



DRONE ATTACK SETS KUWAIT RESIDENTIAL COMPLEX ABLAZE

Déjà vu ... Iran's back at it

Tehran takes conflict to new fronts Barrage triggers Gulf backlash Hormuz strike leaves two Filipinos dead

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2, (Agencies): Kuwait on Wednesday denounced a fresh wave of Iranian missile and drone attacks targeting several sites in the country, including a residential complex, warning that the strikes violate its sovereignty and threaten regional security and stability.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the attacks constitute a grave breach of international law, the UN Charter and UN Security Council Resolution 2817, while undermining diplomatic efforts to reduce tensions.

Kuwait reaffirmed its right to take all necessary measures to protect its sovereignty, security and interests and ensure the safety of citizens and residents in accordance with international law.

The Kuwait Fire Force said a hostile Iranian drone struck a residential complex in the capital early Wednesday, triggering a fire that was brought under

control by teams from Al-Hilali and Al-Madina fire stations.

KFF spokesman Brig Gen Mohammad Al-Gharib said no injuries were reported, with the incident resulting in material damage.

Saudi tanker attack raises maritime fears

Kuwait also voiced strong opposition to an Iranian attack on the Saudi tanker Sidr while it was sailing through the Strait of Hormuz, an incident that resulted in fatalities among its crew.

The Foreign Ministry warned that the attack threatens the safety of international maritime navigation and global energy supplies and called for an immediate halt to escalatory actions and respect for freedom of navigation.

Saudi Arabia said two Filipino sailors aboard Sidr were killed in the incident.

Saudi National Shipping Company (Bahri) said the tanker, IMO No. 9854715, was involved in the security incident at about 11:40 pm Monday

local time. The company expressed condolences to the sailors' families and said it was supporting them while coordinating with authorities and maritime-sector stakeholders.

Bahrain, Jordan strikes draw regional response

Kuwait said Iranian attacks targeting Bahrain and Jordan were also violations of their sovereignty and called for de-escalation, dialogue and respect for the principles of good neighborliness.

Bahrain said the renewed missile and drone attacks targeting Bahrain, Kuwait and Jordan posed a direct threat to civilians and regional stability. It backed the affected countries' right to defend their sovereignty and urged the UN Security Council to take effective measures to halt the attacks and protect maritime navigation in the Strait of Hormuz.

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PM Diwan photo

HH the PM receives President of Airbus for Africa and the Middle East and his accompanying delegation.

PM discusses aviation upgrade with Airbus regional president

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2, (KUNA): His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received on Wednesday President of Airbus for Africa and the Middle East, Gabriel Semelas, and his accompanying delegation, on the occasion of his visit to the country.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed ways to enhance cooperation between Kuwait and Airbus in the fields of aviation and air transport, and benefit from the company's expertise and ad-

vanced capabilities in a manner that contributes to supporting the country's plans to develop this vital sector and enhance its efficiency in line with the latest international standards.

The meeting was attended by Director General of the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) Sheikh Dr. Meshal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and Acting Chief of the Prime Minister's Diwan Sheikh Khaled Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah.

Vaccine reach expands across 90 facilities

Kuwait fires up winter vaccination drive

By Mohammed Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2: Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi launched the winter vaccination campaign for the current season, in the presence of Assistant Undersecretary for Public Health Affairs Dr. Al-Mundhir Al-Hasawi, at the Mubarak Al-Hasawi Specialized Health Center in Hitteen.

The campaign is part of the Ministry

of Health's efforts to strengthen prevention against seasonal respiratory illnesses and reduce their complications, especially among those most vulnerable to health risks.

The ministry explained that the campaign includes vaccination against seasonal influenza, in addition to recommended vaccines for preventing pneumonia. The vaccines are available to citizens and residents at 90 health centers and hospitals in various health zones.

It emphasized the importance of getting vaccinated during the seasonal period, particularly for the elderly, children, those with chronic diseases, pregnant women, people with weakened immune systems, and healthcare workers.

The ministry called on citizens and residents to take advantage of the campaign by following medical guidelines and recommendations.

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Kuwait gives consumers digital grievance channel

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry announced the activation of a service for submitting complaints related to transactions between customers and providers of electronic platforms and applications, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This step coincides with the implementation of Ministerial Resolution No. 109/2026, which aims to regulate the relationship between the relevant parties and expedite the resolution of complaints in accordance with approved procedures.

The ministry stated in a post on its X account that the complaint submission service is available through the Commercial Control Portal at ccas.moci.gov.kw.

It affirmed that a specialized committee will be responsible for examining complaints and disputes arising between customers and providers of electronic platforms and applications.



HORIZON TALK

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Who shakes the sack when the world becomes a lab rat?

The farmer's repeated actions caught the attention of the agricultural engineer.

Pushed by curiosity, he asked: Why are you hitting the sack?

If the rats cut the sack, they will escape, and then I will lose everything I collected.

When a debate turns into fanaticism, it becomes easy to believe the lies.

As soon as the rain stops, the umbrella becomes a heavy burden.

As soon as the sun shines, one blows out a candle.

Buy a watermelon for three dollars or buy three for ten dollars.

Three for nine dollars, and I think you are not an expert in business.

They buy three watermelons instead of one and then keep on lecturing me.

Day by Day

THERE'S a joke about a Jordanian man who was asked by another Jordanian, "Why do you always look so gloomy and irritable?"

The Jordanian man replied, "Don't blame me. Our coffee is bitter, our sea is the Dead Sea, our gulf is called the Gulf of Aqaba (which means Gulf of Trouble), our famous dish is Maqluba (which means thrown out), my father's name is Mahawish (which means trouble-maker), my grandfather's name is Mza'al (which means angry), and my great-grandfather's name is Adwan (which means enemy). How can I be happy in this environment?"

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

946 clinics, 1,193 nurses ready as schools reopen

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2: Official spokesperson of the Ministry of Health Dr. Abdullah Al-Sanad confirmed that the school health facilities are fully ready for the new academic year, through the implementation of a comprehensive healthcare system for public, religious and special needs schools.



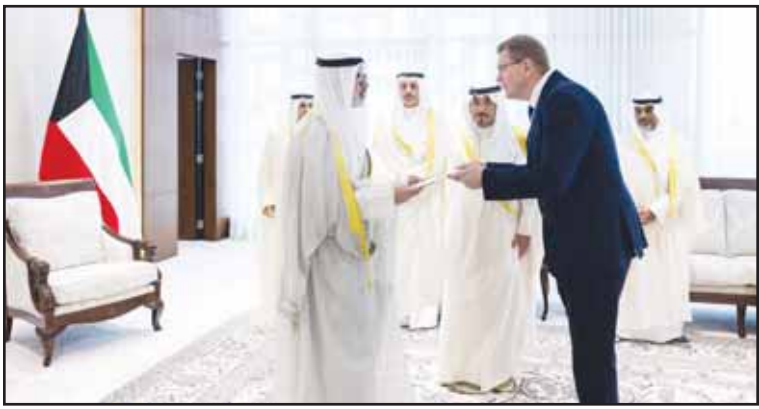
Dr. Al-Sanad

as per the procedures and protocols.

He revealed that the preparations included a field campaign in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, targeting more than 900 public schools to promote environmental sanitation and create a healthy and safe environment.

He clarified that school healthcare is not limited to emergency cases, as it covers prevention, health awareness, monitoring student growth and safety, and spreading good health practices among students.

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Ministry of Foreign Affairs photo

Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah receives the credentials of South Africa's Ambassador to Kuwait Raymond Michael Medhurst at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Kuwait's FM receives credentials of new South African ambassador

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2, (KUNA): Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received on Wednesday a copy of the credentials of South Africa's Ambassador to Kuwait Raymond Michael Medhurst during a meeting held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs head-

quarters.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement that Sheikh Jarrah wished the new ambassador success in his duties and further progress and prosperity for the close bilateral relations between the two friendly countries.

Kuwait empowers protection staff to tackle family violence

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2, (KUNA): Minister of Social Affairs and Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah issued on Wednesday a ministerial decision regulating the rules for the exercise of judicial enforcement powers by employees of the Protection Centers Department at the Supreme Council for Family Affairs.

This decision came in implementation of the provisions of Decree-Law No. (11) of 2026 on protection from family violence.

Al-Huwailah told KUNA that the decision aims to empower legally and socially qualified national personnel to protect vulnerable groups, monitor cases of family violence and deal with them immediately within legislative frameworks that ensure justice,

confidentiality and integrity.

She added that the decision sets conditions for granting judicial enforcement powers to employees of the Protection Centers Department, including being a Kuwaiti national of good conduct and reputation, providing a recent criminal record certificate and holding at least a bachelor's degree in psychological counseling, social counseling or law.

She explained that the conditions also include completing a specialized training course in coordination with the Kuwait Institute of Judicial and Legal Studies and taking the legal oath after completing the course before the head of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs prior to assuming their duties.

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Al-Huwailah

2 Kuwait's economy gears up for 'slow' year-end recovery



8 KFW ranked No. 1 Best-Performing Bank in Kuwait

Kuwait Future Fund gets new financial safety valve

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2: Decree Law No. 81/2026 was issued amending some provisions of Decree Law No. 106/1976 concerning the Future Generations Fund, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The decree includes amendments to the mechanism for allocating funds from annual revenues to the Fund and adds provisions regulating borrowing from the Future Generations Fund to support the state's General Reserve, subject to specific controls.

The decree, published in the supplement to the official gazette, "Kuwait Al-youm," stipulates that allocations to the Future Generations Fund will be made when annual revenues exceed expenditures.

The decree allows borrowing from the Future Generations Fund to support the state's General Reserve by a decision of the Council of Ministers. It also defines the maximum loan amount and the repayment mechanism.

The provisions of the decree are as follows:

Article 1 - The text of paragraph 1 of Article 1 and paragraph 2 of Article 2 of Law No. 106/1976, referred to above, shall be replaced by the following:

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Prayer Timings

Fajr	04:05	Asr	15:20
Sunrise ..	05:26	Maghrib ..	18:09
Zohr	11:47	Isha	19:30



HH the Amir



King Haakon VIII

Amir congratulates Norway King on taking over throne

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Wednesday a congratulatory cable to King Haakon VIII of Norway on taking the constitutional oath as King.

His Highness the Amir wished the King good health and success in carrying out his duties, as well as further progress and prosperity for the relations between both countries.

Crown Prince congratulates

His Highness the Crown Prince

Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent on Wednesday a congratulatory cable to King Haakon VIII of Norway on taking the constitutional oath as King.

His Highness wished the Norwegian King good health and every success in carrying out his duties.

PM congratulates

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent on Wednesday a congratulatory cable to King Haakon VIII of Norway on taking the constitutional oath as King.



KUNA photo Chief of General Staff of the Army Lieutenant General Khaled Al-Shuraiaan receives the French Military Attache and Head of the French Military Mission Colonel Jerome Bugeaud.

Kuwait, France seek to boost joint drills, military relations

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2, (KUNA): Chief of General Staff of the Army Lieutenant General Khaled Al-Shuraiaan discussed with French Military Attache and Head of the French Military Mission Colonel Jerome Bugeaud military cooperation, joint exercises and ways to enhance them in

the common interest. In a statement on Wednesday, the General Staff said the discussions took place during Al-Shuraiaan's reception of Colonel Bugeaud, with bilateral relations and issues of mutual interest also reviewed. A number of senior Army commanders attended the meeting.

Kuwait's economy gears up for 'slow' year-end recovery

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2: The easing of geopolitical tensions suggests a promising final quarter capable of absorbing shocks and stimulating local economic performance in 2026.

Former Ministry of Finance advisor and economic expert Mohammad Ramadan explained that financial buffers enabled the state to effectively overcome crises despite the decline in oil revenues following the closure of the Strait of Hormuz. Strong government capital spending on strategic projects had succeeded in revitalizing the local market and stimulating the economic cycle.



Ramadan

This strong performance of the national economy was reflected positively and directly in trading activity on the stock exchange, and there is hope that this positive performance would continue during the final quarter of the year.

Meanwhile, economic expert Ahmad Al-Sundan confirmed that official economic and financial indicators for the final quarter of 2026 show signs of a gradual and resilient recovery in the Kuwaiti economy and the Boursa Kuwait, paving the way for stable performance.

He stated that the improvement is due to the markets' absorption of the shocks caused by regional geopolitical tensions and the return of momentum to capital and commercial spending.

Al-Sundan explained that the recovery is reflected in the projections of international institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund, which

expects Kuwait's GDP growth to reach nearly 4 percent in 2026, supported by the resilience of non-oil sectors and robust consumer spending. Consumer spending reached approximately 32.77 billion dinars from the beginning of the year through the end of July. Oil capital expenditures of 2.3 billion dinars are supporting major development projects. He pointed out that the enactment of liquidity legislation and the issuance of debt instruments have contributed to easing pressure on the general reserve and improving the country's credit rating.

Al-Sundan revealed that the Boursa Kuwait successfully absorbed the negative impacts of mid-year tensions, supported by a decline in regional risks and the strong performance of major banking stocks, such as the National Bank of Kuwait and Kuwait Finance House, which contributed to the recovery of the market index.

He stated that strong sovereign solvency and well-established legislative frameworks prevented any structural setbacks during the peak of the crises in the second and third quarters of this year.

He indicated that the government's effective management of the economy has contributed to revitalizing the local market and stimulating the economic cycle.

Al-Sundan affirmed that the strong performance of the national economy has had a direct and positive impact on trading activity in the stock market, with expectations that this positive momentum will continue during the final quarter of the year.

He anticipated that the expected regional stability, coupled with continued government capital spending on development initiatives, will pave the way for new liquidity to flow into a wide range of available investment channels.

Amir condoles over passing of ex-French Premier

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of condolences to the President of the France, Emmanuel Macron, over the passing of Former French Prime Minister Edouard Balladur.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir expressed his sincere condolences and heartfelt sympathy to France and its people and wished his family and relatives solace.

Crown Prince condoles

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent a cable of condolences to the President of the French Republic, Emmanuel Macron, over the passing of Former French prime minister Edouard Balladur.

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PM condoles

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent a cable of condolences to the President of the French Republic, Emmanuel Macron, over the passing of Former French prime minister Edouard Balladur.

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Kuwait holds special place in Yemenis mind: minister

'Kuwait, Gulf help eyed for stability, development'

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2, (KUNA): Yemeni Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates Dr. Afrah Al-Zouba affirmed on Wednesday that the deep historic ties between Yemen and Kuwait constitute a solid foundation for building upon, expanding and developing the partnership between the two brotherly countries.

In a statement for KUNA, Al-Zouba said that her official visit to Kuwait represents an important milestone in the course of Yemeni-Gulf relations, expressing confidence in the deep historic ties as a basis for moving toward a more structured and effective partnership in the political, economic and development fields.

She pointed to the message she carried from Chairman of Yemen's Presidential Leadership Council Dr. Rashad Al-Alimi to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, saying it reflects the special importance the leaderships of the two brotherly countries attach to bilateral relations and their shared commitment to strengthening and developing them.

She added that her talks with Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah addressed building on this political momentum by reviewing existing agreements, memoranda of understanding and cooperation frameworks, reactivating and strengthening them, enhancing political consultations and economic and development cooperation, and building capacities in a manner that translates the depth of historic relations into practical initiatives and tangible results serving the two brotherly peoples.

She stressed that Kuwait has been



Sheikh Jarrah Jaber



Dr. Afrah Al-Zouba

present in Yemen's development memory for decades, saying, "We look forward today to jointly building a model of cooperation that links Yemen's stability and development with the security and prosperity of its Gulf surroundings."

Al-Zouba praised Kuwait's history of development work in Yemen, saying Kuwait holds a special place in the memory of Yemenis, as its presence was not limited to the years of crisis and war, but preceded them by many decades and left an impact on the lives of generations through schools, hospitals, roads, water and electricity projects and infrastructure.

Talks

Al-Zouba noted that her talks with the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development reflected a shared aspiration to resume financing priority projects and support the recovery and development phase.

She added that the best way to honor this legacy is to build upon it and move from managing the effects of the crisis to investing in Yemen's capacity to recover and restore its institutions, services and economy.

She pointed out that her current Gulf tour stems from a vision that considers Yemen an integral part of its geographical space in the Arabian Peninsula, noting that during her meet-

ings with senior officials, she sensed a deep understanding of Yemen's geopolitical importance and the close link between its stability and regional security.

She said Yemen, with its strategic location in the south of the Arabian Peninsula, its extensive coastlines along the Red Sea, Bab Al-Mandab Strait and Gulf of Aden, as well as its resources and human potential, is qualified, under a stable state and effective institutions, to become an added value to the region's security, stability and prosperity and to regain its natural role as an active partner in the security and prosperity of its Gulf surroundings.

The Yemeni foreign minister expressed her country's appreciation for the leading role of Saudi Arabia and the efforts of the Coalition to Support Legitimacy under its leadership, as well as Kuwait's and other brotherly countries' positions and support for the Yemeni state and its people.

She affirmed that enabling the Yemeni state to exercise its sovereign responsibilities over its territory, coasts and ports is not merely a Yemeni interest, but a direct investment in the security of the Arabian Peninsula and the freedom of navigation and international trade.

Al-Zouba said recent regional developments, including the Iranian attacks against Kuwait and the attacks and threats by the Houthi militia against Saudi Arabia and maritime navigation, confirm that regional security is interconnected and that sources of threat cannot be addressed in isolation from one another.

She renewed Yemen's full solidarity with Kuwait and its rejection of any infringement on its sovereignty, security or territorial integrity, saying, "Just as we reject any Gulf state being subjected to threats or attacks, Yemen will not accept its territory, ports or coasts being turned into a tool for threatening its neighbors or a bargaining chip in regional conflicts."

MPW plans new expanded construction, road repairs

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2: The Ministry of Public Works will study, design and supervise the construction and maintenance of external roads and connecting roads in South Sabah Al-Ahmad City, including the entrances, exits and intersections.

The ministry floated a tender for the study related to the project, which covers South Sabah Al-Ahmad City, following the allocation of the area for the establishment of a new city, extending from around South Sabah Al-Ahmad City to the northwestern part.

The plan includes the construction of entrances, exits and intersections in various sides of the city, such as four entrances and exits in the western side, three intersections in the eastern side, two entrances, two exits and two intersections in the northern side, and one entrance, one exit and two intersections in the southern side.

This is in addition to modifying the existing roads and constructing connecting roads in the boundaries of the city.

Furthermore, the ministry issued four tenders, which will be offered by the Administrative, Financial, and Legal Affairs Sector, for the utilization of several of its sites to generate revenue.

This includes a location for presenting and displaying bank products in the ministry building, and another location for providing grocery services (supermarket) in the lobby of its headquarters.

MoSA announces dissolution of public benefit association

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2: The Ministry of Social Affairs announced the dissolution of a public benefit association.

The ministry confirmed that the decision was taken upon completion of the legal and administrative procedures, and a thorough review of the status of the association by the relevant authorities, with the aim of ensuring compliance with the law and maintaining the integrity of institutional operations.

The ministry indicated that it continues to closely monitor the public benefit associations, and remains keen on taking legal measures to guarantee compliance with the laws and regulations.

It added that the dissolution procedures will be completed in accordance with the relevant legal provisions and regulations.

MoJ transfers judicial circuits between governorate courts

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2: The Ministry of Justice announced several organizational measures related to the transfer of certain judicial circuits between governorate courts, in accordance with resolution numbers 44/2026 and 45/2026 issued by the deputy chief justice in the Court of First Instance.

These measures include the transfer of all labor circuits from the governorate courts to Jahra Court, effective Oct 1, along with the suspension of new labor cases, which will be registered at Jahra Court starting Oct 1.



KUNA photo Acting Director General of Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) Mohammad Al-Mannaie during the FANA meeting.

'Arab media needs to keep pace with rapid int'l shift'

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2, (KUNA): Acting Director General of Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) Mohammad Al-Mannaie on Wednesday stressed the importance of enhancing cooperation and coordination among Arab news agencies in a way that contributes to developing joint media work.

He also said stressed on raising professional performance, emphasizing the need to keep pace with the rapid developments in the media sector and communication technologies.

This came during a meeting of the General Secretariat of the Federation of Arab News Agencies (FANA) in the Jordanian capital, Amman.

The meeting witnessed the participation of directors and representatives of Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), Saudi Press Agency (SPA), Oman News Agency (ONA), Maghreb Arab Press (MAP), Jordan News Agency (PETRA), in addition to the federation's General Secretariat.

Al-Mannaie noted that FANA represents an important platform for exchanging expertise and experiences among member news agencies and enhancing cooperation in various media fields, serving common interests and supporting the presence of Arab news agencies as reliable sources of information and news.

He expressed appreciation to Jordan News Agency (PETRA) for hosting the meeting and to members of the federation's General Assembly, noting that the meeting's agenda is rich with topics and proposals capable of achieving the fed-

eration's objectives and developing joint Arab media work.

For his part, FANA Secretary-General Dr. Farid Ayyar affirmed that the federation has succeeded over the past years in expanding its network of cooperation and professional relations.

He noted that FANA attaches great importance to developing human resources at Arab news agencies through specialized training and qualification programs targeting various journalistic and technical personnel, contributing to enhancing employees' efficiency and keeping pace with rapid developments in the media industry.

Phase

Ayyar said the next phase requires greater support for Arab news agencies and strengthening their presence in the news distribution and dissemination system, enabling them to continue performing their professional role in providing accurate and reliable information to various media outlets.

The meeting aims to establish a new phase of joint media work and enhance cooperation in content exchange, use of modern technologies, development of journalistic personnel, and formulation of a comprehensive strategic framework to improve the efficiency of news coverage.

It also aims to enrich regional and international media discourse and build sustainable media partnerships that contribute to keeping pace with the modern media sector and consolidating standards of accuracy and objectivity in the field.

