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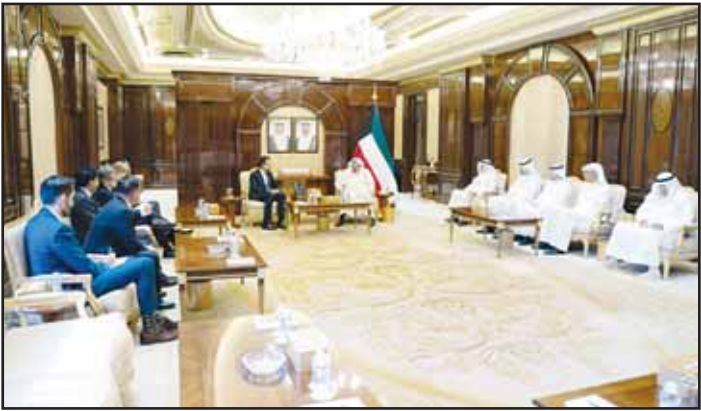
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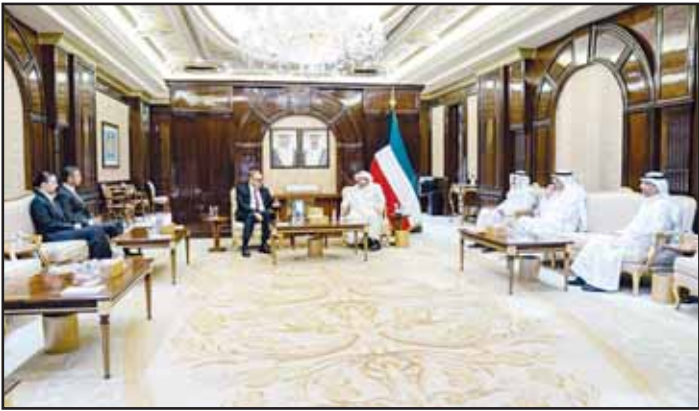
His Highness the Prime Minister, Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah receives a delegation from Airbus and ambassadors of France, Germany, Spain, and the UK to Kuwait.

PM receives Airbus delegation, European envoys, OECD team

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20, (KUNA): His Highness the Prime Minister, Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, received at Bayan Palace on Monday a delegation from Airbus and the ambassadors of France, Germany, Spain, and the UK to Kuwait.

During the meeting, they reviewed aspects of cooperation and joint work between Kuwait and Airbus, as well as ways to enhance and develop the trade partnership between the two sides.

The meeting was attended by Head of the Prime Minister's Diwan



PM Diwan photos
His Highness the Prime Minister, Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah receives the delegation of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

Abdulaziz Al-Dakheel, Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority Director-General Sheikh Dr. Meshaal Al-Sabah, President of the General Authority of Civil Aviation Sheikh Humoud Al-Sabah, Managing Director of the Kuwait Investment Authority Sheikh Saud Al-Sabah and Assistant Foreign Minister for European Affairs, Ambassador Sadiq Marafi.

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'Kuwait's MoH goes hi-tech, investing in human assets'

Modern labs vital for effective treatment: Al-Awadhi

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: The 7th Medical Laboratory Conference, organized by the Medical Laboratory Departments Council and the Medical Laboratory Services Department at the Ministry of Health under the theme "Developments in Diagnostic Hematology and Precision Medicine (Personalized Medicine)... Future Trends in Diagnostic Laboratories", kicked off on Sunday morning.

In his opening statement, Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi highlighted that the conference is taking place at a time when the world is witnessing a radical transformation in diagnostic and healthcare concepts.

He emphasized the ministry's commitment to developing the medical laboratory system and strengthening its technical and human resources, describing it as the beating heart of modern medical work.

Dr. Al-Awadhi stressed the ministry's focus on promoting personalized medicine and precise diagnosis by investing in modern technology and benefiting from artificial intelligence to support medical decision-making.

He affirmed that innovation in laboratory medicine is at the heart of the shift toward an integrated digital health system that relies on accuracy and speed in diagnosis.



Photo by Samer Shaqair
Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi visits a stall during the opening of the medical labs conference.

Dr. Al-Awadhi added that Kuwait, supported by the efforts of its qualified national workforce, is making steady progress toward realizing its vision of improving the quality of health services and implementing international standards in diagnostic and laboratory performance.

Meanwhile, Dr. Ibtisam Al-Jumaa, Chair of the Medical Laboratory Departments Council, highlighted that the conference serves as a strategic platform to strengthen the integration between scientific research and clinical practice, while underscoring the vital role of medical laboratories in the future healthcare system.

She explained that the conference includes eight specialized sessions and training workshops, with participation from 13 international lecturers representing the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, Egypt, Tunisia, Spain, Italy, and the United Kingdom, reflecting the event's international scope and diverse expertise.

Furthermore, Dr. Al-Jumaa explained that hematology laboratories in Kuwait are undergoing a major improvement in performance and quality, with 67 specialized physicians, including 13 consultants.

Since the beginning of 2025, the laboratories have completed more than 7.6 million tests on over 3.1 million samples in public hospitals and specialized health centers, in addition to 712,000 tests conducted in primary healthcare centers.

These achievements result from adopting advanced technical systems that have reduced human error to its lowest levels, with the percentage of rejected samples reaching only 0.38 percent in 2025.

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Defense, energy, trade to top Türkiye, Kuwait talks: Sonmez

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: Turkish Ambassador to Kuwait Tüba Nur Sönmez affirmed Monday that her country will continue to support Kuwait Vision 2035, led by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

In a press statement, Sönmez disclosed that Türkiye will cooperate in the fields of development, energy and infrastructure. She said the upcoming visit of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan will include discussions on developments in Palestine, Syria and elsewhere, enhancing joint cooperation, and maintaining peace and stability in the region. She added this visit is an opportunity to build on the momentum achieved during the visit of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to Türkiye last year, as several agreements and protocols in the fields of defense industries, energy, investment, transportation and trade, are scheduled to be signed to support bilateral relations and diversify investments.

She stressed that Turkish-Kuwaiti relations are considered a model of bilateral relations, pointing out that the foundation of the two countries' friendly relations is based on shared values, common interests, strong political will at the leadership level, and brotherly ties between the two peoples.

She confirmed that Kuwait is one of most reliable partners of Türkiye in the Gulf region, and that cooperation between the two countries encompasses various fields, such as trade, defense, tourism and investment. She added that the growing political will of the two leaders -- His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad and President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan -- allows the development of relations on multiple fronts.

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'Al-Zour' project to help achieve KPC '40 strategy

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: The Al-Zour Refinery petrochemical complex project is expected to see a major breakthrough in the last quarter of 2025 or early 2026.

According to informed sources, the Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company (KIPIIC) aims to produce approximately 2.35 to 2.40 million tons of aromatics and polypropylene annually from this large-scale project.

The Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) has a strong interest in the project, primarily due to its role in supporting KPC's 2040 strategy. This strategy includes expanding the petrochemical industry both locally and globally, as well as producing petroleum derivatives that meet international environmental standards.

The project is also in line with Kuwait's goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2050.

In a related development, KPC's 2024/2025 report revealed that the company aims, through the Al-Zour Refinery Petrochemical Complex project, to supply the local market with approximately 1.55 million tons of gasoline annually. This will also help deal with the current shortfall in gasoline supplied by Equate Petrochemical Company to its existing styrene plant.

The report explained that the project aims to support the development of both current and future petrochemical industries, in addition to creating job opportunities for Kuwaiti nationals.

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Officers trio nabbed for tampering with records

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: The Land Borders Investigation Department at the General Department of Criminal Investigation in the Interior Ministry arrested three civilian employees at the General Department of Land Borders after they tampered with the computer system used to document passenger entry and exit, according to press release by the Ministry of Interior.

This is in line with the efforts of the Criminal Security Sector to combat forgery and abuse of public office.

Details of the case indicate that information was obtained about two employees assigned in the Passport departments at Nuwaiseeb and Salmi borders, who abused their positions and the authority granted to them by entering incorrect data into the computer system of the ministry, thereby, recording false entry and exit records for two Kuwaiti women.

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Moi photo

The alleged border police officers in custody.

Amir receives Tunisian Pres. letter

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Monday a written letter from the President of Tunisia Kais Saied, regarding ways to strengthen and enhance bilateral relations.

Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya received the letter during his reception of the Tunisian Ambassador to Kuwait Mohammad Boudali at the headquarters of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Editor-in-Chief Al-Jarallah is doing fine after op in Paris

Dean of Kuwaiti journalism and Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah, Arab Times and Al-Hadaf newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah successfully underwent eye surgery in Paris on Monday. He is scheduled for a second operation early next month, during which he will receive comprehensive medical care.

Throughout Monday, Al-Jarallah received a number of calls from prominent figures, including sheikhs, politicians and businesspersons in Kuwait, Gulf, Arab and other foreign countries, in addition to his numerous fans, friends and followers, wishing him well.

Al-Jarallah expressed his appreciation and gratitude to Kuwaiti Ambassador to France Abdullah Al-Shaheen and to Head of the Health Office in Paris Dr. Ali Al-Moussawi for their concern and continuous follow up in serving Kuwaiti patients and their companions.

He praised the tremendous efforts exerted by the embassy and the Health Office to facilitate treatment procedures and provide the best services to citizens abroad.

He also appreciated the care and attention provided by the French medical



Ahmed Al-Jarallah

staff, extending his sincere appreciation and gratitude for their humanitarian and professional efforts.

Meanwhile, the staff of Al-Seyassah, Arab Times and Al-Hadaf newspapers expressed their sincere wishes for Al-Jarallah's continued health and well-being, lovingly telling him, "May you never see any harm. May you return safely and continue your journey, which we are all proud of."

Kuwait welcomes Pakistan, Afghanistan ceasefire deal

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait welcomed the agreement between Pakistan and Afghanistan on a ceasefire and the establishment of a mechanism to consolidate lasting peace and stability between the two sides, said the Foreign Ministry on Monday.

In a statement, the Foreign Minis-

try affirmed that the agreement would hopefully put an end to tensions, commending efforts by Qatar and Türkiye in hosting negotiations that led to the ceasefire.

It emphasized that the language of dialogue and diplomacy must prevail to resolve disputes and boost regional and international stability.

KFF adopts joint approach to tackling disasters, risks

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20, (KUNA): Chief of the Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), Major General Talal Al-Roumi, affirmed that Kuwait is adopting an integrated national approach to disaster and risk management, based on early preparedness, rapid response, and sustainable recovery.

This came in a speech by Al-Roumi delivered during an event organized by KFF on Monday, to mark the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction, titled "Financing Resilience, Not Disasters."

The theme is consistent with the Sendai Framework 2015-2030 and in line with Kuwait's goals, which place people at the center.

This is particularly true of the outcomes of the Sixth Arab Ministerial Meeting, recently hosted by Kuwait under the chairmanship of the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, and the outcomes of the meeting, which drafted the Kuwait Declaration.



Al-Roumi

tion.

Al-Roumi emphasized that prevention is not the responsibility of a single entity, but rather a shared national and humanitarian duty that begins with the individual, with the participation of government agencies, civil society, the private sector, academic institutions, and the media, to create a conscious societal culture that recognizes the value of safety before danger strikes.

The event included workshops attended by representatives of relevant government agencies, the civil society, and the private sector, in addition to KFF.

It's worth noting that the International Day for Disaster Reduction is held annually on October 13th, and was established by the UN's General Assembly with the aim of promoting a global culture of risk awareness and disaster loss reduction.

Chairperson of Kuwait Environment Protection Society and Chair of the Event Dr Wejdan Al-Oqab said Monday's celebration is of paramount significance since it comes when climate change-bearing disasters are on the rise.

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3 Kuwaitis arrested in Iraq for violating hunting laws

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: The Iraqi authorities continue to detain three Kuwaiti citizens for allegedly "violating hunting laws in the southern part of the country," according to a statement from

the Iraqi Ministry of Interior.

Foreign Affairs Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya confirmed that the Kuwaiti Embassy in Baghdad is following up details of the arrest of three Kuwaiti citizens in Iraq, in coordination with Iraqi security authorities.

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Day by Day

THERE is no doubt that Zakat funds should play a role in settling the debts of individuals facing legal action, prosecution, or even corporal punishment. Such punishment is unnecessary, as the responsibility also lies with the lender who failed to adequately assess the borrower's financial situation.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar



Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait participates in the 2025 Annual Meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank Group

Prayer Timings			
Fajr	04:33	Asr	14:47
Sunrise ..	05:52	Maghrib ..	17:13
Zohr	11:33	Isha	18:30

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:
By Day: Rather hot with light to moderate northwesterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 08-28 km/h.
By Night: Mild with light to moderate northwesterly wind to

Weather			
light variable wind, with speeds of 08-28 km/h.			
Station	Max Exp	Min Rec	
Kuwait City	37	27	
Kuwait Airport	36	21	
Abdaly	38	21	
Jahra	38	25	

Salmiyah	35	27
Ahmadi	35	23
Nuwaisib	36	23
Wafra	37	22
Salmy	35	19
Managish	38	23



Ministry of Foreign Affairs photo
Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya receives a written message from his Tajik counterpart during his meeting with Zubaydullo Zubaydov, the Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan to the country.

Kuwait's FM receives written letter from Tajik counterpart

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20, (KUNA): Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya received a written message from Tajik Minister of Foreign Affairs Sirojiddin Muhridin on ways to enhance bilateral relations and cooperation across various fields.

The message also addressed prospects for regional and international cooperation. This came during the Minister's reception of the Tajikistan's Ambassador to Kuwait Zubaydullo Zubaydov, on Monday at the ministry.

Diplomats, officials honor late former Prime Minister

Kenyan Embassy opens condolences for Odinga

By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: The Kenyan Embassy in Kuwait opened its doors Sunday to receive condolences on the death of former Kenyan Prime Minister Raila Odinga.
Kenyan Ambassador to Kuwait Halima Mahmood said: "The late Raila Odinga nominated me for the Senate from 2013 to 2017, representing his Orange Democratic Party. He was always in the opposition, but he believed that the nation's interests were more important than any personal interest. Therefore, every time he lost an election, he cooperated with the current government, as it happened during the Building Bridges Initiative, when he shook hands with the former president. He also cooperated with the current president, William Ruto, to strengthen the country's unity and achieve national reconciliation."
During a reception of condolences from heads and members of diplomatic missions on Sunday, Mahmood affirmed that Odinga always put the interests of Kenya above all other con-



Kenyan Ambassador to Kuwait Halima Mahmood (center) poses with members of the diplomatic corps during a condolence reception for the late former Kenyan Prime Minister Raila Odinga.

siderations. "We have lost a truly great leader," she asserted, imploring the Almighty to have mercy on him and grant him eternal peace.
She added, "Today, we dedicate ourselves to receiving condolences on the passing of the great African states-

man Raila Omollo Odinga, the late former Prime Minister of the Republic of Kenya, the leader of the Orange Democratic Movement Party, and the father of democracy in our country. The freedoms and new Constitution

that Kenya enjoys today are the fruits of his tremendous efforts and continuous struggle."
She emphasized that the people of Kenya, the people of Africa, and the world will miss Raila Odinga greatly. "Today, his body will be laid to rest in his hometown of Kisumu County, after being laid to rest in Parliament and the main stadium. A state funeral was held for him, befitting his stature and national and historical role," she added.
Dean of the Diplomatic Corps Ambassador of Tajikistan Dr. Zubaydullo Zubaydov led the mourners in offering their condolences and signed the condolence book on the passing of former Kenyan Prime Minister Raila Omollo Odinga on Oct 15.
The embassy also held a flag-lowering ceremony in mourning for the deceased. It announced that the condolence book will remain open for three days, starting Sunday, to receive representatives of the Kuwaiti government, diplomatic corps, friends of Kenya and all those who wish to offer their condolences.



Ambassador Lorenzo Morini inaugurates Italian Design Week at The Avenues Mall, celebrating Italy's creativity and cultural ties with Kuwait.

Italian Design Week celebrates Kuwait-Italy cultural connection

Envoy highlights deep affinity and strong market presence

By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff
KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: Italian Ambassador to Kuwait Lorenzo Morini inaugurated the Italian Design Week at The Avenues Mall with the theme, "Celebrating Italian Creativity in Various Fields."

In a press statement, Morini pointed out that holding the event at this location is a unique opportunity to showcase Italian creativity to the Kuwaiti public. He affirmed that The Avenues Mall is the ideal place to showcase high-end Italian products, indicating the essence of Italian design is present throughout the mall -- from safety systems to marble, furniture and decor. He said perfume, eyewear and automotive companies are also participating in the event.
He explained that the aim of the event is to highlight the depth of cultural and commercial relations between the Kuwaiti and Italian peoples, disclosing that the weekend program includes traditional performances of the historic flag dance by Italian artists, in a scene that embodies authentic Italian heritage and art.
He said the Italian culture is beloved and well-known in Kuwait, and that the similarity in taste between the two peoples -- whether in food, fashion or design -- reflects a deep cultural affinity.
He added that the quality of Italian products



Kuwaiti and Italian musicians join forces at Italian Design Week, delighting the audience with a unique cultural performance.

gives them a strong presence in the Kuwaiti market despite the stiff competition.
Regarding academic cooperation, Morini confirmed that the Italian Embassy is working hard to promote the teaching of the Italian language in Kuwaiti universities.
He confirmed that Italian designers will deliver lectures at Kuwait University as part of the week's activities, asserting the youths are the key to the future and cultural communication between the

two countries.
The activities on the first day concluded with a concert at the American Cultural Center entitled, "Music of the Peoples - An Italian Story," during which Kuwaiti and Italian musicians performed collaborative pieces that were admired by the audience.
Morini emphasized that music remains a universal language that unites peoples and builds bridges of understanding.

Other Voices

How did Israel defeat Hamas?

By Ahmad alsarraf

The war was neither equal nor fair. On one side stood Hamas, a small Palestinian faction with a few armed men who believed in the justice of their cause. On the other was a state with stronger economic power, superior weaponry, and advanced military, technological, and intelligence capabilities, backed by some of the most powerful countries in the world.
Yet, the war dragged on for more than two years. Throughout, the stronger side held firm to its position, insisting that the military campaign would continue until Hamas was completely defeated, eliminated, and all hostages were freed.
The Israeli army, with its superior equipment and strength, and its aircraft and tanks announced that it would launch operations by land, air, and sea. It also declared its intention to starve the people of Gaza, imposing a comprehensive blockade and cutting off water, electricity, gas, food, and fuel until Gaza either surrendered unconditionally or was completely annihilated.
Two years have passed, during which the Gaza Strip has suffered massive destruction. Its entire infrastructure and superstructure have been shattered, tens of thousands killed, and many times that number wounded. Yet, the threat Hamas posed to Israel's security was not eliminated, and the hostages were released only on Hamas's terms.
Israel's belief in God's promises of a land of Israel stretching to the Arabian Peninsula was ultimately thwarted. Netanyahu paid a heavy and unexpected price. The world, particularly the West, turned against Israel. The dangers of Zionist ideology, the influence of AIPAC, and the Israeli leadership's drive for expansion and bloodshed were laid bare.
In the end, representatives of Hamas, the very group whose complete elimination was the objective of the war, sat at the negotiating table with Israel and the United States of America. That meeting alone signaled the collapse of Israel's commitments. The outcome now appears likely



alsarraf

to be the eventual establishment of a Palestinian state.
□ □ □
Religious fervor, especially during religious wars, has long been a powerful motivator for soldiers to fight with courage. This is what Hamas capitalized on. However, such fervor has never been sufficient for governing a state once the war ends. The skills needed for leadership, governance, and reconstruction are vastly different from those required on the battlefield.
The clearest evidence of this was the wave of random field executions carried out by Hamas following its recapture of large parts of Gaza, which revealed a deeply troubling and complex side of the group. Therefore, Hamas must acknowledge its limitations and step aside from the responsibility of running the anticipated Palestinian state, leaving that task to those better equipped for it. Hamas can choose to transform into a civilian faction that embraces democratic principles.
There is nothing more damaging to the Palestinian cause, or to the Palestinian people, who are diverse in ethnicity, religion, beliefs, and ideas, than the imposition of religious rule. Support for Hamas, whether from us, others, or the international community, will quickly vanish if it overreaches or strays from its proper role, as is all too possible.
I hope Hamas will act wisely and avoid making this fatal mistake.
□ □ □

At the height of the Palestinian-Israeli war, Gazan journalist Saleh al-Jafrawi launched a fundraising campaign to build a hospital in Gaza. He appealed to Kuwait, requesting that the funds be delivered directly to him to realize this goal.
The Muslim Brotherhood responded to his call and, within days, raised nearly \$13 million. A friend alerted me to the potential seriousness of the matter, and I reported my concerns about the campaign's true purpose to the authorities. As a result, the transfer of funds was halted.
Yesterday, news emerged of al-Jafrawi's death during a clash between Hamas militants and their rivals. I do not know which faction he belonged to.
□ □ □
e-mail: a.alsarraf@alqabas.com.kw

Feminist foreign policy: Stepping up our collective action



H.E. Olivier Govin
French Ambassador to Kuwait

How can we unite, act and resist together in order to defend gender equality and the rights of women and girls? This will be the guiding question of the 4th Ministerial Conference on Feminist Foreign Policy, which France will host on 22 and 23 October 2025. This conference will bring together ministers of foreign affairs from all regions of the world, representatives of international organizations, public development banks, as well as civil society, research bodies and philanthropic foundations.
Since 2019, France has pursued a feminist foreign policy, making gender equality and women's rights a cross-cutting priority of its external action in the fields of development, democratic governance, peace and security, and humanitarian action, amongst others. Yet feminist foreign policy is not just lofty ideals; it follows through with concrete public policies and strong partnerships.
France and its partners are actively promoting women's and girls' rights.
France has made gender equality and defending women's and girls' rights a strategic and geopolitical priority in order to build just, inclusive, peaceful and sustainable societies. Research shows that the participation of women in negotiation processes increases the likelihood that a process be sustainable by 35%. Similarly, policies that

effectively mainstream gender equality make it possible to combat global warming more effectively, to stimulate growth and to strengthen the resilience of societies.
On 7 March 2025, France presented its International Strategy for a Feminist Foreign Policy. A central tenet of this strategy is the defence of rights and sexual and reproductive health. New priorities have been established, placing gender equality at the heart of France's response to contemporary global challenges, including crises and conflicts, climate change, health, international finance, digital technology and artificial intelligence.
As part of its feminist foreign policy, France is implementing a number of flagship initiatives, including the Support Fund for Feminist Organizations (FSOF), launched in 2020 to help more than 1,400 organizations in 75 countries. Another example is the Laboratory for Women's Rights Online, created in 2024. As the first of its kind, it offers an international platform for exchanging ideas and serves as an incubator for projects to fight gender-based violence in the digital environment.
For as long as gender inequalities persist, there is much to be done.
Despite these initiatives and the progress made by the international community, much remains to be done.

According to UN Women, at the current pace of change it would take close to 300 years to achieve real gender equality in the world.
Still today, gender inequalities persist, and in some cases are worsening. Conflict-related sexual violence rose by 50% from 2022 to 2023. In far too many countries, millions of women are denied the fundamental right to bodily autonomy: 193 million women only have access to abortion when their lives are in danger, and 142 million have no access to abortion under any circumstances. Wherever crises are shaking the foundations of society -- in Afghanistan, Iran, Gaza, Ukraine or Sudan -- it is women's rights that are the first to suffer.
A high-level conference to reaffirm our shared determination and collective ambition
In an international context marked by a significant decline in dedicated funding and the rise of anti-rights movements, the 4th Ministerial Conference on Feminist Foreign Policy will reaffirm our common determination to defend and promote women's rights and gender equality, and accept no regression. Together, we will keep moving forward.
H.E. Olivier Govin
French Ambassador to Kuwait

Daily diplomatic duties are a national responsibility, do not call for praise

“FIRST of all, it must be emphasized that Kuwaiti diplomacy has long reached a stage of maturity and should not be treated as if it were newly established,” columnist Eng. **Adel Al-Jarallah Al-Kharafi** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“That is why I am often surprised when officials visit certain countries and, upon completing their mission or visit, publicly praise the efforts of embassy staff. This is not a common practice in other parts of the world. The role of a country’s diplomatic representatives is to ensure the success of the official’s visit or mission. That is their duty and responsibility. Public praise in the media, therefore, seems unusual, as such acknowledgments are typically personal and should not be published in the media.

“So when an official says, “Thank you for the warm welcome”, questions arise - What kind of welcome is being referred to? Isn’t it the standard role of diplomatic missions, according to protocol, to handle logistical arrangements?

“While assisting citizens, whether during difficult times or in routine situations, is the primary responsibility of any mission, it is a consular service function. Embassies, by contrast, are primarily in charge of monitoring developments in the host country, protecting national interests, and providing regular reports to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

“They are also responsible for implementing the state’s policies with host countries and supporting the activities of officials involved in bilateral relations. Technical and protocol-related tasks are part of their routine, day-to-day responsibilities.

“Should an embassy issue a public statement of thanks every time a citizen or official visits, when its core mission



Adel Al-Kharafi

is to protect the interests of the state and its citizens, and to provide legal and consular support abroad?

“We understand that diplomatic work is not easy and can be demanding, but those in the field are specifically trained for it. They are expected to have strong skills in communication, negotiation, and problem-solving, along with a solid understanding of international politics and diplomatic protocol. They must also be capable of handling complex and sensitive situations with discretion, and be adaptable to working in diverse environments and engaging with various cultures.

“As for receiving officials, providing transportation, and arranging hotel accommodations, these are routine duties that do not merit public praise. Highlighting such matters can create a negative impression, as it suggests that any official who does not publicly express gratitude may be met with resentment from embassy staff, despite the fact that these services are part of their job.

“Kuwait, which has played a leading role in conflict resolution and demonstrated wise, balanced diplomacy that has earned it international respect, should not be side-tracked by such secondary issues. In fact, there have been occasions where Kuwaiti citizens have sought help from the embassies of neighboring Gulf countries.

“I recall in 2019, media outlets reported on the return of Kuwaiti citizens from Sudan. One headline read - “Kuwaitis returning from Sudan: The embassy let us down, and Saudi Arabia fulfilled its responsibility.”

“I have traveled extensively over the years, and on one occasion, a friend accompanying me said, “We should inform the embassy.” I asked him why. Was it so they could send us a car? There was no need for that. None at all.

“I don’t say this to offend anyone, but rather to point out, indirectly, a critique of how some view diplomatic work. When every employee carries out their duties sincerely and without expecting public praise, it reflects a mature understanding of public service, which is serving the people and the state without seeking recognition.”

