Kamal Miller scored from about 30-yards out in the first half. It was the first goal allowed by the Whitecaps in 325 minutes across all competitions.

Thomas Müller, the former FC Bayern Munich star, missed his second consecutive MLS match with an adductor injury.



Inter Miami forward Lionel Messi (10) scores a goal against New York City FC goalkeeper Matt Freese (49) midfielder Aiden O'Neill during the second half of a MLS soccer game in New York. (AP)