HORIZON TALK

Ahmed Al-Jarallah



Who shakes the sack when the world becomes a lab rat?

IN modern administrative and political literature, there is a story titled, “The Sack of Rats.” I believe it was taken from German folklore. Its protagonists are an elderly farmer and an agricultural engineer on a train.

The elderly farmer works as a rat catcher. He collects rats in a sack and sells them to research centers in the capital.

One day, the farmer boarded a train to the city, put his sack between his feet, and sat quietly. Every now and then, he would shake the sack violently.

This behavior caught the attention of one of the passengers, an agricultural engineer.

The engineer could not control his curiosity and asked, “Why are you shaking the sack? What is inside?”

The farmer smiled and said, “There are dozens of mice in the sack. If I leave them alone for too long, they will realize they are trapped and might stop fighting amongst themselves. They will start working together to gnaw at the sack to escape, and then I will lose everything I collected.”

The farmer added, “Whenever I sense the mice starting to calm down, I shake the sack and start to make them confused. They think the danger is coming from those inside, so they go back to attack each other.”

- The farmer’s repeated actions caught the attention of the agricultural engineer.
- Pushed by curiosity, he asked: Why are you hitting the sack?
- If the rats cut the sack, they will escape, and then I will lose everything I collected.
- When a debate turns into fanaticism, it becomes easy to believe the lies.
- As soon as the rain stops, the umbrella becomes a heavy burden.
- As soon as the sun shines, one blows out a candle.
- Buy a watermelon for three dollars or buy three for ten dollars.
- Three for nine dollars, and I think you are not an expert in business.
- They buy three watermelons instead of one and then keep on lecturing me.

The mice forgot that the real problem is not the mouse next to them, but the sack that trapped them.

The story may seem simple, but it raises a question far bigger than that sack. How often do we get caught up in fighting

amongst ourselves, while ignoring the one who made us believe our enemy is the person standing right next to us?

We often argue over trivial matters, becoming adversaries because of differences in opinion, sect or affiliation, while the issues that truly affect our lives remain outside our sphere of concern.

When a difference of opinion turns into hatred, it becomes easy to forget who holds the power. When a debate turns into fanaticism, it becomes easy to believe that the problem is in the person next to us, not the reality that contains all of us. When we are engulfed in petty battles, we may not notice that someone is continuing to build their interests away from our noise.

The most dangerous thing that could happen to a person is not disagreeing with someone, but losing the ability to think during the disagreement.

Do not be like the mouse fighting the mouse next to it, while ignoring the bag trapping both of them. In a world where noise is increasing, perhaps, the most aware person is the one who looks around and asks, “Who is making us fight, as he continues to go forward calmly?”

The umbrella, the blind man’s cane and the sun

As soon as the rain stops, the umbrella becomes a heavy burden that no one wants

to carry. As soon as the blind man regains his sight, the first thing he discards is the cane that supported him for years. When the sun rises, the first thing one extinguishes is the candle that guided him in the darkness. Is this how loyalty should be?

So, do not be surprised if you feel different since you live in a society that considers the shepherd ignorant and the dog breeder civilized.

The watermelon seller and the wise young man

An elderly watermelon seller put up a sign that read, “Buy one watermelon for three dollars or three watermelons for ten dollars.”

A young man drove past the seller and the sign caught his attention. The young man decided to teach the seller a lesson in economics. He got out of his car, bought one watermelon, left for a short while, and returned to buy a second. Then he came back a little later to buy a third one.

The young man turned to the elderly watermelon seller and said, “I bought three watermelons for nine dollars, not ten. I do not think you are good in business.”

The elderly watermelon seller smiled and thought to himself, “How strange people are! Every time, they buy three watermelons instead of one, yet they insist on teaching me how to do business.”

Car home seizure Sept 6; dodgers face fines, law

Recklessness, no seat belt, phone use to trap motorists

By Munif Naif
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2: Assistant Director General for Violations and Licensing at the General Traffic Department in the Interior Ministry Brigadier General Khaled Al-Adwani confirmed that the smart home impoundment of vehicles for certain traffic violations will start on Sunday.

This is in accordance with Article 43 of the Traffic Law, which authorizes the Minister of Interior to establish impoundment procedures using advanced technologies, as per Ministerial Resolution No. 1090 issued in July.

In an interview with Kuwait TV, Al-Adwani revealed that 29 articles permit the impounding of vehicles for certain traffic violations, according to Article 207 of the Traffic Law. He said these articles cover serious violations like reckless driving, car racing, speeding, failure to wear a seatbelt, using a mobile phone while driving, non-compliance with towing regulations, deliberately obstructing traffic, overtaking, making excessive noise and running the red light. He indicated that these are the most common violations that warrant vehicle impoundment and endanger the lives of road users.

He clarified that the system simplifies matters for everyone, as instead of allocating large impoundment lots, the vehicle will be impounded at the home of the violator.

He pointed out that for certain violations, such as extremely loud exhaust mechanisms, home impoundment is not permitted, so the vehicle must be referred to the impoundment lot to remove the source of noise from the vehicle. He added that other violations like reckless driving and some serious offenses are not

covered by home impoundment.

He stated that some violators have poor driving record, so their vehicles should not be impounded at their homes, because they will likely break the impoundment rule and use the vehicle.

He disclosed that there is a designated area at the impoundment lot for those who wish to have their vehicles impounded at home. He clarified that those concerned who currently have impounded vehicles can complete the impoundment period at home. He said the impoundment period varies depending on the violation, with a maximum of 60 days.

He emphasized that a vehicle impounded at home may only be moved in case of necessity, such as fire or emergencies documented by an official report.

He said if a person deliberately violates the terms of home impoundment, a fine of KD50 will be imposed. “If the violation is repeated, the request for a settlement will be rejected and the case will be referred to the traffic court,” he added.

He pointed out that Article 34 is clear and the penalty is imprisonment for up to two months or a fine ranging from KD150 to KD200.

He stated that in the event of intentionally damaging or tampering with the impoundment device, a case of damaging state property will be filed, and the violator will pay the cost of the device, and the vehicle will be transferred from home impoundment to the impoundment lot of the ministry.

He went on to say that compliance with seatbelt and mobile phone use regulations reached 90 percent, proving the high level of public awareness on these rules. He also affirmed that there has been a noticeable decrease in some serious violations, which cause injuries or fa-

talities. “Previously, there were around 50,000 violations for parking in areas designated for those with disabilities, which now decreased to 300 violations annually. The penalty for parking in such areas includes vehicle confiscation and imprisonment for one to three years,” he elaborated.

On the other hand, Assistant Director General for Traffic Regulation Colonel Ayoub Al-Ayoub said the process of installing the device on a vehicle and impounding it through the device takes only five minutes, including recording the data of the violator and his vehicle, and specifying the location of the impounded vehicle at his home. He stressed that the chosen location must be a private residence, not necessarily owned by the violator.

“Vehicles may not be impounded in public places, association parking lots or school parking areas. The device must be installed and securely locked inside the vehicle, either on the steering wheel or in another manner. The impoundment period begins at midnight after the device is installed. Device installation fee is KD10 and the daily impoundment fee is KD2. If the vehicle is taken to the impoundment lot, the fee is KD1 per day. If the device is moved or it vibrates, the Operations Unit will receive a notification immediately. If the violator does not wish to have his vehicle impounded at home, a tow truck fee of KD10 and daily impoundment lot fee of KD1 will be charged. The device placed in the impounded vehicle is monitored through the Operations Unit and GPS tracking screens,” Al-Ayoub explained.

He asserted that the General Traffic Department is not profit-driven, emphasizing that its goal is to regulate the behavior of motorists, because violations endanger the lives of road users and obstruct traffic flow.

He affirmed that the Traffic Law is applied on everyone and there is no favoritism, in accordance with the directive of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef.

and increasing benefits of regional cooperation in reducing operating costs and supporting the stability of electrical grids.

According to the report, the GCC interconnection network demonstrated high levels of readiness and efficiency in handling various power supply scenarios. Since its inception until the end of 2025, the interconnection network has recorded a total of 3,008 support cases, including 172 in 2025 for the grids of member states.

It indicated that the interconnection network greatly contributed to the management of fluctuations caused by sudden increases or decreases in renewable energy production through the provision of the necessary support to maintain the stability of the Gulf electrical grid.

30 smoking citations issued in Al-Mubarakiya campaign

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2: An intensive field campaign conducted by the Environmental Police Department of the Security Directorates Affairs Sector at Al-Mubarakiya Market resulted in the issuance of 30 citations for smoking, one citation for littering, and one citation against an establishment for allowing smoking on its premises, reports Al-Rai daily.

The Ministry of Interior stated on its Instagram account that the campaign was part of its ongoing efforts to enforce the Environmen-

tal Protection Law and curb illegal practices to maintain public cleanliness.

According to the law, the environmental penalties for these violations are as follows:

■ Smoking in enclosed or semi-enclosed spaces carries a fine ranging from KD 50 to KD 100

■ Establishments that allow smoking are fined between KD 1,000 and KD 5,000

■ Littering carries a fine ranging from KD 50 to KD 500.

GCCIA reveals \$412 million savings in 2025

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2: The annual report issued by the Gulf Cooperation Council Interconnection Authority (GCCIA) revealed unprecedented savings of \$412 million in 2025.

The newspaper obtained a copy of the report, indicating that the savings of GCCIA since its inception in 2009 until last year reached \$540.5 million, increasing the total savings over the past 16 years to \$952.5 million.

The savings are from reduced investments in power plant construction, lower operating costs and operational reserves, and the economic savings from avoiding scheduled power outage dur-

ing emergencies.

The economic savings from energy trading based on economic principles reached 5.8 trillion watt-hours in 2025, owing to the increased volume of electricity traded among the GCC countries.

The report compared the cumulative economic savings with the cumulative project cost from the commissioning of the GCCIA in 2009 until 2025. It showed that the cumulative economic savings by the end of 2025 reached \$5.22 billion, exceeding the cumulative project cost of \$2.151 billion.

The cumulative economic savings have exceeded the cumulative project cost since 2016. The economic viability of the project has been demonstrated since 2016, reflecting the success



Amir congratulates Vietnam Pres. on Independence Day

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Wednesday a congratulatory cable to the President of Vietnam, To Lam, on his country's Independence Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished the president good health and further progress and prosperity for the country and its people.

Crown Prince congratulates

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent on Wednesday a con-

gratulatory cable to the President of Vietnam, To Lam, on his country's Independence Day.

His Highness the Crown Prince wished the president good health and further progress and prosperity for the country and its people.

PM congratulates

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent on Wednesday a congratulatory cable to the President of Vietnam, To Lam, on his country's Independence Day.

CPU announces results

69 admitted to scholarship program

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2: The Secretary-General of the Council of Private Universities (CPU), Dr. Jassim Al-Ali, announced the results of the admissions process for holders of the English high school certificate to the local scholarship program for the 2026/2027 academic year, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Dr. Al-Ali explained that 69 students were admitted. The results were determined according to the established regulations and standards of the local scholarship program, ensuring equal opportunities and adherence to the requirements governing the admissions process. The local scholarship program represents one of the pathways for supporting investment in national human capital by providing quality educational

opportunities, enhancing the alignment of academic majors with labor market demands, and supporting the country's development priorities.

□ □ □

One dead in accident: The Operations Unit at the Ministry of Interior received a report about a hit-and-run accident on Arabian Gulf Street, which resulted in the death of an Asian, report Al-Seyassah daily.

A security source revealed that security and emergency medical teams rushed to the accident site, where they found the victim who already succumbed to his injuries.

The victim was not carrying any identification document and his body was referred to the Forensic Department.

Al-Bseis, guest of honor, at Bahrain CSR event

Spotlight on Kuwait charitable, community work

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2: United Nations Ambassador for Community Partnership and Chairman of the Board of Directors of Al-Awazem Charitable Foundation Hamad Zaid Saud Al-Bseis is the guest of honor in the Corporate Social Responsibility Award for Arab Countries 2026 and the International Forum for Sustainable Economy 2026, which will be hosted by the Kingdom of Bahrain on Thursday as part of the World Corporate Social Responsibility Day celebration, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This affirms the expanding presence of Kuwait in Arab and international platforms concerned with corporate social responsibility (CSR) and humanitarian work, proving its commitment to contribute to the development of modern concepts and practices in community work and exchanging expertise.

It is an opportunity to put the spotlight on the experience of Kuwait in the field of charitable and community works, and its rich historical legacy developed over decades of individual

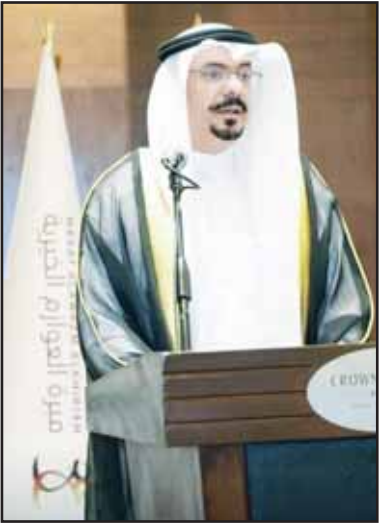
and community initiatives.

The award and forum events are expected to shed light on the transformations in corporate social responsibility, as well as the shift from traditional initiatives to models more closely linked to sustainability, impact measurement, governance and innovation.

The participation of Al-Bseis as the guest of honor reflects his continuous presence in forums on corporate social responsibility, particularly after the participation of Kuwait in several regional and international events this year.

The Bahrain events include honoring institutions, companies and individuals that made outstanding CSR contributions, and sessions about the pioneering experiences in the field of sustainable economics.

The Regional Network for Social Responsibility organized these events as part of its efforts to promote CSR and enhance sustainable practices in the Arab region.



Hamad Zaid Saud Al-Bseis

Bribery, harming public funds detected

71 probed for agricultural holdings, plots fraud

By Jaber Al-Hamoud and Fares Ghalib
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2: The Public Prosecution referred 71 defendants to the Criminal Court for manipulating agricultural holdings and plots.

In a press statement, the prosecution revealed that it conducted investigations into Money Laundering Case No. 153/2026, registered as Criminal Investigations No. 16/2026 based on information about the manipulation of procedures for agricultural holdings and plots that belong to the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR), and the resulting benefits and usufruct rights.

It stated that 71 defendants are involved in the case, including public sector employees, some of whom are holding leadership and supervisory positions, while others are working in various public entities, in addition to 28 legal entities and others whose roles are connected to the case, which made them benefit from the manipulation and reap illegal profits.

According to the prosecution, the defendants have been proven guilty, according to their respective roles, of bribery, deliberately harming public funds through dereliction of duty, forgery of official documents, money laundering and illicit enrichment.

It indicated that the value of the funds and benefits involved in the corruption cases arising from the trading of usufruct rights has reached KD8,662,296.

It affirmed that the case evidence is strengthened by the technical reports from Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) and Kuwaiti Financial Intelligence Unit.

It emphasized that public office is a responsibility that should not be exploited for illegal personal gains.

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Visual identity of co-ops: The Ministry of Social Affairs issued a circular to the cooperative societies about the regulations and requirements for unifying the visual identity of cooperative buildings and facilities.

Based on the directive of the ministry, the Union of Cooperative Societies sent a letter

to the chairpersons of the boards of directors of the cooperatives, indicating that the executive bodies should review the regulations and requirements, implement them, and coordinate with the relevant departments at the ministry regarding the implementation procedures.

The regulations stipulate commitment to the unified visual identity for the facades of buildings, facilities, markets, and branches of cooperatives. They must adhere to the specified colors, fonts, logos, and architectural and informational elements to ensure visual consistency in the buildings and facilities of the cooperative sector.

The ministry stressed the importance of complying with the approved visual identity during construction, development, renovation, rehabilitation or modification works in cooperatives.

It also underscored the necessity of maintaining the consistency of signage, directional signs, market and branch names, as well as the integration of logos as per the approved visual identity in order to guarantee clarity, coherence, and preservation of the unified institutional character of the cooperative sector.

MoE to launch gifted schools

Topnotchers priority

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2, (KUNA): Minister of Education Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei issued a decision on Wednesday to launch the ministry's gifted schools system at the beginning of the 2026/2027 academic year.

The system initially applied at the intermediate level, paving the way for its expansion to the secondary level in the coming years in line with the future plan.

The Ministry of Education said in a press statement that 1,071 male and female students will take giftedness assessment tests at the General Administration for Development and Advancement building in Al-Jabriya, in successive groups starting next Sunday and continuing until Sept 13. Parents can check their children's test dates through (Mawhoob) platform or the unified government electronic services application, Sahel.

It affirmed that gifted schools represent one of the ministry's qualitative initiatives in the field of caring for gifted students, aiming to identify and develop their abilities and provide them with an appropriate educational environment that contributes to preparing a generation of future leaders capable of creativity and innovation and contributing to the development process.

The ministry noted that the initiative is in line with the objectives of the New Kuwait 2035 Vision by investing in gifted students' abilities, developing their talents and creativity, and preparing a generation equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to contribute to building the country's future.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education, represented by the Gifted Students Office, announced the closure of applications for transfers of members of the teaching and administrative staff wishing to work at gifted schools for the 2026/2027 academic year, after receiving 542 applications submitted electronically through (Mawhoob) platform.

It pointed out that candidates will be ranked according to the previously announced approved criteria, including priority for Kuwaiti candidates, holding a university degree in the required specialization, an excellent grade during the past two years, and at least two years of experience, in addition to preference for those with previous experience working with gifted students, outstanding activities in their field of specialization, and proficiency in using computers and their applications.



Al-Tabtabaei

University education pivotal in students' journey: Al-Jallal

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2, (KUNA): Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr. Nader Al-Jallal congratulated on Wednesday the students accepted for the 2026/2027 academic year following the completion of admission results at various public higher education institutions and in external and internal scholarship programs.

In a statement for KUNA, Minister Al-Jallal said that the ministry, in coordination with higher education institutions, was keen to provide diverse educational options inside and outside Kuwait for secondary school graduates from public and private schools under their various educational systems for the 2024/2025 and 2025/2026 academic years, in addition to expanding academic majors that meet labor market needs.

He affirmed that admission results at public higher education institutions and in external and internal scholarship programs were based on the conditions and criteria approved by each entity, after students fulfilled their admission requirements, reinforcing the principles of equal opportunity and fairness and expanding pathways for them to continue their studies in line with their qualifications and preferences.

He noted that university education represents a pivotal stage in students' journeys, during which they develop their knowledge, skills and experiences, preparing them to transition confidently into professional life. He stressed that providing educational opportunities for Kuwait's youth is not merely a matter of university admission, but an investment in a generation that will shoulder the responsibility of building the nation's future.

Al-Jallal stressed that the ministry, in cooperation with higher education institutions, will continue to support students, enhance their academic experience and provide an environment conducive to their success and excellence, enabling them to make the most of their years of study and strengthening their readiness to enter the labor market.

He wished the students success in their upcoming academic journeys and called on them to use the knowledge and expertise they acquire in serving their country and contributing to its progress and advancement.



Dr. Al-Jallal



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Continued from Page 1

Déjà vu

Saudi Arabia likewise expressed solidarity with Kuwait, Bahrain and Jordan, calling for an end to escalation, respect for state sovereignty and international law, and a return to negotiations and peaceful solutions.

GCC, Arab states back targeted countries

GCC Secretary-General Jassem Al-Budaiwi said the attacks on Kuwait, Bahrain and Jordan, along with the strike on Sidr, represented a dangerous escalation that put regional stability, international navigation and global trade at risk.

He affirmed the Gulf states’ support for Kuwait, Bahrain, Jordan and Saudi Arabia in protecting their security, sovereignty and interests.

Arab Parliament President Mohammad Al-Yamahi called for immediate international action to prevent further attacks, while the Arab Interior Ministers Council said the strikes reflected a continuing pattern of conduct that threatens regional and international security.

Egypt also backed Kuwait, Bahrain and Jordan, warning that continued military escalation could trigger further cycles of confrontation and instability. Cairo urged maximum restraint, respect for sovereignty and international law, and a return to diplomatic efforts.

Kuwait calls for accountability
Kuwait’s Permanent Representative to the UN and other international organizations in Geneva, Ambassador Nasser Al-Hain, urged the international community to move beyond statements and adopt effective deterrent and accountability measures.

Speaking to KUNA ahead of the 63rd session of the UN Human Rights Council, Al-Hain described the attacks on Kuwaiti territory as a direct challenge to the international system and a violation of Article 2(4) of the UN Charter, which prohibits the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of states.

He said attacks on vital areas and civilian objects also raised serious concerns under international humanitarian and human rights law, including the principles of distinction and proportionality.

Al-Hain held the UN Security Council primarily responsible for maintaining international peace and security and called for the attacks to be documented and those responsible pursued under international law.

He reiterated Kuwait’s right to individual and collective self-defense under Article 51 of the UN Charter and said Kuwait would take the necessary political, legal and security measures to protect its territory, sovereignty, citizens and residents.

The 63rd session of the UN Human

Rights Council is scheduled to open in Geneva on Sept 7 and run until Oct 7, with the Middle East conflict, humanitarian issues and human rights violations among the key topics on its agenda.

The latest flare-up in violence came as the standoff seemed to be shifting slightly more in the U.S.’ favor, with the price of oil around \$80 a barrel and Iranian leaders talking about growing economic hardships, said Sascha Bruchmann, an analyst with the International Institute for Strategic Studies’ Middle East office in Bahrain.

“The U.S. is trying to reinstall some kind of confidence into the global oil markets ... and the Iranians had to respond to that by reinserting insecurity and doubt,” Bruchmann said.

Since the fighting resumed, the price of Brent crude oil, the international standard, has climbed to around \$95, up more than 30% from the start of the war.

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Iran will “continue to feel the squeeze” from the United States until it drops any nuclear weapons ambitions and ends support for armed groups in the Middle East. Iran has always insisted its nuclear program is peaceful.