Also:

“There are several laws that require strict and effective implementation to curb price manipulation and punish those who exploit it, especially some expatriates who rent licenses from citizens to work in food and vegetable markets,” Kuwaiti journalist **Salem Al-Wawan** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“Citizens are also complicit in encouraging price increases through various means, including residency trading. Therefore, strict enforcement of the law has become essential.

“For example, the fish market is controlled by some expatriate workers who dominate the fishing industry. The Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the Ministry of Health, the Kuwait Municipality, and the Ministry of Social Affairs must enforce the law against anyone manipulating prices.

“The situation appears chaotic, which benefits opportunists. I hope that the relevant ministries will activate their oversight mechanisms to curb price increases. The sea is Kuwaiti, the boat is Kuwaiti, the license is Kuwaiti, but the fisherman is an expatriate. This is why a basket of mead now costs KD 70 or more, in addition to the lack of cleanliness at the Sharq fish market.

“The Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the Consumer Protection Agency are notably absent. The situation calls for increased oversight, stricter monitoring of license rentals, and the establishment of new mechanisms and conditions for issuing fishing licenses.

“We understand that the responsibilities of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef are complex. However, we have full confidence in his ability to protect citizens and consumers from the greed of merchants and the monopoly of some expatriates over basic commodities that have become unaffordable for many citizens.”

“The Wafra agricultural area, located in the far south of the country along the Kuwaiti-Saudi border, is not what it was forty years ago,” former Minister of Justice and former Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs Dr. **Khalid Al-Azab** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“The number of farms and roads has increased, agricultural production has grown and developed, and construction and mosques have proliferated. Long agricultural plots have even been created, but this growth has not kept pace with the service needs of Al-Wafra’s residents and visitors, especially during the winter and spring seasons.

“For example, the 500-meter road leading to the Wafra agricultural plot is neglected and in need of maintenance. Wafra also requires a fresh water station and a gas station, so that drivers of fresh water tankers in plot 6 do not have to travel approximately 25 kilometers to reach the nearest fresh water station. This new area needs paved roads connecting the plots, as well as a second health clinic to complement the existing one.

“The Wafra Agricultural Society should establish new branches to better serve the community. The distance between the clinic and the farms poses a challenge for dozens of agricultural workers in the farms in Area 6, especially if they are injured on the job.

“Why not utilize the vacant land behind the municipality center, located in the middle of Mohammad Al-Jalal Al-Sahli Street, to create a dedicated area for grocery stores, mobile restaurants, or cafes instead of having them on this busy street?

“The state can issue licenses for the use of this undeveloped land in exchange for a fee. This would benefit the state financially and help reduce congestion in Wafra agricultural area, which has a prosperous present and a bright future.”

– Compiled by Simi K.Kutty

Kuwait acts to make atmosphere conducive for foreign investment

‘Uncle’ acquitted in breach of trust case

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: Minister of Justice Nasser Al-Sumait issued a ministerial decision to form a committee tasked to prepare a draft decree regulating real estate ownership by investment entities.

This is in line with Decree-Law No. 7/2025 amending Decree-Law No. 74/1979, which regulates real estate ownership by non-Kuwaitis.

In a press statement on Sunday, Al-Sumait revealed the committee will prepare a draft decree stating the rules governing ownership permits, permitted areas, and restrictions on disposal or mortgage. The draft will then be submitted to him to ask for the opinion of relevant authorities and complete the legal procedures.

Al-Sumait stressed that this step is part of the efforts of the State to develop a legal environment that attracts investment and enhances the balance between encouraging capital and protecting real estate ownership to support the Kuwait 2035 vision.

The committee is chaired by Counselor Ahmed Al-Mutairi, with Hamad Al-Rashidi serving as rapporteur, while the members include the representatives of the Ministry of Justice, Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA), Kuwait Municipality and Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW).

It is worth mentioning that the amended draft decree grants investment entities licensed by KDIPA the right to own real estate, which is necessary to carry out their activities, manage them, or provide housing for investors and employees, in accordance with the regulations and conditions specified in the new decree.

□ □ □

Uncle acquitted: The Misdemeanor Court acquitted a defendant (uncle) of breach of trust and failure to carry out his deceased brother’s will. The defendant was accused of withholding KD50,000 that the deceased entrusted to him, intended to be delivered to the deceased’s son upon reaching the age of 21.

The incident boils down to the complainant’s ex-husband, as prior to his death, he allegedly handed the disputed amount to his brother, asking him to keep it in trust for his son. However, years later, the family was surprised to discover that he denied ever receiving the money.

The complainant based her case on the tes-



Nasser Al-Sumait

timony of several relatives who confirmed the occurrence, stating that the deceased had indeed given the sum to his brother and instructed him to hand it over to his son once he reached the specified age. The accused, however, denied the allegation during the investigation, claiming that the disputed amount is his own money and that he opened the account in his name to deposit his share of his parents’ inheritance. He denied that the money was held in trust for his nephew and presented an account statement showing that the withdrawn amounts belonged to him.

Attorney Inaam Haider, lawyer for the accused, argued that the case was inadmissible, as it was filed by a party without legal standing, since the son already reached the age of majority. She demanded for her client’s acquittal and, alternatively, asked the court to refrain from imposing penalty.

Ultimately, the court acquitted the defendant of the breach of trust charge, stating in its ruling that the case documents lacked conclusive evidence proving he received the money as a trust. The court concluded that this is a family dispute, which did not rise to the level of a criminal offense.

□ □ □

Workers’ rights prioritized: In a landmark administrative ruling that reinforces the principle of legality and protects the rights of employees, the Administrative Court issued a final ruling annulling the decision to transfer an employee from one government agency to another.

The ruling was based on the finding that the decision infringed on the financial benefits and job status of the plaintiff, hence, it is an arbitrary transfer without legal or regulatory justification.

Attorney Mohammad Al-Ansari, lawyer for the plaintiff, told the newspaper that this ruling is a victory for the principle of job stability and ensures that the transfer is not used as a means

to undermine the rights of employees or harm their financial status. He affirmed that the court exercised full oversight over the legality of the decision and determined that it is a disguised punishment in the form of an administrative transfer.

Al-Ansari disclosed that the court concluded in its reasoning that the transfer was not carried out in the interest of the public, as it resulted in the reduction of financial benefits and allowances, which the plaintiff enjoyed at his original workplace. He added the employee was transferred to a unit that is excluded from the approved organizational structure of the entity to which he was transferred, rendering the decision null and void in violation of the law.

He pointed out that the ruling complements a series of principles established by the Administrative Cassation Court, including those contained in its ruling numbers 491/2018, 213/2019 and 102/2021, which stated “a transfer that results in the employee being deprived of his allowances or financial benefits without his consent is an unlawful decision and undermines the principle of equality and equal opportunity.”

He stressed that this ruling sends a clear message to government entities that they must adhere to the regulations governing transfer decisions, and that these decisions should not be taken as a means of administrative retaliation or to pressure employees, as they should be based solely on public interest, without prejudice to employment or financial rights.

He stated that this ruling reaffirms the principle of transparency and legitimacy in public service, and confirms that the Kuwaiti judiciary does not tolerate any administrative decision aimed at circumventing the law or undermining the guarantees provided by the employment system for civil servants.

The ruling affirmed that the administrative body has no authority to transfer an employee to a lower position in terms of financial grade, nature of work or job level, otherwise, the decision will be deemed tainted by abuse of power.

The ruling stated that the Administrative Court has the jurisdiction to hear transfer cases if it is determined that the transfer decision includes a disguised disciplinary penalty or infringes on the employee’s financial rights.

This is based on established rulings of the Administrative Court of Cassation, including Administrative Appeal numbers 975/2015 and 976/2015 and Administrative Appeal No. 2 during the session held on March 29, 2022.

The Court of Cassation affirmed that a transfer deviating from the public interest and leading to reduction in salary or allowances is a harmful administrative decision and violates the law.



KUNA photo
Kuwait’s Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs Ambassador Sameeh Johar Hayat meets Bangladeshi Chief of Army Staff, General Waker-Uz-Zaman.

Kuwait, Bangladesh eye boost in military and bilateral relations

NEW DELHI, Oct 20, (KUNA): Kuwait’s Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs Ambassador Sameeh Johar Hayat met on Monday with Bangladeshi Chief of Army Staff, General Waker-Uz-Zaman, at the Army Command Headquarters. The two sides discussed military cooperation and coordination, as well as means to enhance bilateral relations and address issues of mutual interest.

Attending the meeting were Kuwait’s Ambassador to Bangladesh, Ali Hamadah, Bangladeshi Ambassador to Kuwait Major General Syed Tareq Hussain, and a number of Bangladeshi officers.

The Army Chief lauded the military and

security cooperation between the two countries, expressing hope for further enhancement of bilateral ties.

The first round of political consultations between the two foreign ministries concluded with both sides reaffirming their commitment to strengthening ties.

Ambassador Hayat also met on Sunday with his Bangladeshi counterpart Mohammad Husain and delivered a handwritten letter from Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya regarding ways to bolster bilateral relations in various fields. The Kuwaiti diplomat concluded his two-day official visit and departed Bangladesh on Monday.

Two MoD workers mug Asian expat, snatch cash & mobile

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: The Criminal Security Sector arrested two Kuwaiti employees of the Ministry of Defense for committing a violent robbery in Hawally Governorate, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The Ministry of Interior stated in a press release that the Operations Room received a report from an Asian resident who said he was robbed by two unidentified individuals. One of them restrained him while the other stole cash, mobile phone from him and then fled.

The ministry explained that the Hawally Investigations Department’s Salmiya Investigations Office launched an investigation immediately after receiving the report. They arrived at the crime scene, collected surveillance footage, and gathered the necessary information.

The investigation led to identify-

ing the suspects, who turned out to be citizens working at the Ministry of Defense.

One of the suspects was tracked down and arrested, and he confessed to committing the crime with the assistance of the other suspect. The second suspect was then lured and arrested, and he admitted his involvement in the crime.

Suspected narcotics and drug paraphernalia were found in the possession of both suspects. Legal action is being taken against them, and they, along with the seized items, will be referred to the competent authorities.

The Ministry of Interior affirmed its ongoing efforts to pursue and apprehend anyone who threatens the nation’s security and the safety of citizens and residents, reaffirming its commitment to enforcing the law without exception.

Power cables, iron fence stolen from two locations

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: The Deputy Public Prosecutor ordered the dispatch of forensic personnel to Rawdattain in order to lift fingerprints and collect any traces that might have been left by unknown individuals who stole cables from an oil company site in the aforementioned area, reports Al-Anba daily.

These directives were issued after a citizen, serving as the legal representative of the oil company, filed a report regarding the theft that occurred at the company’s site. He stated that the stolen items included seven cables, each measuring eight meters in length.

The case was registered as theft and classified as felony.

Meanwhile, the Deputy Public Prosecutor also ordered the assignment of a technical team to Mutlaa after a citizen, representing the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, filed a report about a malfunction in the electrical connections.

Following the dispatch of the technical team to investigate the cause of the malfunction, it was discovered that unidentified individuals climbed over the fence of an electrical tower and stole 415 circular fence meshes with a diameter of 19 millimeters, along with seven iron support angles. The value of the stolen items is estimated at KD2,128.

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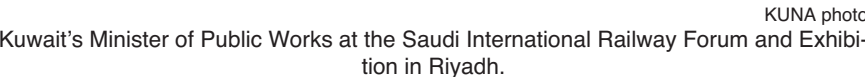
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Kuwait joins Saudi International Railway Forum in Riyadh



RIYADH, Oct 20, (KUNA): The second edition of the Saudi International Railway Forum and Exhibition kicked off in the Saudi capital Riyadh on Sunday with the participation of Kuwait's Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan.

In his opening remarks, Saudi Minister of Transport and Logistics Services and Chairman of Saudi Railways (SAR) Eng. Saleh Al-Jasser said the event aligns with the goals of the National Transport and Logistics Strategy and Saudi Vision 2030, highlighting the major progress achieved in the transport sector to strengthen the Kingdom's position as a global logistics hub through an integrated land, sea, air and rail network.

Al-Jasser noted that rail transport has become a key pillar supporting national development and the economy by

The opening day witnessed the signing of several agreements and cooperation memoranda between local and international entities in areas such as manufacturing, maintenance, infrastructure development, and artificial intelligence applications to enhance operational efficiency, localize technologies and empower national talent.

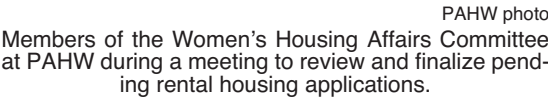
The accompanying exhibition features over 248 exhibitors from around the world displaying the latest technological innovations and solutions in the rail sector, along with investor and entrepreneur platforms underscoring SAR's leading role in transforming this vital industry.

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

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: The Women's Housing Affairs Committee at the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) has completed its review of hundreds of applications for rental housing on a usufruct basis.

In a press statement, the committee disclosed that while scrutinizing old applications for rental housing to determine the extent to which their owners accessed housing care services, the committee discovered two eligible applications registered since the 1970s without obtaining usufruct rights. This necessitated granting them their right to housing care through the provision of two rental housing units.

The committee added "this step is in recognition of their historic priority in obtaining rental housing, and a confirmation of the commitment of PAHW to guarantee justice in housing distribution, giving everyone their rights and ensuring fairness among rental housing applicants."



The committee confirmed that it will continue to review and update old applications to ensure that no similar cases arise, emphasizing that serving citizens and facilitating their access to housing care are top priorities.

Minister Al-Huwaila inspects PADA services in unannounced field visit

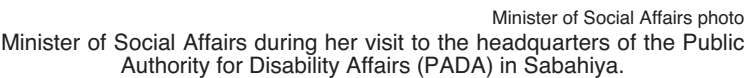
KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwaila conducted a surprise field visit recently to the headquarters of the Public Authority for Disability Affairs (PADA) in Sabahiya to follow up on the services provided, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press statement, Dr. Al-Huwaila said the visit aimed to monitor work progress and closely review the service delivery process.

She emphasized the importance of listening to feedback and suggestions to improve performance and enhance service efficiency.

Dr. Al-Huwaila toured several departments and divisions, and praised the quality of work and the efforts of the teams dedicated to providing excellent services to persons with disabilities with competence and commitment.

She affirmed that she places great importance on people with disabilities, and highlighted her support for



PADA in completing its development projects and providing the resources needed to improve service levels in line with the state's directives.

Dr. Al-Huwaila expressed confidence in the capabilities of national cadres, and called on everyone to continue working as a team to achieve further accomplishments and strengthen Kuwait's position in caring for and empowering persons with disabilities.



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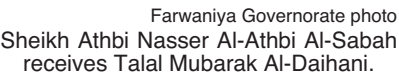
Governor and PAFN discuss food safety cooperation in Farwaniya

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah received Deputy Chairman of the Violations Committee and Director of the Farwaniya Inspection Department at the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN) Talallah Mubarak Al-Daihani on Sunday morning to discuss ways to enhance cooperation between the two sides.

According to a press release issued by Farwaniya Governorate, the meeting focused on strengthening collaboration and coordination in field inspections, with the goal of improving compliance with health regulations in markets and commercial establishments to ensure consumer safety and protect public health.

Governor Sheikh Athbi highlighted the importance of World Food Day as an occasion to raise awareness about food security and nutrition. He praised the vital role played by PAFN in protecting society, and commended the inspection teams for their efforts in enforcing laws and regulations and their dedication to enhancing field operations.

At the end of the meeting, Al-Daihani



thanked the governor for the warm reception and ongoing support, as well as for his cooperation with PAFN and other official bodies in serving the public interest in Farwaniya Governorate.

By Mohammed Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: The Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) announced the postponement of the deadline for submitting bids for the tender to select a consultant for the project to supply, install, operate, and maintain combined-cycle gas turbine units to produce 3,600 megawatts at the Nuwaiseeb Power Plant, from previously scheduled October 28 to November 30.

According to informed sources, the Nuwaiseeb Power Plant project is one of the

largest strategic projects in Kuwait's energy sector, aimed at enhancing electricity production capacity to meet increasing demand in the coming years, particularly during the summer.

CAPT also approved the Ministry of Electricity and Water's request to proceed with the bidding process for the tender to supply, install, operate, and maintain combined-cycle gas turbine units to increase power generation at the Sabiya Power and Water Distillation Plant, with a capacity of 900 megawatts – Phase IV. CAPT requested the ministry to submit its recommendations within 10 working days.

Kuwait marks Int'l Air Traffic Controller Day

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20, (KUNA): The Public Authority for Civil Aviation announced on Sunday that it will be marking the International Day of the Air Traffic Controller under the theme "Recruitment and Training: Our Flight Plan for the Future".

Acting Director General of the Public Authority for Civil Aviation Duaij Al-Otaibin told KUNA that Kuwait International Airport was keen on marking this annual celebration, which is dedicated to the efforts of air traffic control worldwide.

The official noted that the Civil Aviation had sent new air traffic controllers on specialized training courses to enhance their skills.

and enable them to handle emerging technologies in the field.

He pointed out that a new air traffic control towers will be opening soon, in addition to a new runway, boosting Kuwait International Airport's operational capacity.

Al-Otaibi also noted that data of landings and take-off had been updated, along with new navigation maps, in cooperation with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

The International Day of the Air Traffic Controller marks the anniversary of the International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers' Associations (IFATCA), founded on October 20, 1961.

Continued from Page 1

3 Kuwaitis

In a statement to the newspaper, Al-Yahya affirmed that the Kuwaiti Embassy is in constant contact with the relevant authorities to determine the circumstances surrounding the case and ensure the safety of the citizens, stressing his ministry is committed to continue following up the case until all details are clarified.

Earlier, the Iraqi Ministry of Interior announced the arrest of three Kuwaiti citizens on charges of violating hunting regulations and conditions in Muthanna desert.

In a press statement, the ministry re-

vealed "the Border Forces Command at the Ministry of Interior arrested three hunters of Kuwaiti nationality in Muthanna desert. The hunters were found in possession of three falcons used in hunting operations. Results of the initial investigation revealed that they violated hunting regulations, instructions and the laws regulating the entry of foreign hunters and the practice of hunting within Iraqi territory."

It confirmed that legal action will be taken against the Kuwaiti hunters in accordance with the law, and that they will be referred to the competent authorities for further investigation.



Minister of State for Communications Affairs Omar Al-Omar honors Technical Support Supervisor for Digital Health at the Ministry of Health Haifa Al-Mayan.



Minister of State for Communications Affairs Omar Al-Omar honors Director of the Information Systems Department at the Kuwait Credit Bank Sharifa Al-Kandari.



Minister of State for Communications Affairs Omar Al-Omar honors Director General of the Central Agency for Information Technology Najat Ibrahim.

MoF vows to accelerate digital transformation

Finance Ministry wins AI Award for ‘Tarasul Plus’ system; CAIT, MoH and Kuwait Credit Bank recognized

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20, (KUNA): Undersecretary of the Kuwaiti Ministry of Finance, Aseel Al-Munifi, affirmed on Sunday, the ministry’s keenness to expand the implementation of digital transformation systems in a way that contributes to enhancing the level of government performance in the country.

This came in a statement made by Al-Munifi to KUNA on the sidelines of the Microsoft Artificial Intelligence Summit and on the occasion of the ministry receiving the Excellence Award for the “Tarasul Plus” system among the winners of the Artificial Intelligence Excellence Awards, during the awards ceremony held at the conclusion of the summit.

Al-Munifi added that this award came as a result of the ministry’s efforts in the field of digital transformation, as it launched the “Tarasul Plus” system last June, representing a qualitative update

in the correspondence system, whether between ministry employees and senior management or with government entities, making it the first of its kind in the Kuwaiti government sector.

She explained that the system represents the beginning of digital transformation in the ministry, noting that it uses artificial intelligence through the “Copilot” feature to assist employees in efficiently searching and preparing memos. Employees are being trained to use this feature to ensure maximum benefit from the system.

For her part, Najat Ibrahim, Director General of the Central Agency for Information Technology, expressed in a similar statement to KUNA her pride in the agency winning the Artificial Intelligence Excellence Award for the achievement of deploying the “Secure Azure Landing Zones 44”, which embodies the efforts of the agency’s teams and the strong partnership with government entities.

Ibrahim explained that the government cloud environments (Landing Zones) were prepared for 44 government entities, which is a pivotal achievement that consolidates a unified and secure digital infrastructure and paves the way for broad and effective adoption of artificial intelligence technologies in government services.



Minister of State for Communications Affairs Omar Al-Omar honors Undersecretary of the Kuwaiti Ministry of Finance Aseel Al-Munifi.

She stated that this work is the result of meticulous planning and cloud governance aligned with national frameworks and enhances the interoperability of government systems while supporting data-driven decision-making, which directly reflects on operational efficiency and the

quality of services provided to citizens and residents.

Meanwhile, Haifa Al-Mayan, Technical Support Supervisor for Digital Health at the Ministry of Health, said to KUNA that the ministry’s win of the Artificial Intelligence Excellence Award for the

“Salem” application, which will be announced in the coming period, includes integrated and innovative electronic services aimed at facilitating citizens’ and residents’ access to health services and medical records safely and quickly, with the ability to manage the health files of their family members easily.

Al-Mayan pointed out that the application facilitates access to personal and family health information and records, past and upcoming appointments, as well as the display of lab test results, medical prescriptions, and more.

For her part, Sharifa Al-Kandari, Director of the Information Systems Department at the Kuwait Credit Bank, expressed to KUNA her pride in the bank receiving the Excellence Award for “Implementing Integrated Protection Systems” using artificial intelligence, noting that it involves deploying a set of integrated solutions in cybersecurity and information security.

At the conclusion of the Microsoft Artificial Intelligence Summit held today in Kuwait, Minister of State for Communications Affairs Omar Al-Omar honored the winners of the Artificial Intelligence Excellence Awards from various governmental and private entities.

The Ministry of Finance won the Excellence Award for its AI-powered electronic correspondence system.

The Central Agency for Information Technology won for the achievement of deploying the “Secure Azure Landing Zones 44” in the government sector, which is considered the foundation for transitioning to Microsoft Cloud.

The Credit Bank won the Excellence Award for implementing integrated protection systems using Microsoft’s artificial intelligence technologies.

The Public Authority for Sport was honored for its “Hayakom” application, which was part of the success of the Gulf Cup.

The General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development received the Excellence Award for using “Copilot” effectively in the work environment and integrating it with most of the Secretariat’s internal systems.

The Ministry of Health was awarded for its use of artificial intelligence through the “Salem” health platform.

The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training and Kuwait Oil Company also won awards.

In the private sector, both Kuwait Finance House and the National Bank of Kuwait were among the winners.



KUNA photo
Part of the artesian well drilling and operation work carried out by Namaa Charity in the village of Jedami in the Way Province of Chad.

Namaa Charity launches wells in Chad

Kuwait’s Namaa Charity announced the inauguration of four artesian wells in the Republic of Chad to provide clean water to thousands of families suffering from water scarcity and difficulty in accessing it.

This comes as part of its humanitarian and developmental efforts aimed at improving the living conditions of the most needy communities.

CEO of Namaa Saad Al-Otaibi told KUNA that the flow of water represents a new lifeline for communities that have suffered from thirst for many years.

The project is not limited to drilling wells,

but rather embodies a humanitarian mission aimed at preserving human dignity and improving the quality of life in remote areas, Al-Otaibi added.

The project comes in response to the difficult water conditions in Chad, where only 6.2 percent of the population has access to safe water, he added.

Namaa Charity is working in partnership with locally accredited organizations recognized by the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as part of a plan to expand its water projects to include 10 additional villages over the next two years. (KUNA)

Saud Al-Sanousi wins for best novel

Kuwait Writers Association inaugurates new cultural season, honors top novelists, poets

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20, (KUNA): The Kuwait Writers Association inaugurated its new cultural season on Sunday, honoring winners of its literary award in the inaugural edition, under the patronage of Sheikha Afrah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah.

In his remarks, Association Secretary General Eng. Humaidi Al-Mutairi said the event celebrates authentic expression and creative thought, reflecting the Association’s commitment to nurturing literary talent.

The award for best novel was presented to the renowned Kuwaiti novelist Saud Al-Sanousi for his novel (Asfar Madinat Al-Teen), while the best poetry collection went to Faleh bin Tefla for his collection (Aqmar wa Sharafat).

The best children’s story award was shared between Shaimaa Al-Qallaf for (Qalb Rabab) story and Hadeel Al-Hasawi for (Kayfa Ikhtafa Al-Alam) story.

The best critical article award was jointly awarded to Batoul Al-Khamees for her a piece on reform culture in children’s literature, and Muna Al-Shafei for her impres-

sionistic reading of (Halat Nadra 6) by Abdulwahab Al-Rifai.

Al-Mutairi noted the award’s positive impact, as seen in increased membership and participation, affirming the growing trust in the Association’s role and message.

Sheikha Afrah expressed pride in sponsoring and being a member of the Association, stating that literature is not a luxury, but a reflection of identity and a bridge between heritage and modernity.

Sheikha Afrah emphasized that the award is not merely a symbolic gesture, but a culmination of creative journeys and a motivation for young talents who represent the future.

Chair of the award’s jury panel, Dr. Salem Khadadah, said the award reflects a genuine desire to elevate creative expression by recognizing excellence and encouraging hidden talents to emerge.

He added that the objectives of the award center on fostering competition and raising the level of literary arts across all genres, noting the committee’s dedicated efforts to reach its final decisions.



KUNA photos
Honoring the winners of the Kuwaiti Writers Association Award in its first season.

Continued from Page 1

‘Kuwait’s MoH

Advanced tests have been introduced, including quantitative sickle cell anemia testing, chromogenic factor VIII, and precise genetic testing.

The turnaround time for laboratory test results has improved significantly, with the percentage of tests taking more than 60 minutes dropping from 15 percent to nine percent during the first half of 2025. This improvement directly enhances diagnostic accuracy and speeds up medical decision-making.

Dr. Al-Jumaa emphasized that these successes are the result of strong support from the Ministry of Health and its leadership, noting that Kuwait has become a model of innovation and quality in medical laboratories.

‘Al-Zour’

The project will be carried out in three main phases. The first involves the construction of gasoline production units. The second includes the development of aromatics and olefins units. The third focuses on building export facilities and ports, along with the implementation of onshore and offshore pipelines.

Furthermore, sources stated that KIPIC recently resolved the issue of hard and hazardous work, and the file will be submitted to KPC in the coming days for final approval.

They noted that Wadha Al-Khatib, CEO of Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) and acting CEO of KIPIC, issued directives to resolve the hard and hazardous work concerns, which have been an issue of concern for KIPIC’s oil personnel for the past seven years.

