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His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah receives the Saudi King, Crown Prince Representative, Minister of State and Cabinet Member Prince Turki bin Mohammad bin Fahad bin Abdulaziz.



Amiri/PM Diwan photos
Saudi King, Crown Prince Representative, Minister of State and Cabinet Member Prince Turki bin Mohammad bin Fahad bin Abdulaziz expresses condolences to members of the royal family.

Amiri Diwan thanks Saudi King, Crown Prince & PM

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 25, (KUNA): On behalf of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the gracious Al-Sabah family, the Amiri Diwan on Friday expressed gratitude to citizens and residents who offered condolences on demise of Sheikh Ali Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. The Amiri Diwan prayed to His Almighty to reward the condolers, safeguard them and prayed for the soul of the deceased.

Sheikhs, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and the Al-Sabah Family received on Friday the representative of Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and the Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz, Minister of State and Cabinet Member Prince Turki bin Mohammad bin Fahad bin Abdulaziz and his accompanying delegation.

Prince Turki (the representative of the Saudi King and the Crown Prince) and the delegation offered condolences over the death of Sheikh Ali Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

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Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

The Central Bank ... Be kind to debtors

COMPOUND interest is a well-known economic factor that significantly increases the cost of loans, often leading to repayment difficulties and individuals accumulating substantial debt.

This high interest raises borrowing costs for businesses, thereby, hindering competition and reducing opportunities for equitable growth.

In response to these issues, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Federal Supreme Court issued a ruling prohibiting the calculation of compound interest (interest on accumulated interest) under the Commercial Transactions Law and the UAE Central Bank Law.

Furthermore, to prevent obstacles to development, the total interest charged must not exceed the principal amount of the loan itself.

The court also banned indirect usury, recognizing that 'interest' creates a deficit for the debtor when debt servicing surpasses their repayment capacity.

Therefore, this decision helps develop the economy, a goal it has achieved, leading to increased commercial activity and projects.

In this regard, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has long implemented a moratorium on interest on loans, particularly compound interest. When the case reaches court, the interest meter stops, and the principal amount is sufficient.

Compound interest is also inconsistent with the philosophical foundation of the laws in force in the Arab and Islamic worlds, derived from Sharia law, particularly in the Gulf and other Arab countries.

The essence of compound interest is to incapacitate,

impoverish and monopolize. This is why most countries around the world have abandoned it, developing their economies in a manner consistent with equality of opportunity and a commitment to unhindered innovation.

Hence, creditors' reliance on this principle in Kuwait is based on a corrupt principle that is inconsistent with the Constitution and the laws prohibiting usury.

Moreover, circumventing the text is not in the interest of the creditor, as compound interest in this case renders the borrower insolvent and potentially leads to bankruptcy to avoid claims.

The loss falls more heavily on the financial institution or the creditor than on the borrower, who is freed from the bondage of debt.

In contrast, the law empowers judges to impose a one-time, not compound, seven percent interest rate based on a restriction to prevent the loan from becoming usurious, while protecting the debtor from exploitation and the economic system from exorbitant interest rates.

However, the matter does not end there. Bank transactions are exempt from this restriction, and here lies the problem for borrowers, which prompted many of them to declare bankruptcy.

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'Global standoff to hike oil price'

OPEC ready to compensate: Al-Roumi

By Inaas Awad/Najeh Bilal
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 25: Minister of Oil and Chairman of the Supreme Council for the Environment Tariq Al-Roumi stated that any decision to wage war or impose a boycott would affect oil prices, predicting an increase in prices due to US sanctions on Russian oil companies.

Speaking on the sidelines of the 27th meeting of the Ministers Responsible for Environmental Affairs of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Al-Roumi said that consumer countries impacted by the sanctions are expected to turn to oil-producing nations in the Gulf and the Middle East to make up for the shortage of Russian oil.

He affirmed OPEC's readiness to compensate for any supply deficit in the global market.

Al-Roumi stated that oil prices are determined by supply and demand, noting that current conditions do



Tariq Al-Roumi

not indicate a clear positive or negative impact on oil demand.

He indicated that OPEC continues to pump and increase production into the market, with prices remaining within acceptable limits, although they have risen by about two dollars in recent days.

In response to a question about the possibility of global demand shifting toward the Arabian Gulf and the Middle East under current circumstances, particularly as Asian countries such as China and India, which import oil from Russia, may redirect part of their imports, Al-Roumi said he expects such a shift to occur.

He added that any decision regarding production levels would be based on OPEC's studies and available data, whether to restore production to previous levels or maintain current output.

Al-Roumi emphasized that OPEC's response will continue to be guided by oil market indicators and the balance of supply and demand.

Meanwhile, Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) is preparing to complete its exploration strategy following the recent offshore discoveries of Rakhwa, Nokhatha 2, and Jazza 2.

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Kuwait reiterates commitment to charter as UN marks 80th 'versary

By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 25: "Since joining the United Nations (UN) in 1963, the State of Kuwait has been keen on strengthening cooperation and partnership within the international organization through active participation in supporting its programs, funds and specialized agencies, based on its commitment to support and solidify the three pillars of the UN - establishing international peace and security, implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, and protecting human rights," says Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya.

In his speech during the celebration of United Nations Day 2025 in the presence of a number of ambassadors, representatives of the diplomatic corps and partners of the organization in Kuwait, Al-Yahya asserted "today, we celebrate the 80th anniversary of the establishment of the UN and the implementation of its Charter in 1945.

The Charter marked the beginning of a new era in the history of international relations, in which the principles of joint cooperation, promoting international peace and security, and supporting development, justice and human rights were established.

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Al-Seyassah photo
First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef personally supervised the Mahboula operation.

Mol crackdown cuts expat score

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 25: According to the Central Statistical Bureau (CSB), the number of expatriates in Kuwait decreased by 1.6 percent last year, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The Gulf-American economic consulting firm expects a further 2 percent decline in Kuwait's population this year.

The firm's director, Justin Alexander, noted that this is the first population decline Kuwait has experienced under normal circumstances "without wars or a pandemic like COVID-19."

He attributed the decline to tighter immigration procedures, particularly as reducing the number of foreign workers has been a popular demand.

Alexander explained that Kuwait has been undergoing comprehensive regulatory reforms since His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad assumed power, including the citizenship file. However, the population figures published by the CSB do not include the approximately 50,000 people whose citizenship has been revoked.

CSB reported last month that Kuwait's total population declined by 0.65 percent, from 4,913,271 to 4,881,254. The number of Kuwaiti citizens, however, increased by 1.32 percent at the beginning of this year, reaching 1,566,168.

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Navy to launch live-ammo drill

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 25, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti Navy is set to launch a live-ammunition exercise on Monday and Tuesday from 07:00 am to 06:00 pm local time, said the army on Saturday.

The exercise will take place 16.5 nautical miles from east of Ras Al-Jalia coast to Garuh Island and six nautical miles from east of Ras Al-Zour coast to Umm Al-Maradim Island, the Kuwaiti Army's Public Relations Department said in a press release.

It urged citizens and residents alike to steer away from the shooting area during the announced times in order to keep their safety.



KUNA photo
Map defines the firing range site.

Marijuana cultivated at home

263 illegals, flesh traders held in 'Mahboula' swoop

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 25: The Criminal Security Sector launched a large-scale security campaign in Mahboula area, southern Kuwait, on Friday, targeting violations of residency, labor, and public safety laws, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The campaign resulted in the arrest of 263 individuals, including 203 residency and labor law violators, 23 with outstanding arrest warrants, 6 in abnormal conditions, 26 involved in prostitution cases, 4 suspects, and one person

impersonating the opposite sex.

In a statement posted on its X account, the Ministry of Interior explained that the campaign was carried out under the direct supervision of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef, and in the presence of the Assistant Undersecretary for Public Security Affairs Major General Hamed Manahi Al-Dawas.

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Newswatch

LONDON: Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah met recently with Baroness Jenny Chapman, the UK Minister of State for International Development and Africa in the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. The meeting was held on the fringes of the 22nd session of the UK-Kuwait Joint Steering Group held in London.

The two sides discussed the partnership between the two countries in the spheres of humanitarian action, international development, means of boosting it for supporting afflicted communities in the region. They also broached issues on the regional and international levels.

The 22nd session of the UK-Kuwait Steering Committee ended here on Thursday. It was co-chaired by Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and Hamish Falconer, the UK Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. (KUNA)

Gold, real estate partners as surge in prices continue

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

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 25: Despite the recent price correction in gold, the precious metal continues its historic surge, exceeding \$4,300 per ounce (around 28.5 grams) in recent days before falling back to \$4,100, ushering the world into a new phase of monetary transformation amid declining interest rates.

This opened the door to comparing gold with real estate investments, as experts confirmed to the newspaper that they complement each other, but the optimal option is asset diversification.

Amid expectations that the price of precious metal will rise to record levels, maybe about \$7,000 per ounce in the medium term, questions have arisen about whether the luster of gold can compete with the weight of real estate in local and Gulf investment portfolios.

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Global expertise eyed in communication field

LONDON, Oct 25, (KUNA): Kuwait is paying much attention to accelerate the adoption of modern techniques and expanding collaboration with international partners in a manner that boosts readiness of communication system and serves Kuwait Vision 2035 toward a sustainable and inclusive digital economy, said Minister of State for Communication Affairs.

Minister Omar Al-Omar, who led Kuwait's delegation to Bloomberg Tech summit in London, made the statement to KUNA on Friday.

Kuwait's partaking in the summit came within the framework of its keenness on boosting its presence in international arenas organized by global institutions in digital economy and technical fields, he added.

Participation in summit's sessions and panel discussions on artificial intelligence, cybersecurity and digital

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Burgan Bank receives 'Best Client Service' award at MEED MENA Banking Excellence Awards 2025

Prayer Timings			
Fajr	04:36	Asr	14:44
Sunrise ..	05:56	Maghrib ..	17:08
Zohr	11:32	Isha	18:26

Local

Crown Prince and PM extend best wishes

HH Amir congratulates Zambian President on Independence Day

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 25, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Friday sent a cable to President of Zambia Hakainde Hichilema, congratulating him on the occasion of his country’s Independence Day.

His Highness the Amir wished President Hichilema good health and the friendly people of Zambia all progress and prosperity.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah on Friday sent a cable

to President of Zambia Hakainde Hichilema, congratulating him on the occasion of his country’s National Day, wishing him good health and the friendly people of Zambia all progress and developments.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on Thursday sent a cable to President of Zambia Hakainde Hichilema, congratulating him on the occasion of his country’s Independence Day.

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Hot with light to moderate northwesterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 10-32 km/h.

By Night: Mild to rather cold

Weather			
with light to moderate northwesterly wind, with speeds of 12-35 km/h.			
Station	Max Exp	Min Rec	
Kuwait City	38	25	
Kuwait Airport	39	18	
Abdaly	39	19	

Bubyan	36	16
Jahra	39	23
Fallaka Island	37	19
Salmiyah	34	27
Ahmadi	39	22
Nuwaisib	38	21
Wafra	38	21



KUNA photo
Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya received on Saturday his Swiss counterpart Ignazio Cassis. Minister Cassis, accompanied by a delegation of officials, is currently visiting the State of Kuwait.

Empowering youth against violence

Kuwait advances humanitarian relations with US through KAF

WASHINGTON, Oct 25, (KUNA): Kuwait, through the Kuwait-America Foundation (KAF), affirmed on Thursday its firm commitment to disseminating the values of humanitarian tolerance and understanding, and enhancing cultural and educational communication among nations.

This is done through a pioneering educational initiatives topped with “Do the Write Things” program that contributes to building generations able to disregard violence and extremism.

This program embodies Kuwait’s appreciation to the US for its role in liberating the country in 1991.

It aims to strengthen positive dialogue at US schools and encourage students to express their opinions about the means of combating violence through writing and innovation in a manner that cements joint values between the two friendly countries.

The recent visit by Minister of Electricity, Water, Renewable Energy, and Acting Finance Minister and Minister of State for Economic and Investment Affairs Dr. Sabeeh Al-Mukhaizeem to Washington was important as it contributed to pushing ahead the KAF’s

efforts toward further cultural and educational collaboration.

Also, the visit by the Kuwaiti delegation during the annual meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund had a key role in enhancing Kuwait’s leading status in backing border-crossing development and humanitarian initiatives.

In a ceremony held by Kuwait’s Ambassador to the US Sheikhha Al-Zain Al-Sabah featuring the delegation of Kuwait Banking Association, Al-Mukhaizeem affirmed the importance of programs carried out by the KAF that embody unwavering humanitarian values.

He elaborated that the “Do the Write Thing” is a practical exemplary of purposeful societal partnership between Kuwait and the US, adding that it also shows Kuwait’s positive role in supporting initiatives which establish tolerance and dialogue.

Meanwhile, Ambassador Sheikhha Al-Zain underlined the key role of educational and humanitarian dimension of the program in combating violence and extremism at schools and boosting building understanding bridges between the two friendly nations.



KUNA photo
Ambassador Sheikhha Al-Zain with Dr. Sabeeh Al-Mukhaizeem during a ceremony held by the Kuwaiti Embassy in Washington.

Other Voices

Jack Ma and shoe theft

By Ahmad alsarraf

IN 1999, Chinese billionaire Jack Ma founded Alibaba, a mail-order retail company. Within a few years, it grew to be valued at nearly \$130 billion, employing more than 124,000 people. Alibaba is now considered the largest competitor to Amazon, the leading mail-order retailer, as well as a major player in cloud computing and physical storage.

Jack Ma chose the name “Alibaba” not only because he was inspired by the stories from “One Thousand and One Nights,” which have captivated him and hundreds of millions of people worldwide. He also saw a connection between the book’s vast collection of stories and his virtual store, which offers millions of merchandise items.

The name was also selected for its ease of memorability, recognition, and simple pronunciation and spelling in most of the world’s languages.

The company’s name is linked to one of the stories from the book, “Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves,” and the cave where Ali Baba stored all his valuable stolen goods, which could only be opened by shouting “Open Sesame” while standing in front of it.

This is reflected in Alibaba’s website, which resembles a deep cave full of treasures. It provides individuals and small businesses around the world with significant opportunities to profit by ordering items and reselling them.

Despite the clever logic behind the name, the Arab mindset of-



alsarraf

ten struggles to accept it because of its association with “the Forty Thieves.” But that is another story.

* * *

Due to China’s vast size and huge population, and because many people are busy with hard, constant work, many do not have time to shop, especially for items that are not readily available in local shops or supermarkets, particularly those living in remote villages.

As a result, the number of Chinese relying on mail-order delivery for most of their needs continues to grow. This is how Jack Ma built his enormous fortune.

* * *

An Iraqi tourist visiting China shared in a video posted on Instagram that he noticed shelves filled with mail parcels of various sizes at the entrances of many residential buildings. These parcel delivery companies, such as Alibaba, placed the packages there for residents to pick up when they returned from work in the evening.

He revealed that no one else took parcels that weren’t theirs, adding that this behavior is common in atheist countries where the majority, if not all, of the population does not follow any religion.

The Iraqi tourist said he was surprised by this unusual behavior, especially compared to the theft of shoes from worshippers in many of our countries. He revealed that his own shoes were stolen while praying in Iraq.

His observation does not imply that the Chinese are a “special” people, nor that they are perfect. China has its share of bad habits that are difficult to accept. I myself had witnessed many of them during my visit to several Chinese cities. However, it does mean that our problem runs much deeper than theirs.

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Six decades of trust and cooperation celebrated

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 25: His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad stated that “since its independence, Kuwait has given importance to its foreign relations, especially with countries that hold a distinguished position in the international system.

These relations reached their peak under the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, who wisely leads the country at a delicate and sensitive stage in the history of the region, extending his hand of friendship to brotherly and friendly countries in the East and West, while focusing on Kuwaiti-Swiss relations and recommending the continuous strengthening of cooperation between the two countries, in accordance with His Highness’ strategic vision.”

In his speech at the opening of the new building of the Swiss Embassy in Al-Qadsiyah on Saturday, in the presence of Swiss Foreign Affairs Minister Ignazio Cassis and his Kuwaiti counterpart Abdullah Al-Yahya, His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad narrated “the opening of the Swiss Embassy in Kuwait evokes in me the memories of the beginnings, when Kuwait and the Swiss Confederation decided on June 16, 1966 to establish relations between them. I was honored to lay the first foundation stone in the edifice of relations between the two sides. In the same year that the two sides decided to establish relations, I was appointed Consul General of the State of Kuwait to the Swiss Confederation, based in Geneva. I served in that position for two years, before leaving for Tehran and being appointed Ambassador Extraordinary to Iran in 1968.”

He disclosed “I have known Switzerland since 1959, and during that time, I established a network of relationships there and appreciated its sense of order, perseverance and excellence. That same year, the Swiss government appointed its ambassador to Lebanon as its ambassador to Kuwait. A year later, an honorary consulate of the Swiss Confederation was opened in Kuwait, and the late Murad Yusuf Behbehani was appointed as the honorary consul. Thus, Kuwait became the second Gulf state to establish relations with the Swiss Confederation. Within that period, relations between the two sides developed, prompting the Swiss government to open an embassy in



Photo by Rezk Tawfiq
Kuwaiti and Swiss officials, led by Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad, celebrate the Swiss Embassy opening with a commemorative cake-cutting.

Kuwait City in 1975. When I assumed the premiership in February 2006, the Kuwaiti government decided to open an embassy for the State of Kuwait in Bern in April 2006, recognizing the importance of our relations. I made an official visit to the Swiss Confederation to further develop our relations on Sept 12-16, 2011.”

He explained that “Switzerland is not merely a global center for wealth management and sovereign investments, or a safe haven for funds, as it is a model of excellence and a successful and independent State despite its small geographical size. Its diplomacy is characterized by its quiet, discreet and unostentatious approach, which is consistent with the Gulf diplomatic style. Perhaps, this made it a preferred choice for Gulf states whenever they need neutral mediation or an informal channel of communication, such as its role in protecting the interests of other countries. Since the end of World War II, Switzerland has undertaken the task of protecting interests in more than 200 cases between different countries. At the height of its activity, it represented more than 70 countries.”

He said “for us in the Arabian Gulf, Swiss cities have attracted Gulf families for tourism, up to the point that it has become a seasonal tradition, creating informal social and cultural ties and encouraging many Kuwaitis to acquire homes in various cantons of the Swiss Confederation in accordance with its laws on home ownership. This allowed Switzerland to maintain its image as a balanced country in the international media, which has given it a positive standing in public opinion”.

He pointed out that relations between the State of Kuwait and the Swiss Confederation have witnessed remarkable development through a series of reciprocal official visits between senior officials from both sides, includ-

ing political leaders, ministers, foreign ministers, heads of parliaments, special envoys and high-ranking directors. “Several rounds of political consultations have also been held between the two countries, reflecting the keenness of both sides to enhance dialogue and coordination on various regional and international issues,” he added.

He asserted that this extensive diplomatic activity, spanning two decades of visits and continuous rounds of consultations, reveals the significant development in the relationship between the two friendly countries. “Perhaps, the most important of these was the high-level meeting between His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khalid Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and former President of the Swiss Confederation Viola Amherd on the sidelines of the high-level week of the 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York last year,” he stated.

He added “it makes us even prouder that Kuwait, thanks to the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad, has become one of the safest and most stable countries, and is keen on developing relations with various countries around the world.” He pointed out that Switzerland is at the forefront of these countries, as it is not just an economic partner, but also a political, ethical and financial model, as confirmed by its policies. He asserted that “Kuwait remains committed to its relations with Switzerland. We do not forget its stance during the brutal Iraqi aggression when it took a strong and principled position supporting the Kuwaiti position, and, in a humanitarian initiative, allowed Kuwait to be stranded on its territory to extend their stay and permitted our students to enroll in its schools.”

He affirmed that Kuwait and Switzerland are united by an exceptional relationship based on mutual trust and stable interests, reflecting a deep un-

GCC urges Israel to halt settlements

Kuwait calls for unified Palestinian territories

NEW YORK, Oct 25, (KUNA): Kuwait has underlined GCC States’ commitment to the unity of Palestinian territories as an indispensable condition to establish a viable independent Palestinian state on the 1967 borders and East Jerusalem as its capital.

This could be achieved in accordance with relevant international legitimacy resolutions, the UN Resolutions and the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative, Second Secretary of Kuwait’s Mission to the UN Fahad Al-Ajmi said in a statement delivered on behalf of GCC members before the fourth committee regarding ending the colonization in the 80th UN General Assembly session.

GCC States appreciated efforts by Qatar, Egypt and the US, within the framework of endeavors succeeded in reaching an inclusive ceasefire, ensuring the release of hostages and prisoners, and the sustainable and safe flow of humanitarian aid into Gaza, he said.

History is witnessing that occupation and colonization cause suffering and plight and “close” the doors of development and renaissance, he pointed out.

Al-Ajmi further noted that the occupation of the Palestinian territories is the longest-standing military occupation in modern times and has been the greatest obstacle to achieving a lasting and just peace.

Settlement policies, building the separation wall, dividing Palestinian lands among the West Bank, the



KUNA photo
Fahad Al-Ajmi, Second Secretary of the Kuwaiti delegation to the United Nations

Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem are all practices that undermine the opportunities of peaceful coexistence and strip any political process of its substance, Al-Ajmi elaborated.

Colonization in Palestine has not been a merely military or political subjugation, but a main reason to prevent setting up normal ties among peoples, and

Palestinians from their right to self-determination, development and a dignified life, he stated.

He called on Israel to immediately end its occupation, since 1967, halt arbitrary measures taken against Palestinian people, return properties to their legitimate owners and submit compensations to those affected.

On the Sahara issue, Al-Ajmi reiterated the GCC’s firm position in support of Morocco’s sovereignty over the Desert.

GCC States also renew their steadfast stances announced by the their leaders in the final communique of the 45th Gulf Summit hosted by Kuwait, affirming support for the efforts by the UN and its envoy to reach a realistic and lasting political solution to this issue, in a manner that safeguards the interests of all parties and preserves regional security and stability, he noted.

Additionally, Al-Ajmi reaffirmed the GCC’s unwavering stance condemning Iran’s continued occupation of the three UAE’s islands - Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa.

The GCC reiterated its unequivocal support for UAE’s right to sovereignty over its three islands, as well as over their territorial waters, airspace, continental shelf, and exclusive economic zone, considering them an integral part of the UAE’s territory, he said.

diwaniya

ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Numbers not names...
easier to find address

“THE government was considering cancelling street names and replacing them with numbers, except for streets named after heads of state. This is a practical and commendable idea,” columnist **Ahmad Al-Dawas** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“If I were to ask you, dear reader, where Ibn al-Muqaffa Street or Sharhabil Street in Hawally is, in Kuwait we would say ‘As ‘Alaik Ta’rifuhu,’ a classical Arabic expression meaning ‘hard to find.’



Ahmad Al-Dawas

“Don’t tell me to use Google Maps, as we only started using it recently. Why wasn’t our city developed like this decades ago, as Brazil did? Brazil’s capital is designed in the shape of an airplane, with southern and northern wings. Most diplomats and embassies are in the southern wing, the belly is the center of the city housing ministries and markets, and the top of the plane is the Republican Palace, as if the head of state’s residence were the pilot.

“In the Capital, street numbers and residential addresses are easy to locate. I experienced this first hand while working at Kuwait’s embassy in Brasilia in 1986. My residential address was “314 Building K” in the south wing. When arriving at the capital’s airport and taking a taxi, we passed streets with numbered signs. Each street was clearly marked. Approaching sign 300 meant I was near my apartment, and I knew whether to drive a little further or if I had passed my building.

“Here, however, finding streets by name is much more difficult. Where exactly is Sharhabil Street in Hawally? Is it near Tunis Street, or does it branch off from Ibn Khaldoun Street? And which residential area is it in? One citizen said, “I wish the government would start replacing street names like Hassan al-Banna with numbers.”

“The capital of Brazil showcases an extraordinary level of urban planning, perhaps unmatched anywhere in the world. You can drive without stopping at a single traffic light. The car passes under a small bridge while vehicles simultaneously cross over it on a two-lane bridge above. This setup is similar to the bridge under the Passport Roundabout near our Rumaithiya area. A driver heading from the Fifth Ring Road toward Salmiya gently descends under the bridge, while on top, cars travel in two directions - one lane to the right, the other to the left.

“Continuing along, the driver approaches another bridge, descends beneath it, while cars move above in both directions. To turn back, the driver follows a designated path returning to the Fifth Ring Road. All of this occurs smoothly without traffic lights, eliminating congestion and minimizing the risk of accidents.

“The Brazilian architect Oscar Niemeyer is credited with designing the city’s magnificent architecture between 1956 and 1960, before Kuwait’s independence. Niemeyer, who lived nearly 100 years, completed around 600 architectural projects both in Brazil and abroad, including the United Nations Secretariat building in New York and structures in various European cities. With 78 years of architectural experience, he transformed Brasilia into a modern city without traffic lights, pioneering a concept that many cities worldwide would later follow. Remarkably, Brasilia has reportedly not experienced a single traffic accident.

“We say this because current and former ministers of planning and housing have always partnered with Chinese or Korean companies to develop new housing cities in Kuwait. Our government should have drawn lessons from Brazil’s experience instead of focusing solely on the lowest bid prices or construction costs. Had this approach been adopted earlier, we could have saved a lot of money and avoided traffic issues such as congestion and road accidents.”