Following the strikes on Jordan, U.S. Gulf allies Kuwait and Bahrain said they had also come under attack, without reporting any casualties.

“You will soon see that Iran’s new strategy on the battlefield, in diplomacy, and in confronting the economic blockade will shatter your foundations,” the recently appointed head of Iran’s powerful Supreme National Security Council, Mohsen Rezaei, said on X.

In Iraq, where Iranian-backed forces are active, Kurdish authorities said they had intercepted 10 drones laden with explosives in the Irbil area. Iranian television reported that American bases in Irbil had been targeted.

946 clinics,

He urged the parents to provide the school administrations and clinics with their children’s accurate and updated health information, especially regarding chronic illnesses, allergies or regular medications, and to ensure that all required vaccinations and tests are completed.

He advised the parents not to send their children to school if they notice symptoms of any illness that could affect their health or that of their classmates.

Kuwait empowers

The decision grants designated employees powers to ensure victims’ safety, including monitoring cases of violence, inspecting places they are legally permitted to enter, documenting observations and information in official reports, requesting documents,

securing evidence and referring reports to the competent authorities without delay, she said.

Al-Huwailah said the decision prohibits employees from exploiting their influence or powers for personal benefit, interfering in family relationships outside the scope of their work, making media statements or publishing images that could reveal the identities of those involved in cases.

She added that employees are required to immediately recuse themselves and notify their direct supervisor if there is anything that raises a potential conflict of interest with any party involved in a case, ensuring complete impartiality and objectivity.

The decision also emphasizes strict confidentiality regarding all data, correspondence and documents related to family violence cases, with this obligation continuing even after an employee leaves service, she said.

The minister said the relevant department will prepare an annual statistical report to assess the protection system and monitor practical challenges, while prohibiting the inclusion of any data that could reveal the identities of victims of violence.

She said the decision represents a qualitative step in institutionalizing social and legislative work in Kuwait and provides a secure legal environment that safeguards the dignity of families and their members, particularly children, women, older persons and people with disabilities.

Kuwait fires

Dr. Hamad Bastaki, Head of the Infectious Disease Control Department, affirmed that vaccinations represent the first line of defense against winter respiratory illnesses, given their ability to reduce the risk of infection, lessen the severity of illness and its complications, and decrease the number of cases requiring hospitalization.

He highlighted the Ministry of Health’s commitment to providing vaccinations at the largest possible number of health centers and hospitals, making them more accessible to citizens and residents.

Kuwait Future

Article 1, paragraph 1 - “In the event that annual revenues exceed expenditures, a percentage of the actual surplus recorded in the State’s final accounts shall be deducted annually.

The value of this percentage shall be determined based on a proposal from the minister concerned, who chairs the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Investment Authority, and with the approval of the Council of Ministers, effective from the results of the

2018/2019 fiscal year.”

Article 2, paragraph 2 - The Kuwait Investment Authority shall invest these funds and utilize all necessary financial, investment, and funding instruments for this purpose. The returns on its investments shall be added to this account.

Article 2 - Two new paragraphs shall be added to Article 3 of Law No. 106/1976, and a new Article 3-bis shall be added to the same Law, with the following texts:

Article 3, two new paragraphs - “The Council of Ministers may, upon a proposal from the minister responsible for chairing the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Investment Authority and after obtaining the board’s approval, authorize borrowing from the Future Generations Fund to support the state’s General Reserve. This decision shall include the following:

1. The loan amount.
2. The purpose of the loan and its return.

3. The loan term and repayment schedule, including the repayment of the loan or its installments and interest.

4. The terms and conditions for restructuring or rescheduling the loan.

5. Any other data and provisions necessary for organizing and implementing the loan.”

Subject to the provisions of the preceding clauses, the loan amount and any accrued interest shall be recorded as an outstanding asset in the Future Generations Fund account. The loan shall have priority for repayment from state revenues once a budget surplus is achieved.

The repayment of the loan shall be subject to the approval of the state’s final accounts.

Under no circumstances may the loan be written off or reduced except by law.

Article 3-bis - “Borrowing from the Future Generations Fund shall be subject to the following controls:

1. The total loans during any one fis-

cal year shall not exceed 100 percent of the average returns achieved by the Fund over the last five audited fiscal years.

2. The total outstanding balance of accumulated loans shall not exceed 10 percent of the net value of the Fund’s assets, according to its audited financial statements for the last fiscal year.

3. Contracting any new loans is prohibited if either of the maximum limits stipulated in paragraphs 1 and 2 of this article is exceeded. This prohibition shall only be lifted after the borrowing ratios have decreased to the prescribed limits.”

Article 3 - Any provision that contradicts the provisions of this Decree-Law is hereby repealed.

Article 4 - The Prime Minister and the Ministers, each within their respective jurisdiction, shall implement this Decree-Law, which shall be published in the official gazette and shall come into force from the date of its publication.



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Action Energy Company (K.S.C.P)

Reminder Announcement Invitation to Attend Ordinary General Assembly Meeting of Action Energy Company

The Board of Directors of Action Energy Company is pleased to invite the esteemed shareholders to attend the Ordinary General Meeting, scheduled to be held at 2:00 PM on Thursday, 10 September 2026, the meeting will be held either through physical attendance and voting at the Company’s headquarters located at: Al-Asimah, Kuwait Free Zone, Block 1, Plot No. 4D, First Floor, P.O. Box 3866, Safat 13039, Kuwait, or through attendance, participation, and voting via the electronic system, in accordance with the policies and procedures manual for general assemblies through the electronic systems approved by Kuwait Clearing Company, and in line with the decisions and regulations issued by the competent regulatory authorities.

The right to attend and vote at the Ordinary General Meeting shall be granted to shareholders whose names are registered in the Company’s records as of Monday, 31/08/2026 (Record Date). Please note that the last date to purchase shares entitling the shareholder to attend and vote at the meeting is Tuesday, 25/08/2026. The meeting will consider the items listed on the agenda.

To review the agenda, please visit the Company’s website:
www.actionenergykw.com

Shareholders wishing to attend are kindly requested to contact the Company at Tel: 22247533 Ext. 7305 to collect the invitation and agenda, starting from Monday, 31/08/2026, during official working hours from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM.

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Lawmakers blame other party for recent impasses

US House passes short-term funding bill to avoid shutdown before election

WASHINGTON, Sept 2, (AP): The House passed a short-term measure Tuesday to fund the federal government into early December, a move designed to avoid a chaotic shutdown as lawmakers campaign for reelection.

Lawmakers needed to act before the fiscal year concludes at the end of September to avoid a funding lapse. They were determined not to bump up against that deadline during the campaign season following this past year's historic shutdowns.

The House passed the bill by a vote of 370-48. The Senate has already overwhelmingly approved the measure, so it now moves to President Donald Trump's desk for his signature.

"It gives the nation and our constituents certainty, certainty that the government will remain open, certainty that our service members will be paid," said Rep. Tom Cole, the Republican chairman of the House Appropriations Committee.

A record 43-day shutdown occurred last fall when the two parties disagreed on renewing an expiring

tax credit that lowers the cost of health coverage obtained through Affordable Care Act marketplaces. Then came the shutdown of the Department of Homeland Security, which lasted 76 days before lawmakers agreed to fund much of the department but not its immigration enforcement operations.

Lawmakers were wary of a repeat before voters go to the polls. They also blamed the other party for the recent impasses.

"We're going to avoid the threat of another Democratic shutdown," House Speaker Mike Johnson told reporters in advance of the vote.

After the vote Johnson said the House delivered, despite those who doubted the Republican majority would be able to push past its own divisions and rally support.

"We're continuing to do the grown-up thing, get the job done," he said.

Rep. Rosa DeLauro, the lead Democrat on the House Appropriations Committee, encouraged her Democratic colleagues to vote for the measure during a closed-door



With election season getting underway, Speaker of the House Mike Johnson, joined by Rep. Lisa McClain, left, praises the policies of President Donald Trump as he meets with reporters ahead of a vote on a stopgap funding bill and a resolution targeting socialist policies, during a news conference at the Capitol in Washington on Sept 1. (AP)

meeting Tuesday morning.

She said the bill was much improved from the product that passed the House earlier this summer on a mostly party-line basis. For example, she said it

prevents the Department of Homeland Security from transferring funds to the Border Patrol, and it delays a proposed rule that would give political appointees in the Trump administration more

authority to stop federal grants from going out for programs they view as not in line with the president's agenda. Those changes were made when the Senate approved its version of the bill.

Democrats fear the administration will use the proposed regulation on grants to steer money away from Democratic-led states. DeLauro called the delay an important first step, but said more must be done to block the policy from taking effect.

"Whether a community receives disaster relief should not depend on who they voted for in the last election," DeLauro said.

The short-term measure funds federal agencies generally at current levels through Dec. 11. It will give lawmakers more time to find compromise on a full-year measure, though that will likely be quite difficult.

Republicans are seeking hundreds of billions of dollars in additional spending for the military while cutting most non-defense programs. Democrats say that's a non-starter and insist on a bipartisan approach that treats domestic programs with parity.

Also:

LOS ANGELES: US Sen. Ed Markey secured the Democratic nomination in Massachusetts' Senate primary Tuesday, once again fending off a push for generational change as he seeks a third term.

Markey, 80, defeated US Rep Seth Moulton, 47, who had attempted to argue that it was time to do away with the "status quo" in his pursuit to oust the octogenarian.

Yet Markey successfully pointed to Moulton's more moderate positions to argue that it was Moulton - not the older incumbent - who was out of touch with the state's voters. Perhaps no other issue defined the race more than transgender rights, and Markey repeatedly hit Moulton for previously saying he would not want his daughters to play against transgender athletes.

"Massachusetts needs a senator who stands up and fights back, a senator who never forgets who they are fighting for," Markey said during his victory speech. "That has been the mission of my life, and it always will be."

Vance talks about end times, attempted assassination of Trump in podcast

WASHINGTON, Sept 2, (AP): US Vice President JD Vance said in a podcast released Tuesday that if a 2024 assassination attempt had killed Donald Trump, he would have always wondered if it was part of a conspiracy and might not have accepted even another Republican as the next president.

Vance made the statement during a conversation with Christian podcaster Bryce Crawford. The vice president, who recently released a book detailing his own journey to Catholicism, also defended President Trump.

The conversation kicked off with a discussion of faith and the rush to scientifically explain away events that may be divinely touched. Vance cited the July 2024 assassination attempt in Butler, Pennsylvania, during which a bullet nicked Trump's ear and a supporter was killed.

Trump has long talked about his survival as divinely guided, a theme Vance took up. The vice president

said that if the bullet had killed Trump, "we would have had real civil strife in a way that I don't know that the country could have ever come back from."

Vance said many Trump supporters would have assumed a conspiracy had robbed them of their chosen president, and he said he would have also had those thoughts "in the back of my mind."

"I would have assumed very dark forces had taken out Donald Trump, right as he was about to come back into the White House," Vance said. "There would have just been an illegitimacy to our entire political system."

Most of the hour-and-ten-minute conversation was an amiable chat about faith, Vance's own spiritual journey, his Easter meeting with Pope Francis the day before the pontiff's death last year, and human frailty and fallibility. But it occasionally touched on darker themes.

Crawford asked Vance whether, as vice president, he had ever been in a room that was "spiritually dark."

"I've been in meetings with world leaders where various issues are being discussed, and somebody will say something or somebody will make an observation and I'll feel some darkness about it, it sets off every spiritual alarm bell in my body," Vance said. He added he also felt "a very dark spiritual energy" in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, probably because of the carnage at the Civil War battlefield.

Crawford also asked Vance about his interest in the "end times," which the vice president laughingly said had been more of an obsession in youth during the late 1990s, when people were abuzz about the possibility with the coming millennium. A chortling Vance recounted a story of a friend who was obsessed that the world would end in late 2007 and ran up major credit card debt.



US Vice President JD Vance speaks at Universal Contracting and Urban Tree Trimming on Aug 31, in Sterling Heights, Mich. (AP)



Police cordon off the area near the train station in the southern German city of Augsburg on Sept 2. (AP)

Germany train station blast injures 2

An explosion near a German train station followed by the discovery of a suspicious object caused police to temporarily close the transport hub in the southern city of Augsburg on Wednesday morning.

Later in the morning, police said the suspicious object had been identified as harmless and that the train station was reopened again at 10 a.m. and trains starting running again.

"We can give the all-clear - the object we found in front of the main

train station was harmless, and we have reopened the station," police spokesperson Timo K fner told The Associated Press. "The train are running again, too."

An unidentified object exploded in a passageway near the station at around 3:15 a.m., according to officials, causing minor injuries to two people. The people injured were a 17-year-old girl and an 18-year-old man, both of whom are Ukrainian citizens, the German news agency dpa reported. (AP)

EU struggles to find effective response after Germany blames Russia for foiled drone attack

BRUSSELS, Sept 2, (AP): The European Union on Wednesday weighed how best to respond to an attempted drone attack at a German airport blamed on Russia but struggled to find new ways to meet the challenge without resorting to military means.

The German government said Tuesday that Russia was responsible for the failed attack at Leipzig/Halle Airport on Aug. 4 using a drone laden with explosives and announced it would shut down a Russian consulate among other measures.

The nature of the incident and its attribution to Russia set a new benchmark. The drone was found near a Ukrainian cargo plane and the device was defused. The airport is a major international freight hub used for providing support to Ukraine.

"It is clear that it has all the hallmarks of state sponsored terrorism. The question is: what do we do about this," EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas told reporters before chairing a meeting of the bloc's foreign ministers in Ireland.

French Foreign Minister Jean-No l Barrot said France summoned



Germany's Interior Minister Alexander Dobrindt and Germany's Foreign Minister Johann Wadepuhl speak to the media during a press conference in Berlin on Sept 1 about the attempted attack on Leipzig/Halle Airport last month with a drone loaded with explosives. (AP Photo/Ebrahim Noroozi)

Russia's envoy to "protest strongly" and wants to impose sanctions on more of the Kremlin's shadow fleet ships.

"We won't allow an act of such gravity without consequences," Bar-

rot said.

The EU has slapped almost two dozen packages of sanctions on Russia over the war in Ukraine, hitting more than 3,000 officials, oligarchs and entities including banks, energy

companies and drone makers. The EU already was preparing to impose more travel bans and asset freezes on another 1,600 people, Kallas said.

Hundreds of ships making up the shadow fleet illicitly shipping oil to fuel Russian President Vladimir Putin's war effort have been targeted too. Russian diplomats have routinely been summoned around Europe, even expelled.

The challenge is how to respond in effective ways without going too far. EU member nations, many of them NATO allies, remain cautious about being dragged into open conflict with nuclear armed Russia.

Germany insisted it was "not at war" but had become a "daily target" of the Kremlin's hybrid campaign. Putin dismissed the allegations, saying Berlin wants to distract from its own failings and dissatisfaction among voters. Any proof being offered "has been planted," Putin said.

But German Foreign Minister Johan Wadepuhl said Berlin had carefully prepared its response "and now Russia must live with these consequences."

Russian attacks wound 8 civilians as Moscow, Kyiv threaten to raise stakes

KYIV, Ukraine, Sept 2, (AP): Russian aerial attacks struck apartment buildings in Ukraine's Kyiv and Odesa regions overnight and Wednesday morning, wounding at least eight civilians, local officials said. The Ukrainian air force said those two regions bore the brunt of the latest attacks on the country.

The air war between Russia and Ukraine has intensified as the conflict stretches into its fifth year following Moscow's invasion of its neighbor. The front line in eastern and southern Ukraine remains largely deadlocked, and US efforts to negotiate a peace settlement have yet to produce a path to peace.

Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy exchanged threats late Tuesday over what their next steps might be.

Zelenskyy warned foreign airlines that the skies over Russia are not safe for flights because of Ukrainian long-range drone attacks, saying that "Russian airspace will effectively be closing." He said the military pressure aims to compel Russia to accept peace negotiations.

Putin accused Zelenskyy of "state terrorism" and said: "We don't negotiate with terrorists."

At a late-night news conference on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit in Kyrgyzstan, Putin also addressed reports that the Ukrainian military had used British-made drones to strike targets inside Russia.

Asked whether Russia would



In this photo provided by the Ukrainian Emergency Service, firefighters arrive to put out a fire in a residential building after a Russian drone attack in Odesa, Ukraine, on Sept 2. (AP)

strike British military facilities if the UK government continues to provide Ukraine with weaponry, Putin declined to rule it out. With a small smile, he told reporters that is "a military secret."

China and North Korea, meanwhile, have provided military support for Russia, as has Iran in previous years.

Visiting French leader Macron joins King Charles III and PM to see Bayeux Tapestry

LONDON, Sept 2, (AP): French President Emmanuel Macron arrives in London on Wednesday to meet new Prime Minister Andy Burnham and visit the Bayeux Tapestry at its temporary home in the British Museum.

The two leaders and their spouses will join King Charles III and Queen Camilla for a private viewing of the 230-foot (70-meter) tapestry, a 1,000-year-old symbol of Anglo-French relations that depicts the Norman conquest of England in 1066.

France loaned the embroidery, insured for 960 billion euros (\$1.1 billion), for a 10-month exhibition that opens to the public on Sept. 10. It was spirited from Bayeux in northwest France to London by road and rail in a clandestine high-security operation in July, the first time since the 11th century that it has touched British soil.

Burnham said the tapestry's return "is a landmark moment in the history of our two nations."

Macron and the king will deliver speeches at a reception in the museum's Great Court for representatives from Britain and France involved in the loan and schoolchildren from both countries.

Stitched in wool thread on linen



French President Emmanuel Macron visits the Chaptal High School on the first day of the new academic year, in Mende, southern France, on Sept 1. (AP)

fabric, the artwork depicts events leading up to the Battle of Hastings in October 1066, when William, Duke of Normandy defeated King Harold's Anglo-Saxon army. The invasion ended Saxon rule, made William the Conqueror the first Norman king of England, and bound Britain and France together in a close and complicated relationship.

The loan was announced during

Macron's state visit to the U.K. in July 2025. In return, the British Museum is lending items including Viking and Anglo-Saxon treasures to museums in Normandy.

Burnham, who took office six weeks ago, will host Macron for talks at 10 Downing St. on Thursday. Burnham's office said efforts to stop migrants crossing the Channel in small boats will top the agenda.

Some missing tourists make contact as Nepal flood death toll tops 1,100 and more than 3,900 missing

KATHMANDU, Nepal, Sept. 2, (AP): Some tourists previously reported missing in Nepal have made contact with authorities, officials said Wednesday, as search efforts continued following catastrophic floods that killed at least 1,118 people and left more than 3,900 missing.

Nepal's Foreign Ministry said 324 foreign nationals had been rescued so far, while about 590 from 39 countries remained missing a week after the Aug. 26 floods.

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said Wednesday that the number of Australians missing in the disaster had fallen from 43 to 38 after five were confirmed safe overnight.

"Amidst all of this tragedy, we are seeing some positive news. Today, another five Australians have been confirmed safe," Albanese told reporters in Palau, where he is attending a regional summit.

"We hope, of course, for positive news further, and we're doing everything we can to work with authorities," Albanese added.

Sunil Sharma, a spokesperson for



Rescuers inspect a residential building damaged in the aftermath of the flash floods in Nepal's Nuwakot district on Sept. 2. (AP)

the Nepal Tourism Board, said at least five other foreign tourists who were previously reported missing had contacted authorities by email or telephone in recent days.

On the Chinese side, rescue crews completed a makeshift road to the di-

saster site at Gyirong Port on the Nepal border, state broadcaster CCTV reported Wednesday.

Crews have been clearing access for heavy machinery to be used in the search at the border crossing complex, which was washed away

by the floods. The road leading to the crossing was destroyed and buried under water, mud and rocks.

China separately reported 16 deaths and 546 people missing as of Sunday.

The disaster began Aug. 26 in the Himalayas, when a glacial collapse sent rock, ice and meltwater into valleys below, triggering powerful floods downstream. The surge entered rivers flowing through Tibet and Nepal, causing them to rise rapidly. Floodwaters swept away homes, buildings, roads and bridges, carrying mud and rocks downstream.

Some flood survivors are fleeing the devastation to seek shelter in Nepal's capital Kathmandu.

Around 400 survivors, mostly from the town of Timure about 110 kilometers (65 miles) west of Kathmandu, have been staying at the Yellow Gumba monastery, grieving lost family members and homes while relying on one another for support.

The shelter is being organized by locals and relatives, with relief supplies coming from individuals and charity organizations.

Asia

Tugboat sinks off S.Korea coast; 1 dead, 6 missing: A tugboat capsized and sank off South Korea's southeastern coast on Wednesday, leaving one crew member dead and six others missing, the coast guard said.

The 286-ton tugboat was carrying eight crew members when it departed Wednesday morning to tow a merchant vessel in the waters off South Korea's southeastern city of Busan, the coast guard said in a statement.

After the tugboat overturned, one crew member, an Indonesian, was rescued by the merchant vessel. Another of the crew, a South Korean, was discovered unconscious by coast guard rescuers before being sent to a hospital on the mainland and declared dead there, the coast guard said.

The coast guard and the navy sent vessels, aircraft and other assets to rescue the six remaining crew members who are still missing, according to the coast guard. President **Lee Jae Myung** ordered authorities to mobilize all available resources. (AP)



Lee

Mt. Sinabung eruption prompts higher alert: Mount Sinabung on Indonesia erupted Monday, spewing a column of black ash and smoke 3,500 meters (11,482 feet) from the top of the mountain into the sky over Sumatra island.

There were no immediate reports of casualties, evacuations or disruptions to flights in the region. But residents, visitors and tourists were advised to refrain from activities in nearby villages in Karo district in North Sumatra province and areas within 6 kilometers (3.7 miles) of the summit.

