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Make sure pacts with China are enforced in actual time-frame, PM urges panel



PM Diwan photo

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah headed the 31st meeting of the ministerial committee tasked with implementing agreements signed between the State of Kuwait and the People's Republic of China.

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 16, (KUNA): His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah headed on Thursday the 31st meeting of the ministerial committee tasked with implementing agreements signed between the State of Kuwait and the People's Republic of China.

The meeting provided updates on the areas of cooperation and joint coordination between the two countries in various fields especially within the sustainable development domain.

His Highness the Prime Minister affirmed the deep-rooted ties with China, saying that it was a valuable commercial, economic, and investment partner, which is reflected in the volume of trade.

He also said that economic ties were growing exponentially in reflection of the two countries keenness on developing relations.

His Highness the Prime Minister called on the ministerial committee to continue following up on the agreements, making sure that they were implemented to the fullest and within the agreed-upon timeframe.

For his part, Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Housing Affairs Abdullatif Al-Mishari affirmed that the government was continuing to push the wheels of development forward, focusing on the welfare of citizens through the implementation of strategic infrastructural and housing projects such as Al-Sabriya housing project, for which the design contract was awarded to an international consultant.

On the claims regarding Al-Sabriya project, the minister said that one Chinese company, among many, expressed interest in investing in the project to date.

The Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW)

saw it fit not to award the project to the company to avoid risk in its execution of the project, he indicated, adding that PAHW would divide Al-Sabriya project to allow several companies to compete for its development.

The minister added that company offered KD 1.9 billion as a total for investments in the project, contrary to the USD seven billion circulating in media, noting that the offer included the company being awarded all the main infrastructural buildings, the subsidiary infrastructural facilities, public buildings at an additional cost borne by the state.

Minister Al-Mishari also said that the offer would burden the state with interest, while if PAHW implemented Law No. 118 of 2023, which facilitates public-private sector partnerships with the Authority's involvement, the total cost of the project would be reduced.

The minister called for seeking detailed information from reliable sources to avoid affecting Kuwait's ties with other countries.

Meanwhile, Assistant Foreign Minister for Asia Affairs and member of the ministerial committee, Ambassador Sameeh Hayat, briefed the meeting on joint projects and coordination with Chinese state officials especially on major development projects where a number of companies were proposed by the Chinese side.

He indicated that the next week, Chinese government companies officials would be holding meetings with Kuwaiti counterparts during a four-day visit to the country, noting that the meetings would focus on the details of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in recycling low-carbon waste.

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'Keep toddlers away'

Double-edged sword of smart devices & usage

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 16, (KUNA): No one in this modern age could avoid the use of smart devices unless individuals are eager to go completely off-grid and seek digital-free life with no updates of what was occurring in the world.

While smart devices provide a whole new world of discovery any wonders, one could easily become attached to a subject and go through an endless "rabbit hole," possibly leading to isolation.



Dr. Al-Foudari is head of the Ophthalmology Department at Kuwait's Ministry of Health and a consultant ophthalmologist -- told KUNA.

He went on to say that children under two years of age should not be near a smart device unless necessary, adding that children and teenagers between 5 and 17 are recommended two hours of smart device usage.

Dr. Al-Foudari affirmed that it was advisable not to use smart devices an hour before sleep, keeping such tools far away to provide optimal sleeping experience.

He advised parents to do regular checks on children to avoid eye complications from the use of smart devices, saying that the responsibility lies with the parents who themselves should avoid long hours of smart devices exposure.

Meanwhile, Psychotherapist at the Kuwait Center for Mental Health, Alya Lari indicated that smart devices might affect children psychologically, especially in terms social interaction level, leading to some difficulties in speech, comprehension, isolation, and other disorders.

Experts also warn that the misuse of smart devices leads to abnormalities and improper of psychological and emotional development, especially if children were exposed to violent and mature contents, she added.

She indicated that solutions include monitoring the use of smart devices, particularly among children, allocating proper time slots to allow them to use such devices in a responsible manner.

Lari noted that the World Health Organization (WHO) recommended the usage of smart devices be limited based on age group, saying that children should not be given unlimited time when using smart devices.

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ACG committed to credible development plans – Fund

Inflation eases in regional economies: IMF chief

WASHINGTON, Oct 16, (KUNA): Acting Director General of Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development Waleed Al-Bahar affirmed the Arab Coordination Group's (ACG) commitment to adopting effective strategies to meet future development requirements and global economic transformations.

Speaking to KUNA during ACG's 50th anniversary celebration in Washington D.C. late Wednesday, attended by Acting Finance Minister Dr. Sabeeh Al-Mukhaizeem, Al-Bahar congratulated Kuwait Fund for its role as a founding member in 1975.

He emphasized the group's vital contribution to stimulating economic growth and social progress in developing nations across



KUNA photo

Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy and Acting Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic and Investment Affairs Dr. Sabeeh Al-Mukhaizeem and his team at the meeting.

the globe.

Al-Bahar noted that the Fund continuously strives to enhance its collective development efforts in cooperation with ACG institutions to promote sustainable regional and international economic growth.

Since its inception, ACG has financed more than 13,000 development projects in over 160 countries, supporting key sectors such as infrastructure, education, and healthcare.

He stressed the group's dedication to aligning with the next

phase of development by adopting adaptive strategies to address the fast-changing global economic landscape.

Al-Bahar expressed pride in Kuwait Fund's partnerships within the ACG framework, contributing to financing initiatives that drive prosperity and progress in developing countries.

The golden jubilee celebration was held under the theme "United in Cooperation and Development for a Sustainable Future," reflecting the group's shared vision to empower nations and achieve lasting positive impact.

The event gathered leaders from both public and private sectors, investors, and prominent figures from political and economic circles, underscoring the group's enduring influence in advancing global development.

The celebration served as a milestone in the Arab Coordination Group's journey, reaffirming its role as a strategic partner in fostering collective action and sustainable growth across the developing world.

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KD70 fine for using cell phone at traffic signals

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 16: Director for Security Media at the Ministry of Interior Colonel Othman Al-Ghareeb confirmed that using a mobile phone while stopped at traffic lights is a traffic violation, stressing the need for drivers to focus on driving.



Al-Ghareeb

In a television interview recently, Al-Ghareeb explained that a driver's preoccupation with his mobile phone while stopped at a traffic light could delay the departure of the vehicle once the light turns green, thereby, obstructing traffic and affecting the smooth flow of vehicles on the road.

He added "it is unacceptable that a driver is preoccupied with sending messages or browsing his mobile phone, as such an act reduces his concentration and causes traffic obstruction."

He pointed out that the Central Control Room at the ministry monitors these violations through surveillance cameras installed along the roads, where instances of mobile phone use while stopped are recorded.

He urged motorists to strictly comply with traffic regulations to avoid penalties and fines resulting from traffic violations.

It is worth mentioning that, according to the new law, the fine for using a mobile phone while driving is KD70.

Kuwaiti nationality of 6 individuals revoked

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 16, (Agencies): First Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah chaired on Thursday the meeting of the Supreme Committee for Kuwaiti Citizenship Investigation.

In a statement, the committee said it decided to strip Kuwaiti citizenship from a number of individuals, with the matter referred to the cabinet. Those citizenships were revoked due to dual citizenships, forgery, fraud, attaining documents via affiliation and conflict with the state's supreme interest, it added.

Meanwhile, the official gazette "Kuwait Al-Yaum" published in its latest issue a decision issued by the Supreme Nationality Investigation Committee to revoke the Kuwaiti citizenship of six individuals, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The decision is based on Article 11 of Amiri Decree No. 15 of 1959 concerning Kuwaiti nationality and its amendments. Article 11 states that a Kuwaiti citizen shall lose their nationality if they voluntarily acquire a foreign nationality.



KUNA photo

Lesotho's Ambassador to Kuwait Manthabiseng Arcyilia Phohleli meets KRCS Secretary General Fahad Al-Mandeel.

Kuwait's humanitarian role lauded

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 16, (KUNA): Lesotho's Ambassador to Kuwait Manthabiseng Arcyilia Phohleli commended Thursday, Kuwait's leading role in humanitarian work, describing it as a model that reflects the country's distinguished and compassionate global image.

In a statement to KUNA following her visit to Kuwait Red Cres-

cent Society (KRCS), where she met with the society's Secretary General Fahad Al-Mandeel, Phohleli said the visit aimed to closely explore the society's humanitarian and volunteer programs and to explore possible future cooperation between Kuwait and Lesotho.

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MEW, bidding consortiums hold meeting, discuss Khairan project

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 16: The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, in cooperation with the Kuwait Authority for Partnership Projects (KAPP), held the first preliminary meeting recently with the four international consortiums competing to implement the Khairan Power and Water Distillation Plant project, in the presence of the project consultant.

According to informed sources, the ministry, in coordination with KAPP, scheduled a site visit for the competing companies and consortiums on Thursday.

During the meeting, the consultant presented an overview of the project.

The government stakeholders requested the 37 representatives of the four consortiums present to submit any project-related inquiries in writ-

ing. This is intended to facilitate the process and ensure bidders can submit their proposals by the agreed-upon deadline.

The sources expressed optimism about the project's accelerated progress, noting that it is expected to produce 1,800 megawatts of electricity and 30 million imperial gallons of fresh water.

They highlighted that the participation of four international consortiums enhances competition and serves the public interest.

The sources explained that the project's first phase is a major strategic development site located in Khairan, near the southern border of the current Al-Zour South Station, approximately 100 kilometers south of Kuwait City. The plant aims to generate electricity compatible with Kuwait's weather conditions using combined-cycle technology, along with water desalination capabilities.

News watch

Kuwait busts terror financing 'network'

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 16: Security authorities, represented by the State Security Department, have arrested a terrorist financing network affiliated with a banned group targeting the security of the State of Kuwait and seeking to destabilize public order, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In an official statement, the Ministry of Interior explained that thorough investigations revealed the suspects were smuggling funds and medical supplies out of Kuwait to support and fund the terrorist organization.

Intensive field monitoring and follow-up operations led to the arrest of several suspects and the discovery of evidence and seized items confirming their involvement in suspicious financing activities.



2 Why is Kuwait celebrating 25 years of Resolution 1325?

8 Al-Marzouq: Kuwaiti banks set to finance mega-projects across housing, power, & infrastructure

Prayer Timings			
Fajr	04:30	Asr	14:50
Sunrise ..	05:49	Maghrib ..	17:17
Zohr	11:34	Isha	18:34

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:
By Day: Hot with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind to northerly wind, with speeds of 08-42 km/h with a chance for rising dust over open areas.
By Night: Mild with light to moderate northwesterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 08-28 km/h.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	39	27
Kuwait Airport	38	21
Abdaly	38	19

Weather		
Jahra	39	25
Failaka Island	36	22
Salmiyah	34	27
Ahmadi	38	22
Nuwaisib	36	22
Wafra	37	24
Salmiya	33	17

Warm reception underlines strong ties abroad

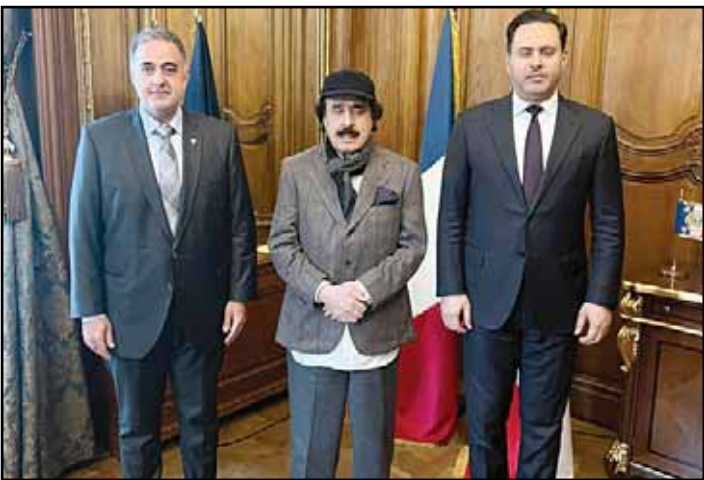
Al-Jarallah visits Kuwait Embassy in Paris

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 16: Dean of Kuwaiti journalism and Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah and Arab Times newspapers, Ahmed Al-Jarallah, paid a visit to Kuwaiti Ambassador to France Abdullah Al-Shaheen at the Embassy of Kuwait in Paris.

During the meeting, Al-Shaheen warmly welcomed Al-Jarallah, commending his influential media role and his longstanding contributions to the advancement of Kuwaiti journalism. In turn, Al-Jarallah expressed his sincere

appreciation for the ambassador's hospitality and his ongoing interest in the welfare of Kuwaiti media professionals abroad.

The meeting was also attended by Dr. Ali Al-Moussawi, Head of the Health Office in Paris, and colleague Mohammad Al-Farhan. Discussions were marked by friendly and constructive exchanges, reflecting the strong fraternal ties and shared commitment to serving Kuwait and supporting its citizens living overseas.



Ahmed Al-Jarallah, warmly welcomed by Ambassador Abdullah Al-Shaheen, along with Dr. Ali Al-Moussawi.



Ahmed Al-Jarallah with Ambassador Abdullah Al-Shaheen (center), along with colleague Mohammad Al-Farhan.



Kuwaiti Ambassador to France Abdullah Al-Shaheen (center) warmly received Ahmed Al-Jarallah, Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah and Arab Times, during a cordial meeting at the Embassy in Paris. Also present was Dr. Ali Al-Moussawi (left), underscoring the strong ties and collaboration in supporting Kuwaitis abroad.

Al-Baghli competition honors first batch of outstanding blind winners

Excellence, insight and hope take center stage

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 16: Al-Sayyida Nafisa Charitable Foundation, in cooperation with Kuwait Blind Association, celebrated the first edition of the Al-Baghli Competition for the year 2025 on Thursday night, with Minister of Social, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah in attendance.

In her speech at the event, Al-Huwailah pointed out that the competition depicts the best meanings of determination, willpower and excellence. She praised the creativity and determination of the participants to succeed in the competition, emphasizing that insight is deeper than sight, and determination is truer than circumstances.

Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Foundation Ibrahim Taher Al-Baghli, Chairman of the Association Fayez Lafi Al-Azmi, and a host of dignitaries and other guests were also present at the event.

Al-Huwailah said "I am pleased to meet you on this blessed evening, which witnessed the excellence and creativity of our sons and daughters with insight in the 2025 Al-Baghli Competition for Distinguished Blind People, organized by the Al-Sayyida Nafisa Charitable Foundation in cooperation with Kuwait Blind Association. It is an occasion to celebrate determination, will and excel-



Winners of the first Al-Baghli Competition for the Distinguished Blind pose with their awards during the closing ceremony, held under the patronage of Minister of Social, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah.

lence, and to honor exceptional talents who have proven that creativity is not limited by disabilities, that insight is deeper than sight, and that determination is truer than circumstances."

She added "today, we are proud to sponsor this competition, which reflects our firm belief in the capabilities of our children with disabilities and our commitment to motivate them and intensify their community participation in various fields. They are an integral part of the fabric of our nation and partners in development and giving."

She stressed that the competition embodies the values of solidarity, cooperation and charitable work, and reinforces the principle that success is the fruit of mutual support between public and private institutions.

She extended her gratitude to the Foundation for its efforts in supporting people with disabilities, and to the As-

sociation for its continuous endeavor in empowering people with vision loss and providing them with the opportunity to showcase their talents and abilities in a nurturing and stimulating environment.

She congratulated the winners, saying, "You are a source of pride for your families and your community, and a role model for a generation of ambitious Kuwaiti youths. Your message today is filled with strength, hope and inspiration."

She expressed her deep gratitude to all those involved in organizing the competition, including the committees, administrators and volunteers, attributing the success of the event to their dedication and tremendous efforts.

She asserted that "supporting and empowering people with disabilities are considered a national and humanitarian mission that we are proud of. It is at the core of the wise political lead-

ership's priorities. Our wise leadership, led by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah, has affirmed that people are the focus and goal of development. The State provides legislation, services and support to ensure the integration and empowerment of people with disabilities in various educational, professional and social fields. This unwavering support from the leadership motivates all of us to continue working as one team to build an inclusive and just society that excludes no one and embraces all people with love and equality."

Meanwhile, Al-Baghli expressed his gratitude and appreciation to Al-Huwailah for her generous sponsorship of the event, confirming that supporting and empowering the blind are among the priorities of the Foundation.

Celebrating 25 years of UNSCR 1325

Kuwait champions women in peace & humanitarian action

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 16, (KUNA): Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights Affairs Ambassador Sheikhha Jawaher Ibrahim Duaij Al-Sabah said on Wednesday empowering women in peace and humanitarian action is not merely a goal, but also a sustainable national approach.

Sheikhha Jawaher made the statement during a ceremony organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the role of women in humanitarian action, marking the 25th anniversary of the UN Security Council Resolution No. 1325, which involves females in peace and humanitarian action.

The ceremony was held under the patronage of Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya, in the presence of Deputy Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and a number of international and humanitarian organizations, along diplomatic missions in Kuwait.

Kuwait's national path regarding empowering women stems from the Amiri directives that peace could only be preserved by the participation of all, she noted.

She stressed Kuwait's commitment to pursuing its national plans and partnerships with the UN and regional organizations to cement Kuwaiti women's presence in mediation paths and making peace.

Sheikhha Jawaher shed light on some women's outstanding developments witnessed in Kuwait, starting with Articles 153 and 182 of Kuwait's penal code, in addition to raising the minimum legal marriage age to 18.

Kuwait's police includes more than 1,000 women, and Kuwait's army has started registering the first batch of applicants and 51 women have been selected as army officers, she said.

Kuwait's women make up 74.5 percent of relief workers, and 26 percent of charitable societies' chiefs, she said.

Meanwhile, UN Secretary General's Representative and Resident Coordinator in Kuwait Ghada Al-Taheer extolled Kuwait's international role in humanitarian field, adding Kuwait has supported this domain through long-term partnerships since the establishment of the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, the Kuwait Red Crescent Society, Kuwait's support for the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), and many other inspiring partnerships.

Women were first in terms of responding to crises, and they make up 40 percent of 500,000 humanitarian workers across the globe, she added.

Also, Head of the Regional Delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross Mamadou Sow commended Kuwait's leading role in backing establishing an international community to support the role of women in peace processes and humanitarian



Ambassador Sheikhha Jawaher Ibrahim Duaij Al-Sabah, Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights Affairs



Ghada Al-Taheer, UN Secretary General's Representative and Resident Coordinator in Kuwait



KUNA photos Mamadou Sow, Head of the Regional Delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross

work around the world.

He referred that Kuwait adopted two key decisions announced by Minister of Justice Nasser Al-Sumait on Tuesday on a bill to combat international crimes and a law to protect those who went missing.

The step makes Kuwait in the first countries, which support international acts, he stressed.

During crises, women face heavier burdens as they deliver under bombing, cross mine fields to get water and bake under the watch of snipers, he explained.

Kuwait vows 'global solidarity' for world free of poverty and hunger

NEW YORK, Oct 16, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait reiterated its commitment to constructive cooperation with global partners to build a world free from poverty and hunger.

This came in a statement delivered by Diplomatic Attache Rashid Farhan on Wednesday before the UN General Assembly's second committee under the agenda items on poverty eradication, agricultural development, food security, and nutrition.

Farhan warned that nearly 800 million people still live in extreme poverty, with children and youth making up 60 percent of the most affected populations, according to UN reports.

He noted that about 350 million people in Africa alone face dangerous levels of food insecurity. He also highlighted the severe food crisis caused by genocidal policies targeting Palestinians in Gaza and the occupied West Bank.

Farhan stressed the need to intensify international efforts to ensure unhindered delivery of humanitarian and food aid and to uphold civilian protection in accordance with international humanitarian law.

He acknowledged a slight global



KUNA photo Rashid Farhan, Diplomatic Attache

improvement in food security, with hunger rates dropping to 8.2 percent last year, though regional disparities remain stark, especially in the Middle East, Africa, and Western Asia.

Farhan underscored the interconnectedness of peace, security, and food. He recalled Kuwait's sponsorship of UN Security Council Resolution 2417 (2018), which linked armed conflict with hunger and condemned the use of starvation as a method of warfare.

Cambodia praises Kuwait's education, orphan support

KUALA KANGSAR, Malaysia, Oct 16, (KUNA): President of the Cambodian University of Management and Technology (CUMT) Dr. Husen



Farid

International Conference on Teaching Arabic Language and Literature (ICTALL 2025), held at Sultan Azlan Shah University (USAS), Malaysia, from 14-15 October.

Dr. Husen who also serves as an Advisor to the Ministry of Cults and

Religion highlighted that Kuwait has contributed to establishment of over 30 orphanage and Islamic education centers across Cambodia, describing them as remarkable humanitarian achievements.

He mentioned the Islamic Heritage Revival Society, affiliated with Kuwait's Ministry of Social Affairs, continues to provide support, scholarships and annual financial aid.

He also pointed to additional support from other Islamic countries, including Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, and Indonesia, in strengthening Islamic education across Southeast Asia.

The two-day conference discussed key points of Arabic language education in Southeast Asia, featuring institutional experiences, the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in teaching, language immersion, translation, and digital Arabic content development.

Other Voices

Why is Kuwait celebrating 25 years of Resolution 1325?

By Abdulaziz Al-Anjeri

In October 2000 the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1325 which for the first time linked women's rights to peace and security. It became the foundation of the Women Peace and Security agenda that now serves as a benchmark for global policy.

A quarter of a century later Kuwait marked the anniversary with an official ceremony under the title The Role of Women in Humanitarian Work Opportunities and Challenges. The event highlighted partial reforms and humanitarian initiatives but offered little evidence of real progress in translating Resolution 1325 into a national framework. Symbolism has replaced substance.

To its credit, Kuwait established a National Committee on Women Peace and Security in December 2023 and organized workshops with the United Nations and ESCWA. This was a useful entry point but remains only a preparatory step. The absence of a published national plan with measur-

able objectives, dedicated budgets, and accountability mechanisms highlights the gap between intention and implementation.



Al-Anjeri

failure to advance a comprehensive strategy is therefore more a question of political will than of capacity.

Incremental progress can be observed. The number of female officers in the police has increased, and Kuwait continues to score well in international

safety and health indicators. However, these gains are not the product of a comprehensive Women Peace and Security agenda and fade in comparison to the broader commitments required under Resolution 1325. Without an integrated national framework, such steps remain fragmented and cannot be regarded as genuine compliance.

Policy questions therefore remain unanswered. Where is the Kuwaiti plan with clear benchmarks. Where are the provisions for reparations and protections that the resolution demands. And where are the monitoring mechanisms that would allow civil society, the media, and when restored, parliament, to hold the state accountable.

Marking anniversaries without delivering real results risks reducing international commitments to ceremonial exercises. For Kuwait, a state that enjoys resources and stability, the challenge is not feasibility but credibility. Until a national plan is enacted, celebrations of Resolution 1325 will remain symbolic gestures rather than proof of policy leadership.

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A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

‘Leaders accountable for Gazans suffering’

“US President Donald Trump’s peace plan for a ceasefire and prisoner exchange between Hamas and Israel included an important clause that may not be implemented. Did Trump include this clause to ensure the two sides would not reach an agreement, only to later propose another solution favoring Israel and undermining Palestinian interests? When religion becomes entangled in political disputes, it poisons the dialogue and sows division among people,” Kuwaiti journalist **Hassan Ali Karam** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.



Hassan Ali Karam

“Israeli Jews are no less rigid than hard line Muslims. Though the Jewish beard and the Islamic beard may look similar, the differences lie in the details. As the saying goes, the devil is in the details.

“Religion should not be involved in political matters. However, Trump sought to make the Abrahamic religions a foundation for a stable future, one he views as imminent and achievable. Why not? There are those preparing for this new religious framework, which might even materialize before the Gaza issue is resolved.

“Perhaps some do not truly want to resolve the Gaza conflict or achieve peace. Instead, they are eagerly eyeing the land itself, which is a precious treasure and an irreplaceable opportunity. Among them is Trump himself, who called for the displacement of Gazans from their homeland for transforming it into an open dance floor and a haven for homosexuals.

“The Gaza issue, and indeed the entire Palestinian issue, is not religious. It is not Islamic, Jewish, or even Christian. Including the three Abrahamic religions in the terms of the peace agreement is nothing but a cynical ploy to sideline religion and push toward secularism. If Trump’s plan is accepted, religious leaders from Islam, Judaism, and Christianity would come together to forge a unified religion that bridges the three faiths.