Also:

“A normal human being is shaped by their environment as well as their physical and psychological behavior,” Doctor of Law and Kuwaiti Lawyer Dr. **Nayef Al-Adwani** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“Those who maintain their physical and mental health can enjoy well-being and vitality, regardless of their chronological age. Chronological age indicates the number of years a person has lived, while biological age is determined by the

overall health of the body.

“A person in their seventies or even eighties can appear vibrant, with clear skin, peak physical fitness, strength, and a slim physique if they exercise regularly and follow a balanced diet. In this context, the Prophet (PBUH) said, “A few mouthfuls are sufficient for a man to straighten his back,” and in another hadith, “A man does not fill a vessel worse than his stomach.”

“One of the factors that contribute to maintaining a person’s health is sustaining a positive mood and avoiding stress and distractions by practicing tolerance and not becoming overly involved in the problems of others. Conversely, some young people in their twenties and thirties may appear much older, with health and physical conditions suggesting they are approaching seventy. Contributing factors include smoking, poor nutrition, excessive use of social media, and lack of sleep. Youthfulness and good health are closely linked to behavior and consistent health care, a concept referred to as medical aging.”

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“Kuwait has had an attachment to the sea since its inception. The sea was the source of livelihood for our ancestors and the arena of their struggle. Today, it serves as an outlet and a space for its people for their hobbies and investments,” Kuwaiti writer **Hamoud Al-Hamdi** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“However, this ancient bond faces a growing crisis - Where can boat and yacht owners dock their vessels? Official marinas in Kuwait are very limited, and most cannot accommodate the increasing number of boats. High prices worsen the problem, forcing many owners to dock their boats in open spaces, at the parking lots of associations and mosques, or even by the roadside.

“These temporary solutions quickly become burdensome, as boat owners face violations, fines, and in some cases, confiscation of their boats. Thus, the sea shifts from a source of pleasure to a source of anxiety. Nevertheless, practical solutions exist and can be implemented, such as constructing multi-story marine hangars adjacent to berths that can hold two or three levels of boats, equipped with forklift systems to facilitate quick launching and retrieval.

“These hangars offer vast space and can double capacity without requiring large land areas. They can be developed at multiple locations throughout the country using the Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) system, ensuring rapid completion and reducing the financial burden on the state.

Also, existing marine hangars can be upgraded through expansion and re-excavation to accommodate a larger number of boats entering and exiting.

“Moreover, these facilities should be equipped with integrated services such as boat fueling stations, small markets (supermarkets), and support amenities, creating a comprehensive and safe environment for boat owners. Fair regulations must be established to ensure real benefits for owners, preventing marinas from being transformed into commercial leasing ventures.

“Therefore, I propose that priority access be granted exclusively to registered boat owners, with special consideration for retirees, who should be offered access for a nominal fee in recognition of their contributions and to encourage their continued engagement in this traditional marine pastime. The issue extends beyond marinas alone. Organized marine tourism can become an additional source of income for the state. Modern marinas offer organized tours to islands, restaurants and cafes overlooking the sea, as well as sporting and marine events. They also attract visitors from Gulf countries who bring their own boats. All of this positively impacts the local economy through fees, licenses, and increased market activity.

“Resolving the marina crisis will benefit not only boat owners but society as a whole. It will help organize the waterfront, prevent chaos, and restore the sea’s central role in the lives of Kuwaitis. In conclusion, the sea is Kuwait’s lifeline, and marinas are its gateway. By investing in these solutions, we ensure that this deep-rooted passion continues to grow and renew for future generations.”

— Compiled by Simi K.Kutty



Drill in progress. Inset: Chief of Staff of the Kuwait Army Lieutenant General Khaled Al-Shariaan meets the commandos during his visit to the ‘Maghaweer Brigade 25’.

‘Regular training vital to improve efficiency’

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 25: On Thursday, the Chief of Staff of the Kuwait Army Lieutenant General Khaled Al-Shariaan visited the Maghaweer Brigade 25 to review the brigade’s assigned tasks and duties, as well as its training and qualification programs aimed at enhancing efficiency and readiness, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

In a press release, Lieutenant General Al-Shariaan stressed the importance of con-

tinuous training and qualification to improve efficiency and combat readiness, and to strengthen the capabilities of army units in carrying out various missions efficiently and competently.

During the visit, Lieutenant General Al-Shariaan attended a field demonstration of urban combat exercises that included several practical scenarios simulating various combat environments. The exercises aimed to enhance coordi-

nation and precision, as well as to develop field operations methods.

He commended the high level of organization and advanced execution displayed during the demonstrations.

Lieutenant General Al-Shariaan also toured an exhibition showcasing the brigade’s weapons and equipment, highlighting the progress made in the Maghaweer Brigade 25’s training and armament systems.

Innocent! ... Court overrules two
yrs jail in cash seizure accusation

Female worker’s 7 days salary reimbursed

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

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 25: The Misdemeanor Court in Ahmadi overturned a previous ruling sentencing the client of Attorney Abdullah Shujaa Al-Otaibi to two years in prison with judicial preclusion and declared him innocent of the charges leveled against him.

The ruling was issued after Al-Otaibi presented his legal argument, in which he asserted that the elements of the crime, both material and moral, were absent, and that there was no evidence that the accused committed the act in question.

He also asserted that the victim’s statements were contradictory and that the prosecution’s evidence was inconsistent.

He indicated in his argument that doubt about the veracity of the charge was sufficient to justify an acquittal, based on the established legal principle that “doubt is interpreted in favor of the accused.”

This principle has also been affirmed by rul-

ings of the Egyptian Court of Cassation, which held that the existence of a single possibility of acquittal precludes conviction.

Al-Otaibi explained that the case documents lacked any conclusive evidence proving that the accused received or seized the alleged money and that the victim’s statements did not constitute valid evidence of guilt in light of the contradictory and conflicting accounts.

He emphasized in his pleadings that his client did not stand before justice merely defending himself but also defending the truth itself, seeking justice and redress for the wronged.

He pointed out that the incident was nothing more than a minor dispute between distantly related neighbors.

□ □ □

Salary reimbursed: The Court of First Instance annulled the decision of the Director General of the Central Statistics Bureau No. 339/2023, penalizing a female employee by deducting seven days from her salary.

The decision was found to be unjustified and unlawful.

The ruling followed the pleadings of Attorney Mohammad Al-Ansari, who argued that the administrative decision was invalid as it is tan-

taunt to misuse of authority and the absence of evidence proving the employee’s alleged violation.

The court accepted this argument. The court affirmed in its reasoning that the documents lacked any evidence to prove the violation against the plaintiff. Therefore, the deduction decision was issued without any basis in fact or law and must be annulled.

The court decided to annul the contested decision and its consequences, obligating the administrative authority to pay the expenses and an amount of KD200 for actual attorney fees, in accordance with Article 119bis of the Code of Civil Procedure.

The court rejected the request for urgent enforcement due to lack of legal justification.

Al-Ansari said the ruling is another victory for the principle of legality and a clear message to administrative authorities regarding the need to adhere to the law and refrain from abusing power.

He emphasized that the ruling embodied a well-established principle that disciplinary authority is not absolute and that its use must be within the limits of the law and in the public interest, not a means of harming or retaliating against employees.



Damaged caused by the fire.

One hurt in Al-Rai car
repair workshop fire

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 25: Fire broke out in a car repair shop in Al-Rai early Friday morning, resulting in injuries to one individual, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

The Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) stated on its official Twitter account that firefighters from the Shuwaikh Industrial Area fire station rushed to the location and brought the fire under control before it spread further. The injured individual was referred to paramedics for treatment.

Meanwhile, firefighters from the Al-Shaqaya, Al-Harfi, Qairawan, and Sanad fire stations extinguished a fire that broke out at a farm in Al-Salmi on Thursday evening. No casualties were reported.

Zero tolerance for any
threat to public safety

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 25: The General Department of Emergency Police conducted traffic and security campaigns in Salwa and Rumaithiya in Hawally Governorate, aiming to apprehend violators, deter behaviors that threaten public safety, and strengthen security presence in the field, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

The Ministry of Interior stated that the results of the campaigns are as follows:

- Issued 524 traffic violations and seized one wanted vehicle
- Arrested two individuals with outstanding warrants
- Detained seven individuals in possession of narcotics and intoxicants
- Impounded nine violating vehicles and seized seven wanted vehicles
- Detained five individuals in abnormal state
- Arrested seven violators of residency and labor laws, and five absconders
- Arrested one individual wanted for criminal execution
- Referred one person to precautionary detention and one to the Juvenile Prosecution

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GCC ministers advance regional anti-corruption agenda in Kuwait

Members endorse new Gulf-wide measures

By Inaas Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 25: The 11th meeting of the Ministerial Committee on Combating Corruption in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries concluded recently.

Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) hosted the meeting, with the heads of the agencies responsible for protecting integrity and combating corruption in the GCC countries in attendance.

Representatives from several Gulf nations participated in the meeting, including Rashid Al-Bawardi from the Emirates Accountability Authority in the United Arab Emirates, Mohammed Ibrahim Al-Hajri from the Ministry of Interior in the Kingdom of Bahrain, Majid bin Mohammed Al-Sinan from the State Financial and Administrative Audit Institution in the Sultanate of Oman, Saleh Al-Qafari from the Oversight and Anti-Corruption Authority in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Amal Ahmed Al-Kuwari from the Administrative Control and Transparency Authority in Qatar and Israa Haidar from Nazaha in Kuwait.



Participants of the 11th meeting of the Ministerial Committee on Combating Corruption in the Gulf Cooperation Council.

Nazaha Chairman Abdulaziz Al-Ibrahim chaired the meeting, while the Kuwaiti delegation was headed by Vice Chairman of the Authority Advisor Nawaf Al-Muhammal.

They discussed a number of topics and issues related to enhancing Gulf cooperation in the areas of integrity and combating corruption.

Participants adopted a number of new Gulf

guidelines to develop institutional work and unify practices among GCC states.

They also supported a number of United Nations resolutions and initiatives that the GCC states will present at the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption, which will be held in the brotherly State of Qatar in December.

Kuwait University exemption denied

Committee probes waste management contracts

By Inaas Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 25: The Legal and Financial Affairs Committee at the Municipal Council, chaired by Fahad Al-Abduljader, met on Thursday, during which it decided to refer the request to discuss extending the contract for waste and debris reclamation at municipal landfill sites to the Legal Department.

The request aims to verify the integrity of the procedures followed and to determine administrative negligence, shortcomings or suspected waste of public funds, if any.

Moreover, the committee rejected the request of Kuwait University to be exempted from Clause Seven of Article One of Ministerial Resolution No. 206/2009 regarding the Medical Campus Project at Sabah Al-Salem University City.

The committee retained two items on its agenda for further study: the umbrella regulations and the regulations for public parks adjacent to private residences, in addition to the practice of commercial activities in unlicensed locations.

It referred the proposal of Al-Abduljader to amend the fees stipulated in the Temporary Exhibitions Regulation to the executive body, along with the letter of a sand extraction company about the addition of an activity in Mina Abdullah.

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Tiny emblems of a proud nation

Postage stamps reflect Kuwait's sovereignty and national identity

By Inaas Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 25: Secretary of the Kuwait Philatelic and Numismatic Society and Editor-in-Chief of Al-Bosta magazine, Issa Dashti, highlighted the vital role of postage stamps in documenting the state's sovereignty and reflecting its independence and identity.

He said postage stamps are as significant as the national flag and emblem in representing national identity.

Dashti said this during a lecture titled "The History of Kuwait's Postal Service from the Beginning to Independence" held on Tuesday at the Nisf Al-Essa Library in Qadisiya.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the lecture, Dashti stated that investment in the postal sector is an effective tool for promoting economic and social development and supporting e-commerce.

He highlighted the notable progress in postal services in the Gulf countries and Kuwait's commitment to issuing postage stamps on national holidays and various occasions.

Dashti also emphasized the role of the Kuwait Philatelic and Numismatic Society in cooperating with the Postal Authority, noting that the society provides Kuwait Post with postage stamp artwork and designs free of charge as a patriotic contribution. These designs are created by Kuwaiti artists who are members of the society.

He also reviewed the most important milestones in the history of Kuwait's postal services, including the first documented postal message in 1750 found in correspondence from the Dutch East India Company.

Dashti explained that the postal center was relocated from Basra to Kuwait several times due to political disputes, the movement of the British East India Company, and the eventual transfer of postal services to Kuwait.

The first postage stamps appeared in Kuwait in 1923, bearing the image of King George V. The first airmail flight between Baghdad and Kuwait took place on January 7, 1933, carrying 53 letters. The first airmail flight between Kuwait and Calcutta in India, followed on July 16, 1933. That same year, mail was also sent from Kuwait to New Zealand, consisting of 31 letters. By the end of 1937, direct airmail services from Kuwait had ceased, requiring mail to be transported overland to Basra before being dispatched onward.

The Kuwaiti government issued a series of postage stamps bearing the image of Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber between 1947 and 1950 to commemorate the Ruler's Accession Day. In 1956, the Kuwaiti government began preparations to assume control of the postal system, and in February 1958, the National Postal Administration was established with the opening of the first national post office in Safat Square near the Ministry of Finance.



KUNA photo
Secretary of the Kuwait Philatelic and Numismatic Society, Issa Dashti, during the symposium.

Over KD14 million paid to Kuwaiti families

Social assistance disbursed to former Article 8 beneficiaries

By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 25: Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs Dr. Khaled Al-Ajmi confirmed the disbursement of social assistance for the months of September and October to 2,130 beneficiaries whose Kuwaiti citizenship was revoked and were previously covered by Article Eight of the Nationality Law.

In a press statement, Al-Ajmi disclosed this disbursement took place after the beneficiaries amended their legal status and fulfilled all regulatory requirements, affirming the completion of procedures for transferring the funds to local banks in preparation for depositing them into the beneficiaries' accounts in the coming days.

He said this step is in compliance with the directives of the political leadership and in line with the commitment of the ministry to ensure assistance reaches the rightful beneficiaries. He revealed that the ministry recently adopted a comprehensive plan to review the files of beneficiaries under this category and ascertain their seriousness in completing the required procedures.

He added "this is the culmination of the tremendous efforts exerted over the past months to regulate disbursement mechanisms and update the data of beneficiaries previously covered by Article Eight, whose status has been amended and who are now treated as Kuwaiti citizens in terms of social benefits." He stressed that the ministry is working hard to standardize the eligibility criteria and enhance transparency in the aid disbursement mechanism, in order to guarantee that support is given only to those who deserve it and in line with the commitment of the State to maintain an integrated social care approach.

On those whose citizenship was revoked pursuant to Article Five, Al-Ajmi stated that the legal procedures for this category are in their final stages, and that their assistance will be disbursed once all regulatory procedures are completed. He emphasized that the ministry is seriously handling this issue to guarantee justice for all and preserve public funds.

He added the ministry is proceeding with a clear policy based on justice and transparency in providing support, without exception or discrimination, to



Al-Ajmi

all those who have completed the procedures and proven their seriousness among those whose citizenship was revoked under articles Five and Eight, embodying the vision of the wise political leadership to maintain security and social and family stability in the society.

Meanwhile, Al-Ajmi, who also serves as Chairman of the Debtors Committee, said the debtors campaign, which was launched eight months ago, will end soon.

In a statement on the sidelines of accepting the KD100,000 donation of Namaa Charity to the campaign, Al-Ajmi announced that the total amount disbursed to date to pay debts exceeded KD14 million, indicating this amount was used to free 2,291 debtors. He said the committee is in the process of identifying the citizens eligible for debt payment in the fourth and final installment, whose debts exceed KD15,000 with maximum of KD16,000. He added the list of beneficiaries will be submitted them to the General Administration of Execution at the Ministry of Justice for implementation, then their debts will be paid in accordance with established procedures.

Al-Ajmi praised the efforts of Kuwaiti charitable societies in promoting the values of giving and sustainable development, stressing that charitable work in Kuwait is a national source of pride, and that Islah and Namaa are considered a model of institutional integration and governance in managing charitable work. He pointed out "we work in a spirit of partnership, not competition, and the next phase will focus on better regulation and transparency to develop this vital sector in a manner befitting the humanitarian status of Kuwait."

Moreover, Deputy Board of Directors of Naama Charity Mohammad Ali Al-Omar affirmed that Namaa's contribution is a continuation of the Islah Society's approach to supporting national initiatives and promoting the values of solidarity. He said "we believe that the partnership between the State and civil society is the foundation of building a cohesive and compassionate nation."

Secretary General of Naama Hamad Mohammad Al-Ali explained that Namaa embodies its mission of serving the community through practical initiatives that translate the values of compassion and cooperation.

Deputy CEO of Naama Abdulaziz Al-Kandari indicated that the campaign is a "national and humanitarian effort to restore hope and stability to struggling Kuwaiti families," affirming continuous cooperation with the ministry in upcoming social programs.

Continued from Page 1

The Central

The Central Bank must address this pressing issue for the public. The current situation, marked by stringent legal action, made debt repayment difficult for borrowers. As a result, lenders also suffered, experiencing a doubling of their losses rather than having any benefit.

Based on this, the legal maxim, “the penalty is on the one who exceeds the limit,” was established. In both cases, there is a double loss for the debtor and the creditor, as well as disruption of the economy.

To foster economic growth, it is imperative that the relevant authorities and the judiciary address the issue of compound interest by following the examples of Saudi Arabia, the UAE and most other nations that have prohibited it. Interest payments should not exceed the principal amount of the debt.

This approach will consider the circumstances of the people and stimulate the economic development of the country.

‘Global standoff

According to oil sources, KOC has achieved a 100 percent success rate in its exploration efforts in the three fields, adding that the global success rate typically ranges between 20 percent and 60 percent, rarely reaching 80 percent.

By using advanced digital technology and high-tech drilling rigs, the company achieved this 100 percent success, thanks to the efforts of its national workforce and highly experienced management, with support from the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC).

The sources expressed hope that KOC will achieve exploratory success in the three remaining fields within the first phase.

They also suggested that KOC’s efforts could potentially result in a 100 percent drilling success rate in the second phase, which includes 18 wells.

The sources explained that KOC broke a record in the history of global offshore exploration by discovering three fields within 15 months, including the first discovery of the Nukhidha 1 field in mid-July 2024.

Kuwait’s offshore exploration history has gone through three phases. The first phase began in 1961 with Shell International, which conducted a two-dimensional seismic survey covering 6,000 kilometers of offshore territory. During this phase, several wells were drilled, but the results were disappointing, as hydrocarbons were not found in the expected quantities.

KOC launched the second phase of offshore exploration in 1981, carrying out a two-dimensional seismic survey that covered the entire offshore area, extending 6,000 meters in length. However, the desired results were not achieved.

The situation remained largely unchanged for several years until KOC initiated the third phase in 2012, and conducted seismic surveys across an offshore area spanning 6,000 kilometers.

Drilling operations for the third phase began in 2019 but were delayed due to the COVID-19 crisis in 2020.

However, as the world began recovering from the pandemic, KPC invested billions of dollars in mid-2022 to carry out offshore exploration. Offshore operations are significantly more labor-intensive and costly than

onshore exploration, up to five times higher.

The sources added that Kuwait aims to use these explorations to achieve oil production of 4 million barrels per day by 2035 and maintain this level through 2040.

Amiri Diwan

The delegation included Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait Prince Sultan bin Saad bin Khaled, Deputy Governor of the Eastern Province Prince Saud bin Bandar bin Abdulaziz and Al-Ahsa Governor Saud bin Talal bin Bandar who offered condolences over the demise of Sheikh Ali Abdullah.

Earlier today, Prince Turki and his delegation arrived in Kuwait to offer sympathy. He was received at the airport by Kuwait’s Defense Minister Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah.

Global expertise

infrastructure sustainability has contributed to sharing expertise and acquiring new visions to back developing national policies and initiatives, he stated.

Kuwait’s delegation contained some senior officials, including Assistant Director General of Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority Sheikh Abdullah Al-Sabah, and member of board Dr. Dhari Al-Huwai as well as head of the minister’s office Bader Al-Khaifi and others.

Organized by Bloomberg on October 20-21, the summit brought together global experts and dignitaries that focused on Europe’s endeavors to achieve the sovereignty of technology, AI, cybersecurity and more.

Mol crackdown

Data showed that the proportion of Kuwaitis in the total population rose from 31.46 percent to 32.09 percent, while the number of non-Kuwaitis decreased by 1.56 percent to 3,315,086, representing approximately 68 percent of the population.

These demographic changes reflect a gradual increase in the share of citizens, with implications for national planning in education, health, and social services, as well as the need to monitor labor market conditions related to expatriate workers.

On September 9, 2021, a committee was formed to examine mechanisms to address the imbalance in the demographic structure, aiming to achieve a population ratio of 70 percent citizens to 30 percent expatriates.

263 illegals,

Field security teams from various governorate investigation departments, Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), and Emergency Medical Services.

Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef instructed authorities to take all necessary legal actions against the offenders and emphasized the importance of ongoing field monitoring and intensified efforts to enforce the law for all without exception.

Meanwhile, the Drug Control General Department (DCGD) overran a marijuana farm run by a Bedoun resident inside a house in Sabah Al-Salem, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This operation followed intensive field efforts exerted by search and in-

vestigation teams, who detected suspicious activity indicating the presence of drug cultivation at the site.

After completing the necessary legal procedures, the site was raided, and 27 marijuana seedlings, approximately one kilogram of marijuana, 50 grams of marijuana seeds, and two precision scales used in the preparation and distribution of the drug were confiscated.

It was discovered that the suspect had been cultivating marijuana in an environment equipped with specialized lighting and ventilation systems to accelerate the growth process for the purpose of trafficking and personal use.

The suspect was arrested and referred to the concerned authorities for further legal action.

DCGD affirmed its ongoing commitment to pursuing drug traffickers and its firm stance against any attempts to compromise the security and safety of society. It also urged the public to cooperate and report any suspicious activities to help preserve national security.

Gold, real

Gold and real estate experts unanimously agreed, in separate statements to the newspaper, that precious metal and real estate are not opposites, as they are rather partners in the investment system or modern investment map.

They emphasized that real estate remains a symbol of long-term stability and security, while gold regains its luster as a quick haven in times of tension. They added “asset diversification is the wisest option for protecting wealth.”

Real estate expert Abdulaziz Al-Dughhaishim ruled out the possibility that the rise in gold will pose a threat to the Kuwaiti real estate market, asserting that talk on capital transfer from real estate to gold is merely “media exaggeration” and not based on market reality. He thinks real estate remains one of the safest and most stable investment sectors, and that comparing it to gold is illogical.

Another real estate expert, Alaa Behehaneh, cited the low interest rates — in theory — as a factor encouraging real estate investment, because they reduce borrowing costs and increase developers’ appetite for construction and development, but was quick to add that other factors control the landscape.

Kuwait reiterates

Eight decades after its establishment, this organization continues to fulfill its noble mission as a unifying platform for states and peoples within an effective framework for confronting global challenges. The theme of the celebration, ‘Building Our Future Together,’ embodies the spirit of solidarity and collective responsibility, and reflects our hope for a more secure and prosperous future. This theme not only expresses the desire to build, but also carries with it a call to strengthen multilateral international cooperation, ensuring a world of peace, development, and respect for human dignity for future generations.”

He pointed out that this occasion is an important milestone in the close partnership between Kuwait and the UN, explaining that Kuwait’s hosting of the United Nations House, which consists of more than 20 UN agencies, organizations and programs, is a manifestation of the depth of the relationship and partnership between the two sides, and reflects the unwavering commitment of Kuwait to support UN work at humanitarian, development and diplomatic levels.



The Minister of Health with members of the association and attendees at the opening ceremony.

Al-Awadhi: Oral health key to preventing ‘chronic diseases’

‘Gum treatment is not a cosmetic issue’

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 25, (KUNA): Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi on Friday affirmed particular concern for boosting inclusive medical prevention and educational programs at the local level.

The minister was speaking at the inaugural session of the Second Kuwait Dental Implants and Periodontics Symposium, organized by Kuwait Dental Association, grouping elite Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti doctors and specialists.

Treating mouth and gum diseases is not a cosmetic issue; rather a condition linked to other diseases such as diabetes, cardiac illnesses, health of the heart and arteries, the minister said, alluding to state-of-art inventions in treating such conditions with employment of digital printing and 3-d imaging.

Dr. Bsais Al-Ajmi, the association president, said the conference was fruit of years of cooperation involv-



The Minister of Health honors one of the sponsors participating in the forum.

ing diverse authorities in the field. The two-day symposium features lectures, workshops presenting top specialists from Kuwait and foreign countries.

Al-Tabtabei lauds students’ Oman victory

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 25, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Minister of Education Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabei Saturday welcomed at Kuwait International Airport Kuwaiti students back from Oman, where they were awarded during the Seventh Financial Innovation Forum.

While receiving returning students, the minister voiced appreciation to the Kuwaiti students for their new educational achievement by having obtained both first and second positions for their innovative projects, the ministry said in a press release.

“This accomplishment reflects Kuwait’s creative student potential marking a genuine national wealth that deserves support and care,” the minister said.