Roads, vehicles and buildings in several villages in Karo affected by the eruption were covered in gray ash. Local authorities distributed masks to residents to protect themselves. (AP)

Crew members not immediately accessible to media

USS Abraham Lincoln arrives in Thailand following Middle East deployment

LAEM CHABANG, Thailand, Sept. 2, (AP): The USS Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier docked at a port in eastern Thailand on Wednesday after its grueling deployment in the Middle East.

Associated Press journalists watched the Lincoln, which is carrying about 5,000 service members, as it made its way into the Laem Chabang port in Chonburi province shortly after the destroyer USS Frank E. Petersen Jr. sailed past the area.

The Lincoln has been supporting the US war against Iran. Its deployment included a record-setting uninterrupted time at sea of more than 250 days. Concerns have grown about the Lincoln's lengthy deployment following reports of deteriorating mental health among the crew and shortages of supplies including food and hygiene products.

Crew members were not immediately accessible to media, but the ship itself looked due for at least a new paint job, with large blotches of

what appeared to be rust on the hull, especially just above the waterline and at the edge of the flight deck, where fighter aircraft and helicopters were parked.

When asked about the aircraft carrier's appearance, Capt. Dan Keeler, the Lincoln's commanding officer, replied that "it is normal for a long deployment and we're not going to make further comments."

Asked for his thoughts about about US President Donald Trump's comment that the Lincoln's record-setting deployment was "not nearly long enough," he was similarly terse.

"So, the President speaks for himself," he said. "That is what I think about that."

A US Embassy statement said the Lincoln's strike group arrived in Laem Chabang, while the destroyer USS Frank E. Petersen Jr. docked at the nearby port of Sriracha, and the guided-missile cruiser USS Robert Smalls is in Map Ta Phut in neighboring Rayong province.

The visit marked the Lincoln's



The US Navy aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln arrives at the port in Laem Chabang, Chonburi, Thailand on Sept. 2. (AP)

first full port stop after 286 days at sea from the start of the deployment in 2025, the statement said.

"Abraham Lincoln's visit to Laem Chabang is a clear demonstration of

our enduring commitment to our allies and partners in Thailand, and we are all very excited to make Thailand the first port visit on our historic deployment," Keeler said earlier in a

prepared statement.

The usually Asia-based USS George Washington relieved the long-deployed Lincoln in the Middle East in August.

Many of the service members are expected to make a visit to Pattaya, a nearby popular beach town. Thai officials have said the Lincoln's stop would be for rest and recovery before returning to its U.S. base.

Pattaya officials said they welcomed the visit and the potential boost to the local economy. Authorities said they are stepping up security to ensure a smooth visit.

Shakira Fairfax, the mother of a crew member, traveled to Thailand to meet her daughter Jada.

"I'm excited. I'm so full of emotion. I can't wait to hold her. I can't wait to snuggle up next to her," said the mom, who hails from Paterson, New Jersey. She spoke to The Associated Press outside a hotel in the resort city of Pattaya where crew members are set to spend their leaves.

Shakira said her daughter, an

entry-level seaman, finished basic training in October and shipped out for the Lincoln's deployment in mid-November, later celebrating her 25th birthday on board.

Shakira said she worried most just after the U.S. launched its initial attack on Iran at the end of February and she was unable to connect with Jada for awhile.

"It was an uncertain time. It was a scary time. It was difficult - definitely difficult. But she has a support system. Her friends reached out to me. In fact, one of her good childhood friends is here as well. It was a time for us to stick together and trust and believe that she would be OK."

She also recalled how her daughter sought her support when morale aboard the ship was reportedly low.

"I asked, 'What can I do? What can I do?'" She said, "Just tell me old stories." Being able to share stories, laugh and look at photographs - to take that walk down memory lane - was really nice. It was really nice."



Students of Rafael Maria Mendive elementary school sing their national anthem during a start of the new school year event in Havana on Sept. 1. (AP)

Nigeria confirms planned withdrawal of US troops sent to help tackle crisis

ABUJA, Nigeria, Sept. 2, (AP): Nigeria on Tuesday confirmed the planned withdrawal of around 200 US troops sent to help the West African country tackle its complex security crisis.

The deployment was made in February following an escalation in tensions between Nigeria and the US following accusations of Christian genocide.

According to the Nigerian government, the US troops assisted in training and intelligence gathering and took part in a joint operation in which a top Islamic State leader was killed.

"The relationship between Nigeria and the United States remains strong, enduring, and mutually beneficial. The deployment of United States personnel was tied to specific operational and counterterrorism objectives," Nigerian military spokesperson Samaila Uba said.

He said the withdrawal is a part of the engagement and some parts of the security partnership will continue.

Nigeria is facing a serious security crisis. Jihadist groups and other criminal groups carry out several attacks across the country. Since President Bola Tinubu came to power, the crisis has worsened, spreading southward.

Analysts say that despite the deployment of troops and US President Donald Trump's claims on the security crisis, little has changed on the



Nigerian President Bola Tinubu speaks to the media ahead of his meeting with Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer inside 10 Downing Street in London on March 19. (AP)

ground. Last week, scores of people were abducted in the central region of the country.

Also:

LUSAKA, Zambia: Zambian President **Hakainde Hichilema** was inaugurated Tuesday to his second term after a disputed election that saw some opposition leaders arrested and the country's courts closed for legal appeals to the election outcomes.

Hichilema was sworn-in at an event at the National Heroes Stadium in the capital **Lusaka** in front of

thousands of supporters.

Hichilema was declared the election winner on Aug. 18 with around 60% of the presidential vote, according to the Electoral Commission of Zambia. The southern African nation has held largely peaceful elections since it returned to multiparty democracy in 1991.

His main challenger, opposition leader **Brian Mundubile**, received around 38% of the vote. He then claimed voting irregularities and rejected the election results.

Schools reopen across Cuba as fuel, water and power shortages persist

LAS MINAS, Cuba, Sept. 2, (AP): The Barroso family rose at dawn and hitched a cart to a borrowed horse to take their daughters to school on Tuesday, the first day of classes for many students across Cuba.

As the crises deepen on the island, thieves recently stole the family's horse and killed it for food, so the Barrosos now rely on a borrowed animal for transportation, because school buses aren't running.

Fuel, teachers and uniforms remain scarce as the new school year begins.

More than 10,000 schools were expected to open their doors on Tuesday, welcoming an estimated 1.4 million children and more than 135,000 teachers.

The island's education minister acknowledged ongoing challenges, calling the reopening of schools a "heroic act" for an island whose free and universal education system was long considered a crowning achievement of the 1959 revolution.

But the island's multiple crises forced the government to end the previous school year in June - one month early. Conditions have only worsened, with persistent power, water and fuel shortages compounded by a U.S. oil embargo and longstanding sanctions.

"This academic year has been the most disastrous one," said Leanete Barroso, mother of two daughters.

As schools reopened, President Miguel Díaz-Canel touted the achievement, writing on X that it was something "the empire sought to prevent with its plan of strangulation."

Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez echoed those sentiments.

"No energy blockade, threats, intensified embargo, or secondary sanctions will prevent us from continuing to preserve and develop the achievements of the Revolution, attained under the leadership of Commander-in-Chief Fidel Castro Ruz," he wrote on X.

As students entered their respective schools, they saluted the Cuban flag and sang the national anthem, which includes this line: "To die for one's country is to live."

A widespread lack of professors prompted the government to send more than 3,000 teachers from Cuba's eastern provinces to schools in Havana as teacher coverage fell to 73% across the island. The vacancies are blamed on low salaries and emigration.

Education Minister Naima Trujillo Barreto implored Cubans to help fill the gaps, calling on university students, professionals and even retirees.

"Everyone is invited - anyone who has something to contribute," she said at a recent news conference. "You might be at home, perhaps retired, and eager to meet a group of children who

need lessons in the very subject you know better than anyone else."

Librarian Sura Victorero Llerena answered the call. She retired this year but rejoined the school where she worked for 39 years: "I came back because I want to help. ... We are like a family. We all pull together to make sure things turn out well."

Meanwhile, parents and those in the private sector are expected to help provide school meals, with some schools only reporting a 15-day supply of food, according to state media.

School uniforms also were largely unavailable as the new school year began, meeting only 12% of demand at the primary level.

"No workshop can operate without electricity. Without fuel, we cannot transport fabric from one part of the country to another," Trujillo Barreto said. "Without money or the ability to import, no fabric comes in either."

She said that students would be allowed to wear "comfortable clothing" but are still required to tie on their traditional red or blue kerchiefs.

On Tuesday before dawn, many children brushed their teeth by the light of cellphones and rechargeable light bulbs. The night was rough for the Barroso sisters, who slept with their mother outside because their rechargeable fan died and the air was suffocating inside their cramped wooden home with a tin roof.

Lat/Am

Colombia blast kills 1 and injures 11: At least one civilian was killed and eleven other people were injured after a car bomb exploded outside a police station in northeastern Colombia, officials said on Tuesday.

The attack took place around midnight in Los Patios, a town on Colombia's border with Venezuela that is also part of the Cucuta metropolitan area. Police officers are believed to be among those wounded.

President Abelardo de la Espiella said the government would chase those who are responsible.

"Colombia will not yield to terrorism" de la Espiella wrote in a post on X.

In August, an explosion outside a police station in Cucuta injured 11 police officers and killed a police dog. Officials blamed that attack on the National Liberation Army, Colombia's largest remaining rebel group.

The area around Cucuta has long been disputed by drug gangs and rebel groups who are fighting over smuggling routes leading into Venezuela.

A peace deal signed a decade ago by Colombia's government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, reduced violence in many parts of the country. But crime has swelled in some regions as smaller groups fight each other and attack the Colombian government as they try to control territory formerly occupied by the FARC.



Debris lies scattered outside a damaged police station after a car bomb exploded in Los Patios, Colombia on Sept. 1. (AP)

Judge dismisses case against Hernández: A judge in Honduras on Tuesday dismissed the case against former president Juan Orlando Hernández for fraud and money laundering charges, clearing him of any pending charges in the Central American nation.

Hernández made the controversial return to his home country in July, four years after being extradited to the United States for his drug trafficking trial. The former leader, sentenced to 45 years in prison in the United States, was released in December after receiving a presidential pardon from US President Donald Trump. He pledged to face justice in his country, but some lawyers questioned whether the Honduran justice system was strong enough to pursue the case. (AP)

Kuwait oil price up \$6.46 to \$96.11 pb

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2, (KUNA): Kuwait oil price rose by USD 6.46 to reach USD 96.11 per barrel (pb) in Tuesday’s trading, compared with USD 89.65 in the previous day, according to the Kuwait Petroleum Cor-

poration (KPC) on Wednesday. In global markets, Brent crude went up by USD 4.16 to reach USD 94.65 pb, and US West Texas Intermediate crude also increased USD 4.46 cents to stand at USD 90.22 pb.

Business

In The Banker’s Top 100 Arab Banks 2026

KFH ranked No. 1 Best-Performing Bank in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has ranked No. 1 Best Performing Bank in Kuwait in The Banker magazine’s 2026 list of the Top 100 Arab Banks. The ranking is based on key financial indicators, including growth, profitability, capital strength, operational efficiency, asset quality, return on risk, and liquidity. This ranking highlights KFH’s robust financial strength, operational efficiency, and successful execution of its strategic priorities, including sustainable growth, digital innovation, and the delivery of customer-centric banking solutions aligned with the rapidly evolving financial landscape. As a prominent and reliable global benchmark, The Banker ranking comprehensively assesses key financial and operational indicators, providing a significant reference for investors, banking leaders, and decision makers to evaluate regional and global bank performance and industry trends. It is worth noting that KFH achieved a net profit of KD 363.1 million for bank shareholders in the first half of 2026, the highest profit in the banking sector, representing an increase of 6.1% compared to the same period last year.



KFH HQ

Net financing income for the first half of 2026 reached KD 649.4 million; an increase of 6.9% compared to the same period last year. Total operating income for the first half of 2026 increased, supported by the increase in all core activities to reach KD 990.5 million; an increase of 9.9% compared to the same period last year. Net operating income increased to KD 687.9 million, reflecting a growth of 16.2%. Financing receivables at the end of the first half of 2026 reached KD 22.8 billion, an increase of 11.5% compared to the end of the first half of the previous year. Total assets amounted to KD 42.2 billion at the end of the first half of 2026, a growth of 9.7% compared to the end of the first half of the previous year. In addition, the capital adequacy ratio reached 17.47%, which is above the limit required by regulators. This ratio confirms KFH’s solid capital base and supports its expansion and growth. The Banker Founded in 1926 and owned by the Financial Times, The Banker is a prestigious financial affairs publication widely regarded as a trusted source of global banking data and analysis.

Bank promotes healthy, active living

Warba concludes ‘Governorate in the Heart of Assima’

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2: Warba Bank marked the conclusion of the community initiative “The Governorate in the Heart of Assima”, which the bank supported for the second consecutive year. Held under the patronage and in the presence of His Excellency the Governor of the Capital, Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, the event took place from August 30 to September 1 at Assima Mall. The three-day initiative featured public health and sports activities designed to encourage community engagement and promote active, healthy lifestyles. **Key Event Activities:** ■ Walking Challenge Awards: The closing ceremony recognized participants who recorded the highest step counts in the “Walk and Win” challenge, aimed at promoting daily physical activity. ■ Community Engagement: Host-



ed interactive health and sports activities to raise awareness of physical well-being and active living. ■ Institutional Collaboration: Reinforced cooperation between Warba Bank and the Capital Governorate in supporting community-focused initiatives.

Executive Commentary: Abdullah Nasser Al-Shoail, Senior director of Branches – Retail Banking Group at Warba Bank, stated: “Warba Bank’s ongoing sponsorship of this initiative for the second consecutive year reflects our commitment to supporting national events that encourage healthy habits and foster positive community interaction. Partnering with local authorities enables us to support community programs that promote healthy lifestyles and regular physical activity.” **About Warba Bank:** Warba Bank is a leading Islamic bank in Kuwait with a strong focus on Sharia-compliant digital banking. With one of the largest shareholder bases in the country, the bank delivers innovative financial products and services, reinforcing its position as a digital-focused financial institution.

S&P GCC Composite Index increased by 3.8% in August 2026

Kuwait stocks end August on strong note: Markaz

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2: Kuwait Financial Center “Markaz” noted in its Monthly Market Review that Kuwait’s equity market closed August on a strong note, with the All-Share Price Index advancing 1.6%, driven by a 5.7% gain in the Main Market Index, while the Premier Market Index increased 0.8%. From a sectoral perspective, Basic Materials and Consumer Staples gained 14% and 9.5% for the month, respectively. Banking stocks remained flat(+0.1%), with leading stocks exhibiting mixed performance. NBK’s share price rose 1.5% while KFH declined 1.5%. Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait outperformed, rising 12.7% after reporting a 17.9% increase in H1 2026 earnings, while Boubyan Bank advanced 3.1% following CMA approval to issue up to KD100 million in AT1 Sukuk. Boubyan Petrochemical Company was the top gainer among premier market stocks during August, rising 17.7%, after promising Q2 2026 earnings. Kuwait’s economy remained resilient amid regional geopolitical challenges, supported by strong sovereign finances, steady credit expansion, and improving real estate activity. During H1 2026, Kuwait Oil Company awarded 129 contracts worth approximately KD 2.2 billion to expand production capacity, accelerate exploration and drilling activities, and modernize oilfield infrastructure. Reflecting the country’s strong financial position, Fitch affirmed Kuwait’s sovereign credit rating at AA- with a Stable Outlook, citing its substantial financial buffers. Real estate activity strengthened in July, with

sales increasing 24% m/m to KD 395 million, the highest level in three months, led by gains across the commercial and investment segments.Domestic credit growth remained healthy despite a modest contraction in July, driven by declines in lending to financial institutions (-2.0% m/m), while business lending (+0.7% m/m) and household credit (1.2% m/m) continued to expand. Resident deposits rose 9.8% y/y in July, supported by public and private sector inflows. GCC equity markets delivered strong performance in August, with the S&P GCC Composite Index rising 3.8%, supported by renewed diplomatic efforts to ease regional tensions and indications of progress toward reopening the Strait of Hormuz. Saudi Arabia’s Tadawul Index advanced 5.1%, driven by gains in major blue-chip stocks, including Ma’aden, which surged 16.8% following the announcement of a mineral exploration and hard-rock mining joint venture with Aramco. Dubai’s equity index rose 0.7% in August, supported by gains in key banking stocks. ENBD advanced 0.3% during the month, supported by its agreement to acquire HSBC’s retail banking business in Egypt. Abu Dhabi equities also ended August in positive territory, advancing 0.9%, as resilient corporate earnings continued to support investor confidence. Renewed geopolitical uncertainties and rising expectations of further U.S. interest rate hikes tempered broader market momentum, with GCC markets remaining sensitive to shifts in U.S. monetary policy.

Across the GCC, economic activity was pressured by geopolitical disruptions, trade challenges, and weakness in the oil sector, although resilient non-oil sectors and strong fiscal positions continued to provide support. In Saudi Arabia, the trade surplus declined 10% y/y in June, while real GDP contracted 4.8% y/y in Q2 2026 due to a 24.7% drop in oil activities, despite moderating construction cost inflation and continued IMF confidence in the Kingdom’s macroeconomic fundamentals. In the UAE, Q1 2026 GDP growth eased to 3.0% y/y amid lower hydrocarbon output, while domestic credit growth moderated to 13.9% y/y despite strong public sector lending and a rising non-oil contribution to GDP of 79.4%. Global and U.S. equity markets registered strong gains in August, supported by robust Q2 2026 earnings, particularly among mega-cap technology companies benefiting from sustained AI-driven demand. The S&P 500 rose 2.6%, the MSCI World Index gained 2.5%, and the tech-heavy Nasdaq Composite advanced 4.2%, rebounding after two consecutive months of declines.SpaceX shares rose 32.6% in August, supported by a strong Q2 earnings report that indicated a 92% y/y revenue growth. At Jackson Hole, Fed Chair Kevin Warsh struck a hawkish tone, emphasizing that inflation remains elevated and signaling that rate hikes may be needed if price pressures do not ease.Emerging markets also performed strongly, with the MSCI Emerging Markets Index rising 3.2%, led by gains in Taiwan (+7.0%) and China (+4.0%).

Bessent says 19 finance ministers agreed ‘cheap exports’ are unsustainable, but China dissented

ASHEVILLE, Sept 2, (AP): Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said Tuesday that 19 of the members of the G20 had agreed to address streams of “cheap exports” that cause global economic imbalances, but said China had dissented. Bessent made his comments at the end of a two-day meeting with finance ministers and central bankers where he tried to focus on growth, telling reporters he had urged some of his G20 counterparts to take a page from the Trump administration’s playbook of using tariffs and other measures to crack down on trade imbalances. “We believe that non-market-based economies pushing out a never-ending stream of cheap exports is not sustainable,” Bessent told reporters, describing the sentiment that all but one G20 member had agreed to. “It is clear that the country with the world’s largest and unsustainable current account surplus, the People’s Republic of China, was the dissenter,” Bessent said. The Trump administration,echoing many economists, has blamed China for trade imbalances that have left it with a large trade surplus while the U.S. has a sizable deficit. At the closing press conference Tuesday, Bessent also previewed the coming meeting between President Donald Trump and China’s President Xi Jinping. He told reporters he had warned other nations at the beginning of Trump’s second term that the new U.S. “tariff wall” would mean that Chinese goods would flood their markets.

“And unfortunately, I was right,” Bessent said. “The rest of the world probably needs to take a hard look at what they should be doing to protect their citizens’ jobs, their manufacturing base, so that everything they do doesn’t get offshored.” He also said Trump and Xi would discuss artificial intelligence policy when they meet later this month, saying more guardrails were needed to prevent “non-state actors” from building their own models. The treasury secretary added that he has made the point directly to industry leaders that AI companies, “whether it is the builders of the data centers, whether it is the labs themselves, have done a horrendous job, horrendous job of explaining themselves to the American people.” “They’re going to have to take some of the blame, and they are going to have to convince the American people that all the benefits will not accrue to a small group.” After the press conference, Trump posted on his social media site that “very productive and positive conversations were had” during the G20 meetings. He added that other countries “should follow our lead.” The Trump administration’s tariff policies have been criticized by economists and politicians for raising costs for U.S. consumers and, in many cases, for punishing allies. The Tax Foundation, an independent think tank, found that the tariffs imposed by the Trump administration throughout 2025 raised the overall retail price of imported

consumer goods by roughly 7% relative to pre-tariff trends. Ultimately, the U.S. Supreme Court in February decided that the sweeping global tariffs that Trump imposed under an emergency powers law were unconstitutional. The Trump administration has been overhauling its approach, and is eyeing an additional 7.5% tariff on Chinese imports after investigating alleged excess industrial capacity and forced-labor regulations. Bessent met with his counterparts from China at the summit and said there was some common ground on Iran, specifically that Iran “cannot have a nuclear weapon” and that oil and other goods should flow freely through the Strait of Hormuz, which Iran has restricted. Bessent has said China’s trade surplus, which reached a record-high \$1.2 trillion in 2025, is a barrier to global economic growth - as well as what he calls excessive regulation. Global debt has reached a record high of \$353 trillion, with the U.S. debt reaching a record \$40 trillion in August. Markets have been concerned about a sell-off in U.S. government bonds, but Bessent told reporters, “I don’t think we’re in any kind of dire situation” on bond markets. Meanwhile, the presence of Russian Finance Minister Anton Siluanov continued to agitate attendees of the conference. Siluanov met with Bessent on Monday on the sidelines of the meeting, but was not included in the traditional “family photo” of ministers.