“I don’t know whether it is a blessing or a curse for the Palestinians that the three Abrahamic religions converge on their land. Even these religions themselves do not truly converge, as each sect insists that only it will enter Heaven. Religious disagreement is eternal. But I say that, regardless of our religions and sects - Muslims, Christians, and Jews, we will continue to live under the rule of those who use religion as a means for personal gain, profit, and prestige.

“If the ultra-Orthodox Jews (Haredim) were to join forces with Hamas, it could only fan the flames further, leaving the people of Gaza even more vulnerable and at risk of losing the limited support they currently receive. The Gazans must pursue peace and hold their leaders to account, as those leaders have brought suffering to a people living on the brink of despair. Homes have collapsed on defenseless civilians, leaving many without food or safety and with few options but death beneath the rubble. For many Gazans, daily income came from working in Israel. Every morning thousands commuted there to earn a living.

“Hamas leaders should be brought before international courts and held accountable as war criminals if found responsible for actions amounting to crimes against the people they claim to represent.”

Also:

“First point I would like to make is that last Sunday, Sheikh Ali Jaber Al-Ahmad wrote in the daily about the cleanliness of Shuwaikh Beach Park. He called for direct enforcement measures to penalize violators, urging the municipality to apply the law immediately through a mobile patrol team using scooters and to tighten penalties on offenders,” columnist Major General Engineer **Faisal Musaed Al-Jazzaf** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“We are facing a moral crisis, as many visitors to recreational and public areas damage these sites with litter and waste. Environmental pollution cannot be ignored when some show no respect for the country’s cleanliness. I believe the Environment Public Authority and Kuwait Municipality must activate their roles to correct this behavior and preserve Kuwait’s beauty.

“Second point is that many street intersections have broken curbs surrounded by piles of debris, including iron scraps from old advertisements and general trash. These scenes mar the aesthetic appeal of our streets and are not isolated but widespread. We see these distressing sights daily.

“Are we capable of removing them? Where are the responsible authorities and teams who should monitor and deal with these issues, especially now that Kuwait has opened its doors to tourism?

“Third point is that commercial advertisements for beauty and cosmetic services, particularly those on social media, raise concerns about the level of regulation. There is a pressing need

to organize this sector, which has begun to distort the true meaning of beauty in society, mislead the public, and exploit people’s tastes and finances.

“My final point is that may Allah have mercy on our noble martyrs, protect our beloved Kuwait, and bless the efforts of all those working for its renaissance under the leadership of His Highness the Amir and His Highness the Crown Prince (May Allah preserve and guide them).”

□ □ □

“Promoting investment is a priority for every nation, and building human capacity is a fundamental element of a productive society,” columnist Sheikh **Fahad Dawood Al-Sabah** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“Therefore, when His Highness the Crown Prince said, “We must benefit from the expertise of these companies in training and developing young talent, and transfer modern knowledge and technology to enhance their role in the development process” during his meeting with CEOs of international companies at the 80th session of the United Nations, he was emphasizing the importance of aligning the country’s economic needs with the potential of Kuwaiti youth.

“Obviously, this transformation cannot happen overnight. It is an ongoing process that requires programs, training, and continuous evaluation. This means developing new curricula in higher education designed to build generations capable of keeping pace with the modern era and adapting continuously to new global developments.

“The foundations of academic knowledge development in higher education are based on a set of principles and strategies designed to equip university students with the knowledge and skills necessary to contribute effectively to the country’s economic growth. An important element is strengthening the role of young people in the Kuwaiti economy. This requires aligning curricula with market demands and focusing on high-demand specializations such as technology, programming, artificial intelligence, engineering, and entrepreneurship.

“This is achieved by focusing on practical and applied learning along with theoretical knowledge, which will enable students to develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and effective communication skills. Today’s economy thrives on innovation and competitiveness.

“This also involves establishing university business incubators to enable students to transform their ideas into viable economic projects and to support graduation projects with an



Al-Sabah

economic or industrial focus. Building partnerships between universities and businesses to train students and prepare them for the workforce through fieldwork and cooperative training programs in government institutions or private companies is essential. Also, involving business leaders and economists in guiding educational programs forms a crucial bridge between university research and the local economy, and will teach students problem-solving skills and encourage innovation.

“Achieving this requires integrating modern technologies into the educational process, using artificial intelligence and data analysis in both teaching and administration, and providing e-learning platforms that offer flexible, anytime access to learning materials. However, the most important aspect of this process is encouraging national belonging and economic responsibility, and highlighting the citizen’s role in development to cultivate a strong sense of economic awareness among university students.

“This is key to building a knowledge-based system that operates on a continuous improvement cycle for enhancing the capabilities of young people to lead the future. To achieve this, higher education must be innovative, flexible, relevant to real-world needs, and motivating, for encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship. Knowledge development is not limited to academic instruction but it involves preparing a generation capable of critical thinking, productivity, and initiative in all sectors of the economy.

“Furthermore, this development is based on human beings, as it is an interactive and cumulative process shaped by experience, learning, and interaction with the environment. Human experiences are a fundamental component of knowledge development and lead to societal progress. The foundation of any nation is its human capital, its people endowed with knowledge. Therefore, countries that invest in education and scientific research achieve higher rates of economic growth than others.”

— Compiled by Simi K.Kutty

Expat forges lease contracts to obtain civil IDs

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 16: The Criminal Security Sector, represented by the Forgery and Counterfeiting Department, has arrested an Arab expatriate accused of forging dozens of lease contracts for other expatriates to help them obtain civil ID cards, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

Investigations revealed that the suspect previously worked as a representative for a real estate company, which had ended its association with him over a year ago due to his lack of integrity.

According to a security source, the department launched an investigation after receiving reports about civil ID cards being issued to multiple expatriates registered at the same addresses. The reports indicated that forged lease contracts were being submitted to the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) as part of the ID issuance process.

The source said, “Several expatriates who submitted similar lease contracts were summoned. In their statements, they confirmed meeting an expatriate who claimed to be a real estate representative. He

provided each of them with a lease contract in exchange for KD 180. They then submitted these documents to PACI to obtain their civil IDs.

Further investigations revealed that the individual behind the forged contracts was an expatriate whose employment with the real estate company had ended more than a year ago. However, he had apparently retained the company’s official seals.

Authorities were able to identify his location, and he was subsequently arrested.

The suspect, born in 1982, confessed during interrogation that after losing his job, mounting financial pressures pushed him to exploit expatriates by providing forged rental contracts. He admitted to obtaining dozens of blank contracts from the company he once worked for and selling each forged lease for KD 180.”

Seals belonging to the same company were also found in his possession during a search of his residence.



Al-Anba photo
The suspect in police custody.

Man absolved in drugs case

‘Cryptocurrency mining’ case adjourned

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

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 16: The Criminal Court refrained from pronouncing penalty on a defendant accused of possessing hashish and the psychoactive substances amphetamine and methamphetamine for personal consumption, in addition to driving under the influence of narcotic and psychoactive substances.

The court made this decision following the pleadings of Attorney Tahani Al-Nafees, lawyer for the defendant.

In her argument at the court, Al-Nafees pointed out that the seizure and search procedures were invalid, and that there was no criminal intent to use drugs, prompting the court to accept her defense and refrain from pronouncing penalty on her client.

In another ruling, the submission of an appeal by the same lawyer, the court accepted the appeal in form and in substance to overturn the appealed judgment, cancel the travel ban, and consider it null and void. The first respondent was ordered to pay the actual expenses and attorney fees for both

levels of litigation.

□ □ □

Case adjourned: The Criminal Court adjourned to January 7 for review and photocopying of documents, the case against the defendants accused of “cryptocurrency mining”.

The court held the first session of the cryptocurrency mining case on Wednesday. Several individuals stand accused of illegally using electricity allocated to homes to operate mining devices, causing damage to the public electricity grid.

These trials are the first of their kind as part of the government’s campaign to conserve energy resources, particularly during the summer season, when electricity consumption surges.

The Public Prosecution has launched investigations into 31 reports concerning the illegal use of electricity for cryptocurrency mining in 59 homes, and interrogated 116 defendants.

In a previous statement, the Public Prosecution affirmed that, in cooperation with relevant authorities, it will not hesitate to take strict legal action against anyone found guilty of illegally exploiting electricity.

The investigations revealed that some individuals were using household electricity to operate cryptocurrency mining devices with the aim of making quick profits. This activity caused significant technical damage to the electricity grid and increased pressure on power plants.

□ □ □

From jail to acquittal: The Court of Cassation

overturned the ruling issued by the Court of Appeals that sentenced a citizen to two years in prison with hard labor, fined him KD1,000 and revoked his driver’s license for one year in a drug-related case, leading to his acquittal, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

Following the verdict of the Appeals Court, the defendant sought the assistance of Attorney Dr. Fahad Al-Hubaini, who appealed to the Court of Cassation, arguing the invalidity of the arrest and search procedures. He stressed that the incident is not considered a flagrant crime and that there was insufficient evidence to justify a flagrante delicto, which allows an arrest without a warrant from the investigating authority.

Al-Hubaini said the observation of the officer that the defendant was confused or the presence of a cigarette in the ashtray of the vehicle did not conclusively prove that the vehicle contained a psychotropic substance. He argued that the invalidity of the arrest and search procedures renders all evidence obtained as a result of them invalid, in accordance with the legal principle that “what is built on falsehood is false.”

He added the initial medical report confirmed the accused was fully conscious and stable, which eliminates any suspicion or justification for his detention or arrest.

He further stated that while a security officer has the right to stop his client to check his condition or issue a traffic violation, he does not have the authority to search the vehicle or its contents without a warrant. He considered this a legal violation and an act contrary to the provisions governing lawful search and seizure.

Raids conducted on factories

PAI uncovers over 200 violations

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 16: The Public Authority for Industry (PAI) announced on Wednesday that it had carried out over 1,000 inspection tours of industrial, service, and commercial plots within its jurisdiction, which resulted in the detection of 222 violations, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

In a statement to the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), PAI explained that the violations included the misuse of plots for purposes other than those designated, the presence of labor housing within industrial zones, environmental and occupational safety breaches, and unlicensed subletting.

In cooperation with relevant government agencies, PAI had issued multiple warnings and closures, and referred several violating plots to the Public Prosecution, while others were referred to the Environment Public Authority (EPA) for legal action.

It affirmed its commitment to enforcing the law firmly and fairly to ensure the optimal use of plots allocated for industrial, service, and craft activities.

The statement quoted the Minister of Commerce and Industry as saying that this step reflects PAI’s commitment to promoting transparency and discipline in the management of industrial plots, supporting compliant factories and businesses, and creating a fair competitive environment that boosts investor confidence.

The minister affirmed that the next phase will see continued inspections covering all plots under PAI’s supervision, with reports submitted to the relevant committees, adding that this effort aims to enhance the effectiveness of oversight and ensure that violations are addressed in accordance with established legal procedures.



Al-Anba photo
Police seize liquor-manufacturing paraphernalia.

Asian expats held in raid on factory for local brew

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 16: Fahaheel detectives and teams from Kuwait Municipality, led by Ahmadi Municipality Director Saad Al-Khurainj and official Hamoud Akarsh, raided a liquor factory run by expatriates in the Sabah Al-Ahmad Residential Area, and confiscated 97 barrels and 450 bottles of liquor, as well as the equipment used for producing liquor, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

According to informed sources, authorities received information that an Asian man was selling locally produced liquor, and immediately launched investigations. A search team was formed, and the raid was carried out on the liquor factory.

Elderly Arab expat commits suicide at Mutlaa workplace

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 16: An Arab, in his 60s, took his own life at his workplace in Mutlaa by hanging himself with a rope, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

A security source told the daily that a citizen informed the Operations Unit at the Ministry of Interior after discovering the Arab worker who hanged himself. Upon receipt of the report, security personnel, criminal evidence officers and representatives of the Public Prosecutor’s Office rushed to the scene.

The source added that the Public Prosecutor’s Office ordered the removal of the body and referral to the Forensic Medicine Department, and then instructed security personnel to file a suicide case and carry out the necessary investigations.

Gang arrested for making, selling fake int'l perfumes

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 16: The Criminal Security Sector, represented by the General Department of Criminal Investigation’s Department for the Protection of Public Morals and Combating Human Trafficking, has arrested three Asians for running a factory that manufactured, stored, and sold counterfeit international perfume labels. The factory was located in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh and was shut down ahead of an upcoming perfume exhibition, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

In a press release, the Ministry of Interior explained that the raid was conducted in coordination with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Kuwait Municipality. The operation led to the seizure of over 15,000 counterfeit perfume packaging boxes and 28,000 bottles ready for distribution in the market.

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KUNA photo
Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs, Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah, inspects service quality of abused women shelters.

Minister Al-Huwailah urges better humanitarian services in shelters

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 16: Minister of Social Affairs, Family, and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah stressed the importance of continuously improving humanitarian services provided in shelters and enhancing coordination among relevant authorities to ensure a rapid and effective response to cases, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Dr. Al-Huwailah praised the efforts

of the staff and their commitment to maintaining professional and humane standards in caring for female residents.

She said this during her recent visit to a shelter for abused women affiliated with the Supreme Council for Family Affairs. The visit included an on-site review of the progress of work and an assessment of the quality of social and psychological services provided to the residents.

Energy Ministry opens bids for cloud data center power hubs

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 16: The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy issued a tender for the supply and installation of three main power stations (11/132 kV) for the cloud data center project in various areas, along with their feeders and accessories.

Sources from the ministry disclosed that the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) set Oct 28 as the deadline for submitting bids. They explained that if no postponement is granted, the bids will be referred to the ministry to review them within a month, then the bids will be returned to the agency to decide on the best bid that meets specifications.

Sources indicated that the tender is in line with the efforts of the ministry to provide infrastructure for government projects. They pointed out that cloud data centers are important in developing the digital infrastructure of the country and supporting digital transformation efforts in the public and private sectors by providing advanced and secure cloud services. They added this strengthens the position of Kuwait as a trusted regional center for data services and cloud computing.

It is worth noting that sites have been allocated for the establishment of three centers as per the request of the Communications and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) as follows: South Mutlaa, North-South Saad Al-Abdullah and Sulaibiya.

Social Affairs ministry posts strong performance in 2025/2026 projects

147 initiatives mark progress in operational plan

By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 16: Acting Assistant Undersecretary for Financial, Administrative and Cooperative Affairs at the Ministry of Social Affairs Dr. Sayed Issa said the ministry has completed 147 projects included in the operational plan for the second part of fiscal 2025/2026.

In a press statement, Issa revealed these projects aim to achieve a set of strategic objec-

tives, including employee development, administrative development, strengthening the mandates of various departments, and achieving the objectives of the ministry.

He affirmed that the completion rates are in line with the planned timeframe, indicating the departments under the minister achieved 55.4 percent, while those under the undersecretary of reached 51 percent.



Issa

He said the Financial, Administrative and Cooperative Affairs Sector recorded outstanding achievement, with a completion rate of 52.6 percent for the General Department of Planning and Administrative Development, 47.6 percent for the General Department of Financial and Administrative Affairs, and 55.5 percent for the General Department of Cooperative Affairs.

He added that the Social Development and Care Sector continued its remarkable performance with a completion rate of 57.5 percent for the General Department of Social Development and 58.75 percent for the General Department of Social Care, while the departments of the Supreme Council

for Family Affairs achieved 67.5 percent – one of the highest achievement rate among the sectors in the ministry.

He stressed that these achievements reflect the unwavering commitment of the ministry to comply with the directives of the political leadership, as well as that of Minister of Social, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah and Undersecretary Dr. Khaled Al-Ajmi. He said these achievements are in line with the New Kuwait 2035 vision, which aims to enhance institutional efficiency and raise the level of government performance to better serve the citizens and society.

Cooperation aims to boost volunteerism and local programs

Farwaniya Governor hosts Kafu CEO on volunteer initiatives

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 16: Governor of Farwaniya Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah had a meeting with Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Kafu Platform Dr. Fatima Al-Mousawi in his office at the Farwaniya Governorate headquarters on Wednesday.

This meeting is part of the ongoing cooperation between Farwaniya Governorate, national platforms and volunteer teams supporting community initiatives.

During the meeting, discussions focused on implementing programs and projects that aim to better serve the residents of the governorate and contribute to the achievement of sustainable development goals by

supporting volunteer work and empowering national and community capacities in line with the vision of Kuwait towards comprehensive and sustainable development.

The Governor praised the efforts of Al-Mousawi and the Kafu team in implementing national environmental projects aimed at protecting the environment and achieving sustainable development.

At the end of the meeting, Al-Mousawi expressed her gratitude to Sheikh Athbi Al-Nasser for his continuous cooperation with volunteer teams, his unwavering support for community initiatives, and his efforts to promote community participation and volunteer work.



Farwaniya Governorate photo
Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah with Dr. Fatima Al-Mousawi, Chief Executive Officer of Kafu Platform.



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Experts to discuss future lab diagnostics

Kuwait to host Seventh Laboratory Conference on precision medicine

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

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 16: Chairperson of the Medical Laboratory Departments Council at the Ministry of Health Dr. Ibtisam Al-Juma announced that the Seventh Laboratory Conference will be held on Oct 20-22 under the patronage of Health Minister Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadi.

In a press statement, Al-Juma disclosed that the conference is an important scientific event bringing together experts and researchers in the field of medical laboratory sciences to discuss the latest developments in precision medicine and diagnostic hematology.

She said this year's conference, with the theme "Developments in Diagnostic Hematology and Precision Medicine...Future Trends in Laboratory Diagnostics," is part of the approach of the ministry in supporting scientific research and developing laboratory services in line with global trends toward medicine that relies on the genetic and environmental characteristics of the individual to provide personalized healthcare.



Dr. Al-Juma

She stated that the program consists of eight main multidisciplinary sessions, in addition to short training courses, during which speakers will tackle vital topics, such as developments in hematology and oncology, applications of artificial intelligence in laboratory analysis, predictive biomarkers, blood transfusion medicine, and ethical aspects of modern medical diagnosis.

She emphasized that the organization of the conference by the Medical Laboratory Departments Council and the Medical Laboratory Services Department affirms the commitment of the ministry to further improve the skills of laboratory personnel and expand scientific cooperation with regional and international institutions. She added the conference will host international speakers and experts from various countries to exchange experiences and review the latest scientific findings in this vital field.

She urged all interested parties and those working in the healthcare sector to participate in this significant scientific event. Through this conference, she hopes to build a sturdy bridge between scientific research and clinical practice, and activate the role of medical laboratories as a leading element in developing the future healthcare system in Kuwait and the region.

Inspiring young minds through discovery

Scientific Center brings prehistoric giant to life with 'T-REX' screening

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 16: The Scientific Center, a subsidiary of the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS), announced the launch of the award-winning film "T-REX" on Wednesday, October 14, 2025. The event was attended by paleontology students, The Scientific Center staff, and annual membership holders.

According to a press release issued by The Scientific Center, the film was screened on The Scientific Center's giant IMAX screen, taking viewers on an exciting journey through time to explore the most famous and powerful predator in Earth's history, which is the Tyrannosaurus rex.

The film is produced and distributed by the international company Giant Screen Films.

It combines the latest scientific research with an engaging cinematic narrative and stunning visual effects, offering viewers the most accurate and realistic portrayal of the tyrannical king of lizards.

Narrated in English by international actor Sam Neill, star of the Jurassic Park series, the film also features an Arabic version performed by Dr. Basam Al-Jazzaf. His warm and passionate narration brings scientific excitement, making the experience more relatable and captivating for local and Arab audiences.

The story centers on the true story of three young individuals who, as teenagers, discovered a rare T-REX fossil, an important find that has expanded our understanding of dinosaur growth and behavior.

The Scientific Center's Deputy Di-



Award-winning film 'T-REX' poster.



Movie goes during the film screening.

rector General, Mohammed Al-Sanousi, expressed his pleasure in presenting this distinguished scientific film, emphasizing that it offers not just entertainment but an educational journey that sparks curiosity among young people and encourages them to explore the natural sciences.

Ahmadi Council approves major site allocations

Five agenda items and four KNPC requests get greenlight

By Inaas Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff
KUWAIT CITY, Oct 16: The Ahmadi Governorate Committee at the Municipal Council, chaired by Nassar Al-Azmi, approved

five of the seven items on its agenda, in addition to four requests submitted by Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC), during its meeting on Wednesday.

The approved agenda items include the following:
■ Cancellation of the decision that the council issued on March 21, 2016 regarding the allocation of Site No. 5 for the construction of a fuel filling station on Mina Abdullah-Wafra Road, Southwest Sabah Al-Ahmad Residential City, and the allocation of

an alternative site in the western part of the city,
■ Allocation of an alternative site for the former Fuel Filling Station No. 6 (currently Site 155) north of Wafra Agricultural Park, next to the amusement park,
■ Allocation of an alternative site for the former Fuel Filling Station No. 1 (currently Site 153) on Mina Abdullah-Wafra (Arifjan) Road,

q Allocation of an alternative site for the former Fuel Filling Station No. 2 (currently Site 154) in Arifjan on the newly constructed road, south of the military zone,
■ Request of the Ministry of Public Works to allocate sites in Fahaeel.
On the other hand, the committee decided to return the proposal of member Walid Al-Dagher regarding

the creation of entrances and exits in South Sabahiya to the executive body for technical approval.
The committee retained on its agenda the request of the Public Authority for Sports to allocate a site in Ahmadi for Burgan Sports Club, pending the invitation of the authority's representatives to a meeting to discuss details of the request.



Kuwait Pavilion at Expo 2025 Osaka.

KUNA photo

Pavilion sweeps four international awards

Kuwait earns top honors at Expo 2025 Osaka

OSAKA, Oct 16, (KUNA): Kuwait's Pavilion at Expo 2025 Osaka has won four international awards from Exhibitor magazine, a leading U.S. publication specialized in global exhibitions and conferences.
Kuwait's Commissioner General to the Expo, Salem Al-Watyan, expressed pride in the recognition, describing it as a testament to the country's creativity and innovation on the world stage.
In a statement to KUNA, Al-Watyan explained that the pavilion received first place for "Best Storytelling," honoring its creative narrative that connects Kuwait's heritage with its present and future.
In addition to the top prize, the pavilion earned three honorary awards; the first was for "Best In-

teractive Experience," recognizing its innovative and engaging visitor features.
The second acknowledged the pavilion's team for "Best Staff," in appreciation of their effective communication and hospitality.
The third was awarded for "Best Use of Technology," highlighting the integration of modern technologies and artificial intelligence in presenting the pavilion's content.
Al-Watyan emphasized that these awards represent international validation of Kuwait's forward-looking vision and cultural presence, aligning with the country's Vision 2035 in the fields of development, technology, and the arts.
He also credited the ongoing support of Kuwait's leadership and the close follow-up by

Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi.
He added that Exhibitor magazine has been a prominent global reference in the exhibition industry for over four decades, and its awards are considered the second most prestigious worldwide after those of the Bureau International des Expositions (BIE), due to their high evaluation standards focused on design, innovation, interactivity, and advanced technology.
Al-Watyan concluded by stating that this achievement reflects Kuwait's positive image on the international stage and confirms its leadership in delivering a rich cultural and educational experience at Expo 2025 Osaka.

Islamic Affairs standardizes mosque sector procedures

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 16: The Ministry of Islamic Affairs has instructed individuals holding religious positions, such as Imams, preachers and Muezzins, to standardize all forms and procedures for employees in the mosque sector, particularly those related to residency renewal application, reports Al-Anba daily.
According to a circular issued to the Mosque Sector, those renewing their resi-

dency for religious positions must visit the respective governorate's mosque administration headquarters. They are required to provide copies of their civil identification card and passport.
If their families reside in the country, they must submit copies of all family members' civil identification cards, the wife's entry and exit records from the Sahel app, and informa-

tion about children who are above 18 years old from the same app.
Other required documents include recent and valid salary certificate with a barcode for employees registered in the Civil Service Commission (CSC), excluding those working under revenue-based contracts, as well as a certificate of employment continuity issued by the department where the employee works.