The sources highlighted that coordination took place between Al-Khatib, Director of Health, Safety, and Environment Omar Al-Mulhim, Health Team Leader Dr. Waleed Al-Harbi, and all relevant parties.

In addition, the same sources revealed a need to fill 50 vacant positions in the Operations Department of the Al-Zour Refinery.

They said Al-Khatib recently took this initiative in cooperation and coordination with Deputy CEO for Administrative and Commercial Affairs Bandar Al-Qahtani and Deputy CEO of the Al-Zour Refinery Fahad Al-Mutairi.

The sources explained that filling these vacancies coincides with ongoing development operations at the Al-Zour Refinery and is necessary to meet the increased refinery capacity.

Following the completion of the development of the third phase in mid-2024, the refinery’s capacity is expected to reach approximately 615,000 barrels per day (bpd), up from fluctuating production levels between 205,000 and 410,000 bpd in 2022 and 2023.

They added that the vacancies include ten positions for senior supervisors, five for grade 13 in Area 4, and five for grade 13 in Area 7.

Defense, energy,

She pointed out that His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal’s visit to Türkiye last year was highly successful and resulted in the signing of six agreements in the fields of defense, trade, investment, diplomacy and culture, in addition to the establishment of a joint strategic dialogue mechanism, elevating relations to the level of strategic partnership.

She indicated that the volume of trade exchange reached about \$720 million in 2024, adding this figure does not reflect the true potential, and that both sides have the capacity to double it within a short period.

She said more than 400 Kuwaiti companies operate in Türkiye in various fields, while around 50 Turkish companies are active in Kuwait, particularly in the construction sector, where Turkish companies play an important role in the implementation of infrastructure projects such as Terminal Two at Kuwait International Airport.

Regarding bilateral cooperation, she stated that high-level visits contributed to diversifying bilateral relations, and that cooperation in the defense industry has gained significant momentum, thanks to these visits. She cited the reciprocal visits by the chiefs of staff and military delegations between the two countries, as well as the visit of the head of the Turkish Defense Industries Authority to Kuwait in November 2024.

She added that a delegation from the

Turkish Ministry of Health visited Kuwait last May to discuss areas of health cooperation. She revealed that Kuwaiti investments in Türkiye have reached about \$2 billion since 2002, stressing the need to increase this figure by strengthening cooperation between the sovereign wealth funds.

She also disclosed that Türkiye received around 300,000 Kuwaiti tourists last year, and that the customs and traditions between the two peoples are similar. She expressed her happiness over the growing interest of Kuwaitis in learning the Turkish language and culture, unveiling a plan to open the Yunus Emre Cultural Center in Kuwait soon as a platform for cultural exchange.

She affirmed that Türkiye and Kuwait share a common vision for maintaining peace and stability in the region, and that Kuwait is a key factor in achieving regional stability. She added the ninth round of political consultations will be held in April 2025 in Türkiye, while emphasizing the importance of ongoing consultation and cooperation between the two countries, especially in light of developments in Palestine and Syria and the tension between Iran and Israel.

PM receives

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah also received a visiting delegation of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in

presence of Minister of Education Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei, at Bayan Palace on Monday.

During the meeting, they discussed ways of cooperation between the State of Kuwait and the OECD and how to make use of its experience of developing the educational process in the country with the best international criteria.

Chief of His Highness the Prime Minister’s Diwan Abdulaziz Al-Dakheel and Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education Mohammad Al-Khaldi attended the meeting.

KFF adopts

She cited relevant UN surveys as showing that the number of disasters related to climate change had edged up by 83 percent between 2000 and 2019, compared with the period between 1980 and 1999, underlining the pressing need to carry on preventive efforts.

She added that marking the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction, titled “Financing Resilience, Not Disasters” this year reflects the necessity of changing local and global trends of post-disaster response into prior investment in prevention, building capabilities and forming community immunity.

For her part, UN Secretary-General’s Representative and Resident Coordinator in Kuwait Dr. Ghada Al-Taheer said the UN was so pleased to have attended this Kuwait-hosted event, which reflects the obvious UN message of prior investment

in prevention and response.

She added that this UN message comes in the context of reducing disasters, promoting governance of risks and multi-hazard early warning and merging reduction of risks in developmental and strategic planning.

Officers trio

After coordinating with the Ministry of Social Affairs, it was discovered that the two women were receiving financial assistance illegally despite having left the country several months ago. The competent authorities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia also confirmed through cross-checking entry and exit records, that the data recorded in the system of the ministry showing their presence in Kuwait was inaccurate, confirming the forgery.

In light of the above, the necessary legal authorization was issued, and the two employees were arrested at their workplaces. They confessed to the charges against them and admitted the involvement of a third employee assigned at the Passports Department in Salmi border in tampering with the automated system. This employee was immediately arrested. Legal action was taken against the three employees who were referred to the competent authorities.

The ministry stressed that the law is applied equally on everyone, and that it will not tolerate any employee or individual who abuses their powers or violates their job duties.

Some lawmakers worry progress will be reversed if law's protections removed

After Voting Rights Act case arguments, concerns over diminished minority representation rise

WASHINGTON, Oct 20, (AP): For decades, the faces of American politics have grown more diverse by nearly every measure, especially as racial minority communities gained political representation after longtime legal disenfranchisement and violent discrimination.

But after some Supreme Court justices expressed skepticism about a key provision of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, a landmark law that civil rights leaders credit with enabling pluralistic democracy in the US, Black lawmakers, civic leaders and organizers fear that the faces of the nation's elected representatives may soon return to a time before hard-fought civil rights gains.

Justices on Wednesday heard oral arguments in *Louisiana v. Callais*, a case that scrutinizes whether Section 2, a part of the Voting Rights Act that bars discrimination in voting systems, is constitutional.

Rep Cleo Fields, who represents the Louisiana congressional district at the heart of the case, sat in the courtroom as the justices questioned attorneys on both sides of the case. He said he hopes

the scope of the ruling's impact would give justices pause about whether to gut the law.

"If they do away with Section 2, they know the ripple effect that's going to have all over this nation. It's not just Congress," Fields said in an interview with *The Associated Press*. He added that it was "hard to judge" what the justices are thinking, "but I am cautiously optimistic. I really think all of the justices know what's at stake."

Since the passage of the Voting Rights Act, which bans a range of discriminatory voting practices by state and local governments and individuals, communities of color have turned longtime movements into direct political representation - and power.

State legislatures in the Deep South, once uniformly committed to white supremacy, now feature sizable minorities of Black, Asian and Latino lawmakers. The act was amended a decade after its passage to protect the rights of "language minorities," increasing protections for Asian American, Native American and Latino communities across the country.



Voting rights activists gather outside the Supreme Court in Washington on Oct 15, as the justices prepare to take up a major Republican-led challenge to the Voting Rights Act, the centerpiece legislation of the Civil Rights Movement. (AP)

Lawmakers elected as a direct result of Voting Rights Act-enabled legislative districts have often served as a voice in state legislatures and Congress for once-overlooked interests. The Congressional Black Caucus, for instance, has for decades served as a

hub for Black political power and organizing in the country. Lawmakers in VRA districts have become political icons and overseen political machines that drive national politics.

Minority communities in states and districts once subject to VRA review have successfully elected mayors, police commissioners, judges and county commissioners to lead some of the nation's largest cities and municipalities.

Black residents of communities in VRA districts gathered in front of the Supreme Court to rally during oral arguments Wednesday.

Khadidah Stone, a plaintiff in a 2023 case brought by Black Louisianans that created Fields' district and another majority-minority district in Alabama, connected the current lawsuit to President Donald Trump's calls for states to redraw congressional maps ahead of next year's midterm elections.

"We're back because it's very evident what the current administration is trying to do when it comes to dismantling what we currently know as democracy," Stone told *The Associated Press*. "That entails destroying things

like the Voting Rights Act because it doesn't align with their ideals of what America should be."

Some lawmakers worry that progress will be reversed if the law's protections are removed.

"There's a certain level of anxiety as we look at the mid-decade gerrymandering that's taking place," Rep. Yvette Clarke, chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, told the AP.

Clarke called GOP-led redistricting efforts in states like Texas "blatant targeting" of Black lawmakers and said the case now before the court "could have an impact for generations to come."

Rep Troy Carter, a Louisiana Democrat, said the US would become "a very weakened democracy" if the court made a sweeping decision.

"A representative form of government means it should look like its people. If you take away the elements that create the opportunity for it to look like its people, it won't be a democracy as we hoped it would be," Carter warned. "It will be a much weaker one, and ultimately on the road to an oligarchy."



People take photos near a John Harvard statue, left, on the Harvard University campus on Jan. 2, 2024, in Cambridge, Mass. (AP)

US Homeland Security jet purchase draws criticism from Democrats

WASHINGTON, Oct 20, (Agencies): The US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has come under criticism from congressional Democrats following reports that it purchased two business jets worth about 172 million US dollars amid the ongoing federal government shutdown, local media reported on Saturday.

According to public procurement documents cited by *The New York Times*, the US Coast Guard (USCG) signed a sole-source contract with Gulfstream Aerospace for two G700 aircraft to be used for the Coast Guard's Long-Range Command and Control Aircraft fleet. The planes will reportedly serve DHS Secretary Kristi Noem and other senior officials.

Several Democratic lawmakers questioned the decision and demanded clarification on the source of funding.

"Your first priority should be to organize, train and equip a Coast Guard that is strong enough to meet today's mission requirements. Instead, it appears your first priority is your own comfort," Democratic Representatives Rosa DeLauro and Lauren Underwood wrote in a letter to Noem.

"The procurement of new luxury jets for your use suggests that the USCG has been directed to prioritize your own comfort above the USCG's operational needs," the letter added, expressing deep concern about Noem's "judgment, leadership priorities, and responsibility as a steward of taxpayer dollars."

In response to the controversy, the DHS said on its official X account that "this is a matter of safety and mission



A video shows Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem speaking as TSA agents check passengers at Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport on Oct 16, in Romulus, Mich. (AP)

readiness. Senior military officials and cabinet members need secure command and control and rapid long-range mobility."

Earlier this year, the USCG requested one jet in its budget at an estimated cost of 50 million dollars. In May, DHS said in a statement that the existing Gulfstream G550 aircraft has been in service for more than 20 years and is now "well beyond operational usage hours for a corporate aircraft."

Also:

SANTA FE, NM: New Mexico has its first Republican contender for governor ahead of the 2026 elections, as the three-term city mayor of fast-growing

Rio Rancho launched his campaign.

Gregg Hull on Friday outlined priorities, including greater state investments in the health care workforce and roadways, in pursuing the Republican nomination ahead of an open race for governor. He also described a "zero-tolerance" approach to crime that would revisit the state's bail reforms and seek changes to juvenile justice statutes.

"I've taken a very pragmatic approach to solving problems up in Rio Rancho," said Hull, a former business executive for a commercial crating company and a motorhome resale business. "That's how we want to approach the issues in New Mexico."

Erhurman wins Turkish Cypriot leadership election

NICOSIA, Oct 20, (AP): Hopes for a resumption of long-stalled talks to heal Cyprus' decades-old ethnic rift were buoyed Sunday when Turkish Cypriots elected a leader who campaigned on getting back to negotiating a two-zone federation with rival Greek Cypriots after an eight-year stalemate.

Tufan Erhurman, 55, won by a landslide, receiving 62.76% of the vote, against incumbent Ersin Tatar's 35.81%, according to unofficial figures broadcast on BRT TV. Nearly 65% of 218,000 registered voters cast ballots. The remaining ballots were split among five other candidates who got very few votes.

At a victory rally in front of jubilant supporters, Erhurman said the election was a victory for all Turkish Cypriots irrespective of party affiliation and noted that any steps forward on reviving Cyprus peace efforts would be in consultation with the Turkish government as has been done in the past.

Turkish Cypriots turned away from Tatar's vision for a two-state deal in Cyprus that Turkey has championed since 2017 when the last major push to resolve the dispute collapsed amid much acrimony.

Erhurman had harshly criticized Tatar's reluctance to engage in formal



Turkish Cypriot newly elected leader Tufan Erhurman waves to supporters after winning the leadership election in the Turkish occupied northern part of the divided capital Nicosia, Cyprus on Oct 19. (AP)

peace talks all through his five-year term as a costly loss of time that has alienated Turkish Cypriots from the European Union and pushed them farther on the international periphery.

Nikos Christodoulides, the island's Greek Cypriot president, said in a congratulatory statement that he looks forward to meeting Erhurman as soon as possible and reiterated his readiness to resume peace talks.

Cyprus was as divided in 1974 when Turkey invaded days after Greek junta-backed supporters of union with Greece mounted a coup. Only Turkey recognizes a 1983 Turkish Cypriot declaration of independence and maintains more than 35,000 troops in the north.

With no takers yet, WH meets with colleges still weighing deal with Trump

WASHINGTON, Oct 20, (AP): The five universities that were still weighing President Donald Trump's higher-education compact were asked to join a White House call recently to discuss the proposed deal. By late Friday afternoon, one of the schools - the University of Virginia - had already declined to sign the agreement.

The meeting with university presidents, first reported by *The Associated Press*, was an "important step toward defining a shared vision," Education Secretary Linda McMahon said in a post on X. She called for "renewed commitment to the time-honored principles that helped make American universities great" and said she looked forward to more dialogue.

The White House has faced a flurry of rejections after inviting nine universities to become "initial signatories" of the so-called compact, which asked colleges to make commitments aligned with Trump's political priorities in exchange for favorable access to research funding. It was the latest effort by Trump's administration to bring to heel prestigious universities that conservatives describe as hotbeds of liberalism.

The White House asked university leaders to provide initial feedback

on the compact by Oct 20, yet as the deadline approaches, none has signed on to the document. Those that have not yet announced a decision are Dartmouth College, the University of Arizona, the University of Texas and Vanderbilt University. They did not immediately respond to questions about Friday's call. Leaders of the University of Texas system previously said they were honored to be included, but other universities still weighing the deal have not indicated how they're leaning.

After the meeting, McMahon took a collaborative tone, speaking of ongoing discussions with universities and referencing continued federal funding.

"American universities power our economy, drive innovation, and prepare young people for rewarding careers and fulfilling lives," she said in the social media post. "With continued federal investment and strong institutional leadership, the higher education sector can do more to enhance American leadership in the world and build tomorrow's workforce."

Nevertheless, the University of Virginia on Friday became the fifth university to decline to participate in Trump's compact. Providing federal money based on anything but merit would un-

dermine the integrity of research and further erode public confidence in higher education, the university's interim president said in a letter to McMahon and White House officials.

"We look forward to working together to develop alternative, lasting approaches to improving higher education," Paul Mahoney wrote.

It's unclear exactly what universities have to gain by agreeing to the deal - or what they stand to lose if they don't. In a letter sent alongside the compact, Trump officials said it provided "multiple positive benefits," including favorable access to federal funding. In exchange, colleges were asked to adopt 10 pages of commitments aligned with Trump's views.

The administration asked for commitments to eliminate race and sex from admissions decisions, to accept the government's strict binary definition of "man" and "woman," to promote conservative views on campus and to ensure "institutional neutrality" on current events, among other provisions.

"Institutions of higher education are free to develop models and values other than those below, if the institution elects to forego federal benefits," the compact said.

America

Ex-rep Santos humbled by experience: Freed from the prison where he had been serving time for ripping off his campaign donors, former US Rep. **George Santos** says he's humbled by his experience behind bars but unconcerned about the "pearl clutching" of critics upset that US President Donald Trump granted him clemency.

Santos, who won office after inventing a bogus persona as a Wall Street dealmaker, pleaded guilty to fraud and identity theft last year and began serving a 7-year sentence in July at a prison in New Jersey. But Trump ordered him released him Friday after he'd served just 84 days. Trump called Santos a "rogue," but said he didn't deserve a harsh sentence and should get credit for voting Republican. (AP)

Shrapnel damages vehicle during drills: Metal shrapnel from an exploding artillery shell fell hit and damaged a California Highway Patrol vehicle as personnel at a U.S. Marine Corps base fired live rounds over a highway



Santos

- against the objections of Gov Gavin Newsom - during weekend exercises observed by Vice President JD Vance, state authorities said Sunday. No one was injured.

The incident occurred when ordnance detonated overhead prematurely during Saturday's exercise at Camp Pendleton, the California Highway Patrol said in a news release.

Newsom had strongly objected to the firing of munitions over Interstate 5 for safety reasons. The Democrat closed a 17-mile (27 kilometers) stretch of the road connecting Los Angeles and San Diego during the drills, which were held to mark the upcoming 250th birthday of the Marine Corps.

The incident occurred in an area where officers had shut down traffic, the highway patrol said. (AP)

Driver crashes into party, killing 1: A hit-and-run driver slammed into an outdoor birthday party in suburban Washington, D.C., killing a woman and injuring eight kids on Saturday evening, police said.

Thirteen people were hurt in the crash in Bladensburg, Maryland, according to statements from the city's police department and the Prince George's County Fire and EMS Department.

The children ranged in age from 1 to 17 years old, Bladensburg Police said in a statement.

Video and photos of the scene posted on social media showed a sedan inside a white tent on a lawn outside a home. (AP)

Russia not serious about peace despite Trump's efforts, says EU

BRUSSELS, Oct 20, (Agencies): EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Kaja Kallas affirmed on Monday that Russia lacks genuine intent for peace in Ukraine despite US President Donald Trump's efforts, and that the EU is weighing more pressure on Moscow, including a new sanctions package.

Speaking to reporters upon arrival at the Foreign Affairs Council meeting in Luxembourg, Kallas said, "The European Union welcomes all efforts to bring peace, including the initiatives taken by President Donald Trump," but added that "Russia does not seem interested in a just peace, as it only understands the language of strength and negotiates only when it is forced to do so."

The EU's top diplomat explained that the foreign ministers "will discuss today what more can be done to continue supporting Ukraine in the face of Russian aggression," noting that "the EU is preparing to adopt its 19th package of sanctions against Moscow this week," and expressing hope that "an agreement can be reached during the European leaders' meeting on Thursday."

Kallas added that the ministers would also discuss "how to better coordinate efforts to deal with the so-called shadow fleet used by Russia to circumvent the sanctions imposed on it," stressing "the European Union's determination to strengthen joint monitoring mechanisms and to counter attempts to evade sanctions." Trump said Sunday that the Donbas region of Ukraine should be "cut up," leaving most of it in Russian hands, to end a war that has dragged on for nearly four



US President Donald Trump, (left), greets Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy at the White House on Oct 17, in Washington. (AP)

years.

"Let it be cut the way it is," he told reporters aboard Air Force One. "It's cut up right now," adding that you can "leave it the way it is right now."

"They can negotiate something later on down the line," he said. But for now, both sides of the conflict should "stop at the battle line - go home, stop fighting, stop killing people."

Trump's latest comments came after Ukrainian drones struck a major gas processing plant in southern Russia, sparking a fire and forcing it to suspend its intake of gas from Kazakhstan, Russian and Kazakh authorities said Sunday.

The Orenburg plant, run by state-owned gas giant Gazprom and located

in a region of the same name near the Kazakh border, is part of a production and processing complex that is one of the world's largest facilities of its kind, with an annual capacity of 45 billion cubic meters. It handles gas condensate from Kazakhstan's Karachaganak field, alongside Orenburg's own oil and gas fields.

According to regional Gov. Yevgeny Solntsev, the drone strikes set fire to a workshop at the plant and damaged part of it. The Kazakh Energy Ministry on Sunday said, citing a notification from Gazprom, that the plant was temporarily unable to process gas originating in Kazakhstan, "due to an emergency situation following a drone attack."



Passengers queue to check in at the Siem Reap Angkor International Airport in Siem Reap province, Cambodia on Oct 16. (Xinhua)

Cambodian PM officially opens kingdom’s biggest airport

Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet on Monday officially inaugurated the Techo International Airport (TIA), the biggest new airport in the Southeast Asian country.

Speaking during the inauguration ceremony, Hun Manet said the 2.3-billion-US-dollar world-class airport has replaced the old Phnom Penh International Airport, which was completely closed.

“The TIA is Cambodia’s biggest airport at present,” he said. “I’m confident that the TIA will become a catalyst for Cambodia’s economic and tourism growth, helping attract more investors and tourists.”

Hun Manet said the 4F-level international airport would facilitate air travel and air cargo transport, further broadening Cambodia’s connection to the region and the world.

He added that the airport would become a main passenger and logistics hub in the kingdom. Cambodia currently has three international airports in operation. They are the TIA, the Siem Reap Angkor International Airport, and the Siهانouk International Airport. (Xinhua)



The cargo aircraft that skidded off a Hong Kong airport runway is seen on Oct 20. (AP)

Cargo aircraft skids off HK runway into sea, killing 2 airport workers

A cargo aircraft skidded off a Hong Kong runway and collided with a security patrol car before both fell into the sea early Monday, killing the two people in the car, authorities said. The plane’s four crew members were unhurt.

The Boeing 747, flown by Turkey-based ACT Airlines, was landing at Hong Kong International Airport around 3:50 am on arrival from Dubai, United Arab Emirates. The aircraft was being operated under lease by Emirates, a long-haul carrier based in Dubai.

The captains did not seek help before landing and had taxied about halfway down the runway before skidding off it to the left, Steven Yiu, the airport authority’s executive director in airport operations, said during a press conference.

“The patrol car absolutely did not rush onto the runway. It was the plane that went off the runway and crashed into the patrol car outside the fence,” he said.

When rescue crews arrived, the plane was broken into two parts, floating in the sea, and the four crew members were waiting to be rescued at its open door, said Yiu Menyeung, a fire services official. (AP)

Japan’s ruling LDP and Japan Innovation Party sign coalition deal

TOKYO, Oct 20, (Agencies): Japan’s ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and the Japan Innovation Party on Monday formally agreed to form a coalition government, with party leaders Sanae Takaichi and Hirofumi Yoshimura signing a written agreement.

The deal will effectively pave the way for LDP President Sanae Takaichi to secure victory in the upcoming prime ministerial designation vote.

The agreement outlined a wide-ranging policy agenda, including swift implementation of economic relief measures, constitutional reform, and major structural reforms, national broadcaster NHK reported.

Faced with severe conditions both at home and abroad, the two parties have decided to “overcome differences in position and build a stable government to achieve a revival of Japan,” said the report.

The two parties also confirmed they will cooperate in the prime ministerial designation vote scheduled for the extraordinary Diet session convening on Tuesday.

Japan’s prime minister is chosen through a vote in both chambers of the National Diet. A candidate



Sanae Takaichi, (right), the leader of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, meets with Hirofumi Yoshimura, (second left), and Fujimitake Fujita, leaders of Nippon Ishin no Kai or Japan Innovation Party at the parliament in Tokyo, on Oct 15. (AP)

who wins a simple majority in the first round is declared elected. If no candidate reaches that threshold, a runoff is held between the top two contenders, with the one receiving more votes declared the winner.

Citing the ruling party’s “insufficient” response to a high-profile political funds scandal, Japan’s Ko-meito earlier this month terminated its decades-old coalition with the LDP, triggering the latest realignment in Japan’s political landscape.

An eventual Takaichi premiership would be on a cliff edge. The fragile new coalition, still a minority, would need cooperation from other opposition groups to pass any legislation. It would be a risk that could lead to an unstable, short-lived leadership.

5 have been set free: police agency

S.Korea seeks to arrest online scam suspects

SEOUL, South Korea, Oct 20, (AP): Authorities are seeking to formally arrest most of the 64 South Koreans repatriated from Cambodia for allegedly working for online scam organizations in Cambodia, police said Monday.

The 64 South Koreans were detained in Cambodia over the past several months and were flown to Korea on a charter flight Saturday. Upon arrival in South Korea, they were detained while police investigated whether they voluntarily joined scam organizations in Cambodia or were forced to work there.

Online scams, many based in Southeast Asian nations, have risen sharply since the COVID-19 pandemic and produced two sets of victims: the tens of thousands of people who have been forced to work as scammers under the threat of violence, and the targets of their fraud. Monitoring groups say online scams earn international criminal gangs billions of dollars annually.

State prosecutors have asked local courts to issue arrest warrants for 58 of the 64 returnees at the request of police, the Korean National Police Agency said in a statement. Police said the people they are seeking to place under arrest are accused of engaging in online fraud activities like romantic scams, bogus investment pitches or voice phishing, apparently targeting fellow South Koreans at home.

The courts are expected to determine whether to approve their arrests in coming days.

The police agency said that five people have been set free, but it refused to disclose the reasons for their releases, saying investigations are still under way.

South Korean police said that four



In this photo released by Agence Kampuchea Press (AKP), South Koreans, hooded, who allegedly involved in online scams get off from a bus before boarding a plane at Techo International Airport in Kandal province, Cambodia on Oct 17. (AP)

of the 64 returnees told investigators that they were beaten while being held in scam centers in Cambodia against their will.

South Korea faces public calls to take stronger action to protect its nationals from being forced into overseas online scam centers, after one of its nationals was found dead in Cambodia in August.

Asia

China’s Xi appoints new ambassadors: Chinese President Xi Jinping has appointed the following ambassadors in accordance with a decision of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress, China’s top legislature, an official statement said on Monday.

Yu Jinsong was appointed ambassador to Morocco, replacing Li Changlin. Chen Feng was appointed ambassador to Romania, replacing Han Chunlin. Jiang Xiaoyan was appointed ambassador to North Macedonia, replacing Zhang Zuo.

Zhang Zuo was appointed ambassador to Malta, replacing Yu Dunhai. Yang Shu was appointed ambassador to Grenada, replacing Wei Hongtian. Sun Xiangyang was appointed ambassador to Ecuador, replacing Chen Guoyou. Li Yongjie was appointed China’s permanent representative and ambassador to the World Trade Organization, as well as China’s deputy permanent representative to the United Nations Office at Geneva and other international organizations in Switzerland, replacing Li Cheng-gang. (Xinhua)

Tropical storm kills 7 in Philippines: A tropical storm lashed the northern and central Philippines over the weekend, killing seven people after forcing more than 22,000 people to evacuate from flood- and landslide-prone villages.

Tropical Storm Fengshen blew away from the main northern Philippine region of Luzon into the South China Sea late Sunday. It currently has sustained winds of up to 65 kph (40 mph) and gusts of up to 80 kph (50 mph), government forecasters said.