Plant to process 632m cf/d gas

\$3.3b Al-Durra gas project set to take off

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2: The Al-Durra offshore gas field, shared by Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, is on track for development, with multi-billion-dollar projects expected to be launched soon, reports Al-Seyassah daily quoting sources from the oil sector. The information, reported by CNBC Arabia, coincides with the expected launch of the largest tender in Kuwait’s oil sector in ten years, valued at \$3.3 billion. The tender aims to construct an onshore gas processing plant connected to the Al-Durra offshore field, which is shared by Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Kuwait Petroleum Corporation’s (KPC) CEO Sheikh Nawaf Saud Al-Sabah told CNBC Arabia that technological advancements and seismic surveys have identified six areas suitable for oil and gas exploration out of a total of 16. According to the sources, Kuwait Gulf Oil Company (KGOC) issued the tender for the gas plant contract earlier this month, setting the end of December as the deadline for bids.

The plant is expected to have a processing capacity of up to 632 million cubic feet of gas per day and 60,000 barrels per day of condensate. Dr. Mubarak Al-Hajri, an energy expert, stated that the two parties had agreed to sign a contract to develop the field and reach production of approximately one billion cubic feet of gas. Abdullah Fahad Al-Ajmi, a former oil executive, said the primary consumers of the field’s output are the Ministry of Electricity and Water, as well as companies and factories operating in the oil and gas sector. Kuwait has subsequently achieved success in discovering and developing several offshore fields containing promising quantities of oil and gas. The Al-Durra field is considered a strategic reserve with significant estimated natural gas reserves. Its production of associated and free gas is expected to contribute sufficiently to meeting the needs of the local market, including requirements for electricity generation and water desalination, in line with the strategic objectives of KPC 2030.

Gas prices rise

Chevron to expand Venezuela output with \$7 bln investment

NEW YORK, Sept 2, (AP): Oil giant Chevron confirmed that it will expand its operations in Venezuela, just days after President Donald Trump announced an ambitious deal to develop the nation’s oil reserves and give the Pentagon a stake in the profits. Chevron, the only U.S. oil company that has a major presence in the country, said Wednesday that it has been assigned additional acreage in the Orinoco Belt, where the company has an established position. Joint venture plans include investing more than \$7 billion over the next five years, more than doubling production to approximately 600,000 barrels a day compared with 2026. “Chevron’s history in Venezuela spans more than a century, and our expanded position reflects our confidence in the country’s deep resource potential and its ability to compete for investment within our portfolio for decades,” CEO Mike Wirth said in a prepared statement. “With improved terms and additional acreage, we are strengthening a portfolio that we believe can deliver attractive low-cost oil growth, support energy supply and create differentiated long-term value.” Venezuela holds the world’s largest proven reserves, totaling more than 303 billion barrels of crude oil, according to OPEC’s 2025 Annual Statistical Bulletin. Saudi Arabia is a distant second with 267 billion barrels. However, Venezuela’s current oil output is only about 1.1 to 1.2 million barrels per day, due to factors such as political instability and international sanctions. The announcement comes a day after a U.S. official, who briefed reporters on the expected announcement, said that Chevron officials and Energy Secretary Chris Wright were expected to visit Venezuela on Wednesday when the new investment would be formally unveiled. The official spoke on condition of anonymity under ground rules set by the White House for the call. Chevron, the second-largest U.S. oil company, has had a presence in Venezuela since 1923. Its joint ventures Petroindependencia and Petropiar, S.A. operate extra-heavy oil projects in the Orinoco Oil Belt, while Petroboscan, S.A. is located in the Zulia State in western Venezuela. The White House confirmed on Monday that it is partnering with North American Blue Energy Partners as part of Trump’s push to tap into Venezuela’s oil industry.

disarray after years of neglect. Energy experts also have questioned whether Venezuela’s acting President Delcy Rodríguez has the legal authority to give the company 100-year rights over 17 oil fields with reserves of 65 billion barrels - and whether future Venezuelan or American administrations would overturn the agreement. Trump has had his eyes on Venezuela’s oil since the capture of Nicolás Maduro, and his aides call it a path away from reliance on oil from the Middle East. Trump has been pressing to get U.S. businesses to restore a presence in the country, and suggested Monday that other oil companies were readying for business in Venezuela. “We have Exxon going in, we have Chevron going in. We have our big oil companies going in,” he said. Trump in January said he was inclined to leave Exxon out of Venezuela after CEO Darren Woods called the country “uninvestable.” A spokesman for Exxon said Tuesday, however, that “nothing has changed” on the company’s position regarding Venezuela. Venezuela’s government nationalized its oil industry in 1976, and it created the state-owned company Petroleos de Venezuela SA. A second nationalization happened in 2007, with President Hugo Chavez pushing foreign oil companies into state-owned joint ventures or seizing the assets of those companies that did not agree to the joint ventures. While Chevron agreed to become part of a joint venture, others like Exxon and ConocoPhillips refused, and Venezuela took their assets. Asked about Chevron’s announcement during an interview on Wednesday, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said, “No American firm knows how to operate in Venezuela better than Chevron.” Bessent told Fox News Channel’s “Fox & Friends” that Trump is “creating assets for the American people” with the deal and that the arrangement “is going to push down oil prices, push up production” to benefit U.S. consumers and the Venezuelan economy. Trump has said that the agreement with Venezuela would “substantially lower” gasoline prices in the U.S. However, experts have repeatedly warned that Venezuela’s dilapidated oil infrastructure will require years of restoration work and tens of billions of dollars to resuscitate. Meanwhile, the national average price for a gallon of regular gasoline jumped overnight to \$4.12, according to the motor club AAA. That’s 93 cents more than it cost at this point last year.

The announcement comes a day after a U.S. official, who briefed reporters on the expected announcement, said that Chevron officials and Energy Secretary Chris Wright were expected to visit Venezuela on Wednesday when the new investment would be formally unveiled. The official spoke on condition of anonymity under ground rules set by the White House for the call. Chevron, the second-largest U.S. oil company, has had a presence in Venezuela since 1923. Its joint ventures Petroindependencia and Petropiar, S.A. operate extra-heavy oil projects in the Orinoco Oil Belt, while Petroboscan, S.A. is located in the Zulia State in western Venezuela. The White House confirmed on Monday that it is partnering with North American Blue Energy Partners as part of Trump’s push to tap into Venezuela’s oil industry.

The sweeping agreement has been met with skepticism from analysts who say it will take years to revive Venezuela’s oil industry, which is in

Bahrain, Japan boost economic ties

MANAMA, Sept 2, (KUNA): Bahrain’s Minister of Finance and National Economy Sheikh Salman bin Khalifa Al-Khalifa and Japan’s State Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Yamada Kenji discussed economic, trade and investment cooperation and developments in the global economy in Manama Tuesday. According to Bahrain News Agency (BNA), Sheikh Salman highlighted the mutual interest in strengthening Bahrain-Japan relations and expanding cooperation under their existing agreements and partnership. He commended their longstanding ties, particularly in economic, trade and investment fields, and underlined the importance of building on existing cooperation to achieve further progress and shared goals. The meeting also explored promising investment opportunities and other issues of mutual interest.

Separately, Bahrain’s Oil and Environment Minister and Special Envoy for Climate Affairs Mohammad bin Daina discussed with Yamada ways to strengthen energy cooperation and investment opportunities in the sector, according to BNA. Bin Daina commended Bahrain-Japan ties and their growing partnership, underscoring the importance of expanding cooperation and exchanging expertise, particularly in energy and related technologies. The two sides also reviewed global changes in the energy sector and shifts in energy production and consumption, emphasizing innovation and modern technologies to improve efficiency and sustainability. Meanwhile, the Japanese minister lauded Bahrain’s progress in developing its energy sector and affirmed Japan’s commitment to expanding cooperation and strengthening the partnership between both countries.

HONOR brings its Alpha Plan to life at LEAP 2026 with the world’s first Robot Phone & renewed ‘Dare to Be’ brand direction



Kun Meing Lei, HONOR Middle East & Africa CMO at LEAP 5 in Riyadh.



Kun Meing Lei with John C Fernandes.



Flash and Vita Boy Humanoids



Robo Phone

By John C. Fernandes
Online Media Manager – Arab Times

RIYADH, Sept 2: HONOR, a global leading AI device ecosystem company, concluded its participation at LEAP 2026, bringing its “ALPHA PLAN: From Vision to Reality” to life through the world’s first Robot Phone, advancements in robotics, cinematic imaging and connected AI experiences. The participation also marked HONOR’s renewed “Dare to Be” brand direction reflecting its continued transformation from a company predominantly known for smartphones into a broader global AI device ecosystem company.

At LEAP5 Deepfest, Mr. Kun Meing Lei, HONOR Middle East and Africa CMO, highlighted its transformation from a smartphone manufacturer into a global AI devices ecosystem company, with a strategy focused on connecting smartphones, PCs, tablets, wearables, audio products and emerging AI-powered devices through an open and intelligent ecosystem. He added “We are not simply building smarter devices; we are building the bridge between human intelligence and silicon-based intelligence.”

Commenting on the participation, Mr Ingmar, CEO HONOR Middle East & Africa said,“LEAP 2026 showed how HONOR’s ALPHA PLAN is moving from vision to reality. From the world’s first Robot Phone and Robotics to our connected ecosystem, we demonstrated how AI can work more naturally around people.” He added“Our ‘Dare to Be’ direction gives that transformation a stronger identity, with Saudi Arabia remaining central to our growth in AI and digital innovation.”

Bringing the HONOR Booth Experience to Life

Visitors explored HONOR’s expanding ecosystem through interactive experiences spanning sports, gaming, smart office, learning and everyday scenarios.

The booth demonstrated how smartphones, PCs, tablets, wearables and other smart devices can work together to deliver more seamlessly, across work, entertainment, sports and health, reflecting the ALPHA PLAN’s ambition to create a more intelligent, connected and human-centric ecosystem around the user.

Introducing the World’s First Robot Phone

At the centre of HONOR’s showcase was the world’s first Robot Phone, a defining proof point of the ALPHA PLAN and a new category combining AI, robotics and cinematic imaging.

Its integrated robotic gimbal can move, track subjects and respond to its surroundings, enabling more intuitive and proactive content creation. LEAP also marked the Robot Phone’s reveal for the Middle East and Africa, making the region the

first overseas market to experience the new category.

HONOR also highlighted its collaboration with ARRI, bringing more than 100 years of professional cinema and image science expertise together with HONOR’s AI and robotics capabilities to make cinematic content creation more accessible to everyday users.

HONOR and ARRI Advance Professional Mobile Videography

Kun Meing Lei, highlighted its collaboration with ARRI, a global leader in professional film and imaging technology, aimed at advancing mobile videography and providing content creators with more professional imaging capabilities. Through the collaboration, HONOR is developing an imaging workflow designed to deliver high-quality video capture and processing, bringing professional-grade content creation capabilities to mobile devices.

Advancing a Future Built on Human and AI Collaboration

Beyond the Robot Phone, HONOR showcased its ambitions in robotics through HONOR Robotics D1, reinforcing its vision of a future shaped not by humans competing against AI, but by humans working with AI to achieve more. The company also explored the future of AI devices and robotics through its LEAPkeynote and panel discussions.

Entering a New “Dare to Be” Era

Reflecting this evolution, HONOR’s renewed“Dare to Be” direction reflects its evolution beyond individual devices towards an open AI ecosystem connecting technologies, industries and lifestyles. Supported by innovations including Agentic OS and AiMAGE, HONOR’s journey progresses from an intelligent phone to an intelligent ecosystem and, ultimately, an intelligent world.

Driving Growth Across MEA

HONOR entered LEAP with strong regional momentum. In H1 2026, the company grew by 35% while the Middle East smartphone market declined by 13%, making HONOR the only leading smartphone brand in the region to grow and the second-largest smartphone brand in the Middle East. This followed 73% year-on-year growth in Q1 2026.

Within this regional growth, Saudi Arabia remains a particularly important market for HONOR, supporting the company’s broader ambitions across AI devices and its connected ecosystem.

Strengthening HONOR’s AIoT Presence in Saudi Arabia

As part of this momentum, Saudi Arabia remains a strategic market for HONOR and an important part of the ALPHA PLAN. The Kingdom is now HONOR’s number one tablet market by share, while its AIoT business has grown by more than 500% and HONOR Earbuds Clip has surpassed 100,000 units sold locally.

Building on this strong foundation, HONOR continues to strengthen its

Interview with HONOR

Arab Times spoke with Kun Meing Lei, CMO of HONOR Middle East & Africa, on the sidelines of LEAP 2026 in Riyadh, to explore HONOR’s vision for the future, its evolution into an AI-powered devices ecosystem company, and the innovative products and technologies it is developing to shape the next generation of intelligent devices.

At LEAP 2026, HONOR also showcased its growing ambitions in robotics, featuring two humanoid robots, Vita Boy and Flash, highlighting the company’s move beyond smartphones and into next-generation intelligent machines. Vita Boy is designed for agility, endurance, and mobility and, alongside its sibling robot Flash, can tackle long-distance running challenges. Vita Boy recently made its international debut at the Malaysia Marathon 2026, successfully completing a 10-kilometer race and earning recognition from Asia & ASEAN Records for its athletic capabilities.

The demonstration showed how HONOR envisions a future where AI-powered devices and robotics become more integrated into everyday life, expanding the company’s ecosystem beyond traditional consumer electronics

Arab Times: Why is LEAP an important platform for HONOR, and what does HONOR’s presence here this year say about the importance of the Middle East market?

Kun Meing Lei: Absolutely. LEAP is one of the most important technology platforms in the region, which is why HONOR is proud to be here. This is our third year participating in LEAP, and we see it as an important opportunity to demonstrate our commitment to the Middle East market.

This year, our theme is “From Vision to Reality.” We have heard many visions, concepts and ideas around artificial intelligence, but people increasingly want to see what AI actually looks like in the real world and how it can make a tangible difference in their lives. That is what we want to bring to LEAP this year.

We are also very excited to introduce our world’s first HONOR robot here at LEAP. It is an amazing innovation, and I hope everyone will have the opportunity to experience it. Alongside the robot, we are showcasing the full HONOR ecosystem as well as two of our latest robotics innovations.

Arab Times: HONOR is showcasing the mass-production version of the Robot Phone overseas for the first time here at LEAP. What does this represent for HONOR’s innovation journey in the region?

Kun Meing Lei: This is the third time, outside China, that we have showcased the commercial, mass-production version of the HONOR Robot Phone, and we are very excited to bring it to the Middle East.

The Middle East is one of the most important markets for HONOR, and we see tremendous potential for growth and innovation here. As you can see, across the region, HONOR currently holds the number-two position in smartphone market share. That reflects the strong trust and interest we have built among consumers.

That is why we are committed to continuing

presence through retail, after-sales, local partnerships and deeper engagement with the Kingdom’s technology ecosystem.

to invest in the region and bringing our most advanced and innovative products here. We want consumers in the Middle East to be among the first to experience the technologies that are shaping the future.

Arab Times: Congratulations on 35% increase in Middle East Sales. Currently AI is getting more and more competitive with other phones. Where do you see Honor competing with other phones in the next five years, where pricing is concerned, where compatibility of features of AI is concerned?

Kun Meing Lei: I think that’s a very good question. AI is a huge topic, and I don’t believe any single brand or company can own AI. No one can do that.

When we look at the next five years and how the competitive landscape may evolve, we are not going to focus solely on our competitors. Our primary focus will be on ourselves and on executing our own vision.

Two years ago, HONOR launched a long-term AI strategy that we see as a five- to 10-year journey. Our ambition is to use that time to transform HONOR into a global leading AI device company. We know this will not happen overnight, so we will take it step by step.

On the AI side, this year we introduced the HONOR Robot Phone, which we believe represents a breakthrough for industry. But this is only the first step and the first generation. We will continue to listen closely to customer feedback and learn from how people use the product. If customers embrace it, we will explore further generations and continue to innovate.

We also welcome and encourage our competitors to innovate and push the boundaries. I believe the industry benefits when more companies invest in new ideas and technologies. Ultimately, we need more innovation across the industry to move the entire ecosystem forward.

Arab Times: HONOR has seen strong growth across the Middle East in recent years. What do you see as the key drivers behind this momentum?

Kun Meing Lei: Yes, that’s another very good question. I think the first and most important driver is our products. Customers in the Middle East understand the value of strong technology and quality products. They want reliable, high-quality and trustworthy brands that they can depend on in their daily lives.

That is why we have introduced our full portfolio of products across the region — from our flagship Magic Series to our mainstream number series, as well as our entry-level products and online accessories. We want to offer consumers choices across different price segments while maintaining a strong focus on quality and innovation.

With our Magic Series, we aim to deliver the best possible experience, including the latest chipsets, advanced videography and photography capabilities, and powerful camera technology. For customers looking for premium devices, we want to ensure they get a high-end experience without compromise.

Another important factor behind our growth is our strong after-sales service. We believe that building long-term trust with customers goes beyond the product itself — it also means pro-

viding reliable support and service throughout the customer journey.

Arab Times: Consumer expectations in the Middle East are evolving rapidly, particularly among younger, digitally connected users. How is HONOR adapting its marketing and product strategy to meet the changing expectations of consumers in the region?

Kun Meing Lei: The younger generation wants products that are not only functional but also stylish. They are not simply buying a smartphone; they want a device that complements their personal style and can be part of their everyday look.

That is why we refresh the design of our products every year across our different number series. Whether it is the 100, 200, 400 or 600 series, we continuously evolve the design to give consumers something new and ensure they never feel bored with our products.

At the same time, we continue to focus on durability and performance. Consumers expect long-lasting devices, powerful performance and features such as large-capacity batteries, so these remain important areas of our product strategy.

Another key area we want to highlight is our after-sales service. HONOR offers a GCC Warranty Package, which provides customers with warranty support across GCC countries. For example, if a customer purchases an HONOR smartphone in one GCC country and later travels to another, they can access HONOR service and support there under the warranty programme.

We are also looking to expand this warranty journey to include India and Pakistan. We recognize that many Indian and Pakistani consumers live and work across the region, and we want to make sure they can enjoy a seamless service experience wherever they are.

Arab Times: As AI becomes embedded across smartphones, wearables, tablets and other devices, how does HONOR see AI changing the way these devices work together as one ecosystem?

Kun Meing Lei: HONOR’s new brand direction is focused on building an intelligent, connected and human-centric environment. When we talk about the ecosystem, we strongly believe it should be an open ecosystem.

At the end of the day, consumers should have the freedom to choose the devices they want. We should not force customers to use only HONOR products. If you like an HONOR smartphone, you can use an HONOR smartphone. If you prefer a laptop from another brand, that is completely fine.

What is important is that, regardless of the devices or brands consumers choose, they should be able to connect and work across different platforms and scenarios seamlessly. That is why we are investing in an open infrastructure that allows an HONOR smartphone to work easily with a laptop from another brand, for example.

We want to make it simple for consumers to transfer videos, files and other content across different devices and operating systems. That is our belief: technology should give consumers more choice, rather than forcing them to make choices based on a closed ecosystem.

COFE Tech secures pre-IPO investment at \$178 million valuation

RIYADH, Sept 2: COFE Tech (formerly COFE APP), the leading operator of agentic AI enterprises and the provider of intelligent procurement and commerce infrastructure to more than 1,000 businesses across the Gulf, announced today at LEAP 2026 the close of a pre-IPO funding round valuing the company at \$178 million. The round was co-led by Wa’ed Ventures, the domestic venturing arm of Aramco, Aditum Investment Management, the regional fund partner to global financial giants like BlackRock, Masarrah Investment Company and Alyasra Foods. The investment puts COFE Tech, dubbed as the “Salesforce of MENA” on course for a targeted IPO on the Saudi Exchange by 2029.

“Too many companies in our region still run procurement, sales and inventory on systems that do not talk to one another, and that gap costs them efficiency at every step,” said Ali Al-Ebrahim, founder and CEO of COFE Tech. “COFE Tech brings those operations into a single intelligent platform, where agents watch the business, anticipate what it needs and act on its behalf, before a shelf runs empty or a customer is kept waiting. The backing from Wa’ed Ventures, Aditum Investment Management, Masarrah Investment Company and Alyasra Foods reflects confidence in our read on where enterprise software in the Gulf is heading, and we intend to turn that into continued growth across the MENA region.”

Al-Ebrahim added: “Since COFE launched out of Kuwait in 2018, we have expanded quickly across the Gulf, including the UAE and Saudi Arabia. The business and innovation environments in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and the UAE are what made that pace possible. COFE Tech today is a working example of what the innovation-enabling economic visions of the Gulf countries can produce when they line up, and of the AI-ecosystem this region gives ambitious Gulf companies to grow and scale regionally. We thank all our investors for their continued trust and confidence in our vision, and for their support for our team.”

“COFE Tech is built as one core with two engines, a foundation flexible enough for an enterprise to start with a single



COFE CEO Ali Al-Ebrahim

workflow and extend across its whole operation without re-platforming,” said Shahood Siddiqui, Chief Technology Officer of COFE Tech. “That architecture is proving itself in production: enterprises across the Gulf have transformed how they run growth, procurement and finance on it, with our agents working inside their day-to-day decisions. This round lets us take that foundation further.”

Anas Algahtani, Chief Executive Officer at Wa’ed Ventures, said: “COFE Tech has demonstrated an impressive ability to evolve from a consumer marketplace into an enterprise technology platform addressing critical procurement and commerce challenges. Its growing adoption across Gulf enterprises validates both the strength of its technology and the scale of the opportunity ahead. We see significant potential for COFE Tech to deepen its presence in Saudi Arabia and build an institutionally ready technology company with long-term regional relevance.



Stage photo

Aditum Venture Capital Fund’s participation in this round reflects its approach to identifying compelling investment opportunities globally and across regional markets in MENA, supported by Aditum Group’s presence in UAE and Saudi Arabia.”, stated Manoj Mahadev, Head of Investments, Aditum Investment Management.