Continued from Page 1

ACG committed

Acting Minister of Finance, Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, and Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment Dr. Sabeeh Al-Mukhaizeem met with World Bank Vice President for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Ousmane Dione.
During the meeting, Dr. Al-Mukhaizeem highlighted the importance of strengthening relations with the World Bank's local office in Kuwait, especially following the appointment of a new office director.
He stressed the need for the new director to possess the necessary expertise, knowledge, and flexibility to engage effectively with local entities, ensuring that the office's presence delivers tangible added value.
He also underlined the importance of holding an early meeting with the newly appointed director to set clear priorities for cooperation between Kuwait and the World Bank.
On his part, Dione expressed appreciation to Kuwait for recently completing the payment of its contribution to the general and selective capital increase of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD).
He said this reflects Kuwait's commitment to its international obligations and its support for the World Bank's efforts in advancing sustainable development.
Both sides reaffirmed the importance of further enhancing cooperation between Kuwait and the World Bank, particularly in the fields of education, health, energy, and water.
The meeting was attended by the Executive Director at the World Bank Group (WBG) Abdulaziz Al-Mulla, the Director of Public Debt

Management Faisal Al-Muzaini, Director of International Economic Cooperation Department Saad Al-Rashidi, Acting Director of Macroeconomics and Fiscal Policy and Director of Financial Planning and Follow-up Department Ahmad Al-Oman.
The meeting took place on the sidelines of Kuwait's participation in the Annual Meetings of the Boards of Governors of the World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), held in Washington from October 13 to 18, 2025.
Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy and Acting Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic and Investment Affairs Dr. Sabeeh Al-Mukhaizeem participated late Wednesday in the meeting of Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors of the Middle East, North Africa and Pakistan (MENAP).
The meeting, held as part of Kuwait's participation of the Annual Meetings of the World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund in Washington, reviewed the latest regional and international economic developments as well as exchanged views on key global issues, including current economic challenges.
The meeting also touched on policies focused on strengthening financial stability, seizing growth opportunities and boosting IMF engagement with member states amid uncertainty and regional tensions.
On her part, IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said the inflation in most regional economies had eased due to lower food and energy prices as well as relatively tight monetary policies.
She took note that the IMF raised its growth forecast for the region to 3.2 percent in 2025, up from 2.6

percent in May, expecting it to reach 3.7 percent in 2027, supported by strong domestic demand and ongoing reforms.
She stressed key priorities, including rebuilding fiscal and external buffers, strengthening fiscal frameworks and policies, accelerating structural reforms, and deepening IMF partnerships across the MENAP region.
Meanwhile, member states called for the full membership of the State of Palestine in the IMF during a meeting held on the sidelines of the 2025 Annual Meetings of the World Bank and IMF Boards of Governors from October 13 to 18.
Double-edged
Children under two should not be using smart devices and children between two and five years of age should be allowed to use such tools of a maximum of one hour, according to WHO, she asserted.
Regarding the unmonitored use of smart device and its effect on the safety of children, the Interior Ministry's cybercrime department warned that unsupervised smart devices sessions might expose children mature content and also predators would take advantage of children, blackmailing them into unthinkable acts.
Children are vulnerable to threats online and smart devices could be used to expose data, bully children, and affect families, the department added, noting that children, under threat, could be end up providing their passwords and private data to criminals who take advantage of their young age.
Monitoring children's use of smart devices, allowing them to speak their minds to their parents will help prevent extortion and pro-

tect the lives of the whole family, it stressed, calling on parents to reinforce healthy digital culture and usage among children to keep safe and avoid the pitfalls of smart devices.

Kuwait's

She expressed admiration for KRCS's regional and international efforts supporting communities affected by disasters and crises.
For his part, Al-Mandeel said that during the meeting, they discussed ways to enhance humanitarian cooperation and reviewed KRCS programs and projects implemented in several countries.
He affirmed KRCS's continued drive to build humanitarian partnerships worldwide, expand its programs, and contribute to sustainable development, adding that such visits are valuable for sharing expertise and strengthening mutual ties.
Make sure
Present at the meeting were Chief of His Highness the Prime Minister's Diwan Abdulaziz Al-Dakheel, Minister of Defense 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 Abdullah Al-Mishari, Director General of the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) Dr. Sheikh Meshaal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Chairman of the Fatwa and Legislation, Counselor Salah Al-Majed, Assistant Minister for Asian Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Sameeh Hayat, and Assistant Undersecretary at the Ministry of Electricity and Water Eng. Faisal Al-Sumait.

Kuwait engages in Arab priorities

Minister Al-Mukhaizeem joins WBG Arab Governors Summit

WASHINGTON, Oct 16, (KUNA): Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, and Acting Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic and Investment Affairs Sabeeh Al-Mukhaizeem took part on Wednesday in the joint meeting between President of the World Bank Group (WBG) Ajay Banga and the Arab Governors at the group.
The meeting discussed some issues topping Arab countries' priorities like rebuilding and recovery in post-conflict countries, and achieving balance in climate financing between adaptation and mitigation.
The conferees also focused on support by WBG to integrate digital transformation in the strategies of labor markets to prepare workforce for future jobs.
On labor markets, Banga said in the next ten years, about 1.2 billion youth will join these markets, and this requires providing job opportunities to them.
Banga asserted that 90 percent of jobs created by private sector, and other main sectors like infrastructure, healthcare and more also provide jobs to youth.
The meeting further touched upon the rebuilding of Gaza evaluated at USD 53 bil-



KUNA photo
Sabeeh Al-Mukhaizeem, Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, and Acting Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic and Investment Affairs
lion, according to the WBG estimation.
It welcomed the return of Syria as a World Bank active member after settling its financial arrears to the institution.
The conferees demanded diversification and inclusiveness inside the WBG through increasing representation of Arab efficiencies on different levels.

Other Voices

The glad tiding of the 1.5 KWD

By Ahmad alsarraf

THE United Arab Emirates recently announced deaths and serious side effects resulting from the consumption of the Iranian bottled water brand "Uranus Star".
Kuwait's Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN) also issued a warning against consuming the product, citing dangerously high levels of contamination.
In a separate case, a European country previously suspended production at a facility belonging to a well-known European water company after discovering bacterial contamination linked to fecal matter.
These are just the incidents that make headlines. What lies beneath the surface is likely far more concerning. It is important to take every possible precaution and ensure the safety and quality of the water, vegetables, and fruits we consume daily. If not, we risk paying a steep price with our health and money due to negligence.



alsarraf

Everyone concerned knows exactly where the problem lies. Some individuals willingly compromise their own health by choosing the lowest-quality fruits and food simply because they are cheap, despite being fully aware of the risks and having the financial means to afford better options.
This kind of miserliness mirrors the behavior of some government agencies, which, despite knowing that we have access to water suitable for irrigation and the ability to boost local production, fail to act. We also have arable land, the capacity to grow a wide variety of food products, and the financial resources to develop a robust, high-quality, and affordable food industry.
Furthermore, we possess advanced vertical farming technology that has already proven successful. Several agricultural companies in Kuwait, most notably Al-Hayat Company,

have adopted this model and earned the prestigious GLOBALG.A.P. certification for the quality of their produce.
These local companies have not only provided vegetables and fruits with exceptional taste, but have also protected consumers' health from the serious risks posed by produce irrigated with sewage-contaminated water. This is particularly evident with imported crops from so-called friendly and sister countries, where cultivation practices often lack proper oversight, especially regarding water quality, fertilizers, and the chemical agents used to manipulate the appearance and speed up the ripening of crops.
Protecting consumer health simply requires one thing - making the right decision and enforcing it.

In a ludicrous move, the Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) announced its intention to offer a subsidy of just KD 1.5 for each fruitful palm tree as part of an incentive initiative. This comes in response to a sharp decline in date production, with nearly 50 percent of palm trees reportedly infested by the red palm weevil.
However, disbursing such a meager subsidy is likely to cost the government twice as much in administrative expenses, potentially prompting the formation of investigative committees to look into suspected manipulation or misuse of the payments.
What farmers truly need is not this paltry sum, which doesn't even cover the cost of palm fertilizer. They need real support from PAAAFR in combating the red weevil.
It is important to note that date cultivation is already costly, requiring intensive care, harvesting, cleaning, pressing, vacuum-sealing, packaging in cartons, and transportation to retail outlets.
Instead of disbursing a KD 1.5 subsidy, PAAAFR should raise its standards by encouraging committed farmers to grow fruits and vegetables using modern scientific methods, and by providing basic resources like water and electricity.
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This photo provided by the Alaska Division of Geological Geophysical Surveys shows the village of Kipnuk, Alaska, as seen from a drone on June 21, 2022, before floods in 2024 and 2025 destroyed many buildings. (AP)

Alaska airlifting hundreds from storm-devastated coastal villages

One of the most significant airlifts in Alaska history was underway Wednesday to move hundreds of people from coastal villages ravaged by high surf and strong winds from the remnants of Typhoon Halong last weekend, officials said.

The storm brought record water levels to two low-lying communities and washed away homes - some with people inside. At least one person was killed and two are miss-

ing. Makeshift shelters were quickly established and swelled to about 1,500 people, an extraordinary number in a sparsely populated region where communities are reachable by air or water.

The remoteness and the scale of the destruction created challenges for getting resources in place. Damage assessments have been trickling in as responders have shifted from initial search-and-rescue op-

erations to trying to stabilize or restore basic services.

The communities of Kipnuk and Kwigillingok near the Bering Sea saw water levels more than 6 feet (1.8 meters) above the highest normal tide line. Leaders asked the state to evacuate the more than 1,000 residents in those villages, said Jeremy Zidek, a spokesperson with the state emergency management office. (AP)

Judge temporarily blocks WH from firing workers during govt shutdown

SAN FRANCISCO, Oct 16, (AP): A federal judge on Wednesday temporarily blocked President Donald Trump’s administration from firing workers during the government shutdown, saying the cuts appeared to be politically motivated and were being carried out without much thought.

US District Judge Susan Illston in San Francisco repeatedly pressed the assistant U.S. attorney to explain the administration’s rationale for the more than 4,100 layoff notices that started going out Friday even though furloughed workers can not access their work emails and there are no human resources specialists to assist with next steps.

“It’s very much ready, fire, aim on most of these programs, and it has a human cost,” she said. “It’s a human cost that cannot be tolerated.”

She granted a temporary restraining order blocking the job cuts, saying she believed the evidence would ultimately show the cuts were illegal and in excess of authority.

Asked for comment, the White House referred The Associated Press to the Office of Management and Budget. The budget office did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The American Federation of Government Employees and other federal



With the government shutdown now in its third week, a sign turns away tourists at the entrance to the Capitol Visitor Center, in Washington on Oct 15. (AP)

labor unions had asked Illston to block the administration from issuing new layoff notices and implementing those that were already sent out. The unions said the firings were an abuse of power designed to punish workers and pressure Congress.

“The president seems to think his government shutdown is distracting people from the harmful and lawless-

ness actions of his administration, but the American people are holding him accountable, including in the courts,” said Skye Perryman, president and CEO of legal organization Democracy Forward. “Our civil servants do the work of the people, and playing games with their livelihoods is cruel and unlawful and a threat to everyone in our nation.”

‘Now it’s like a passion for me’

‘Law and order’ push shows Trump no longer encumbered by naysaying aides or govt guardrails

WASHINGTON, Oct 16, (AP): US President Donald Trump was telling a Rose Garden audience about his efforts to quell violence in the nation’s capital when, as if on cue, his words were drowned out by the wail of sirens from passing vehicles.

“Listen to the beauty of that sound,” Trump said, grinning before adding, “They’re not politically correct sirens.”

Coming as it did during an otherwise somber event to posthumously award the Presidential Medal of Freedom to conservative activist Charlie Kirk, the moment encapsulated how Trump’s push for law-and-order-at-all-costs has become a centerpiece of his second term.

He’s deployed troops to Democrat-majority cities and directed federal officials, often with their faces obscured by masks, to round up people living in the country illegally. He has suggested that US urban areas could become military “training grounds” and toyed with invoking the Insurrection Act so political opponents can’t use the courts to foil his plans.

Now settled into his second term,

Trump has embraced the kind of tough-on-crime approach he has always campaigned on but was unable to achieve with the naysayers who often checked his most extreme instincts during his first four years in office. In the process, his administration has sometimes trampled law enforcement norms and critics say Trump has weaponized the Department of Justice, using it to go after political opponents.

On Wednesday, he touted the results of a crackdown named “Operation Summer Heat” in the Oval Office. Flanked by FBI Director Kash Patel and Attorney General Pam Bondi, Trump said the FBI made 8,000-plus arrests.

Trump said that he had talked about crime during his campaign last year, but never expected it to be such a major second-term focus.

“Now it’s like a passion for me,” he said, and that his actions were “many many steps above” what he’d pledged and “we’re just at the start.”

It’s in some ways the full realization of the mindset Trump has had since his early days as a real estate mogul back in the gritty days of 1970s and ‘80s



US President Donald Trump speaks during an event in the Oval Office at the White House on Oct 15, in Washington, as FBI director Kash Patel and Attorney General Pam Bondi listen. (AP)

New York, when crime was rampant and city residents clamored for crackdowns.

Trump’s efforts have drawn resistance from local leaders. His plans to

send soldiers to Chicago and Portland, Oregon, have so far been thwarted by legal challenges. He has said he is confident he will win on appeal, but hasn’t ruled out using the Insurrection Act as

a workaround, if needed.

But elsewhere, his moves have dramatically altered day-to-day lives. Earlier this year, he took control of the California National Guard in response to protests against immigration raids in Los Angeles and sent the National Guard into Washington, D.C. and Memphis, Tennessee.

Trump also has mused about taking similar action in Baltimore, New Orleans and New York, and also threatened Boston, suggesting World Cup games set to be played in nearby Foxborough next year could be moved if law enforcement actions aren’t intensified.

Trump’s eagerness to embrace the hardest possible line against accused criminals - guilty or not - burst into public view more than 30 years ago. He stirred racial tensions by calling for the execution of the Central Park Five, a group of Black and Hispanic teenagers who were wrongly convicted of rape in 1989.

Trump took out full-page newspaper ads under the headlines: “Bring Back The Death Penalty. Bring Back Our Police!” Those convictions were

vacated in 2002, after evidence linked a serial rapist to the crime. Today, the case is remembered by activists as evidence of a criminal justice system prejudiced against defendants of color.

“That’s the very same spirit that’s at work now,” said Rev. J. Lawrence Turner of the Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church in Memphis. Turner said Trump had “demonized” and “targeted” Memphis, which is 62% African American and has a Black mayor and county leader.

Trump “seems like he is bent on seeing us in the way he has seen other persons of color throughout his first term, and possibly, I would say, throughout his public-facing life,” Turner said. “We have this president unleashed in this second term.”

Trump covered some of the same political ground in his first term during the protests over racism and police brutality sparked by the 2020 killing of George Floyd, when he sent troops to the streets of Washington and to Portland. But his advisers at the time staunchly opposed many of his calls to more broadly deploy the military to beat back unrest.

Embattled French premier survives no-confidence votes in Parliament

PARIS, Oct 16, (AP): French Prime Minister Sébastien Lecornu survived two votes of no-confidence Thursday that could have toppled his fragile new government and plunged France deeper into political chaos.

The National Assembly votes clear the way for the embattled Lecornu to pursue what could be an even greater challenge: getting a 2026 budget for the European Union’s second-largest economy through Parliament’s powerful but bitterly divided lower house before the end of the year.

Lecornu’s survival also spares any immediate need for President Emmanuel Macron to again dissolve the National Assembly and call snap legislative elections, a hazardous option that the French leader had signaled that he might take if Lecornu fell.

The close ally of the French president faced two no-confidence motions filed by Macron’s fiercest opponents - the hard-left France Unbowed party and Marine Le Pen of the far-right National Rally and her allies in Parliament.

The 577-seat chamber voted on the France Unbowed motion first - and it fell short by 18 votes, with 271 lawmakers supporting it. It needed a majority of 289 votes to succeed.



French Prime Minister Sebastian Lecornu listens to speeches before a no-confidence vote on Oct 16, at the National Assembly in Paris. (AP)

Le Pen’s second motion got just 144 votes, well short of a majority.

But Lecornu isn’t out of the woods yet.

To get the votes he needed, Lecornu dangled the possibility of rolling back one of the flagship but most unpopular reforms of Macron’s second term as president, which will gradually raise France’s retirement age from 62 to 64.

Lecornu’s proposed suspension of the 2023 pension reform helped

convince opposition Socialist Party lawmakers to grudgingly decide not to back the efforts to topple him, at least for now. With 69 lawmakers, Socialist backing for Lecornu’s removal would have tipped the votes against him. But just seven Socialists broke ranks in voting for the France Unbowed motion.

The conservative Republicans, with 50 lawmakers, also withheld support for Lecornu’s removal, with just one exception.

Europe

‘Measures adopted to counter threats’: NATO has said that it has begun implementing a set of additional measures to strengthen its defensive capabilities against drone threats, calling for more coordination with the European Union (EU) to ensure the success of such efforts.

Speaking at a press conference in Brussels following a meeting of NATO defense ministers, Secretary General **Mark Rutte** said that the Alliance is “raising its level of vigilance and reinforcing its defensive posture along the eastern flank,” including the recently launched Eastern Sentry initiative in the Baltic Sea.

The NATO chief cited ongoing tests for “integrated systems to detect, track and neutralize aerial threats,” underlining the use of procurement mechanisms to develop cost-effective and efficient counter-drone capabilities.

In line with the additional measures, he said that NATO would not shoot down any aircraft in its airspace unless it “poses a threat,” which in such case, allows “our forces full authority to respond immediately,” added the official.(KUNA)



Rutte

BiH parliament fails to adopt budget: Bosnia and

Herzegovina (BiH)’s parliament on Wednesday failed for the third time to adopt the 2025 budget, leaving the country under temporary financing for the tenth consecutive month.

The House of Representatives ended its session without debating the draft budget proposed by the Presidency, after lawmakers from Republika Srpska voted against an emergency procedure.

Representatives from the Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) reiterated their opposition to higher allocations for state-level institutions.

The next parliamentary session is scheduled for Oct 29. (Xinhua)

Ex-security guard convicted of spying: A former security guard at the US Embassy in Norway was convicted of espionage Wednesday after a court in Oslo found that he spied for Russia and Iran.

The 28-year-old Norwegian man, whose name has not been made public, was sentenced to three years and seven months behind bars. He had acknowledged the indictment’s facts but denied any criminal guilt.

Prosecutors said he handed over details about the embassy’s diplomats, its floor plans and security routines, among other things, Norwegian state broadcaster NRK reported.

The man’s defense attorneys, in a statement Thursday, said the verdict raises questions about what is considered espionage under Norwegian law.

“He lied about having security clearance to agents from other countries and exaggerated his own role,” attorney Inger Zadig of Elden Law Firm said in the statement. (AP)

Russian barrage causes blackouts in Kyiv as Zelenskyy seeks Trump’s help

KYIV, Ukraine, Oct 16, (AP): Russia battered Ukraine’s energy facilities with hundreds of drones and dozens of missiles in its latest heavy bombardment of the country’s power grid, authorities said Thursday, as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy prepared to ask President Donald Trump at a White House meeting for more American-made air defenses and long-range missiles.

Eight Ukrainian regions experienced blackouts after the barrage, Ukraine’s national energy operator, Ukrenergo, said. DTEK, the country’s largest private energy company, reported outages in the capital, Kyiv, and said it had to stop its natural gas extraction in the central Poltava region due to the strikes. Natural gas infrastructure was damaged for the sixth time this month, Naftogaz, Ukraine’s state-owned oil and gas company, said.

Zelenskyy said Russia fired more than 300 drones and 37 missiles at Ukraine overnight. He accused Russia of using cluster munitions and conducting repeated strikes on the same target to hit emergency crews and engineers working to repair the grid.

“This fall, the Russians are using every single day to strike our energy infrastructure,” Zelenskyy said on Telegram.

The Ukrainian power grid been one of Russia’s main targets since its in-



In this photo provided by the Ukrainian Emergency Services on Oct 16 a residential building is seen on fire after a Russian strike in Nizhyn, Chernihiv region, Ukraine. (AP)

vasion of its neighbor more than three years ago. Attacks increase as the bitterly cold months approach in a Russian strategy that Ukrainian officials call “weaponizing winter.” Russia says it aims only at targets of military value.

Ukrainian forces have resisted Russia’s bigger and better equipped army, limiting it to a grinding war of attrition along the roughly 1,000-kilometer

(600-mile) front line snaking through eastern and southern regions.

But Ukraine, which is almost the size of Texas, is hard to defend from the air in its entirety, and Kyiv officials are seeking more Western help to fend against aerial attacks and strike back at Russia.

Zelenskyy was expected to arrive in the United States on Thursday, ahead of his Oval Office meeting with Trump on Friday.

Plane carrying Hegseth lands in UK for emergency

WASHINGTON, Oct 16, (Agencies): US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth’s plane made an unscheduled landing in the United Kingdom because a windshield cracked on a flight back to the US from a NATO meeting and all aboard are safe, the Pentagon said.

The plane landed “based on standard procedures,” Pentagon spokesman Sean Parnell said in a post on X.

After Hegseth left Brussels, open source flight trackers spotted his C-32 lose altitude and begin broadcasting an emergency signal.

No members of the Pentagon press corps were traveling with Hegseth, as was regular practice under previous defense secretaries. Instead, Pentagon reporters were emptying their desks and cleaning out their workspaces after rejecting new rules for journalists based in the Pentagon.

In February, an Air Force C-32 carrying Secretary of State Marco Rubio and the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Sen. Jim Risch, was similarly forced to return to Washington after an issue with the cockpit windshield. The incident occurred about 90 minutes after the flight took off from Joint Base Andrews outside



United States Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, (left), speaks with Britain’s Defense Secretary John Healey during a meeting of the Ukraine Defense Contact Group at NATO headquarters in Brussels on Oct 15. (AP)

of Washington.

The C-32, a specially configured version of the Boeing 757-200 commercial airplane, transports U.S. leaders, including the vice president, first lady and members of the Cabinet and Congress.

The flight, SAM 153, was flying over the North Atlantic before turning back to Britain. The flight was en route back to the United States from NATO’s defense ministers’ meeting in Belgium, said Parnell.

No casualties reported after 6.6-magnitude quake hits Papua province

Indonesia to buy 42 fighter jets from China marking its first non-Western aircraft purchase deal

JAKARTA, Indonesia, Oct 16, (Agencies): Indonesia’s top defense official said Wednesday that Jakarta will acquire at least 42 Chinese-made Chengdu J-10C fighter jets, marking the country’s first non-Western aircraft purchase deal.

Defense Minister Sjafrie Sjamsoeuddin told reporters in the capital, Jakarta, that Indonesia would soon buy fighter jets from China as part of a plan to modernize its military. Analysts said the deal could touch regional sensitivities and have geopolitical implications.

“They will be flying over Jakarta soon,” Sjamsoeuddin said. He declined to provide further details of the purchase.

The plan to buy the J-10s was first disclosed last month by defense ministry spokesperson Brig. Gen. Frega Wenas. Local media had reported that the Indonesian Air Force was still reviewing the Chinese-made fighter jets to ensure their acquisition would effectively strengthen Indonesia’s air defense capabilities.

Finance Minister Purbaya Yudhi Sadewa on Wednesday confirmed that his ministry had approved a budget for the purchase of the aircraft from China that reached more than \$9 billion.

“So, everything should be ready,” Sadewa told reporters, “But I have to double check when those aircrafts will arrive in Jakarta from Beijing.”

Indonesia has embarked on a drive to upgrade and modernize its military arsenal and strengthen its defense industry under President Prabowo Subianto’s administration. Subianto has crisscrossed the globe since he was appointed defense minister in 2019, traveling to China, France, Russia, Turkey and the U.S. in a bid to acquire new military weapon systems and surveillance and territorial defense capabilities.

The Indonesian Air Force currently has fighter jets from countries including the



Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto leaves after delivering his Annual State of the Nation Address ahead of the country’s Independence Day in Jakarta, Indonesia on Aug 15. (AP)

U.S., Russia and Britain. Some of these aircraft need to be upgraded or replaced.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced in June that his country will export 48 of its KAAN fighter jets to Indonesia. Those jets would be manufactured in Turkey and exported to Indonesia, Erdogan said in an X post.

Indonesia finalized an order for 42 French Dassault Rafale fighter jets in January 2024, with the first delivery expected in early 2026. Southeast Asia’s largest economy also announced the purchase of two French Scorpene Evolved submarines and 13 Thales ground control interception radars.

Beni Sukadis, a defense analyst from the Indonesia Institute for Defense and Strategic Studies, said that despite being politically non-aligned, the government shouldn’t underestimate the geopolitical implications of its choices.