The government’s disaster-mitigation agency said seven deaths were reported. Nearly 14,000 people who evacuated remained displaced from their homes by Monday, the agency said. (AP)

‘Trend is irreversible’

Centrist Rodrigo Paz wins Bolivia’s presidential runoff

LA PAZ, Bolivia, Oct 20, (AP): Rodrigo Paz, a centrist senator who was never a nationally prominent figure until now, won Bolivia’s presidential election on Sunday, preliminary results showed, galvanizing voters outraged by the country’s economic crisis and frustrated after 20 years of rule by the Movement Toward Socialism party.

“The trend is irreversible,” Oscar Hassenteufel, the president of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal, said of Paz’s lead over his rival, former right-wing President Jorge “Tuto” Quiroga.

Paz won 54% of the votes, early results showed, versus Quiroga’s 45%.

Paz took the podium Sunday night flanked by his wife, María Helena Urquidí, and four adult children. The hotel ballroom in Bolivia’s capital of La Paz went wild, with people shouting his name and holding phones aloft.

“Today, Bolivia can be certain that this will be a government that will bring solutions,” he told supporters. “Bolivia breathes winds of change and renewal to move forward.”

Shortly after the results came in,



Presidential candidate Rodrigo Paz waves to supporters after preliminary results showed him leading in the presidential runoff election in La Paz, Bolivia on Oct 19. (AP)

Quiroga conceded to Paz.

“I’ve called Rodrigo Paz and wished him congratulations,” he said in a som-

ber speech, prompting jeers and cries of fraud from the audience. But Quiroga urged calm, saying that a refusal to

recognize the results would “leave the country hanging.”

“We’d just exacerbate the problems of people suffering from the crisis,” he said. “We need a mature attitude right now.”

Paz and his popular running mate, ex-police Capt. Edman Lara, gained traction among working-class and rural voters disillusioned with the unbridled spending of the long-ruling Movement Toward Socialism, or MAS, party but wary of Quiroga’s radical 180-degree turn away from its social protections.

Quiroga’s embrace of the International Monetary Fund - an organization that has long aroused political resentment in Bolivia - for a shock treatment package of the kind Bolivians came to know and fear in the 1990s also alienated more moderate voters.

Paz’s victory sets this South American nation of 12 million on a sharply uncertain path as he seeks to enact major change for the first time since the 2005 election of Evo Morales, the founder of MAS and Bolivia’s first Indigenous president.

Kenya ex-prime minister Odinga buried as country faces political uncertainty

NAIROBI, Kenya, Oct 20, (AP): Former prime minister Raila Odinga was buried Sunday at his rural home as the country, which has previously been marred by post-election violence and anti-government protests, faces political uncertainty.

Leaders present at the burial, who included President William Ruto who signed a political pact with Odinga early this year, talked about the need for Odinga’s ODM party to remain united, and either form or join the next government after the 2027 election.

Odinga, a democracy champion, was accorded full military honors that included a 17-gun salute by the army and was buried next to his father, Jaramogi, who fought for Kenya’s independence and was the country’s first vice president.

Thousands of Kenyans and dignitaries from across Africa attended the final interment of a man described as a “selfless pan-Africanist.” The wailing mourners breached a security cordon to gain access to the burial site, which was initially only for family members and leaders.

Odinga, 80, died in India on Wednesday, and his body was received by thousands of mourners in Kenya’s capital, Nairobi, on Thursday. Four public viewing events have been held in the past three days, attracting thousands of mourners and leaving five people dead and hundreds injured during stampedes.



Family members of the late prime minister Raila Odinga walk into the Nyayo National Stadium during the state funeral in Nairobi, Kenya on Oct 17. (Xinhua)

Africa

Rwanda, Senegal sign 5 cooperation deals: Rwanda and Senegal on Saturday signed five bilateral agreements to strengthen cooperation across key priority areas of mutual interest.

The signing ceremony took place in Kigali, Rwanda’s capital, during Senegalese President Bassirou Diomaye Faye’s three-day state visit, which started on Friday. Rwandan President Paul Kagame and Faye witnessed the signing after holding discussions on areas of shared strategic importance.

The agreements cover visa exemptions for holders of diplomatic, service, and ordinary passports, as well as collaboration in agriculture, health, correctional services, and Vision 2050 initiatives.

In his remarks, Kagame said both leaders share a deep concern for Africa’s future, particularly the role of its youth. (Xinhua)



Faye

‘Two-month ban on political rallies’: The government of Cote d’Ivoire announced a two-month temporary ban on all public gatherings and demonstrations organized by political parties or groups across the country.

According to a decree issued on Friday by Minister of Interior and Security Vagondo Diomande and Minister of State and Minister of Defense Tene Birahima Ouattara, the measure, effective immediately, aims to maintain

public order and safeguard national security during the electoral period.

The decree stipulates that only demonstrations directly related to the Oct. 25 presidential election process will be permitted, while all other public political gatherings remain strictly prohibited, warning that violators will face prosecution.

Implementation of the ban has been entrusted to senior officials within the territorial administration, the Gendarmerie and the National Police.

The official campaign period for the upcoming presidential election began on Oct. 10 and will end on Oct. 23. (Xinhua)

7 killed in S.Africa mass shooting: Seven men were killed in a mass shooting in Cape Town, Western Cape Province of South Africa, local police have confirmed.

The incident occurred on Road R53 in Philippi East, a suburb in Cape Town’s Cape Flats area, where seven men aged between 20 and 30 were fatally shot in what authorities described as a “senseless act of violence.”

According to a statement issued Saturday morning by the South African Police Service (SAPS), police in the Western Cape have launched a large-scale manhunt following the shooting.

“Detectives attached to the Provincial Serious and Violent Crimes Unit have been assigned to the case and are pursuing every available lead to identify and apprehend those responsible for this brutal attack,” the statement said.

“The Western Cape police management has strongly condemned this senseless act of violence and confirmed that the investigation has been prioritized to ensure that the perpetrators are swiftly brought to justice,” it added. (Xinhua)

Boursa Kuwait closes slightly lower

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait ended Monday's session with a mild downturn, as the All Share Index slipped 7.88 points, or 0.09 percent, to settle at 8,883.20 points. Trading activity reached 652.9 million shares across 35,753 transactions, with a total market

value of KD 155.2 million (USD 473.3 million). The Main Market Index inched up by 7.73 points, or 0.09 percent, to close at 8,412.75 points. Turnover on this market totaled 423 million shares through 23,276 transactions, valued at KD 72.12 million (USD 219.9 million).

Business

CEO Van Der Tol highlights global collaboration on economic challenges

Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait participates in the 2025 Annual Meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank Group



Governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait, Basel Al-Haroon, with Van Der Tol, Al Sumait, Alduweesh, Al Rifai and Haddad

Giel-Jan M. Van Der Tol and Abdulla Al Sumait with banking sector leaders

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) is pleased to announce its recent participation in the 2025 Annual Meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank Group, held in Washington, D.C. as part of its commitment to participating in major global events and staying abreast of international economic developments.

The ABK delegation included Mr. Giel-Jan M. Van Der Tol, Group Chief Executive Officer; Mr. Abdulla Al Sumait, Deputy Group Chief Executive Officer; Ms. Noura Alduweesh, General Manager – Treasury and Investments; Mr. Rami Al Rifai, General Manager and Senior Executive Officer – ABK-DIFC Branch; and Ms. Leen Haddad, Assistant General Manager – Executive Management Affairs.

Commenting on the occasion, Mr. Van Der Tol said, “The IMF and World Bank Annual Meetings represent a genuine working platform for discussing shared ideas and shaping a roadmap to address the world’s most complex economic and financial challenges and opportunities. These include inflation rates, global interest trends, and growth outlooks, among other vital topics.”

He further emphasized the significance of such meetings in strengthening relationships with the IMF and the World Bank, as well as fostering new ties with leading financial institutions and corporations worldwide.

Mr. Van Der Tol also highlighted the importance of these meetings in understanding global economic outlooks and preparing proactive plans to navigate future shifts, while identifying the key priorities for the upcoming period.

Mr. Van Der Tol thanked the Central Bank of Kuwait, Kuwait Banking Association, and the Embassy of Kuwait in the United States for their significant efforts in preparing the necessary arrangements for the success of the meetings. This highlighted the role of the Kuwaiti banking sector and its contribution to the economic activity of Kuwait, while providing the opportunity for Kuwaiti banks to showcase their successes and achieve-



Giel-Jan Van M. Der Tol
Group Chief Executive Officer



Abdulla Al Sumait — Deputy
Group Chief Executive Officer

ments.

For his part, Mr. Al Sumait, stated, “Our participation in the Annual Meetings of the World Bank and the IMF holds significant importance, as it enables us to engage with global financial policymakers and gain valuable insights into their perspectives on the broader economic landscape. These interactions contribute to shaping our strategic direction and reinforcing our ability to deliver superior financial and banking solutions across all our markets.”

Mr. Al Sumait added that the meetings also provided an opportunity to review best practices in the banking industry and explore potential partnerships reflecting the confidence ABK enjoys within the global banking, financial, and investment communities, and further reinforcing its competitive position across multiple markets.



A delegation from the Al Ahli Bank Group met with Kuwaiti Ambassador to the United States Shaikha Al-Zain Al-Sabah.

He concluded by reaffirming ABK’s continuous commitment to engaging in major international events, which enables the ABK to benefit from leading global practices, enhance its banking solutions, and strengthen its capabilities in delivering efficient, high-quality services that meet the highest industry standards.

Boursa Kuwait & Markaz conclude the 5th edition of UNICODE to develop national talents in programming, cybersecurity and financial technology



Boursa Kuwait, Markaz and CODED Academy representatives joined graduates of the fifth UNICODE program in a commemorative photo, celebrating the success of 320 trainees in cybersecurity, software development and FinTech.



Mr. Naser Al-Sanousi, Senior Director of Marketing and Corporate Communications at Boursa Kuwait, honors one of the top graduates of the UNICODE program during the ceremony held at Boursa Kuwait.

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: Boursa Kuwait successfully concluded its hosting of the fifth edition of UNICODE, an intensive cybersecurity, software development, and financial technology (FinTech) training program organized by CODED Academy with the bourse and the Kuwait Financial Center (Markaz) as strategic partners in the program.

The achievement was marked by a graduation ceremony held in the Nasser Al-Kharafi / Jassim Al-Bahar Hall (Trading Hall) at Boursa Kuwait, celebrating 320 students who completed their three-month learning journey in the exchange’s modern training facilities. The event was attended by distinguished leaders and representatives from the sponsoring and academic institutions, honoring the graduates who have joined the ranks of Kuwait’s promising talents in technology and innovation.

Boursa Kuwait’s hosting and sponsorship of the program for the second consecutive year underscore its continued commitment to nurturing young national talents. The Kuwait Financial Center (Markaz) joined as a co-sponsor, highlighting the two institutions’ shared dedication to advancing technical education, empowering the next generation and equipping them with the modern skills and expertise demanded by today’s labor market and strengthening the nation’s competitiveness on both regional and global fronts.

Sponsorship and hosting this initiative also stem from a firm belief in the importance of technology in strengthening institutional efficiency and safeguarding business operations. Advanced technical knowledge plays a vital role in enhancing organizational security and ensuring the reliability of transactions, which can positively impact the stability of financial markets and reinforce investor confidence.

During the ceremony, Senior Director of Marketing and Corporate Communications at Boursa Kuwait, Mr. Naser Al-Sanousi, expressed his pride in the graduates, saying, “This ceremony marks the culmination of an intensive learning journey that participants pursued with passion and dedication alongside

their academic and professional commitments over the course of three months. We are proud of their accomplishments, which reflect the ambition of Kuwaiti youth and their determination to develop their skills in the fields of financial technology and innovation. The graduates have demonstrated their ability to combine academic knowledge with practical application, embodying the spirit of perseverance and continuous learning and paving the way for future success and leadership.”

In its fifth edition, the program saw a notable expansion of its content, integrating financial technology (FinTech) and artificial intelligence (AI) concepts across all learning tracks. The curriculum included web development using HTML, CSS, and JavaScript, mobile application development through the Flutter framework, and cybersecurity fundamentals, designed to equip participants with the skills and confidence needed to thrive in today’s rapidly evolving digital job market.

“Boursa Kuwait is proud of its strategic partnership with CODED Academy, which underscores our commitment to empowering young people with the knowledge and skills that enhance the competitiveness and sustainability of the economy and support Kuwait’s national development. Our partnership also reflects our goal of investing in technical education to strengthen the digital transformation ecosystem within the capital market sector. Through its sponsorship of the UNICODE program, Boursa Kuwait aims to bridge the gap between academia and labor market needs by preparing a generation equipped with advanced financial and technological skills, in line with the State of Kuwait’s vision to become a leading regional financial and investment hub,” added Al-Sanousi.

The strategic partnership between Boursa Kuwait and CODED Academy extends over two years, with UNICODE serving as a distinguished educational platform that combines academic knowledge with practical application. The program contributes to developing a generation that is financially aware and digitally empowered and is aligned with Boursa Kuwait’s efforts to pro-

mote financial literacy and awareness of capital markets, key pillars in the company’s corporate sustainability strategy.

“The partnership between Markaz, Boursa Kuwait, and CODED Academy reflects our shared vision for progress through knowledge, innovation, and social responsibility. Markaz is proud to be a long-term strategic partner of UNICODE, which continues to grow in both scope and impact. By supporting initiatives that combine financial literacy with innovation, we help empower Kuwaiti youth with the skills and capabilities demanded by modern economies, strengthening their ability to create value and drive progress, underscoring our firm belief that developing human capital is a cornerstone of economic diversification and sustainable growth in Kuwait,” said Managing Director of Investment Banking at Markaz, Mr. Ahmad Fouad AlFalal.

Established in 1974, the Kuwait Financial Center (Markaz) is a Kuwaiti financial institution specializing in asset management and investment banking services across the Middle East and North Africa region. It was listed in the Kuwaiti capital market in 1997.

“We value our strategic partnership with Boursa Kuwait and the Kuwait Financial Center (Markaz), which stands as a model of productive collaboration that empowers youth with the capabilities to lead the future of technology in Kuwait. UNICODE continues to embody the importance of combining education with hands-on experience in real-world work environments, and its fifth edition equipped participants with advanced technical skills that enable innovation and adaptability in today’s fast-paced digital economy. Hosting the program at Boursa Kuwait also provided an inspiring professional setting that reflects the realities of the financial sector, giving participants the ability to explore the growing role of technology in improving corporate efficiency and performance,” said CODED Academy Co-founder and Chief Operating Officer, Mr. Hashim Behbehani.

Since its launch in 2021, UNICODE has evolved from a promising pilot initiative into a leading platform for empow-

ering Kuwaiti youth in technology and innovation. In 2024, the program’s fourth edition, the first sponsored by Boursa Kuwait, trained 250 university students and recent graduates at the exchange’s headquarters. The fifth edition expanded further to include 320 participants, bringing the total number of beneficiaries to over 570 students in just two years, a growth that reflects the program’s continued success and the strengthening partnership between Boursa Kuwait and CODED Academy.

Launched by CODED Academy in 2021, UNICODE aims to equip university students and recent graduates in Kuwait with the technical skills required by the labor market, seeking to empower national talents to keep pace with rapid digital transformation, enhance their capacity for innovation and excellence in modern work environments and contribute to the economic development and sustainable growth of Kuwait.

The program takes its name from the global Unicode encoding system, which assigns a unique digital identity to every character in the world’s languages, enabling universal communication across platforms and borders. The name was chosen to capture the spirit of the program, which aims to bring together generations through a shared language of technology and bridge classroom learning with real-world application in today’s connected digital world.

Boursa Kuwait’s corporate sustainability strategy is designed to ensure that all initiatives align with the company’s corporate social responsibility governance framework, industry best practices, and investor expectations. The strategy also emphasizes the establishment of strong and sustainable partnerships that contribute to Boursa Kuwait’s success, allowing the company to leverage the expertise and strengths of other organizations and institutions across various fields. Additionally, it seeks to integrate corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts into the company’s culture, ensuring long-term sustainability and a lasting impact embedded within its daily operations.

In recognition of its outstanding efforts in leveraging AI to enhance operational efficiency and agility

NBK wins AI Excellence Award at Microsoft AI Summit Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: In a further testament to its leadership in the banking sector, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) was awarded the AI Excellence Award at the Microsoft Summit Kuwait, held under the patronage of His Excellency Mr. Omar Saud Abdulaziz Al-Omar, Minister of State for Communications.

The award was presented to Mr. Mohammad Al Kharafi, Group Chief Operating Officer, Group Operations, Technology and Data at NBK during the summit held at the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center on October 19, 2025.

This accolade underscores NBK’s unwavering commitment to harnessing cutting-edge AI technologies to optimize workflows, boost productivity, and strengthen organizational agility. The Bank’s recent rollout of Microsoft’s AI-powered digital assistant, “Copilot,” across all operations marks a defining milestone in its ongoing digital transformation journey.

The Microsoft AI Summit Kuwait serves as a premier platform, uniting business leaders, developers, IT professionals, and AI enthusiasts to explore the next generation of artificial intelligence and its transformative potential across diverse industries.

The summit offered a unique opportunity to engage with industry leaders and Microsoft experts, and to gain insights from global and local speakers on how organizations can harness AI to drive practical solutions to operational and functional challenges, while achieving significant leaps in productivity.

The patronage of the summit by the Minister of State for Communications highlights Kuwait’s steadfast commitment to forging strategic partnerships with global leaders such as Microsoft, driving digital transformation and innovation in full alignment with the country’s long-term vision.

Copilot leverages the power of generative AI to empower NBK employees to perform their daily tasks with unprecedented efficiency, including drafting documents, analyzing complex datasets, summarizing key information, and automating repetitive processes, seamlessly integrating this advanced technology into the digital work environment.

NBK’s strategy extends beyond the implementation of Microsoft Copilot, en-



Mohammad Al Kharafi receives the Excellence Award for AI-led transformation efforts at the Microsoft Summit.

compassing a holistic approach to enhancing the employee experience through cultural transformation and digital empowerment. The Bank continues to modernize its internal systems and deliver targeted skills development programs, fostering a work environment that seamlessly integrates human expertise with advanced technology.

The strategy also seeks to promote continuous learning, cultivate a culture of collaboration, and drive human-centric innovation across the Group’s diverse sectors. By leveraging AI to reduce time spent on repetitive tasks, departments can focus on strategic initiatives and enhance customer engage-

- NBK’s strategy centers on the seamless integration of human expertise with advanced technologies
- AI enables the Bank to concentrate on initiatives that reinforce its leadership in innovation and excellence
- The Bank aims to elevate customer experience through the application of cutting-edge technologies and data-driven strategies

ment, thereby reinforcing the Bank’s leadership, innovation, and excellence.

As part of its journey toward a more advanced digital future, NBK is committed to enhancing customer experience through the adoption of cutting-edge technologies and data-driven strategies. The Bank’s initiatives include optimizing user journeys in mobile and internet banking, upgrading call center technologies, and expanding engagement across social media platforms. Additionally, NBK is exploring AI applications to deliver greater value for both customers and the organization, ensuring continuous innovation and agility amid the rapidly evolving digital landscape.

NBK has undertaken a series of development and enhancement initiatives as part of its ongoing digital transformation journey, including platform upgrades, strengthened digital infrastructure, and accelerated automation of routine processes to boost efficiency and mitigate operational risks. These advancements have strengthened system resilience, enhanced cybersecurity protocols, and reinforced business continuity, creating a safer and more agile work environment that drives the Group’s digital efficiency.

Notably, NBK has received numerous accolades from esteemed global and regional institutions, in recognition of its unwavering commitment to digital innovation, excellence, and responsible technology adoption, further solidifying its leadership in the banking sector in Kuwait and the region.

JEDI Fund outperforms global peers

Kamco Invest drives global tech investing from Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: Kamco Invest, a regional non-banking financial powerhouse with one of the largest AUMs in the region, announced the continued success of its closed and almost fully deployed ‘JEDI Fund’, with a capital of USD45mn. The Fund is an unique institutional-grade investment platform connecting GCC investors with the world’s top international tech opportunities. Through a disciplined, data-driven, and relationship-anchored hybrid model, the Fund demonstrated how a Kuwait-based platform can operate with the same sophistication, precision, and reach as its US peers.

At the core of its strategy, the JEDI Fund follows a hybrid model that anchors exceptional emerging managers and selectively invests in proven category leaders. It combines the breadth of a fund-of-funds approach with the precision of direct investing. This combination has proven both resilient and rewarding, with the Fund outperforming many of its 2022-vintage global peers by delivering a 1.3x Gross MOIC (Gross multiple on invested capital). Coupled with its hybrid strategy, the Fund focused on resilient venture markets in emerging tech such as fintech, SaaS businesses and AI-native enterprise software.



Dalal Al-Shaya



Fahad AlSharekh

Fahad AlSharekh, CEO of Tech invest and the Investment Advisor of The JEDI Fund, commented, “The success of The JEDI Fund reflects a combination of disciplined execution, strategic insight, and the strength of the relationships that supported its journey. From inception, we recognized that meaningful partnerships within the global venture ecosystem would be an essential part of the formula. By maintaining trusted connections and engaging with founders over time, we were able to access opportunities that align with our investment vision and long-term objectives.”

AlSharekh added, “The Fund has also demonstrated that competitiveness is defined by capability and conviction rather than geography. What began as a Kuwait-based initiative has evolved into a regional platform investing alongside leading global funds in Silicon Valley and beyond. With the Fund now almost fully deployed and performing strongly, we will build on this foundation through a new phase focused on growth-stage opportunities emerged from within our existing funds’ portfolio. This next step reflects our long-term approach to compounding value and sustaining exposure to exceptional companies as they continue to scale.”

Al Shaye concluded, “Beyond financial performance, the JEDI Fund represents a strategic step in positioning Kamco Invest as a regional leader in institutional venture investing. Our objective was to create a sustainable platform that connects Gulf capital with high-quality global opportunities. The Fund’s success reflects our ability to translate a long-term vision into measurable outcomes, strengthening our commitment to developing differentiated and creative investment strategies that deliver value to our investors and the markets we serve.”

It is worth noting that Kamco Invest was recently named Kuwait’s Best for Alternative Investments in 2025 by Euromoney, recognizing the company’s strong performance and diverse solutions in the alternative investment space which covers private equity, real estate and structured products.

Commercial property segment logs record high sales in Q3

By National Bank of Kuwait

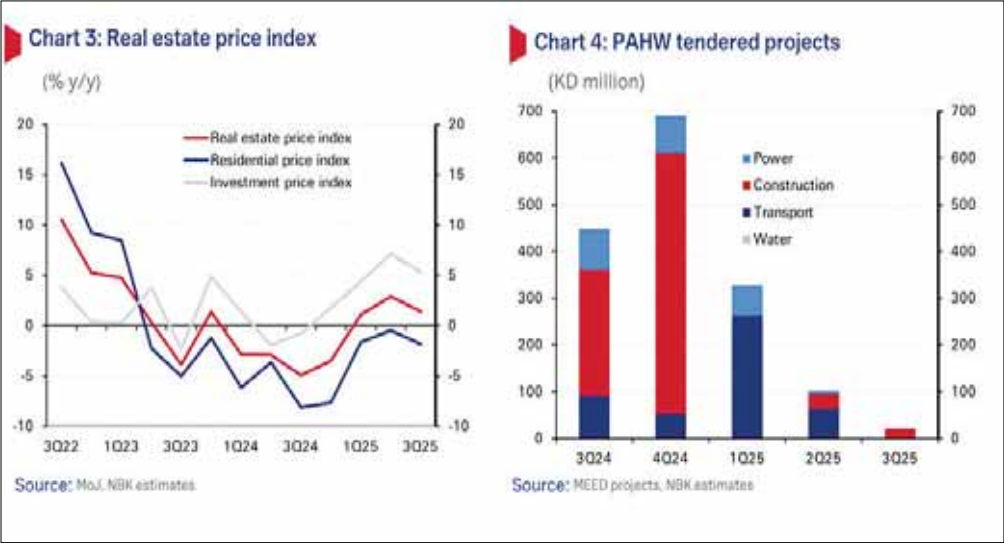
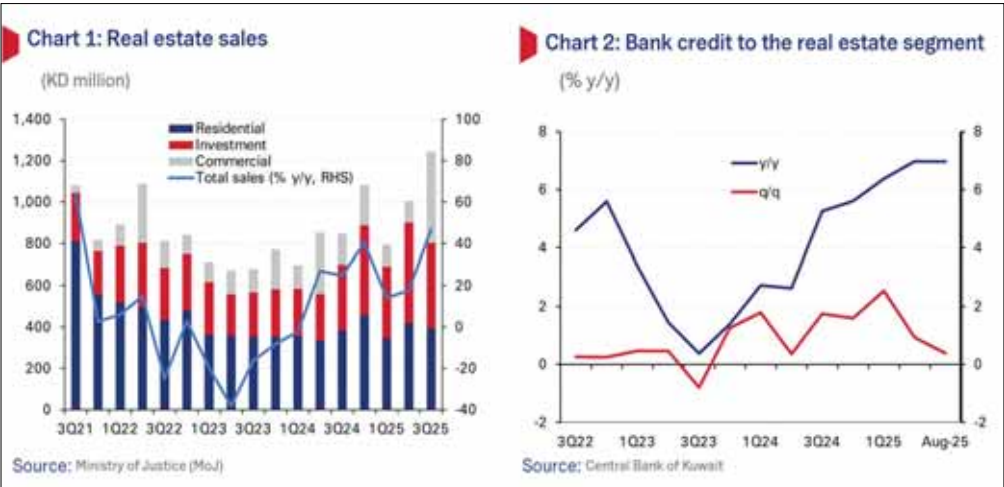
Real estate sales surged to an 11-year high in Q3, led by record-high commercial transactions, though growth in residential and investment segments slowed. Overall sales in Q3 were well above the five-year average for this traditionally softer quarter, with a noticeable shift toward outer urban areas, especially in investment and commercial segments, indicating growing interest in rental and income-generating assets. Residential sales, on the other hand, are rising more slowly, weighed down by affordability and supply constraints. Meanwhile, real estate price rises softened in Q3 due to a sharper drop in residential prices and slower growth in investment unit prices, though price trends are still more upbeat than a year ago. Looking ahead, we expect a broadly positive overall market performance to be sustained, supported by the potential approval of the real estate financing law and the prospect of lower interest rates.