In this regard, the minister reiterated his ministry’s commitment to backing students’ creativity and innovation and promoting their participation in regional and international events.



Minister of Education Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabei welcomes back Kuwaiti students back from Oman.

Experts highlight innovation, investment and workforce development

KCCI, GCC urge private sector to lead economic diversification

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 25: Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) and the Office of the Secretariat General of the Economic and Development Affairs Authority at the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) jointly organized the 11th panel discussion of the Future Prospects for Gulf Economic Integration and Development Program, taking place on Oct 22-23, with the theme, “The Role of the Private Sector in Economic Diversification.”

In his speech at the opening of the panel discussion, Assistant Undersecretary for Technical Services Affairs at the Ministry of Finance Saad Aqla Al-Alati stated that organizing this panel discussion affirms the growing interest of GCC countries in strengthening the position of the private sector and enabling it to play its vital role as a key partner in achieving comprehensive and sustainable development.

Al-Alati pointed out that the private sector is no longer just an economic component, as it has become a pillar in formulating economic policies and the main supporter of governmental efforts to implement development plans.

He said the strategic transformation of the GCC economies requires activating the partnership between the public and private sectors, providing an attractive legislative and regulatory environment for investment, and adopting qualitative initiatives that contribute to stimulating sustainable growth and diversifying sources of income, to ensure balanced economic development.

On the other hand, KCCI stated that the global economy is going through a critical phase, characterized by accelerating changes and growing challenges. It added that technology and artificial intelligence are reshaping labor and production markets, indicating that trade policies are redrawing the map of supply chains, and the shift to clean energy is opening a new race towards sustainability and innovation. It

explained that the future now depends on the ability of countries to adapt and innovate, not only based on their resources, but also on their investment in knowledge and skills and the provision of infrastructure services to the private sector.

According to KCCI, the Gulf countries realized the magnitude of these transformations early on and took the initiative to modernize their policies, diversify their economies, and enhance their competitiveness.

It affirmed that the Gulf has become a growing hub for trade, investment and services, while it continues to build a diversified and sustainable economy that creates value and enhances well-being through the establishment of a logistical infrastructure. It emphasized that the real challenge is to transform this empowerment into actual production and a broader contribution to generating opportunities and diversifying sources of income, including investing in human capital as it is the cornerstone of an effective private sector.

It called for focus on building a logistics services system based on the GCC Economic Agreement and the Unified Gulf Customs Union, which translate the recommendations of the GCC leaders and realize the integrated



The first and second session of the panel discussion during the 11th Future Prospects panel in Kuwait.



Officials from KCCI and the GCC Secretariat discuss the role of the private sector in driving economic diversification.

Gulf economy vision, as well as the importance of partnerships between the public and private sectors to boost the level of development.

Moreover, Director General of the Office of the Economic and Development Affairs Authority at the GCC Secretariat General Khalid Al-Sheikh explained that foresight is a scientific and systematic approach aimed at anticipating the future by analyzing trends and variables, identifying potential opportunities

and risks, and developing proactive policies and initiatives that support decision-making. “By organizing such sessions, we intend to develop initiatives and present recommendations that enhance the progress of joint Gulf action,” he added.

He pointed out that the private sector today is considered the cornerstone of building modern economies and shaping the future of sustainable development as a fundamental engine of growth, a pillar of innovation, and the



KCCI photos

largest generator of job opportunities. He stressed that the private sector is now a key partner in formulating economic policies and leading development transformation paths in various countries around the world.

He asserted that the private sector in GCC countries occupies a leading position in the regional development and economic transformation process. He said GCC countries focus on empowering the private sector to be an effective partner in achieving economic diversification and creating job and investment opportunities.

He revealed that the contribution of non-oil activities to the GCC countries’ gross domestic product (GDP) increased by 71.5 percent at the end of 2023, according to data from the Gulf Statistical Center.

The first session of the panel discussion featured working papers and research as follows:

- “Foreseeing the Future of the Gulf Business Environment,” presented by Advisor to the Board of Directors and acting Director of the Strategy and Research Sector at the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry Dr. Adel bin Ali Al-Abdullah
- “The Role of the Private Sector in Economic Diversification,” presented by Maryam Al-Nadabi from the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- “Implications of US Trade Policy on Saudi Economy,” presented by Dr. Ibtihal bint Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi from the Saudi Central Bank
- “Enhancing the Integration of SMEs and Family Businesses through a Unified Gulf Customs and Trade Platform,” presented by CEO of Al-Oula Steel Industries Company in Kuwait Ahmed Hussein Al-Kharafi
- “Future Partnerships between the Public and Private Sectors,” presented by Director of the Private Sector Projects Department at the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy in Kuwait Eng. Ayman Al-Hajji

The second session featured the following lectures:

- “Involving the Private Sector in Economic Decision-Making,” presented by Tariq Al-Shanfari, Director of Private Sector Development at Nazdar Center, which is part of the National Program for Private Sector Development and Gulf Trade in the Sultanate of Oman
- “The Role of Small and Medium Enterprises in Economic Diversification,” presented by Director General for Strategy at the Public Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises in Saudi Arabia Saad bin Abdulrahman Al-Muhanna
- “Reviewing the UAE’s Experience in Food-Specific Economic Clusters,” presented by Director of the New Economy Department at the UAE Ministry of Economy Professor Tariq Al-Suwaidi
- “Integration and Partnership in Empowering the Gulf Private Sector - The Desired Reality According to Innovative Models,” presented by Economic Advisor at the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of the GCC Abdullah bin Hassan Al-Omran
- “Business Environment and Private Sector Support,” presented by Director of the Economic Competitiveness Department at the Ministry of Finance in Qatar Bara’a Aima Al-Mansouri

National Guard deployments in DC and Portland, Oregon focus of court hearings

Tech leaders, mayor change Trump’s mind about using federal force in San Francisco

SAN FRANCISCO, Oct 25, (AP): US President Donald Trump was geared up for a show of federal force in San Francisco, a city he’s blasted as everything wrong with liberal governance. Then conversations with some of the Bay Area’s most prominent tech leaders and the mayor changed his mind.

“I got a great call from some incredible people, some friends of mine, very successful people,” Trump told reporters Thursday at the White House, specifically referencing Jensen Huang, the CEO of Nvidia, one of the world’s most valuable tech companies, and Marc Benioff, CEO of software company Salesforce.

He said they told him San Francisco was working hard to reduce crime. “So we are holding off that surge, everybody. And we’re going to let them see if they can do it,” Trump said. He said he could change his mind if it “doesn’t work out.”

Trump said the increased federal force had been planned for Saturday. He didn’t specify whether he was just referring to National Guard troops, which he had threatened to send in, or if he would also halt a potential ramp up of immigration enforcement. US Customs and Border Protection agents arrived at a U.S. Coast Guard base near the city on Thursday morning, drawing protesters.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement informed Alameda County Sheriff Yessenia Sanchez that the operation had been called off for the entire Bay Area, a nine-county region of about 8 million people, Sgt. Roberto Morales, a spokesman for the sheriff, said Friday.

Outreach from billionaire CEOs clearly had a hand in the rare reprieve Trump handed a Democrat-led city. But Trump also credited Mayor Daniel Lurie, who has worked to avoid direct confrontation with the Republican president since both took office in January. Lurie has governed as an earnest and relentless cheerleader of San Francisco, and repeatedly refused to weigh in on national politics or to mention Trump’s name.

Instead, he’s focused on local issues - public safety, luring back business and reversing the city’s pandemic-fueled decline. When Trump said repeatedly earlier this week that he’d send the National Guard into San Francisco to quell crime, Lurie noted overall crime is down 26% compared to last year and car break-ins are at a 22-year low.

“I told the mayor, I love what you’re doing, I respect it, and I respect the people that are doing it,” Trump said, referencing a phone call the two had Wednesday.



Flanked by city leaders, San Francisco Mayor Daniel Lurie discusses President Donald Trump’s comments that he has called off a surge of federal law enforcement in San Francisco on Oct 23, in San Francisco. (AP)

An heir to the Levi Strauss fortune and anti-poverty philanthropist, Lurie is a centrist Democrat who had never held office until he ousted then-Mayor London Breed in last November’s election. He has stated no other political aspirations than to improve the city and has said that he will work with anyone who wants to do the same.

Lurie said he told Trump that he welcomes the city’s “continued partnership” with the Drug Enforcement Agency and other federal authorities to get illegal narcotics off the streets and contribute to San Francisco’s falling crime rates. Fentanyl has been a major scourge on the city’s streets.

“But having the military and militarized immigration enforcement in our city

will hinder our recovery,” Lurie said.

Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem said Friday that her department won’t tolerate violence like the truck that rammed into a Coast Guard station in the San Francisco Bay Area on Thursday night. She said during a news conference in Minneapolis that she had discussed the incident with Trump and suggested the president could change his mind about holding off a federal enforcement surge if more violence occurs.

Also:

WASHINGTON: No National Guard troops are expected to be deployed in **Portland, Oregon**, for at least several days, after a temporary federal appeals court decision Friday. Meanwhile, a judge in Washington, D.C., is weighing whether to pull more than 2,000 troops off the streets of the nation’s capital.

The developments are the latest in a head-spinning array of lawsuits and overlapping rulings prompted by Trump’s push to send the military into Democratic-run cities despite fierce resistance from mayors and governors. Troop deployment remains blocked in the **Chicago** area, where all sides are waiting to see if the US Supreme Court intervenes to allow it.

Here’s what to know about the latest legal efforts to block or deploy the Guard in various cities.

A federal appeals court on Friday paused a decision issued by a three-judge panel earlier in the week that could have allowed President **Donald Trump** to deploy 200 Oregon National Guard troops, ostensibly to protect federal property in Portland.

The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals said it needs until 5 p.m. Tuesday to decide whether to reconsider the panel’s decision, and the panel’s decision won’t take effect until then.

U.S. District Judge **v**, a Trump appointee in Portland, issued two temporary restraining orders earlier this month - one prohibiting Trump from calling up Oregon troops to Portland and another blocking him from sending any Guard members to Oregon at all after he tried to evade the first order by deploying California troops instead.

A 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals panel put the first ruling on hold Monday, letting Trump take command of 200 Oregon National Guard troops. But the second order remained in effect, blocking him from actually deploying them.

Early voting begins in NY mayor’s race, contest to pick NJ’s next gov

NEW YORK, Oct 25, (AP): Polling places open Saturday for the start of in-person voting for two of the year’s most closely watched elections: The New York City mayor’s race and the contest to pick New Jersey’s next governor.

New Yorkers are choosing between Democrat **Zohran Mamdani**, Republican Curtis Sliwa and former New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, a Democrat on the ballot as an independent. The incumbent mayor, Eric Adams, is also on the ballot but dropped out of the race last month and recently threw his support behind Cuomo.

The New Jersey governor’s race features Republican state Assemblyman Jack Ciattarelli against Democratic U.S. Rep. Mikie Sherrill.



Mamdani

New York has allowed early voting since 2019, and it has become relatively popular. In June’s mayoral primary, about 35% of the ballots were cast early and in person, according to the city’s campaign finance board.

New Jersey adopted early voting in 2021.

The off-year elections in neighboring states could be bellwethers for Democratic Party leaders as they try to decide what kinds of candidates might be best to lead their resistance to Republican President Donald Trump’s agenda.

Mamdani, a democratic socialist, has electrified liberal voters, drawn to his proposals for universal, free child care, free buses, and a rent freeze for New Yorkers living in about 1 million rent-regulated apartments. Cuomo has portrayed Mamdani’s policies as naive and financially irresponsible. He has appealed to voters to pick him because of his experience as the state’s governor, a position he gave up in 2021 after multiple women accused him of sexual harassment.

Pentagon accepts \$130 million donation to help pay military during US government shutdown

WASHINGTON, Oct 25, (AP): The Pentagon confirmed Friday that it has accepted an anonymous \$130 million gift to help pay members of the military during the government shutdown, raising ethical questions after President Donald Trump had announced that a friend had offered the gift to defray any shortfalls.

While large and unusual, the gift amounts to a small contribution toward the billions needed to cover service member paychecks. The Trump administration told Congress last week that it used \$6.5 billion to make payroll. The next payday is coming within the week, and it is unclear if the administration will again move money around to ensure the military does not go without compensation.

“That’s what I call a patriot,” Trump said during a White House event Thursday when he disclosed the payment from the donor.

The president declined to name the person, whom he called “a friend of mine,” saying the man didn’t want the recognition.

The Pentagon confirmed it had accepted the donation on Thursday “under its general gift acceptance author-



US military senior leadership listen as President Donald Trump speaks at Marine Corps Base Quantico on Sept 30, in Quantico, Va. (AP)

ity.”

“The donation was made on the condition that it be used to offset the cost of Service members’ salaries and benefits,” said Sean Parnell, chief spokesman for the Pentagon. “We are grateful for this donor’s assistance af-

ter Democrats opted to withhold pay from troops.”

Congress is at a stalemate over the government shutdown, now on track to become one of the longest federal closures ever, in its 24th day. Neither Republicans, who have control of the

House and Senate, nor Democrats, in the minority, are willing to budge in their broader standoff over health care funding.

Payment for service members is a key concern among lawmakers of both parties as well as a point of political leverage. The Trump administration shifted \$8 billion from military research and development funds to make payroll last week, ensuring that military compensation did not lapse.

But it is unclear if the Trump administration will be willing - or able - to shift money again next week as tensions rise over the protracted shutdown.

While the \$130 million is a hefty sum, it would cover just a fraction of the billions needed for military paychecks. Trump said the donation was to cover any “shortfall.”

What’s unclear, however, is the regulations around such a donation.

“That’s crazy,” said Max Stier, president and CEO of the Partnership for Public Service, a nonpartisan organization focused on the federal government.

“It’s treating the payment of our uniformed services as if someone’s picking up your bar tab.”



Smoke bellows from a warehouse that caught fire following a Russian attack on Oct 25, in Kyiv, Ukraine. (AP)

Russia missile attacks kill 4 in Ukraine as Zelenskyy pleads for air defense

KYIV, Ukraine, Oct 25, (AP): Russian missile and drone attacks on Ukraine overnight into Saturday killed at least four people and wounded 20, officials said, and prompted fresh pleas from Ukraine’s president for Western air defense systems.

In the capital, Kyiv, two people were killed and 13 were wounded in a ballistic missile attack in the early hours of Saturday, Kyiv’s police said.

A fire broke out in a non-residential building in one location, while debris from intercepted missiles fell in an open area at another site, damaging windows in nearby buildings, Ukraine’s State Emergency Service wrote on the message app Telegram.

“Explosions in the capital. The city is under ballistic attack,” Mayor Vitali Klitschko wrote on Telegram during the onslaught.

In the Dnipropetrovsk region, two people were killed and seven wounded, acting regional Gov. Vladyslav Haivnenko said, adding that apartment buildings and private homes were damaged in the strikes.

Ukraine’s air force said Russia launched nine missiles and 62 drones, of which four missiles and 50 drones were intercepted.

In Russia, the Defense Ministry said its air defenses shot down 121 Ukrainian drones over Russia overnight.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr

Zelenskyy said Saturday that such attacks intensify Ukraine’s need for Patriot defense systems.

“It is precisely because of such attacks that we pay special attention to Patriot systems - to be able to protect our cities from this horror. It is critical that partners who possess relevant capability implement what we have discussed in recent days,” he wrote in English on X.

“America, Europe and the G7 countries can help ensure that such attacks no longer threaten lives,” he said.

Zelenskyy is hoping Ukraine can purchase 25 Patriots from the US to fortify its air defenses, particularly in cities.

Europe fights to avoid being sidelined by US President Trump’s world-shaping plans

LONDON, Oct 25, (AP): When US President Donald Trump took the stage in Egypt to hail the US-brokered ceasefire deal between Israel and Hamas, a row of world leaders stood behind him like extras in a political drama.

It was a telling image. European governments have struggled to play a significant role in diplomacy over the Gaza war, while the “America First” leader has played a central one, pushing longtime allies in Europe toward the sidelines.

Closer to home, they have labored with mixed results to shape Trump’s response to Russian President Vladimir Putin’s obstinate pursuit of the Ukraine war, a conflict with profound consequences for the continent’s future.

“Is Europe able to influence Trump? I think the short answer ... is no,” said Lindsay Newman, a geopolitical risk expert and columnist for GZERO Media. “The policy and positioning of the US government - on Ukraine, on Israel, on its relationship with Europe - is defined by the president and those around him. Largely the president.”

Newman said Trump’s ambitious global agenda proves anyone wrong who thought “‘America First’ means a narrow, isolationist foreign policy.”

“He’s remaking the world in his image,” she said.

European support for Ukraine



US President Donald Trump speaks during a summit to support ending the more than two-year Israel-Hamas war in Gaza after a breakthrough ceasefire deal on Oct 13 in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, as Italy’s Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni and Britain’s Prime Minister Keir Starmer listen. (AP)

against Russia’s invasion has clashed with Trump’s desire to end the conflict even if that means Kyiv giving up territory. The continent’s leaders have had decidedly mixed results in trying to bolster the president’s support for Ukraine.

Trump this week did finally pull the trigger and sanctioned Russia’s oil and gas industry following bipartisan pressure in Washington and

months of lobbying by Kyiv and its European allies.

But he appeared more motivated by frustration with Putin - unable to persuade the Russian leader to hold direct talks with Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelenskyy - than assuaging European countries, whom he has accused of undercutting their call for US sanctions by continuing to purchase Russian oil.

Croatia reintroduces military conscription

ZAGREB, Croatia, Oct 25, (AP): Croatia’s parliament on Friday voted to reintroduce compulsory military service in the European Union and NATO member country.

The move comes amid heightened tensions in Europe following the Russian aggression against Ukraine, as well as an apparent arms race and military buildup in the Balkans, which went through a bloody war in the 1990s.

Lawmakers approved legal changes in a 84-11 vote and with 30 abstentions in the 151-member parliament. The army service will last two months and provide “basic military training,” public broadcaster HRT said.

This decision marks a return to conscription, which was suspended in 2008 when the country shifted to a volunteer system.

Croatia’s Defense Ministry said the aim is to teach young people basic skills and knowledge that are “needed in crisis situations, so they would contribute to national security.”

Authorities will start calling conscripts born in 2007 for medical check-



Croatian troops participate in a military parade marking 30 years since a key war victory, in Zagreb, Croatia on July 31. (AP)

ups by the end of the year. Conscripts will receive a salary, and conscientious objectors can choose civilian service instead, the HRT report said.

Croatia has been boosting its armed forces at a time when many European countries fear that the war in Ukraine

could spill over or that they could face an attack from Russia.

Croatia held a big military parade in July marking a major victory from the 1991-95 war that followed its independence from the former Yugoslavia. Relations with wartime foe Serbia have remained tense since the 1990s.

Europe

5 sentenced over London arson attack: A British judge on Friday sentenced five men for their roles in an arson attack in London that authorities say was masterminded by Russian intelligence as part of a wider campaign of sabotage and disruption.

Their sentences ranged from seven to 17 years in prison. Another man was sentenced for not disclosing information about a plot to burn a London restaurant.

Five men were involved in a plot to set fire to a warehouse in east London in March 2024 that contained satellite communication devices destined for Ukraine.

The judge said that the arson - organized on behalf of the Wagner paramilitary group - was part of a planned cam-

paign of terrorism and sabotage in the Russian state’s interests. It was likely linked, she said, to another arson attack against a warehouse in Spain. (AP)

UK police search for asylum-seeker: British police said Saturday they were scouring hours of closed-circuit TV recordings to find an asylum-seeker sentenced for assault who was mistakenly released from prison.

Ethiopian national Hadush Gerberslasie Kebatu, 38, was “last seen in the London area,” Essex Police said Saturday, adding that officers from three separate forces were working together in the investigation.

Kebatu came to national attention after his case triggered a wave of anti-migrant protests in London and other cities in recent months. (AP)

‘A great loss for the country’

Thailand’s Queen Mother Sirikit dies at 93

BANGKOK, Oct 25, (AP): Thailand’s Queen Mother Sirikit, who supervised royal projects to help the rural poor, preserve traditional craft-making and protect the environment, died on Friday. She was 93.

The Royal Household Bureau said she died in a hospital in Bangkok, adding that she began suffering from a blood infection on Oct 17 and despite her medical team’s efforts, her condition did not improve. She suffered a stroke in 2012 and was afterwards largely absent from public life due to declining health. Her husband, King Bhumibol Adulyadej, died in October 2016.

The bureau’s statement said King Maha Vajiralongkorn had directed that she be given a funeral with the highest honors, and that he had instructed members of the royal family and royal servants to observe mourning for one year.

Mourners gathered outside Chulalongkorn Hospital on Saturday morning after hearing the news.

“It is yet again another great loss for the whole nation. I heard about it at 4 a.m. I felt like fainting. The whole world seemed like it had



Thailand’s Queen Sirikit tours the State Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow, July 4, 2007. (AP)

stopped,” said 67-year-old Maneer-at Laowalert.

Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul said Saturday that Sirikit’s passing was “a great loss for the country.” He said the national flag will fly half-staff at all government agencies for 30 days, and civil servants will observe mourning for one year.

Although overshadowed by her late husband and her son, the current king, Sirikit was beloved and influential in her own right.

Japan PM faces diplomatic gauntlet with Trump and regional summits

TOKYO, Oct 25, (AP): Just days after taking office, Japan’s new leader faces a series of back-to-back foreign policy tests, with a meeting with US President Donald Trump in Tokyo sandwiched between Asia-region summits in Malaysia and South Korea.

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, with limited experience in international affairs, will have to manage Trump’s demands and unpredictability and China’s wariness of her strong support for a military build-up and her right-wing views on Japan’s invasion of China before and during World War II.

She arrives in Malaysia on Saturday for meetings with Southeast Asian leaders, then returns to Japan to meet Trump before heading to South Korea for the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit at the end of the week.

In her first news conference as prime minister, she described her schedule as “packed” with diplomatic events and said it will be a valuable opportunity to meet other regional leaders.

Chinese leader Xi Jinping will also attend the summit in South Korea, where talks with Trump are planned, but a one-on-one meeting with Takaichi would be a surprise.

Neither Xi nor Chinese Premier



Japan’s Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, (right), waves as she departs for Malaysia to attend an ASEAN summit, at Haneda Airport in Tokyo on Oct 25. (AP)

Li Qiang has publicly congratulated Takaichi since she became prime minister on Tuesday. They extended immediate congratulations to her predecessor, Shigeru Ishiba, who held more moderate positions on China.

America has long been Japan’s most important ally and protector, but as with NATO and other allies, Trump has demanded Japan contribute more for its defense. His tariffs on imports have also delivered a blow to the country’s economy.

Takaichi pledged Friday to accelerate a plan to increase defense spending to 2% of Japan’s GDP, a measure of the size of the economy. The target would be reached in March instead of 2027, she said.

“In the region around Japan, military activities and other actions from our neighbors China, North Korea and Russia are causing grave concerns,” she said in a policy speech to parliament.

Trump may be more focused in both Japan and South Korea on his demands for more investment in the United States, particularly for factories that would create jobs for American workers.

Takaichi could benefit from being a political protégé of former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who appeared to have won Trump’s trust during the American president’s first term.

Malaysia warns neutrality eroding as global powers compete

Trump’s Asia return and East Timor’s entry take spotlight in landmark ASEAN summit

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia, Oct 25, (AP): Malaysian foreign minister warned his counterparts from Southeast Asia that the space for neutrality is shrinking in a region increasingly shaped by big power rivalry, as they mark US President Donald Trump’s first trip to Asia since returning to the White House.

The meeting on Saturday serves as a curtain-raiser for the annual Association of Southeast Asian Nations summit, which starts on Sunday in Kuala Lumpur, followed by two days of high-level engagements with key partners including China, Japan, India, Australia, Russia, South Korea and the US.

Leaders are expected to focus on regional security, economic resilience, and maritime disputes - with US tariffs and shifting global trade patterns looming large over discussions.

“As the international landscape becomes increasingly dominated by contestation rather than consensus, division rather than dialog, ASEAN finds itself at a crossroads,” Malaysian Foreign Minister Mohamad Hasan told

his counterparts.

“Our space for neutrality and centrality is narrowing, particularly in areas such as trade, technology and regional security arrangement,” he said. “We must continue to act as the speakers and not the spoken for.”

A separate summit of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership - the world’s largest trade bloc encompassing ASEAN and five partners: China, Japan, South Korea, Australia, and New Zealand - will convene for the first time since 2020. Its revival comes as regional economies seek to stabilize trade at a time when US tariffs have rattled markets and tested decades of globalization.

Apart from Trump, Chinese Premier Li Qiang and Japan’s newly inaugurated Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi are among more than a dozen leaders attending the ASEAN summit and related meetings.

Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa will also participate as new dialogue partners - part of Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar



Foreign ministers and economic ministers of ASEAN member countries pose for a group photo during the ASEAN Joint Foreign and Economic Ministers’ Meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on Oct 25. (AP)

Ibrahim’s effort to deepen ASEAN’s economic ties with Africa and Latin America.

Trump’s trip marks his first ASEAN

meeting since 2017 and his first journey to Asia in his second term. The last US president to attend an ASEAN meeting was Joe Biden in 2022.

Officials say Trump is expected to witness new US trade deals, including with Malaysia.