After decades of relying on Western suppliers, a major arms purchase from Beijing “could be read as a shift in Indonesia’s security orientation amid China’s growing military and diplomatic influence in Southeast Asia region,” Sukadis said.

He warned the “move could spark regional sensitivities over the South China Sea where China has direct interests.”

Also:

JAKARTA: No casualties or major damage have been reported after a 6.6-magnitude earthquake struck Indonesia’s Papua province on Thursday.

According to the Indonesian Meteorology, Climatology and Geophysics Agency (BMKG), the quake’s epicenter was located about 32 km southeast of the Sarmi district at a depth of 18 km.

No tsunami warning was issued following the tremor.

Indonesia, a vast archipelagic nation, sits on the Pacific “Ring of Fire,” an area with frequent seismic and volcanic activity.

UN urges Pakistan and Afghanistan to end hostilities to protect civilians

ISLAMABAD, Oct 16, (AP): The United Nations on Thursday urged Pakistan and Afghanistan to bring “a lasting end to hostilities” to protect civilians, after days of fighting killed dozens of people in both countries and injured hundreds more.

It’s the deadliest crisis between the neighbors since 2021, when the Taliban seized power in Afghanistan following the collapse of the Western-backed government.

Cross-border violence has escalated since Oct. 10, with each country saying they were retaliating to armed provocations from the other. On Wednesday, the two sides agreed to a ceasefire.

The truce followed appeals from major regional powers, as the violence threatened to destabilize a region where groups, including the Islamic State and al-Qaida, are trying to resurface. There were no reports of overnight fighting. Key border crossings remained closed on Thursday.

The UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan welcomed the ceasefire and said it was still assessing the number of casualties. It said the heaviest toll was in the south on Wednesday.

“Current information indicates that at least 17 civilians were killed and 346 were injured in Spin Boldak on the Afghan side of the border,” the UN mission said.



People bring a man, who was injured in the clashes between Pakistan and Afghan forces in border area, for medical treatment at a hospital in Chaman, a town on the Pakistan side of the border on Oct 15. (AP)

It said it had also documented at least 16 civilian casualties in several Afghan provinces during earlier clashes between the two countries.

“UNAMA calls on all parties to bring a lasting end to hostilities to protect civilians and prevent further loss of life,” the mission added.

Pakistan has not provided figures for civilian casualties suffered on its side

of the border.

It has repeatedly accused Afghanistan of harboring militants, a charge rejected by the Taliban. Pakistan is grappling with attacks that have increased since 2021.

The two countries share a 2,611-kilometer (1,622-mile) long border known as the Durand Line, which Afghanistan has never recognized.

Asia

New Zealand mourns ex-PM Bolger: New Zealand politicians have paid tribute to former prime minister **Jim Bolger** following his death at the age of 90, leaving behind “a legacy that will be studied, debated, and respected for generations.”

Prime Minister Christopher Luxon made the statement on Thursday after Bolger, who served as New Zealand’s prime minister from 1990 to 1997, died on Wednesday.

Luxon described Bolger as “a towering figure” and “a reformer of consequence” whose legacy has shaped the nation in profound and lasting ways.

Bolger served as New Zealand’s ambassador to the United States from 1998 to 2002.

Flags were flown at half-mast in his honor on Thursday at all government and public buildings nationwide. (Xinhua)



Bolger

US copters make emergency landings in Japan: Three US military helicopters made emergency landings Thursday afternoon at a commercial airport in western Japan, local media reported.

The helicopters landed at around 2:30 p.m. local time at Takamatsu Airport in Kagawa Prefecture, public broadcaster NHK reported, citing the Japanese Defense Ministry.

Fire engines were dispatched to the site but no water was sprayed, while no flames or smoke were visible around the helicopters, the report said.

There have been no reports of civilian aircraft being affected.

The ministry is currently investigating the cause of the incident. (Xinhua)

‘Widening inequality, corruption and nepotism of leaders’

‘Gen Z’ protesters lead global wave of generational discontent

NEW DELHI, Oct 16, (AP): From the Andes to the Himalayas, a new wave of protests is unfolding across the world, driven by generational discontent against governments and anger among young people.

This week, Madagascar’s President Andry Rajoelina was forced out of power and out of the country after a military mutiny, the culmination of weeks of demonstrations led by young protesters referring to themselves as “Gen Z Madagascar.”

The rage against the political establishment in the Indian Ocean island country mirrors other recent protests across the world, in countries like Nepal, the Philippines, Indonesia, Kenya, Peru and Morocco. These protests have been sparked by specific grievances but are driven by long-simmering issues like widening inequality, economic uncertainty, corruption, and nepotism of leaders.

But they have one thing in common: Mostly leaderless, they are made up primarily of young people who brand themselves as “Gen Z,” defined as those born roughly between 1996 and 2010 - the first generation to grow up entirely in the internet age.

“What connects these youth-led protests is a shared sense that traditional political systems aren’t responsive to their generation’s concerns,



A protester shouts during a protest calling for President Andry Rajoelina to step down in Antananarivo, Madagascar on Oct 14. (AP)

whether that’s corruption, climate change, or economic inequality. Protest then becomes the logical outlet when institutional channels feel blocked,” said Sam Nadel, director of Social Change Lab, a UK-based nonprofit that researches protests and social movements.

Though their specific demands differ, most of these protests have been

sparked by government overreach or neglect. Some have also confronted harsh treatment by security forces and brutal repression.

In Morocco, a leaderless collective called Gen Z 212 - named after Morocco’s dialing code - has taken to the streets to demand better public services and increased spending on health and education. In Peru, protests over a pension law exploded into broader demands, including action to tackle rising insecurity and widespread corruption in the government. In Indonesia, deadly protests have erupted over lawmakers’ perks and the cost of living, forcing the president to replace key economic and security ministers.

The most widely recognized movement to be dubbed as a “Gen Z” protest was a deadly uprising in Nepal that culminated with the resignation of the prime minister in September. Protesters drew inspiration from successful anti-government movements elsewhere in South Asia - Sri Lanka in 2022 and Bangladesh in 2024 - which led to the ouster of incumbent regimes.

In Madagascar in turn, protesters say they were particularly inspired by the movements in Nepal and Sri Lanka.

The protests began against regular water and electricity cuts but quickly morphed into wider discontent, as demonstrators called for the president and other ministers to step down. On Wednesday, Madagascar’s military coup leader said he is “taking the position of president.”

Across multiple countries, a singular pop culture symbol has emerged: a black flag showing a grinning skull and crossbones wearing a straw hat.

Lat/Am

Arevalo accepts security officials resignations: Guatemalan President Bernardo Arevalo accepted the resignations of three top security officials Wednesday as the fallout from Sunday’s admission that 20 gang members had escaped from prison continued.

The prisoners, all members of the Barrio 18 gang, had apparently escaped over a period of days, perhaps during family visits, and it wasn’t until a recount of prisoners was made that their escape was discovered.

On Wednesday, Interior Minister Francisco Jiménez, his deputy overseeing combating drugs and his deputy overseeing the prison system all resigned.

“What has occurred in the penitentiary system is unacceptable,” Arevalo said in a news conference. “The escape from justice by 20 dangerous criminals is not a simple operational failure, it is a serious offense against every good Guatemalan who trusts that the state will carry out its duty to protect them.” (AP)



The photo of prison escapee Julio Cristobal Gomez Lic, of the the gang Barrio 18, is shown on a screen offering reward money for information to recapture him and other prisoners who escaped from a maximum security prison, during a press conference by Interior Minister Francisco Jimenez at the National Palace in Guatemala City on Oct 13. (AP)

Explosions hit Ecuador, gangs blamed: Two explosions rocked different parts of Ecuador on Wednesday, less than 24 hours after a vehicle exploded in a port city in the South American country and left one person dead.

Explosives were placed on bridges “to block traffic,” Transportation Minister Roberto Luque wrote on X, describing the acts as “terrorism.” No casualties have been reported, though roads leading to the affected areas remain closed.

Interior Minister John Reimberg accused “Los Lobos,” one of Ecuador’s largest criminal gangs, which is designated a foreign terrorist organization by the United States, and dissidents of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, a now-defunct Colombian guerrilla movement with ties to the gang, of being behind the blasts.

Reimberg said the attacks came after security opera-

Congo, M23 rebels agree to create body to oversee potential ceasefire

GOMA, Congo, Oct 16, (AP): Congo and Rwanda -backed rebel group M23 agreed to establish an oversight body for a potential permanent ceasefire, an important step toward a peace deal, after efforts to end decades-long fighting in eastern Congo stalled in recent weeks.

The agreement was signed in Doha after mediation by Qatar, Congolese government spokesperson Patrick Muyaya announced on X. M23 spokesperson Lawrence Kanyuka confirmed the signing and shared documents highlighting the terms of the agreement on X.

As part of the agreement, a ceasefire monitoring body, including representatives from Congo, M23 and the 12-country International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, will be formed, according to the documents.

The body is expected to meet within seven days of its creation, with the UN peacekeeping mission in Congo, known as MONUSCO, participating to provide logistical coordination. It will investigate alleged ceasefire violations, the documents said. Backed by neighboring Rwanda, M23 is the most prominent of more than 100 armed groups fighting for control in Congo’s mineral-rich east. With 7 million people displaced in Congo, the U.N. has called the conflict “one of the most protracted, complex, serious humanitarian crises on Earth.”

In a major escalation earlier this year, the rebels seized two key cities in eastern Congo. In July, Congo and M23 signed a declaration of principles in Qatar to end the conflict and commit to a comprehensive peace agreement that would include the restoration of state authorities in key eastern cities controlled by the insurgents and the exchange of prisoners.

Also:

NAIROBI, Kenya: The former president of the Democratic



People walk on the road near Kibumba, north of Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo, as they flee fighting between Congolese forces and M23 rebels in North Kivu on May 24, 2022. (AP)

Republic of Congo appeared in public Wednesday for the first time since being sentenced to death in absentia for treason and war crimes, meeting other leaders in Kenya in an attempt to establish a political group in opposition to Congo’s current president.

Joseph Kabila was filmed in Kenya’s capital, Nairobi, at a ceremony attended by a dozen other Congolese leaders who oppose President Felix Tshisekedi.

Kabila’s appearance in Kenya is expected to trigger diplomatic protests by Congo’s government, which has previously accused Kenya of supporting the Congo rebel group M23.

Kuwait crude rises to \$63.76 pb

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 16, (KUNA): Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said Thursday. Kuwait crude oil edged eight cents higher on Wednesday to reach USD 63.76 per barrel compared with USD 63.68 pb the day before, Kuwait Brent futures dropped 48 cents to USD 61.91 pb and West Texas Intermediate lost 43 cents to USD 58.27 pb.

Business

During a KBA-hosted panel held on the sidelines of the IMF-World Bank Annual Meetings

Al-Marzouq: Kuwaiti banks set to finance mega-projects across housing, power, & infrastructure

‘Kuwait is not merely adapting to the global financial future, but hopefully to be part of shaping it’

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 16: Chairman of the Kuwait Banking Association (KBA) and Chairman of Kuwait Finance House (KFH), Hamad Abdulmohsen Al-Marzouq, presented a comprehensive outlook on the resilience and strategic direction of Kuwait’s banking sector, positioning it as a pivotal platform for national economic transformation. Speaking at the panel “Financial Infrastructure as a Platform” during the “Kuwait – The Beacon of a New Era: Foundations for Economic Transformation” event, held in parallel with the IMF–World Bank Annual Meetings, Al-Marzouq detailed how the sector is converting its stability into a competitive advantage and a foundation for global growth.

The panel was attended by Kuwait’s Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy and Minister of Finance and Acting Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment , Dr. Subaih Abdul Aziz Al-Mukhaizeem, as well as Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to the United States of America, Sheikhha Al-Zain Al-Sabah, along with a number of senior leaders and officials from Kuwait’s banking sector.

Banking Sector Strength: A Strategic Asset Attracting Investment

When asked how the financial system’s strength can attract long-term international partners and investment, Al-Marzouq affirmed the sector’s exceptional health.

“Kuwait’s banking sector is indeed well capitalized, backed by prudent regulatory oversight and a capital adequacy ratio nearing 20%, well above the regulatory minimum of 13%. It has consistently demonstrated resilience especially in the aftermath of global economic crises,” he stated. He provided up-to-date figures from the Central Bank of Kuwait H1 2025 report: “Asset quality remains strong, with a gross non-performing loan ratio of just 1.6% and an NPL coverage ratio of 242.1%, probably considered the highest in the region and globally. Liquidity as measured by LCR or liquidity coverage ratio is solid at well above 150%, and profitability is good with local banks achieving ROE of around 12% reflecting operational efficiency and robust returns.”

He concluded, “This strength is more than a safeguard – it’s a strategic asset. Kuwaiti Banks have been leveraging these strengths through forming strategic partnerships and ventures with international asset managers, positioning Kuwait as a secure and credible financial hub in the GCC and MENA markets.”

Furthermore, he noted that this financial robustness is utilized through syndicated lending and structured finance. “Mega projects that were financed or will be financed by Kuwaiti banks include power stations, Mubarak Port, and mortgage lending, which is expected to be approved soon under new legislation.”

Kuwait’s Vision for Ethical and Islamic Finance

Addressing the growing relevance of ethical and Islamic finance, Al-Marzouq highlighted Kuwait’s historical credentials and future ambitions.

“The Islamic finance industry today is valued at around US\$5–6 trillion. Kuwait, one of the pioneer countries in Islamic banking with the first license granted in 1977, has the credibility to shape its next phase. One of the main ambitions of Islamic banking is to fully cater to the financial needs of the Muslim population of 2 billion making a quarter of the world population,” he explained. To ensure international relevance, he stressed the drive



Hamad Al-Marzouq speaking during the session.

for digital transformation and standardized practices. “KFH among many Islamic banks has been at the forefront of setting harmonized Shariah standards that facilitates cross-border flows and build investors’ confidence just as we, at Kuwait Finance House, have done in UK, Germany, and Egypt. We have been integrating ESG principles within Islamic instruments introduced such as green sukuk and sustainable energy financing. We have also been focusing on nurturing fintech sandboxes that export Kuwait-certified solutions. These innovations ensure Kuwait remains internationally relevant, while appealing to diverse markets seeking ethical, inclusive, and Sharia compliant financial system.”

Safeguarding Trust and Balancing Regulation in the Digital Shift

Discussing the acceleration of digital banking, Al-Marzouq focused on the critical role of trust.

“This question is twofold: the first relates to trust, which is considered the most valuable currency in banking, and every digital initiative must reinforce it through diligent security to ensure safety against cyber-attacks to the best degree possible,” he stated. He also cited the domestic roll-out of instant payments: “Kuwait’s rollout of instant payments system (WAMD), which requires only entering the beneficiaries’ phonenumber demonstrates the commitment to adopt the latest payments technologies by the banking

sector. WAMD has processed over a million transactions in its first year and has been well received by customers reflecting confidence in digital rails.”

To mitigate the sophisticated risks from hackers, he noted two measures: “ The first involves fraud awareness campaigns by the Central Bank and the local banks, while the second is fraud-reporting war room established by the concerned authorities to receive reports and immediate action.”

On the balance between regulation and agility, he highlighted the collaborative approach in Kuwait. “Although it is not a secret that banks around the world always complain about regulations, the situation in Kuwait is probably better than other countries because of the continuous dialogue between the banks and the Central bank as well as other regulatory authorities. This has led to a balanced regulations that take into account public interest while not impeding banks agility and innovation.”

Lessons from Advanced Markets and Capital Mobility

On adopting lessons from advanced markets without stifling local adaptability, Al-Marzouq noted that policies must be shaped by a country’s size, the maturity of its financial institutions, and national objectives.

“Among the main lessons is how volatile liquidity can shift from one market to the other as global markets witness substantial increase in hot money. The 2008 crisis exposed

the vulnerability of depending on unstable capital flow,” he remarked, citing the US government’s emergency measures during that period. “Other areas of interest where we can benefit are the advances achieved in compliance, risk management, and the deployment of AI and robots in achieving fast and efficient products and services provided to our clients.”

Linking Financial Infrastructure to Economic Transformation

Al-Marzouq clearly defined the economic transformation Kuwait is seeking: “We need to transform the economy from being largely dependent on oil into a more diversified economy that can basically achieve two objectives: 1. Ability to generate foreign currency from other sources than oil and 2. The ability to generate jobs. This transformation has to be done jointly between the public and private sector.”

He confirmed that expanding the private sector’s role is a priority under Kuwait’s Vision 2035. To facilitate this, “financial institutions and private sector players in general are continuously upgrading their technology infrastructure to be able to adapt and facilitate the inflow of capital.”

He offered a specific example of contribution: “Let me give you a specific example: at KFH we have been investing in our business-to-business systems and protocols that have made us now better positioned to integrate clearing and settlements with global exchanges, making Kuwaiti sukuk and other instruments seamlessly tradable abroad.” He stated this work contributes to positioning Kuwait as a regional liquidity and risk management hub, supported by new digital rails for cross-border payments and blockchain-enabled trade finance, anchoring Kuwait at the center of capital mobility.

Evolving Beyond Traditional Banking: A Platform for Growth

Finally, Al-Marzouq outlined the sector’s evolution into a platform supporting entrepreneurship, financial inclusion, and cross-border innovation.

“The Kuwaiti banking sector is evolving beyond classic intermediation into a true platform for growth and inclusion. Our banks are creating venture financing ecosystems that support entrepreneurship, embedding financial inclusion by extending mobile-first solutions to different social segments including for example migrant workers,” he said.

Crucially, the sector is “adapting open banking through Application Programming Interfaces (APIs), a key component of Open Banking and Banking-as-a-Service (BaaS), which significantly promotes entrepreneurship. The objective is to promote Kuwait as a testbed for regional fintech interoperability.” He concluded, “This way, our financial system becomes more than a banking channel – it becomes a convergence point for innovation, inclusion, and cross-border collaboration, enabling Kuwait to serve as both connector and catalyst for economic transformation.”

Al-Marzouq concluded with a clear mandate for the future: “Kuwait’s banking sector stands at a unique juncture. Our resilience is proven, but our mandate now is to transform that stability into global investments and global technology. By fusing our heritage in Islamic finance with innovations in digital banking, and by deepening our linkages with international markets, we can ensure Kuwait is not merely adapting to the global financial future but is determined to be part of shaping it.”



A group photo of the Gulf Bank team, with Hamed Al-Tamimi in the middle.

Large turnout of job seekers at Gulf Bank’s booth

Gulf Bank sponsors and concludes participation in ‘My Job’ career fair

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 16: As part of its ongoing support for youth and its continuous efforts to attract the best national talents and professionals, Gulf Bank concluded its participation and sponsorship of the “My Job” career fair, which was held at The Arena – 360 Mall, under the patronage of His Excellency the Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, Mr. Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, during the period from October 16 to 18.

During their participation in the exhibition, Gulf Bank’s Human Resources representatives shed light on the nature of banking work at the Bank and provided detailed explanations to job seekers about the types of banking jobs and the professional development opportunities the Bank offers its employees.

The Bank’s booth witnessed a large turnout of visitors interested in learning more about the Bank’s departments and work environment, as well as submitting job applications, driven by Gulf Bank’s strong reputation as one of the most attractive employers for young national talent in Kuwait.

On this occasion, Mr. Hamed Al-Tamimi, Assistant General Manager of Human Resources at Gulf Bank, stated: “We are pleased to participate in the ‘My Job’ career fair – the largest private sector recruitment fair – as it presents a real opportunity for companies to attract national talent and competencies, and to help young people make critical decisions regarding their career paths and professional futures.” He added: “Gulf Bank is keen on



His Excellency the Minister of Information, surrounded by Gulf Bank officials.

Hamed Al-Tamimi:

■ We believe our employees are the foundation of our success and the secret to our distinction, and we are always keen to enhance and develop their capabilities.

attracting young Kuwaiti talents and professionals across various fields, as they represent the generation capable of keeping up with modern demands and the rapid technological innovations in the local and global banking sector.”

Al-Tamimi reaffirmed Gulf Bank’s commitment to supporting Kuwait’s vision, which prioritizes increasing employment in the private sector and developing the capabilities of Kuwaiti youth while encouraging them toward professional growth. He noted that this

is reflected in the rising percentages of national employment within the Bank in recent years.

He concluded by saying: “At Gulf Bank, we believe our employees are the cornerstone of our success and the secret behind our distinction. That’s why we continually work on developing our systems and processes to empower them to excel and advance professionally, thereby reinforcing the Bank’s position as an employer of choice for both employees and job seekers.”

Dana Naser Al Sabah named on ‘Sustainability Leaders 2025’ list

KIPCO recognized by Forbes Middle East for its continued sustainability excellence

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 16: KIPCO – Kuwait Projects Company (Holding) – was recognized by Forbes Middle East for the third consecutive year for its continued commitment to advancing sustainability and governance practices across its Group companies. KIPCO’s Group CEO, Sheikhha Dana Naser Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah, was listed on the publication’s ‘Sustainability Leaders 2025’ list in the category of investment and holding companies.

The recognition took place during the third edition of the Forbes Middle East Sustainability Leaders Summit, held in Abu Dhabi on October 14–15, 2025, under the theme ‘Guided by Legacy, Committed to Sustainability’. The ceremony was held under the auspices of the UAE’s Minister of Climate Change and Environment, HE Dr Amna bint Abdulrah Al Dahak Al Shamsi.

The two-day summit brought together leaders from the public and private sectors, at the regional and international levels, to discuss innovative solutions that promote social well-being, strengthen environmental resilience and reinforce



Sheikha Dana Naser Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah named on ‘Sustainability Leaders 2025’ list.

the principles of corporate responsibility for sustainable economic growth.

Receiving the award on behalf of KIPCO, Ms Eman Al Awadhi, Group Senior Vice President – Corporate Communications and Investor Relations at KIPCO, said: “We are proud to once again receive this recognition from Forbes

Middle East, which reflects the progress that KIPCO continues to make in its sustainability journey across the Group. Sustainability has become an integral part of how we operate, staying true to our strategy as we tackle challenges and embrace opportunities, while we continue to create value for our shareholders and community.”

Boursa Kuwait All Share Index rises 0.22% to 8,862.87 points

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 16, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait closed trading on Thursday with a positive performance across several indices. The All Share Index increased by 19.53 points, or 0.22 percent, ending at 8,862.87 points. The total trading volume reached approximately 803.6 million shares through 35,828 transactions, with a traded value of KD 184 million (about USD 651.3 million).

The Main Market Index experienced a decline of 38.19 points, or 0.45 percent, closing at 8,414.10 points, with 463.6 million shares traded across 22,258 transactions valued at KD 77.4 million (USD 236 million). Conversely, the Premier Market In-

dex gained 34.90 points, or 0.37 percent, reaching 9,412.74 points, with 340 million shares traded in 13,570 transactions worth KD 106.6 million (USD 325.13 million).

The Main 50 Index, however, fell by 94.98 points, or 1.07 percent, to 8,747.69 points. Trade volume in this segment was about 325.4 million shares, exchanged through 14,610 cash transactions, with a total value of KD 58.6 million (approximately USD 178.7 million). Overall, Boursa Kuwait demonstrates mixed market activity, with broad participation and significant trading volumes reflecting investor engagement.

In line with its strategy to invest in national competencies

National Bank of Kuwait welcomes the 30th wave of NBK Academy

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 16: In line with its strategy to invest in national competencies, National Bank of Kuwait welcomed the 30th cohort of trainees as part of its annual NBK Academy program, specifically designed for young Kuwaiti university graduates.

The academy's training program extends over six months, beginning this October and ending in March of next year, in which trainees will undergo an intensive program in technical, behavioral, and experiential training, giving participants the opportunity to build a long-term career at NBK.

Moreover, the program covers various aspects in the banking field, such as basic banking principles, risk management, financial accounting, marketing, and negotiation, in addition to training in creativity, innovation, design thinking, and productivity enhancement. Additionally, the trainees will under go a rotation in the network of branches and the bank's departments to better understand the nature of the banking sector.

Through the "Innovation Challenge" project, academy trainees will also present new ideas to the executive management. The launching of this project came with the aim of stimulating the participants' creativity and innovative solutions skills in the various elements and aspects they have learned



Maryam Al-Nasralla

Al-Nasralla:

- We aim to prepare qualified national leaders able to spearhead the future of banking.
- NBK Academy embodies our commitment to investing in human capital for 15 years.

about during their academy training.