Overall property sales reached KD1.2 billion in Q3, marking a second consecutive quarter of strong quarter-on-quarter growth (+24%), while yearly growth (+47% y/y) reached its fastest in four years. The commercial segment, despite its historical volatility, saw record-breaking sales of KD441 million, due to large-scale land transactions in Al-Ahmadi governorate (KD240m in August alone). Stripping out commercial activity would see sales growth (residential and investment) in Q3 ease from a four-year high of 61% y/y to 14.5%. Investment sales remained resilient at KD407 million and supported by strong bank lending to the real estate sector (+7% y/y in July and August) and the recent changes to investment housing and foreign ownership regulations. However, investment sales growth moderated to a still-high 28% y/y from Q2’s more exceptional level of 116%.

Residential sales came in at KD396 million in Q3, down 5.3% q/q but up 3.2% y/y. This modest annual increase in sales comes despite a marked increase in the number of transactions (+15.6% y/y) and this can be explained by the fact that sales have increasingly been concentrated further out in lower-priced areas such as the Al-Ahmadi and Al-Jahra governorates.

Real estate price rises slowed in Q3 amid residential weakness

Meanwhile, real estate prices in Q3 rose at a slower 1.4% y/y compared to 2.9% in the previous quarter, according to our real estate price index. This deceleration was primarily a reflection of a larger contraction in residential prices (-1.8% y/y) and a more moderate increase (+5.3% y/y) in investment (i.e. apartments and buildings) prices. Although the pace of residential price declines has moderated since the beginning of the year, the figures suggest that downward pressures persist, albeit less intensely. One possible contributor is



the potential release of idle land due to the vacant residential lands law coming into effect in January 2026. However, the anticipated approval of the housing financing law and the prospect of lower interest rates may support prices in the months ahead.

PAHW advances housing agenda with strategic developer partnerships

Kuwait’s Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) has recently launched a strategic roadmap to engage real estate developers for a foray into public-private housing development projects. The initial phase targets three key areas: Mutlaa (2,500 units), East Saad Al-Abdullah (1,200 units), and a combined development in Jaber Al-Ahmad and West Saad Al-Abdullah (1,000 units). The aim of this initiative is to address the housing shortage (outstanding applications for the government

housing scheme reached 103,110 by mid-July) and accelerate delivery. In parallel, PAHW signed an investment agreement in July for a 12,575 sqm mixed-use project in Al-Qairawan while reporting notable progress across major infrastructure projects in South Saad Al-Abdullah and South Sabah Al-Ahmad cities with several contracts signed ahead of schedule. Overall housing project awards slowed down in Q3, however, as reported by MEED Projects, dropping to KD20 million from KD100 million in Q2 2025. Meanwhile, the value of housing loans approved by the Kuwait Credit Bank for government plots increased for the second straight quarter in Q3 (+28% q/q to KD61 million), a positive turnaround since Q1 when loan approvals were at a four-year low. The value of disbursed loans, however, declined by 14% q/q to KD82 million.

Showcasing diverse career opportunities as part of a strategy to empower local talents

ACICO partakes in ‘Watheefti’ to attract national talent

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: ACICO Group concluded its participation in “Watheefti”, Kuwait’s largest recruitment exhibition bringing leading national companies together with graduates and job seekers under one roof. The Group’s participation forms part of its strategy to attract, develop and empower national talent to contribute to development projects in line with ACICO’s vision and national role.

At the fair, ACICO presented career opportunities across its industrial, construction, logistics and real estate sectors, alongside year-round training and educational programs.

Commenting on the participation, Eng. Ahmad Ragab, Senior Group Director - HR & Administration at ACICO, said: “Our presence at ‘Watheefti’ reflects our firm commitment to supporting Kuwaiti youth and promising local talent by offering quality employment opportunities that enable them to build successful careers in a dynamic, progressive work environment like ACICO. We believe that investing in national talent is an investment in Kuwait’s future.”

Rajab emphasized that ACICO’s participation underscores the Group’s values and commitment to the Kuwaiti community by equipping graduates with strong foundations to launch their careers. It also aims to highlight ACICO’s culture of continuous development and innovation, which makes it a preferred destination for fresh graduates. The company is today an established national organization delivering high-quality products and services and serving major development projects.

He added: “We look for individuals who are passionate about innovation and growth, and



Ahmad Ragab



ACICO at ‘Watheefti’ Exhibition.

who thrive in collaborative teams. In turn, we are committed to supporting them from day one and throughout their professional journey.”

Rajab emphasized: “We adopted the ‘Apply, Meet, Experience’ approach to open the door for youth and fresh graduates to engage directly with our HR team at the fair and learn about available opportunities across the company’s sectors, because we recognize that the best way to discover talent is through firsthand experience.”

This participation is one of many initiatives through which ACICO invests to attract, train and retain local talent, most notably ACICO

Academy, launched last year as a specialized professional initiative to prepare graduates from various disciplines in collaboration with relevant government entities. The Academy delivered a mix of hands-on training at project sites and across departments, along with programs that develop leadership and analytical skills, ensuring graduates are ready to enter the industrial and construction job market.

Rajab concluded: “We look forward to attracting young national cadres, preparing and training them so they can contribute to the growth of Kuwait’s industrial and construction sectors.”

Two of the Bank’s senior legal executives named in the ‘GC Powerlist Kuwait 2025’

Burgan Bank recognized by The Legal 500 for excellence in legal leadership in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: The Legal 500 – one of the world’s leading authorities on legal excellence – named both Mr. Mahmoud Ezzat, General Manager – Legal, Burgan Bank Group, and Mr. Ayman Elkhatib, Assistant General Manager – Legal, Burgan Bank Group among the country’s most influential and impactful legal professionals as part of “GC Powerlist Kuwait 2025”.

The Legal 500 issues this annual ranking based on a series of in-depth research and studies aimed at analyzing the capabilities of in-house legal departments and law firms across major institutions in various sectors.

The inclusion of both executives on the GC Powerlist Kuwait 2025 marks an unprecedented achievement for Burgan Bank, with two representatives from the same institution recognized in this prestigious listing. It also underscores the caliber of the Bank’s in-house legal team and the Bank’s commitment to excellence in governance, ethics, and corporate integrity.



Mr. Mahmoud Ezzat, General Manager – Legal, Burgan Bank Group



Mr. Ayman Elkhatib, Assistant General Manager – Legal, Burgan Bank Group in the middle, alongside representatives from Legal 500.

Commenting on the recognition, Mr. Mahmoud Ezzat, General Manager – Legal Group, said: “We are proud to see Burgan Bank’s legal ex-

cellence acknowledged on such a reputable international platform.

“This recognition is a testament to our Group’s strong governance framework, our commitment to integrity, and the high standards of professionalism that guide our legal practice.

“It also reflects the collaborative spirit of our entire Legal Group, whose work ensures the Bank’s continued compliance, transparency, and operational strength.”

The Bank’s legal team continues to play a pivotal role in driving the organization’s strategic objectives while maintaining full alignment with international best practices and local regulatory requirements.

The team’s expertise and foresight contribute to reinforcing the Bank’s resilience, enabling sustainable growth, and safeguarding the trust of its stakeholders.

It is worth noting that this latest recognition from The Legal 500 reinforces Burgan Bank’s standing as one of the region’s most trusted financial institutions and highlights its unwavering dedication to upholding the highest ethical and legal standards across all areas of operation.

The UK-based The Legal 500 has been evaluating and analyzing the capabilities of law firms and in-house legal teams across corporate, financial, and governmental institutions worldwide for over three decades. The organization celebrates leaders in the legal field for their expertise and positive impact, both within their organizations and across the broader industry.



Al-Zamel, Al-Salman, and Al-Khashti at Zain’s booth.

‘AI a strategic pillar for digital enablement’

Zain showcases digital transformation solutions at 12th e-Government Forum

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: Zain Kuwait announced its sponsorship of the 12th e-Government Forum (EGOV 12), titled AI-powered Information Security Services. The event was organized by the Kuwait Federation of Engineering Offices and Consultant Houses in cooperation with the Communications and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) and the Central Agency for Information Technology (CAIT), under the patronage of H.E. Omar Al-Omar, Minister of State for Communications Affairs.

Zain took part in the opening ceremony in the presence of the patron’s representative, Dr. Khaled Al-Zamel, Chairman of CITRA, Bader Al-Salman, Chairman of the Federation of Engineering Offices and Consultant Houses, and Waleed Al-Khashti, Zain Kuwait’s Chief Corporate Affairs and Relations Officer, alongside a select group of senior public and private sector leaders.

By supporting this annual platform, Zain renews its commitment to enabling Kuwait’s digital transformation journey as a key and effective partner to the public sector. This comes within the framework of the company’s strategic efforts to contribute to the national economy and highlight the role of the private sector in supporting the state’s development plans, particularly in technology and digital innovation.

In Zain’s opening remarks, Al-Khashti said: “We are pleased to renew our support for the 12th e-Government Forum, whose rich program centers on AI-powered information security services. This forum has become a national platform that annually brings together decision makers and experts to build a more secure and efficient digital future.”

“This year’s theme carries a clear message. Artificial intelligence is not an end in itself. It is a tool that enhances our ability to detect threats faster, respond with greater agility, and build sustainable digital immunity for government institutions and the private sector. It is a strategic pillar for digital enablement and sustainable development.”

Al-Khashti added: “At the same time, AI compels us to double our awareness of emerging risks, which requires clear usage policies. That is what brings us together at this forum today.”

“Today’s program opens important discussions on AI’s impact on cybersecurity, cloud computing, data center operations, and modern work ethics, especially in vital sectors such as banking and telecommunications. These tracks give us a comprehensive view of opportunities and challenges



Zain recognized for its annual support of the forum.



Al-Khashti delivering his opening speech.

and narrow the gap between vision and execution.”

He continued: “In this context, we value the recent government partnerships with leading global technology companies such as Google and Microsoft in cloud and AI. At Zain, we take pride in our key role in supporting and enabling these directions through our advanced digital infrastructure.”

“There are four priorities that Zain sees as cornerstones for the next phase. First, trust, security, data protection, and privacy are the foundation of every successful digital service. Second, services must be human-centric, with simple, transparent, and fast experiences for citizens, residents, and the business environment at large.”

“Third, successful partnerships and

integration between the public sector and the private sector with global partners turn innovations into scalable national solutions. Fourth, developing national talent and investing in digital skills will create a generation that leads transformation in line with Kuwait’s ambitions.”

Al-Khashti concluded: “We reaffirm Zain’s commitment to being an active partner in enabling digital transformation and enhancing AI-powered information security for the good of Kuwait and its people.”

On the sidelines of the forum, Zain showcased at its booth a selection of its digital business solutions, including AI-enabled drones, cloud computing solutions, and more.

Parents can manage children’s accounts via KIB mobile app

KIB kicks off ‘Grow Their Dreams with a Small Step’ Kids Account campaign

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) launched a new Kids Account campaign, ‘Grow Their Dreams with a Small Step’, offering a wide range of value-added benefits. Reflecting KIB’s main slogan, ‘Bank for Life,’ this step also reinforces its comprehensive strategy to support all customer segments.

Through this campaign, KIB reaffirms its commitment to offering innovative financial solutions that help build a brighter future for generations to come. The KidsAccount is designed to instill a savings culture in young ones and cater to the needs of children from birth to 14 years old, making it the ideal choice for parents who wish to secure a safe financial future for their children.

Commenting on the new campaign, Khaled Al Hulaibi, Segments Manager at KIB, stated: “The KidsAccount represents one of our key strategic initiatives to foster financial awareness from an early age. It reflects our strong belief in the importance of empowering the younger generation. We are convinced that instilling the values of saving and financial planning in children, together with their parents, is a long-term investment in their future.”

AlHulaibi added: “With this account, we strive to strengthen our bond with families, as the cornerstone of society, by offering smart banking solutions tailored to the needs of children and their parents. These solutions include exclusive benefits, interactive educational tools, and incentive programs that promote saving. In collaboration with a select group of partners, we also provide exclusive educational and entertainment offers that enrich the customer experience within a safe banking environment, encouraging learning and financial growth.”

The KidsAccount from KIB offers a profit that is distributed quarterly, with no minimum balance required to open or maintain the account, making it accessible to all families. The account also includes a free ATM card issued in the child’s name. Furthermore, parents/



Khaled Al-Hulaibi



guardians can link and manage their minor children’s existing KIB accounts through the KIB Mobile application, allowing them to view all account details and transactions, as well as the children’s card transactions. They can also transfer amounts directly to the children’s accounts, suspend and reactivate cards, and report lost or stolen card.

Customers can also benefit from the special discounts offered through KIB’s Kids Account with strategic partners such as KMES, OH G!, Dabdoob, Kenzi, Intersport, and The Athlete’s Foot. These discounts apply to purchases of sportswear, educational supplies, toys, and more, supporting children’s overall development. Discount rates range from 10% to 15%.

It is worth noting that KIB continues to uphold its commitment to developing banking services and products that meet the needs of all customer segments and keep pace with the demands of their modern lifestyles. The Bank places particular importance on offering innovative banking solutions that enhance the daily quality of life of its customers, especially families and children, supporting their aspirations to achieve their financial goals. For more information or to open an account, visit www.kib.com.kw.

Empowering future energy leaders

Kuwait to organize eighth WPC Energy Youth Forum

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20, (KUNA): Under the patronage and attendance of Minister of Oil Tareq Al-Roumi, and with the sponsorship of Kuwait Oil Company (KOC), the State of Kuwait will host the eighth WPC Energy Youth Forum on October 22 and 23.

The forum, the largest event for youth engagement within the global energy sector, will take place at the Jumeirah Hotel in Messila, Kuwait, under the central theme: “Empowering the Future: Connecting Young Professionals, Ideas & Knowledge.”

The program will be structured around three thematic blocks: “Youth as Change makers,” “Smart and Sustainable Innovation,” and “Strategic Leadership in Energy.”

In a statement, obtained by KUNA, Minister Al-Roumi said, “We are honoured to welcome the global energy community to Kuwait for the 8th WPC Energy Youth Forum. This important gathering reflects Kuwait’s unwavering commitment to empowering our youth, supporting innovation, and advancing the global energy dialogue.”

“By bringing together talented young professionals with international leaders, we are not only investing in the next generation, but also in the sustainable future of the energy sector,” he affirmed.

Dr. Sheikh Nimr Al-Malik Al-Sabah -- Undersecretary of Kuwait’s Ministry of Oil -- stated, “The Youth Forum is a unique opportunity to showcase Kuwait’s

dedication to equipping young people with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to drive transformation in the energy sector.”

“The Ministry of Oil is proud to support this initiative, which strengthens international cooperation and prepares our future leaders to address the challenges and opportunities of tomorrow’s energy landscape.”

Meanwhile, Ahmad Al-Eidan -- CEO of Kuwait Oil Company -- remarked, “We are pleased and honored to host this highly significant event, particularly as it aims to achieve noble goals that we jointly strive towards.”

“Our Company places the utmost priority on empowering the youth, whom we consider our most valuable asset,” he indicated, adding, “Our core mission is to supply energy to the world and to maintain our position as one of the most trusted global energy suppliers.”

“I would like to assert that we will do everything in our power to contribute to the success of this forum, to ensure that all participating entities benefit from it, and to achieve the best possible outcomes that will further support young people in the energy sector.”

“We are committed to providing them with all the necessary tools and the best environment to help them work, achieve, and enhance their skills and capabilities.”

Pedro Miras -- President of WPC Energy -- said, “Young Professionals play a crucial role in the energy sector, spearheading innovation, sustainability, and technological

AEO releases study on converting cooking oil to renewable energy

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20, (KUNA): Arab Energy Organization (AEO) released a new study about converting used cooking oil into renewable energy, highlighting its economic and environmental benefits, to overcome current challenges and pave the way for sustainable biofuel production.

AEO Secretary-General Jamal Al-Loughani told KUNA that the study reviews the sources of used cooking oil, its collection and transport to production centers, as well as refining and processing steps required to produce high-quality, impurity-free biofuel.

He noted that the amount of used cooking oil collected

globally reached 14 billion liters in 2022, and is expected to exceed 30 billion liters by 2030. The study also examined recent global developments in producing sustainable fuels such as biodiesel and Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) derived from used cooking oil, which are already being implemented by the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia.

Al-Loughani pointed out that several Arab countries have shown interest in converting used cooking oil into sustainable aviation fuel, with such projects expected to expand, as nations seek to reduce carbon emissions, diversify income sources, and protect natural resources.

‘Good Fortune’ opens in third place despite positive reviews

Horror sequel ‘Black Phone 2’ dials up a No. 1 opening

LOS ANGELES, Oct. 20, (AP) — The horror sequel “Black Phone 2” topped the North American box office charts this weekend with \$26.5 million in ticket sales, according to studio estimates Sunday. Not only did it surpass the original’s \$23.6 million debut, it’s a much-needed win for Blumhouse after a string of disappointments this year like “M3GAN 2.0.”

Though “Black Phone 2” opened in line with expectations, moviegoing in October continues to be slow - down about 11% from last year, according to Comscore. The overall box office is still up about 4% compared with last year, but a big blockbuster hit that could spark more momentum might not arrive until late November or December.

Universal Pictures released “Black Phone 2” in 3,411 theaters in North America on a wave of good reviews. Coming four years after the original, the sequel sees the return of filmmaker Scott Derrickson, as well as stars Ethan Hawke and Mason Thames. Opening weekend audiences were 63% between the ages of 18 and 34, according to exit polls, and the biggest demographic was Hispanics, making up 39% of ticket buyers while Caucasians accounted for 35%.

With an additional \$15.5 million from 71 international

territories, “Black Phone 2” had a \$42 million worldwide launch against a reported \$30 million production budget.

The first “Black Phone” was a bit of a sleeper hit for Universal and Blumhouse in 2021 as cinemas were beginning to come back to life after COVID shutdowns. By the end of its run, it had earned more than \$161 million worldwide against an \$18 million budget. Blumhouse has had a rocky 2025, with a handful of duds including “Wolf Man” and “The Woman in the Yard.” But the once impenetrable horror hitmaker could be on the upswing again with a “Five Nights at Freddy’s” sequel coming in December. The first movie earned nearly \$300 million worldwide.

“Black Phone 2” was also the only film to really break through this weekend, despite a slew of options playing in wide release including the R-rated Seth Rogen, Aziz Ansari and Keanu Reeves comedy “Good Fortune,” which opened in 2,990 locations to \$6.2 million, and the expansion of the Julia Roberts and Andrew Garfield drama “After the Hunt,” which made \$1.6 million from 1,238 theaters.

“Tron: Ares” fell about 67% to \$11.1 million in its second weekend in theaters, which was enough to snag second place on the charts. Globally it has now earned \$103 million.

“Good Fortune,” which opened in third place, had mostly positive reviews on its side, but Ansari’s comedy with a side of social commentary did not drum up a lot of enthusiasm in its first weekend. With a B+ CinemaScore, though, it likely has a better chance in the coming weeks than the campus drama “After the Hunt,” which got a very poor C- score.

Next weekend audiences will get another batch of awards-hopefuls, including Yorgos Lanthimos’s latest Emma Stone collaboration “Bugonia” and the Bruce Springsteen biopic “Springsteen: Deliver Me from Nowhere,” starring “The Bear’s” Jeremy Allen White.

With final domestic figures being released Monday, this list factors in the estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Comscore: 1. “Black Phone 2,” \$26.5 million; 2. “Tron: Ares,” \$11.1 million; 3. “Good Fortune,” \$6.2 million; 4. “One Battle After Another,” \$4 million; 5. “Roofman,” \$3.7 million; 6. “Truth & Treason,” \$2.7 million; 7. “Gabby’s Dollhouse,” \$1.7 million; 8. “The Conjuring: Last Rites,” \$1.6 million; 9. “After the Hunt,” \$1.6 million and

10. “Demon Slayer: Kimetsu no Yaiba Infinity Castle,” \$1.3 million.



Ethan Hawke arrives at a special screening of ‘Black Phone 2’ on Wednesday, Oct. 8, at TCL Chinese Theatre in Los Angeles. (AP)

Call to offer tax credits

Unions push to bring film studios to Nevada

LAS VEGAS, Oct. 20, (AP) — Movies like “The Hangover” and “Ocean’s Eleven” piqued interest in the Las Vegas Strip long ago. But now Nevada labor unions hoping to boost jobs and tourism are pushing state officials to offer tax credits aimed at bringing more Hollywood filmmaking to the state.

The effort to offer up to \$95 million in tax credits to Sony Pictures Entertainment and Warner Bros. Discovery for a new film production facility in the Vegas suburbs didn’t win enough legislative support earlier this year. But more than a dozen labor unions are pushing to revive the proposal during an expected special session next month.

“We believe if we can get the public behind us, we’ll be able to get the legislators to understand what a big change this can bring to Southern Nevada,” said Tommy White, business manager-secretary treasurer of Laborers’ International Union of North America, Local 872 in Las Vegas.

Trade unions formed a political action committee called Nevada Jobs Now, which has raised over \$1 million to be used for digital advertisements, mailers and some TV commercials, White said. The production companies behind the project say it would create 19,000 construction jobs.

If the unions are successful, Las Vegas would be competing with cities like Atlanta, where the film industry has boomed for more than a decade thanks to a far more generous tax break. California, meanwhile, recently revamped its own tax incentive programs to combat a multiyear downward trend in Hollywood film production.

The production companies would not come to Las Vegas if they don’t receive the tax incentives, according to David O’Reilly, CEO of Howard Hughes Holdings, the developer of the proposal called Summerlin Studios. It would include 10 movie stages, hotels, a medical center and be part of a master-planned neighborhood in West Las Vegas.

“There would be no reason for Sony and Warner to film in Nevada when they can get tax credits in 20 other states or around the globe,” he said. “They need to bring their productions to where they have the best economic deal, and we’re just trying to make Nevada competitive with everybody else.”

Eligible

To be eligible for the tax credits, \$400 million needs to be spent building a studio and \$1.8 billion spent building the mixed-use development of shops and restaurants, O’Reilly said. Sony and Warner Bros. would have to spend \$4.5 billion over 15 years. They would be eligible for the tax credits after the studio is built and filming begins, he said.

The proposal comes as Las Vegas continues to see a decline in tourism. Between June 2024 and June 2025, the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority reported an 11.3% decline in visitors.

White and other supporters argue that not only will the film studios bring jobs and revenue, it will also attract tourists.

“With movie studios, you bring in a whole different type of tourist,” White said, likening it to how major sports teams draw visitors. “You don’t just bring the person that’s come in to go to a resort to gamble.”

Stephen Weizenacker, an Atlanta attorney who was involved in Georgia’s film tax credit program since its inception in 2008, said Georgia has seen more tourists wanting to visit the scenes where movies like “The Hunger Games” and “Forrest Gump” were filmed.

Dubbed the “Hollywood of the South,” metro Atlanta became a ubiquitous backdrop for huge projects, including Marvel films and Netflix’s “Stranger Things.” Its program has supported thousands of jobs and the creation of several thriving studios. But it is expensive - the state in 2024 was projected to give out \$1.35 billion in credits that year alone.

The state’s return is an average of 17 cents in tax revenue for every state dollar spent, according to Carlianne Patrick, an associate professor at Georgia State University who conducts audits of the state’s tax credit programs.

Georgia has seen a large increase in production activity and an increase in jobs, though not all of them are full-time, permanent positions, Patrick said.

Some don’t see the payoff in giving tax credits to the film studios.

The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), a union representing thousands of state workers, joined other Nevada organizations this week in sending a letter to the governor urging him to not include the film tax credit proposal in the upcoming special session. Republican Gov. Joe Lombardo says he will call lawmakers back to the capital before the years ends, but it’s not yet clear what issues lawmakers will tackle.

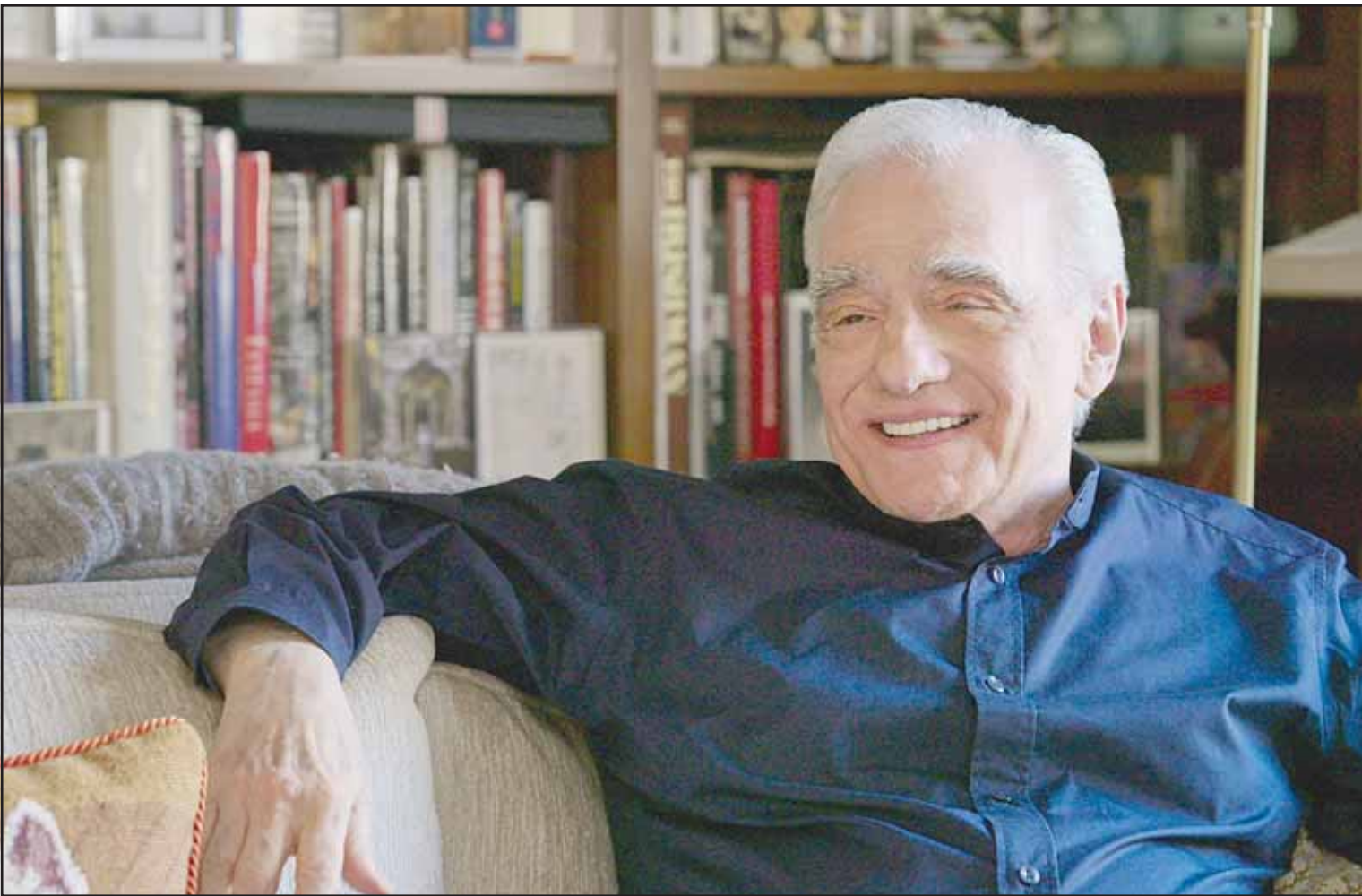
They argue the project is “fiscally irresponsible and politically indefensible” and would only generate \$0.52 in tax revenue for every \$1 in credit, citing a May 2025 report commissioned by the state.