“COFE Tech represents the type of opportunity Aditum VC looks for, combining disciplined expansion across key regional markets with a growing enterprise business and an evolving governance framework that positions the business for its next stage of growth. This combination of regional growth potential and institutional capabilities is central to how Aditum evaluates VC investment opportunities”, stated Sonali Goila, Head of VC, Aditum Investment Management.

Dalal Al Mutlag, Principle and Board member at Masarrah Investment Company, said: “Building enduring businesses requires patient capital and the ability to support

companies as they move into more ambitious stages of development. COFE Tech has grown from its roots in Kuwait into a technology business serving more than 1,000 enterprises across the Gulf region, while continuing to broaden the role its platform plays for enterprise customers. Masarrah sees strong potential in the company’s next chapter and the value it can build as it continues to scale.”

Yousef Nasser Alfulaifi, Head of Real Estate and Projects at Alyasra Group, said: “Our participation in this round reflects our strong conviction in the company’s growth potential and the opportunity for ambitious technology companies to build a strong foundation in the region and scale from here. Since its founding, COFE has demonstrated a clear ability to evolve and enter new markets, reinforcing our confidence in the management team’s ability to lead the company through its next phase of growth, strengthen COFE’s presence across the GCC, and expand beyond the region.”

The closing of COFE Tech’s funding round was announced during LEAP 2026 in Riyadh, with the company represented by Founder and CEO Ali Al-Ebrahim and Co-Founder Hamad Musaed Al-Sayer, alongside representatives of the participating investors.

The latest round of investment backs the progress COFE Tech has made in growing from a consumer marketplace to an operator of agentic AI enterprises, along two principal tracks. The first is Agentic Procurement, a unified enterprise procurement infrastructure solution. The second is Agentic Commerce, a unified enterprise technology infrastructure solution. Both run alongside the company’s direct-to-consumer marketplace, the business where the platform was first built and proven.

COFE Tech today serves more than 1,000 clients across 3,000 outlets in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates, spanning coffee shops and restaurants, hotels, hospitals, education, aviation and corporates. Clients include Emirates, Etihad Airways, Kuwait Airways, Al-Futtaim Group, Kuwait Finance House, the Central Bank of Kuwait, etc, Aramco and Alibaba Cloud, among others.

In partnership with Injaz to build future-ready talent & strengthen youth-centric banking

Gulf Bank concludes Summer Internship Program for university students

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2: Gulf Bank has concluded its annual Summer Internship Program for university students, held from 9 to 27 August 2026 in partnership with Injaz, as part of the Bank's commitment to developing national talent, strengthening workforce readiness, and creating meaningful opportunities for young people to gain practical exposure to the banking sector.

Over the course of three weeks, participating students rotated across several core functions, including Treasury, Risk Management, Retail Banking, Customer Service, Marketing, and Corporate Communications, giving them direct insight into how a modern financial institution operates across both customer-facing and strategic functions.

The program was designed to move beyond traditional observation-based internships. Students were introduced to the fundamentals of financial markets, risk assessment, customer experience, retail banking propositions, marketing strategy, corporate communications, and the role of digital channels in shaping how customers interact with banks today.

Through these rotations, participants developed practical skills in areas such as problem-solving, communication, teamwork, customer understanding, analytical thinking, and professional decision-making, while gaining a clearer understanding of how different banking functions work together to serve customers and support the wider economy.



A group photo of the trainees with Gulf Bank officials.

The experience also gave students an opportunity to better understand the skills required in the workplace and identify potential career paths within the financial sector. By connecting academic learning with re-

al-world business challenges, Gulf Bank aims to help young people enter the labor market with greater confidence, stronger professional awareness, and a more practical understanding of employer expectations.

At the same time, the program provides Gulf Bank with an important opportunity to learn directly from younger generations. University students bring fresh perspectives, changing expectations, and first-hand insight into how young

customers engage with brands, technology, financial services, and digital platforms. Their feedback and observations can help inform the Bank's ongoing development of youth propositions, products, communication strategies,

and digital experiences, ensuring that Gulf Bank continues to respond to the evolving needs and behaviors of younger customers.

This two-way exchange is particularly important as younger generations increasingly shape the future of banking. Their expectations around simplicity, speed, personalization, digital accessibility, and user experience are influencing how financial institutions design products and services. Engaging young people early therefore supports not only talent development, but also innovation and stronger customer-centricity across the Bank.

In the longer term, initiatives such as the Summer Internship Program contribute to building a stronger national talent pipeline and reducing the gap between academic education and labor market requirements. By equipping young Kuwaitis with relevant skills, practical experience, and greater exposure to the private sector, the program supports the development of a more capable and adaptable workforce that can contribute to Kuwait's economic diversification and long-term sustainable growth.

Gulf Bank's strategic partnership with Injaz reflects the shared importance both organizations place on preparing young people for the future of work. The Bank remains committed to creating opportunities that allow students not only to learn from the workplace, but also to contribute their ideas, perspectives, and expectations to the evolution of the banking sector.

Indian Community School Kuwait conducts ICMUN-2026 with grand success

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2: The Indian Community School Kuwait (ICSK), Khaitan successfully hosted the second edition of ICMUN 2026 on 28 and 29 August 2026, bringing together young diplomats for two days of engaging debate, negotiation, research and collaboration. The conference witnessed the enthusiastic participation of around 75 delegates, supported by a dynamic 10-member Executive Committee.

The conference was officially inaugurated on the morning of 28 August by the school Principal, Mr. K. Gangadhar Shirsath. The opening ceremony marked the beginning of two days of spirited deliberations and diplomatic engagement. Following the inaugural proceedings, Secretary General Master David Mathew formally declared ICMUN 2026 open by banging the gavel, setting the stage for the conference. The second edition featured four committees- Ad Hoc, Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Delegates actively

participated in committee sessions, engaging in discussions, presenting arguments, negotiating solutions and addressing pressing global issues. Beyond the formal debates, ICMUN provided students with a valuable platform to develop public speaking, critical thinking, research, negotiation, leadership and communication skills. The confidence and enthusiasm displayed by the delegates, together with the commitment of the Executive Committee, contributed greatly to the smooth and successful conduct of the conference.

The Closing Ceremony was graced by the presence of Dr. Shirley Dennis, Director, ISEK, as the Chief Guest. In her address, Dr. Shirley congratulated the delegates on their commendable participation and appreciated their enthusiasm and confidence. She also commended the school for encouraging students to participate in such platforms, recognising their role in strengthening students' public-speaking and communication skills and motivating them to become more confident speakers and leaders. The ceremony continued with

the award and prize distribution, where outstanding delegates and committee participants were recognised for their performance, diplomacy, research and contribution throughout the conference.

As the conference drew to a close, Secretary General Master David Mathew delivered the Vote of Thanks, expressing gratitude to the dignitaries, faculty members, Executive Committee, delegates and everyone who contributed to the successful completion of ICMUN 2026. With the concluding remarks, the Secretary General formally adjourned ICMUN 2026. The successful completion of the Second Edition of ICMUN 2026 marked another significant milestone for ICSK Khaitan, providing students with an enriching experience that extended beyond the classroom. The two-day conference concluded on a high note, leaving behind valuable lessons, lasting memories and a renewed appreciation for the power of dialogue and diplomacy. ICMUN 2026 was truly a celebration of young voices, global perspectives and the spirit of diplomacy.



Photos during the event.



This image released by Marvel shows Doctor Doom in a scene from “Avengers: Doomsday.” (AP)

Back from Endgame, into Doomsday

Marvel comeback has a Russo twist

Before they were the most-trusted hands behind Marvel’s largest epics, Joe and Anthony Russo presided over a slightly less potent assemblage of talent: the Bluth family of “Arrested Development.”

Beginning with “Arrested Development” (14 episodes directed) and “Community” (34 episodes), the Russo brothers established an especially keen sense for the rhythms and intersections of ensemble casts.

“For whatever reason, Joe and I have always really been drawn to ensemble storytelling,” Anthony says. “Maybe it speaks to the fact that we work as a team.”

“We grew up in a very large Italian family full of colorful personalities,” suggests Joe, citing their Ohio upbringing. “It was complex family dynamics. We all grew up on the same street; people lived in different houses. We spent dinners together on Sundays.

“We were always interacting with a large amount of personality and interpersonal dynamics. I think that’s how we see the world and see stories.”

That inclination has served the Russos well in the Marvel Cinematic Universe, particularly in the sprawling superhero films “Avengers: Infinity War” (2018) and “Avengers: Endgame” (2019). But even for the Russos, “Avengers: Doomsday” (in theaters Dec. 18) is a unique juggling act. It brings together (deep breath) the Avengers, the Wakandans, the New Avengers (from Earth-616), the Fantastic Four (from Earth-828) and the original X-Men.

“The MCU is this massive experiment in how vast, how much scope can an ensemble really have?” Anthony says. “If we have a taste and talent for ensemble storytelling, we’re certainly pushing ourselves further than we ever have before.”

Joe and Anthony Russo spoke in a recent exclusive interview - or rather interviews, because the brothers spoke separately while knee-deep in work on “Doomsday” and its 2027 follow-up, “Avengers: Secret Wars.” They were finishing work on “Doomsday” - scoring, editing - while, in their words, “soft prepping” production on “Secret Wars.”

“When you’re doing one of these movies it’s the hardest thing you’ve ever done,” Joe says. “When you’re doing two of them, it’s almost inconceivable. But it’s the second time around we’re doing two back to back.”

When the Russo brothers were last at the helm in the MCU, “Endgame” marked the apex of Marvel as a cultural force. Conceived as the culmination of a decade of movies, “Endgame” became the second highest-grossing film of all time, with \$2.8 billion in ticket sales. (The Walt Disney Co. will bring it back to theaters as “Avengers Endgame: Encore” on Sept. 25.)

Since “Endgame,” the MCU has undergone plenty of expansion and experimentation. But Phases four, five and six of the MCU have also been notably rockier than the first three phases. Kevin Feige, president of Marvel Studios, has acknowledged that oversaturation played a role in the downturn.

For the first time, Marvel wasn’t immune to the ups and downs that characterize the rest of the movie world. “The Marvels” in 2023 tapped out with just \$206 million in ticket sales. “Captain America: Brave New World” in 2025 landed the worst CinemaScore,



This image released by Marvel shows Paul Rudd, as Scott Lang, left, and Kathryn Newton, as Cassie Lang, in a scene from “Avengers: Doomsday.” (AP)

a “B-,” for a Marvel movie.

“Doomsday” aims to reinvigorate the MCU. It features not just the return of the Avengers and the Russos, but also Robert Downey Jr. The former “Iron Man” star plays the villain Doctor Doom. Downey has said he wouldn’t have come back if the Russos didn’t, too.

So there is a get-the-band-back-together quality to “Doomsday,” a movie expected to be among the highest-grossing ever. Do the Russos feel that the film will, after some MCU stumbles, restore order in the Marvel universe?

“It’s a great question. It’s part of the unique challenge,” says Anthony. “The thing that Joe and I have always appreciated about our collaboration with Marvel is: Our job isn’t to answer for the entirety of the MCU. We intersect it in a very specific way. It’s that intersection which is where we can make sense of things.”

Of course, “Spider-Man: Brand New Day” (\$2.3 billion worldwide) has already nearly matched “Endgame” in box-office might. Anthony Russo, “buzzing” from the movie, calls the film’s reception “a wonderful challenge.”

Yet the Russos promise something special in “Doomsday.” They have referred to it as “back to zero,” “starting from scratch” and “a profound shift” in the MCU. Even in the ever-expanding realm of the MCU, the Russos have been animated by stories with defined beginnings (“Doomsday”) and legitimate endings (“Endgame”). Even if “Endgame” wasn’t really the end, they needed to believe it was.

Since then, the Russos have directed three films for streaming: 2021’s “Cherry,” for Apple Studios; 2022’s “The Gray Man,” one of Netflix’s most-watched original films; and 2025’s “The Electric State.” They also launched an action franchise for Netflix with “Extraction.” Their production company, AGBO, has turned into a consistent blockbuster maker, producing not just “Doomsday” but the Oscar-winner “Everything Everywhere All at Once.”

It took something extra to bring the Russos back to Marvel. They were coaxed back, Anthony says, by a “foundational narrative concept” suggested by cowriter Steve McFeeley.

“We never want to coast on the capital that already exists,” he says. “We want the greatest value of the film to reside in the new thing it’s bringing to the table.”

Orienting the film around Dr. Doom, however, wasn’t the initial plan. Originally conceived as “Avengers: The Kang Dynasty,” the fifth “Avengers” film went through considerable retooling after Jonathan Majors (who played Kang the Conqueror) was dropped from the franchise after being convicted of assaulting his ex-girlfriend.

The Russos eventually stepped in. But the revamped production meant going into shooting with an unfinished script.

“We always view the script as a living organism,” says Joe. “We’re improvisation-based, rehearsal-based directors. We like to see what the actors bring to the characters, and sometimes you don’t get the actors until a few days or few weeks before you shoot them. And a lot of the time, that’s when the magic happens.”

A lot has changed since the Russos last released a Marvel movie. The pandemic came and went. The industry defaulted to streaming, only to again embrace theatrical. The phrase “superhero fatigue” was trotted out at times, though less so after “Brand New Day.”

If there’s a guiding template for the Russos for the kind of movie they want to make - one with grand scale and moments of emotional intimacy - it’s the Western. Sergio Leone’s “Once Upon a Time in the West” was a particular inspiration for “Doomsday.”

“Joe and I grew up fans of all types of cinema, but Westerns have always been very special to us. Throughout cinema history, the Western has been declared dead for decades, and then you can still make one of the greatest examples of the genre.” (AP)



This image released by Marvel shows directors Joe Russo, left, and Anthony Russo on the set of “Avengers: Doomsday.” (AP)



This image released by Marvel shows a scene from “Avengers: Doomsday.” (AP)

Variety

LAS VEGAS: A jury found Duane “Keffe D” Davis guilty of orchestrating the 1996 killing of rap icon Tupac Shakur, finally bringing a measure of resolution to a case that had gripped hip-hop fans and lingered in the public imagination for decades.

The 63-year-old Davis was convicted Monday of a single count of murder with a deadly weapon and could be sentenced to life in prison. The jury deliberated for less than three hours after a weekslong trial in Las Vegas.

After the verdict was read, Shakur’s sister, Sekyiwa “Set” Shakur, cried and hugged the prosecutors. Davis’ son covered his face with one hand.

Chief Deputy District Attorney Binu Palal told jurors in closing arguments earlier Monday that Davis acquired a gun and “went hunting” for Shakur and Death Row Records co-founder Marion “Suge” Knight after the men had beaten up Davis’ nephew earlier that night.

“He is responsible of the murder of Tupac Shakur,” Palal said. “Tell him you hear him. Find him guilty.”

Prosecutors said that while his story had changed over the years, Davis repeatedly placed himself inside a white Cadillac from which the shots were fired. And they said that while he did not pull the trigger, evidence showed he’d called for the gunfire as a powerful gang leader the younger men in the car, including his nephew, were going to listen to. (AP)

□ □ □

LOS ANGELES: Singer D4vd lost his high-profile private lawyers Monday at a hearing where he entered a new not guilty plea to charges that he killed, sexually abused and dismembered 14-year-old Celeste Rivas Hernandez.

It’s not clear why Blair Berk and her colleagues Marilyn Bednarski and Regina Peter parted ways with the indie-pop singer whose legal name is David Anthony Burke. They were replaced by a lawyer from the Los Angeles County Public Defender’s Office.

The defense attorneys said in a statement only that

the judge granted their request to withdraw after finding that Burke qualified for a court-appointed lawyer.

“We continue to support David and his defense against these serious charges,” the statement said. The lawyers would not answer specific questions about their departure outside the courtroom.

Burke earned at least \$10 million through his music from 2023 through 2025, according to testimony from his money handlers at a previous hearing. It’s not clear how he financially qualifies for a public defender whose job is to defend clients who lack the money for a lawyer.

Without providing details, the Public Defender’s Office said in an email that it had completed a thorough financial evaluation and found he was eligible.

Deputy Public Defender Walid Kandeel took over the defense. Judge Charla F. Olmedo denied his first request as the singer’s lawyer to delay the arraignment. Olmedo demanded a plea Monday instead, and scheduled a status conference for October. No trial date has been set. (AP)



Friends and family members of rapper Tupac Shakur, including his sister Sekyiwa Shakur, second left, line up to hug Chief Deputy District Attorney Binu Palal, right, after a jury found Duane Davis guilty of first-degree murder in his trial related to the 1996 killing of rapper Tupac Shakur, at Clark County District Court Regional Justice Center, Monday, Aug. 31, 2026, in Las Vegas. (AP)

Film

Hollywood stars and filmmakers confront a changing world

Venice Film Festival opens with Boyle, Clooney & politics

VENICE, Italy, Sept 2, (AP): George Clooney may be at the Venice Film Festival to receive a lifetime achievement award, but he didn't dwell just on memories and nostalgia on Wednesday.

Before the award ceremony, which he plans to attend with his wife Amal Clooney, the 65-year-old actor and director addressed issues such as the artificial intelligence revolution in Hollywood and the Paramount-Warner Bros. merger, to the state of journalism and power in America.

"There's a great word, kakistocracy, which is a country run by the least qualified people," Clooney said. "I think maybe we have a kakistocracy right now. But we'll get through it."

Of artificial intelligence, Clooney said that his industry is going to have to find ways to survive, and that he would "like to avoid being in a tampon commercial 20 years after I'm dead." He bemoaned the fact that some of the world's richest men own The Washington Post and X and said that the proposed merger of Paramount and Warner Bros. was "a complicated thing because I don't know how this works out, I don't know how it goes through."

Over the course of 11 days, the 83rd edition of the festival will see many stars from Hollywood and beyond grace the red carpet, from Robert Pattinson to Noel and Liam Gallagher of Oasis, but the focus this year seems to be more on geopolitics than movie star moments.

The sprawling lineup includes documentaries about the conflict in Gaza ("NAZA"), Elon Musk ("Musk") and independent Russian journalists covering the war in Ukraine ("My Undesirable Friends - Part II: Exile") as well as Palestinian films and a short about U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement in Minneapolis.

Jury president Maggie Gyllenhaal spoke about the fact that many of the films in the slate are about the current events and



Jury president Maggie Gyllenhaal, fourth from left, poses with jury members Xavier Giannoli, from left, Shahrbano Sadat, Kaouther Ben Hania, Johnnie To, Daniel Blumberg and Francesco Caselli at the jury photo call during the 83rd edition of the Venice Film Festival in Venice, Italy, on Wednesday, Sept. 2, 2026. (Photo by Scott A Garfitt/Invision/AP)

conflicts.

"Look, we could say how are we possibly here talking about movies right now when the world is in a state of emergency," Gyllenhaal said. "To me the answer has something to do with empathy."

When asked if she thought films should be political, she said that she thinks they are "fundamentally, unavoidably political."

Festival director Alberto Barbera told The Associated Press that most of the films they saw during the selection process dealt with "contemporary problems."

"We didn't really have a choice," he said. "We are in a space open to everybody for



George Clooney holds a photograph, which was taken at the 82nd edition of the Venice Film Festival, presented to him by the photographers during the golden lion for lifetime achievement photo call during the 83rd edition of the Venice Film Festival in Venice, Italy, on Wednesday, Sept. 2, 2026. (Photo by Scott A Garfitt/Invision/AP)

discussion, for confrontation. Everybody is completely free to express themselves. And I'm, in a way, really happy that this kind of film could help the viewers, the critics, everybody to have a better understanding of what is going on in our contemporary, difficult world."

Gyllenhaal also addressed the dearth of female directors in the competition lineup. When the slate was announced in July, there was much attention on the fact that there was only one film directed by a woman. The documentary "NAZA," which was added to the lineup just last week, was also co-directed by a woman.

"I guess it's just finally become clear that men make better

movies than women do," Gyllenhaal quipped, before speaking about the systemic issues facing female directors, like financing and preconceived notions about high art.

Earlier, Barbera called it "a big problem," adding: "There is a lot to do to give women the place that they deserve in cinema."

He explained that while the organizers saw many interesting films from women, and programmed many in the festival's sidebars, they didn't find films that were strong enough for the main competition.

The festival is also known for being a launch pad for Oscar contenders.

Barbera said one such possibility could be the opening-night film "Ink," a competition title starring Guy Pearce as Rupert Murdoch and Jack O'Connell as tabloid newspaper editor Larry Lamb. An adaptation of James Graham's acclaimed play, the Danny Boyle-directed film dramatizes Murdoch's acquisition of the British tabloid "The Sun" in 1969 and explores how Lamb transformed a failing paper into a bestselling one.

Pearce said Murdoch's daughter, Elisabeth, told him: "'Dad's very happy that you are playing him.' But he hadn't seen the film at that point."

As in the stage play, Boyle said the point was not to "monsterize" Murdoch, who at the time was seen as a breath of fresh air in a rigid British society and media landscape.

The filmmakers and the cast spoke about "Ink's" themes and the cost of sacrificing morals, standards and decency for profit and sensationalism.

Boyle's thoughts also turned to AI and how it might impact journalism.

"The danger is with the tech giants and their AI is they'll be able to replace journalists," he said. "Will that AI journalist speak truth to the power that's created it?"

Emotional farewell

Grande takes a break from public life after tour finale

LONDON, Sept 2, (AP): Ariana Grande's final words, before she stepped offstage and out of the spotlight, were for her fans.

Addressing the crowd during her last concert in London Tuesday before she takes a break from the public eye, the singer was full of emotion and gratitude.

Grande thanked the audience and called The Eternal Sunshine Tour one of "most beautiful, extraordinary, experiences" of her life.

The music star confirmed in August that she'd be taking time out after the conclusion of her live shows, with the final leg being a 10-date run at London's O2 Arena.