NBK Academy embodies a legacy of success spanning 15years, and it's specifically designed for young Kuwaiti university graduates who have successfully met the selection criteria for admission. It also includes internationally certified trainers to enable employees to acquire specialized banking



Mohammed Al Othman, Mohammed Al Kharafi, Emad Al-Ablani and Ahmed Bourisly in a group photo with the trainees.

skills.

On this occasion, **Maryam Al-Nasralla**, Manager - Talent Management, Group Human Resources at National Bank of Kuwait, commented: "At NBK, we are strongly committed to attracting and upskilling young national competencies. We do not simply recruit them but rather invest in them through intensive training programs,

empowering them to become a driving force and a true added value that will spearhead the future of the banking sector".

Al-Nasralla added: "NBK Academy embodies our vision of investing in human capital, which aligns with our strategy to Kuwaitize jobs and support Kuwait's economy. Through these initiatives, not only do we contribute to

achieving the goals of Kuwait Vision 2035, but we also ensure a sustainable flow of national competencies capable of driving growth and innovation in the banking industry".

Lastly, Al-Nasralla emphasized that the academy, which has a successful history spanning more than 15years, aims to equip the new generation of national banking leaders with high

skills in all specializations, including advanced technical aspects, such as AI, data analysis, and leadership and behavioral skills. This type of training ensures a dynamic workforce capable of achieving the bank's objectives of building a sustainable future, improving services, and achieving steady growth in business activities and expansion plans at the local and regional levels.

Ontario's Premier blames Trump for Stellantis relocation to Illinois

TORONTO, Oct 16, (AP): The leader of Canada's most populous province called for economic retaliation on the U.S. after auto company Stellantis said it was moving planned production of its Jeep Compass from Canada to the U.S.

Ontario Premier Doug Ford blamed U.S. President Donald Trump for the company's decision this week to shift production of the SUV from Brampton, Ontario, to Illinois as part of plan to invest \$13 billion to expand its manufacturing capacity in the United States.

The comments come as Canada is negotiating to reduce tariffs. Trump has been urging the Big 3 American automakers to move production to the U.S.

"That guy, President Trump, he's a real piece of work," Ford said. "I'm sick and tired of rolling over. We need to fight back."

Ford said Canada needs to hit back with tariffs if Prime Minister Mark Carney can't reach a trade deal with Trump. Dominic LeBlanc, the minister responsible for Canada-U.S. trade, is in Washington this week for talks to reduce tariffs on certain sectors. Carney left Washington last week without a deal.

Carney said the move by the world's fourth-largest carmaker was a direct consequence of tariffs and his government would work with Stellantis to create new opportunities in the Brampton area. Carney added that Ottawa expects Stellantis to fulfill its commitment to Brampton workers. The federal government threatened legal action against the company.

Federal Industry Minister Melanie Joly said the production shift is "unacceptable" and warned Stellantis made commitments to Canadian production in exchange for substantial financial support.

"Anything short of fulfilling that commitment will be considered as default under our agreements," Joly wrote in a letter to the company chief executive.

Fear has spread in Ontario over what will happen to Canada's auto sector. Autos are Canada's second-largest ex-

port and Carney has noted the sector employs 125,000 Canadians directly and almost another 500,000 in related industries.

"Stellantis is bowing at the Trump administration with this pledge of massive investments in the U.S.," Brampton Mayor Patrick Brown told the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

"If this bullying tactic works with Stellantis I expect it to be replicated to every other automaker that has a presence in Canada and frankly other sectors that the U.S. has an interest in."

Workers at the Stellantis assembly plant in Brampton were greeted Wednesday with a rebocall from their employer that said work they'd been waiting for wouldn't be coming back. The company closed the factory in 2023 and laid off its roughly 3,000 workers as it retooled the facility.

Stellantis said it would reopen its Belvidere Assembly Plant in Illinois to expand U.S. Jeep production, creating thousands of new jobs there.

Vito Beato, president of Unifor Local 1285, which represents the Brampton plant workers, said the news came as a surprise because Stellantis had said previously it was committed to producing its Jeep Compass in Brampton.

Stellantis said it continues to invest in Canada, including adding a third shift to the Windsor, Ontario assembly plant, and that it is in talks with the government on the future of the Brampton facility.

Carney won the country's election earlier this year fueled by Trump's annexation threats and trade war, but has tried to improve relations ahead of a review of the free trade deal next year. More than 75% of Canada's exports go to the U.S. and Canada recently dropped many of its retaliatory tariffs to match U.S. tariff exemptions for goods covered under the United States-Mexico-Canada trade pact.

Ford said Canada should start responding to Trump's tariffs with its own harsh measures.

"That's the only thing that this person understands," Ford said of Trump. Ford is scheduled to meet with Carney this week.

Interactive workshops on fintech and smart money management planned for students

Weyay Bank collaborates with Dasman Bilingual School to empower students with digital learning

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 16: Weyay Bank welcomed a delegation from Dasman Bilingual School to its headquarters to mark the signing of a strategic partnership aimed at empowering students through seamless learning experiences, enhancing financial literacy, and equipping the next generation with modern digital tools.

This initiative aligns with Weyay Bank's vision to build strong relationships with leading educational institutions in Kuwait and reinforces its commitment to supporting digital transformation in society, particularly in the education sector, which serves as the cornerstone of a more innovative and sustainable future.

As part of the agreement, Weyay Bank will support and upgrade the school's internet infrastructure to help create a fully integrated digital learning environment. Additionally, a series of interactive workshops will be organized for students to introduce key concepts in financial literacy, fintech, and the importance of smart financial management in everyday life.

Commenting on the partnership, Amal Al-Duwaisan, Head of Weyay Bank, stated: "Our collaboration with Dasman Bilingual School allows us to bring our innovation-driven mindset directly to where young minds are shaped.

Through our upcoming initiatives, we aim to empower students with the digital tools and financial knowledge needed to turn their



Weyay Bank and Dasman Bilingual School sign strategic partnership to enhance student learning.

goals into reality."

Samar Dizmen, Academic Director at Dasman Bilingual School, added: "We believe in providing a holistic education that prepares our students for the future. Our partnership with Weyay Bank, a leader in digital innovation, reflects this commitment. These exclusive initiatives will enhance our students' digital awareness and entrepreneurial skills, ensuring they are well-equipped to move forward in their journey."

This partnership also highlights Weyay Bank's leadership in social responsibility, not just as a financial institution, but as a catalyst for positive change in the community.

The agreement serves as a model for fruitful collaboration between the financial sector and educational institutions, paving the way for a digitally and financially empowered generation capable of contributing to Kuwait's sustainable development.

Weyay is Kuwait's first digital

bank, dedicated to empowering the new generation through innovative and user-friendly financial solutions.

Through its "Jeel" card, the Bank offers a tailored banking experience for kids aged 8 to 14, combining financial education, smart technology, and a seamless digital journey. With "Jeel," Weyay continues its commitment to building a financially aware future that meets the evolving needs of the next generation.

Talks underway on energy cooperation

India plans to boost US oil, gas imports amid Trump criticism

NEW DELHI, Oct 16, (AP): India says it is looking to step up purchases of crude oil and natural gas from the U.S. as it diversifies its energy supplies and confronts criticism by U.S. President Donald Trump over its imports of discounted Russian oil.

Trump said Wednesday that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi had personally assured him his country would stop buying Russian oil, in a move that might add to pressure on Moscow to negotiate an end to the war in Ukraine.

"There will be no oil. He's not buying oil," Trump said. The change won't take immediately, he said, but "within a short period of time."

India is the second biggest buyer of Russian oil after China. Trump cited its purchases from Moscow when he announced 50% tariffs on imports from India in August.

A statement Thursday by India's foreign ministry did not address Trump's remarks directly. It said the government's consistent priority was to safeguard the interests of Indian consumers in a volatile energy environment.

"Ensuring stable energy prices and secured supplies have been the twin goals of our energy policy. This includes broad basing our energy sourcing and diversifying as appropriate to meet market conditions," said Randhir Jaiswal, a ministry spokesman.

He said the Trump administration had shown interest in deepening energy cooperation and talks on that were underway.

Expanding India's energy dealings with the U.S. could help India mitigate supply disruptions and align with

Washington's push to reduce global dependence on Russian oil.

India's Trade Secretary Rajesh Agarwal said Wednesday that India was willing to increase its purchases of American oil and natural gas if prices were competitive.

Agarwal told reporters India has been buying around \$12-\$13 billion worth of crude oil and gas from the U.S. annually and there was room to nearly double that without causing disruptions for Indian refiners.

A team of Indian government officials was visiting the U.S. to discuss a bilateral trade agreement that includes energy cooperation, he said.

"In discussions we are in, we have indicated very positively that India as a country would like to diversify its portfolio as far as energy imports are concerned. That's the best strategy for a big buyer like India," said Agarwal.

In February, Modi and Trump set a target of finalizing the first tranche of a trade agreement by autumn. Talks were suspended after five formal rounds of negotiations after Trump expressed displeasure over India's continued purchases of Russian oil. He said that was helping to fuel Moscow's war against Ukraine.

Trump has been frustrated by his inability to force an end to the war in Ukraine, which began with Russia's invasion almost four years ago. He's expressed dissatisfaction with Russian President Vladimir Putin, whom he increasingly describes as the primary obstacle to a resolution, and he's scheduled to meet with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Friday.

Brand aims for a 5% share of Kuwait's automotive lubricants market within 5 yrs

Amaron selects Kuwait to debut its Middle East portfolio expansion

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 16: Amaron, a leading automotive battery brand from India's Amara Raja Energy and Mobility Ltd (ARE&M) has selected Kuwait to debut its Middle East portfolio expansion in partnership with Bandira Auto Parts, the brand's official distributor in Kuwait. This strategic move reflects Amaron's confidence in Kuwait's dynamic business environment, strong after-market fundamentals, and growing demand for high-performance automotive products.

Kuwait's automotive lubricants market is expanding rapidly, with annual consumption estimated at around 45 million Ltrs. Driven by high vehicle ownership, a well-established service network, and a growing focus on vehicle performance and maintenance, this growth positions Kuwait as a strategic market for Amaron's regional expansion.

As part of this expansion, Amaron introduced its complete range of automotive lubricants, Amaron Hi-Life Lubes, to the Kuwaiti market during an event held at Al Baraka Ballroom, Crowne Plaza, Al Thuraya City, Kuwait. The event was attended by Amara Raja Executive Director Mr. Harshavardhana Gourineni, CMO, International Automotive Business (ARE&M) Mr. Indeevar Govardhanagiri, Business Head – MEA (ARE&M) Mr. Maneesh Khanna, Bandira Auto Parts owners Mr. Jassim Al Tamimi and Mr. Joyab Ali Patel, along with the leadership team from Amara Raja International Business, local automotive dealers, and workshop partners.

Executive Director of Amara Raja, Mr. Harshavardhana Gourineni said, "Our vision for AMARON in Kuwait is not only to enter Kuwait's dynamic automotive lubricant sector but also to achieve a 5% market share in the automotive lubricant aftermarket within the next five years. The launch of Hi-Life



Group photo of the heads and owners of Amara Raja, Bendera and representatives of Amaron, in the presence of the Deputy Head of Mission at the Indian Embassy in Kuwait.

Lubes today is a strategic step in our broader expansion into the auto-allied segment."

He added, "Hi-Life Lubes has already been successfully launched in India, earning nationwide recognition and ranking among the top five brands in the motorcycle oil segment. Kuwait marks our first international launch market outside India in this category."

Bandira Auto Parts Owner, Mr. Jassim Al Tamimi said, "We are proud of our long-standing partnership with Amaron since 2008 as their exclusive distributor in Kuwait. Today marks a significant milestone as we introduce Amaron's new automotive lubricants to the market. We look forward to bringing more high-performance and reliable

products to customers, including motorists, fleet operators, and service workshops across Kuwait, helping extend vehicles engine life, improve fuel efficiency, and reduce maintenance costs."

Amaron Hi-Life Lubes is designed to deliver maximum engine protection and performance, featuring unique Molybdenum enriched PENTACORE Technology advanced base oils, and premium additives. Tested for high thermal stability and oxidation resistance, and meeting international OEM and API standards, these lubricants provide long-lasting results and ensure engines remain protected even in the harshest conditions, making them ideally suited for GCC climate.

What's On

SPOTLIGHT

Got a birthday or event?



Share your story and snapshots with Arab Times!
Email your write-up and photos to
arabtimes@arabtimesonline.com
We'll feature it on our What's On page!

Show highlights centuries of cultural exchange

Chinese art exhibition 'Distant and Close' opens in Kuwait City

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 16, (Xinhua): The Chinese art exhibition "Distant and Close" opened on Wednesday at Kuwait's Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah, or House of Islamic Antiquities, a major public museum in Kuwait City. The exhibition, running through 2026, showcases the historical and cultural ties between China and Kuwait.

Held under the patronage of Kuwaiti Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah, the exhibition features 128 artifacts collected by Kuwaitis, highlighting centuries of artistic and cultural exchange between Chinese and Islamic civilizations.

Kuwait's Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi called the exhibition a milestone in cultural cooperation, reflecting strong bilateral relations built on mutual respect and a shared interest in expanding partnerships.

Liu Xiang, charge d'affaires at the Chinese Embassy in Kuwait, said the exhibition "represents the true friendship between China and Kuwait" and underlines ongoing cultural collaboration.

He added that China will continue working with the Kuwaiti authorities to promote mutual learning and cultural exchange.



A man visits an exhibition in Kuwait City, Kuwait, Oct. 15, 2025. The Chinese art exhibition 'Distant and Close' opened on Wednesday at Kuwait's Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah, or House of Islamic Antiquities, a major public museum in Kuwait City. The exhibition, running through 2026, showcases the historical and cultural ties between China and Kuwait. (Xinhua)



Photos during the event.

International Women's Group cultivates community and greenery at The Scientific Center, Kuwait

Members of the International Women's Group (IWG) in Kuwait, alongside distinguished members of the diplomatic corps, gathered at The Scientific Center Kuwait (TSCC) on Monday for a special event dedicated to environmental stewardship and community beautification.

The initiative was held in collaboration with TSCC and with the gracious support of Dr. Ameera Al-Hassan, UN-Habitat Kuwait Country Programme Head for the GCC, and Mr. Mohamad Alsanosi, Deputy General Manager for Visitors Engagement and Spokesperson TSCC, highlighting a shared commitment to sustainability in Kuwait.

The day's program was a blend of education and hands-on action. Participants enjoyed guided tours of the center's facilities, an insightful environmental awareness session, and immersive 3D films in the IMAX cinema titled "Human Body" and "the Wonderful World of Butterflies." The event also included a symbolic gesture of recycling

plastic, reinforcing the day's green message.

The highlight of the day was the flower planting ceremony held near the main entrance. – featuring petunia, vincirusa, and geranium saplings. Lady Ambassadors, Spouses of Ambassadors, and IWG members worked together to plant vibrant petunia, vincirusa and geranium saplings, adding a touch of lasting color to the landscape. To commemorate the day, attendees were presented with takeaway souvenirs and their own saplings to continue the greening efforts at home.

In her closing remarks, Mrs. Marika Kochlamazashvili, President of IWG and Spouse of the Ambassador of Georgia, expressed her profound gratitude to the organizers. She emphasized the joy of IWG contributing to Kuwait's environmental goals and shared her hope of returning next year to see the flowers in full bloom, a sentiment that captures the event's forward-looking spirit.



Photo during the event.

Pravasi Legal Cell Kuwait Chapter – Al Dostour Law Group signs MoU

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 16: Pravasi Legal Cell Kuwait Chapter has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the renowned Kuwaiti law firm Al Dostour Law Group. The event was graced by Dr. Talal Thaqi (Prominent Kuwaiti Lawyer), Babu Francis (PLC Kuwait Chapter Country Head), and Biju Stephen (PLC Kuwait Chapter President). With this MoU, all Non-Resident Indians in Kuwait can seek free legal advice through the PLC Kuwait Chapter. A key highlight is that legal assistance will now be faster and more accessible with the support of native Kuwaiti lawyers. Since its inception in Kuwait in December 2019, PLC has been at the forefront of championing the rights of expatriates. Globally, under the leadership of Adv. Jose Abraham (Advocate on Records Supreme Court of India & Global President), Pravasi Legal Cell has secured landmark verdicts in the Supreme

Court and High Courts, including: Repatriation of stranded NRIs, Airline ticket refund petitions, Utilization of Indian Community Welfare Fund for destitute NRIs Repatriation of mortal remains of NRIs, protection of Indian students abroad, prevention of employment frauds, safeguarding Kerala Pravasi Welfare Fund members. Over the past 5 years, thousands of expatriates in Kuwait and India have benefited from PLC's free legal support.

A similar MoU was also signed earlier with Mawazeen Legal Counseling & Attorneys Group during PLC's 5th anniversary; further expanding its outreach. This MoU marks yet another milestone in ensuring justice, protection, and support for the Indian diaspora in Kuwait.

For services, NRIs can contact: +965 41105354, +965 97405211. Email: pravasillegalcellkuwait@gmail.com

Connecting to Jazeera's second destination in Syria after Damascus

Jazeera Airways reopens Aleppo Route with two flights weekly

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 16: Jazeera Airways, reinforcing its commitment to reconnecting families and communities across the region today announced the resumption of direct flights to Aleppo, Syria. The new service will operate twice a week, making Aleppo the airline's second destination in Syria, following the successful relaunch of flights to Damascus earlier this year.

Speaking at the press conference announcing the launch, Barathan Pasupathi, Chief Executive Officer, Jazeera Airways said: "Reintroducing flights to Aleppo is a meaningful milestone for Jazeera Airways as we seek to build accessibility and connectivity across the region. We are proud to serve communities seeking to reconnect with family and heritage, while also promoting Aleppo as a city rich with history, culture and hospitality."

This route comes at an optimal time as family visit visas in Kuwait are now open, providing an important travel option for those wishing to reunite with loved ones and strengthen ties with their homeland.

Tamim Al-Madani, Chargé d'Affaires, Embassy of Syria in Kuwait commented: "We have the pleasure of announcing the launch of direct flights between Kuwait and Aleppo, a truly significant and positive step taken by Jazeera Airways following the successful resumption of its Damascus route. This new route serves as a vital bridge for our Syrian community in Kuwait and carries additional importance as Aleppo International Airport serves three key governorates in northern Syria: Aleppo, Idlib and Hama, making it a central hub for tens of thousands of travelers. We hope this milestone will mark the beginning of broader expansion to include new destinations in Syria such as Latakia and Deir Ezzor, in parallel with the country's reconstruction phase to prosperity and its leading position



Jazeera to fly to Aleppo

in the region."

A City of Heritage, Culture, and Flavor

Aleppo, one of the world's oldest continuously inhabited cities, offers visitors a profound blend of history and tradition with historic landmarks, and cultural charm. The city's centuries-old markets, stone-carved courtyards, and vibrant cafés all highlight its enduring spirit. Known as Syria's culinary capital, Aleppo is also famed for delicious food and desserts like the Kibbeh Halabiyyeh, and

Halawet El Jibn.

Twice Weekly Service

Flights between Kuwait and Aleppo will operate twice a week, offering convenient travel options for both family visits and tourism. Launch fares will start at KD 45 one way and KD 79 return. Ticket bookings are now available via the Jazeera Airways website – www.jazeeraairways.com, mobile app, and call center at 177.

Ethan Hawke steals the show in his new film

Linklater's 'Blue Moon' is a poignant and funny love letter

NEW YORK, Oct 16, (AP): For a filmmaker once synonymous with slackers, Richard Linklater has proven to be one of the most prodigious and consistently excellent American filmmakers. A small but rich vein of the two dozen features he's made have been portraits of artists, including "Me and Orson Welles" and, if you like, "School of Rock."

This fall brings two more, one set at the dawn of a great career ("Nouvelle Vague," about Jean-Luc Godard and the birth of the French New Wave) and another on the cusp of its tragic end: "Blue Moon," about lyricist Lorenz Hart. Both are, in their way, joyous celebrations of brilliant, stubbornly uncompromising creative visionaries. And both are a grand time at the movies.

"Blue Moon," the first to arrive of the two, is one of the more shepherly delightful movies of the year. It takes place at Sardi's, in New York, on March 31, 1943. Down the street, "Oklahoma!" is premiering, a debut that for Hart (Ethan Hawke) stings. His longtime collaborator, the composer Richard Rodgers, has made it not with Hart but with his new songwrit-

ing partner, Oscar Hammerstein II. Six months from this night, Hart will die from pneumonia after spending a cold night passed out outside an 8th Avenue bar. He was 48.

But while Broadway's focus is on "Oklahoma!" ours is on Larry, as everyone calls him. He's holding court at Sardi's before Rodgers (Andrew Scott) and the "Oklahoma!" crowd rushes in. There, he is regaling Eddie the bartender (Bobby Cannavale) and a few others (including E.B. White, played by Patrick Kennedy) in a free-flowing monologue, as he tries to resist a drink on the bar, laments the imminent sensation of "Oklahoma!" and waxes poetic about some of his best lines.

"I've written a handful of words that are going to cheat death," says Larry. Hart's best work included American songbook standards like "My Funny Valentine," "The Lady Is a Tramp," "Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered" and, of course, "Blue Moon."

But his appreciation for language goes far beyond himself. As much as he does a warm sip mocktail, Larry savors any good quip, turn of phrase or mot juste. His favorite quote from



This image released by Sony Pictures Classics shows Margaret Qualley, (left), and Andrew Scott in a scene from 'Blue Moon.' (AP)

"Casablanca," for example, is a telling one: "Nobody ever loved me that much." Larry adores the movie and, in particular, Bogart, whom, he notes, is both short and a leading man. "Which proves you can be both," Hart says.

Larry is, himself, diminutive, with greasy strands of hair combed over his bald head. The physical transformation for Hawke is a little extreme and potentially distracting. There's little superficial in the role - including that Hart was a closeted gay man

- that screams Hawke. Yet the actor has simply never been better. Hawke's Larry is a magnetic raconteur and an increasingly desperate has-been whose last-ditch attempts to reingratiate himself to Rodgers are limited as much by his excessive drinking as his refusal to hold his tongue. He is, to put it simply, extraordinarily good company.

"Oklahoma!" Larry realizes, is going to be performed from that moment "until Doomsday." Even that exclamation point irks him. But more than that, the success of "Oklahoma!" - a musical Larry deems a "fraudulent" portrait of America - casts his sorry situation in a poignant light. This is the dawn of a mainstream Americana that doesn't have room for an unconventional man like Larry or his blue songs.

That makes this night at Sardi's a bittersweet salvation and a tender eulogy. Larry has an audience of only a few, but they're a fine crew (Cannavale is perfect) and their quiet, quipped-toasts have an abiding warmth. On the outskirts of this group is Elizabeth Weiland (Margaret Qualley), a 20-year-old Yale student with whom Larry is infatuated. To others, Larry's obsession seems incongruous with his

sexuality, but he retorts that he "drinks beauty wherever he finds it."

Robert Kaplow, whose novel "Me and Orson Welles" was the basis of Linklater's film, drew from the real-life correspondence between Hart and Weiland for his script to "Blue Moon." In the film, Elizabeth is ambitious and busy mingling with the "Oklahoma!" party. That she's destined to join them, not Larry, is obvious to us. But his oblivious, irrational hope is one of the reasons to love him.

Linklater's "Nouvelle Vague" is a wider story that, while the focus is on Godard, makes room for all the central characters of the New Wave. It's a teeming movie, bursting at the seams with personalities. "Blue Moon," though, is a solo act. And a magnificent one, at that. In its finest moments, Linklater's film pays homage not just to Hart but to all the forgotten writers who couldn't cheat death, but could tell one heck of a yarn.

"Blue Moon," a Sony Pictures Classics release is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for language and sexual references. Running time: 100 minutes. Three and a half stars out of four.

Media

Pentagon policy

Journalists reject new 'media rules'

WASHINGTON, Oct 16, (AP): Dozens of reporters turned in access badges and exited the Pentagon on Wednesday rather than agree to government-imposed restrictions on their work, pushing journalists who cover the American military further from the seat of its power. The US government has called the new rules "common sense."

News outlets were nearly unanimous in rejecting new rules imposed by Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth that would leave journalists vulnerable to expulsion if they sought to report on information - classified or otherwise - that had not been approved by Hegseth for release.

Many of the reporters waited to leave together at a 4 p.m. deadline set by the Defense Department to get out of the building. As the hour approached, boxes of documents lined a Pentagon corridor and reporters carried chairs, a copying machine, books and old photos to the parking lot from suddenly abandoned workspaces. Shortly after 4, about 40 to 50 journalists left together after handing in badges.