Trump is also expected to preside over the signing of an expanded ceasefire between Thailand and Cambodia, following border clashes between the countries earlier this year. The ceasefire deal was brokered in Kuala Lumpur in July with ASEAN’s support and under Trump’s threat to suspend trade negotiations. His trip will also take him to Japan and South Korea.

“Trump’s presence reflects a rare moment of direct US presidential engagement in the region,” said Joanne Lin, co-coordinator of the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute’s ASEAN Studies Centre in Singapore. It signaled Washington still sees value in ASEAN as part of its Indo-Pacific outreach, she said.

“But more than deepening US involvement, this visit is about visibility. Trump wants to project himself as a global dealmaker at a time when his domestic policies, especially tariffs, have unsettled key partners in the re-

gion,” Lin said.

Security has been ramped up across Kuala Lumpur ahead of planned protests against Trump’s visit, particularly over his administration’s stance on the Palestinian issue.

Anwar has said the government would allow peaceful demonstrations but vowed the meetings would proceed smoothly.

Malaysia, however, maintains that the truce has not resolved the Palestinian question and intends to raise the issue directly with Trump during the summit, Anwar said.

This year’s summit marks a milestone for ASEAN as it welcomes a new member for the first time in 26 years. It has been a long but rewarding journey for East Timor, also known as Timor Leste, which applied for membership in 2011. The last member to join ASEAN was Cambodia in 1999.

“Welcoming this young democracy strengthens not only our collective resolve, but also our capacity to meet future challenges together,” Mohamad said.

WH imposes sanctions to Colombia’s Petro

US sends aircraft carrier to Latin America

WASHINGTON, Oct 25, (AP): The US military is sending an aircraft carrier to the waters off South America, the Pentagon announced Friday, in the latest escalation of military firepower in a region where the Trump administration has unleashed more rapid strikes in recent days against boats it accuses of carrying drugs.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth ordered the USS Gerald R. Ford and its strike group to deploy to the U.S. Southern Command region to “bolster US capacity to detect, monitor, and disrupt illicit actors and activities that compromise the safety and prosperity of the United States,” Pentagon spokesman Sean Parnell said on social media.

The USS Ford, which has five destroyers in its strike group, is now deployed to the Mediterranean Sea. One of its destroyers is in the Arabian Sea and another is in the Red Sea, a person familiar with the operation told The Associated Press. As of Friday, the aircraft carrier was in port in Croatia on the Adriatic Sea.

The person, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive military operations, would not say how long it would take for the strike group to arrive in the waters off South America or if all five destroyers would make the journey.

Deploying an aircraft carrier will surge major additional resources to a region that has already seen an unusually large US military buildup in the Caribbean Sea and the waters off



Colombian President Gustavo Petro speaks during the swearing-in ceremony of Gen. William Rincon as the new national police director in Bogota, Colombia on Oct 24. (AP)

Venezuela. The latest deployment and the quickening pace of the US strikes, including one Friday, raised new speculation about how far the Trump administration may go in operations it says are targeted at drug trafficking, including whether it could try to topple Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro. He faces charges of narcoterrorism in the US.

There are already more than 6,000 sailors and Marines on eight warships in the region. If the entire USS Ford strike group arrives, that could bring nearly 4,500 more sailors as well as the nine squadrons of aircraft assigned

to the carrier.

Complicating the situation is Tropical Storm Melissa, which has been nearly stationary in the central Caribbean with forecasters warning it could soon strengthen into a powerful hurricane.

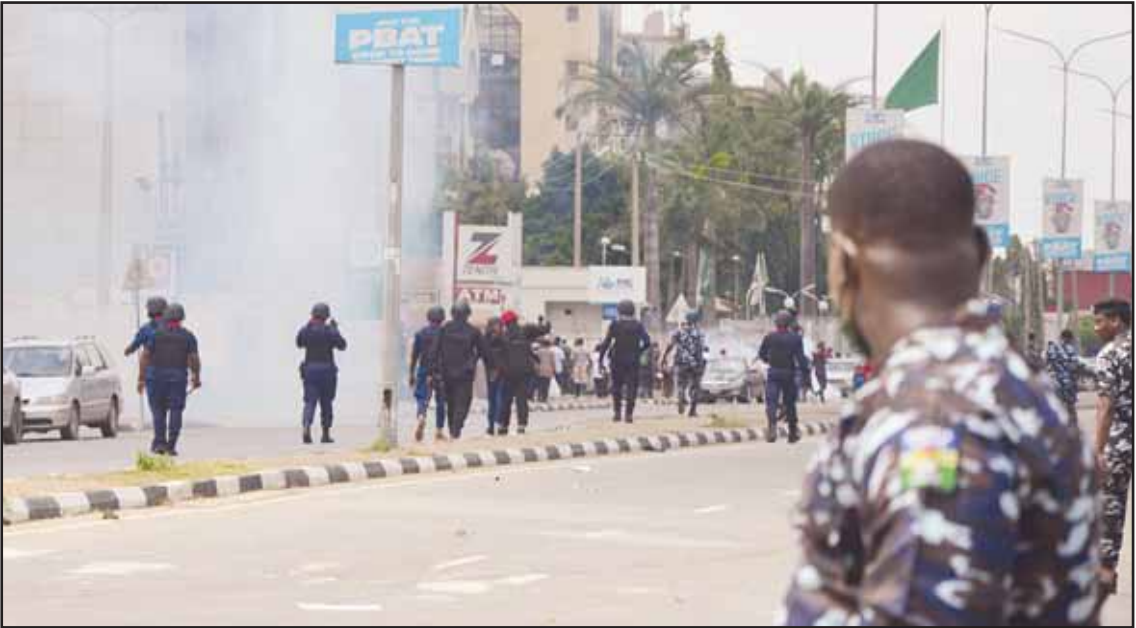
Hours before Parnell announced the news, Hegseth said the military had conducted the 10th strike on a suspected drug-running boat, leaving six people dead and bringing the death count for the attacks that began in early September to at least 43 people.

Also:

WASHINGTON: The Trump administration imposed sanctions Friday on Colombian President Gustavo Petro, his family and a member of his government over accusations of involvement in the global drug trade, sharply escalating tensions with the leftist leader of one of the closest US allies in South America.

The Treasury Department leveled the penalties against Petro; his wife, Veronica del Socorro Alcocer Garcia; his son, Nicolas Fernando Petro Burgos; and Colombian Interior Minister Armando Alberto Benedetti.

Petro “has allowed drug cartels to flourish and refused to stop this activity,” Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said in a statement. “President Trump is taking strong action to protect our nation and make clear that we will not tolerate the trafficking of drugs into our nation.”



Police fire tear gas at protesters demanding the release of separatist leader Nnamdi Kanu in Abuja, Nigeria on Oct 20. (AP)

Nigeria leader replaces top security officials as government struggles to restore stability

ABUJA, Nigeria, Oct 25, (AP): Nigeria’s president on Friday replaced top security officials as the West African country grapples with unabated violence in the conflict-hit north and myriad security challenges.

No reason was given but the shake-up comes as the government has denied rumors of a coup plot in the wake of local media reports that at least 20 military officers were arrested in September, including a brigadier general and a colonel.

Nigeria’s capital, Abuja, was also shaken by protests this week as police fired tear gas and arrested dozens of protesters who took to the streets to demand the release of Nnamdi Kanu, leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra separatist group that seeks independence for Nigeria’s southeastern region.

A wide spectrum of armed groups operate across the country. The Islamic militant Boko Haram, Nigeria’s home-grown jihadi group, this year mounted

a major resurgence. The group took up arms in 2009 to fight Western education and impose its radical version of Islamic law.

Boko Haram’s splinter faction Ansaru and the Islamic State group’s affiliate, known as Islamic State West Africa Province, have also staged attacks. Criminal groups specializing in kidnapping for ransom and looting - commonly referred to as bandits - are also dominant.

In recent months, Islamic extremists have repeatedly overrun military outposts, mined roads with bombs and raided civilian communities, raising fears of a possible return to the peak insecurity of the Boko Haram era despite the military’s claims of success against them.

Earlier this year, the U.S. government approved the sale of \$346 million in arms to bolster Nigeria’s fight against insurgency and criminal groups.

According to the presidential

spokesman, Nigerian President Bola Tinubu fired three top security officials on Friday - Christopher Musa, chief of defense staff; Emmanuel Ogalla, chief of naval staff, and Hassan Abubakar, chief of air staff.

Tinubu appointed Olufemi Oluyede, the former chief of army staff, as the new chief of defense staff.

W. Shaibu, I. Abbas and S.K. Aneke were appointed as the chiefs of army, air force, and naval staff. The president tasked them with improving “the professionalism, vigilance and comradeship that define the Armed Forces of Nigeria,” spokesman Sunday Dare said in a statement.

The denial of a coup plot by Nigeria’s defense headquarters earlier this week did little to calm public fears, as the topic draws widespread attention.

In the past three years, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger each saw a military takeover, a trend that analysts warn could continue across West Africa.

Severe flooding affects over 960,000 in South Sudan: UN

UNITED NATIONS, Oct 25, (Xinhua): Severe flooding affected more than 960,000 people in six states in South Sudan under the government of **Salva Kiir** and displaced some 335,000 people, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said Friday.

Since last month, the floods have affected more than 140 health facilities, disrupting access to essential health services for thousands of people at a time when South Sudan grapples with disease outbreaks, including cholera and malaria, the office said.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has reported more than 104,000 malaria cases, including 16 deaths, across the country in the past week, marking a 15 percent increase in cases from the previous week, mainly due to the ongoing flooding.

OCHA said the flooding is compounding an already dire humanitarian situation in the country, which faces ongoing conflict and acute food insecurity.

The office said the United Nations and its humanitarian partners continue to reach flood-affected people with life-saving aid and conduct needs assessments despite significant access challenges in the states of Unity, Jonglei and Upper Nile.

The World Food Programme said it is delivering food and nutrition assistance.



Kiir

Subcontinent

20 dead in India vehicle collision: At least 20 people were killed and many others suffered burn injuries early Friday when a private bus carrying them caught fire after colliding with a motorcycle in the southern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh, officials said.

The bus caught fire on the road near Chinna Tekur village in Kurnool district in Andhra Pradesh.

According to police, the ill-fated bus travelling from Hyderabad to Bengaluru with 42 passengers on board went up in flames immediately after the collision. Reports said the majority of the passengers were asleep when the accident occurred.

Following the blaze, locals rushed to the spot and tried to rescue the injured before fire tenders and police teams arrived. (Xinhua)

□ □ □

Pakistan road accident kills 5: At least five members of a family were killed and four others injured when a truck rammed into a minivan in Pakistan’s eastern Punjab province early on Saturday, an official said on Saturday.

The accident occurred on Hafizabad Road near Qila Diwan Singh area of Gujranwala district, a Rescue 1122 spokesperson told Xinhua.

He said a speeding truck hit the van carrying a family, killing five people on the spot and leaving four others seriously injured.

“The deceased included three men and two women,” the spokesperson said, adding that the injured were shifted to hospital. (Xinhua)

Africa

Ivory Coast votes: Voters in Ivory Coast cast ballots Saturday to elect a new leader as longtime President Alassane Ouattara seeks a fourth term while his key contenders were barred from the race.

The election is the latest example of aging men continuing to hold power in Africa, which boasts the youngest population in the world. Cameroon’s Paul Biya, 92, Uganda’s Yoweri Museveni, 81, and Equatorial Guinea’s Teodoro Mbassogo, 83, are some other older African leaders still in power.

Five candidates are jostling for Ivory Coast’s top job, but many see Ouattara, the 83-year-old leader of the world’s biggest producer of cocoa, retaining his seat. If he wins, he will extend his rule to almost two decades. Ouattara’s party, the Rally of Houphouetistes for De-

mocracy and Peace, or RHDP, also holds a majority of seats in parliament. (AP)

□ □ □

Cameroon opp’n leaders arrested: Two Cameroon opposition leaders have been arrested, their parties said, as protests rattled the country over the presidential election results that were expected on Monday.

Among those arrested late Friday in the economic hub of Douala were Anicet Ekane and Djeunkam Tehameni, two top figures in the Union for Change political platform that endorsed candidate Issa Tchiroma Bakary and his claim to have defeated President Paul Biya in the Oct. 12 election.

The African Movement for New Independence and Democracy (MANIDEM) party said its treasurer and other members were also “kidnapped” by local security forces. It said the aim was “to intimidate Camerooni-

Kuwaiti crude rises to \$69.63 pb

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 25, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti crude oil price rose 62 cents during Friday's trading to reach USD 69.63 per barrel (pb), compared with Thursday's USD 69.01 pb, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC)

said on Saturday. Globally, Brent futures fell five cents to reach USD 65.94 pb and West Texas Intermediate went down 29 cents to reach USD 61.50 pb.

Other Voices

Jittery oil market, prices set to rise

By Kamel Al-Harami
Independent Oil Analyst

OIL markets were experiencing significant price fluctuations these days following recent actions by the U.S. administration to boycott the import and purchase of Russian oil. The U.S. has warned China and India to stop buying Russian oil or face consequences for continuing their dealings with Russia.



Al-Harami

China and India are among the world's largest oil consumers, with China importing around 17 million barrels per day, second only to the U.S. at 22 million barrels per day, while India ranks third with 5.7 million barrels per day. Russia has been a major crude oil supplier to both countries.

As a result, these countries are now expected to turn to alternative or traditional suppliers from the Arabian Gulf region, where they have long-standing trading relationships.

Switching to another oil supplier is not difficult, but it will likely create market instability and push prices higher. The search for new suppliers presents logistical challenges, and the most concerning issue is meeting the large volume previously supplied by Russia. In the coming days, it will become clear how this supply gap can be addressed.

No single oil-producing country can replace Russia's lost output alone. A combined effort from OPEC+ members will be required, provided they have adequate surplus. Saudi Arabia and the UAE could contribute some volume, but likely no more than 2 million barrels per day, or possibly less. Given today's tight market conditions, oil prices are expected to rise above \$70 per barrel, up from around \$62 per barrel last week.

The current oil situation is complex, as the U.S. administration has also decided to fill its strategic reserves at this time of year, while simultaneously calling for a boycott of Russian oil. The timing seems unusual, or perhaps the U.S. expected oil prices to remain low, in the low \$60s range. However, prices are now rising above \$66 per barrel.

The U.S. decision appears to be contributing to higher prices. Filling the strategic reserve during the peak winter demand period, while pushing China and India to avoid Russian oil, is likely to put additional upward pressure on the market.

The current U.S. administration, which calls on oil producers to "reduce oil prices," is the one creating confusion in the market. Its push for a boycott of Russian oil has tightened supply, while its decision to refill the strategic reserve is driving prices above \$62 per barrel.

This recent firming of oil prices is not the result of actions of OPEC+ but stems directly from the U.S. administration's oil policy.

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Business

Bank praised for digital transformation and private banking excellence

Gulf Bank recognized as the 'Best Next Generation Program' at MEED Awards

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 25: Gulf Bank announced that it has received the "Best Next Generation Program" award as part of the 2025 MEED Banking Excellence Awards for Wealth Management and Private Banking in the Middle East and North Africa, organized by the international publication MEED in Dubai.

This award comes in recognition of Gulf Bank's efforts to develop innovative banking programs designed for young entrepreneurs and promising business owners, by providing specialized financial and advisory solutions that enable them to grow their businesses and build a sustainable financial future.

Gulf Bank was selected for this prestigious award based on a range of professional criteria, including the design of innovative financing and advisory programs tailored for young and emerging entrepreneurs, the launch of flexible banking products and digital services that elevate the next generation's customer experience, and the bank's leadership in digital transformation, exemplified by its advanced mobile application.

The Bank was further recognized for the development of its premium private banking services, offering asset-backed financing, exclusive investment solutions, and elite banking cards designed to meet the needs of high-net-worth clients.

Commenting on this achievement, Abdulrahman Al-Khubaizi, Deputy General Manager of Consumer Banking – Wealth Management at Gulf Bank, stated: "We are honored to receive this prestigious award, which reflects our unwavering commitment to empowering Kuwaiti youth and supporting them in building their businesses and securing their financial future. This recognition not only celebrates our achievements but also reinforces our responsibility to continue innovating and fulfilling the aspirations of the next generation."

Al-Khubaizi added that Gulf Bank



Abdulrahman Al-Khubaizi:
■ "This award underscores our ongoing commitment to empowering Kuwaiti youth and enabling them to build a prosperous financial future."

continues to place strategic focus on its private banking services, offering tailored programs and initiatives designed for young high-net-worth individuals and future investors. He emphasized that the Bank remains dedicated to expanding its client base and strengthening customer loyalty, contributing to sustainable growth and long-term value creation in the years ahead.

He further noted that the bank is committed to providing high-quality, bespoke wealth management services, through personalized banking solutions that align with clients' needs and lifestyles. This approach ensures seamless banking experiences and attracts more affluent clients seeking exclusive and refined banking services.

It is worth noting that Gulf Bank recently received the "Best Customer Experience in Private Banking Services"



es" award at the Private Banker International Global Wealth Awards 2025, one of the world's leading awards in the wealth management sector.

In 2024, Gulf Bank was also honored with the "Best Next Generation Offering for Emerging High-Net-Worth Clients" award from the same organization, further reaffirming its leadership in addressing the evolving needs of clients, particularly the new generation of investors.

MEED, the organizer of this award, is a renowned media and business intelligence platform established in 1957, dedicated to tracking and analyzing economic and financial devel-

opments across the Middle East. The organization hosts the MENA Banking Excellence Awards in collaboration with leading global banking partners, including Private Banker International, to honor financial institutions that exemplify excellence in innovation, customer experience, and digital transformation.

The awards are widely regarded as among the most prestigious recognitions in the regional banking sector, distinguished by transparent evaluation criteria and a rigorous selection process conducted by a specialized judging panel of international banking experts and consultants.

Founders from 6 regional markets handpicked for the flagship phase of ZGI

Zain Great Idea: 13 regional tech startups to embark on the Global Acceleration program in Silicon Valley

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 25: Zain Group announced the selection of 13 tech startups by judging panels across six of its operating companies and subsidiaries in the region to advance to the flagship phase of its award-winning accelerator, Zain Great Idea. The selected founders will take part in the upcoming Global Acceleration program in Palo Alto, California, at the heart of Silicon Valley, the world's capital of entrepreneurship.

From Kuwait, the shortlisted startups are Farah; the one-stop destination for wedding planning, LumenPro; a platform that brings the most powerful AI tools together in one place, Playbook; a digital platform for discovering and booking kids' parties, Provis Management; a specialist in sourcing and recruiting talent for the culinary sector, Tenmeiya; the first Arabic platform that enables creators to monetize their content, and the QA; Kuwait's first research platform connecting brands with verified local participants to collect fast, high-quality insights.

From Jordan, Avancer.AI; a platform for detecting manipulated digital content and fake media. From the United Arab Emirates, FortyGuard; an AI-driven temperature intelligence platform. From the Kingdom of Bahrain, Wajba; a digital platform for F&B vendors to sell surplus food at discounted prices.

From the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, WePay; a fintech platform offering escrow-based payment solutions. From Iraq, Andalusi; an edtech provider of apps, digital classrooms, creative tools, and training simulations. Jaamila; an e-commerce platform that connects buyers and sellers to enable digital trade and inventory management, and Saleem; a platform for digital healthcare innovations such as telemedicine, homecare apps, and medical devices.

Alongside the finalists, Zain announced six runners-up from Kuwait: Actly; a leading platform for AI agents, QETAE; a mobile app for purchasing spare parts and accessing automotive services, Athletes Elevator; an AI-powered sports talent platform, Go Tickets!; an all-in-one ticketing platform for movies, shows, events, and leisure activities, Outing; a platform for booking chalets, villas, farms, campsites, resorts, and holiday homes, and Vehab; a VR application that enhances rehabilitation experiences.

The finalists were announced following the conclusion of the Super Saturday events held in each of the six markets. During these events, participants from every country applied the knowledge and skills gained in the first phase, the intensive bootcamp, to present final concepts for their companies and pitch business plans to judging panels. The panels then selected the finalists based on a set of academic criteria.

In Kuwait, the judging panel included senior executives, experts, and investors: Malek Hammoud, Chief Investment and Digital Transformation Officer at Zain Group, Volkan Sen, Head of Zain Ventures, Othman Ayman Boodai, Board Member and Group CEO at Rawasi Holding, and Nasser Al-Mutawa, Head of Digital Group at Warba Bank.

The panel also included Mohammad Al-Munifi, Head of Investments at Faith Capital, Ahmad Marafi, Co-founder and CEO of CODED Academy, Seham Al-Hussaini, Former General Manager of Deliveroo in Kuwait and Qatar, Bashar Al-Abdulhadi, Founder of KuwaitNet, and Mai Al-Owaish, CEO of CINET.

The finalists will now head to the Global Acceleration program in Palo Alto, California in Silicon Valley, offering an exceptional opportunity to experience business dynamics up close. The program comes in collaboration with Vibrantium VC, a Silicon Valley-based venture capital fund specializing in startup investments.

The program is set to feature workshops, networking with startup founders, visits to major accelerators and technology companies, pitching to venture capital funds, relationship building, and a deep dive into the global entrepreneurship ecosystem.



Kuwait judging panel members with the Zain Great Idea team.



Group photo of the ZGI Kuwait cohort.



Chief Investment and Digital Transformation Officer Malek Hammoud with members of the judging panel and the Zain team.



The judging process during the Super Saturday event.



Founders presenting their startups to the judging panel.

The first phase of the program, the intensive bootcamp, recently concluded across Zain's markets as part of the new edition launched in several GCC and Arab countries. The program carries an ambitious vision to empower founders to develop their startups and build more impactful and sustainable business models.

The opening weeks featured a series of intensive sessions focused on strategic pillars such as marketing, finance, operations management, and digital transformation. The goal was to accelerate startup growth and prepare them to enter regional and international markets with confidence and efficiency.

The bootcamp also featured one-to-one and speed mentoring sessions focused on core areas, helping participants strengthen their foundations and move faster toward sustainable growth and market expansion.

This year's edition is supported by Zain Ventures, the Group's investment arm for emerging technologies, and ZainTECH, its regional digital and ICT solutions arm. For the first time in the program's 15-plus year history, applications were opened to candidates from Kuwait, Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, creating new opportunities for mentorship, funding, and international exposure.

Zain Ventures aims to identify and invest in promising startups from the cohort. ZainTECH will work closely with ZGI to support selected startups joining the Silicon Valley phase, offering expertise in cloud computing, artificial intelligence, analytics, robotics, and other advanced technologies that drive growth.

The expansion marks a major milestone for ZGI, as previous editions focused on the Kuwaiti market. The new regional launch underscores Zain's long-term commitment to advancing technological innovation and entrepreneurship across the region.

Meet the finalists

Farah

Founded by Abdulwahab and Khaled Al-Tabtabaei

from Kuwait, Farah is the one-stop shop for weddings, where grooms and brides can book all their wedding needs directly from trusted vendor, all in one place.

LumenPro

Founded by Hussain Al-Saffar from Kuwait, LumenPro is a platform that brings the world's most powerful AI tools together. Not just another app, but the creative hub where ideas turn into visuals in seconds. A seamless platform designed for creators, businesses, and visionaries in the MENA region and beyond.

Playbook

Founded by Hanan Al-Kulaib and Basma Al-Humaidhi from Kuwait, Playbook is a digital platform that makes it easy for parents to discover and book kids' parties, while helping vendors manage and streamline their operations efficiently.

Provis Management Consulting

Founded by Nasser Al-Helali and Fatimah Boareki from Kuwait, Provis is an HR partner to local businesses and startups to help them build strong, engaged teams. It also operates Searly, a specialized platform for sourcing and placing culinary talent across the GCC.

Tenmeiya

Founded by Eid Al-Mujaibel from Kuwait, Tenmeiya is the first Arabic platform that helps creators monetize their content. Upload, sell, and deliver in one place — without any technical complexity.

theQA

Founded by Ahmad Al-Ebrahim from Kuwait, theQA is Kuwait's first research platform connecting brands with verified local participants to collect fast, high-quality insights. It helps companies make smarter, data-backed decisions through reliable consumer feedback.

Avancer.AI

Founded by Mohammed and Abdullah Majed from Jordan, Avancer.ai is a cutting-edge startup specializing in the detection of manipulated or fake media. The platform uses advanced technology to validate videos and an-

alyze audio authenticity, providing users with quick and reliable results. Users can trust that their media content is verified, ensuring accuracy and transparency.

FortyGuard

Founded by Jay Sadiq from the UAE, FortyGuard delivers Temperature AI with 2-meter precision, 115x more accurate than standard models. With applications in logistics, real estate, energy, and smart cities, FortyGuard is positioned to scale globally as the platform for temperature intelligence.

Wajba

Founded by Ghassan Esfahani from Bahrain, Wajba is a digital platform that helps F&B vendors sell surplus food at discounted prices, reducing waste while making meals more affordable for consumers. It allows businesses to recover lost revenue, consumers to access great deals, and contributes to a more sustainable environment.

WePay

Founded by Maha Al-Rossais from KSA, WePay is an innovative fintech startup focused on transforming transaction security through an escrow-based payment platform, providing a secure and transparent payment solution for buyers and sellers (Individuals/Businesses).