On stage, Grande has admitted to being emotional about the tour coming to an end after 41 dates, which also took place in the U.S. and Canada before the U.K. On Tuesday, she tried to speak "without sobbing completely," she said.

"I'll cherish this experience always. I have the best fans in the entire world and I always have," she said.



Grande

A representative for Grande told People magazine in August that the 33-year-old singer "will be taking a step back from visibility" after the tour.

"She looks forward to finishing the tour and ending it on a high note, both healthily and happily, and then taking a much-deserved break from public-facing work and appearances, which has led to endless, ongoing public scrutiny," the statement said.

In a social media post on Monday, ahead of the penultimate night, Grande warned fans that she had to swap out her trademark six-inch heeled platform boots after cutting her foot.

She reassured them that she was on the mend, even if she was a few inches shorter on stage.

While Grande wasn't in her highest heels, her followers still were; the audience dressed up in her style with stilettos, cat ears and ponytails - something the star noticed.

"Thank you for all of your effort and continuing to make this so special. I have loved every minute of this with you all," Grande said.

The concert concludes with Grande summoned back, sci-fi style, to a spacecraft as she ascends to the mothership in a beam of light.

It's not known when she will next be seen on earth, although Grande's most recent album "Petal" will certainly be a fixture at September's MTV Video Music Awards, where she's in the running for artist of the year.



A fan of Ariana Grande poses for a picture before her concert at the O2 Arena in London, Tuesday, Sept. 1, 2026. (AP)

Latin America youth turns internet vibes into live battles

'Aura farming', gaming-inspired trend, goes viral

LIMA, Peru, Sept 2, (AP): Dozens of young people gathered recently on a beach in Peru's capital to dance, pose and show off their most creative moves - all in pursuit of one thing: aura.

They were taking part in a so-called "aura battle," a real-world spin on the Internet trend known as "aura farming" that is sweeping across Latin America.

Dressed up as characters from comic books or animated films, competitors engaged in dance battles of sorts, vying for the crowd's applause. Those with the loudest cheers and the most creative moves advanced to the next round. One competitor dressed up as Spider-Man performed forward rolls and push ups, as techno music played in the background. Another hopped on one leg while kicking the other forward, in a move that looked straight from a video game.

"Aura farming is about letting your essence flow in a place where people are watching you, but where there is no shame," said Liam González, a 20-year-old film student who attended dressed up as the movie character Shrek.

Gonzalo Cornelio, 19, came dressed as former Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, wearing a grey tracksuit like the one worn by the deposed leader the night he was captured by the U.S. military.

Aura farming competitions first emerged in Brazil and spread through social media. Now, teenagers and adults are holding aura bat-



Young men dressed as "Mr. Chainsaw" and "Maduro" face off in an aura-farming battle at Las Sombrillas beach in Lima, Peru, on Aug. 29, 2026. (AP)

tles across Latin America.

"It's not about being popular," said María Paula Martínez, a professor in the arts faculty at Colombia's Los Andes University. "It's about showing off good vibes, and having others recognize that."

Like video game characters who farm for points, people who go aura farming are trying to earn a reward. In this case, it's about generating good vibes, and thus improving their "aura," a term that, according to some spiritual traditions, refers to an energy field that surrounds people.

Fernando Lícito, a Peruvian content creator, said that in aura battles participants do not touch each other or trade insults. "They are simply farming their aura," said Lícito, 25.

"And whoever gets the crowd to make more noise wins."

Lícito said he saw a video in June of an aura farming contest in Brazil, and decided to bring the idea to Peru. So far, he has organized three aura battles there.

During the contests, some participants imitate soccer star Cristiano Ronaldo's goal celebration, extending their arms downwards and making a sound that sounds like "siuu."

Aura farmers also draw on other online trends, with some repeating the words "six, seven" as they move their hands.

Aura battles have spread to cities across Latin America, including Mexico City, Quito and Buenos Aires, where dozens of people

staged a battle in front of the Obelisk, one of the most iconic monuments in the Argentine capital. The contests have also reached Spain, with events taking place in Madrid, Burgos and Zaragoza.

Martínez, the Colombian arts professor, said that the concept of aura farming has moved beyond the digital world into physical spaces, enabling teenagers to socialize.

But some aura battles have met some resistance.

In Lima's Miraflores district, officials recently cancelled an aura farming event, saying organizers had not obtained the permits required to hold it in a public space.

In July, the mayor of Cuiaba, a city in southwestern Brazil, denied permits for an aura tournament, arguing it was not in the public's interest. The event was transferred to a university campus. And in Costa Rica, the ministry of education banned aura battles in public schools arguing they could create conflicts between students or disrupt learning.

In Mexico, by contrast, the education minister embraced the trend, posting a video in which he smiles and says he is "farming good education" as the country prepares for the new school year.

González, the aura farmer who dresses up as Shrek, said that this hobby gives him a way to have fun and express himself, even if his grandmother doesn't get what he's doing and thinks it's silly. "We were born in a different era," he said.

Guide to chrysanthemum varieties for fall gardens

WASHINGTON, Sept 2, (AP): September marks the beginning of the great summer-to-fall garden transition and, although most summer plants still have life left in them, many gardeners are turning their attention to the iconic chrysanthemum.

The majority of mums sold in pre-planted containers at the garden center are typical "cushion" mums. I wouldn't garden without them, but there are plenty of other interesting options for gardeners looking to branch out.

Botanists worldwide recognize approximately 40 species of wild chrysanthemums. Over centuries, hundreds of thousands of varieties and cultivars have been bred from them, making the plant family one of the largest in the world.

The National Chrysanthemum Society has wrangled the whole lot into 13 exhibition-judging categories, each based on flower shape. Many of those, however, are too delicate to grow outdoors



White daisy mums appear in full bloom at Longwood Gardens' annual Chrysanthemum Festival in Kennett Square, Pa., on Nov. 5, 2020. (AP)

or require specialized handling that is not easily attainable in the garden, so they are not offered by the horticultural trade.

Still, there are plenty of beautiful, eye-catching and even unusual types available to home gardeners to make your fall garden stand out.

Many mums are perennial and will return year after year if planted early enough for their roots to become established before frost.

If you intend to plant perennial mums, beware of so-called florist mums, which are often sold in foil-wrapped pots at supermarkets and chain stores, as they are intended as a one-season fall decoration. Always check plant tags for information about hardiness in your horticultural zone.

At the supermarket or garden center, you also will likely encounter perennial cushion mums. When in bloom, the compact, mounding plants resemble a cushion covered in small double flowers in white, yellow, lavender, pink, purple, red, orange, bronze or rust.

Schools reopen in Ituri despite concerns from parents and teachers

Congo’s Ebola outbreak shows no signs of slowing as deaths top 3,000

BUNIA, Congo, Sept 2, (AP): Congo’s Ebola outbreak has killed more than 3,000 people out of over 6,100 confirmed cases, the latest government data showed Wednesday, as the disease is spreading at an unprecedented speed, faster than efforts to track and slow it.

Data from Congo’s Ministry of Health showed the outbreak has recorded 6,186 confirmed cases, including 3,007 deaths since it was declared a global health emergency in mid-May. It remains the fastest-growing outbreak of Ebola ever.

Recent weeks have witnessed a surge in cases, with two new health zones affected last week in North Kivu, where the fatality rate is much higher than in the rest of the affected provinces. The virus has spread to six provinces.

The US Centers for Disease Control said Tuesday in a report that the efforts to contain the virus “remained below established response targets” and the fast expansion of the disease across many health zones indicates “uncontrolled expansion of the outbreak.”

Health workers are struggling under difficult conditions and have gone on strike multiple times to demand their pay.

The disease has continued to spread rapidly for several reasons, including conflict in the eastern region of the country where the outbreak is concentrated, attacks on health workers, miners constantly on the move, and inadequate health infrastructure.

The resumption of school in the middle of the outbreak has also raised concerns about transmission in classrooms.

The World Health Organization said the outbreak is on track to exceed the deadliest on record, West Africa’s regional outbreak between 2014 and 2016, which killed 11,000 people.

The Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said the outbreak is possibly three times larger than the number of cases recorded, as surveillance and contact tracing are still weak. Despite that, the outbreak has already become Congo’s deadliest Ebola outbreak.

There is no vaccine or approved treatment for the rare Bundibugyo virus that has sparked the current outbreak. A couple of vaccines are currently being developed to tackle the disease.

Last week, the government started the distribution of the Ervebo vaccine to front line health workers in Kisangani in the northeastern Tshopo region. Ervebo has helped combat previous Ebola disease outbreaks and the WHO said it could offer some protection.

A new academic year began Tuesday across Congo despite concerns by parents and teachers that the ongoing Ebola outbreak poses risks to



A school official checks students' temperatures as they enter school, on the first day of the new school year amid the Ebola virus outbreak, in Ituri, Congo on Sept 1. (AP)

children in the epicenter.

The union representing teachers in Ituri province, the epicenter of the outbreak, had called for a delay in re-starting classes, but the government pressed ahead. UNICEF said it is supporting the authorities to prevent transmissions in schools.

Some schools in Ituri, especially those owned by the government,

recorded low turnouts. Authorities in Ituri did not respond to a request for comment on measures to ensure a lack of transmission in classrooms.

Aimerance Vahweka, a parent in the Bunia, the capital of Ituri, said the school restart came as a surprise and she is keeping her child at home for now.

“I do not really see an increase in prevention measures,” she said.

Other education officials said they are equipping schools with noncontact infrared thermometers, hand sanitizers and hand-washing basins.

“We also raise student awareness about adhering to hygiene protocols, particularly regular handwashing and the use of hand sanitizer,” said Etienne Ndjabu, a teacher in a Bunia private school.

Experts say major challenges still remain, as many schools lack access to clean water and funding remains below target.

“There are also significant logistical challenges, particularly in remote areas, where the delivery of equipment and learning materials may be delayed,” said Greg Ramm, director for Save the Children in Congo.

Children aged 4 and below have the highest case-fatality rate of any age group in the outbreak at 60%, according to available health data.

“The priority is both to protect the health of students, teachers, and communities, and to preserve, as much as possible, children’s right to learn,” Dounia Dekhili, UNICEF Emergency coordinator in DRC, said.

The latest outbreak, which is caused by the rare Bundibugyo virus, has spread to more than 60 health zones. Authorities believe it had been spreading undetected among communities since at least February. The World Health Organization said the outbreak is on track to beat the West Africa’s regional outbreak between 2014 and 2016.

Health workers in affected provinces have gone on several strikes to protest delays in payments, which has affected the response to the deadly outbreak.

Efforts to contain the disease have been hampered by a lack of an approved vaccine or treatment. Congolese authorities had started distributing thousands of Ervebo vaccine, which the WHO said might provide some protection.

Conflict between the government and rebel groups in the eastern region, attacks on health workers and an intense population movement also have worsened the outbreak.



Greg Metzger, lead field biologist for SOFO's shark research and education program, catches a sand tiger shark off the coast of Hampton Bays, NY on Aug 20. (AP)

Researchers catch sharks off NY’s Hamptons and attach trackers to toothy predators

SOUTHAMPTON, NY, Sept 2, (AP): Just off one of New York’s famed Hamptons beaches, shark researcher Greg Metzger reels in one of the day’s prize catches: a young but powerful sand tiger shark.

He and another marine researcher quickly lasso the tail of the sharp-toothed female to the side of the boat and hold it steady as they take tissue samples and work to attach small data collection devices. Metzger marvels as the shark’s thick, rugged skin snaps a surgical-grade scalpel.

“It’s no surprise that they’ve been around since prehistoric times and they’re still going strong,” Metzger says as he stitches up the incision and sends it along its way.

Metzger and other researchers are catching, tagging and releasing a wide range of sharks as they seek to understand the local population and shed more light on one of the world’s few confirmed great white shark nurseries, where masses of young predators spend their first vulnerable years feeding and growing. Other white shark nurseries recognized globally are in the coastal waters off California, Mexico and Australia.

“It’s that initial fear of sharks that captures people’s imagination,” said Metzger, who also teaches marine science at Southampton High School. “Hopefully, through educational opportunities like today, we’ll be able to show that these sharks are far from mindless eating machines.”

The researchers attach different types of tags. One relays location by sending an acoustic signal that can be detected by monitoring receivers set up along the coast. Another measures depth and water temperature for several months, then pops off.

The data illustrates how sharks can cover vast distances in a year, said Bradley Peterson, the Stony Brook University marine scientist working with Metzger this particular day.

“Their tags are being detected in North Carolina and Georgia and Florida and the Gulf of Mexico, and then they’ll be back here the following year,” he said. “So a lot of them are coming up here to get themselves fueled up and fattened up.”

The research also suggests more varied species of sharks are coming up from more tropical southern waters during the summer months, as the waters off Long Island’s coast and elsewhere are warming, likely due to climate change, said Frank Quevedo, executive director at the South Fork Natural History Museum and Nature Center, which is coordinating the research.

“We’re seeing more spinner sharks, more black tip sharks, more bull sharks,” he said as he showed off the Bridgehampton museum’s interactive exhibit on the work.

“These are temperate sharks that utilize this habitat when the food source is here. So right now is like prime time.”

To be clear, the waters off Long Island have long been known to be a haven for all manner of sharks. The bestselling Peter Benchley novel “Jaws” was set in a fictional seaside town in the Hamptons before the

blockbuster film version, which Netflix is bringing back to its streaming library Tuesday along with its sequels, was shot on location on Martha’s Vineyard, Massachusetts.

The International Shark Attack File, a database at the Florida Museum of Natural History, includes no records of a fatal shark attack on Long Island, though beachgoers have been bitten in recent years, including one this summer, prompting local officials to invest in safety measures, including shark-spotting drones.

“There’s this huge misconception that there’s this surge of sharks in Long Island waters. These sharks have always been here,” Metzger said. “A reason why we’re seeing more is because of technology. There’s more drones. Everybody’s got a cellphone now.”

Quevedo says baby whites are already about 4 feet (1.2 meters) long and weigh up to 80 pounds (36 kilograms) at birth, and they aren’t reared by their mothers, meaning they must immediately fend for themselves.

As climate change warms Himalayas, disasters like Nepal’s deadly floods becoming more frequent

KATHMANDU, Nepal, Sept 2, (AP): When a wall of water, rocks and mud tore through her remote village in Nepal last week, Pema Tamang and her neighbors fled uphill to a Buddhist shrine that had been rebuilt the previous year after a 2015 earthquake.

The steep mountain folds of the Himalayas, already prone to earthquakes, have seen more frequent flash floods as high mountain glaciers melt, redrawing rivers at sometimes terrifying speed. Residents have had little time to rebuild from one disaster to the next, raising concerns over whether their communities can endure as climate change accelerates.

“We were able to rebuild the stupa only last year after it was destroyed during the earthquake,” Tamang told The Associated Press, referring to the shrine. “Sheltering in it was how we saved our lives from the floods,” she said in a makeshift shelter at a monastery in Kathmandu.

The Aug. 26 floods in Nepal and neighboring China have killed more than 1,000 people and left thousands missing, including hundreds feared trapped in tunnels at hydropower projects. The floods were triggered after a collapse of bedrock and glacier ice sent debris and water surging through multiple Himalayan rivers.

Scientists say it is too early to directly link Wednesday’s catastrophe to global warming. But as Earth’s temperature rises at a faster rate because of the burning of oil, gas and coal, the chances of such disasters increase, especially in the Himalayan mountains, which are warming considerably faster than many other parts of the world.

“Climate change has been playing a large role in the Hindu Kush Himalayas, causing these kinds of complex disasters which have really impacted downstream communities and investments,” said Saswata Sanyal, a disaster risk resilience expert at the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development based in Kathmandu.

Sanyal said the region is increasingly confronting hazards that trigger one another.

Warmer temperatures cause high mountain ice to melt, leading to more frequent rockslides, avalanches and floods. An avalanche can dam a river before unleashing a flash flood. Heavy rain after an initial disaster can compound the destruction.



A view of a damaged hydropower project in northern India after a portion of the Nanda Devi glacier broke off on Feb 7, 2021. (AP)

Flash floods last year in the same region in Nepal claimed nine lives and caused millions of dollars in damage. Across the wider Himalayan region, the 2013 Kedarnath floods, the 2021 Chamoli disaster, the 2023 South Lhonak glacial lake outburst flood, and other recent landslides and floods, have killed thousands of people and caused hundreds of billions of dollars in damage.

People in Nepal were still recovering from last year’s floods, Sanyal said, “and before they could fully adapt, the next one came.”

The Hindu Kush Himalaya stretches across parts of Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Myanmar and China, and contains the largest concentration of ice outside the polar regions. River systems originating in the mountains support nearly 2 billion people.

Glacier ice loss has accelerated sharply since 2000, according to Sanyal’s intergovernmental climate research group. Another risk is thawing permafrost - ground that has remained frozen for long periods - that can weaken mountain slopes.

Satellite imagery of the glacial collapse last week indicates that a huge mass of bedrock and glacial ice

plunged into a valley below, sending a wall of water and mud several stories high through communities many kilometers (miles) downstream.

Climate experts say that in some places the danger may become so great that rebuilding is no longer viable, forcing residents to move. Climate change could also have implications for efforts to develop the region through the construction of roads, bridges and hydropower plants.

“The adaptation threshold has been crossed in some areas,” said Manjeet Dhakal, a Nepali climate policy expert and United Nations climate negotiator.

When an earthquake destroys a house, belongings can sometimes be recovered, he said. A catastrophic flood can wipe out not only the house, but the land beneath it, along with roads, water systems, schools and electricity. He said future resettlement would have to incorporate climate risk from the beginning.

The consequences can be mitigated by stricter land-use rules, better assessments before infrastructure is approved, stronger cross-border monitoring and early warning systems.

Still, Sanyal said that of the 670,000 people who received text

alerts about the Aug. 26 floods, some were visitors or migrant workers who could not understand Nepali while others downplayed the risk. Other systems designed to measure rivers were overwhelmed or washed away.

Chanda Lal Chitrakar, a 62-year-old resident of Nuwakot in Nepal, told the AP that he paid little attention to warning messages. As the waters rose, he ran uphill to save himself.

Sanyal said such warnings need to provide more information on what actions to take. He also suggested prioritizing development in less-dangerous areas, assessing infrastructure for multiple hazards and incorporating the knowledge of Indigenous communities into disaster planning.

Dhakal, the climate negotiator, noted that Nepal has emitted less than 0.1% of the greenhouse gases that cause global warming, even as it grapples with some of its most severe effects.

“We should blame those who are responsible for increasing the global temperature, those who have benefited from the fossil fuel economy for such a long time,” he said. “We can at least use this devastating example as an inspiration to urgently reduce carbon emissions.”

Some solar energy goes to waste

India’s power demand surges

BENGALURU, India, Sept 2, (AP): When India’s power demand surged at the height of summer, the country struggled to meet evening needs as air conditioners ran longer amid hotter nights. Despite this demand, some renewable energy providers were told to limit their output because the country had more clean electricity available than its grid could safely handle.

In the last 15 months, India curtailed nearly 11 terawatt-hours of solar generation - enough electricity to power about 10 million homes, according to government data and research by energy think tank Ember. That solar power went unused even as extreme heat and poor monsoon rains drove up demand for power in India for cooling and pumping groundwater for agriculture.

India, the world’s most populous country and one of the largest emitters of climate-polluting gases, is rapidly adding clean energy, especially solar, to its power mix. However, it can’t use all the clean power it could generate because of insufficient transmission and storage capacity and the technical difficulty of shifting between fossil power and renewables.

Energy experts say that contradiction points to the next big challenge for India’s energy transition. Building solar and wind farms is no longer enough. India also needs more transmission lines to move electricity across the country, batteries to store renewable power until it is needed and a more flexible power system that can quickly adjust as wind and solar output rises or falls.

“We’re in a stage where some of the biggest hurdles in renewables are starting to hit us,” said Neshwin Rodrigues, an energy analyst at Ember.

India has more than 300 gigawatts of clean power capacity, more than half its total installed electricity capacity. But coal still produces most of the country’s electricity.

Experts said the main reason for this is curtailment - when a wind

or solar plant could produce electricity but is ordered to reduce or stop generation as the grid cannot take the power.

Rodrigues said that when solar generation surges in the afternoon, it’s difficult for coal units to reduce their output because they are relatively inflexible and cannot ramp down quickly without compromising efficiency, increasing costs or risking operational problems.

Trying to make thermal power plants flexible and adapt to increasing supply from clean energy sources “is like asking an elephant to dance,” said Vinay Pabba, CEO of Hyderabad-based renewable energy company Vibrant Energy.

Pabba said curtailment results in losses for clean power developers. “We get paid only for what we put on the grid,” he said.

The high concentration of renewable generation in western India has also meant that transmission lines in that part of the country get congested quickly. The western states of Gujarat and Rajasthan account for nearly 50% of India’s solar power capacity.

“When solar peaks, usually in the afternoon, there is a limited pipe to evacuate it,” said Pabba.

Another risk of not building storage quickly is that dirty fuels get used more. “Without enough storage, India risks keeping coal plants running even when cheap renewable power is available,” said Vibhuti Garg, South Asia director at the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis.

While a solar or wind farm can sometimes be completed within two years, building new power lines can take a minimum of three years, according to energy experts.

India has achieved only about 80% of its annual transmission construction targets over the past five years, research by Ember has found.

Spreading more renewable development across other parts of the country, while adding more wind and smaller local solar projects, could reduce pressure on crowded transmission corridors and make the electricity supply more balanced throughout the day, said Disha Agarwal, an energy analyst at the New Delhi-based Council on Energy, Environment and Water.

Agarwal said the challenge is likely to become more difficult as renewable capacity keeps rising.



Pabba

SPORTS

Plum and Ogwumike departures signal new chapter

Sparks bet on youth, \$150M facility after 6 straight losing seasons

LOS ANGELES, Sept 2, (AP): The Los Angeles Sparks are looking to the future as their sixth consecutive losing season nears an end.