"It's sad, but I'm also really proud of the press corps that we stuck together," said Nancy Youssef, a reporter for The Atlantic who has had a desk at the Pentagon since 2007. She took a map of the Middle East out to her car.

It is unclear what practical impact the new rules will have, though news organizations vowed they'd continue robust coverage of the military no matter the vantage point.

Images of reporters effectively demonstrating against barriers to their work are unlikely to move supporters of President **Donald Trump**, many of whom resent journalists and cheer his efforts to make their jobs harder. Trump has been involved in court fights against The New York Times, CBS News, ABC News, the Wall Street Journal and The Associated Press in the past year.

Speaking to reporters at the White House on Tuesday, Trump backed his defense secretary's new rules. "I think he finds the press to be very disruptive in terms of world peace," Trump said. "The press is very dishonest."

Information

Even before issuing his new press policy, Hegseth, a former Fox News Channel host, has systematically choked off the flow of information. He's held only two formal press briefings, banned reporters from accessing many parts of the sprawling Pentagon without an escort and launched investigations into leaks to the media.

He has called his new rules "common sense" and said the requirement that journalists sign a document outlining the rules means they acknowledge the new rules, not necessarily agree to them. Journalists see that as a distinction without a difference.

"What they're really doing, they want to spoon-feed information to the journalist, and that would be their story. That's not journalism," said Jack Keane, a retired U.S. Army general and Fox News analyst, said on Hegseth's former network.

When he served, Keane said he required new brigadier generals to take a class on the role of the media in a democracy so they wouldn't be intimidated and also see reporters as a conduit to the American public. "There were times when stories were done that made me flinch a little bit," he said. "But that's usually because we had done something that wasn't as good as we should have done it."

Youssef said it made no sense to sign on to rules that said reporters should not solicit military officials for information. "To agree to not solicit information is to agree to not be a journalist," she said. "Our whole goal is soliciting information."

Several reporters posted on social media when they turned in their press badges.

"It's such a tiny thing, but I was really proud to see my picture up on the wall of Pentagon correspondents," wrote Heather Mongillo, a reporter for USNI News, which covers the Navy. "Today, I'll hand in my badge. The reporting will continue."

Mongillo, Youssef and others emphasized that they'll continue to do their jobs no matter where their desks are. Some sources will continue to speak with them, although they say some in the military have been chilled by threats from Pentagon leadership.

In an essay, NPR reporter Tom Bowman noted the many times he'd been tipped off by people he knew from the Pentagon and while embedded in the military about what was happening, even if it contradicted official lines put out by leadership. Many understand the media's role.

"They knew the American public deserved to know what's going on," Bowman wrote. "With no reporters able to ask questions, it seems the Pentagon leadership will continue to rely on slick social media posts, carefully orchestrated short videos and interviews with partisan commentators and podcasters. No one should think that's good enough."

Film



This image released by Neon shows, from left, Mohamad Ali Elyasmehr as Hamid, Majid Panahi as Ali, Hadis Pakbaten as Goli, in a scene from 'It Was Just an Accident.' (AP)

'It Was Just an Accident' delivers dark humor

Panahi finds humor, heart in revenge tale

LOS ANGELES, Oct 16, (AP): The mundane act of a car breaking down one night on a road in Iran sets in motion one of the most moving movies of the year in "It Was Just an Accident."

The sputtering car comes to a stop outside a business. The driver comes out and asks those inside for help. He's just trying to get his pregnant wife and precocious young daughter home.

But inside there's someone who thinks he recognizes this soon-to-be father of two from a past life. He's convinced that the guy was the same intelligence officer who tortured him for years in prison. Now is the time for revenge.

Written and directed by Jafar Panahi, "It Was Just an Accident" is obviously dark and yet wickedly funny, existential and very, very human as it explores the ripple effects from state violence and asks if forgiveness can ever be offered.

The movie, in Farsi with subtitles, is itself an act of defiance, since Panahi has been jailed for his work and is not legally allowed to make films in Iran, unwilling to have his scripts approved by the government.

Our main hero is Vahid (played by Vahid Mobasseri), who we watch as recognizing in horror his old tormentor re-entering his life. Although he was blindfolded while imprisoned, Vahid recognizes the squeak of his interrogator's prosthetic leg. The camera captures him as he impulsively but methodically abducts the man, takes him to the desert in a van and begins to bury him in the ground.

Wait, hold on. Is Vahid completely sure? The man in the shallow grave insists he's not a torturer and argues a terrible mistake is being made. Vahid stuffs him in a large box in the van and goes back to the city to reconnect with a band of other former prisoners to ensure they're making the proper identification. "I have a doubt," he confesses to them.



This image released by Neon shows Maryam Afshari in a scene from 'It Was Just an Accident.' (AP)

We learn there is a world of once-tortured inmates who have learned to lead otherwise ordinary lives after leaving prison, some who lost years just for asking for missing government paychecks. They were interrogated and beaten, told their loved ones had abandoned them, had nooses put around their neck for hours and threatened with rape. "I am a zombie, one of the living dead," one admits.

Vahid and three former blindfolded prisoners played by Mariam Afshari, Hadis Pakbaten and Mohamad Ali Elyasmehr try to use all their senses: One tries to smell the captive, another listens to his voice and a third feels his leg scars, which he had been forced to do behind bars. Can they be certain the ID is correct? What do they do if it is? Might he be a victim, too?

"We aren't killers. We're not like them," one argues. "If we let him go, he will trap us again," argues another. "This

performers in the event of injury and put limits on how many performances in a row actors can be asked to do without a day off.

The health of Broadway - once very much in doubt due to the COVID-19 pandemic - is now very good, at least in terms of box office. The 2024-2025 season took in \$1.9 billion, the highest-grossing season in recorded history, overtaking the pre-pandemic previous high of \$1.8 billion during the 2018-2019 season. It has been a long road back from the days when theaters were shuttered and the future looked bleak.

The unions are pointing to the financial health of Broadway to argue that producers can afford to pay up and benefits for musicians and actors. Producers, represented by The Broadway League, counter that the health of Broadway could be endangered by increasing ticket prices.

"On the heels of the most successful season in history, the Broadway League wants the working musicians and artists who fueled that very success to accept wage cuts, threats to healthcare benefits, and potential job losses," Local 802

is a quagmire," argues another, quite correctly. "We are at war," is one comment that sums them up as they begin to argue amongst themselves, an old foe dividing them anew.

A fabulous "Waiting for Godot" element descends on the movie as the former prisoners debate in a no-man's land between life and death as the prisoner is ferried across the city during one long day. Panahi even references the Samuel Beckett play and mimics the setting.

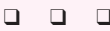
Adding a surreal touch is Pakbaten, playing a bride-to-be wearing her wedding dress for a photo shoot and spending the day in it, driving around with her groom and pushing the van down the road when it breaks down, her fluffy white dress comical in such a grave situation.

Amid the debate over whether to kill their old tormentor or show him the humanity he never showed them, a complication emerges. There's an emergency at their captor's home and this ragtag band of broken, angry people come to help, an extraordinary kindness given the circumstances.

Panahi grounds his story in the dusty, street-level realism of modern Iran, with cars honking, dogs barking and crows making a ruckus. At seemingly every turn, people demand tips, from security guards to nurses and gas station attendants and street musicians - hands forever out, a system broken.

The movie has won the Palme d'Or and has been picked by France as its submission to the Academy Awards. That is no accident: Watch it and it will linger in your mind. It's a movie for Iranians, of course, but it's valuable for any society hoping to one day mend a divided country.

"It Was Just an Accident," a Neon release that opened in New York and Los Angeles on Wednesday followed by a national rollout, is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association for language and themes of torture. Running time: 102 minutes. Four stars out of four.



President Bob Suttman said in a statement Tuesday.

A strike would cripple most of Broadway, but some shows might continue. "Beetlejuice" and "Mamma Mia!" arrived as part of tours and so do not have a traditional Broadway contract. And shows playing at nonprofit theaters, such as the musical "Ragtime" at Lincoln Center Theater and the play "Punch" from the Manhattan Theatre Club, have separate labor agreements. (AP)

LONDON: Sumo wrestlers bring 1,500 years of tradition to London's Royal Albert Hall.

It marks only the second time the elite five-day tournament will be held outside Japan. The first was in 1991 at the same venue.

Organizers of the London event say they hope to show Japan's rich culture as well as its traditional sport that pits two huge men clad in very little against each other in a test of strength and technique. (AP)

Week-long festival of Italian creativity, music and food

Italian Design Festival Week 2025 brings Italy’s best to Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 16: Italian creativity is set to take center stage in Kuwait as Ambassador HE Lorenzo Morini unveils an exciting lineup of events for Italian Design Day, coinciding with Italy’s National Day (Oct 19-27). From fashion and furniture to art, music, and culinary delights, a week-long series of fairs, exhibitions, and live performances will showcase the best of Italian design, while fostering cultural exchange and collaboration between Italy and Kuwait.

In his press conference HE Lorenzo Morini stated:

“We are pleased to meet once again on this special occasion, coinciding with the celebrations around Italy’s National Day. Today, I would like to announce a series of exciting initiatives that we will be organizing in the coming days as part of the Italian Design Day.

“Italian Design Day is an annual celebration held around the world during the second half of October, although the exact dates may vary from country to country. It serves as a global platform to showcase the essence of Italian creativity – a reflection of our innovation and artistry in various fields.

“Here in Kuwait, Italian products and creativity are already well appreciated – from fashion, furniture, and jewelry to food, art, and music. This year, however,

we have decided to take a new and more dynamic approach. Instead of hosting a single event, we will present a series of diverse cultural and artistic programs across multiple venues, in collaboration with several esteemed Kuwaiti partners.

“We have partnered with the Givenna Board, the Contemporary Art Platform (CAP), the Dar Al-Fajr Conference Center, and the American Museum. Together, we aim to reach a wide audience through events that highlight Italian excellence in design, culture, and performance.

“The celebrations will officially begin on Sunday, October 19, with the opening of an Italian Fair at The Avenues Mall. In the Grand Avenues area, visitors will experience a vibrant display of Italian brands and craftsmanship. The fair will feature products from diverse sectors – fashion, food, furniture, medical equipment, and perfumes – as well as iconic Italian cars such as Ferrari, Maserati, and Vespa. The fair will run throughout the week, from Sunday to Saturday.

“During the weekend, visitors to The Avenues will also enjoy live cultural performances. A traditional Italian group, Sbandieratori di Bubbio, will perform a captivating flag-waving show on October 24 and 25. This medieval performance, inspired by historical Italian fes-



Italian Ambassador to Kuwait HE Lorenzo Morini

tivals such as the Palio di Siena, features participants dressed in period costumes, waving colorful guild and family flags accompanied by traditional music.

“Another key highlight will take place on October 19, when a classical music concert will be held at the Americana Museum. Initially planned for Dar Al-

Athar Al-Islamiyyah, the concert has been relocated due to venue constraints. The program will feature timeless compositions from world-famous films such as The Godfather, Once Upon a Time in America, and Cinema Paradiso, among others – all composed by legendary Italian maestros like Ennio Morricone.

“What makes this event particularly special is its collaborative spirit: Italian and Kuwaiti musicians will perform together, symbolizing cultural unity and artistic harmony between Italy and Kuwait.

“On October 21, the Contemporary Art Platform (CAP) will host an art exhibition titled “A Gaze Elsewhere”, featuring diorama-style artworks depicting landscapes, cities, cars, and animals in unique artistic perspectives. The inauguration of this exhibition will be followed by a live jazz concert “It’s Time” by G. Bunoasorte ensemble.

“Throughout the same week, will also inaugurate a new Italian design store in collaboration with local partners. Renowned Italian designers will deliver lectures at Kuwait University and CAP, fostering dialogue and creative exchange between Italian and Kuwaiti architects and designers.

“Italian Design Day embodies the philosophy that design is not limited to furniture or fashion – it extends to every sphere of creativity. In Italy, even food is considered a form of design, as every recipe begins with imagination and artistry.

“Through these events, we hope to further strengthen cultural and artistic ties between Italy and Kuwait and share with the public the timeless beauty and

innovation of Italian design.

Festival Program

Oct 19, 4.00 pm: Opening Ceremony at Avenues Mall, Italian Design Exhibition from Oct 19 to Oct 25)

Oct 19, 7.00 pm: Concert at American Museum - “UnaStorialtaliana” (An Italian Story)

Oct 21, 7.00 pm: At Contemporary Art Platform (CAP) - opening ceremony of Art Exhibition by F. Fiorentini “A Gaze Elsewhere”

Oct 21, 7.30 pm: Concert at Contemporary Art Platform (CAP) - “It’s Time” by G. Bunoasorte ensemble

Oct 24 and Oct 25: At the Avenues Mall “Sbandieratori Di Gubbio” Flag Waving show by Sbandeicatori di Gubbio group

Oct 27, 10.00 - 13.00 and 15.00 - 20.00: Lecture with Italian designers (Kuwait University + Design District)

Ambassador Lorenzo Morini warmly invited all members of the Kuwaiti community, as well as expatriates residing in Kuwait, to participate in the Italian Design Day celebrations. He encouraged everyone to attend the diverse events, experience the richness of Italian culture and creativity firsthand, and join in the week-long festivities that promise art, music, fashion, and culinary delights for all ages.

KTAA

People

KTAA puts Kuwaiti artistry on the global map

A Kuwaiti quilt weaves its way to Houston

By Chaitali B. Roy
Special to the Arab Times

Quilting, one of the oldest forms of textile art, began as a simple act of necessity: stitching together scraps of fabric to create warmth and comfort while avoiding waste. Over time, this humble craft evolved into a rich art form combining creativity, precision, and storytelling. Today, quilting is not only a practical pursuit but also a medium of cultural expression worldwide.

In Kuwait, members of the Kuwait Textile Arts Association (KTAA) have transformed this traditional craft into a sophisticated art practice. For them, quilting is far more than a hobby; it is a language through which they express emotion, technique, and their reflections on the world around them.

Among these talented artists is Hanan Al Kazemi, a master quilter who is in the news for being the first Kuwaiti quilt artist whose work has been selected for exhibition in the Traditional American category at the prestigious Houston International Quilt Festival, one of the world’s most celebrated exhibitions of textile art. This remarkable recognition places Hanan among a select group of global artists whose creations transcend fabric and thread to tell stories of identity, creativity, and cultural pride.

Exhibition

The Houston Quilt Festival is one of the largest quilt exhibitions in the world. Held at the George R. Brown Convention Centre from October 9 to 12, this year’s event attracted over 35,000 visitors from 30 countries. To be accepted into the festival, participants must adhere to strict guidelines that emphasise both craftsmanship and creative concept, as outlined in the festival’s official categories.

“Since 2014, I have made it a point to visit the International Quilt Festival in Houston every year,” says Hanan. “Each visit renewed my dream of one day exhibiting my own quilt there. I was inspired by the beauty and mastery of the artworks on display and became determined to reach that level of excellence. Every year, that desire motivated me to attend more workshops, refine my skills, and create a piece of the highest quality that could meet the festival’s standards. Finally, the time came, I perfected my piece, submitted it, and it was accepted into the show.”

Quilting is one of the main activities of the Kuwait Textile Arts Association (KTAA), whose quilting group regularly holds meetings, workshops, and demonstrations. “Quilting is a refined and deeply rooted art form,” says Hanan. “I often describe it by saying that a painter creates with brushes and



Hanan AlKazemi at the 2025 International Quilt Festival at Houston.

colours, while a quilter creates with fabrics and threads, whether stitched by hand or with a sewing machine.”

In recent years, KTAA has seen a sizeable increase in Kuwaiti members eager to learn the craft. Quilters of KTAA have maintained very high standards of the craft, with many participating in international quilt shows and winning prizes. I recall Paramjeet Bawa, a very gifted former member of KTAA, showing her quilt in Houston in the late 2000s. When asked what it meant for her personally and as a KTAA member to win this honour, Hanan Al Kazemi said, “I am truly proud to be the first Kuwaiti artist to have my work exhib-

ited at the International Quilt Festival in Houston. Participating in this festival has long been a dream of mine. The Houston International Quilt Festival is the largest quilt exhibition in the world, showcasing over 100 quilt artworks this year. The competition is intense, with highly accomplished artists from across the globe taking part. Every year, I aspired to participate, and now, after years of dedication and mastering the art of quilting, the moment has finally come to realise this goal.”

Hanan’s dream became a reality when she received the congratulatory message confirming her artwork had been accepted. “The joy I felt was indescribable, to see my work featured at the world’s most prestigious quilt exhibition was a deeply fulfilling moment. As a proud member of the Kuwait Textile Arts Association, I consider my participation in any international event an opportunity to add to the association’s reputation and visibility. I was especially pleased that the organisers expressed their delight in having an artist from Kuwait participate in the Traditional American Art category. This achievement marks a meaningful milestone for both Kuwait and the Kuwait Textile Arts Association, placing our name on the global quilting map.”

Patronage

The Kuwait Textile Arts Association has changed over the years. Formed in the mid-nineties by a group of expatriate women under the patronage of Sheikh Altaf Salem Al Ali Al Sabash, the organisation’s departure of many long-standing members who left for their permanent homes and its inclusion of many local members have brought the organisation closer to home in many ways. The initial membership composition was predominantly expatriate. Today, that balance has shifted predominantly toward Kuwaitis. Batoul Al Sayegh, the first Kuwaiti President of KTAA, who has overseen the evolution of KTAA into an organisa-

tion that is deeply rooted in local talent, notes, “The Kuwait Textile Art Association (KTAA) is proud to support all its members in pursuing excellence. Through KTAA’s ongoing programs, exhibitions, and international collaborations, our members can showcase their talents on a global stage. We are pleased to see how these opportunities have helped many quilters like Hanan AlKazemi to grow and share their creative achievements internationally.”

Hanan AlKazemi’s journey with quilting began when she joined KTAA in 2009. “Since then, I have been passionate about attending courses both inside and outside Kuwait to build my artistic skills, in addition to participating in exhibitions held in Kuwait and abroad,” she says. Members of KTAA piece, sew, stitch and quilt together, almost in happy oblivion of the outside world. “The relationship among the members of the Kuwait Textile Arts Association is one of friendship and sisterhood, united by our shared passion for handmade arts and crafts,” says Hanan. “During our weekly meetings, we all speak the same language, the language of art. Working within the association is a beautiful act of volunteerism. I first served as a hospitality coordinator, then as the exhibition coordinator for 10 years, and also coordinated workshops to teach members the art of quilting and help them elevate their skills.”

A quilter is not just a crafter or an artist, but both. I have observed Hanan grow as an artist since she joined KTAA in 2008. “This year, over 1000 quilts from all over the world were on display and judged at the festival,” observes Donna Al Shaya, Past President of KTAA. “This was the first year a Kuwaiti reached this path of the journey, a fact to be recognised and applauded. Hanan is an accomplished quilter, trained quilt instructor from the South African guild. I have no doubt, she will continue to create her masterpieces and share with her students and community of quilters.”



Colour Palettes by Hanan AlKazemi on display at the International Quilt Festival in Houston, Texas. Hand-pieced and machine-quilted using machine piecing and English paper piecing techniques.

From screen to page

A character sparks Witherspoon’s novel

NEW YORK, Oct 16, (AP): Reese Witherspoon’s first novel for adults began with the kind of inspiration veteran fiction writers know well - a character who wouldn’t leave her alone.

A military doctor who ends up performing plastic surgery for mysterious clients.

“I had never had an idea for a character in my whole life. She was sort of living in my head, and once that happens I knew I was going to have to do something about it,” Witherspoon said this week as she and co-author Harlan Coben spoke in a conference room at the Apple SoHo store in downtown Manhattan, shortly before their interview for an upcoming podcast, Bookmarked by Reese’s Book Club.

“And so I called Harlan.”

The novel, which has just been published, is called “Gone Before Goodbye.” The woman in Witherspoon’s mind became Maggie McCabe, an Army combat surgeon whose professional setbacks lead her to accept a lucrative, but suspicious plastic surgery job that will bring her everywhere from Russia to Dubai and ensnare her in a puzzle of murder, multiple identities and jarring coincidences. “Gone Before Goodbye” began with Witherspoon, but has the kind of layered plot lines and haunting back stories known to Coben’s many readers.

The careers of the 49-year-old Witherspoon and 63-year-old Coben have run parallel for decades - she’s the Oscar-winning actor and producer whose credits include “Walk the Line,” “Legally Blonde” and “The Morning Show” and he’s the million-selling author of such crime stories as “Tell No One,” “Fool Me Once” and “No Second Chance.” But their interests have also overlapped. Beyond her influential book club, Witherspoon is one of Hollywood’s most prominent champions of reading and literacy, while Coben has seen many of his books adapted for film and television.

Witherspoon says the two met at a conference about nine years ago and that she has long been a fan of his work. Once she decided to take on a novel, she contacted Coben, who had never worked with a co-author.

“I was wary of the idea of collaborating. I’m just not that guy,” he said. “But when she told me the idea and started talking about private doctors illegally going over and doing surgeries for very wealthy people and then something going wrong. And that’s kind of in my alley - but not. And I loved it. It’s like when you have an idea, there’s like hooks in your brain, you know, and all these ideas kind of rushed through.”

Maggie McCabe might seem like a fine and challenging role for an actor like - Reese Witherspoon. And “Gone Before Goodbye” has clear cinematic scope, with its mix of exotic locales, narrow escapes and deadly confrontations. But no rights have been sold and the authors both say they want the book to be enjoyed as a book - for now. Coben explained that they worked under a few ground rules - no writers besides themselves, and no thinking beyond the project at hand.

“The biggest kiss of death, despite how many adaptations I’ve had of my own books, is to write a novel thinking, ‘Ooh, this is going to make a really good movie.’”

During their recent interview, Witherspoon and Coben also talked about their collaborative process, Witherspoon’s family background and what they learned from each other.

Questions and answers have been edited for brevity and clarity.

AP: How did the writing process for this work? You were sending each other drafts?



Reese Witherspoon attends the WSJ. Magazine Innovators Awards in New York on Oct. 29, 2024. (AP)

Witherspoon: Constant communication. Text messages.

Coben: Emails. We met in person once every 2 or 3 weeks, I guess.

Witherspoon: We’d sit for hours, kind of just beating out the story, making sure we understood each character’s backstory so that we could mine it for future plot lines. It was really interesting, the construction process.

Coben: I warned her that novels like a sausage. You might like the final taste. You probably don’t want to see how it was made. So we really got into the weeds with that.

AP: Do you (Witherspoon) feel like you now know enough that you could write a novel yourself?

Witherspoon: I know what I don’t know. And I think, you know, partnering with a master who’s done it for more than 10,000 hours and has 37 or 38 books, there’s a reason I wanted to work with somebody who is so incredibly skilled at it because he actually had the patience to let me into his process.

I felt very confident in my mastery of building a character. I felt as confident about this character as I do Tracy Flick (from “Election”), or Elle Woods (from “Legally Blonde”). To me, that character so clear and the fact that we built this together and he showed me how you can construct a world around a character, it really was an education for me.

AP: What was the biggest adjustment for you (Coben) about working with another writer?

Coben: Reese took over part of the part of my brain that sometimes talks to myself. I would talk to Reese instead. I would tease her because sometimes when we were speaking, because of her acting background, her ability to create character, I could almost see her becoming Maggie. Her voice would change a little. I would think to myself, “I’ve really got to mine her now because it’s like I’m talking to the actual character and she is in the room.”

AP: Was there an incident that inspired the book?

Witherspoon: Not really. I got a lot of inspiration from my dad, who was a military surgeon, my mom’s a military nurse. So they would talk about their surgeries at night. And my dad worked right after Vietnam. So he was seeing soldiers coming back from Vietnam. He was, you know, seeing patients after a lot of conflicts. And he would come home and tell us really vivid stories about surgeries, trauma surgeries and things he had seen.

I have a real reverence for people who serve in the military and who are also in the medical community. And, I’m also really fascinated by what drives a person to want to be that person.

Coben: She’s a novelist (now), like it or not.

AP: Is it going to be lonely for you (Coben) the next time you write a book by yourself?

Coben: Yes it is. It’s going to be strange.

Witherspoon: Aww, I’ll be here. Just call a friend.

Coben: I’ll just call Reese. ‘Honey, I need help.’