“Every dollar we lock into a corporate handout is a dollar we can’t put toward our rainy-day readiness, public education, health care, wildfire mitigation, housing, and the basic services Nevadans rely on when times get tight,” the organizations wrote in the letter.

Jared Kluesner, a psychiatric nurse at the Southern Nevada Adult Mental Health campus in Las Vegas and member of AFSCME, said the state should prioritize public services for people with mental health issues.

Kluesner wants Sony and Warner Bros. to build a film studio facility and create more jobs for Nevadans, but “if they’re going to do it at the cost of public services and funds that should be allocated to state workers, then that’s not really solving any problems.”

Film



This image released by Apple TV+ shows filmmaker Martin Scorsese in a scene from the documentary series ‘Mr. Scorsese.’ (AP)

A five-hour conversation with a legend

In Miller’s ‘Mr. Scorsese,’ fitting a filmmaking titan into the frame

NEW YORK, Oct. 20, (AP) — The first time the filmmaker Rebecca Miller met Martin Scorsese was on the set of 2002’s “Gangs of New York.” Miller’s husband, Daniel Day-Lewis, was starring in it. There, Miller found an anxious Scorsese on the precipice of the film’s enormous fight scene, shot on a sprawling set.

“He seemed like a young man, hoping that he had chosen the right way to shoot a massive scene,” Miller recalls. “I was stunned by how youthful and alive he was.”

That remains much the same throughout Miller’s expansive and stirring documentary portrait of the endlessly energetic and singularly essential filmmaker. In “Mr. Scorsese,” which premiered recently on Apple TV, Miller captures the life and career of Scorsese, whose films have made one of the greatest sustained arguments for the power of cinema.

“We talk about 32 films, which is a lot of films. But there are yet more films,” Miller says, referencing Scorsese’s projects to come. “It’s a life that overflows its own bounds. You think you’ve got it, and then it’s more and more and more.”

Scorsese’s life has long had a mythic arc: The asthmatic kid from Little Italy who grew up watching old movies on television and went on to make some of the defining New York films. That’s a part of “Mr. Scorsese,” too, but Miller’s film, culled from 20 hours of interviews with Scorsese over five years, is a more intimate, reflective and often funny conversation about the compulsions that drove him and the abiding questions - of morality, faith and filmmaking - that have guided him.

“Who are we? What are we, I should say?” Scorsese says in the opening moments of the series. “Are we intrinsically good or evil?” “This is the struggle,” he adds. “I struggle with it all the time.”

Miller began interviewing Scorsese during the pandemic. He was then beginning to make “Killers of the Flower Moon.” Their first meetings were

outside. Miller first pitched the idea to Scorsese as a multifaceted portrait. Then, she imagined a two-hour documentary. Later, by necessity, it turned into a five-hour series. It still feels too short.

“I explained I wanted to take a cubist approach, with different shafts of light on him from all different perspectives - collaborators, family,” Miller says. “Within a very short amount of time, he sort of began talking as if we were doing it. I was a bit confused, thinking, ‘Is this a job interview or a planning situation?’”

Scorsese’s own documentaries have often been some of the most insightful windows into him. In one of his earliest films, “Italianamerican” (1974), he interviewed his parents. His surveys of cinema, including 1995’s “A Personal Journey With Martin Scorsese Through American Movies” and 1999’s “My Voyage to Italy,” have been especially revealing of the inspirations that formed him. Scorsese has never penned a memoir, but these movies come close.

While the bulk of “Mr. Scorsese” are the director’s own film-to-film recollections, a wealth of other personalities color in the portrait. That includes collaborators like editor Thelma Schoonmaker, Paul Schrader, Robert De Niro, Leonardo DiCaprio and Day-Lewis. It also includes Scorsese’s children, his ex-wives and his old Little Italy pals. One, Salvatore “Sally Gaga” Uricola for the first time is revealed as the model for De Niro’s troublemaking, mailbox-blowing-up Johnny Boy in “Mean Streets.”

“Cinema consumed him at such an early age and it never left him,” DiCaprio says in the film. “There will never be anyone like him again,” says Steven Spielberg.

It can be easy to think of Scorsese, perhaps the most revered living filmmaker, as an inevitability, that of course he gets to make the films he wants. But “Mr. Scorsese” is a reminder how often that wasn’t the case and how frequently Scorsese found himself on the outside of Hollywood, whether due to box-of-

fice disappointment, a clash of style or the perceived danger in controversial subjects (“Taxi Driver,” “The Last Temptation of Christ”) he was drawn to.

“He was fighting for every single film,” Miller says. “Cutting this whole thing was like riding a bucking bronco. You’re up and you’re down, you’re dead, then alive.”

Film executives today, an especially risk-averse lot, could learn some lessons from “Mr. Scorsese” in what a difference they can make for a personal filmmaker. As discussed in the film, in the late ’70s, producer Irwin Winkler refused to do “Rocky II” with United Artists unless they also made “Raging Bull.”

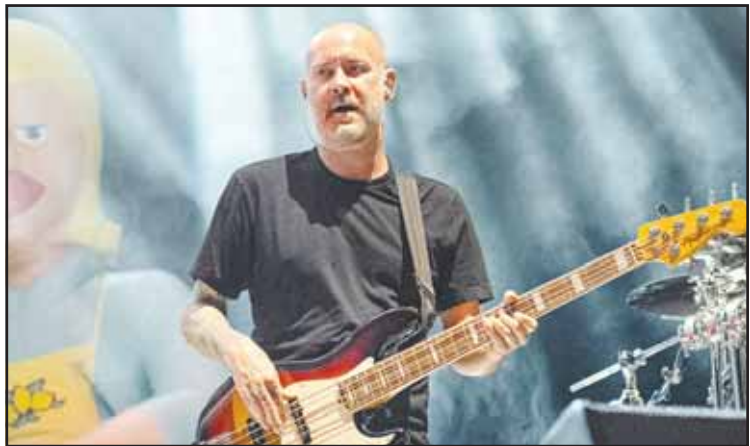
For Miller, whose films include “The Ballad of Jack and Rose” and “Maggie’s Plan,” being around Scorsese was an education. She found his films began to infect “Mr. Scorsese.” The cutting of the documentary took on the style of his film’s editing. “In proximity to these film,” she says, “you start to breathe the air.”

Nearness to Scorsese also inevitably means movie recommendations. Lots of them. One that stood out for Miller was “The Insect Woman,” Japanese filmmaker Shōhei Imamura’s 1963 drama about three generations of women.

“He’s still doing it,” Miller says. “He’s still sending me movies.”

“Mr. Scorsese” recently debuted at the New York Film Festival, where Miller’s son, Ronan Day-Lewis made his directorial debut with “Anemone,” a film that marked her husband’s return from retirement. At the “Mr. Scorsese” premiere, a packed audience at Lincoln Center’s Alice Tully Hall came to enthusiastically revel in, and pay tribute to its subject.

“You hear all those people laughing with him or suddenly bursting into applause when they see Thelma Schoonmaker or at the end of the ‘Last Waltz’ sequence,” Miller says. “There was a sense of such palpable enthusiasm and love. My husband said something I thought was very beautiful: It reminded everyone of how much they love him.”



Sam Rivers of Limp Bizkit performs at the Inkcarceration Music and Tattoo Festival on July 14, 2023, at the Ohio State Reformatory in Mansfield, Ohio. (AP)

‘Pure magic ... the soul in the sound’

Bass player Sam Rivers of Limp Bizkit band has died

LOS ANGELES, Oct. 20, (AP) — Sam Rivers, the bass player in the nu metal band Limp Bizkit, died on Saturday, according to social media posts by his band mates.

The band did not disclose where Rivers died or the circumstances, but praised him as “pure magic” and “the soul in the sound.”

“From the first note we ever played together, Sam brought a light and a rhythm that could never be replaced,” they wrote in a group Instagram post. “His talent was effortless, his presence unforgettable, his heart enormous.”

Fred Durst, the band’s front man and lead vocalist, posted a video Sunday morning that recounted

how they met at a club in Jacksonville Beach, Florida, and went on to music stardom and performances around the globe. Durst said he has shed “gallons and gallons of tears since yesterday.”

“He really did have an impact on the world and his music and his gift is the one that’s going to keep on giving,” Durst said. “I just love him so much.”

Rivers, 48, had spoken of heavy drinking that had caused liver disease. He left the band in 2015 and received a liver transplant before reuniting with Limp Bizkit three years later.

Limp Bizkit has scheduled a tour of Central and South America to begin in Mexico City in late November.

Durst said he and Rivers shared a love of grunge music, naming the bands Mother Love Bone, Alice in Chains and Stone Temple Pilots.

“He had this kind of ability to pull this beautiful sadness out of the bass that I’d never heard,” Durst said, calling Rivers “so talented I can’t explain.”

Limp Bizkit, with roots in Jacksonville, Florida, emerged in the late 1990s with a sound that melds alternative rock, heavy metal and rap.

Their off-the-wall sense of humor is reflected in the titles of their mega-selling 2000 album, “Chocolate Starfish and the Hot Dog Flavored Water,” and a single released last month, “Making Love to Morgan Wallen.”

Singer shares her poetry with the world in new book

Poetry helped R&B singer Jessie Reyez find her voice

LOS ANGELES, Oct 20, (AP): Long before Jessie Reyez was celebrated for her voice, poetry was the Toronto-bred musician’s “first love.”

The Grammy-nominated and Juno Award winner’s music often feels like spoken poetry, backed by a mix of R&B, hip-hop and Latin beats. When music, and the commercial demands of the industry, fail to satiate her creative hunger, Reyez turns to writing and often asks her millions of Instagram followers for poetry prompts.

She compiled some of those poems, previously only available on a 24-hour Instagram story timeline, into a book, “The People’s Purge: Words of a Goat Princess Volume II,” releasing Tuesday.

The exercise, which Reyez now does weekly, allows her to create and release almost instantly and felt like scratching “an itch in the middle of my brain that I can’t reach,” she told The Associated Press.

“When you’re fortunate enough to find a job in creativity and you’re getting paid for your art, it can create this bastardized version of what you’re making. Some of the purity is jeopardized,” Reyez said. “You really have to be your art’s security guard.”

Reyez has written about “Breadcrumb crumbs” and “Air.” Other prompts are specific, like one titled, “Stubbing your



Jessie Reyez performs during the Corona Capital music festival in Mexico City on Nov. 16, 2024. (AP)

toe on the table when you were having a good day.” The prompts are boundless, Reyez said. “It’s like having a snapshot of the world’s emotional state.”

This year has been a busy one for Reyez, emblematic of the her non-stop creative flow. She has been on tour since early June for her latest album, “Paid in Memories.” She began a US book tour this month and will return

to the international leg of her musical tour in November.

She recently spoke about her upcoming book, the freedom that poetry offers and how she protects her creative flow.

Remarks have been edited for clarity and brevity.

AP: How does writing poetry differ from writing songs?

Reyez: Writing has always been my

first love. Poetry has been my love before music. I like the idea of release. I love the idea of freedom. Freedom feels like home for me. Even though I love creating as a musician, when you are creating a song, you have the boundaries of the music around it for the lyrics and for the melody. There’s just more rules that you have to abide by. But I feel the most free when I write and I’m not beholden to the fences of the chords of the song that I’m in, or to the melody of the song that I’m in.

AP: Why did you decide to compile the poems into a book?

Reyez: I love the ephemeral nature of them when I’m making it. But, because it is such a community thing, there were people that started to be like, “I wish I was here for it. I wish we can keep it.” It became more apparent to me that this is a team thing. I wanted to make sure that people could, you know, hold what they’ve made in tandem with me.

AP: How did you choose which poems were included?

Reyez: I’ve become very skilled at objectively critiquing myself. For music, it’s a little bit more difficult because the thing is, music can act like makeup sometimes. If you take a great song and you read it, it should be strong enough to be able to sound like a beautiful poem without having any

music. That’s kind of what I love when I play with words. It just becomes that much more apparent what is well done versus what is going to hit the cutting room floor.

AP: One of the poems is completely in Spanish and your Colombian heritage shines throughout the book. Did that come naturally?

Reyez: It’s not so much something that I have to be cognizant of because it’s naturally in me. It is in my blood, it’s in my heart, it is in my soul, it’s in the way I love. However, as much as Spanish is my first language - it’s the language I learned to be human in, it was the language that I learned love in - it’s not the language which I studied. The library of words that I can pull from is just a lot larger in English, so by default my output is more in English.

AP: Some of the prompts are super specific and others are vague. How did that impact your writing process?

Reyez: There is not one that I like more than the other. I literally just love the entire process because it’s challenging in both ways. When it’s specific, it’s a challenge because you have to dig a little bit deeper to find it. I think everybody has that ability. You just need to learn how to like open the box, dig in, and then you’re able to find so many things in common and so many

thing that you and I went through. It’s like a different shade of blue, but it’s still blue.

AP: I really enjoyed how you flipped some of the prompts on their head. For instance, one prompt asked for a poem about “Big butts,” and you wrote about butts, as in hesitations in a relationship. Was that intentional?

Reyez: I do it a lot. That’s the method of finding how it relates to you, you know what I mean? “Big Butts” is a good one. I love that you recalled that one as an example. I love the idea of play. I love the idea of challenge. Every now and then, I get one where it feels like the person is almost like, “In what world is she gonna make something with a prompt like that,” you know?

AP: You do this exercise about once a week. I’m sure you’ve written many more poems. Are there more iterations of this book that might come in the future?

Reyez: Yeah, maybe. It’s really funny, because the day we turned it in, I did the exercise again. The week after the deadline, I did the exercise again. I really had to show some restraint. Shout out to deadlines. Deadlines are the gift of the creative because otherwise this would have been a never-ending book. We’ll see. If it’s meant to be, sure.

Fashion



Models wear creations from the Fauve collection during the Sao Paulo Fashion Week, in Sao Paulo, Sunday, Oct. 19. (AP)

Females find empowerment

More women embrace baldness with style

NEW YORK, Oct 20, (AP): “Being bald is sexy. It’s an attitude. It’s a luxury. It’s a lifestyle.”

That’s how Brennan Nevada Johnson, who shaved her head voluntarily 14 years ago, opens the video podcast she launched last November to celebrate the advantages of choosing a bald look.

Sensuous, self-assured and glamorous are not the adjectives typically assigned to women with shorn hair. For centuries, many cultures have viewed long hair as a symbol of femininity, health and fertility. But more women are defying that traditional beauty standard and finding empowerment by baring their heads.

“Once you do it, it brings all this confidence into your life,” Johnson, 34, said. “Whenever you see someone who’s bald and not wearing a wig, just know that they have fully embraced themselves, and I think that’s something that’s really challenging to do.”

Her initial decision to go baldheaded was practical. Johnson played competitive volleyball in college and found the sweating she did on the court affected the expensive hair relaxing treatments she often had done.

Once she started shaving off her hair, though, she was hooked. She was relieved to save money on salon trips.

Johnson now owns a New York public relations firm. “Bald and Buzzed with Brennan,” the video podcast she posts on YouTube, was an attempt to fill a void in social media content that affirmed bald people, especially women. She says she always thought baldness was sexy.

“It’s such a fashion statement, and it’s a really powerful look,” Johnson said.

Other women without hair, whether voluntarily or due to medical conditions, also have sought ways to support each other, attending conferences, joining “baldie” groups and swapping grooming and scalp care tips.

“There’s a whole community of us out there,” said Dash Lopez, a content creator who posts a weekly video series of her shaving routine called “Fresh Cut Friday.” “We need to talk about it because we do find comfort and empowerment and beauty in what some people think is weird.”

Lopez said members of her family praised the long



Aicha Soumaoro poses for a photograph in West Chester, Pa., Friday, Oct 17. (AP)

curly hair she had growing up. Some of her friends played with different hair colors and styles, but Lopez said she didn’t have the same freedom. And she didn’t enjoy detangling her hair or spending long afternoons at the salon.

As soon as she turned 18 and could get a haircut without permission, she chopped her locks into a pixie cut. Then she shaved it all off during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“It makes me feel powerful in the sense that I’m able to detach from the things that people place so much emphasis on,” Lopez, 29, said. “I’m not sitting here planning, ‘Oh my gosh, when am I going to get my next color appointment done? That’s gonna cost me \$300. Oh my gosh. I’ve got to get my hair done before I go to this event.’”

Lopez signed a contract with a modeling agency in 2020, a time when brands wanted to showcase diversity, she said. Back then, being bald worked for her professionally.

“There was an appreciation for quirks and if you had a gap in your tooth, if you had a bald head, if you had a face full of freckles, that’s what casting directors were looking for,” Lopez said.

She noticed the tide shifting last year, when her

bookings for modeling jobs decreased. “Let’s be honest, the odds were stacked against me in the modeling world,” Lopez said. “I was 5’4”, 5’5” on paper, no hair.”

A client suggested she wear wigs to land more work. Lopez did not want to do that or grow out her hair. Her modeling contract ended. Since then, she has shared glimpses of her life as a bald woman on Instagram and TikTok, where some of her videos have been watched millions of times. “I feel powerful in the sense that I’m making my own choices,” Lopez said. “I’m doing it for my own self-empowerment, I am doing it from my own self-clarity, for a deeper understanding of what it is that I value, a deeper understanding of what beauty means to me.”

Many women are confronted with how they define beauty when they lose hair due to health conditions such as alopecia or during chemotherapy treatment for cancer.

Felicia Flores, a flight attendant who lives in Atlanta, was diagnosed in 2001 with alopecia, an autoimmune disorder that causes hair to fall out. Six years later, all her hair was gone. Initially, she wore wigs.

Then she came across a group called The Baldie Movement on Facebook. “The ladies just really inspired me,” Flores, 47, said. “They really did help to encourage me and give me strength, ... and they were just so confident.”

She eventually decided to stop wearing wigs and embrace being bald in 2015, after a romantic breakup. “I was tired of lying. I felt like I was hiding something. I felt like I wasn’t myself,” she said.

To help uplift and inspire other women, Flores founded an annual conference called Baldie Con.

The fourth one drew more than 200 attendees to Atlanta last month for a fashion show, guest speakers, a jazz brunch and a black tie gala, she said.

Aicha Soumaoro, who works in Philadelphia as a nurse on weekdays and as a mechanic on weekends, said some of her patients call her “sir” instead of “ma’am,” but she doesn’t let it bother her. “It’s new to them, girls that are bald,” Soumaoro, 27, said that after she shaved her head, her mother told her that most men wouldn’t want to marry a woman with no hair. She focuses instead on the compliments she’s received while out in public, including “You wear it with confidence” and “Your face is gorgeous.”

Louvre to remain closed one day after jewel heist

PARIS, Oct 20, (AP): The Louvre said on Monday it would remain closed a day after historic jewels were stolen from the world’s most-visited museum in a daring daylight heist.

The museum’s staff asked dozens of visitors who were queuing in front of the glass pyramid entrance to leave the site. In a message posted on social media, the Louvre said visitors who have booked tickets will be refunded. It did not provide additional details.

On Sunday, thieves rode a basket lift up the Louvre’s facade, forced a window, smashed display cases and fled with priceless Napoleonic jewels, officials said. The theft occurred about 30 minutes after the museum opened, with visitors already inside, and was among the highest-profile museum thefts in living memory.

It unfolded just 250 meters (270 yards) from the Mona Lisa, in what Culture Minister Rachida Dati described as a professional, four-minute-long operation.

French Justice Minister Gerald Darmanin acknowledged security failures on Monday.

“One can wonder about the fact that, for example, the windows hadn’t been secured, about the fact that a basket lift was on a public road,” he said on France Inter radio. “Having (previously) been interior minister, I know that we cannot completely secure all places, but what is certain is that we have failed.”

Culture Minister Rachida Dati said investigators are working on evidence found at the scene.

“We did find a motorcycle and it has a license plate,” Dati said on news broadcaster CNews. “I also want to pay tribute to the security officers who prevented the basket lift from being set on fire. One of the criminals tried to set it on fire, but they forced him to flee. This allowed us to recover evidence at the scene.”

Dati stressed that a decade-long “Louvre New Renaissance” plan that was launched earlier this year includes security improvements.

“When the Louvre Museum was designed, it was not meant to accommodate 10 million visitors,” she said.

The plan calls for €700 million (\$760 million), also intended to modernize infrastructure, ease crowding and give the Mona Lisa a dedicated gallery by 2031.

Around 9:30 a.m. on Sunday, several intruders forced a window, cut panes with a disc cutter and went straight for the glass display cases, officials said. Interior Minister Laurent Nunez said the crew entered from outside using a basket lift via the riverfront facade to reach the hall with the 23-item royal collection.

Their target was the gilded Apollon Gallery, where the Crown Diamonds are displayed. The thieves smashed two display cases and fled on motorbikes, Nunez said. No one was hurt. Alarms brought Louvre agents to the room, forcing the intruders to bolt, but the theft was already done.

Eight objects were taken, according to officials: a sapphire diadem, necklace and single earring from a matching set linked to 19th-century French queens Marie-Amélie and Hortense; an emerald necklace and earrings from the matching set of Empress Marie-Louise, Napoleon Bonaparte’s second wife; a reliquary brooch; and Empress Eugénie’s diadem and her large corsage-bow brooch, a prized 19th-century imperial ensemble.

‘It’s ‘Tycoon’ season’

Ty Dolla \$ign back with 1st solo album in 5 yrs

NEW YORK, Oct 20, (AP): “It’s ‘Tycoon’ season,” a beaming Ty Dolla \$ign, declares.

It is indeed. The inventive R&B singer has just released his fifth studio album, his first full-length solo release in five years. He chose “Tycoon” for its title because the word encompasses his current state of mind. “It’s like (being at) the top of your game,” he says. “It’s like, not only have I done all the stuff you could do in artistry, (but) there’s still more to do.”

Call it confidence or swagger or showboating: The Grammy-nominated artist has a trove of multiplatinum records to his name from 2018 to the present, and recently, his controversial project with Kanye West, \$, released two albums, “Vultures 1” and “Vultures 2” in 2024. They debuted at No. 1 and 2 on the Billboard 200, respectively.

“Tycoon” is classic Ty Dolla \$ign. The album is what he’s made a name for himself doing: a collection of ceaselessly catchy, NSFW R&B anthems about lust and love (both mostly lechery), stacked with A-list collaborations: Quavo,

Juicy J, 2 Chainz, Tyga, Travis Scott, Chloë - the list goes on.

Also among them: Rappers Kodak Black and Ty Dolla \$ign’s longtime kindred spirit YG. (Ty Dolla \$ign and YG have worked together for a num-



Ty Dolla

ber of years, certainly going back to 2010’s “Toot It & Boot It.”) For his latest album, the trio teamed up for “Smile Body Pretty Face.” It was one of the last songs to make “Tycoon,” says Ty Dolla \$ign, “But when we started messing with the beat. I was like, ‘This has got to be YG.’”

There’s a romantic element to the song - with some of his explicitly sexual posturing. The same can be said about the lead single to “Tycoon,” “All In,” where Ty Dolla \$ign’s rich baritone considers devotion to a partner. “They say love don’t cost a thing,” he swoons on the chorus. “And if it did, I’d go all in.”

For Ty Dolla \$ign, this new era means being a business “Tycoon” as well. He’s taken on his fair share of industry endeavors - like launching a label, EZMNY, with then-Motown Records executive Shawn Barron - and experiencing immediate success with its first signing, the R&B upstart Leon Thomas. His single, “Mutt,” hit No. 11 on the all-genre Billboard Hot 100 and No. 1 on its Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart.

Thomas told AP earlier this year about working with Ty Dolla \$ign: “I was around some epic legends in the field, and I feel like the best teacher is experience.”

“My goal there, with EZMNY, is to give the real artists a chance. Myself, I didn’t make it until I was 27 and I was always good. I was always making music,” Ty Dolla \$ign says. “And I just wanted to reach back to people that are actually great.”

“There’s definitely going to be a comeback in R&B very soon,” he adds. “We’re talking Leon specifically.”

Caution urged as parents told to consult pediatricians

Early peanut feeding helped 60,000 kids avoid allergies: study

NEW YORK, Oct 20, (AP): A decade after a landmark study proved that feeding peanut products to young babies could prevent development of life-threatening allergies, new research finds the change has made a big difference in the real world.

About 60,000 children have avoided developing peanut allergies after guidance first issued in 2015 upended medical practice by recommending introducing the allergen to infants starting as early as 4 months.

“That’s a remarkable thing, right?” said Dr. David Hill, an allergist and researcher at Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, and author of a study published Monday in the medical journal Pediatrics. Hill and colleagues analyzed electronic health records from dozens of pediatric practices to track diagnoses of food allergies in young children before, during and after the guidelines were issued.

“I can actually come to you today and say there are less kids with food allergy today than there would have been if we hadn’t implemented this public health effort,” he added.

The researchers found that peanut allergies in children ages 0 to 3 declined by more than 27% after guidance for high-risk kids was first issued in 2015 and by more than 40% after the recommendations were expanded in 2017.

The effort hasn’t yet reduced an overall increase in food allergies in the U.S. in recent years. About 8% of children are affected, including more than 2% with a peanut allergy.

Peanut allergy is caused when the body’s immune system mistakenly identifies proteins in peanuts as harmful and releases chemicals that trigger allergic symptoms, including hives, respiratory symptoms and, sometimes, life-threatening anaphylaxis.

For decades, doctors had recommended delaying feeding children peanuts and other foods likely to trigger allergies until age 3. But in 2015, Gideon Lack at King’s College London, published the groundbreaking Learning Early About Peanut Allergy, or LEAP, trial.

Lack and colleagues showed that introducing peanut products in infancy reduced the future risk of developing food allergies by more than 80%. Later analy-



An arrangement of peanuts is seen Feb. 20, 2015, in New York. (AP)

sis showed that the protection persisted in about 70% of kids into adolescence.