Andalusi

Founded by Hussam Aamer from Iraq, Andalusi provides educational technologies that enhance learning through apps, digital classrooms, creative tools, and training simulations.

Jaamila

Founded by Khaled Alsaady from Iraq, Jaamila is an online platform that connect buyers and sellers, enabling digital trade, inventory management, and streamlined supply chains.

Saleem

Founded by Taha Ayad from Iraq, Saleem is a platform for digital healthcare innovations such as telemedicine, homecare apps, medical devices, and other solutions that improve patient access and health service delivery.

Reaffirming its commitment to a personalized, exceptional experience for Private Banking and Wealth Management clients

Burgan Bank receives ‘Best Client Service’ award at MEED MENA Banking Excellence Awards 2025

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 25: In the latest testament to its strategic commitment to excellence, Burgan Bank has been honored with the “Best Client Service” award at the MENA Banking Excellence Awards 2025 – Wealth & Private, under the “Client Service & Relationship Management” category, for its exceptional commitment to a client-first culture. Organized by the Middle East Economic Digest (MEED) – a preeminent business intelligence service providing news, analysis, and data on the Middle East and North Africa – the annual awards celebrate the financial institutions that excel in offering personalized advisory services, innovative wealth solutions, and comprehensive family office support.



Meshari Shehab, General Manager – Private Banking and Wealth Management at Burgan Bank

Accepting the award on behalf of Burgan Bank at the annual awards gala held in Dubai, UAE, was Mr. Meshari Shehab, General Manager – Private Banking and Wealth Management at Burgan Bank.

Mr. Meshari Shehab commented: “It is an honor to accept this prestigious accolade from MEED, a recognition that reaffirms the enduring success of our client-first mindset – one that places our clients’ goals, trust, and experience at the center of every relationship,” commented Mr. Meshari. “At Burgan Bank, we continuously invest in our people, our platforms, and our processes to deliver seamless, responsive, and high-impact banking solutions that elevate the private banking experience even further.”

He added: “This award also reinforces our focus on building enduring partnerships, enabled by empowered relationship managers, advanced digital capabilities, and an unwavering pursuit of client satisfaction.”

Burgan Bank was selected for the award following rigorous, independent evaluation of top-tier applicants from across the MENA Private Banking and Wealth Management industry. The judges commended the Bank’s exceptionally high client satisfaction score in 2024, its dedicated relationship manager model, and its ability to combine speed, responsiveness and omnichannel delivery. They further highlighted that continuous investment in staff training and client feedback mechanisms demonstrates the Bank’s leadership in elevating the private banking experience across the MENA region.

Driven by its unwavering pursuit to offer its Private Banking and Wealth Management clients best-in-class services and products, Burgan Bank continues to broaden its licensed capabilities under the Capital Markets Authority (CMA). These include custodian, investment advisory, portfolio management, and unregistered securities brokerage licenses – collectively enabling the Bank to deliver a comprehensive suite of high-quality, value-driven financial solutions. In parallel, the Bank continues to enroll its dedicated CMA-registered advisors and relationship managers in year-long training under the umbrella of its Investment and Wealth Management Academy. This initiative ensures that every



Meshari Shehab receives ‘Best Client Service’ award at MEED MENA Banking Excellence Awards 2025.



advisor is equipped with deep knowledge of investment methodologies, market dynamics, and risk management approaches; empowering them to guide high-net-worth and ultra-high-net-worth clients in alignment with their unique portfolios, liquidity requirements, and risk appetite

The MEED award comes following yet another recent accolade that Burgan Bank received at the 12th Arab Awards and Commendations of Excellence, organized by the World Union of Arab Bankers (WUAB), for its “Excellence and Leadership in Wealth and Credit Management Services in Kuwait for the Year 2025”. Other awards include the Global Private Banker MEA Awards 2024, where the Bank received the “Best Private Bank for Credit” award, the “Best Private Bank for Fixed Income Securities” award, and the “Best Private Bank for High-Net-Worth (HNW) Clients” award. Burgan Bank also won the 2024 Visa award for “Best-in-Class Premium Active Cards Growth in Kuwait” for its continued efforts to promote innovation and deliver an exceptional banking experience for distinguished customers.

About Burgan Bank

Established in 1977, Burgan Bank is a Kuwait-based conventional bank with a significant focus on the corporate and financial institution sectors. From its earliest days, the Bank has significantly sought to diversify its offering to cater to its growing retail and private banking customer base.

Burgan Bank has majority-owned subsidiaries, collectively known as the “Burgan Bank Group”, in the MENAT region. This Group is supported by one of the largest branch networks across the region and includes: Gulf Bank Algeria – AGB (Algeria), Tunis International Bank – TIB (Tunisia), Burgan Bank Turkey (Turkey) and United Gulf Bank (Bahrain). Furthermore, Burgan Bank has a pres-

ence in the UAE through its corporate office, Burgan Financial Services Limited.

The Bank has continuously improved its performance over the years, through an expanded revenue structure, diversified funding sources, and a strong capital base. The adoption of state-of-the-art services and technology has positioned it as a trendsetter in the domestic market and within the MENA region. Moreover, Burgan Bank’s brand has been built on a foundation of real values – trust, commitment, excellence, and progression – which serve as a reminder of the high standards to which the Bank always aspires. In fact, the Bank’s core philosophy of ‘Driven by You’ is the foundation on which its products and services are continuously developed.

Burgan Bank has achieved the LEED v4.1 O+M: EB Gold Certification for its Head Office in Kuwait City. The Bank has also obtained the ISO/IEC 27001: 2022 Information Security Management Systems certificate (ISMS), ISO /IEC 27701:2019 Privacy Information Management Systems (PIMS), ISO/IEC 20000-1: 2018 Information Technology Service Management System (ITSMS) and was re-certified with the prestigious ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management System (QMS), making it one of the few banks in the GCC and Kuwait to receive such certification for five consecutive times. At the same time, the Bank has the distinction of being the only Bank in Kuwait to have won the JP Morgan Chase Quality Recognition Award for twenty consecutive years. Moreover, in a testament to its dedication to the development of its human capital, Burgan Bank is the first bank in Kuwait to be certified as a Great Place to Work®, earning the distinct honor in 2023.

Burgan Bank is a majority-owned subsidiary of KIPCO (Kuwait Projects Company), one of the largest holding companies in the MENA region.

Empowering communities, upholding responsibility

KIB organizes ‘Your Health Matters’ awareness event for its employees

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 25: In line with its unwavering commitment to supporting its employees’ health and safety, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) recently organized the internal health awareness event, “Your Health Matters”, in collaboration with the International Hospital. The event included a series of medical checkups and services, such as blood pressure and blood sugar tests, ocular examination, in addition to specialized nutritional and orthopedic consultations.



KIB’s Hamad Al-Rasheed

This event comes as an extension of the Bank’s comprehensive corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategy, which centers on the best sustainable corporate practices and adheres to environmental, social, and governance (ESG) principles.

In light of the event, **Hamad Al-Rasheed** from the Corporate Communications Department at KIB,

said: “Our employees are the cornerstone of KIB’s success and sustainable growth, which is why their

health and safety are a top priority. By organizing such events, we aim to raise health awareness among our employees and encourage them to adopt healthy practices that contribute to improving their quality of life, inside and outside the workplace.”

In line with its comprehensive CSR program, KIB remains committed to organizing, supporting, and sponsoring a diverse range of health and community initiatives.

These initiatives include internal events targeting its employees – most notably the blood donation campaign “Your Donation Saves Lives” – as well as community-centered initiatives, such as sporting events, mental and physical health awareness campaigns, and humanitarian contributions that benefit the local and regional communities.

Joint plan to boost Bursa Kuwait’s competitiveness

Min Al-Ajil: Upgrading capital markets is a national priority

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 25, (KUNA): Upgrading Kuwait’s capital markets is a national priority in the path of the state’s efforts aiming to enhance entrepreneurship and investment environment, Minister of Commerce and Industry Khalifa Al-Ajil said on Saturday in a statement to KUNA.

The ministry is working with its partners at the Capital Markets Authority (CAM), Boursa Kuwait and Kuwait Clearing Company (KCC) to start a new period of modernization and organization that aims to boost market and allures investors, he added after a meeting he held at the CAM, with the participation of some bodies to discuss how to develop CAM system.

Modern indicators refer to noticeable improvement in capital market’s performance as foreign investors’ trading rose to 27 percent in 2024, thus showing growing trust of international capitals at local market, he noted.

Market value has grown by nearly

30 percent over the past two years, while traded liquidity has increased by more than 85 percent since 2023 – a clear indication of the expanding investor base and the market’s greater openness to foreign investments, the minister pointed out.

This positive performance is attributed to technical and regulatory reforms led by the CAM, in cooperation with the concerned bodies, to develop market in line with the highest standards of transparency and governance, he noted.

The minister underlined that the coming phase will witness greater coordination between regulatory and operational bodies to enhance transparency, governance, and improve investor experience.

“We are working to build a modern financial market based on transparency and fairness, aligned with global economic transformations, and positioning Kuwait as a leading market in the

region,” he stressed.

The meeting discussed a number of development proposals aimed at strengthening the position of Boursa Kuwait and enhancing its competitive efficiency.

It was agreed to prepare a joint implementation plan that includes practical initiatives to improve market performance and develop its technical and regulatory infrastructure.

The meeting included Chairman of CMA’s Board of Commissioners Emad Al-Tifoni, and Chairman of Board of Directors at Boursa Kuwait Bader Al-Kharafi and CEO of Boursa Kuwait Mohammad Al-Osaimi and Chairman of KCC Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem.

Boursa Kuwait is the first organized market in the Gulf region that has formed over the last decades a pivotal platform in funding projects and national companies. It has contributed to boosting Kuwait’s status in the region.

In the Legal 500 GC Powerlist Kuwait 2025

KFH among the most influential institutions in legal management

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 25: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) announced that the Group Legal Department has been recognized by Legal 500 GC Powerlist as one of the most influential institutions in legal management for 2025. This achievement reflects KFH’s commitment to the highest standards of legal professionalism and institutional excellence.

Group Chief Legal Officer and Board Secretary, Fawaz Munawer Al-Enezi was selected in the GC Powerlist Kuwait 2025. He was awarded a certificate of excellence in performance for the year in recognition of his outstanding efforts and effective leadership of the Group Legal Department, as well as his remarkable contributions to strengthening the department’s legal framework.

Senior Manager International and Subs Legal Affairs at KFH, Yousef Al-Obaidan Alazemi, has also been selected on this list, representing International Legal Affairs. The list is one of the most reputable international references for identifying top professional talents in the legal field.

Commenting on this achievement, Fawaz Al-Enezi stated: “This recognition reflects the confidence of international institutions in the competence of KFH’s legal professionals and their ability to support the Group’s growth and keeping pace with the regulatory requirements across the various markets in which we operate.”

He mentioned that KFH’s inclusion in this distinguished list reaffirms its adherence to the highest standards of legal performance and professional compliance with regulatory guidelines, aligning with the Bank’s esteemed reputation for attracting top-tier legal talents and empowering them to achieve excellence.

Al-Enezi added: “I extend my sincere appreciation to KFH Group Board and Executive Management for their unwavering commitment to ensuring



Fawaz Al-Enezi and Yousef Alazemi

Al-Enezi:

- This recognition reflects the confidence of international institutions in KFH’s legal professionals and their ability to support the Group’s growth

the Bank’s compliance with laws and regulations in all its transactions. I also commend their continuous support extended to the Legal, which served as a motivation to maintain this excellence and high standards in the legal profession, reinforcing KFH’s position as a leading global Islamic financial institution.”

He also thanked the legal team, stressing that KFH’s inclusion in the list is a testament to the team’s dedication and hard work. “This recognition also highlights their extensive experience and commitment to the highest quality standards in the legal field, added Al-Enezi. “I am confident that the legal department at KFH will con-

tinue to achieve further milestones and recognitions in the future.”

KFH’s inclusion among the top institutions in legal management is a testament of its accomplishments in addressing significant legal matters during the current year and its success of its vision of achieving leadership in Islamic banking.

It is worth noting that Legal 500 GC Powerlist is one of the most reputable and internationally recognized sources in the global legal industry. Its annual rankings are based on research and analysis of the capabilities of in-house lawyers and legal teams across global institutions across different sectors.

Kuwait leads 108th GCC Committee session

RIYADH, Oct 25, (KUNA): The GCC Permanent Committee of Financial and Administrative Affairs held its 108th periodical meeting at the GCC General Secretariat in Riyadh under the chairmanship of the State of Kuwait.

During the meeting, which was chaired by Kuwaiti Assistant Foreign Minister for Financial and Administrative Affairs and Minister Plenipotentiary Anas Al-Shaheen,

the committee discussed several issues put on the agenda, mainly the final accounts of the secretariat and its offices and bodies, the GCC General Secretariat said in a press release.

The committee voiced satisfaction with the secretariat’s reports that reflected transparent and sound procedures and governance.

Program focuses on enhancing performance, skills, and leadership

ABK launches second edition of MASAR training program

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 25: As part of ABK’s commitment to developing its employees’ capabilities and investing in its human capital to achieve its strategic goals, Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) has launched the second edition of its distinguished employee training and development program, MASAR.

Building on the success of the MASAR 1.0 a flagship talent development program targets high-potential Kuwaiti employees, providing them with a comprehensive educational framework that enhances their personal and professional growth. The initiative aims to cultivate stronger performance and productivity across all levels of the organization.

Grounded in the solid foundation established, the new phase of MASAR 2.0 offers a more holistic learning journey that integrates education, practical training, and on-the-job experience to prepare the next generation of banking professionals.

The program focuses on strengthening the core and technical competencies required to meet the evolving demands of the banking sector. It also aims to elevate both individual and collective performance, empowering employees to assume greater responsibilities and seize future opportunities.

The official launch ceremony was attended by Mr. Giel-Jan Van M. Der Tol, Group Chief Executive Officer, Ms. Afrah Al Arbash, General Manager – Human Resources, as well as members of the Bank’s executive management and employees.

During opening remarks, execu-



Al Arbash and some members of the executive management with the program participants.



Group CEO Giel-Jan Van M. Der Tol speaking at the program launch.



A group of bank employees during the event.

tives reaffirmed ABK’s unwavering commitment to the continuous development of its human capital as

part of its strategic focus on investing in people and enhancing professional excellence to sustain the

Bank’s leading position within the Kuwaiti banking industry. Commenting on the launch, Ms.

Afrah Al Arbash, stated,“In today’s dynamic business landscape, employee training is not a luxury or a

procedural requirement, it is an absolute necessity and a fundamental driver of our long-term success. At ABK, we view training as a direct investment in our human capital.”

She further noted that the MASAR 2.0 represents a major milestone in ABK’s human capital development agenda and its alignment with industry advancements. “The program was meticulously designed to address the training needs of participants within the framework of ABK’s HR strategy, ensuring the empowerment of young national talents and maintaining the highest standards of service quality and productivity expected by our customers,” she added.

Al Arbash emphasized that MASAR2.0 reflects the Bank’s strong commitment to fostering a culture of continuous learning and innovation. The program features a series of specialized courses and workshops designed to enhance performance and efficiency, enabling employees to complete tasks more effectively, generate innovative ideas, and elevate the quality of banking services and solutions provided by ABK in the future.

In conclusion, Al Arbash highlighted that ABK’s sustained investment in learning and development underscores its dedication to offering employees a clear career path and a rewarding professional journey. This approach, she affirmed, enhances the Bank’s competitiveness, drives the achievement of its strategic objectives, and reinforces its position as one of the most attractive employers in Kuwait’s banking sector.

Delivering enhanced engine protection

ALSAYER announces special offer on Cofran synthetic oils

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 25: ALSAYER Group, in partnership with Cofran lubricants, a French brand founded in 1954 and recognized for delivering high-quality lubricants designed for demanding conditions, has announced a special promotion on its superior synthetic oils.

Krishna Kumar, General Manager of ALSAYER Engineering, stated that by this promotion ALSAYER Group reinforces its commitment to customers to provide reliable global products that adhere to the highest international quality standards.

The promotion aims to provide added value and encourage car owners to experience the unique protection

and enhanced performance of Cofran’s advanced synthetic formula, which notably reduces deposits, extends engine life, and allows for longer oil change intervals.

Customers who purchase a four-liter can of any participating Cofran synthetic oil product, will receive a complimentary one-liter can of the same oil, ensuring they have the volume needed for a complete oil change and necessary top-ups.

The offer is valid from October 15, 2025, to January 9, 2026, exclusively at authorized ALSAYER Group branches in Shuwaikh, Ahmadi, Fahheel, and Jahra, as well as through ALSAYER authorized distributors.



International Optique opens new boutique at Hessa Mubarak District

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 25: International Optique proudly announces the official opening of its new branch positioning itself as the premier destination for premium eyewear with advanced eye testing facilities. International Optique continues its mission to combine fashion, innovation, and healthcare in one elegant space.

“We are thrilled to expand into the Hessa Mubarak District, one of Kuwait’s most prestigious neighbor-



hoods,” said April Habig, CEO of International Optique. “This new branch reflects our commitment to offering world-class eyewear, personalized eye care and the latest innovation for our community.”

UK retail sales up 0.5%

LONDON, Oct 25, (KUNA): Retail sales volumes have risen for the fourth month in a row, driven by consumers buying gold online and new tech gadgets.

Monthly sales rose by 0.5 percent in September 2025, new figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) show, defying an expected decrease of -0.2 percent, according to official data.

“Although food stores saw very little growth, good weather in July and August boosted sales of clothing, while online retailing also did well,” said ONS senior statistician Hannah Finselbach in a statement.

Tech sales were boosted over the summer by the launch of Nintendo’s long-awaited Switch 2 gaming console and Apple’s iPhone 17.

New 2,000 sqm outlet raises Sultan’s Kuwait store count to 52

Sultan opens new flagship store at The Gate Mall in Egaila

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 25: Sultan Center Food Products Company (Sultan) announced today the grand opening of its newest flagship store at The Gate Mall in Egaila. This expansive 2,000 sqm retail space marks a significant milestone in Sultan’s growth strategy, elevating its total store count in Kuwait to 52 stores. This opening is part of Sultan’s vision of ensuring a store is accessible within a ten-minute drive from every inhabited area in Kuwait.

Board Member of Sultan, Mr. Abdullah Waleed Sultan Ben Essa said, “We’re delighted to celebrate the opening of our new store at The Gate Mall, serving the vibrant Egaila community and surrounding areas. This milestone reflects our ongoing commitment to bringing high-quality products, great value, and exceptional service closer to our customers. Sultan remains a trusted name and the preferred destination for families across Kuwait.”

Sultan CEO, Mr. Haitham Shalabi stated, “The new Gate Mall store embodies Sultan’s refreshed identity and modern retail experience. It offers a curated mix of premium local and international brands, fresh food options, and everyday essentials designed to meet the evolving lifestyles of our customers. Situated in one of Kuwait’s most dynamic retail destinations, this store is a testament to our vision of combining convenience with quality shopping in a welcoming environment.” He added, “As we look ahead, Sultan will continue to evolve its store formats, enhance its digital presence, and invest in innovative customer experiences that keep us connected to the communities we proudly serve.”

Sultan is set to continue its expansion plan in 2026, demonstrating a strong commitment to growth and customer convenience. The company plans to launch three new flag-



A group photo of the Sultan Center team.



Sultan's administrative team cuts the ribbon for the opening of The Gate Mall branch.



A side view of the opening ceremony of The Gate Mall branch.

ship stores next year in the Capital, Ahmadi, and Hawalli governorates, collectively adding over 11,000 sqm of retail space. In parallel, the company will continue to expand its Sultan Express network, bringing everyday essentials even closer to customers through added neigh-

bourhood convenience locations across Kuwait. Sultan Center Food Products Company is the largest independent retailer. It owns and operates over 70 stores across the Middle East, including twelve branches in Jordan, three in Bahrain, and nine

in Oman. In Kuwait, Sultan now operates 52 branches, spanning from Jahra to Nuwaiseeb, through its three distinct store formats: Sultan, Sultan Market, and Sultan Express, offering customers a wide range of convenient and tailored shopping experiences.

Premier Doug Ford agrees to pull ad

President Trump ends all trade talks with Canada over Ontario ad dispute

WASHINGTON, Oct 25, (AP): President Donald Trump announced he’s ending “all trade negotiations” with Canada because of a television ad sponsored by one of its provinces that used the words of former President Ronald Reagan to criticize U.S. tariffs - prompting the province’s leader to later pull the ad.

The post on Trump’s social media site Thursday night ratcheted up tensions with the U.S.’s northern neighbor after Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney said he plans to double his country’s exports to countries outside the U.S. because of the threat posed by Trump’s tariffs. White House officials said Trump’s reaction was a culmination of the administration’s long, pent-up frustration about Canada’s strategy in trade talks.

Later Friday, Ontario Premier Doug Ford, whose province had sponsored the ad, said it would be taken down, though it will still run this weekend.

Ford said after talking with Prime Minister Mark Carney he’s decided to pause the advertising campaign effective Monday so that trade talks can resume. Ford said they’ve achieved their goal, having reached U.S. audiences at the highest levels.

“Our intention was always to initiate a conversation about the kind of economy that Americans want to build and the impact of tariffs on workers

and businesses,” Ford said. “We’ve achieved our goal, having reached U.S. audiences at the highest levels.”

The U.S. president alleged the ad misrepresented the position of Reagan, a two-term president who remains a beloved figure in the Republican Party, and was aimed at influencing the U.S. Supreme Court ahead of a hearing scheduled for next month that could decide whether Trump has the power to impose his sweeping tariffs, a key part of his economic strategy. Trump is so invested in the case that he has said he’d like to attend oral arguments.

“You know, it’s a crooked ad,” Trump said Friday night as he left the White House for a trip to Asia, shortly after the ad aired during the seventh inning of Fox’s national broadcast of Game 1 of the World Series between the Toronto Blue Jays and Los Angeles Dodgers.

“They could have pulled it tonight,” Trump said. “Well, that’s dirty play - but I can play dirtier than they can, you know.”

The ad was paid for by Ontario’s government, not the Canadian federal government. Ford, the premier, didn’t initially back down, posting Friday that Canada and the U.S. are allies “and Reagan knew that both are stronger together.” Ford then provided a link to a Reagan speech where the late president voices opposition to tariffs.

Ford had said the province plans to pay \$54 million (about \$75 million Canadian) for the ads to air across multiple American television stations using audio and video of Reagan speaking about tariffs in 1987.

Ford is a populist conservative who doesn’t belong to the same party as Carney, a Liberal.

For his part, Carney said his government remains ready to continue talks to reduce tariffs in certain sectors.

“We can’t control the trade policy of the United States. We recognize that that policy has fundamentally changed from the 1980s,” he said Friday morning before boarding a flight for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations summit in Malaysia.

Trump is also traveling to the summit. But he told reporters on Air Force One that he had no intention to meet Carney there. “I don’t think there’s much they can do,” Trump said, noting he was inclined to leave the trade deal with Canada “the way it is.”

Earlier Thursday night, the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute posted on X that the ad “misrepresents the ‘Presidential Radio Address to the Nation on Free and Fair Trade’ dated April 25, 1987.” It added that Ontario did not receive foundation permission “to use and edit the remarks” and said it was reviewing legal options.

2026 nominees include pop, rock, hip-hop icons

Swift, LL Cool J get Songwriters Hall of Fame nod

NEW YORK, Oct 25, (AP): Taylor Swift, Kenny Loggins, LL Cool J, Pink, Sarah McLachlan and Talking Heads' David Byrne are among the impressive list of nominees for the 2026 Songwriters Hall of Fame class, an eclectic mix of pop, hip-hop, folk and rock innovators.

Also on the ballot are Charlotte Caffey, Kathy Valentine and Jane M. Wiedlin of The Go-Go's, Randy Bachman and Burton Cummings of The Guess Who, Gerry Beckley and Dewey Bunnell of America and Gene Simmons and Paul Stanley of the glam rock band Kiss.

News of Simmons and Stanley's inclusion comes days after the death of Ace Frehley, Kiss' original lead guitarist and founding member. Frehley, 74, died Oct. 16 in New Jersey.

Rounding out the performer-songwriter category is Richard Carpenter of The Carpenters (notable hits include "Goodbye To Love," "Top Of The World" and "Yesterday Once More"), Harry Wayne Casey, better known as KC of KC and the Sunshine Band ("Rock Your Baby," "That's The Way (I Like It)" and "(Shake Shake Shake) Shake Your Booty") and guitarist Boz Scaggs.

The Hall annually inducts performers and non-performers alike. The latter category's nominees this year include disco songwriter Pete Bellotte (known for his work with Donna Summer on "Hot Stuff," "I Feel Love" and "Love To Love You Baby"), Swedish pop producer of the legendary Cheiron Studios, Andreas Carlsson (Backstreet

Boys' "I Want It That Way," NSYNC's "Bye Bye Bye," Katy Perry's "Waking Up In Vegas") and Steve Kipner (Olivia Newton-John's "Physical," Christina Aguilera's "Genie In A Bottle.")

The list also includes longtime Madonna collaborator Patrick Leonard ("Like A Prayer," "Live To Tell"), Vini Poncia (The Ronettes' "Do I Love You?,"), Martin Page (Starships' "We Built This City"), Kenny Nolan (Labelle's "Lady Marmalade") and the duo Terry Britten and Graham Lyle (Tina Turner's "What's Love Got To Do With It.")