Kuwait pledges support for global health, peace initiatives

WHO praises Kuwait’s award for cancer, chronic diseases control

CAIRO, Oct 16, (KUNA): An official of the World Health Organization (WHO) on Thursday commended Kuwait’s role in supporting medical research, considering its prize for control of cardiovascular diseases and diabetes as a shining example of spurring scientific research.

Speaking to KUNA, Director of WHO’s Program Management for the Eastern Mediterranean Region Dr. Adham Rashad voiced appreciation to Kuwait for its pioneering role in backing medical research, hailing the prize for stimulating scientific and medical research at both regional and international levels.

The WHO official was in Cairo to partake in the 72nd session of the WHO’s Eastern Mediterranean Region.

He said that the continuation of this initiative reflects Kuwait’s humanitarian and scientific commitment

ment to buttressing efforts aiming at improving public health and bolstering scholars’ capabilities of addressing chronic health challenges.

He added that the Kuwaiti prize, which was launched in 2003, is annually given to the best research in the field of controlling cancer and cardiovascular diseases and diabetes.

Over 12 years, the prize has contributed to enriching the Arab and international medical research scene by highlighting distinguished works and encouraging cooperation between scientific and medical institutions.

Rashad added that this initiative marks an exemplary partnership between national instructions and international organizations due to relevant positive influence in developing medical sciences and improving life quality.

Kuwaiti Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi delivered the



KUNA photo
The Minister of Health presents the ‘Kuwait Prize for Chronic Disease Control’ to the winners from Oman and Iran.

Kuwaiti prize for control of cardiovascular diseases and diabetes to Dr. Noor Al-Busaidi of Oman and Dr. Majid Mobarhan of Iran during a ceremony held on the sidelines of the WHO’s 72nd session.

Meanwhile, Dr. Al-Awadhi affirmed on Wednesday the State of Kuwait keenness on supporting regional and international initiatives for development and peace.

This approach has been set by guidelines of the sagacious leadership that advocates that investment in the human being is ideal for shaping nations’ future, said the minister during the 72nd session of the regional committee of the World Health Organization, held in Cairo with participation of health ministers and representatives of the member states.

Dr. Al-Awadhi revealed that the conferees examined annual report of the WHO regional director general

that shed light on its works over the past two years in the face of complex regional humanitarian and health crises affecting livelihood of more than 115 million people in need for aid.

The minister lauded WHO’s noticeable efforts in the region namely its three initiatives; easing access to medical products, investing in the sustainable medical personnel and speeding up response to health issues. He also indicated in this vein at its successful efforts in combating polio, promoting psychological treatment programs and combating non-communicable diseases.

Meanwhile, the assistant under-secretary for external health services, Dr. Hisham Kalandar, affirmed in remarks to KUNA importance of the minister’s speech on boosting the inclusive medical systems and expanding digital transformation in the sector.

HIV progress threatened

US aid cuts deal a massive blow for the small African nation of Lesotho

HA LEJONE, Lesotho, Oct 16, (AP): In the wake of massive US cuts to foreign aid, the small country of Lesotho, in southern Africa faces deep uncertainty and worry over its HIV-positive residents.

Lesotho long had the world’s second-highest HIV infection rate. Over years, with nearly \$1 billion in US aid, Lesotho patched together a health network efficient enough to slow the epidemic’s spread. But when US President Donald Trump froze foreign assistance and dismantled the US Agency for International Development, chaos and confusion followed in Lesotho. Clinics shut down, workers were let go, and patients stopped treatment.

Much of Lesotho’s system to treat hundreds of thousands of HIV-positive residents is crumbling, and experts are sounding alarms, even as some US-funded programs are temporarily reinstated.

Here are some takeaways from The Associated Press’ reporting on the effects of the aid cuts in Lesotho.

When aid cuts began, confusion followed in nearly all the 130 countries with USAID-supported programs. More than nine months later in Lesotho, there’s still little clarity.

Weeks ago, the US announced it would reinstate some flagship initiatives to combat HIV worldwide. Officials here applauded the move. But the measures are temporary solutions



A nurse vaccinates a small child in a clinic in Ha Lejone, Lesotho, July 16, 2025. (AP)

that stress countries must move toward autonomy in public health.

The State Department told the AP in an email that its six-month bridge programs would ensure continuity of life-saving programs while officials work with Lesotho on a multiyear agreement on funding.

Those negotiations will likely take months. While programs may have been reinstated on paper, restarting them on the ground takes considerable time, Lesotho health workers and ex-

perts told AP.

HIV-positive residents, families and caregivers say the chaos that reigned most of this year has caused irreparable harm, and they’re consumed with worry and uncertainty about the future. Most feel deep disappointment - even betrayal - over the loss of funds and support.

“Everyone who is HIV-positive in Lesotho is a dead man walking,” said Hlaoli Monyamane, an HIV-positive 32-year-old miner.

Small nations hit hardest despite low emissions

World is on track to add 57 deadly superhot days a year, study warns

WASHINGTON, Oct 16, (AP): The world is on track to add nearly two months of dangerous superhot days each year by the end of the century, with poorer small nations hit far more often than the biggest carbon-polluting countries, a study released Thursday found.

But efforts to curb emissions of heat-trapping gases that started 10 years ago with the Paris climate agreement have had a significant effect. Without them Earth would be heading to an additional 114 days a year of those deadly extra hot days, the same study found.

The international collection of climate scientists World Weather Attribution and the U.S.-based Climate Central teamed up to use computer simulations to calculate just how much of a difference the landmark accord has made in terms of one of the biggest climate effects on people: heat waves.

The report - which is not yet peer-reviewed but uses established techniques for climate attribution - calculated how many superhot days the world and more than 200 countries got in 2015, how many Earth gets now and what’s projected in two future scenarios.

One scenario is if countries fulfill their promises to curb emissions and by the year 2100 the world warms 2.6 Celsius (4.7 Fahrenheit) above preindustrial times. That adds 57 superhot days to what Earth gets now, according to the study. The other scenario is the 4 C (7.2 F) of warming that the world had been on track to hit before the Paris agreement. The study found that would double the number of additional hot days.

“There will be pain and suffering because of climate change,” said Climate Central Vice President for Science Kristina Dahl, a report co-author. “But if you look at this difference between 4 degrees C of warming and 2.6 degrees C of warming, that reflects the last 10 years and the ambitions that people have put forth. And to me, that’s encouraging.”

The study defines superhot days for each location as days that are warmer



Jorge Moreno, a worker, drinks flavored water to cope with the heat wave during his workday at a construction site in Veracruz, Mexico, June 17, 2024. (AP)

than 90% of the comparable dates between 1991 and 2020. Since 2015, the world has already added 11 superhot days on average, the report said.

“That heat sends people to the emergency room. Heat kills people,” Dahl said.

The report doesn’t say how many people will be affected by the additional dangerously hot days, but co-author Friederike Otto of Imperial College London said that “it will definitely be tens of thousands or millions, not less.” She noted that thousands die in heat waves each year already.

Thursday’s study calculated that the weeklong southern Europe heat wave in 2023 is now 70% more likely and 0.6 C (1.1 F) warmer than it would have been 10 years ago when the Paris agreement was signed. And if the world’s climate-fighting efforts don’t increase, a similar heat wave at the end of the century could be 3 C (5.4 F) hotter, the report estimated.

A heat wave similar to last year’s Southwestern United States and Mexico heat wave could be 1.7 degrees

Celsius (3.1 degrees Fahrenheit) hotter by the end of the century under the current carbon pollution trajectory, the report said.

Other groups are also finding more than hundreds of thousands of deaths from recent heat waves in peer-reviewed research with much of it because of human-caused climate change, said University of Washington public health and climate scientist Kristie Ebi, who wasn’t part of Thursday’s report.

More than anything, the data shows how unfair the effects of climate change seem, even under the less extreme of the two scenarios. The scientists broke down how many extra superhot days are expected for each country by the end of the century under that scenario.

The 10 countries that will see the biggest increases in those dangerous heat days are nearly all small and dependent on the ocean, including the Solomon Islands, Samoa, Panama and Indonesia. Panama, for example, can expect 149 extra superhot days.

Fed cuts to threaten chronic disease progress

Obesity remains high in the US

NEW YORK, Oct 16, (AP): For the first time in more than a decade, the number of states with rates of obesity of 35% or more has dropped, an encouraging sign that America’s epidemic of excess weight might be improving. But cuts to federal staff and programs that address chronic disease could endanger that progress, according to a new report released Thursday.

Nineteen states had obesity rates of 35% or higher in 2024, down from 23 states the year before, according to an analysis of the latest data collected by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The CDC data was analyzed by the nonprofit group Trust for America’s Health.

The group’s analysis follows a CDC report last year that found that the overall rate of obesity in the U.S. is high but holding steady, affecting about 40% of the population.

While the decline is positive, “it’s too soon to call it a trend,” said Dr. J. Nadine Gracia, president and chief executive for TFAH.

And with recent federal funding cuts, staff layoffs and eliminated programs, “this potential progress is also at risk,” Gracia said.

A US Health and Human Services Department spokesman said in an email that the administration is “encouraged by the new data showing progress in the fight against obesity.”

“We are restructuring public health programs to eliminate waste, reduce



A man uses measuring tape on his waist in California on Jan 9, 2025. (AP)

bureaucracy, and redirect resources toward real prevention,” said spokesman Andrew Nixon.

The latest report analyzed data from the CDC’s 2024 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, which uses annual telephone surveys to collect data on health behaviors and chronic conditions in U.S. states and territories.

It showed that 19 states had obesity rates among adults of 35% or higher, 22 states had rates between 30% and 35% and nine states had obesity rates of below 30%. The rates varied from a low of 25% in Colorado to a high of more than 40% in West Virginia.

Between 2023 and 2024, no state had statistically significant increases or decreases in their obesity rates, after 18 states saw significant increases in the previous five years, the report found.

Before 2013, no state had an adult

obesity prevalence at or above 35%. By 2019, a dozen states had rates that high - and the number continued to climb.

In adults, obesity is defined as having a body mass index of 30 or higher. Body mass index is a calculation based on height and weight. Obesity is a chronic disease linked to a host of serious health problems including diabetes, stroke, cancer and heart disease.

It’s not clear exactly what may be driving the apparent improvements in obesity. Wider use of drugs such as Wegovy and Zepbound - which target appetite and slow digestion - could be starting to show up in reported data, said Aviva Musicus, a science director for the Center for Science in the Public Interest, an advocacy group. Increased support for nutrition assistance programs during the COVID-19 pandemic might also be a factor, she suggested.

The report also details a broad range of federal, state and local efforts that focus on improving nutrition and boosting physical activity, said Solveig Cunningham, an Emory University global health expert who specializes in obesity.

“I think the report would argue that some of these interventions may actually be successful,” said Cunningham, who was not involved with the research. “That would suggest that there are possibly ways in which we could prevent obesity at the population level, which would be a really, really big deal.”

Key rocket milestone

China’s mission marks 600th flight of Long March rockets

BEIJING, Oct 16, (Xinhua): China’s Long March rocket series achieved its 600th space launch on Thursday, with a Long March-8A successfully deploying internet satellites into orbit.

Serving as China’s backbone launch vehicles, the Long March rockets have delivered nearly 1,400 spacecraft into orbits and conducted over 86 percent of the country’s space launch missions to date, according to the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation, China’s major space contractor.

“These rockets have provided solid support for the implementation of major aerospace projects, such as China’s manned spaceflights, BeiDou navigation and deep space exploration,” it said in a press release.

Among the 24 rocket variants developed since the maiden flight of the Long March-1 rocket, 11 are classified as new-generation launch vehicles. In the most recent 100 missions, new-generation rockets have accounted for 40 percent, emerging as an important force supporting the country’s high-density launches.

The company also noted that the Long

March rocket series has been actively adapting to market demands, with the share of commercial launches steadily rising. Its payloads span multiple fields, including communications, remote sensing and navigation.

The Long March-8A rocket, in particular, is known for its cost-effectiveness and high adaptability, having successfully undertaken multiple satellite internet constellation deployment missions.

Long Lehao, a renowned rocket expert and an academican of the Chinese Academy of Engineering, said that the Long March series will continue to develop toward greater payload capacity, faster operational responsiveness, higher reliability and reduced cost.

He disclosed the progress of several launch vehicle programs, noting that the new-generation crewed Long March-10 rocket, designed for China’s lunar landing mission by 2030, has achieved significant advances in key ground tests. Additionally, the heavy-lift launch vehicle, currently in the planning phase, is expected to further enhance the country’s capability for space access.

Experts uncover hundreds of new viruses shaping human gut

MELBOURNE, Oct 16, (Xinhua): Researchers in Australia have discovered hundreds of previously unknown viruses that live inside bacteria in the human gut.

These viruses, known as bacteriophages, could eventually be used to reshape the gut microbiome, potentially influencing gut health and the progression of various disease states, according to a statement released Thursday by Australia’s

Monash University.

The study, published in Nature, is the first of its kind and uses a large-scale, culture-based approach to isolate and study temperate bacteriophages in the human gut, it said.

The research team worked with 252 bacterial isolates from the human microbiome, which had to be grown in the lab using specialized anaerobic chambers devoid of oxygen, and were then

treated with ten diverse compounds, foods, and conditions.

The study found that Stevia, a common plant-based sugar substitute, and compounds released by human gut cells, were leading activators for gut phages, and can awaken dormant viruses in gut bacteria, which could have major implications for gut diseases like inflammatory bowel disease.

“This is a foundational study that changes how

we think about and study the viruses within the human gut,” said Professor Jeremy Barr from Monash University’s School of Biological Sciences, the study’s senior author.

The study, in collaboration with Australia’s Hudson Institute of Medical Research, suggests that human biology plays an important and direct role in shaping the viral landscape of the gut.

Rockets have new star in Durant

Southwest Division adds a phenom in Flagg to go with Wembanyama

WASHINGTON, Oct 16, (AP): Kevin Durant is back in Texas, Victor Wembanyama is back after major shoulder surgery and the Dallas Mavericks aren't saying when Kyrie Irving might be back from a knee injury so he can join Anthony Davis and No. 1 pick Cooper Flagg.

The defending Southwest Division champion Houston Rockets added Durant - a one-and-done star for the Texas Longhorns almost 20 years ago - in a blockbuster trade with Phoenix, not long after losing to Golden State in the first round of the playoffs as the No. 2 seed in the Western Conference.

Wembanyama missed most of the last half his second season with the San Antonio Spurs after getting diagnosed with deep vein thrombosis, a blood clot condition that is potentially life-threatening. Surgery was the chosen path back to the court for the 21-year-old French star, who is now listed at 7-foot-4 instead of 7-3.

The Mavericks enter their first full season without Luka Doncic after converting a 1.8% chance to win the draft lottery and getting Flagg, a one-year wonder at Duke 14 years after Irving followed the exact same path to the NBA.

Dallas lost in the play-in tournament a year after reaching the NBA Finals, losing Davis for almost two months when he went down with an injury in the 10-time All-Star's debut a week after the widely panned trade that sent Doncic to the Los Angeles Lakers. Irving was lost for the season when he tore his left ACL in early March.

Durant didn't win a playoff game in two-plus seasons with the Suns, who decided on a major reset in a deal that landed them 2021 No. 2 pick Jalen Green and a bevy of draft picks.

Now the four-time scoring champion joins a team looking for its first playoff series victory since 2020. It's the fifth stop for the 15-time All-Star since leaving the Longhorns to be the No. 2 pick in 2007.

"We always got so much support here from me playing at Texas, so I always



Houston Rockets forward Kevin Durant (7) shoots against the New Orleans Pelicans during the first half of an NBA preseason basketball game in Birmingham, Ala. (AP)

felt the love every time I came back to Houston," said Durant, who won two NBA titles with Golden State. "So to put on a Rockets jersey, I know it's going to go to the next level."

Wembanyama's health scare gave him a new appreciation for life. He spent part of the offseason visiting NASA in Houston and training with monks in China. Not to mention adding some bulk to his unique, wiry frame. He's listed at 240 pounds.

"This is my best summer so far," Wembanyama said. "I can tell the progress is just incredible. I feel better, I look stronger and the scale says I'm heavier. So everything is a green light."

It seems unlikely Irving will play before the calendar turns to 2026, and Davis will have protective eyewear for the rest of his career following offseason surgery to repair a detached retina.

If the 32-year-old Davis can avoid a penchant for long-term injuries and Flagg lives up to the hype that helped soothe the hard feelings many Mavs fans had over the trade, Dallas could chart a promising near-future quickly after many thought they had squandered it by trading a then-25-year-old superstar in his prime.

"Same thing as last year when I got traded and I had a press conference," Davis said of his message for fans. "The goal is still to bring a championship here. I think we have a good ballclub. I think our biggest thing as a team is our health. I'm happy to be here. I'm excited to be here. And I want to win here."

Here's a look at each Southwest Division team in a predicted order of finish:

A season-ending knee injury to Fred VanVleet just before camp dampened the Rockets' title hopes and left them searching for answers at point guard. They could use different lineup configurations with VanVleet out, including moving 6-7 forward Amen Thompson to point guard to make a big starting five that would include Durant and center Alperen Sengun, both at 6-11, along with forwards Jabari Smith Jr. (6-10) and Tari Eason (6-8). Even with this lineup, Houston needs point guard Reed Sheppard, the No. 3 pick in 2024, to take a step forward to make up for the loss of VanVleet after the former Kentucky standout played sparingly last season.

Doncic, Butler prepare for full seasons as Lakers and Warriors eye NBA glory



Golden State Warriors' Trayce Jackson-Davis (32) is defended by Los Angeles Lakers' Rui Hachimura (28) during the first half of a preseason NBA basketball game in Los Angeles. (AP)

Suns begin new era under Ott with Booker leading rebuilt roster

WASHINGTON, Oct 16, (AP): **Luka Doncic is doing his best to bring the Los Angeles Lakers closer, planning a recent visit to the Porsche Driving Experience for some team bonding.**

Golden State star Jimmy Butler is finding ways to build camaraderie, too, holding a recent retreat at his home in San Diego ahead of training camp.

The success of Doncic and Butler in their first full seasons with new teams will go a long way in determining how things go in the wild Western Conference, with the Lakers and Warriors eyeing a championship.

They are set to battle for Pacific Division superiority, and the midseason acquisitions of Doncic and Butler should provide each franchise with additional stability and leadership alongside superstars LeBron James and Stephen Curry.

Doncic, fresh off a three-year maximum contract extension worth \$165 million keeping him with the team through 2028, can't wait to play alongside James and Co. for a full season.

"Coming into a new team, it's kind of hard to get the leadership up, but that's what the preseason is for. I had a great time with the national team, kind of worked on my leadership role, so I feel way more comfortable."

Butler hosted his teammates for a retreat he considered an important part of the Warriors getting to know him even better, away from basketball.

The Warriors added veteran center Al Horford after finally being able to build a roster following forward Jonathan Kuminga's three-month contract stalemate. Guard Gary Payton II returns, and Curry's younger brother, Seth, is another veteran addition.

The Sacramento Kings received a blow when forward Keegan Murray injured his left thumb in an exhibition game on Oct. 10 against Portland, which required surgery and will sideline him for more than a month. Here's a look at each team in the Pacific Division in predicted order of finish:

James begins his record 23rd NBA season in unfamiliar territory: For the first time in his life, he isn't the most important player on his team.

The top scorer in NBA history appears to be focused on making it work with Doncic, not on retirement or on moving to a more immediate title contender. Redick is confident this partnership will thrive, particularly if the Lakers can get enough practice time early in the season to meld the superstars' games.

The Lakers' supporting cast appears to be improved after adding center DeAndre Ayton, shutdown defender Marcus Smart, and versatile Jake LaRavia. Austin Reaves will be highly motivated in a contract year - if he declines his 2026-27 player option, as expected. But everyone realizes the defending division champions will go as far as Doncic and James can carry them.

The addition of Horford stepping in to complement Green will be key after Kevon Looney's departure to New Orleans, as the Warriors aim for another championship while Curry, Butler, Green, and coach Steve Kerr are still together.

Golden State is versatile and deep again, with Buddy Hield, Moses Moody, and Brandin Podziemski offering Kerr options in his backcourt rotation alongside Curry and Butler - both of whom could need regular rest days. Payton brings a defensive punch off the bench for a team that lost in five games to Minnesota in the Western Conference semifinals after Curry went down with a hamstring injury in a Game 1 win.

The Clippers have one of the oldest teams in the league - much like the aging Warriors - with James Harden (36) and new additions Chris Paul (40) and Brook Lopez (37). Only 28-year-old newcomer John Collins is under 30. With age comes experience, but they'll need to avoid the injury bug over an 82-game season plus the playoffs.

Kawhi Leonard is healthy to start the season after playing just 37 games last season while recovering from a knee injury. The Clippers filled their biggest need by trading for Collins and signing Lopez to back up big man Ivica Zubac.

The Suns experienced an extensive makeover during the offseason, hiring first-time NBA head coach Jordan Ott and building a roster around four-time All-Star Devin Booker. Phoenix hopes guards Jalen Green and Dillon Brooks - acquired in the deal that sent Kevin Durant to the Rockets - can form a steady backcourt with Booker. The team also acquired center Mark Williams in a draft-day trade with the Hornets and is banking that better health can unlock his considerable potential. Rookie center Khaman Maluach is an intriguing prospect but might need time to develop, considering he's still just 19 years old. He was taken with the No. 10 selection.

Wang takes second shooting gold

GUANGZHOU, Oct 16, (Xinhua): Rising star Wang Zifei of Zhejiang staged a late comeback to overtake teammate Han Jiayu in the final rounds of the women's 50m rifle three positions on Thursday, capturing her second title this week at China's 15th National Games.

The 18-year-old, a triple World Cup winner in the 10m air rifle this season, surged from seventh place to first in the final standing stage, sealing victory with 462.9 points. Han, who led for much of the match, settled for silver with 462.6, while Beijing's Li Ya'nan earned bronze with 450.0, winning her team's first shooting medal at these Games.

Earlier in the week, Wang teamed up with Han and Olympic champion Huang Yuting to win the women's 10m air rifle team gold, following Han's triumph in the individual event.

Han, the top qualifier with 594 points, led from the start of Thursday's final. She held a 0.1-point advantage over Sichuan's Pang Yuqian after the kneeling position and extended it to 1.1 points after prone shots, as Li climbed into second. But Wang produced a brilliant standing series to catch Han at 432.7 points with three shots remaining, capitalizing on her teammate's consecutive sub-10s to secure the title.

"Although today's result was a bit beyond my expectations, it was still within the range of what I believed I could achieve," Wang said. "My standing position has always been one of my strengths." Taking two golds on her

National Games debut, Wang remained modest about her success. "This was something I didn't really expect," she added. "For me, this competition was more about gaining experience. It's my first time competing at the National Games, and I just hope to keep getting better in the future." Wang's victory further strengthened Zhejiang's dominance in shooting, with the province now winning three golds and two silvers from 12 completed events.

In the men's 10m air pistol team final, six-time World Cup gold medalist Hu Kai bounced back from missing the individual podium on Wednesday, leading Anhui to a 16-6 victory over Hebei.

"For me, yesterday is yesterday and today is today," said the 23-year-old defending champion. "Every bit of effort we make each day is for tomorrow. Compared with who I was yesterday, I've already succeeded today." In the bronze medal match, Jilin survived a late scare to edge a Guizhou side led by Olympic champion Xie Yu 16-10. Jilin had led 14-2 but needed several extra series to finally close out the win.

Elsewhere, Tang Xiao of Guangxi claimed a surprise victory in the women's 10m air pistol final with 240.3 points, finishing 1.7 ahead of Ruan Mengying of Hubei. Shanghai's Olympic gold medalist Jiang Ranxin took bronze.

National Games shooting competition continues Friday with the women's 10m air pistol team final and the men's 50m rifle three positions final.

Best of the Rest

Pedro leads Flamengo rout of Botafogo: Striker Pedro scored one goal and set up another as Flamengo secured a 3-0 away win over Botafogo in Brazil's Serie A.

Flamengo opened the scoring in the 40th minute when Pedro ran onto Gorgian de Arrascaeta's pass and finished clinically into the far corner.

Winger Luiz Araujo made it 2-0 by slotting home from the edge of the six-yard box after Pedro's layoff.

Gonzalo Plata put the result beyond doubt as he latched onto Jorge Carrascal's cross with a glancing header that left goalkeeper Leo Linck with no chance.

Flamengo manager Filipe Luis singled out Pedro for praise after the match, stressing the importance of the former Fiorentina striker to his side's title hopes.