The study immediately sparked new guidelines urging early introduction of peanuts - but putting them into practice has been slow.

Only about 29% of pediatricians and 65% of allergists reported following the expanded guidance issued in 2017, surveys found.

Confusion and uncertainty about the best way to introduce peanuts early in life led to the lag, according to a commentary that accompanied the study. Early

on, medical experts and parents alike questioned whether the practice could be adopted outside of tightly controlled clinical settings.

The data for the analysis came from a subset of participating practice sites and may not represent the entire U.S. pediatric population, noted the commentary, led by Dr. Ruchi Gupta, a child allergy expert at Northwestern University.

However, the new research offers “promising evidence that early allergen introduction is not only being adopted but may be making a measurable impact,” the authors concluded.

Advocates for the 33 million people in the US with food allergies welcomed signs that early introduction of peanut products is catching on.

“This research reinforces what we already know and underscores a meaningful opportunity to reduce the incidence and prevalence of peanut allergy nationwide,” said Sung Poblete, chief executive of the nonprofit group Food Allergy Research & Education, or FARE.

The new study emphasizes the current guidance, updated in 2021, which calls for introducing peanuts and other major food allergens between four and six months, without prior screening or testing, Hill said. Parents should consult their pediatricians about any questions.

“It doesn’t have to be a lot of the food, but little tastes of peanut butter, milk-based yogurt, soy-based yogurts and tree butters,” he said. “These are really good ways to allow the immune system exposure to these allergenic foods in a safe way.”

Tiffany Leon, 36, a Maryland registered dietician and director at FARE, introduced peanuts and other allergens early to her own sons, James, 4, and Cameron, 2.

At first, Leon’s own mother was shocked at the advice to feed babies such foods before the age of 3, she said. But Leon explained how the science had changed.

“As a dietician, I practice evidence-based recommendations,” she said. “So when someone told me, ‘This is how it’s done now, these are the new guidelines,’ I just thought, OK, well, this is what we’re going to do.”

‘Whole foods beat supplements’

Antioxidants offer health benefits, but calculating intake can be tricky

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



By Nathaniel Johnson
University of North Dakota

When it comes to describing what an antioxidant is, it’s all in the name: Antioxidants counter oxidants.

And that’s a good thing. Oxidants can damage the structure and function of the chemicals in your body critical to life - like the proteins and lipids within your cells, and your DNA, which stores genetic information. A special class of oxidants, free radicals, are even more reactive and dangerous.

As an assistant professor of nutrition, I’ve studied the long-standing research showing how the imbalances in antioxidants and oxidants lead to oxidative stress, which is linked to cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and dementia and Alzheimer’s disease. In fact, a primary cause of aging is the damage accumulated across of a lifetime of oxidative stress.

Simply put: To help prevent oxidative stress, people need to eat foods with antioxidants and limit their exposure to oxidants, particularly free radicals.

There’s no way for any of us to avoid some oxidative stress. Just metabolism - the processes in your body that keep you alive, such as breathing, digestion and maintaining body temperature - are a source of oxidants and free radicals.

Inflammation, pollution and radiation are other sources.

As a result, everyone needs antioxidants. There are many different types: enzymes, minerals, vitamins and phytochemicals.

Two types of phytochemicals deserve special mention: carotenoids and flavonoids. Carotenoids are pigments, with the colors yellow, orange and red; they contain the antioxidants beta-carotene, lycopene and lutein. Some flavonoids, called anthocyanins, are pigments that give foods a blue, red or purple color.

Although your body produces some of these antioxidants, you can get them from the foods you eat, and they’re better for you than supplements.

In fact, researchers found that antioxidant supplements did not reduce deaths, and some supplements in excessive

amounts contribute to oxidative stress, and may even increase the risk of dying.

It should be pointed out that in most of these studies, only one or two antioxidants were given, and often in amounts far greater than the recommended daily value. One study, for example, gave participants only vitamin A, and at an amount more than 60 times an adult’s recommended intake.

In contrast, increased antioxidant intake from whole foods is related to decreased risk of death. And although antioxidant supplementation didn’t reduce cancer rates in smokers, the antioxidants in whole foods did.

But measuring antioxidants in foods is complicated. Extensive laboratory testing is required, and too many foods exist to test them all anyway. Even individual food items that are the same exact variety of food - such as two Gala apples - can have different amounts of antioxidants. Where the food was grown and harvested, how it was processed and how it was stored during transportation and while in the supermarket are factors. The variety of the food also matters - the many different types of apples, for instance, can have different amounts of antioxidants.

Nonetheless, in 2018, researchers quantified the antioxidant content of more than 3,100 foods - the first antioxidant database. Each food’s antioxidant capacity was determined by the amount of oxidants neutralized by a given amount of food. The researchers measured this capacity in millimoles per 100 grams, or about 4 ounces.

For fruits easily found in the grocery store, the database shows blueberries have the most antioxidants - just over 9 millimoles per 4 ounces. The same serving of pomegranates and blackberries each have about 6.5 millimoles.

For common vegetables, cooked artichoke has 4.54 millimoles per 4 ounces; red kale, 4.09 millimoles; cooked red cabbage, 2.15; and orange bell pepper, 1.94.

Coffee has 2.5 millimoles per 4 ounces; green tea has 1.5; and whole walnuts, just over 13; whole pecans, about 9.7; and sunflower seeds, just over 5. Herbs and spices have a lot: clove has 465 millimoles per 4 ounces; rosemary has 67; and thyme, about 64. But keep in mind that those enormous numbers are based on a quarter-pound. Still, just a normal sprinkle packs a powerful nutritional punch.

Other ways to choose antioxidant-rich foods: Read the nutrition facts label and look for antioxidant vitamins and minerals - vitamins A, C, E, D, B2, B3 and B9, and the minerals selenium, zinc and manganese. (AP)

Building with mushrooms

Fungi-based panels in Kenya pave the way for greener construction

NAIROBI, Kenya, Oct 20, (AP): A large mushroom farm near the Kenyan capital of Nairobi is one of a kind: It grows fungi on an industrial scale - not as food for restaurants but as a building material that some Kenyans say could make more people homeowners.

The farm produces mycelium, the root structure of mushrooms that a local company then uses to make building materials it says are more sustainable than regular brick and mortar.

The company, MycoTile, combines the roots with natural fibers and agents to make panels that can be used for everything from roof and wall insulation to interior decor, at a fraction of the cost of building with standard clay bricks. It currently produces about 3,000 square meters (yards) of such materials every month.

Street vendor Jedidah Murugi, whose house was made with fungi-based construction materials, said she believes “there is no huge difference in the quality of the houses made from



Pallets made from agricultural waste, for use in building house wall and roof insulation, are displayed at the MycoTile facility at the Kenya Industrial Research and Development Institute in Nairobi, Kenya, Thursday, July 24, 2025. (AP)

brick and these boards.”

“The only difference,” she said, is in the cost. Her house, she added, “is not cold at night and neither is it hot during the day.”

MycoTile’s work could be a boon for Nairobi, where local leaders cite a housing crisis that has left many homeless or living in informal settlements and dwelling enclaves, prone to fires

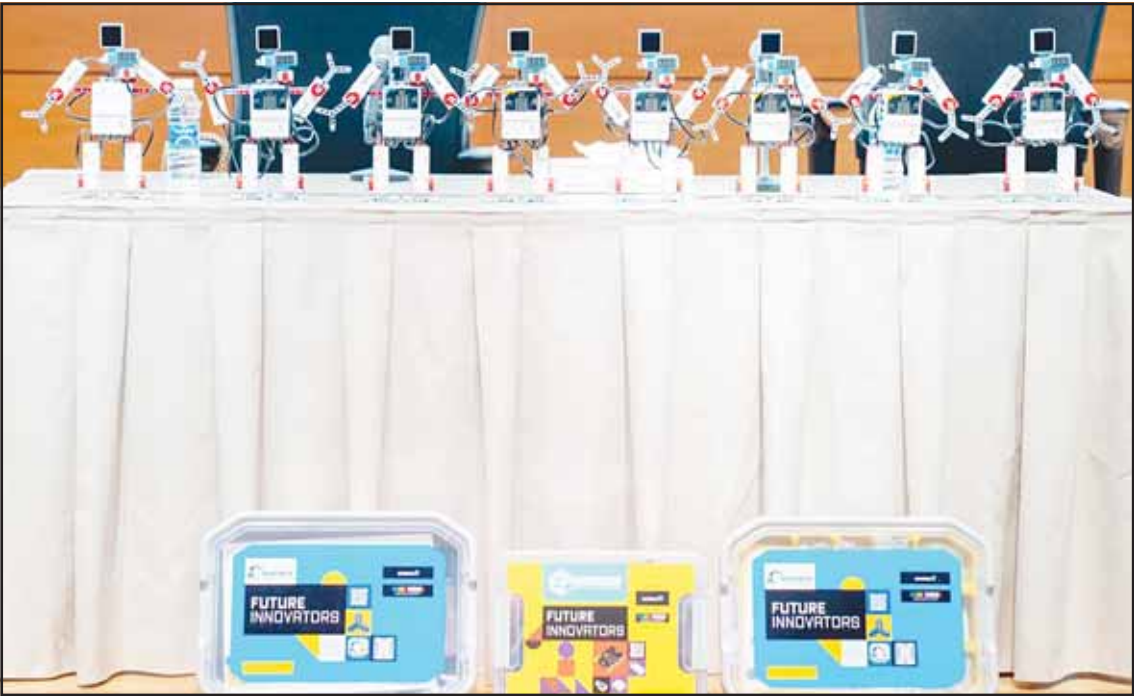
and sanitary issues. Official figures say there is a housing deficit of at least 2 million units in this metropolis of over 5 million people.

Most Kenyans are renters and those who are homeowners build from the ground up over many years instead of hiring contractors. It is common to find people living in badly finished or incomplete homes to avoid paying rent elsewhere.

“Introducing affordable materials like ours taps into an existing huge market and contributes to providing affordable housing solutions,” said Mtamu Kililo, MycoTile’s founder.

Kililo said his company’s insulation products cost roughly two-thirds of the price of standard materials.

Building a one-bedroom unit in Nairobi using materials such as brick, timber and tin sheets typically costs up to 150,000 Kenyan shillings (about \$1,000), for a simple structure, and the figure can double depending on the quality of finishes, according to estimates from builders.



A model of modern educational robots designed to enable students to acquire creative thinking skills.

Robotics labs boost creativity in schools

KPC supports WRO-Kuwait to boost youth innovation, skills development

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20, (KUNA): Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) Public Relations Manager Shamael Al-Sharikh said Sunday that KPC’s support for World Robotics Olympiad (WRO) branch in Kuwait (WRO-KUWAIT) aligns with its institutional values centered on innovation and human capital development.

This came during Al-Sharikh’s speech in a press conference organized by the corporation, held at its headquarters, in cooperation with WRO-KUWAIT, on the occasions of lunching a program to support the schools participating in the competition, funded and sponsored by KPC.

Al-Sharikh said that this partnership represents a strategic step towards empowering Kuwaiti youth and encouraging creativity in key future sectors such as artificial intelligence and digital technology.



WRO-Kuwait organizer Hamidah Rahimi

She added that KPC’s support for WRO-KUWAIT includes launching a program to equip four schools across Kuwait with modern robotics labs and

training tools, enabling students to develop creative thinking and innovation skills.

For her part, official organizer of WRO-KUWAIT Hamidah Rahimi said the organization aims to elevate Kuwait’s global standing in educational robotics, noting that this year’s strategy focuses on engaging schools and parents in the competition.

Rahimi highlighted the launch of Kuwait’s first national robotics workshop, supported by KPC, with over 250 participants from various nationalities and age groups.

She praised KPC’s continuous support and sponsorship since WRO-KUWAIT started organizing the seasons of the Olympic competition in Kuwait, indicating that the conditions for participation in the upcoming World Robotics Olympiad - Kuwait competition will be announced on January 15.

Effective and cuts kidney damage

FDA approves new lupus treatment

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO, Calif., Oct 20, (AP): Genentech, a member of the Roche Group, has announced that the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved Gazyva® (obinutuzumab) for the treatment of adult patients with active lupus nephritis (LN) who are receiving standard therapy, as well as a shorter 90-minute infusion time after the first infusion, for eligible patients. Following four initial doses in the first year, Gazyva can be administered twice yearly, offering an effective and potentially more convenient treatment option than traditional targeted therapies.

“People with lupus nephritis who achieve a complete renal response are more likely to experience preserved kidney function and delay, or even pre-

vention, of progression to end-stage kidney disease,” said Levi Garraway, M.D., Ph.D., chief medical officer and head of Global Product Development. “The approval of Gazyva by the FDA marks an important step towards a potential new standard of care for lupus nephritis, one that could allow clinicians to offer their patients more effective disease control.”

“As a severe and potentially life-threatening disease, lupus nephritis greatly disrupts daily life with chronic pain, fatigue, and the constant fear of worsening kidney health,” said Louise Vetter, President and Chief Executive Officer, Lupus Foundation of America. “The FDA’s approval of Gazyva offers renewed hope for people with lupus nephritis and their loved ones, as it provides an important new treatment

option that has the potential to prevent long-term complications, including kidney failure.”

This approval is based on positive results from the Phase II NOBILITY and Phase III REGENCY studies. In REGENCY, data showed that nearly half of the participants (46.4%) on Gazyva in combination with standard therapy achieved a complete renal response (CRR) compared to 33.1% on standard therapy alone.

This was accompanied by clinically meaningful improvements in complement levels and reductions in anti-dsDNA, corticosteroid use, and proteinuria, all signaling improved disease control. The safety profile of Gazyva was consistent with the well-characterized profile observed in its hematology-oncology indications.

New polio case detected in S. Afghanistan

WHO says DRC could declare end of Ebola outbreak by December

KINSHASA, Oct 20, (Xinhua): The World Health Organization (WHO) said Sunday that health authorities could declare the end of the current Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in early December if no new cases are detected before then.

The announcement came in a statement from the WHO Regional Office for Africa after the last Ebola patient was discharged from a treatment center following full recovery, a milestone in the country’s battle against the deadly virus.

“This discharge marks the start of a 42-day countdown, after which the outbreak can be officially declared over, provided that no new cases are identified,” the statement said.

Since the outbreak was declared on Sept. 4 in Bulape, a health zone in the central province of Kasai, a total of 64 cases have been reported, including 53 confirmed and 11 probable. Nineteen patients have recovered, and no new cases have been reported since Sept. 25, according to the WHO.

Mohamed Janabi, WHO regional director for Africa, hailed the progress made

so far. “The recovery of the last patient, only six weeks after the outbreak was declared, is a remarkable achievement. It reflects the strength of partnerships, national expertise, and collective determination to overcome challenges and save lives,” he said.

The DRC previously declared the end of its 15th Ebola outbreak in September 2022, which had emerged in the eastern province of North Kivu.

Ebola is a highly contagious hemorrhagic fever that causes a range of symptoms such as fever, vomiting, diarrhea, generalized pain, and malaise, and in many cases, internal and external bleeding, according to the WHO.

Polio: Local authorities have reported the detection of a new case of polio in the southern Afghanistan Uruzgan province, spokesman for the provincial government Samiullah Akrama said Monday.

According to the official, the eight-month-old girl was infected with the virus

and cannot move her arm, both legs, and neck.

At least nine polio cases have reportedly been registered in Afghanistan so far this year amid government efforts to eradicate the crippling disease among children in the post-war nation.

Afghanistan and Pakistan are among the few countries in the world that have yet to eradicate the wild poliovirus.

Food poisoning: A total of 49 people have been affected by a food poisoning outbreak in the Republic of Buryatia in Russia’s Far East, local health authorities said Sunday.

Regional Health Minister Evgenia Ludupova said 40 people, including 22 children, have been hospitalized. One patient remains in intensive care. Laboratory tests have confirmed 11 cases of salmonellosis, Ludupova said, adding that the outbreak was linked to poor-quality prepared food produced by a local company.

JGR earns 2nd spot in finale

Briscoe’s late surge secures Phoenix ticket

TALLADEGA, Ala., Oct 20, (AP): Chase Briscoe gave Joe Gibbs Racing its second spot in NASCAR’s championship-deciding season finale with an over-time victory Sunday at Talladega Superspeedway.

Briscoe raced to the first superspeedway victory to join teammate Denny Hamlin as Toyota drivers guaranteed slots in the four-driver winner-take-all finale at Phoenix Raceway in two weeks.

Briscoe was sixth on the restart - a two-lap sprint in overtime to the finish - and Hendrick Motorsports drivers William Byron and Kyle Larson split the front row and lined up side-by-side for the Chevrolet drivers to control the restart.

Byron was getting help from behind from fellow Chevrolet driver Carson Hocevar, a driver for Hendrick aligned Spire Motorsports. Larson’s push was from Toyota driver Bubba Wallace, who did get Wallace into the lead.

But Larson appeared to run out of fuel and dropped dramatically off the pace and Byron, who is in danger of playoff elimination, lost his chance at victory when his push from Hocevar was too strong and it caused Byron to spin.

Briscoe, meanwhile, had no problems with all his

help coming from JGR driver Ty Gibbs, the only one of his teammates not eligible for the championship.

“Ty Gibbs, just incredible teammate there. I mean, I honestly would not have won that race without Ty,” Briscoe said. “This is an amazing team effort. I can’t believe I won a superspeedway race. I haven’t done it at any level.”

There are two open spots left in the championship field to be determined next week in the finale of the third round of the playoffs. Larson and JGR driver Christopher Bell are above the elimination line, while Byron, Hendrick teammate Chase Elliott, and Team Penske drivers Joey Logano and Ryan Blaney are below the cutline.

Logano and Blaney have combined to win the last three Cup titles for Penske.

The race went to overtime when Chris Buescher was leading with two laps to go and he was spun from behind by Byron, who was shoved into Buescher by Hocevar. Buescher spun across the front of the pack and slammed hard into an inside wall in a one-car crash that sent the race to overtime.

Todd Gilliland finished second in a Ford for Front Row Motorsports - the team that alongside Michael

Jordan-owned 23XI Racing is headed to mediation Tuesday in a federal antitrust suit - and Gibbs was third. Wallace, who drives for 23XI, was fourth.

Chase Elliott’s chances to advance into the final four took a hit when NASCAR’s most popular driver was collected in the first crash of the race.

Elliott, the 2020 NASCAR champion, was already below the cutline for elimination when he was caught in an early eight-car crash 52 laps into the race. It sent the Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet to the garage for repairs and dropped Elliott to last in the 40-car field.

Elliott now goes to Martinsville Speedway in a must-win situation to advance to the title-deciding finale at Phoenix for the first time since 2022.

“It is what it is, I can’t change it now,” Elliott said. “Just all eyes on Martinsville and try to go up there and get a win.”

Elliott won Martinsville once before, in 2020, when he parlayed the victory into his only Cup title.

The final race to set the championship four, next Sunday at Martinsville Speedway in Virginia, where Blaney won last year to advance to the title deciding playoff finale.



Driver Chase Briscoe celebrates with a victory wreath after winning a NASCAR Cup Series auto race at Talladega Superspeedway, in Talladega, Ala. (AP)

England edges India by four runs to reach women’s WC semifinals

INDORE, India, Oct 20, (AP): England dug in for a four-run victory over India to clinch a semifinal spot at the Women’s Cricket World Cup on Sunday, leaving the tournament co-hosts in a five-way contest for the remaining place in the final four.

Chasing a winning target of 289, India stumbled from a position of strength to fall just short as it was contained to 284-5 in its 50 overs.

India was on course for victory for much of its innings - Smriti Mandhana top-scored with 88, while skipper Harmanpreet Kaur hit a run-a-ball 70.

England captain Nat Sciver-Brunt picked up 2-47 and left-arm spinner Linsey Smith bowled a tight spell - 1-40 in 10 overs, including the key wicket of Mandhana - to apply the brakes on the home team and help pull off a stunning win.

It was India’s third straight loss - following defeats to Australia and South Africa -- and stunned the home crowd at Holkar Stadium.

This was after England opted to bat first and posted 288-8, with Heather Knight contributing 109 off 91 balls.

England joined defending champion Australia and South Africa in the semifinals with a fourth win in five games. The four-time champions next play



England’s Lauren Bell, second left, celebrates with teammates the wicket of India’s Pratika Rawal during the ICC Women’s Cricket World Cup match between India and England in Indore, India. (AP)

Australia on Wednesday at the same venue.

India is still fourth with four points from five games and needs a massive turnaround in form against New Zealand (Thursday) and Bangladesh (Sunday) in its last two group games.

“Smriti’s dismissal was the turning point,” Kaur said. “We had sufficient batting to finish the game, but I don’t

know how things went the other way. Credit to England - they kept bowling well and kept getting wickets.”

Co-host Sri Lanka takes on Bangladesh - also at Navi Mumbai - on Monday.

The chase didn’t get off to the best start. Pratika Rawal was caught behind for six, while Charlie Dean trapped Harleen Deol leg before wicket for 24.

Foos triumphs in Macao open

Leonard clinches 2nd win of year at Charity Classic

RICHMOND, Va., Oct 20, (AP): Justin Leonard stayed patient with his putting on a windy Sunday and watched it pay big dividends with a birdie-par-eagle finished for a 4-under 68 and a one-shot victory over Ernie Els in the Dominion Energy Charity Classic.

Leonard won for the second time this year on the PGA Tour Champions and moved into top 10 after the first playoff event for the Charles Schwab Cup.

The top 54 advance to the second postseason event next week in Arkansas.

Els was in control on the back nine of the James River course at the Country Club of Virginia and appeared to steady himself with birdies on reachable par-4 15th and the par-5 16th.

But he bogeyed the 17th as Leonard made his move. After a birdie on the 16th, Leonard hit a hybrid 4-iron to about 20 feet and holed the downhill eagle putt to post at 12-under 204.

Els failed to make a 10-foot birdie putt on the closing hole that would have forced a playoff. He



Dominic Foos of Germany poses with the trophy after the Macao Open golf tournament in Macao, South China. (Xinhua)

closed with a 72 and shared second place with Thomas Bjorn (68).

Bernhard Langer, the 68-year-old German who has won every year on the PGA Tour Champions since turning 50, was within two shots of the lead until a long

three-putt bogey ended his hopes. He shot 72 and finished three back in his bid for a first Champions win this year.

Scott Parel shot 71 and tied for 21st, moving up three spots to No. 53 to advance to the Simmons Bank Championship next week. David Brandson fell out.

The top 36 after next week reach the season-ending Charles Schwab Cup Championship.

Meanwhile, Germany’s Dominic Foos claims victory in playoff thriller at golf Macao Open.

The 2025 Macao Open concluded on Sunday with a dramatic final round, as Foos edged out Wang Wei-hsuan of Chinese Taipei in a playoff to capture the championship title.

Wang produced a flawless round of 62, featuring eight birdies, while Foos matched the momentum with a bogey-free 63 that included seven birdies. The pair had finished tied on 17 under.

In the playoff, both players made birdies on the first extra hole. On the second, Foos held his nerve to seal victory.

Deal worth \$90 million

Durant signs two-year extension with Rockets

HOUSTON, Oct 20 (AP): Kevin Durant wants to be in Houston for more than one year. And he left more than \$30 million on the bargaining table to make that possible.

Durant has signed a contract extension that could keep the four-time scoring champion and four-time Olympic gold medalist with the Rockets through the 2027-28 season, the team announced Sunday.

It is a two-year extension, the second year at Durant’s option, according to a person who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the Rockets did not disclose those details.

ESPN, which first reported the agreement, cited Durant’s business partner Rich Kleiman and said the deal could be worth \$90 million. If Durant plays both seasons as planned, that \$90 million would push his on-court earnings to nearly \$600 million - which could be an NBA record, depending on how long LeBron James continues to play.

Durant - a 15-time All-Star, one of only seven players in NBA history with that many selections - was eligible for an extension that could have been worth \$122 million. He opted for less, a move that will provide the

Rockets plenty of flexibility for other deals going forward.

“Generous guy,” Rockets forward Amen Thompson told reporters in Houston on Sunday.

The new deal had been expected since Durant chose to join the Rockets and they swung a trade for him this past summer. Houston was the Western Conference’s No. 2 seed last season after going 52-30, snapping a five-year playoff drought. The Rockets are 93-71 in Ime Udoka’s two seasons as coach, after going 59-177 in the three previous seasons.

“I think we all knew when we traded for him and when he came here it wasn’t a short-term thing,” Udoka said. “Good to get to a point where everybody’s happy and hopefully he finishes his career here.”

Durant said at Rockets’ media day last month that he expected to sign an extension.

“Just seeing the quick progression of this franchise from where it was right after that James Harden-Chris Paul era, seeing when Ime got here and how he turned it around so fast ... it just felt organic and natural coming into the gym and being a Houston Rocket for the first time,” Durant said.



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

ROME, Oct 20, (AP): Rafael Leão must have been inspired by seeing Stefano Pioli back at the San Siro.

The Portugal winger scored twice in his first start of the Serie A season following an injury lay-off, and under-strength AC Milan came from a goal down to beat Pioli’s Fiorentina 2-1 and move back atop the Italian league Sunday.

Leão was the Serie A player of the season when Milan won the Italian title under Pioli in 2021-22, but hasn’t performed anywhere near that level since then.

But with Christian Pulisic, Adrien Rabiot, and Christopher Nkunku all out injured, Milan needed Leão to step up.

After Robin Gosens put Fiorentina ahead from close range shortly before the hour mark, Leão quickly equalized with a long, low shot. Then he stepped up to the penalty spot for the first time in his Milan career and converted from the spot following a foul on Santiago Gimenez.

“This is the Rafa that we need. He is an amazing talent,” said Luka Modric, who joined Milan in July after 13 seasons at Real Madrid. “For me, he’s one of the best players in the world. And he can still improve.”

Milan moved one point ahead of Inter Milan, Napoli, and Roma.

It’s been quite a turnaround for Milan under returning coach Massimiliano Allegri after an eighth-place finish last season left the seven-time European champion off of continental competition.

Fiorentina remained winless, piling pressure on Pioli. At this rate, it’s only a matter of time before Real Madrid buys back Nico Paz from Como.

The 21-year-old Argentina playmaker scored one goal and set up another as Como beat visiting Juventus



Fiorentina’s Dodo, left, clears the ball past AC Milan’s Fikayo Tomori during a Serie A soccer match between AC Milan and Fiorentina, in Milan, Italy. (AP)

2-0 to hand the Bianconeri their first loss of the season.

A product of Madrid’s youth system, Paz was sold by the Spanish power to Como last year with a clause that allows it to re-acquire him by June 2027 - or after this season.