Eligible voting members have until midnight Eastern on Dec. 4 to turn in ballots with their choices of up to three nominees from the songwriter category and up to three from the performing-songwriter category.

Representing country songwriters are Jeffrey Steele (Rascal Flatts' "What Hurts The Most," Tim McGraw's "The Cowboy In Me"), Don Williams' "Good Ole Boys Like Me") and Larry Weiss (Glen Campbell's "Rhinestone Cowboy," Jeff Beck's "Hi Ho Silver Lining.")

R&B-pop songwriters are also prevalent this year with Tom Snow (The Pointer Sisters' "He's So Shy," Deniece

Williams' "Let's Hear it for the Boy") and Christopher "Tricky" Stewart (Rihanna's "Umbrella," Beyoncé's "Single Ladies" and "Break My Soul.")

A few performers are getting another shot at entry. Walter Afanasieff, who helped Mariah Carey with her smash "All I Want for Christmas Is You" and who was previously nominated in the 2025 Songwriters Hall of Fame class, is up for induction again this year.

The Guess Who's Bachman and Cummings - as well as Bob McDill, known for country classics like Dan Seals' "Everything That Glitters (Is Not Gold)" - are also returning nominees.

The Songwriters Hall of Fame was established in 1969 to honor those creating the popular music. A songwriter with a notable catalog of songs qualifies for induction 20 years after the first commercial release of a song.

Some already in the hall include Elton John and Bernie Taupin, Brian Wilson, James Taylor, Bruce Springsteen, Tom Petty, Carole King, Paul Simon, Billy Joel, Jon Bon Jovi and Richie Sambora, Lionel Richie, Bill Withers, Neil Diamond, Phil Collins, R.E.M., Steely Dan, Dean Pitchford, Hillary Lindsey and Timbaland.

The 2025 class included George Clinton, The Doobie Brothers, Ashley Gorley, Rodney "Darkchild" Jerkins, The Beach Boys' Mike Love and Tony Macaulay.

The 2026 inductees will be announced in early 2026.



Jon Bon Jovi poses for photographers after announcing an upcoming tour and reimagined album "Forever: Legendary Edition" during a press conference at Wembley Stadium on Friday, Oct. 24, 2025, in London. (AP)

Bon Jovi returns

'Forever' tour more than just victory lap

LONDON, Oct 25, (AP): Bon Jovi will embark on their first tour in four years in 2026 - and it's more than just a victory lap.

In 2022, singer Jon Bon Jovi saw a doctor who said one of his vocal cords was atrophying. He had major surgery and has been in extensive rehab since. These new shows - kicking off with four nights at New York's Madison Square Garden in July before heading to Edinburgh, Scotland; Dublin and London - are the result of all the work.

In an interview with The Associated Press at Wembley Stadium, where Bon Jovi will close their "Forever" Tour in September 2026, frontman Jon Bon Jovi discusses the forthcoming gigs, his band and their latest collaborative album, "Forever (Legendary Edition)."

This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

AP: What can fans expect from the tour?

Bon Jovi: It's a lot of hits that you know. But I think more than ever, I'm really in touch with the idea of gratitude and joy, and this idea of this energy that happens between me and that audience. And it's been so long since I've done it that I can really re-appreciate how much that means to me. And that's really the only motivation for me to want to do it anymore. It's just to go out there and say, "Touch." You know? It's gonna be good.

AP: I think that's what we all want.

Bon Jovi: I agree with you. I agree. You know, that optimism and tribalism but with joy as the underlying thing, you know, that fact that brings you together.

AP: And you're starting with five nights in New York.

Bon Jovi: Well, it's home. I get to sleep in my own bed at night, which was integral to this equation, that I would play a bunch of nights there to start it as long as I was going home at night. And then we'll go and do these (U.K. and Ireland shows) and that's going to be it. That's it for the year. Just get my feet back in the pool, you know, and get in there slowly, wait around, and after I have that joy and good health then we could talk about doing some work. But this should be about, don't even bring a suitcase. We're just going out for the weekend.

AP: How are you feeling?

Bon Jovi: Really, really good. I could go tonight. I can tell that I woke up this morning at 7 a.m. and you're ready to talk and you go, "Yeah, it just works."

AP: You've talked about how the band has supported you. Would you mind sharing that?

Bon Jovi: Well, the truth is, here's a band of brothers who at this stage and phase of their lives could have said, "We've had it. We're done. Good luck to you. We are going to go and do solo projects. We will go and join someone else's band." They sat in the rehearsal space to this day with me and said, "We got your back." And how much more grateful can I be than in my darkest hours, each one of them said, "This ain't about money, boss, let's go." And the bond has just gotten bigger and deeper and stronger.

AP: You build that camaraderie after such a long period of time together, don't you?

Bon Jovi: It's amazing, and each of 'em's contribution has been unique. And from the newest member, Everett Bradley to Phil X, who's just that guy that wants to play seven nights a week, doesn't care where he plays, the guy's nuts. He truly would play seven days a week if he could. And to see him just going, "I'm here, I am here, I'm not going anywhere else," it's unbelievable.

AP: And you have a new collaborative album — "Forever."

Bon Jovi: Well, the thing about the "Forever" album is that we were very proud of it, and it was coinciding with the documentary and the 40th anniversary. When I wasn't up to it physically, I thought we could reimagine the record by having features on it.

In this day and age, people know what features are. I learned about that the hard way. But in doing so, I think they took a great record and made it better. And, you know, I called Robbie Williams. He was the first call I made. He said yes, which made it easier for me to call number two, three, four, seven, eight, nine, 10. Because at first, it's daunting. You call even your dear friends and go, "Hey, would you do this for me?" Each one of them did it. I think that joy in the record is felt and even just raised the level of the bar.

AP: Bruce Springsteen is on the album. What was it like collaborating?

Bon Jovi: Oh, it's fantastic. I mean, I've looked up to him my whole life. The E Street Band are our Beatles. They were just 25 miles away from where I was as a kid. You know, Highway 9 was out my window. You know, these are, these are my streets, too. And so, it was fabulous because he loved that song ("Hollow Man.") Even when it was a demo, he's like, "That's a really special song." So, when I called him on that one instead of the obvious single, he was like, "You know, yeah, I get it, I can do that."

Film



Actor Tessa Thompson poses for a portrait to promote the film 'Hedda' during the Toronto International Film Festival on Sept. 8, 2025, in Toronto. (AP)

'She is dying to live on her own terms'

Tessa Thompson finds her own 'Hedda'

TORONTO, Oct 25, (AP): In Nia DaCosta's "Hedda," Tessa Thompson's titular socialite sows chaos. She manipulates. She cuts people to the bone with a quip. She pours more drinks.

Hedda Gabler, the heroine of Henrik Ibsen's 1890 play, has long been one of theater's most tragic figures, a woman hemmed in by societal convention and her own dread of scandal. She is that, and more, in DaCosta's new "Hedda."

"Many think of her as a woman that's suicidal," Thompson says. "I think of her as someone who's dying to live, and dying to live on her own terms. She might do some pretty questionable things in the pursuit of that, but I think the actual pursuit is really aspirational and beautiful."

"Hedda," which is currently in theaters and streams Oct. 29 on Prime Video, is a blistering tour de force for Thompson. In the two-decade career of the 42-year-old Los Angeles native, no role has given Thompson a more complicated, contradiction-rife character that showcases all her charisma, all her cunning, all her capacity to stir things up.

It's a somewhat rare full-view of Thompson, who has generally favored ensembles, from Marvel movies to "Creed." And it's something spikier and sexier for Thompson, whose roles - empathetic, kindhearted - have often hewed closer to her own thoughtful personality. But in "Hedda," Thompson is brash and brutal.

"Even the dress, taking up that amount of space is really an exercise in taking up space," Thompson said, relaxing in a Toronto hotel restaurant shortly before "Hedda" premiered earlier this fall. "I'm sensitive to people, I would say. I used to say that I'm a people pleaser and then I read a really fantastic thing that said: So you're a people pleaser. How many people are currently pleased with you?"

Thompson lets out a great laugh. Far from accruing enemies, Thompson has steadily built a wide following for the nuance and intelligence she brings to a wide swath of roles. "Hedda" has her in the (very competitive) mix for a best actress Oscar nomination this year. Whether that comes to

be or not, it's a performance that firmly lodges Thompson in a pantheon of Hedda Gablers, from Ingrid Bergman to Cate Blanchett.

"It's daunting but it's incredible to be part of a tradition," says Thompson. "It some ways, it puts pressure on, but in some ways it alleviates it. This is not the be-all-end-all. There are so many versions, and we're doing our own. And I'm also of the mind that if you're going to take any classical piece, you should have real skin in the game."

And for both Thompson and DaCosta, "Hedda" is a highly personal film. DaCosta, who also wrote the adaptation, makes significant alterations to Ibsen's drama while remaining faithful to its tragic underpinnings. Her "Hedda" transfers the play from 19th century Norway to 1950s England. Here, Gabler is queer, but not openly, and instead has taken social shelter by impetuously marrying a wealthy man (Tom Bateman).

On the chaotic night of the film, they are hosting a lavish party at their massive country estate. One of the most notable guests is Eileen Lovborg (Nina Hoss), a former lover of Hedda's who isn't hiding her sexuality or her ambition. (In the play, Lovborg is a man.) With Eileen is her girlfriend (Imogen Poots) and a new manuscript that seems destined to buoy her career as a writer and professor. The gender switch allows DaCosta's film to offer a portrait of not just one but a trio of women, each swimming their own way through a white, male patriarchy.

Thompson and DaCosta have been friends since meeting at the Sundance Labs. DaCosta's directing debut, the 2018 indie crime drama "Little Woods," starred Thompson. DaCosta says she wrote "Hedda" for her.

"I knew she could do it and I knew she would surprise me," DaCosta says. "She's kind of a big-sister energy, so loving and kind of the opposite of this character. But she's incredible at playing these characters who have so much going on that they can't show. Like in 'Passing.'"

"Hedda" shares some DNA with Rebecca Hall's 2021 drama. It starred Thompson as a Black woman and Ruth Negga

as her white-passing friend in 1920s New York. "Hedda," likewise revolves around a character who is hiding - in some instances ruthlessly so - her true nature from both society and herself.

"In that way, I feel like it's really modern. I think we kind of all do that," says Thompson. "It's death by increments. We sort of have to cut off parts of ourselves to fit inside whatever. I experience that even in Hollywood. There are certain things that fundamentally don't really work for me and I kind of make them work because I want to exist inside of this industry."

Thompson started acting in Los Angeles theater. Her break came in the series "Veronica Mars." Then came parts in acclaimed independent films like "Dear White People" (2014), "Selma" (2014), "Sorry to Bother You" (2018) and "Sylvie's Love" (2020). In between, she's mixed in franchises: as Valkyrie in the MCU, the aspiring singer in the "Creed" trilogy and starring in 2019's "Men in Black: International."

Mostly, Thompson has made a career on her own terms. She came out publicly as bisexual in 2018. With her production company, she has turned producer for films like "Hedda." "I've found, in a way that Hedda hasn't, a kind of agency," Thompson says. "Starting a production company some years ago was really helpful in that regard, the ability to develop something to feel less like a cog in something moving. Also to be able to, frankly, sometimes take myself out of the frame."

But it's clear that Hedda has left a mark on Thompson. The character, she acknowledges, is one she's still pondering like a puzzle that can't be completely solved.

"There's a such a paradox in her," she says. "She's fixated on existing inside of society. On the other hand, she's brave enough to do many of the things that you would not do if you have that interest. But she's not brave enough to do the ultimate thing, which is to decide to live outside of the parameters of what's expected of her. In that way, she's a total, total coward. Like many of us."

Variety

CAIRO: Egypt's international El Gouna Film Festival (GFF) concluded its 8th edition in the Red Sea coastal resort city of Hurghada on Friday, a run that strongly reaffirmed the festival's humanitarian commitment through its "Window on Palestine" program.

This year's GFF, which opened on Oct. 16, features approximately 70 films from around the world, spanning feature narratives, documentaries, and short films, according to the official website of the GFF.

The "Window on Palestine" program, a special section of the annual festival, provided a global platform making Palestinian voices heard, particularly those from Gaza. This is the third consecutive year the GFF has featured the program.

This year's "Window on Palestine" show-

cased a special selection of seven short documentaries. These films offered raw, intimate glimpses into the lives, struggles, dreams, and resilience of people enduring unimaginable circumstances in Gaza.

"Their screening at GFF ensured that stories of daily life, fear, and hope -- produced under extreme conditions in Gaza -- reached a worldwide audience, a testament to the festival's belief in cinema as a vital medium for understanding," Palestinian filmmaker Rashid Masharawi, who conceptualized the initiative, told Xinhua. He underscored the program's crucial importance to the new generation of artists in Gaza.

Masharawi added that these young filmmakers, working under unimaginable conditions, "have managed to capture the essence of their humanity, their dreams, their pain, and their resilience." (Xinhua)

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WARSAW: A chamber piano concert celebrating the cultural ties between China and Poland was held Friday night in Warsaw, paying tribute to Poland's greatest composer and pianist, Fryderyk Chopin.

The event was jointly organized by the Fryderyk Chopin Institute and the Chinese Embassy in Poland, and was attended by around 100 guests from across the country.

Two Chinese finalists of the 19th International Chopin Piano Competition, Wang Zitong, who won third place, and 16-year-old Lyu Tianyao, who took fourth, performed a selection of well-prepared pieces at the concert.

Other performers included Chinese pianist Wu Yifan and Polish pianists Zuzanna Sejbuk and Adam Kaldunski, all participants in the competition.

The 19th International Chopin Piano Competition concluded on Thursday in War-

saw. First held in 1927, the competition has been organized every five years since 1955 and is widely regarded as the "Olympics of the piano." (Xinhua)

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LONDON: The 11th Artes Mundi international contemporary art prize biennial exhibition opened Friday in Cardiff, the capital of Wales, showcasing works by six artists from around the world competing for this year's award.

Hosted at the National Museum Cardiff and several cultural venues across Wales, the exhibition explores themes of collective memory, migration, identity, drug issues, and ecological crises. It examines the complex ties between individuals and society, as well as between local and global contexts, highlighting the challenges facing humanity and cultural development today. (Xinhua)



Singers Mehdi Ayachi and Lamia Jamal perform with the Mazzika Orchestra under the baton of conductor Dr. Amal Guermazi at the Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Cultural Center in Kuwait.



Maghrebi melodies captivate Kuwaiti audience

Maestra Amal Guermazi leads ‘Mazzika’ orchestra in a landmark concert in Kuwait



Maestra Amal Guermazi leads the Mazzika Orchestra at the International Music Festival in Kuwait.

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 25: Thursday night, Oct 23, was no ordinary night. It was an exceptional moment in time — one that will remain in the memory of Arabic music. Around thirty elite international musicians took the stage at the Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Cultural Center in Kuwait, as part of the 25th edition of the International Music Festival organized by the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters. They presented a spellbinding evening titled “Melodies from the Maghreb — From the Ocean to the Gulf,” performed by the international orchestra “Mazzika,” under the baton of conductor Dr. Amal Guermazi, and featuring vocalists Mehdi Ayachi and Lamia Jamal.

This musical event marked a historic moment for Arab female leadership. The evening carried within it a milestone: Maestra Amal Guermazi — who has uniquely led an Arab orchestra on major European and international stages, and who is considered one of the rare global conductors qualified to lead a musical production of this scale — reaffirmed in this grand concert in Kuwait that music is not only the language of peoples, but also a mirror of cultural and social transformation. With her commanding presence and her baton weaving a pulse of nostalgia and innovation, Guermazi led the performance with the mind of a researcher, the eye of an artist, and the heart of an Arab woman carrying an inheritance and breathing new life into it.

The evening, held under the umbrella of the International Music Festival and supervised by the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters, was defined by range and craftsmanship. The program included works newly arranged specifically for the orchestra, invoking voices and icons from the Maghreb — from Tunisia to Algeria to Morocco — in a bouquet of melodies where popular North African rhythms intertwined with refined symphonic language. The notes of “Qa’alJani Ba’dYoumain” (Samira Said), “Ez El Habaib” (Saber Rebai), “Lola El Malama” (Warda), and “Wahayati Andak” (Zekra) flowed alongside “Mzyana,” “YaRayeh,” “Sidi Mansour,” “Ally Gara,” “Bint Bladi,” “Abdelkader,” and more — a musical vision that united the spell of the Arab East with that of the Arab Maghreb, on Kuwaiti soil. In this exceptional evening, timeless melodies met mesmerizing voices: artist Mehdi Ayachi dazzled with his velvety tone and warm presence, while Lamia Jamal captivated the audience with a performance that blended tenderness and strength, in exquisite harmony with the orchestra.

Behind the scenes, this achievement would not have been possible without the creative vision of the orchestra’s founder and general director, Dr. ShadiHakme, who has, over the years, succeeded in shaping “Mazzika” into a distinctive force in the global music scene — fusing contemporary aesthetics with an authentic Arab identity, making the orchestra a cultural bridge that transcends borders. Since its establishment in 2017, “Mazzika” has become a global Arab voice, touring major stages across Europe and the Americas, reintroducing Arabic musical heritage through a modern orchestral lens. Under the musical direction of Dr. Amal Guermazi since 2019, “Mazzika Orchestra” has become synonymous with artistic excellence and innovation. The orchestra has collaborated with more than 25 artists from across the Arab world and has delivered large-scale performances welcomed from Paris to New York to Montreal and beyond.

With the resounding success of its Kuwait concert, Mazzika Orchestra once again reaffirms its mission: to present Arabic music as a living, breathing art form capable of touching hearts everywhere. This evening was more than a concert; it was a vibrant artistic journey that merged Maghrebi heritage with orchestral modernity, carrying the audience from the shores of the Atlantic to the banks of the Gulf, where the scent of authenticity met the elegance of symphonic arrangement, and where traditional maqamat echoed as a bridge of shared legacy and shared dreams.

At the end of the night, the audience rose in an ovation that lasted several long minutes. Applause that was not only for a flawless performance, but for an artistic journey whose notes carried a human message: that music can be a bridge, a dialogue, and a celebration of identity.

With this concert, Mazzika Orchestra has written a new chapter in its international musical journey, affirming that the Arabic melodic voice — when performed with a global spirit — can captivate, unite, and inspire.



Audience in Kuwait enjoy spellbinding ‘Melodies from the Maghreb’ concert.

‘Our reality, our values’

Graffiti finds a home in West Africa

CONAKRY, Guinea, Oct 25, (AP): It was the middle of the day when Omar Diaw, known by his artist name “Chimere” - French for chimera - approached a blank wall off the main thoroughfare in Guinea’s capital and started spray-painting.

“They know who I am,” he said confidently. Though it wasn’t clear who “they” were, civilians and police didn’t bat an eye as Diaw’s fellow artists unloaded dozens of paint cans onto the roadside in Conakry.

Graffiti has thrived for years in Diaw’s native Senegal, where the modern urban street art first took off in West Africa. But when he moved to Guinea in 2018 to explore a new place, he said such art was nearly nonexistent.

“It was thought that graffiti was vandalism,” he said.

To win over the public, Diaw took a gentle approach, using graffiti for public awareness campaigns. One of his first was to raise awareness about COVID-19 preventive measures.

“We had to seduce the population,” he said.

The port city of Conakry faces rapid urbanization. Diaw’s graffiti has become an undeniable part of its crowded, concrete-heavy landscape.

His larger-than-life images of famous Guinean musicians and African independence leaders now dwarf the overloaded trucks that drive by. Dry-



Graffiti artist Omar Diaw works on a mural depicting Guinea’s President Mamadi Doumbouya on a street wall in Conakry, Guinea, Saturday, Sept. 20, 2025. (AP)

ing laundry hung over the portrait of the West African resistance fighter Samory Toure. The tag of Diaw’s graffiti collective, Guinea Ghetto Graff, is on murals all over the city.

Graffiti as it’s known today began in the 1960s and ’70s in the United States. It arrived in West Africa via Dakar, Senegal, in 1988, when the region’s first graffiti artist, Amadou Lamine Ngom, started painting on the city’s walls.

Known by his artist name, “Docta,” Ngom and a group of fellow artists was commissioned the following year to paint murals for an awareness campaign aimed at cleaning up Dakar’s streets.

Ngom, 51, said that at the beginning, aside from such campaigns, he did graffiti mostly at night. He later changed his approach.

“I decided to do it in broad daylight,” he said. “So as not to copy what’s happening in the United States, Europe or elsewhere. To create graffiti that resembles the African reality, taking into account our reality, our values.”

Ngom, who later mentored the teenage Diaw, said communities grew to respect the public artwork since it reflected their lives and experiences.

With the public’s backing, “the authorities didn’t have a choice,” Ngom said.

These days, graffiti has grown more assertive in Senegal, becoming part of the political messaging around anti-government protests. In Guinea, Diaw’s graffiti has addressed issues like migration.

Diaw said Conakry’s governor supports much of his work and has given him carte blanche to do it wherever he wants.

As his latest work beside the thoroughfare took shape, passersby began to stop and admire the portrait of Guinea’s military leader, Gen. Mamadi Doumbouya, who took power in a 2021 coup. A 22-year-old driver, Ousmane Sylla, said he was already familiar with Diaw’s gigantic paintings near Conakry’s airport.

tured a global selection of over 90 works this year, ranging from AI-generated, animated, experimental and fiction films to documentaries, said a report on the festival’s website.

Launched in 1983 and held annually in the Iranian capital in October, the short film festival is one of the oldest and most prestigious film events in the Middle East and North Africa region. In 2020, it became a qualifying event for the Oscar award for the short film category by the U.S. Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. (Xinhua)

Picasso’s Dora Maar portrait sells for \$37m

PARIS, Oct 25, (AP): A vividly hued Picasso portrait of longtime muse and partner Dora Maar that had remained hidden from public view for more than eight decades sold Friday at auction for 32 million euros (about \$37 million), including fees - surpassing expectations but far from the artist’s most expensive work ever auctioned.

Painted in July 1943, “Bust of a Woman with a Flowered Hat (Dora Maar)” depicts Maar in a brightly colored floral hat. Maar, an artist and photographer herself, had been Picasso’s partner and muse for about seven years, and the relationship was coming to a painful close. The work was purchased in 1944 and had not been on the market since, remaining in the family collection.

The painting, part of Picasso’s “Woman in a Hat” series, was auctioned at the Drouot auction house in Paris. Auctioneer Christophe Lucien called the final sale, to a buyer in the room, “an enormous success,” as well as a very emotional moment. He said the price - 32,012,397 euros after adding buyer fees to the 27-million hammer price - was not only well above estimates but also the highest paid at auction this year for any artwork in France.

Lucien called the painting “a little piece of the story of love” - albeit a bittersweet one - between Picasso and Maar. She was 29 when she met



Art expert Agnes Sevestre-Barbe, (right), and auction officer Christophe Lucien, display a rediscovered Picasso painting ‘Bust of a Woman in a Flowery Hat’, Oct. 22 in Paris. (AP)

the artist and quickly became his muse and the model for “Guernica,” among other works. He later left her for the younger Francoise Gilot and she died at 89, having lived an increasingly reclusive life.

Theirs “was not a very simple story,” Lucien said, adding that the painting came at the end of it. “You see that she was containing tears because she understood that Picasso was leaving her.”

At a preview this week, Picasso specialist Agnès Sevestre-Barbé marveled at how vivid the portrait has remained.

“We have a painting that is ex-

actly as it was when it left the studio,” she said. “It wasn’t varnished, which means we have all its raw material, all of it. It’s a painting where you can feel all the colors, the entire chromatic range.”

“It’s a painting that speaks for itself,” she added. “You just have to look at it - it’s full of expression, and you can see all of Picasso’s genius.”

Previously, Sevestre-Barbé noted, the work had only been seen in a black-and-white photograph. “We couldn’t imagine from this photo that this painting was so colorful, so amazing, really.”

robbery last Sunday. (AP)



DUSHANBE: The second International Teaching Excellence Competition for Chinese Language Teachers in Central Asia kicked off Friday in the Tajik capital Dushanbe.

Hosted by the Confucius Institute at Tajik National University, the event featured sessions on course design, teaching demonstrations, and on-site Q&A. Eleven participants represented Confucius Institutes in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan. (Xinhua)

Variety

TEHRAN: The 42nd edition of the Tehran International Short Film Festival (TISFF) concluded here Friday with the announcement of winners in various categories.

The six-day festival displayed a wide variety of works from over 50 countries and regions around the world, including China, France, Italy, Japan, Russia and the United States.

The festival’s International Competition section fea-

Gluten sensitivity driven by gut-brain interaction: study

Limiting sugar in early life offers lasting heart benefits

MELBOURNE, Oct 25, (Xinhua): Restricting sugar intake in early childhood may lead to lower risks of heart disease later in life, according to a study led by Australian and international researchers.

The study used the end of Britain’s sugar rationing in 1953 as a natural experiment, comparing health data from more than 63,000 UK Biobank participants born just before or after the policy ended, according to a summary of the study on the Australian Science Media Center website on Thursday.