"Pedro helped us in every stage of the match," Filipe Luis told reporters. "He's been training well, he is in great shape and his performance on the pitch tonight speaks for itself. This is the Pedro that we all want to see and the Pedro that we need." Flamengo remains second in the standings with 58 points, three behind Palmeiras, while reigning champions Botafogo drops to fifth, 15 points further back.

In other Brazilian top-flight matches on Wednesday, Cruzeiro drew 1-1 at Atletico Mineiro, Vasco da Gama won 2-0 at Fortaleza, Santos prevailed 3-1 at home to Corinthians, Sport Recife was held to a 1-1 home draw by Ceara, and Mirassol clinched a 3-1 home win over Internacional. (Xinhua)

□ □ □

Press announces retirement from soccer: Angel City forward Christen Press has announced her retirement from professional soccer following the National Women's Soccer League season.

The 36-year-old Press won Women's World Cup titles with the United States in 2015 and 2019 and a bronze medal at the Tokyo Olympics in 2021. Over a decade with the national team, she appeared in 155 matches, scoring 64 goals and 43 assists.

Press played professionally in Sweden and has played in the NWSL for the Chicago Red Stars, Utah Royals and Angel City, in addition to a stint with Manchester City.

A native Californian, Press was Angel City's first signing in 2022. She scored two goals in eight games with the team before tearing the ACL in her right knee. She had four surgeries before returning last season.

"It's hard to find the words to say goodbye to a sport that has defined my life for over three decades. Football has given me everything, and I will miss being on the pitch so very much. Thank you to my family, friends, teammates, coaches, and community for this beautiful ride," Press said in a statement released Wednesday. (AP)

McKeown describes Arnie as incredible

Olympic champion Titmus terminates swimming career, shocks fans

BRISBANE, Australia, Oct 16, (AP): The Olympic champion known affectionately as "Arnie" chose to terminate her elite swimming career immediately, an ending that caught her audience completely by surprise.

Ariane Titmus, a four-time Olympic gold medalist, had been widely expected to return to competitive swimming following a break in the wake of the Paris Games and train for the Los Angeles Olympics in 2028.

Instead, she posted a video on Instagram on Thursday announcing her retirement at the age of 25.

"I've always loved swimming, it's been my passion since

I was a little girl, but I guess I've taken this time away from the sport and realized some things in my life that have always been important to me are just a little bit more important to me now than swimming," Titmus said. "And that's OK."

At the Paris Olympics last year, Titmus successfully defended her 400-meter freestyle title in a much-hyped race against U.S. great Katie Ledecky and Canada's Summer McIntosh.

All three have held the world record in the event at some stage.

"Knowing now what I know, I wish maybe I enjoyed that last race a little bit more," she said. "But I guess having this 12 months away I've had the chance to explore what life is like without swimming - and that was always my intention - but I think a turning point for me was in the lead-up to the Paris Games I went through some health challenges which, quite frankly, really rocked me."

In 2023, Titmus had surgery to remove two benign ovarian tumors but returned to the highest level quickly to prepare for the next competition.

On Thursday, she initially posted the news of her retirement in the form of a letter to her seven-year-old self.

"Today you retire from competitive swimming. 18 years you spent in the pool competing. 10 of those representing your country. You went to two Olympic Games and, even better, you won!!!" she wrote.

"The dreams you had, they all came true. You achieved more than you ever thought you were capable of and you should be so proud."

Titmus retires as the world-record holder in the 200 freestyle and with 33 international medals, including four gold, three silver and one bronze Olympic gold medals and four world titles.

Kaylee McKeown, who has won five Olympic gold medals including relay wins with Titmus, described her friend and teammate as "incredible."



In this file photo, Australia's Ariane Titmus poses with her gold medal after winning the women's 400-meter freestyle final at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Nanterre, France. (AP)

"Privileged to have witnessed a living legend in the sport."

Swimming delivers most of Australia's gold medals at the Olympics, and it's a big part of life Down Under where most kids have to swim at least once a year in a school competition, or carnival, during their childhood.

So the sudden retirement made national, headline news.

In a "Thankyou Arnie!" farewell note, Swimming Australia said there'd be "a seismic void for the Dolphins" to fill as it was customary at major meets for Titmus to swim the 400 freestyle event on the opening night.

The swimming federation noted that Titmus had dominated the race for seven years and took her responsibility as a competition agenda setter very seriously.

"Before her successful Paris campaign, Titmus vowed to win Australia's first gold medal of the 2024 Paris Olympics not just for the Dolphins," Swimming Australia said, "but for the entire Australian Olympic team and for the Australian public."

Titmus, who was raised in the southern island of Tasmania, made reference to her relatively isolated home state on Thursday.

"I probably shouldn't have become Olympic champion," she said. "I come from the (southernmost) place in this country - freezing, the pools aren't open outdoors for seven months of the year. I was able to take it to the world, and I probably shouldn't have."

"I think I'm a testament to setting big goals and chasing them and not being afraid of them. Swimming's helped me realize that anything is possible if you work for it."

Change Name

The public is hereby notified that Myrna Alaman Knapczyk has filed with the Embassy of the Republic of the Philippines, State of Kuwait, a Migrant Petition for Change of First Name of her son in the Report of Birth with the Embassy on 25 September 2025 under Registry No. ROB-KT-07-530-2022

The First Name of child should read as GIAN VINCENT instead of GIAN YASBIN.

Any person having knowledge and/or claiming interest or may be adversely affected by said petition, file his written opposition with the Philippine Embassy within ten (10) working days.

Pressure mounts on Belkacem

Al-Fahaheel seeks rebound against winless Al-Nasr

By Hassan Mosa
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 16: The Zain Premier League returns today after a break of more than two weeks due to the international window, kicking off the fifth round with a single match: Al-Jahra welcomes Al-Tadamon to Mubarak Al-Ayar Stadium at 5:40 PM.

The round continues on Saturday with two matches: Al-Fahaheel takes on Al-Nasr at Al-Sadaqa & Al-Salam Stadium at 5:40 PM, followed by Qadsia hosting Kazma at Mohammed Al-Hamad Stadium at 7:55 PM. The round will conclude on Sunday with Al-Shabab facing Kuwait Club, and Al-Arabi playing Al-Salmiya.

Kuwait Club tops the league with 10 points, just ahead of second-placed Al-Salmiya. Al-Arabi sits third with 8 points, while Qadsia occupies fourth with 7 points, level on goal difference with Al-Shabab. Kazma is sixth with 6 points, Al-Tadamon seventh with 4 points, Al-Fahaheel eighth with 3 points, Al-Jahra ninth with 1 point, and Al-Nasr remains winless at the bottom.

Friday’s clash between Al-Jahra and Al-Tadamon promises an even contest. Al-Tadamon holds a slight edge with one win and one draw from four matches, aiming for a second victory to move into the “safe zone,” while Al-Jahra searches for its first points of the season.

Similarly, the Al-Fahaheel vs. Al-Nasr match looks balanced, despite Al-Nasr’s ongoing struggles and zero points so far. The pressure is on Tunisian coach Jamal Belkacem, while Al-Fahaheel hopes to snap a three-match losing streak and record its second win.

The spotlight, however, will be on the Qadsia vs. Kazma matchup. Both teams are close in the standings, and recent form suggests a tightly contested game.

Qadsia has endured a difficult spell, losing 1-2 to Kuwait in the fourth round and 1-3 to Zakho in the Gulf Champions’ League group stage opener. A defeat could see the team slip further in the table, which is particularly concerning as it prepares to host UAE’s Al-Ain in the Gulf Champions League next Wednesday.

Kazma, meanwhile, seeks its second league win while maintaining an unbeaten streak. The team is determined to continue its title chase, aiming to reclaim a championship that has eluded it for years.



Qadsia’s Bader Al-Mutawa controls the ball under pressure from a Kazma player during a league match.

Aiming to serve humanity

Sheikh Salman hails AFC Dream Asia as a global model for social impact

RIYADH, Oct 16: Sheikh Salman bin Ibrahim Al Khalifa, President of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) and First Vice President of FIFA, highlighted yesterday that the AFC’s Dream Asia initiative has become a pioneering model for promoting positive societal impact.

He spoke at the opening of the 2025 Dream Asia Foundation Conference in Riyadh, held in partnership with the United Nations’ “Football for Goals” initiative, and attended by representatives from the UN, UEFA, FIFA, and other international organizations.

Sheikh Salman said, “Dream Asia has become a leading example of how football can be used as a tool for positive social change. Through collaboration



Sheikh Salman bin Ibrahim Al Khalifa, AFC President and FIFA First Vice President, addresses the audience at the 2025 Dream Asia Conference.

with member associations and international partners, AFC programs have touched the lives of thousands across Asia.”

He added, “From its inception, Dream Asia has pro-

moted the idea that football is more than just a game – it is a powerful platform to unite communities, build societies, and foster values of respect, equality, and tolerance. The AFC’s mission goes beyond competitions, aiming to serve humanity and create a brighter future for people across our continent.”

Over the past eight years, Sheikh Salman noted, Dream Asia has made significant strides in social responsibility by implementing developmental and humanitarian programs across most national and regional member associations. “We have witnessed the tangible impact of these initiatives in supporting children and youth, empowering women, and enhancing inclusivity in football,” he said.

Roshn League returns

Al-Ittihad targets fresh start under new coach Conceição

RIYADH, Oct 16: Following the international break, the Saudi Roshn League returns with the fifth round, starting today as Al-Ittihad takes on Al-Fayha. The defending champion hopes for a strong start under its new coach, Sérgio Conceição.

Today’s schedule also features Al-Kholood vs. Al-Najma and Al-Ahli vs. Al-Shabab, while Saturday will see Al-Ittifaq clash with Al-Hilal, Al-Akhdoud face Al-Hazem, and Al-Nassr host Al-Fateh.

Al-Ittihad appointed Portuguese coach Sérgio Conceição to replace Laurent Blanc, signing a contract through 2028. Blanc and his staff ended their tenure in late September, a day after a defeat to Al-Nassr.

Al-Ittihad currently sits third in the league with nine points, earned from three consecutive wins before a 0-2 loss to Al-Nassr in round four.

Conceição shared his excitement for his new role, stating in a club video on X: “This is a big club, a team used to winning titles. We are here to continue the club’s tradition of success and bring more championships.”



Sérgio Conceição

Meanwhile, Al-Nassr, led by Jorge Jesus, aims to extend its unbeaten run and remain the only team with victories in every league match this season when they host Al-Fateh on Saturday.

Al-Hilal will seek to climb the league standings in their match against Al-Ittifaq tomorrow.

Euro heavyweights ‘shine’ as Lyon, Chelsea claim big wins

Barcelona humiliates Roma

PARIS, Oct 16, (AP): U.S. international Lily Yohannes capped the scoring in OL Lyonnes’ 3-0 victory over St. Pölten with a spectacular long-range lob in the Women’s Champions League on Wednesday.

Jule Brand and captain Ada Hegerberg - the competition’s all-time leading scorer - also found the net for the record eight-time champions.

The 18-year-old Yohannes spotted goalkeeper Carina Schlüter off her line in the 52nd minute. From near the center circle, Yohannes powered a right-footed shot over Schlüter’s head and into the net.

Brand opened the scoring just before the half-hour mark in France. The German completed a fluent team move by tapping in a cross from Vicki Becho.

Hegerberg headed in the second just seconds before halftime to improve her total tally to 67.

Lyon amassed 44 attempts on goal compared to six by the visitors from Austria.

Lyon coach Jonatan Giráldez used an entirely different starting 11 than the one that beat defending champion Arsenal 2-1 in the first round a week ago.

St. Pölten lost 6-0 to Atleti at home last week.

Barcelona and Chelsea also won



Roma’s Frederikke Thogersen, left, tries to block a shot by Barcelona’s Alexia Putellas during the Women’s Champions League soccer match between Roma and Barcelona, at the Tre Fontane stadium in Rome. (AP)

big with clean sheets, and newcomer OH Leuven earned its first win.

In the new format, the 18-team league phase ends in December. Teams that finish first to fourth in the standings advance directly to the quarterfinals. Those ranked Nos. 5 to 12 go to a knockout playoff round. The bottom six teams are eliminated.

Chelsea routed Paris FC 4-0 to record its first win of the campaign after the six-time defending English champion was held 1-1 by Twente last week.

New Chelsea signing Alyssa Thompson scored her first goal for the Blues. The 20-year-old U.S. international moved to London from Angel City in September for

a reported fee of around 1 million pounds (\$1.35 million) on a five-year contract.

France winger Sandy Baltimore and Johanna Rytting Kaneryd put Chelsea in command with a goal apiece less than 10 minutes apart late in the first half at Stamford Bridge.

Baltimore converted a penalty and Rytting Kaneryd doubled the advantage with a looping header. Thompson added the third after the break from close range and Erin Cuthbert also scored.

Barcelona didn’t waste time in Rome en route to a 4-0 victory. Esmée Brugts scored off a rebound in the second minute.

The Catalan club didn’t translate

their dominance into more goals in the opening 45 minutes, while Roma came close on counters.

Putellas wasted a penalty opportunity, sending her attempt over the bar early in the second half. But the captain got another chance 20 minutes later and this time succeeded. Kika Nazareth and substitute Caroline Graham Hansen also had one goal each.

Barcelona had beaten Bayern Munich 7-1 last week.

Roma remain pointless after conceding 10 goals in two games.

In Oslo, two-time champion Wolfsburg needed Janina Minge’s penalty kick deep into stoppage time to win 2-1 over Vålerenga.

Lineth Beerensteyn capitalized on a defensive blunder, burst into the area and scored with a low shot past goalkeeper Tove Enblom to put Wolfsburg ahead 1-0 in the 57th minute.

Sara Hørtø equalized just three minutes later with a header.

The She-Wolves routed Paris Saint-Germain 4-0 last week, when Vålerenga lost 1-0 loss at Manchester United.

European debutant OH Leuven earned its first win after staging a late comeback to beat Twente 2-1.

The Belgian squad was trailing 1-0 when Linde Veeffkind equalized eight minutes from time from the penalty spot. Sára Pusztai scored the winner deep into stoppage time.

The first Belgian team to reach the league phase or group stage of the competition managed had also come back from a 2-0 deficit to salvage a draw at Paris FC in its first game.

Leipzig hosts promoted Hamburger

Dortmund hopes to halt Bayern in Der Klassiker

BERLIN, Oct 16, (AP): With more hope than expectation.

The Bundesliga is waiting to see if Borussia Dortmund can mount a challenge to Bayern Munich in “der Klassiker” on Saturday.

Both teams are unbeaten after six rounds but Bayern has made a perfect start to the season with 11 wins from 11 games across all competitions including the German Supercup.

Though Dortmund dropped points against St. Pauli and Leipzig, it has displayed a new-found resilience under new coach Niko Kovac. Still, the team has a long way to go

before it can be considered a title contender.

“We don’t want to talk up something that isn’t there. We are good but Bayern are currently better,” Kovac said before facing his ex-club.

Bayern has already scored twice as many goals (25-12) and conceded fewer (3-4) than Dortmund after six rounds.

Leipzig and Stuttgart are the next closest challengers.

While der Klassiker in Munich dominates the seventh round, Bayer Leverkusen can confirm its revival

under new coach Kasper Hjulmand at Mainz earlier Saturday. The Danish coach has overseen three wins and a draw since taking over from the fired Erik ten Hag after just two rounds.

Borussia Mönchengladbach also fired its coach after a dismal start, and its sporting director subsequently resigned. Interim coach Eugen Polanski takes the troubled team to Union Berlin on Friday for what will be new sporting director Rouven Schröder’s debut.

Third-placed Leipzig hosts promoted Hamburger SV on Saturday,

when Stuttgart visits Wolfsburg - another team in trouble after three straight losses. There was no respite for Wolfsburg during the international break - coach Paul Simonis’ side also lost a friendly to second-division Hertha Berlin.

Harry Kane can’t stop scoring for Bayern with 11 Bundesliga goals so far. The only time he didn’t score, he set up two in a 3-2 win at Augsburg. Kane also scored twice in England’s 5-0 rout of Latvia in World Cup qualifying, taking his tally to 21 goals for club and country this season.

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KUNA photos
Kuwait Club player unmarked
as he scores during the final
match against Qadsia.

Sports

Unstoppable Kuwait Club extends reign



Kuwait Club celebrates with the championship trophy.

Abyad wins 10th Basketball Super Cup

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 16: Kuwait Club re-affirmed its supremacy in local basketball by clinching the Basketball Super Cup for the 10th time in its history, defeating Qadisia 122-99 in the final held recently at the Basketball Federation Hall inside the

Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Indoor Complex. Qurain finished third after edging Kazma 93-92.

This year's edition featured a new format, with the top four teams from last season's league participating instead of the traditional setup that included only the league and cup champions.

With this latest triumph – its 10th in 11 editions (Kazma won in 2022) and third consecutive title – Kuwait Club further cemented its dominance on the

domestic stage, coming just days after winning the Arab Championship in Dubai.

Kuwait Club was in control from the opening tip, showcasing its trademark dominance. Kuwait Club quickly imposed its rhythm, storming ahead 24-3 before closing the first quarter at 34-14. The team maintained a commanding 20-point advantage throughout most of the game, extending it beyond 30 points at times – a rare gap in a final between two title contenders. Kuwait Club led 70-37 at halftime and 99-78 after the third quarter, never allowing Qadsia a chance to recover.

The final period followed the same trend, with Kuwait Club's players maintaining their grip on the game while Qadsia struggled to find its form.

Bader Al-Asaimi, Kuwait Club's Basketball Director and Club Vice President praised the players for their mental sharpness, particularly after their recent continental success – a situation that often leads to a dip in focus in local tournaments.

He also revealed that Club President Khaled Al-Ghanem promised generous financial rewards to the players in recognition of their Super Cup victory.

Kuwait set to compete in inaugural Asia Padel Cup



KUNA photo

Kuwait Asia Padel Cup delegation.

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 16, (KUNA): The Kuwait national padel team, for both men and women, will take part in the first-ever Asia Padel Cup, hosted by Qatar from October 17 to 24, featuring elite teams from across the continent.

Omar Al-Zanki, Chairman of the Kuwait Padel Club and head of the Kuwaiti delegation, said the participation reflects the country's commitment to developing padel and enhancing its presence regionally and internationally.

Al-Zanki emphasized that the team has prepared thoroughly for the tournament and aims to achieve results that honor Kuwait's name. The squad includes some of the nation's top male and female players, guided by the club's experienced technical and administrative staff.

Expressing pride in representing Kuwait at the inaugural official Asian padel championship, Al-Zanki expressed confidence that the players will deliver performances befitting the stature of Kuwaiti sports.

El Mesbahi shootout heroics send Morocco into historic U-20 World Cup final against Argentina

SANTIAGO, Chile, Oct 16, (AP): Third goalkeeper Abdelhakim El Mesbahi came off the bench near the end of extra time and made the decisive save in the shootout as Morocco edged France 5-4 on penalties Wednesday to qualify for its first Under-20 World Cup final.

The Moroccans will play for the championship against Argentina, which edged Colombia 1-0 to reach its eighth final at the under-20 tournament. French goalkeeper Lisandru Olmeta's own goal in the 32nd minute gave Morocco the lead before midfielder Lucas Michal equalized in the 59th.

It was tied 1-1 in regulation and near the end of extra time, when Morocco's coach, Mohamed Ouahbi, sent in El Mesbahi for the shootout. El Mesbahi had headshots of France's players printed on his water bottle and a small graphic of where they might direct their penalty kicks. The strategy worked because El Mesbahi, who hadn't played in any of Morocco's previous matches at the tournament, stopped France's last shot from Djilian Nguessan.

"We managed to stay focused, calm, and wait for our moments," Ouahbi said. "Now we're enjoying it, we're in the final. I'm quite emotional because it's a historic moment, but we want to win the final."

We're going to calm down quickly because what we want is to win the cup." Morocco's starting goalkeeper, Yanis Benchaouch, was injured dur-



Morocco players celebrate defeating France in a penalty shootout during a FIFA U-20 World Cup semifinal soccer match at Elias Figueroa Brander Stadium in Valparaiso, Chile. (AP)

ing regulation time and replaced by Ibrahim Gomis in the 64th minute.

Gomis made way for El Mesbahi at the end of overtime. Morocco topped its group, beating Spain and Brazil in the process, and then beat South Ko-

rea and the United States to reach the semifinals.

The African nation's best previous performance in the tournament was fourth place in 2005. In the later semifinal match, Mateo Silvetti scored in the 72nd minute for Argentina, which

has won all of its matches in Chile and is aiming for a seventh Under-20 world title. The Argentina squad is dominating in Chile despite missing Bayer Leverkusen's Claudio Echeverri and Real Madrid's Franco Mastantuono, two of the country's best under-20s players.

Injury-hit Barcelona visits Girona

BARCELONA, Spain, Oct 16, (AP): Barcelona lost more players to injuries including striker Robert Lewandowski and playmaker Dani Olmo during the international break ahead of visiting Girona in La Liga on Saturday.

Kylian Mbappé is also doubtful for Real Madrid's game against Getafe on Sunday after he missed a World Cup qualifier for France with an ankle injury.

Barcelona is back in action after it was stunned at Sevilla 4-1 in its last game two weeks ago. That loss let Madrid move back into the league lead.

Barcelona's unbeaten season ended in the shock loss at Sevilla. It now faces a short trip up the Mediterranean coast to play struggling Girona, which is coming off its only win of the season at home against Valencia.

Barcelona hosts Olympiakos on Tuesday in the Champions League and then visits Madrid in the first clásico of the season on Oct. 26.

Madrid, after playing Getafe, hosts Juventus in the Champions League on Wednesday before hosting its top rival at the Santiago Bernabeu.

Coach Hansi Flick will have to reinvent Barcelona's attack with possibly five top attacking players unavailable.

Lewandowski returned from playing for Poland with a hurt left hamstring. Olmo and fellow Spain player Ferran Torres both came back with muscle injuries in their left legs.

Torres has started ahead of Lewandowski this season and scored five goals, while Olmo is a versatile playmaker who can play as a false nine.

Barcelona was already missing teen star Lamine Yamal, forward Raphinha, midfielders Gavi Pérez and Fermín López and goalkeeper Joan García due to recent injuries before clubs paused for the international break.

Pressure still on Amorim

Doubts hang over Liverpool ahead of Man U showdown

MANCHESTER, England, Oct 16, (AP): The first doubts are beginning to emerge about Liverpool's Premier League title defense on the back of three straight losses.

Manchester United seems to be never more than one loss away from another crisis.

That is the backdrop to the latest clash of English soccer's fiercest rivals.

At Anfield on Sunday, Liverpool looks to stop an early-season wobble from developing into something more serious, and United tries to nail down some momentum under coach Ruben Amorim.

Liverpool fell to late defeats against Crystal Palace and Chelsea before the

international break, and another loss came in the Champions League. It is the club's worst run under coach Arne Slot, who was near-faultless in his title-winning first season.

After more than \$400 million was spent in the summer, the Dutchman has seen a streak of frantic late wins turn into late collapses - the latest against Chelsea at the start of the month.

As strange as it may sound, Slot may welcome the visit of United, even given the added pressure of their ionic rivalry. United has not won at Anfield in its last 10 visits - the last victory coming in 2016.

There have been some humiliating defeats since then - 7-0 in 2023 and 4-0 in 2022. United enjoyed a morale-

boosting victory against Sunderland last time out, but Amorim has still to oversee back-to-back wins in the Premier League. Co-owner Jim Ratcliffe backed Amorim in recent weeks.

By the time Liverpool kicks off against United, it could be down to fifth in the standings and as many as four points behind leader Arsenal which plays Fulham on Saturday.

Also on Saturday, Nottingham Forest hosts Chelsea with increasing speculation surrounding manager Ange Postecoglou's position.

Manchester City is clicking into gear after a difficult start and, depending on other results, could go top by beating Everton on Saturday.

Erling Haaland can't stop scoring.

Another hat trick for Norway during the international break took his tally to 21 in 12 appearances for club and country this season. Everton is warned.

In contrast, Alexander Isak is finding it hard to break his British record after his move from Newcastle to Liverpool, with just one in nine - including two blanks for Sweden during the international break, leaving his country on the verge of missing out on the World Cup.

Jack Grealish is in great touch while on loan at Everton, but league rules state he cannot play against his parent club, potentially sparing City the embarrassment of being undone by a player deemed surplus to requirements.