With four goals and four assists, Paz has been involved in eight of Como’s nine scores this season.

The only other players in Europe’s top five leagues with at least four goals and four assists are Vinicius Junior (five goals and four assists for Real

Madrid) and Luis Díaz (five goals and four assists for Bayern Munich).

“I can understand when a player has the hunger and right focus to get to the top - or if it’s just momentary,” Como coach Cesc Fabregas said. “Nico can go as far as he wants to. He’s got the talent and the physical qualities.”

Both goals against Juventus were highlight-worthy.

Four minutes in, Paz provided a perfect cross on a set play for Marc-Oliver Kempf to redirect in following a corner.

Then, toward the end of the second

half, Paz gathered a long ball on a counterattack, cut inside, and drilled a curving shot into the far corner without even looking at the goal.

Madrid will certainly have been watching, since it faces Juventus in the Champions League on Wednesday.

Also watching, from the stands in Como, were former Arsenal coach and striker Arsene Wenger and Thierry Henry, respectively. Fabregas, who was serving the second match of a two-game suspension for protests, played with Henry under Wenger at the London club.

China makes strong opening at Jakarta Gymnastics Worlds

JAKARTA, Oct 20, (Xinhua): Olympic champion Zou Jingyuan delivered a textbook performance on the parallel bars to lead China’s charge at the 53rd FIG Artistic Gymnastics World Championships in Indonesia’s Jakarta on Monday, posting a score of 15.466 points, the highest of the tournament so far.

According to the competition schedule, the qualification rounds are being held from Sunday to Tuesday, with China’s men’s team opening their campaign on the rings on Monday, while the women’s team will start on the balance beam on Tuesday.

Throughout Monday’s men’s qualification, China secured multiple berths in the finals. Zou qualified for the parallel bars final, Zhang Boheng advanced to both the all-around and rings finals, Shi Cong earned spots in the all-around, parallel bars and horizontal bar finals, Huang Mingqi reached the vault final, and Hong Yanming advanced to the pommel horse final.

Zou, who previously claimed the parallel bars and team titles and a pommel horse silver medal at the 2018 Jakarta Asian Games, returned to the same city with confidence. His 6.0-difficulty routine, executed with exceptional precision

and a 0.1 bonus for a solid landing, brought the crowd to its feet and set a new benchmark for this year’s championships.

Zhang performed smoothly on the rings, vault and parallel bars but suffered a costly slip on the horizontal bar, which pushed him out of the top 60 in that event. However, with stable routines on the floor and pommel horse, he joined Shi in the all-around final.

Huang, the only Chinese gymnast contesting the vault final, produced an almost flawless first vault, scoring 14.833 points including a 0.1 landing bonus, before a minor error on the second vault left him sixth overall, still enough to reach the final.

Change Name

I, MITALKUMAR PRABHUDES BHANVADIYA, father of PREET MITALKUMAR BHANVADIYA my son's Passport (10733806) shows his name as Given name: PREET Surname: BHANVADIYA but his correct name is, Given Name: PREET MITALKUMAR Surname: BHANVADIYA

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Kuwait Club continues dominance in the league



Kuwait Club player vies for the ball with Al-Shabab player during the Zain Premier League.

KUNA photo

Al-Arabi keeps pressure

By Hassan Mosa
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: Kuwait Club continued its dominance in the Zain Premier League, defeating Al-Shabab 4-0 in the fifth round to maintain 13 points at the top of the standings. Meanwhile, Al-Arabi kept up the chase, defeating Al-Salmiya 3-1 to stay close to the leader.

The victory marked Kuwait's fourth win of the season, keeping them on track to defend their title for the fifth consecutive season and claim the 21st championship in the club's history.

Al-Arabi achieved a double boost by beating Al-Salmiya 3-1, knocking it down from second place while maintaining a two-point gap behind Kuwait. The "Green" team bounced back after a 0-0 draw with Kazma in the fourth round, recording its third win of the season.

Al-Salmiya, now with 9 points, suffered its second defeat, slipping to fourth place. Similarly, Kazma (9 points) capitalized on Al-Qadsia's struggles, earning a 1-0 victory to rise three places in the standings, keeping its title hopes alive for the first time in 30 years.

Al-Qadsia continued its decline, suffering a second straight loss, dropping to fifth with 7 points, six points behind leader Kuwait Club. Its inconsistent performances over the first five rounds have disappointed fans.

Al-Shabab (7 points) also recorded their second defeat, falling to sixth, while Al-Fahaheel (6 points) emerged as a winner from this round, breaking a three-match losing streak and moving away from the relegation zone.

Al-Jahra, eighth in the table, notched their first win of the season, defeating Al-Tadhamon 1-0, while the "Blue of Farwaniya" dropped to ninth with the same points.

Al-Nasr remains at the bottom of the league with zero points, enduring their fifth consecutive loss and scoring just one goal all season.

The "Al-Anabi" team faces a serious relegation threat unless their coaching staff, management, and players find a solution to secure their first victory and boost morale.

Meanwhile, Al-Qadsia concludes its final training session today ahead of hosting Al-Ain of the UAE tomorrow in the second round of Group A in the Gulf Champions League.

The "Yellow" team is focused solely on winning to regain confidence after a recent dip in form. They suffered consecutive defeats in the Zain Premier League against Kuwait (2-1) and Kazma (1-0) and lost their opening Gulf Champions League match 3-1 away to Zakho of Iraq.

Meanwhile, Al-Arabi is set to travel to Kyrgyzstan tomorrow to compete in the Asian Challenge League, drawn in Group C with Regar-TadAZ (Tajikistan), Al-Safa (Lebanon), and Murass United (Kyrgyzstan). The competition begins next Saturday.

Al-Arabi is enjoying consistent domestic results, remaining undefeated and sitting second in the Zain Premier League with 11 points, two behind leaders Kuwait.

At the same time, Al-Abyad has started preparations to host Group B matches in the Asian Challenge League, which also begins Saturday, featuring Al-Seeb (Oman), Al-Ansar (Lebanon), and Bashundhara Kings (Bangladesh).

Verstappen wins US GPrix, Norris pulls closer to Piastri

AUSTIN, Texas, Oct 20, (AP): Red Bull's Max Verstappen raced to his third victory in four races Sunday at the Formula 1 United States Grand Prix, while McLaren's Lando Norris took a huge chunk out of teammate Oscar Piastri's championship lead by finishing second.

Piastri was a distant fifth, allowing Norris to pull within 14 points with five grand prix and two sprint races to go.

Verstappen also is closing fast with his late-season charge. Verstappen now trails Piastri by 40 points, and Norris by 26, in third place, and has put the McLarens on notice he intends to chase them all the way to the end of the season.

Piastri and Norris are trying to win their first career drivers championship. Verstappen is hunting his fifth in a row, and his dominant form of late has given him a real chance to get it. He also won the sprint race Saturday after the two McLarens ran into each other on the first turn and crashed out.

"It was an unbelievable weekend for us," Verstappen said. "The chance is there. We just need to try to deliver these kind of weekends until the end."

Norris' late pass of Ferrari's Charles Leclerc for second earned the British driver a crucial position and points as he chases Piastri and hopes to hold off Verstappen over the final stretch of the season.

Verstappen started on the pole Sunday at the Circuit of the Americas and was never challenged for the lead in collecting his 68th career victory, and fourth in five years in Austin. The Dutch driver built a 10-second lead by the half-way point as Norris and Leclerc drove a furious battle for second.

"It was a good battle with Charles. He fought hard," Norris said. "We'll have to take second. No more we could have done today."

Piastri's day never got going. The Australian started sixth and quickly made up a spot in the first few corners but was stuck there for the rest of the race.

Piastri's lead is rapidly shrinking under pressure. He hasn't won since the Dutch Grand Prix on Aug. 31 and hasn't finished on the podium the last three races.

"I'd still rather be where I am than the other two, but obviously this weekend was not what I wanted or expected," Piastri said.



Red Bull driver Max Verstappen of the Netherlands celebrates on the podium after winning the Formula One U.S. Grand Prix auto race in Austin, Texas. (AP)

The series next heads to Mexico City, where Verstappen has five career victories at the Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez.

"I think we need to be perfect until the end to have chance," to

win the championship, Verstappen said. "We've caught up a lot. At the same time, the gaps (between cars) are very small."

Ferrari is still winless on the season, but the team showed flashes with its 3-4 finish from Leclerc and Lewis Hamilton.

And it came a day after Ferrari Chairman John Elkann issued a statement saying he has "full confidence" in team principal Fred Vasseur amid persistent speculation that former Red Bull racing boss Christian Horner could take his job.

"I'm very happy," Leclerc said. "It was good day, especially considering the situation. The second part of the season hasn't been easy. There are completely unfounded noise and rumors around the team. To demonstrate we can stay focused on the job and be rewarded with a podium is really nice."

F1 officials announced before the race a contract extension to keep the event at COTA through the 2034 season. The current contract expired after 2026.

The only purpose-built F1 track in the country, COTA has been an important footprint for F1 in the U.S. since it opened in 2012.

Asian Youth Games showcase strength of continent's champions: Al-Musallam

MANAMA, Oct 20: The Olympic Council of Asia has hailed the Kingdom of Bahrain for hosting a historic and unprecedented event, the 3rd Asian Youth Games, taking place from October 22 to 31. Over 4,000 athletes will compete in 249 medal events across 26 Olympic and Asian sports.

The Council praised Bahrain's state-of-the-art infrastructure, comprehensive preparations, and seamless logistics, as well as the warm welcome extended to all participating delegations. These efforts, carried out under the generous patronage of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, meet the highest international standards.

Captain Hussain Al-Musallam, Director General of the Olympic Council of Asia, emphasized that Asia's sporting achievements are the result of strategic planning, dedication from national Olympic committees, and extensive support for youth development programs. These initiatives are designed to nurture young talent, develop their skills, and prepare them for success on the international stage.

Al-Musallam added that the Bahrain 2025 Asian Youth Games foster human values such as peace, cultural diversity, harmony, friendship, and fair play, helping athletes cultivate both awareness and com-



Hussain Al-Musallam

petitive skills. These values align with the Council's strategy to promote sustainable excellence and pride for Asian athletes.

He described the event as a vital platform for preparing Asia's future champions, ahead of the 2026 Dakar Youth Olympics and the 2026 Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan. With participants aged 14 to 17, the Games serve as a benchmark for measuring athlete development across Asia, and as a stepping stone toward the 2028 Olympic Games.

Kuwait Club opens Super League campaign against Qatar's Al-Arabi

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: Kuwait Club kicks off its journey in the Asian Basketball League – Gulf Region "Super League" today, facing Al-Arabi of Qatar at 7:00 PM at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Complex, in the opening round of Group B.

The reigning champions of the 37th Arab Clubs Championship and holder of ten Super Cup titles, aim to extend its dominance at the regional level. It hopes to overcome last season's setback, when the Saudi federation blocked its qualification to the tournament's final stages, preventing it from competing with Asia's top clubs in the Final Eight.

Kuwait Club enters the Super League in top form, having completed a training camp in Serbia, where it played six competitive matches, followed by participation in the Arab Clubs Championship in Dubai, which it won convincingly. Recently, it retained the local Super Cup, defeating Al-Qadsia 122-99.

Kuwait Club recent performances highlight



Kuwait Club player dribbles the ball as an opponent defends.

strong readiness, advanced technical skills, and peak physical condition, signaling that the "White" team is focused solely on winning the Asian Super League Cup. The squad has been further strengthened by the signing of French star Geoffrey Lauvergne (2.11m), adding extra firepower to their roster.

Al-Mousawi resigns as Salmiya coach

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: Salmiya's head coach Yaqub Al-Mousawi officially resigned from his position, marking the second coaching departure in the 2025-26 Kuwaiti Handball Premier League.

Al-Mousawi follows Burgan coach Hussein Habib, who resigned earlier after the league's pause.

Announcing his decision on X (formerly twitter), Al-Mousawi said:

"I have formally submitted my resignation to the Salmiya Club board. I hope I have fulfilled my responsibilities—as a player, then assistant coach for four years, and finally as head coach for two seasons."

He added: "I thank Sheikh Turki Al-Yousef, the club president, for his trust and the opportunity he gave me, as well as my colleagues in the administrative staff and the players. I apologize for any shortcomings and wish the team success in the future."

Reports indicate that Al-Mousawi has received coaching offers locally and abroad and is currently considering his options.

Meanwhile, the Kuwait national handball



Salmiya's head coach Yaqub Al-Mousawi.

team has departed for Tunisia for a training camp ahead of the Islamic Solidarity Games in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, from 7 to 21 November. Following this, Kuwait will host the 22nd Asian Men's Handball Championship, which serves as the qualifier for the 2027 World Cup in Germany, from 15 to 26 January.

Led by Icelandic coach Aron Kristjansson, the national team began local preparations earlier. During the Tunisia camp, Kuwait will participate in a friendly tournament with Tunisia, Iran, and Guinea, before returning home and heading to Saudi Arabia on 11 November.

Al Hilal seeks top spot as Al Sadd hunts first win



Al Hilal forward makes a goal attempt.

RIYADH, Oct 20: The third round of the AFC Champions League Elite kicks off today with several high-profile encounters, including Shabab Al Ahli vs. Nasaif, but all eyes will be on the much-anticipated clash between Al Hilal and Al Sadd.

Al Hilal will look to maintain its perfect start and strengthen its lead at the top of the group by reaching nine points. Under Italian coach Simone Inzaghi, the Riyadh giants have lost only once – against Fluminense in the FIFA Club World Cup – and are enjoying an impressive run of form.

The match, held at Kingdom Arena in Riyadh, comes on the heels of Al Hilal's dominant 5-0 away victory over Al Ettifaq in the Saudi League, a result that boosted the team's confidence and kept it hot on the heels of rivals Al Nassr in the domestic title race.

In contrast, Al Sadd is seeking its first win of the continental campaign after back-to-back draws in the opening rounds. The Qatari champions have struggled for form recently – drawing 1-1 with Sharjah in the AFC Champions League, a goalless draw with Al Duhail in the Qatar Stars League, and a 2-3 defeat to Al Markhiya in the Qatar Stars Cup group stage.

Those results prompted the club to part ways with Spanish coach Félix Sánchez, appointing his assistant Sergio Allegri as caretaker manager.

A two-time Asian champion (1989 and 2011), Al Sadd hopes to rediscover its rhythm and climb the standings after collecting only two points, currently sitting seventh, just ahead of Iran's Tractor, who hold the last qualifying spot for the Round of 16.

Al Hilal's attacking firepower, led by Brazilian forward Marcos Leonardo and Uruguayan striker Darwin Núñez, continues to be its biggest strength. Meanwhile, Al Sadd will rely on the experience and chemistry of its Qatari internationals, including Boualem Khoukhi, Pedro Miguel, and Akram Afif, who all played crucial roles in Qatar's World Cup qualification campaign.

Best of the Rest

Estudiantes claims derby to go top: Edwuin Cetre and Guido Carrillo scored either side of halftime as Estudiantes climbed to the top of Argentina's Primera Division Group A standings on Sunday with a 2-0 home win over La Plata rivals Gimnasia.

Colombian forward Cetre broke the deadlock in first-half stoppage time with a diving header after Santiago Ascacibar's headed flick.

Carrillo doubled the lead by pouncing on an errant defensive pass and calmly slotting a shot between the legs of goalkeeper Nelson Insfran.

"Today we showed the true side of this club," Estudiantes manager Eduardo Dominguez told reporters. "We could have scored more goals but what is even more important is that we virtually didn't give them any clear chances to score. That shows how solid we are as a team." Estudiantes now has 21 points from 13 games, two points ahead of second-placed Defensa y Justicia, which has a game in hand. Gimnasia is 12th in Group B with 13 points so far. (Xinhua)

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NEWS



Red Bull driver Max Verstappen of the Netherlands leads at the start and followed by McLaren driver Lando Norris of Britain during the Formula One U.S. Grand Prix auto race in Austin, Texas. (AP) – See Page 15

Sports

Kuwait's teqball player Al-Saqer advances to the semifinals

Kuwait eyes another win after impressive start at Asian Youth Games

MANAMA, Oct 20: Kuwait handball team will play its second match today at the 3rd Asian Youth Games in Manama, facing Thailand at 6:00 p.m. in the preliminary round of Group B, which also includes China, the UAE, Iran, and Kazakhstan.

The Kuwait aims to maintain its winning momentum after a dominant 42-26 victory over Kazakhstan in the opening match.

The team relies on a group of promising talents such as Abdulatif Saleemin, Omar Madou,

Abdulwahab Al-Mutawa, and goalkeeper Mohammad Farhan to continue their strong run in the tournament.

Assistant Secretary of the Kuwait Olympic Committee and delegation director Captain Ali Al-Marri praised the team's impressive start and the players' performance in their opening game.

He noted that today's match represents the next step toward advancing to the knockout stages and competing for a podium finish, commending the players' high spirits and

determination to showcase the progress of Kuwaiti handball on the Asian stage.

The 3rd Asian Youth Games, hosted by the Kingdom of Bahrain, will officially open on October 22 and continue until October 31, featuring more than 5,000 athletes from 45 Asian countries competing in 26 sports and 253 events held across 20 venues.

Kuwait's delegation includes 75 male and female athletes participating in 14 individual and team sports, including

swimming, triathlon, athletics, badminton, table tennis, golf, equestrian (show jumping and endurance), handball, judo, teqball, taekwondo, muay thai, and jiu-jitsu.

Kuwait's teqball player Nasser Al-Saqer advanced to the semifinals of the singles event after defeating Bahrain's representative 2-0. Al-Saqer secured his qualification from the group stage with victories over Cambodia and Lebanon (2-0), despite losing his first match 1-2 to Pakistan.

Kuwait golf team manager Dr. Swaid Al-Abkal confirmed that golfer Salem Al-Abkal began daily training sessions immediately upon arriving in Bahrain, preparing for the competition that kicks off on October 23.

He explained that Salem's preparation included participation in the Gulf Golf Championship, where he clinched the gold medal, and the Arab Championship in Egypt, where he finished as runner-up.



Kuwaiti player shoots as Kazakhstan player defends during the opening match.

King Mohammed VI 'congratulates' Morocco U-20 on World Cup victory



Players of Morocco celebrate with the trophy after defeating Argentina to win the FIFA U-20 World Cup final soccer match in Santiago, Chile. (AP)

'Historic achievement'

SANTIAGO, Chile, (Agencies): King Mohammed VI of Morocco sent a warm congratulatory message to the Moroccan under-20 national football team following their victory at the 2025 FIFA U-20 World Cup in Chile.

In his message, the King stated: "We have followed with great joy and pride your heroic journey, culminating in your well-deserved triumph at the FIFA U-20 World Cup (Chile 2025)."

He added: "It is a source of immense pride to extend our heartfelt congratulations on this historic achievement, the first of its kind in Moroccan football history."

"We commend your sporting excellence, born from your self-confidence, strong belief in your abilities, teamwork, and professional play throughout the tournament, which brought honor to your country and the African continent."

The Moroccan U-20 team claimed the World Cup title with a 2-0 victory over Argentina in the final at Estadio Nacional, Chile, achieving a historic milestone for Morocco and the Arab world.

This accomplishment reflects the strategic sports vision of King Mohammed VI. Since the 2008 National Sports Forums, His Majesty has championed sports as a key driver for human, social, and regional development.

The Mohammed VI Football Academy, launched in 2010, embodies this vision by focusing on professional training and development. Notably, five players from the victorious U-20 squad – Yassir Zuberi, Othman Konton, Fouad Zahwani, Houssam Al-Sadiq, and Yassine Khalifi – are graduates of the academy, highlighting its role in nurturing Morocco's football talent.

Striker Yassir Zabirini scored twice as Morocco won its first U-20 World

Cup title with a 2-0 victory over Argentina.

Zabirini scored in the 12th and 29th minutes of the final to help Morocco become the first African nation to win the U-20 title since Ghana in 2009.

Morocco topped its group against Spain, Brazil, and Mexico and then advanced over South Korea, the United States, and France in the knockout stages.

It was the first loss in the tournament for Argentina, which was aiming for its seventh title.

Argentina reached the final despite missing its two best players in this age group, Bayer Leverkusen's Claudio Echeverri and Real Madrid's Franco Mastantuono.

Masood and Shafique survive dropped catches

Pakistan grinds to 259-5 against scrappy South Africa in 2nd test

RAWALPINDI, Pakistan, Oct 20, (AP): Captain Shan Masood and Abdullah Shafique survived four dropped catches to hit half-centuries as Pakistan ground to 259 for five against world champion South Africa on the opening day of the second and final test on Monday.

Masood, put down on 71, scored the bulk of his runs in singles before falling for 87 off 176 balls in the final session on a dry wicket that is expected to favor the spinners more and more.

Kagiso Rabada should have dismissed Shafique off his fourth ball of the test match, but had to wait for his first wicket until late on the first day when he trapped Mohammad Rizwan (19) plumb lbw on the backfoot.

Left-hander Saud Shakeel was batting on 42 and Salman Ali Agha was not out on 10 at stumps as South Africa could get just one wicket with the second new ball late on Day 1.

Surprisingly, South Africa used its best bowler in the first test – Senuran Muthusamy – for only two brief spells of two overs each. Keshav Maharaj (2-63) and Simon Harmer (2-75) kept the scoring rate under control by sharing 54 overs in between them. Muthusamy had bagged a career-best 11-wicket haul at Lahore on a spin wicket.

Shafique's (57) luck finally ran out after getting dropped on 0, 15, and 41 when he feathered a catch down the legside to wicketkeeper Kyle Verreynne, but South Africa had to review the not out on-field decision as ultra edge showed a clear spike when the ball passed Shafique's bat.

South Africa's scrappy fielding allowed Masood and Shafique to add 111 runs for the second wicket

stand after spinners created several chances in the first two sessions, but got little support from the fielders.

Maharaj, who missed South Africa's 93-run defeat in the first test last week, had to wait until his 20th over for his first wicket when he dismissed Babar Azam for 16 in the most productive second session for the visitors in which they got two wickets for 82 runs.

Babar, who hasn't scored an international century since his hundred against Nepal in an ODI in August 2023, hit three boundaries against the spinners in his brief 19-minute stay at the wicket before he was caught one-handed by a diving Tony de Zorzi at forward short leg.

Earlier, Shafique had three reprieves after Masood won the all-important toss and Pakistan reached 95-1 at lunch. Shafique was dropped by Tristan Stubbs at third slip off Rabada's fourth ball, before he'd scored. Then Marco Jansen's sharp delivery beat the inside edge of Shafique's bat, but the bails didn't fall after the ball grazed the off stump.

Maharaj could have made an early impact but failed to grab a return catch to his left in his first over after inducing an outside edge off Shafique's bat. And luck continued to go Shafique's way when he was adjudged leg before wicket against Maharaj, but went for a successful television review as replays suggested the ball had hit his bat first.

Amongst all those nervy moments for Shafique, Masood smashed two sixes against Harmer's off-spin and welcomed Muthusamy with another big hit over the long-on boundary before the left-arm was taken out of the attack.



Pakistan's Abdullah Shafique plays a shot during the first day of the second test cricket match between Pakistan and South Africa, at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium, in Rawalpindi, Pakistan. (AP)

Mbappé continues fine form as Madrid edges nine-man Getafe to retake lead

MADRID, Oct 20, (AP): Real Madrid took advantage of a red card for a Getafe player who stayed less than a minute on the field to win 1-0 with an 80th-minute goal by Kylian Mbappé.

The hard-fought victory moved Madrid back on top of the Spanish league, two points ahead of Barcelona, which beat last-placed Girona 2-1 with a stoppage-time goal by Ronald Araújo on Saturday.

Mbappé's league-leading 10th goal of the season came shortly after host Getafe went a man down because of a straight red card shown to Allan Nyom about 40 seconds after he came off the bench.

Nyom fouled Real Madrid forward Vinícius Júnior away from the ball as Madrid started to build a breakaway in the 77th.

Madrid, which had been struggling to create significant scoring chances, took advantage of the sending off, and Mbappé scored with a shot from inside the area after a nice through ball by Arda Güler.

Mbappé has scored in 13 of the 14 games he played this season for club and country. He has scored at least once in 11 straight matches.

"We're very pleased with how Kylian is doing," Madrid coach Xabi Alonso said. "He's been decisive with his goals and his involvement. Goals give you points, but we need everyone because a lot is going on in the background."

Getafe went another man down four minutes later when Alex Sancris was shown a second yellow card for another foul on Vinícius.

Despite playing with nine men, Getafe nearly equalized in stoppage time, with Madrid goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois charging from the net to make a difficult close-range save from a shot by Abu Kamara inside the area.

"That missed chance by Kamara was a pity," Getafe coach José Bordalás said. "Nyom's red card made the difference. For me, that's not a red card, at most a yellow."



Real Madrid's Kylian Mbappe shoots by Getafe's Domingos Duarte during a La Liga soccer match between Getafe and Real Madrid in Getafe, Spain. (AP)

Bordalás criticized Vinícius, claiming the Brazilian forward provoked him by saying something to the effect of "good job making the substitution" to include Nyom in the match.

Getafe, which had only one attempt on target, stayed in 12th place. It has a five-game winless streak.

Madrid has won 10 of its 11 games in all tournaments this season, with its lone setback a league loss at Atletico Madrid last month.

Just like at the other league matches this weekend, players stood still for the first 15 seconds of the game in opposition to La Liga's plan to hold the Barcelona-Villarreal game in the U.S. on Dec. 20.

Jorge de Frutos scored two first-half goals as Rayo Vallecano won 3-0 at Levante for its third straight win across all competitions.

De Frutos, a former Levante player, scored in the 12th and 25th minutes, and Alvaro García sealed the victory in the 65th.

Rayo was coming off another road win in the league against Real Sociedad, and it had beaten Shkendija 2-0 at home in the Europa League.

Levante has won only one of its last four league matches.

Real Sociedad needed an 89th-minute goal by Carlos Soler to draw 1-1 at 10-man Celta Vigo, extending both teams' poor start to the season.

Sociedad, sitting in 18th, has only one win in nine league matches, with five losses and three draws. The Basque Country team's only win was against Mallorca.

Celta, which had defender Carl Starfelt sent off with a second yellow card in first-half stoppage time, opened the scoring with Pablo Durán in the 20th.

In 17th place, Celta remains the only team without a league win after nine rounds. It has seven draws and two losses.

Athletic Bilbao needed a solid performance by Spain goalkeeper Unai Simón to salvage a 0-0 draw at promoted Elche.

The result kept seventh-placed Elche tied with eighth-placed Athletic on 14 points.