The results showed people exposed to the rationing before birth and during early life also developed heart conditions up to two and a half years later, on average, than those with unrestricted early sugar intake, according to the researchers from Australia’s Monash University and China’s Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, among others.

“The greatest protection against the risk of developing heart problems, and the longest delay in disease onset, was seen in people whose sugar intake was restricted from conception to around 2 years of age,” said the study.

Evidence suggested that the first 1,000 days of life is a period when diet can have lasting health effects, the study said.

Compared with those never exposed to rationing, people whose sugar intake was restricted from conception through age two had a 20 percent lower risk of cardiovascular disease and a 25 percent lower risk of heart attack, along with reduced risks of heart failure, atrial fibrillation, stroke, and cardiovascular death, it showed.

During rationing, sugar allowances were restricted to under 40 grams per day for all, with no added sugar allowed for infants under two, restrictions consistent with modern dietary guidelines, the authors said.

“Further studies should investigate individual-level dietary exposures and consider the interplay between genetic, environmental, and lifestyle factors to develop more personalized prevention strategies,” they said.

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An Australian-led study has revealed that gluten sensitivity, which affects about 10 percent of the global population, is not actually about gluten but part of the way the gut and brain interact.

The finding was expected to set a new benchmark for how gluten sensitivity is defined, diagnosed and treated, over-

turning long-held assumptions about gluten sensitivity, said a statement released Thursday by Australia’s University of Melbourne.

Published in The Lancet, the research review found that symptoms attributed to non-coeliac gluten sensitivity (NCGS) are often triggered by fermentable carbohydrates (FODMAPs), other wheat components, or people’s expectations and prior experience with food, rather than gluten.

People with NCGS experience symptoms after consuming gluten but do not have coeliac disease, an autoimmune disease triggered by gluten. Common symptoms include bloating, gut pain and fatigue, the statement said.

“Contrary to popular belief, most people with NCGS aren’t reacting to gluten,” said study lead researcher, University of Melbourne Associate Professor Jessica Biesiekierski.

Across recent studies, people with irritable bowel syndrome who believed they were gluten-sensitive react similarly to gluten, wheat, and placebo, indicating “how people anticipate and interpret gut sensations can strongly influence their symptoms,” Biesiekierski said.

The study redefined NCGS as part of the gut-brain interaction spectrum, closer to conditions like irritable bowel syndrome, rather than a distinct gluten disorder, she added.

The finding has major implications for people self-managing gut symptoms, for clinicians prescribing restrictive diets, and for policymakers shifting public perception away from gluten as inherently harmful, the researchers said.

Meanwhile, scientists have uncovered new insights into hydrogen’s role in gut health, revealing that commonly expelled as flatulence, hydrogen plays a critical part in maintaining digestive function.

Published in Nature Microbiology, the study, led by Australia’s Monash University and Hudson Institute of Medical Research (HIMR), revealed how hydrogen is made and used in the human gut, and analyzed how microbes control hydrogen levels in the gut, said a statement released Friday by Monash University.

Hydrogen gas is generated when gut microbes ferment undigested carbohydrates. While some hydrogen is expelled, much is recycled by other bacteria, aiding digestion and shaping the gut microbiome, it said, adding the discovery can be used to design new microbiome-based treatments for gastrointestinal issues.



A worker places a dead crane into a tractor bucket in Fehrbellin, Germany, on Friday, Oct. 24, as avian influenza, also known as bird flu, has spread across almost the whole of the country. (AP)

EU battles bird flu surge

How serious is Europe’s latest bird flu outbreak?

BRUSSELS, Oct 25, (Xinhua): Europe has seen a sharp rise in cases of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), also known as the bird flu, since September, forcing governments to raise alert levels and order mass culling.

France, Germany, the Netherlands, and others are racing to contain the virus as it spreads rapidly among poultry and wild birds. Here’s what you need to know:

According to the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH), Europe saw a steep increase in bird flu cases in September. Bird infections jumped from 759 to more than 61,000, while poultry losses (from deaths and culling) surged from 291 to around 334,000. Germany, Spain and France are among the worst affected.

Belgium reported an outbreak on Wednesday, with 319 birds dead and over 60,000 culled. The federal food safety agency ordered all poultry to be kept indoors nationwide.

France raised its national alert level from “moderate” to “high” on October 21 after reporting four outbreaks at poultry farms since early October. Meanwhile, Germany has logged infections at more than 15 farms this month, up from just four in September, and upgraded its risk level for poultry holdings to “high.”

In Spain’s Castilla y Leon region, the province of Valladolid has been the hardest hit, with six outbreaks affecting more than 2 million birds. Portugal has reported seven cases since September, including one at a duck farm that impacted 250,000 birds.

The main response across Europe has been mass culling and movement restrictions on poultry. France, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Portugal and Poland have all adopted such measures to slow the spread.

In the Netherlands, for instance, authorities culled 161,000 birds at a layer farm in Gelderland province on Oct. 22 and 71,000 more earlier this month at another site. The country has also imposed nationwide indoor housing rules and 10-km transport bans around affected farms, covering birds, eggs, manure and related materials.

According to Euronews, European governments are also expanding monitoring and vaccination programs to help the poultry sector prevent and recover from the HPAI outbreaks.

According to the WOAH, wild birds, especially waterfowl, are the natural hosts of avian influenza viruses and are often responsible for transmitting the virus to domestic flocks.

France’s Agriculture Ministry said detections among migratory birds have risen significantly in recent weeks. Many outbreaks were located along the Atlantic migratory flyway, suggesting that wild birds traveling south between September and December are a key source of infection.

Environmental authorities in Germany’s Brandenburg state said that they are dealing with the largest-ever wild bird outbreak, mainly among migrating cranes. More than 1,000 crane deaths have been confirmed. The virus has also been detected in dead swans and ducks in the Netherlands, Portugal, and Latvia.

The Friedrich-Loeffler-Institut, Germany’s federal animal health agency, said infected birds can still fly in the early stages of the disease, potentially spreading the virus along migration routes.

WOAH said September’s bird flu outbreaks in poultry hit the highest level compared to the same month in the previous two seasonal waves, and are expected to rise further in the coming months.

As migratory birds move southwest, environmental authorities of Germany’s Brandenburg state expect the virus to spread deeper into France and Spain, causing more bird deaths. Dutch officials warned that the spread of HPAI remains highly unpredictable and requires close monitoring.

The outbreak could also threaten endangered species such as the great bustard, of which only about 100 remain in Germany.

According to Euronews, the outbreaks pose a threat to Europe’s poultry industry and trade. For instance, Morocco suspended imports of poultry, eggs and related products from Portugal in September.

It is extremely rare for humans to become infected with bird flu, and no sustained human-to-human transmission has been observed, the European Center for Disease Prevention and Control said on Oct. 17 in a statement. The risk to the general population in the EU and European Economic Area is considered low.

Spain’s health authorities said there is no evidence that bird flu can spread through properly cooked poultry or eggs.

1 in 5 young adults face obesity risk

Late teens, early 20s are crucial times for lifelong heart health

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

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By Jewel Scott

University of South Carolina

Emerging adulthood - the life stage that unfolds around ages 18-25 - is full of major transitions, such as starting college or learning a trade, making new friends and romantic connections, and generally becoming more independent.

It’s also a stage where behaviors that diminish heart health, such as spending more time sitting, consuming more fast food and using more tobacco and alcohol, become more common. In fact, only about 1 in 4 youths maintain positive health behavior patterns during the transition to adulthood.

More Americans die of heart disease than of any other condition. People often think of heart disease as an illness that mostly affects older people, but data from electronic health records show that the rate of heart disease in people under 40 has more than doubled since 2010 and tripled among people who use tobacco. Researchers like me are learning a great deal more about how heart health later in life heavily depends on the habits built during late adolescence and early adulthood.

I am a primary care nurse practitioner and researcher studying how early life shapes long-term heart health. In my clinical practice, I frequently care for people in their early 20s who are entering adulthood and are already facing serious cardiovascular risk factors such as elevated blood pressure, high blood sugar or a body mass index in the obesity range.

Just as young people on the cusp of adulthood make important decisions about their education, career and relationships, the health habits they build during this critical time also lay the foundation for lifelong heart health and better quality of life.

The most common form of heart disease is atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease, which develops when sticky, fatty plaque builds up in the blood vessels and makes it harder for blood to flow.

Factors

Heart health doesn’t suddenly decline in middle age. It starts to slip much earlier, often without people realizing it. In fact, research shows that a key turning point is around age 17. That’s when overall heart health scores based on behaviors such as diet, movement and sleep, along with clinical measures such as blood pressure, begin to worsen.

That means by the time many young people are finishing high school, heart disease risk factors are already emerging. The good news is that most of the risk factors that drive this buildup are modifiable - meaning you can do something about them.

In a report I co-authored in March 2025, my colleagues and I explored the key risk factors for heart disease in emerging adults. One of the most important is nicotine exposure. Use of cigarettes, vapes and other nicotine products has surged among young adults in recent years, from 21% of 18- to 23-year-olds in 2002 to 43% in



A subject’s waist is measured during an obesity prevention study in Chicago on Jan 20, 2010. (AP)

2018. Nicotine damages blood vessels and speeds up the plaque formation process, increasing the risk of serious heart problems later in life. While signs such as chest discomfort or shortness of breath tend to show up much later, the groundwork for those symptoms is laid much earlier.

Obesity is another early risk factor. In fact, 1 in 5 young people under age 25 have a BMI of 30 or higher, and projections suggest nearly 3 in 5 will meet that threshold by age 35.

Checkups

Meanwhile, fewer than half of adults ages 18-34 recognize high cholesterol, obesity, high blood pressure and lack of physical activity as heart disease risk factors. These early warning signs, often uncovered during routine checkups, can set the stage for future heart disease.

Heart health isn’t shaped by individual choices alone. Broader policies and systems also play a major role.

For example, the Affordable Care Act allows young adults to stay on their parents’ insurance plans until age 26, which can help ensure access to preventive services. These services, such as routine checkups, blood pressure screenings and conversations about family history, are key opportunities for your primary care provider to catch early signs of cardiovascular risk.

While preventive care use among young adults increased after the ACA was passed, overall rates of preventive care visits still remain low. Policies that expand access to health care and that make it easy for young people to take advantage of these services, such as telehealth, can make a real difference. And if a provider doesn’t bring up heart health during a well-check visit, patients can ask questions or start the conversation themselves.

Beyond health care access, the conditions of people’s daily lives, such as where they live, their education level and their economic stability, also play important roles in heart health. Neighborhoods can include resources such as parks and green spaces, which make healthy choices more feasible. Education and stable employment are tied to health care access, lower stress and food security, all of which support a healthier heart.

Healthy social connections matter, too. Strong, supportive relationships are linked to better overall well-being, including heart health. Recently, several major health organizations have spotlighted loneliness as a public health issue. However, there is still a lot to learn about exactly how social connections translate to healthier lives, and not enough of this research focuses on young adults.

Pew research shows that 1 in 3 teens report near-constant use of social media, but those connections do not yield the same health benefits as interacting in real life. In my own research, I am investigating how social connection affects heart health in young adults in particular.

There is a lot you can do today to make a difference in your heart health. In our recent report, written with the American Heart Association, my colleagues and I highlighted a group of eight risk factors that people can modify to reduce their heart disease risk, called the Essential 8.

Four are health behaviors. In addition to avoiding nicotine, young people should prioritize getting 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity a week, or around 20 minutes a day, as recommended by the American Heart Association. They should also aim to get seven to nine hours of sleep nightly and to eat a diet rich in fish, berries and vegetables. Even small changes in these four behaviors can have positive effects.

Of these four behaviors, US children score worst on diet - an important area for improvement in the transition to adulthood. Young adults with stronger cooking skills tend to have healthier eating habits in middle age, suggesting that learning how to cook could be a valuable step toward better heart health.

The other four factors are clinical measures: blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol and BMI. Since the early 2000s, three of the four - blood pressure, blood sugar and BMI - have all worsened among young adults.

These changes can go unnoticed until much later, but checking in on them early creates an opportunity to take action. The next time you are at a checkup, ask your provider about your heart health - even if you think you’re too young to be worrying about heart disease. A simple conversation today could shape the way you feel years from now, and your future heart will thank you. (AP)

Sewage crisis

Cholera hits Yemen hard

SANAA, Oct 25, (Xinhua): The sharp scent of chlorine fills the corridors of Al-Sabeen Hospital in central Sanaa. Cries of pain echo through the crowd. Fatigued faces line up for examinations, while others wait in fear that help may come too late.

“Since dawn, I have been feeling dizzy and exhausted, and I have severe diarrhea. I feel like my intestines are about to come out,” Fatima, who was being carried by her husband and three children, told a nurse at the reception.

A nurse quickly directed her to the isolation ward -- a section now expanded by several white tents in the hospital’s backyard, guarded by masked security staff.

In line, a mother was holding her six-month-old baby. “Since last night, she’s been vomiting and suffering from diarrhea.”

“The gas cylinder ran out yesterday, and my husband didn’t have the money to refill it, so I had to prepare the baby’s milk with regular tap water,” the mother said.

Inside Al-Sabeen Hospital, health workers tirelessly spray chlorine on every surface -- floors, walls, doors, and ceilings -- in a constant battle to contain the outbreak.

Outside, the contrast is striking. Just beyond the hospital walls lies Al-Sabeen Square, a wide, clean, and elegant street where annual national celebrations, military parades, and weekly demonstrations are held in a show of force. But less than a mile away, sewage overflows from cracked and clogged pipes beneath the surrounding neighborhoods, flooding the streets and forming foul streams.

In Tahrir Square, also downtown Sanaa, popular restaurants and street vendors abound, cooking popular meals on the sidewalk and in the open air, including grilled chicken, meat, fried foods, and vegetables, despite the dense dust and swarms of flies.

Although the flood channels from Al-Sabeen to Tahrir and Sh’ub appear relatively clean, residential alleys are lined with piles of garbage and plastic bags, teeming with stray dogs and mice.

Further north, the flood paths become swamps filled with garbage and sewage, where insects, mosquitoes, flies, and rats thrive. The stench grows stronger near Sanaa International Airport, where rainwater and sewage converge in open spaces. Nearby, in Al-Azraqayn, sits the capital’s largest open landfill -- a symbol of a system long overwhelmed.

Health authorities in Sanaa send weekly messages to residents’ mobile phones, warning them of the dangers of acute watery diarrhea, and urging them to wash their hands with soap before eating and use clean drinking water. They also require all farmers to use clean well water and licensed fertilizers to spray crops.

Groundwater contamination near army base

Study reveals alarming PFAS levels in blood of New Mexico residents

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M., Oct 25, (AP): It’s a name many people have trouble pronouncing, but these synthetic chemicals have been used in everything from fast-food packaging to nonstick cookware, clothing, household cleaning products and even firefighting foam.

PFAS - or perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances - resist breaking down and as a result have found their way into drinking water, soil, air and the bloodstreams of 99% of Americans.

This is certainly true for people who live or work near a plume of contamination that has seeped beyond the boundaries of Cannon Air Force Base, where PFAS-laden firefighting foam was used for years.

New Mexico health and environmental officials conducted a \$1.2 mil-



A water researcher tests a sample of water for PFAS at the US Environmental Protection Agency Center For Environmental Solutions and Emergency Response in Cincinnati, on Tuesday, Feb. 14, 2023. (AP)

lion testing project, drawing blood from nearly 630 people. They shared

the results Thursday night during a public meeting.

The research shows 99.7% of participants had one or more PFAS in their blood, with the most common being associated with firefighting foams.

While the percentage isn’t surprising given the overall prevalence of so-called forever chemicals in the environment, officials said some residents living in the plume area showed dramatically higher concentrations than the broader testing group. About one-quarter of them had levels reaching the highest concentration tier used in national guidelines.

The findings suggest a correlation with groundwater contamination migrating from the base, state officials said.

Russia faces demographic disaster

Russia tries restrictive laws to fight falling birthrates, aging population

MOSCOW, Oct 25, (AP): For a quarter century, President Vladimir Putin has faced the specter of Russia’s shrinking and aging population.

In 1999, a year before he came to power, the number of babies born in Russia plunged to its lowest recorded level. In 2005, Putin said the demographic woes needed to be resolved by maintaining “social and economic stability.”

In 2019, he said the problem still “haunted” the country.

As recently as Thursday, he told a Kremlin demographic conference that increasing births was “crucial” for Russia.

Putin has launched initiatives to encourage people to have more children -- from free school meals for large families to awarding Soviet-style “hero-mother” medals to women with 10 or more children.

“Many of our grandmothers and great-grandmothers had seven, eight, and even more children,” Putin said in 2023. “Let’s preserve and revive these wonderful traditions. Having many children and a large family must become the norm.”

At first, births in Russia grew with its economic prosperity, from 1.21 million babies born in 1999 to 1.94 million in 2015.

But those hard-won gains are crumbling against a backdrop of financial uncertainty, the war in Ukraine, an exodus of young men and opposition to immigration.

Russia’s population has fallen from 147.6 million in 1990 - the year before the USSR collapsed - to 146.1 million this year, according to Russia’s Federal Statistics Service. Since the 2014 illegal annexation of Crimea, it has included the peninsula’s population of about 2 million, as well as births and deaths there, in its data. The population also is significantly older. In 1990, 21.1% was 55 or older, government data said. In 2024, that figure was 30%.

Since the 2015 peak, the number of births has fallen annually, and deaths are now outpacing births. There were only 1.22 million live births last year - marginally above the 1999 low. Demographer Alexei Raksha reported the number of babies born in Russia in February 2025 was the lowest monthly figure in over two centuries.

Russia is trying new restrictions to halt the backslide and embrace what it calls “traditional family values” with laws banning the promotion of abortion and “child-free ideology” and outlawing all LGBTQ+ activism.

A near-perfect game: Gill

Sharma and Kohli deny Australia a whitewash as India wins by 9 wickets

SYDNEY, Oct 25, (AP): Rohit Sharma smashed his 33rd one-day international hundred and Virat Kohli rebounded from back-to-back ducks with a meticulous half-century as India avoided a whitewash against Australia with a nine-wicket win to close their three-match series Saturday.

Sharma made an unbeaten 121 off 125 balls with 13 fours and three sixes and Kohli scored 74 not out as both batters knocked off 237-1 with more than 11 overs to spare in what could be their last international innings in Australia.

Fast bowler Harshit Rana's career-best 4-39 bowled out Australia for below-par 236 after India lost its 18th consecutive toss in an ODI, but all six of its bowlers were among the wickets.

Australia had clinched the series 2-0 by winning Thursday's match in Adelaide by two wickets. That followed a seven-wicket victory in the rain-interrupted opener in Perth.

"We had a near-perfect game," said India captain Shubman Gill, who scored 24 off 26 balls before falling to Josh Hazlewood. "Rohit and Kohli have done it for so many years, (a) delight to watch.

Sharma and Kohli got loud cheers from the crowd of nearly 40,000 at the Sydney Cricket Ground as they shared a 168-run partnership - the first century stand between the two since January 2020.

Sharma's century was punctuated by strong sweeps against the spinners on front of square and he twice lofted Adam Zampa (0-50) for sixes on either side of the wicket before raising his hundred with a single against the leg-spinner.

Kohli, who was dismissed without scoring at Perth and Adelaide, pumped his fist gently as he drove Hazlewood for a single to wide mid-on from the first ball he faced. Kohli grew in confidence when he cut Zampa to point boundary and welcomed Mitchell Starc with a straight driven boundary.

Kohli survived a close lbw review on 36 when he went to pull Nathan Ellis' short ball before completing his half-century off 56 balls.

Kohli also overtook Kumar Sangakkara (14,234) and with 14,255 runs he is now behind only Sachin Tendulkar's all-time record of 18,426 runs.

Earlier, Matt Renshaw (56) scored his maiden ODI half-century before Australia collapsed and got bowled out in 46.4 overs.

Australia's first six batters all

crossed the 20-run mark but could not convert them into big scores. The home team lost four wickets for 18 runs after sitting pretty at 183-3 in the 34th over as India kept picking up wickets with regular intervals.

Travis Head (29) started aggressively before he offered a tame catch at backward point off Mohammed Siraj and Mitchell Marsh's promising start came to and end when gave himself too much room against left-arm spinner Axar Patel and was clean bowled on 41 in the 16th over.

Renshaw and Alex Carey added 59 runs for the fourth-wicket stand before Shreyas Iyer took a stunning catch while running from backward point. Renshaw was out lbw in the 37th over when he advanced down the wicket to the off-spin of Washington Sundar (2-44), but was hit low on the pads. Ellis played a little cameo of 16 with three boundaries before Australia got bowled out.

"We needed one more stand in the back-end of our first innings," Marsh said. "Had a great platform at 183-3, but couldn't cash in."

India's eight-game tour continues with a five-game T20 series starting next Wednesday. After this series, Australia will play the Ashes test series against England.



Australian players celebrate the series win over India after their One Day International cricket match in Sydney, Australia. (AP)

Doncic scores 49 to extend sizzling season start in Lakers' victory over Timberwolves



Los Angeles Lakers guard Luka Doncic (77) shoots against the Minnesota Timberwolves guard Mike Conley (10) during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Los Angeles. (AP)

Trail Blazers beat Warriors in Splitter's debut as interim coach

LOS ANGELES, Oct 25, (AP): Luka Doncic scored 49 points and became the fourth player in NBA history to begin a season with back-to-back 40-point performances, leading the Los Angeles Lakers to a 128-110 victory over the Minnesota Timberwolves.

Doncic followed his 43-point game in an opening-night loss to Golden State with his highest-scoring effort yet in a Lakers jersey, going 14 for 23 with five 3-pointers while adding 11 rebounds and eight assists.

The Slovenian superstar also made 16 of his 19 free throws, yet he missed his final two field goal attempts and a late free throw to fall just short of his eighth career 50-point game.

Michael Jordan, Wilt Chamberlain and Anthony Davis have also started NBA seasons with a pair of 40-point games. Doncic was traded to LA for Davis last winter.

Anthony Edwards scored 31 points and Julius Randle had 26 for Minnesota, which couldn't slow the Lakers' offense in a rematch of last season's first-round playoff series won in five games by the Wolves.

Austin Reaves added 25 points, 11 assists and seven rebounds, while Rui Hachimura scored 23 and Deandre Ayton had 15 for the Lakers.

Trail Blazers 139, Warriors 119

In Portland, Deni Avdija had 26 points and six assists, and the Portland Trail Blazers beat the Golden State Warriors in Tiago Splitter's first game as interim head coach.

Splitter is stepping in after coach Chauncey Billups was arrested by the FBI early Thursday and arraigned in federal court later that day.

Splitter told reporters before the game he wanted to keep his team focused on basketball.

Jerami Grant scored 22 points, Toumani Camara had 19, and Shaedon Sharpe added 17. Donovan Clingan had 14 points, Kris Murray scored 13, Jrue Holiday added 12 points and 11 assists, and Matisse Thybulle had 10 points.



Washington Wizards guard Tre Johnson drives to the basket as Dallas Mavericks guard Klay Thompson (31) defends in the first half of an NBA basketball game in Dallas. (AP)

Stephen Curry scored 35 points for the Warriors, Jonathan Kuminga had 16 points, Jimmy Butler 14 and Draymond Green 12.

Both teams shot well from the 3-point line with Portland making 47% (16 for 34) and Golden State 42% (16 for 38). However, the Trail Blazers outscored the Warriors 66-30 in the paint.

Wizards 117, Mavericks 107

In Dallas, Kyshawn George scored a career-high 34 points, and the Washington Wizards turned away a Cooper Flagg-fueled rally for a victory over Dallas, dropping the Mavericks and their No. 1 overall pick to 0-2.

Flagg led a second-half comeback from a 17-point deficit by scoring nine consecutive points in the fourth quarter and finishing with 18.

Anthony Davis, in another rough outing to start his first full season since coming to Dallas in the Luka Doncic trade, missed two free throws with a chance to get the Mavs within two points with five minutes remaining.

Pistons 115, Rockets 111

In Houston, Cade Cunningham scored 21 points and made two free throws with 5.5 seconds left to help the Detroit Pistons hold on to beat the Houston Rockets.

Detroit coach J.B. Bickerstaff got his 300th career win, making him and his father Bernie Bickerstaff (419) the first father-son duo to in NBA history to each reach 300 career wins.

Paul Reed's layup made it 113-110 before Houston cut the lead to two when Alperen Sengun made 1 of 2 free throws with 1:32 remaining.

Spurs 120, Pelicans 116, OT

In New Orleans, Victor Wembanyama had 29 points, 11 rebounds and nine blocks before fouling out in overtime, and the San Antonio Spurs held on to beat the New Orleans Pelicans.

Devin Vassell, who had 23 points, hit a 3 in overtime. Julian Champagnie followed with another from deep shortly after to give the Spurs a 116-110 lead and the Pelicans could not recover.

Zion Williamson had 27 points and 10 rebounds for New Orleans. He made a free throw to tie it at 107 with 12 seconds left in regulation, but missed another for the lead.

Cavaliers 131, Nets 124

In New York, Donovan Mitchell scored 35 points, Jarrett Allen added 22, and Cleveland Cavaliers outlasted the Brooklyn Nets.

Sam Merrill finished with 22 points and Evan Mobley chipped in 13 for the Cavaliers, who won their first game of the season after losing against the New York Knicks on Wednesday night.

Knicks 105, Celtics 95

In New York, Jalen Brunson scored 31 points, Karl-Anthony Towns had 26 points and 13 rebounds and the New York Knicks rode a huge second quarter to a victory over the Boston Celtics and a 2-0 start to the season.

Kuwait Club & Qadsia open league with emphatic wins

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

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 25: Kuwait Club delivered a commanding performance, defeating Al-Sahel 106-39 at the Basketball Federation Hall in the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex, during the first round of the new basketball league season. Qadsia also impressed, overpowering Al-Nasr 114-57.

The 64th edition of the Kuwaiti Basketball League (First Division) began last Thursday, with Kazma beating Al-Arabi 98-56, and Sulai-bikhat edging Al-Qurain 89-86.

The league features 8 teams competing in a three-stage round-robin format, with the top four advancing to the playoffs. In the playoffs, the first-ranked team faces the fourth, and the second plays the third in a best-of-three series, with the team winning two games moving on to the final.

After the first round, Kuwait Club, Kazma, Qadsia, and Sulai-bikhat secured their first two points, while Al-Arabi, Al-Qurain, Al-Nasr, and Al-Sahel received one point for the loss.



A Kuwait club basketball player skillfully controls the ball to dribble past an opponent during a match.

Kuwait Club is the defending champion, having won the last seven editions, while Qadsia holds the record for most league titles with 23, followed by Kuwait Club with 16, Kazma 9, Al-Arabi 8, Al-Jahra 5, and Al-Sahel once.

Kuwait Volleyball semifinals take shape after epic finish

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

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 25: The final four teams in the Kuwait Volleyball Federation Championship have been confirmed following the conclusion of the preliminary round, held at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex.

In a thrilling finale, Kuwait Club edged past Kazma in a marathon five-set battle (3-2) with scores of 31-29, 25-21, 21-25, 23-25, 17-15. Meanwhile, Qadsia cruised to a 3-0 win over Al-Shabab (25-14, 25-19, 25-20), Al-Arabi defeated Al-Nasr (25-20, 25-13, 25-18), and Sulai-

bikhat swept Al-Yarmouk (25-22, 25-18, 25-13).

At the end of the round, Kuwait Club topped the standings with 20 points, narrowly ahead of Kazma in second and Qadsia in third on set difference. Burgan followed in fourth place with 15 points, while Al-Shabab finished with 11, Al-Arabi and Sulai-bikhat each earned 8, Al-Yarmouk had 6, and Al-Nasr ended without points.

The semifinals will be held tomorrow, featuring Kuwait SC against Burgan at 5:00 p.m., followed by Kazma versus Qadsia at 7:00 p.m. The winners will advance to the championship final scheduled for October 30.



A Kuwait Club volleyball player spikes the ball during a match.

Best of the Rest

Golovkin to run for president: Former boxing champ Gennady Golovkin is heading into an electoral fight as he runs to become president of World Boxing, the new body aiming to run Olympic bouts at the Los Angeles Games in 2028.

Golovkin is one of two candidates announced Friday as running for the post at a congress in Rome next month. World Boxing's founding president, Dutch official Boris van der Vorst, is stepping down. Golovkin's opponent will be Mariolis Charilaos from Greece, a former president of the Hellenic Boxing Federation.

Golovkin is likely to be the frontrunner after he headed a World Boxing delegation to rebuild ties with the International Olympic Committee, which had hinted at removing boxing from the Olympic program for 2028. (AP)

□ □ □

Independiente ends winless streak: Independiente secured its first win of the Clausura campaign with a 3-0 home victory over Platense in Argentina's Primera Division on Friday.

Gabriel Avalos put the hosts ahead by prodding the ball into the back of the net after a scramble inside the six-yard box.

Independiente doubled its lead when Felipe Loyola combined with Santiago Montiel before sending a looping header past goalkeeper Federico Losas.

Lautaro Millan completed the rout a minute from time, running onto Ivan Marcone's perfectly weighted pass and finishing clinically into the far corner (Xinhua).

Al-Subaie claims Al-Sakab Equestrian Championship title



Winners celebrate on the podium.

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 25: Sabah Club rider Fawaz Al-Subaie clinched the Al-Sakab Equestrian Club Championship title, held recently at the Al-Maseelah Equestrian track in Sabah area, with the participation of top riders from various local clubs.

Al-Subaie topped the main sixth round after clearing obstacles set at 130 cm in 32.23 seconds without incurring any penalties. He was followed by Abrar Al-Musallam, Abdullah Al-Aybani, Khaled Al-Khubaire, and Abdulrahman Al-Mudhahka.

In the fifth round (120 cm), Salem Al-Wuhaib of Al-Sakab Club secured first place ahead of Mohammed Al-Mulaifi, Abdulrahman Al-Mudhahka, Salman Al-Tainan, Rakan Al-Hasawi, and Abdullah Al-Ramadhan. The win-

ners were honored by Sameer Barakat.

Mohammed Al-Shammari dominated the fourth round (110 cm), followed by Saad Al-Sulaiman, Hamad Al-Shammari, Sogho Babi, Faisal Al-Shatti, Deema Al-Jasser, Rawan Al-Drees, and Tala Barakat.

Meanwhile, Mohammed Ghuloom of Al-Masayel Club took the third round (100 cm) title, ahead of Abdulmohsen Malik, Marzouq Al-Saeedi, and Mohammed Al-Ruwais.

More than 100 male and female riders competed in the first and second rounds (60–80 cm), with many successfully completing their runs without penalty points. The event was supervised by international referee Nidar Al-Mustafa, who chaired the judging committee.

Qadsia maintains top spot

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 25: Qadsia extended its lead in the U20 Ooredoo League with a 2-0 victory over Al-Sahel at the Friendship and Peace Stadium in the fifth round of the competition.

The goals for Qadsia, nicknamed “The Yellow”, came from Fadel Al-Sarraf in the 45th minute and Turki Al-Yousef in the 72nd minute.

With this win, Qadsia moved to 15 points, keeping a perfect record and a clean sheet in all five matches, while scoring a total of 14 goals.

Elsewhere, Al-Yarmouk defeated Al-Fahaheel 3-0, taking second place with 13 points, narrowly ahead of Kazma, who beat Al-Jahra 2-1.

Al-Arabi dominated Al-Salmiya 5-0 at Mohammed Al-Hamad Stadium, reaching 7 points, while Al-Salmiya remained at 4 points. Khaitan overcame Al-Nasr 3-1, moving to 6 points, and Al-Anabi stayed at 2 points. Kuwait Club recorded a 4-1 win over Sporty, while



Players celebrate their victory in the league.

Sulaibikhat narrowly defeated Al-Shabab 1-0.

Kazma and Al-Jahra take on Al-Shabab, Al-Nasr in Zain Premier League round 6

By Hassan Mosa
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 25: The sixth round of the Zain Premier League kicks off today with two key fixtures. In the first match, Al-Nasr faces Al-Jahra at Ali Sabah Al-Salem Stadium at 5:35 PM, followed by Kazma hosting Al-Shabab at Al-Sadaqa wal-Salam Stadium at 7:50 PM.

The round continues on Sunday with Al-Qadsia vs Al-Salmiya at Thamer Stadium. Meanwhile, Al-Arabi vs Al-Tadamon and Kuwait Club vs Al-Fahaheel have been postponed due to the participation of Al-Akhdar and Al-Abyad in the Asian Challenge League.

Al-Jahra, currently eighth with 4 points, is looking to secure its second consecutive win, taking advantage of Al-Nasr’s current struggles. Croatian coach Rodion Ghassanin “Radan” aims to capitalize on his players’ high morale after last round’s 1-0 victory over Al-Tadamon.

For Al-Nasr, sitting at the bottom of the table, tonight could be a last chance for Tunisian coach Jamil Belkacem. The team has scored just one goal in five matches and is eager to register its first league win.

In the second fixture, Kazma, third in the standings with 9 points, aims to maintain its momentum in the title race, following a narrow 1-0 victory over Al-Qadsia last round. Al-Shabab, sixth with 7 points, is determined to bounce back after a 4-0 defeat to league leader Kuwait Club. However, it faces a tough challenge against a Kazma side that has been consistent and impressive in the opening five rounds.

Messi scores twice as Inter Miami tops Nashville in playoff opener

Argentine agrees to new deal

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla., Oct 25, (AP): Lionel Messi raised the Golden Boot. He then got Inter Miami started with his head.

Messi opened the scoring with a diving header in the first half, then capped the scoring in the 96th minute as Inter Miami opened the Major League Soccer playoffs with a 3-1 win over Nashville SC in Game 1 of their Eastern Conference best-of-three first-round series .

Messi and Ian Fray had the assists on Tadeo Allende’s second-half tally for Inter Miami, which now gets two chances to advance out of the first round for the first time in Messi’s 2 1/2-year tenure with the team. Game 2 is at Nashville on Nov. 1. Game 3, if necessary, would be in Fort Lauderdale on Nov. 8.

Hany Mukhtar got Nashville’s goal off a free kick in the 101st minute. It was the final play of the match.

The win capped a big couple of days for Inter Miami, which announced Messi’s three-year contract extension on Thursday.

“I don’t think we ever could have imagined that Leo would have been able to deliver for this club, for this city and for this league the way he has,” said MLS Commissioner Don Garber, who presented Messi with the Golden Boot – the trophy presented to the league’s top goal scorer – in a pregame ceremony.



Inter Miami forward Lionel Messi (10) kicks the ball away from Nashville SC midfielder Edvard Tagseth (20) during the second half of match one of their MLS playoff opening round soccer match in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. (AP)

“You know, he has reset the trajectory for Major League Soccer, and we were already doing pretty well,” Garber added. “And I think having three more years is just going to be another gift. Hopefully it’s the gift that keeps on giving.”

Messi ducked behind a line of defenders for the header that opened the scoring in the 19th minute. Allende scored off a header as well in the 62nd minute, with Messi starting that play with a pass to Fray on the right wing. Fray chipped the ball into the middle of the box, and

Allende made the rest look easy.

The capper came in stoppage time, when the ball deflected to an unmarked Messi in the goal mouth. He tapped it home for a 3-0 lead.

Messi was the league’s MVP last season and is the overwhelming choice to win the award again this year, which would make him only the second two-time winner in league history and the first to win it in back-to-back years. Preki won the MVP award in 1997 and 2003.

Messi scored 29 goals in the regular

season, five more than LAFC’s Denis Bouanga and Nashville’s Sam Surridge. He also had 19 assists, and his 48 total goal contributions was one shy of matching the MLS record of 49 set by Carlos Vela in 2019.

“You have to lean into this unique and special historic moment that I know I’ll look back on and say, ‘Boy, I can’t believe I was running a league that had the best player in the history of the game playing in it,’” Garber said. “Sometimes I find when things are happening ... you’re just moving on to the next thing. I think we all need to take a step back and appreciate that Leo Messi is playing in Major League Soccer.”

The new contract means Messi could remain with Inter Miami into his early 40s. He is still the biggest name in soccer: ticket revenue for MLS set a record this year, Inter Miami’s value has doubled by some estimates to about \$1.2 billion since he arrived, and he has led the league in jersey sales annually since his arrival midway through 2023.

“I think he’s the unicorn of unicorns,” Garber said. “You know, there’s something about the way he’s wired. He’s thinking about the game like nobody else ever has. His intensity and desire to win are what make him the greatest of all time. There are a lot of really competitive players, but he has this special sauce, this dynamic that has him so focused on doing what he needs to do to win games.”



Kazma striker congratulated by his teammates after scoring.

Scheib dominates in opener

SÖLDEN, Austria, Oct 25, (AP): Austrian skier Julia Scheib dominated the season-opening women’s World Cup giant slalom Saturday, denying runner-up Paula Moltzan what would have been the American’s first career win.

Moltzan led a strong showing by the U.S. ski team, which saw Mikaela Shiffrin place fourth and Nina O’Brien sixth, while there four more Americans in the top 20.

Scheib built on her big first-run lead of 1.28 seconds to win the race by 0.58, giving the Austrian women’s team its first victory in a World Cup GS since Eva-Maria Brem triumphed in a race in Slovakia in March 2016. Lara Gut-Behrami finished 1.11 behind in third, and Shiffrin trailed by 1.42.

“A load of thousands of kilos has dropped off my shoulders. I was so relieved to see the green light,” said Scheib, who had not won a World Cup race before but finished third in the season opener last year.

“The (second) run felt terrible, the first run I was more at ease. But that’s probably normal if you are the last racer standing at the start,” Scheib said.

Moltzan said she was “really excited” with matching her career-best result.

“I knew I was skiing well coming into the race, but skiing well in training and skiing well in the race are two different aspects of the sport,” Moltzan said.

Teenager Karl scores again

Bayern continues winning run in the Bundesliga

MUNICH, Oct 25, (AP): Bayern Munich’s latest star, 17-year-old Lennart Karl, scored again as his team extended its perfect start to the Bundesliga season by racking up its 13th win in a row in all competitions.

Three days after becoming Bayern’s youngest-ever Champions League goalscorer, Karl hit a curling shot from outside the box for his first Bundesliga goal, Bayern’s third in a 3-0 win over Borussia Moenchengladbach.

Karl again made an impact almost immediately off the bench, after scoring in the fifth minute against Club Brugge on Wednesday.

Despite being last in the Bundesliga and reduced to 10 players after a 19th-minute red card, Gladbach stopped Bayern scoring for longer than any other team has this season.

Just as frustration seemed to be mounting after a Harry Kane goal was ruled offside, captain Joshua Kimmich got the breakthrough in the 64th minute. Set up by substitute Serge Gnabry, who had just come on, Kimmich’s first shot was blocked but he scored off the rebound.

Bayern doubled its lead five minutes later when Michael

Olise played a smart pass that gave Raphael Guerreiro plenty of space to score with a low shot.

Soon after, Kevin Stöger hit the post with a penalty which could have brought Gladbach back into the game, before Karl’s goal sealed the win for Bayern.

Second-place Leipzig kept



Bayern’s Lennart Karl celebrates after scoring his side’s third goal during the German Bundesliga soccer match between Borussia Moenchengladbach and Bayern Munich in Moenchengladbach, Germany. (AP)

pace with Bayern, albeit five points adrift, by demolishing Augsburg 6-0. Six different players scored the goals as 19-year-old Assan Ouédraogo scored one goal and set up another.

It’s the fifth loss in eight games for ex-Bayern striker Sandro Wagner in his first job as a Bundesliga coach with Augs-

burg, and the first time his team has failed to score.

Eintracht Frankfurt bounced back from its 5-1 loss to Liverpool in the Champions League as Jonathan Burkardt scored both goals in a 2-0 win at home over St. Pauli. That ended a four-game winless run for Frankfurt in all competitions.

Also Saturday, Adam Daghim scored the only goal as Wolfsburg beat Hamburger SV 1-0. Hoffenheim won 3-1 against Heidenheim.

Marco Grüll curled in left-foot shot in the 72nd minute to give Werder Bremen a 1-0 win over Union Berlin .

The win gave Bremen consecutive home victories for the first time this season and moved it into the top half of the table ahead of the weekend’s other games.

In a game of few chances, Grüll’s goal was a rare moment of beauty. The former Rapid Vienna winger cut in from the right before curling a shot into the far corner.

The win snapped Bremen’s poor run of Friday night results. Horst Steffen’s team had lost its last three Friday games, each time by at least three goals.

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Gold medal, Zou Jingyuan of China, center, poses with silver medal Tomoharu Tsunogai of Japan, left, and bronze medal, Individual Neutral Athlete Daniel Marinov after competing in the men's parallel bars final during the 53rd Artistic Gymnastics World Championships in Jakarta, Indonesia. (AP)

Sports

Swimming team departs for Bahrain

Bashar praises Kuwait Olympic Committee support for athletes at Asian Youth Games



The swimming delegation.



Kuwaiti Sports officials attend the Asian Youth Games.

MANAMA, Oct 25: Bashar Abdullah, Acting Director General of the Public Authority for Sports, commended the Kuwait Olympic Committee for its pivotal role in preparing and supporting athletes participating in the 3rd Asian Youth Games in Manama, Bahrain. He emphasized that the committee's efforts directly contribute to raising the level of competition, improving athlete performance, and enhancing their overall experience. Bashar described the Games as a key step in developing young athletes and preparing them for upcoming championships, expressing appreciation for the committee's dedicated care at all levels.

He highlighted the strong performance of Kuwaiti equestrians in the show jumping competition, where the team finished fourth in the finals. Riders Ali Al-Kharafi, Modhi Al-Jabri, Ghazi Al-Fulaij, and Hussein Al-Kharafi delivered a commendable performance, demonstrating the progress of equestrian sports in Kuwait, even though they narrowly missed a medal.

Bashar also praised the overall performance of the Kuwaiti delegation, noting the athletes' competitive spirit and sportsmanship, which reflect the advancement of Kuwait on the Asian sports map. He congratulated teqball player Nasser Al-Saqr for winning the bronze medal in men's singles.

He stressed the importance of regional and continental competitions for providing young athletes with experience, skill development, and exposure, helping to build a new generation capable of international success. Bashar wished the Kuwaiti delegation the best of luck, hoping they will achieve strong results and raise Kuwait's profile on the global stage.

Kuwaiti riders secured fourth place in show jumping, reaching the finals with notable performances from Ali Al-Kharafi, Modhi Al-Jabri, Ghazi Al-Fulaij, and Hussein Al-Kharafi, showcasing the growth of equestrian sports in Kuwait.

The Kuwaiti national youth handball team will play a decisive match against Iran at 5:00 p.m., concluding the group stage of the Games. The team

aims to win and secure a semifinal spot after a close 37-35 loss to China.

Iran leads Group B with four victories, while Kuwait and China are tied for second place with three wins and one loss each.

Meanwhile, the Kuwaiti national swimming team departed for Bahrain to participate in the 3rd Asian Youth Games, including the country's top young swimmers selected under the Kuwait Swimming Federation's talent development program.

The delegation includes male swimmers: Hamad Al-Hamoud, Hassan Hussein, Abdullah Sultan, Saud Al-Anzi, Mohammed Zubaid, Omar Al-Khalkan, and Mohammed Ashkanani; and female swimmers: Saba Sultan and Jana Adel. The team is led by coaches Aziz Al-Zakrawi and Somaya Al-Riyahi.

The Swimming Federation emphasized that the participation aims to support young athletes, enhance their skills, and enable them to represent Kuwait at Asian and international competitions with excellence.

Kuwait's Al-Sharaf brothers shine with four medals at Middle East Jiu-Jitsu Champ'ship

DOHA, Oct 25, (KUNA): Kuwaiti athletes Ahmad and Khaled Al-Sharaf delivered outstanding performances at the Middle East Regional Jiu-Jitsu Championship in Doha, Qatar, capturing two gold, one silver, and one bronze.

Ahmad Al-Sharaf struck gold twice – first in the Gi category (gray belt) for the under-27 kg division, and again in the No-Gi category (gray belt) for the same weight class.

His brother Khaled Al-Sharaf earned a silver medal in the Gi event (gray belt) for the under-34 kg division and added a bronze in the No-Gi competition in the same class.

Their father, Eissa Al-Sharaf, expressed pride in their accomplishments, emphasizing his commitment to supporting his sons as they pursue international success and bring honor to Kuwait.

He also highlighted the impor-



KUNA photo

Kuwait's Al-Sharaf brothers celebrate with the national flags.

tance of competing in regional championships, noting that such participation helps develop ath-

letes' skills and paves the way for future international achievements.

Best of the Rest

Mbappe, injuries key factors:

Real Madrid plays FC Barcelona on Sunday in the first Clasico of the season which will lay down a marker for both sides.

Madrid goes into the game top of La Liga having thus far played functional rather than attractive football, with Kylian Mbappe making the difference in many games.

Although just two points behind, Barcelona has shown erratic form, with some excellent attacking displays unbalanced by a defense that looks more vulnerable than last season, partly due to Inigo Martinez's departure to Saudi Arabia.

Barcelona has been plagued by injuries in recent weeks, with Lamine Yamal struggling with a pelvic problem, which is almost certainly the result of the amount of football he has played over the past year. Elsewhere in the squad, Raphinha is still out with a hamstring issue, Robert Lewandowski and Dani Olmo have calf injuries, Joan Garcia and Gavi have knee problems, while Ferran Torres suffered muscle fatigue with Spain's national team, but should start on Sunday.

Frenkie de Jong should also play despite suffering a stomach bug during the week.

To make matters worse, Barcelona coach Hansi Flick will be watching the match from the stands after being sent off in his side's late win over Girona last weekend and seeing all of the club's appeals rejected. (Xinhua)

Sunderland seals stunning late victory against Chelsea

Sheffield Wednesday taken over by administrators

LONDON, Oct 25, (AP): Chemsidine Talbi scored in stoppage time to complete a stunning Sunderland 2-1 comeback win at Chelsea on Saturday in the Premier League.

Chelsea led after four minutes through Alejandro Garnacho, but Wilson Isidor leveled the game in the 22nd before Talbi's dramatic winner in the third minute of added time at Stamford Bridge.

There was also a late winner at St James' Park, where Bruno Guimaraes scored in the 90th minute to seal Newcastle's 2-1 victory over Fulham.

Jacob Murphy put Newcastle ahead in the 18th, but Sasa Lukic equalized in the 56th for Fulham.

Nuno Espirito Santo became the first West Ham coach since 2018 to go winless in his first four games as his struggling team showed the same defensive frailties that have plagued it all season in a 2-1 loss to Leeds.

The Portuguese coach joined the Hammers a month ago after leading Nottingham Forest to a place in Europe but he has been unable to turn things around quickly in east London.

He now has three losses and one draw since taking over, a record equal to that of Manuel Pellegrini when he took charge of the club in 2018.

Off the field, supporters have ex-

pressed their discontent with the board, with thousands boycotting Monday night's loss at home to Brentford.

The team has defended poorly all season - conceding nine goals from corners, three times more than any other side - leading to the sacking of Graham Potter. And it was 2-0 down after just 15 minutes at Leeds thanks once again to hesitant defending.

Goalkeeper Alphonse Areola could not hold Noah Okafor's header after three minutes and U.S. international Brenden Aaronson pounced to sidefoot home the loose ball as the West Ham defenders watched on.

The back line was equally lackadaisical 12 minutes later when Joe Rodon headed home unchallenged from a corner kick.

Mateus Fernandes' deft header in the final minute gave the Hammers a consolation goal but an equalizer never looked likely.

The win lifts Leeds into 13th place on 11 points, while West Ham is 19th with four points and the league's worst goal difference.

That points tally is its joint worst at this stage of the season. Only in the 1932-33 and 1973-74 campaigns have the Hammers started as poorly as now.

"We're in a real situation and we have to face the reality of that," West Ham captain Jarrod Bowen told Sky Sports. "You have to face up to the reality of where we are and we're in

trouble now.

"We have to go out there and fight more than anything. The Premier League is the hardest league. We're not playing well and not getting results. We need to change it. We're the only ones that can change it."

Meanwhile, Historic English soccer club Sheffield Wednesday's future was thrown into doubt Friday after it was taken over by administrators amid financial troubles.

The English Football League confirmed that the club, which was founded in 1867, would be hit with a 12-point deduction as punishment.

Joint administrator Kris Wigfield said a new owner was being sought as quickly as possible.

The four-time English champion was an original member of the Premier League. It now plays in the second-tier Championship and is currently bottom of the 24-team league on minus 6 points after the deduction.

The latest move comes after a period of financial difficulty under the ownership of Thai businessman Dejphon Chansiri, which prompted protests from fans and sanctions from the league.

"For the fans, staff and players of Sheffield Wednesday this is an extremely worrying situation," said U.K. culture secretary Lisa Nandy. "Owners should be good custodians who act with their club's best interests in mind and clearly, in this instance, that has not been the case."



Al-Ittihad player falls down during the league match between Al-Hilal and Al-Ittihad.

Al-Hilal deepens Al-Ittihad's woes

RIYADH, Oct 25: Al-Hilal dealt another blow to Al-Ittihad, securing a 2-0 victory in the sixth round of the Saudi Pro League (Roshn League).

The first goal came in the 41st minute through an own goal by Al-Ittihad's Mamadou Doumbia, giving Al-Hilal the lead. Marcos Leonardo added a second in the 57th minute, converting a rebound from goalkeeper Hamed Al-Shanqeeti.

The win lifted Al-Hilal to 14 points, placing it third, just one point behind second-placed Al-Taawoun and one point behind leader Al-Nassr. Al-Ittihad remained at 10 points in seventh place, marking its third consecutive league setback following a loss to Al-Nassr in round four and a draw against Al-Fayha last week.

The opening goal was historic, marking Al-Hilal's 500th goal in Saudi Pro League history, with Marcos Leonardo's strike becoming the 501st. This achievement made Al-Hilal the first team to surpass 500 goals in the league, according to Opta statistics.

Al-Hilal now leads the all-time scoring chart, 54 goals ahead of Al-Nassr, who sit second with 447 goals since the league's 2008-2009 season.



Newcastle United's Dan Burn, left, and Fulham's Raul Jimenez in action during the English Premier League soccer match between Newcastle United and Fulham at St James' Park, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, England. (AP)