Having traded five-time All-Star guard Kelsey Plum and former WNBA MVP Nneka Ogwumike retiring at season's end, the team is positioning itself for yet another rebuild. It also needs a new general manager after firing Rae-gan Pebley in mid-July.

After a 2 1/2-week break to begin September for the FIBA World Cup, the Sparks (15-25) have four games remaining, with three against playoff-bound teams. In a season with few highlights, they've beaten first-place Minnesota, defending WNBA champion Las Vegas, and Caitlin Clark and the Indiana Fever.

"They've given me everything that they have, and I love them for it," second-year coach Lynne Roberts said recently. "They have not quit on me at all. They've showed up every day, ready to learn, be better, turn the page, attack. That's the culture that we want, that we're building towards."

Ogwumike spent her first 12 seasons with the Sparks, winning a championship in 2016, then played two seasons in Seattle before returning to Los Angeles for her final year.

"I'm excited to see the youth of this league, and especially the youth on the Sparks," she said. "I want to empower a lot of these young players in the same way that I was empowered. I came into this league, and I came into this team understanding the legacy and the history of this organization, and I really don't want that to get lost."

The Sparks have not had a winning record or made the playoffs since 2020, when they were 15-7 in coach Derek Fisher's second season. The franchise



In this file photo, Los Angeles Sparks forward Nneka Ogwumike shoots a free-throw against the Toronto Tempo during a WNBA basketball game in Los Angeles. (AP)

owns three WNBA championships, but none since 2016.

As part of the Plum trade to Phoenix, the Sparks received Monique Akoka Makani, a 2027 first-round draft pick and a 2028 second rounder.

Last season, Akoka Makani, a 25-year-old guard, started 11 playoff games for the Mercury, who reached the WNBA Finals.

The Sparks currently have two potential first-round picks next year - their own and the one they received from Phoenix. If USC star JuJu Watkins decides to declare for the WNBA draft and the Sparks have a high enough selection, they could have a shot at keeping the star guard in her hometown.

They already have center Cameron Brink, the No. 2 overall pick in 2024, who is averaging a career-best 9.6 points to go with 48% shooting from the floor and 33% from 3-point range, both career highs. Rae Burrell, who will be a restricted free agent, is having a career year and could be another key piece in the rebuild.

The team claimed Aaliyah Nye off waivers last week after she played 19 games for the Atlanta Dream. The 24-year-old guard-forward joins her third team this season.

"She had a good rookie season in Vegas, and she can shoot," Roberts said. "She's got a really quick trigger, good size and she's young, so she's got a lot of basketball in front of her."

The future also includes the opening of a \$150 million training and practice facility in El Segundo, about 15 miles from their home arena in downtown Los Angeles. The building, set to open before next season, includes two WNBA regulation courts. It's a major upgrade for a franchise that has spent years renting various training locations, including at community colleges.

Injured backs to return

Erasmus fumes at Rennie's scrum dig ahead of 3rd Test

JOHANNESBURG, Sept 2, (AP): South Africa's Rassie Erasmus appreciates what opposition rugby coach Dave Rennie is up to by complaining about the Springboks scrum.

What Erasmus doesn't appreciate is how Rennie's claims are taken as gospel.

World champion South Africa and New Zealand are 1-1 in their historic four-test series, and preparing for the third match on Saturday at FNB Stadium.

New All Blacks coach Rennie has been picking at the South Africans since he landed in the republic a month ago. First, he accused them of deliberately slowing the game down and, after New Zealand won the first test 33-16 at Ellis Park, claimed the Springboks scrum was walking around.

Rennie doubled down on the scrum after losing the second test 33-26 in Cape Town on Saturday, and Erasmus reacted at his press conference by swearing in frustration.

"It started early in the tour when they complained about teams slowing the ball down," Erasmus said on Ss-wearing in frustrationtuesday. "I think it should be clear now we are not slowing the ball down. It was a plan on their part. It's the first time in history that these people are talking about us walking around. So why would we want to start walking around now? We are not (expletive) walking around. We scrum through."

On Monday at his team announcement, Erasmus said his frustration was less about Rennie and more about "when an opinion gets presented as fact."

"Once you put a narrative out like that, everybody starts focusing on that, all media, all podcasts, and a lot have got no knowledge about scrums," he said. "I would not be a person to talk with authority about scrums but I do know how (assistant) Daan (Human) coaches the scrums and we will never say let's walk around a team. That's not our strength, that's not how we do it."

Erasmus had empathy for Rennie's mind games because he believed coaches were constrained by World Rugby protocols about raising issues post-match. Erasmus added he had his own grievances about the All Blacks' play but didn't want to air them through the media.

"I've been burned for that before," he said. He was suspended twice by World Rugby for referee criticisms in



South Africa's head coach Rassie Erasmus watches on as players warm up for a Test rugby match between South Africa and New Zealand, in Johannesburg, South Africa. (AP)

2021 and 2022.

Former Springboks coach Nick Mallett said it would be disappointing if the to and fro between the coaches distracted from the series.

"You see a strength in the opposition and you try to negate it," Mallett told the Talking Boks podcast. "You try and use everything, not only through coaching but also through chatting about, 'Is it legal? How do they manage to get (that advantage)?' Every coach does it."

Meanwhile, Erasmus made essentially one enforced change to the team from last Saturday's win, switching Cheslin Kolbe to fullback for the injured Damian Willemse, and filling the wing spot with Kurt-Lee Arendse.

Willemse and other injured backs Handré Pollard, Grant Williams and Canan Moodie will be fit to fly to Baltimore for the fourth test next week, Erasmus added.

"We're desperate to make sure we don't go to Baltimore to play for a (series) draw," he said.

Squad

South Africa: Cheslin Kolbe, Kurt-Lee Arendse, Jesse Kriel, Damian de Allende, Ethan Hooker, Sacha Feinberg-Mngomezulu, Cobus Reinach, Jasper Wiese, Pieter-Steph du Toit, Siya Kolisi (captain), Ruan Nortjé, Eben Etzebeth, Wilco Louw, Malcolm Marx, Ox Nché. Reserves: Deon Fourie, Gerhard Steenekamp, Thomas du Toit, Lood de Jager, André Esterhuizen, Cameron Hanekom, Morne van den Berg, Manie Libbok.

Action will be taken

Selector Javed wants inquiry into Imam-ul-Haq injury

ISLAMABAD, Sept 2, (AP): A senior member of the Pakistan Cricket Board selection committee has questioned the severity of Imam-ul-Haq's calf injury and called for an inquiry into the treatment protocols after the opener didn't bat during Pakistan's 194-run loss against England in the second cricket test at Lord's last Sunday.

"An inquiry will be conducted into this matter," Aaqib Javed, part of a four-member national selection panel, told Pakistan's told private news channel Geo TV during an interview.

"How is it possible that you failed to come out to bat in both innings after pulling up a muscle?" Javed said. "Injuries do occur and we have seen instances in the past where players -- even with casts -- have gone out and made an effort. This situation is different. It is a matter of great concern, and action will be taken regarding it."

Former chief selector Mohammad Wasim was among others who expressed concern in the Pakistan media. Imam sustained the injury in the field on the first day at Lord's and didn't play in the rest of the match.

However, after Wasim's criticism, Imam appeared in the outfield before play on the fourth day on Sunday but was visibly limping as he shadow-batted and had his left calf heavily strapped.

Imam was among seven players recalled from England by the PCB along with bowling coach Umar Gul and head coach Sarfaraz Ahmed after Pakistan's two defeats at Headingley and Lord's.

White-ball head coach Mike Hesson and bowling coach Ashley Noffke will take charge of the team for the final test, starting at Birmingham on Sept. 9. Pakistan selectors have chosen five uncapped players and two others - openers Saim Ayub and Abdullah Fazal -- with just a combined experience of 10 tests.

There's been reports of serious differences between the team management and Javed regarding the playing XI for the Lord's test, prompting changes midway through the tour.

Javed wanted the head coach and captain Babar Azam to include a fast bowling allrounder, pace bowler Ubaid Shah and wicketkeeper-batter Ghazi Ghorri - at the expense of Mohammad Rizwan - for the Lord's test, but the tour management just dropped Salman Ali Agha, who led the team in the first test in Babar's injury-enforced absence.

"We can't just keep waiting," Javed said. "I had actually spoken to both the captain and the coach after the first test, suggesting they include Ubaid, who bowls at 140 kph. Agha was rightly rested, Ghazi Ghorri was available on the tour and should have played instead of Rizwan."

Zverev survives Sonogo scare as Gauff begins US Open title quest

Eala makes winning start

NEW YORK, Sept 2, (AP): Alexander Zverev has the No. 1 seed in a Grand Slam tournament for the first time and the belief that comes from finally winning a major title.

Then he nearly had a quick exit from the U.S. Open.

The French Open champion rallied just in time to edge Lorenzo Sonogo 6-4, 3-6, 6-7 (7), 7-5, 6-4 in a match that lasted 4 hours, 52 minutes and ended early Wednesday morning.

Two nights after No. 4 seed and 24-time Grand Slam champion Novak Djokovic was eliminated with a five-set loss, Zverev nearly became another top player ousted from an event that top-ranked Jannik Sinner had to miss because of a right knee injury.

That moved the No. 2-ranked Zverev up to the No. 1 seed in the U.S. Open, and if he had lost he would have been the first man on the top line to fall in the first round of a major since Lleyton Hewitt lost to Ivo Karlovic at Wimbledon in 2003.

"I'm happy that I won this kind of battle," Zverev said. "This is exactly the match that I needed."

Coco Gauff had an easier time, opening her quest for a second U.S. Open title by beating Zeynep Sonmez 6-3, 6-4, regaining control midway through the second set after her opponent from Turkey picked up her play.

"I know that I can raise my level if I need to and I like to challenge my opponent to let them keep up the level the whole match," Gauff said. "And if they do, I clap my hands and I walk off court with my head held high."

Instead, she's walking into a second-round match against either Paula Badosa or Daria Kasatkina.

On a rainy day in New York, nothing could dampen the spirits inside Louis Armstrong Stadium.

First, Gael Monfils won on his 40th birthday to extend his Grand



Alexander Zverev, of Germany, hits a return to Lorenzo Sonogo, of Italy, during the first round of the U.S. Open tennis championships in New York. (AP)

Slam career, with fans singing happy birthday to the Frenchman afterward. He was followed by No. 17 Alex Eala, who beat Mary Stoiana 6-1, 6-2 in front of her many Filipino fans.

Gauff was battling serving woes when she arrived in Flushing Meadows last year and began working with a new coach on the eve of the tournament. There wasn't time to fix her problems and Gauff had to battle though a rocky opener before getting easily ousted by Naomi Osaka in the fourth round.

Gauff returned this year with the confidence and momentum of a serious contender, winning the title in Cincinnati after semifinal runs at Wimbledon and Toronto.

She also won the hard-court tournament in Cincinnati in 2023 before going on to become the first American teenager to win the U.S. Open title since Serena Williams in 1999,

topping Aryna Sabalenka in the final.

Flavio Cobolli rallied from two sets down to avoid an early upset on the men's side, and his wasn't even the most dramatic comeback Tuesday.

Maria Sakkari fell behind 6-2, 4-0 once she was finally able to get on the court after the rain stopped, then the No. 32 seed rallied to edge Rob-in Montgomery 2-6, 7-5, 6-2.

"Just kept telling myself that everything is possible and just try to get myself in a good place mentally and just try to be a little bit more positive, try to make more balls, get myself into the match," said Sakkari, who reached the U.S. Open and Wimbledon semifinals in 2021. "Because, I mean, everyone's very good in tennis nowadays, but specifically that girl I played today doesn't have the experience that I do. So I just told myself, let's try and hang in

there, try and make more balls, and it worked."

Cobolli, the No. 5 seed and French Open runner-up, beat Francisco Comesana 3-6, 2-6, 6-3, 6-4, 6-4, finishing his match that lasted 4 hours, 12 minutes not long after some sun had broken through the clouds and allowed play to start on all the outside courts.

Cobolli made his first career two-set comeback to avoid joining No. 4 seed Novak Djokovic and No. 10 Arthur Fils among early losers in a men's draw that was already missing top-ranked Jannik Sinner, Cobolli's fellow Italian who was unable to play in the tournament because of a right knee injury.

He said he took a bathroom break after the second set and decided to change everything he was wearing.

"In Grand Slams it's never done. You have to fight until the last point," Cobolli said.

Young stars look to extend legacy of dominance

Clark, Bueckers, Reese begin new Team USA era

WASHINGTON, Sept 2, (AP): Paige Bueckers sees her first major tournament for the U.S. women's national team alongside fellow newcomers Caitlin Clark and Angel Reese as the natural course of one generation replacing another.

The Dallas Wings star wants to be clear, though. This FIBA World Cup - not to mention any Olympic or other international event that might follow - isn't some sort of entitlement.

"We don't take it for granted and think we're entitled to it just because we feel like it's our time now," Bueckers said. "We had to earn it, we had work for it and we're all extremely grateful for that. We've been competing with and against each other our whole lives, and something that I admire is their work ethic and what it took to get here."

Team USA begins pursuit of a fifth consecutive World Cup title against China on Friday in Berlin in the first of three games in group play. The WNBA is taking a nearly three-week break to accommodate the tournament.

For Bueckers, Indiana's Clark and Atlanta's Reese, it means putting aside thoughts of the looming WNBA playoffs to start what each would hope is a long international career. They were together when the U.S. won a World Cup qualifier in Puerto Rico in March.

Sue Bird and Diana Taurasi have both moved on after becoming the

first to win five Olympic gold medals, with Taurasi adding a sixth in Paris two years ago. Bird had a role in picking a team that includes another first-timer in Clark's Fever teammate, Aliyah Boston.

A'ja Wilson and Kelsey Plum will miss the World Cup for health reasons, meaning the U.S. will lean a little bit more on a youthful group. Only three players are in their 30s - Las Vegas guard Chelsea Gray at 33 and a pair of 32-year-olds in Breanna Stewart of New York and Kahleah Copper of Phoenix.

Bueckers, Clark, Reese and Bos-

ton are 24. And while there are plenty of other stars the U.S. could have chosen - U.S. team veteran Sabrina Ionescu of the Liberty was left off this roster - it's easy to see the four headliners one day matching the longevity of Bird and Taurasi.

"Anytime you wear USA across your chest, it's a tremendous honor," Clark said. "And to be surrounded by so many great players, some of which have already won Olympic gold medals, some have been on the World Cup team before. And I get to share it with (Boston), too, so it's pretty cool and pretty fun, and I'm



Dallas Wings guard Paige Bueckers, right, drives against Indiana Fever guard Caitlin Clark, left, during the first half of a WNBA basketball game in Dallas. (AP)

excited about it."

Bueckers is the reigning WNBA Rookie of the Year who will soon get her first shot at the WNBA playoffs. Clark's Fever have made the postseason each of her three years, although she missed most of last season with a groin injury.

Reese, who was traded by Chicago before the season, is on her way to leading the WNBA in rebounding for the third time in her three years.

Boston, Clark and Bueckers were the No. 1 overall picks in consecutive seasons, while Reese went seventh when Clark was the top pick in 2024. It sure seemed like just a matter of time before this happened with the national team.

"It shows the shift, right?" said Indiana coach Stephanie White, who is on the U.S. staff. "There was a time when Sue Bird and Diana Taurasi were those young ones. There was a time when Tamika Catchings was one of the young ones. And you start to see that shift. And then they become the next generation of hopefully multi-time Olympians. The game couldn't be in better hands with those guys."

Reese's Atlanta teammate, Rhyne Howard, is another first-timer. Washington's Sonia Citron, one of the injury replacements, is the youngest at 22 and making her national team debut. The other replacement, Citron teammate Kiki Iriafen, also was with Bueckers, Clark and Reese for the World Cup qualifier.

Mohammed praises the players for efforts during opening window of Asian qualifiers

Kuwait Club awaits rivals in West Asia Super League finals draw

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

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2: The draw for the West Asia Super League (WASL) finals will be held in Beirut today, with eight clubs set to discover their group-stage opponents for the tournament, which Lebanon will host from September 25 to October 1.

The lineup features Kuwait Club, Lebanese giants Al Riyadi and Al Hikma, Saudi clubs AlUla and Al-Ittihad, Qatar's Al Arabi, Iran's Shahrardi and India's Indian Railways.

The teams have been placed in two seeding pots. Al Riyadi, Al-Ittihad, AlUla and Shahrardi are in the first pot, while Kuwait Club, Al Arabi, Al Hikma and Indian Railways make up the second.

The eight clubs will be divided into two groups of four, with the top two finishers in each group advancing to the semifinals.

Kuwait Club will enter the competition with ambitions of challenging for the title after reinforcing its roster with three American players — Shinano Onuaku, Christian Brown and Dai Dai Granet.

Meanwhile, Mishal Mohammed, director of Kuwait's national basketball teams and head of the national delegation, praised the players for their efforts during the opening window of the Asian qualifiers, which ended in the UAE on Monday.

Kuwait finished third behind Bahrain and the UAE, with Oman fourth and Nepal fifth, securing its place in the second phase of the qualifiers.

Kuwait has been placed in Group E alongside Bahrain, the UAE, Palestine, Kazakhstan and Sri Lanka. Group F includes Hong Kong, Malaysia, Indonesia, Mongolia and Fiji.

Four teams from each group will advance to the Asian finals, where they will join the continent's eight highest-ranked teams in a 16-team tournament.

Mohammed said Kuwait faced major challenges during its preparations, particularly after players had been away from competitive action since February because of security-related developments in the region. The team also had to cope with the absence of several players for various reasons.



Kuwait players preparing for action.

Argentina enters new era after Messi's international farewell



In this file photo, Argentina's Lionel Messi lifts the trophy after winning the World Cup final soccer match between Argentina and France in Lusail, Qatar. (AP)

Young core ready to carry on Leo legacy

BUENOS AIRES, Sept 2, (AP):
What now for Argentina?

Lionel Messi announced his retirement from the national team on Monday after a 21-year career, leaving behind a legacy of 125 goals and the 2022 World Cup title. As captain and talisman, his departure raises big questions about the future of a team that reached the World Cup final just six weeks ago.

"I gave it my all; I have nothing left to give," Messi wrote in an Instagram post. "Besides, young players are coming up who deserve to be here."

Messi made his senior debut in 2005, went on to become Argentina's all-time leading scorer, and appeared in six World Cups. He holds the records for both the most games played (34) and most victories (23) in the history of the tournament.

At 39, the end of Messi's international career was imminent. Yet, the official confirmation struck an emotional chord with teammates and

fans alike - especially the younger generation who grew up watching him wear the Albiceleste colors.

"I was just a kid, calculating the age gap between us to see if I might one day get to play alongside you," said 25-year-old midfielder Enzo Fernández, who debuted just months before the Qatar World Cup. "It's hard for me to picture the next training camp without you - stepping onto the pitch and not seeing you up front in that No. 10 jersey. ... We're going to miss you dearly, Captain."

Can Argentina's inexhaustible talent pool produce another global megastar?

The same question arose in 1994, when Diego Maradona's time with the Albiceleste came to a traumatic end following a positive drug test at the World Cup in the United States. More than a decade passed before a player capable of claiming his throne emerged, and it took 36 years for Argentina to lift the trophy again.

"Argentina has a deep-rooted culture. Players grow up learning the craft on the street and at

local clubs; football permeates everything," said 1986 World Cup champion and sports columnist Jorge Valdano in an interview with The Associated Press last May.

"In that environment, a genius is far more likely to emerge. But to become Messi, you need to win both the genetic lottery and the social lottery," Valdano added.

There is currently no player who matches Messi's technical brilliance. However, several young prospects are competing for the playmaker role in the Argentina team.

Nico Paz and Thiago Almada both shared the pitch with Messi at the recent World Cup, though neither quite dazzled. Paz was named the best midfielder in Serie A last season with Como, while Almada, who started early in the tournament before being relegated to the bench, recently left Atlético Madrid to join River Plate.

In the twilight of his career, hampered by recurring physical issues, Messi missed more than 20 national team matches. Yet Argentina maintained a winning record without him.

Watkins scores on debut

Al-Hilal routs Al-Ahli to maintain perfect start

RIYADH, Sept 2: Al-Hilal continued its perfect start to the Saudi Pro League season with a convincing 3-0 victory over Al-Ahli, thanks to goals from Sergej Milinkovic-Savic, Crysencio Summerville and .

The win took Al-Hilal to 12 points from four matches and sent it to the top of the standings on goal difference ahead of defending champion Al-Nassr. Al-Ahli remained seventh with six points.

Milinkovic-Savic opened the scoring in the ninth minute, firing home from inside the penalty area. Summerville doubled the lead midway through the first half with a low effort into the near corner.

Al-Ahli's task became even harder when Merih Demiral was



New signing Ollie Watkins celebrates goal against Al-Ahli.

shown a red card in first-half stoppage time.

The hosts remained in control after the break, while Al-Ahli

struggled to find a way back into the match. Watkins, who had earlier seen a goal disallowed for offside after coming off the bench,

eventually got his name on the scoresheet four minutes from time with a header.

The goal marked another impressive debut chapter for Watkins, who also scored on his first appearance for Aston Villa after joining the Birmingham club.

Before moving to Al-Hilal, the England international represented Exeter City, Brentford and Aston Villa. He also spent time on loan with Weston-super-Mare, who currently plays in the sixth tier of English football.

Watkins made his Exeter first-team debut in May 2014, coming on as a 77th-minute substitute against Hartlepool United in the fourth tier. Exeter won 2-0, although Watkins failed to score on his debut.



Kuwait players vie for the ball with Japanese during the opening match.

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NEWS

Hossam Hassan extends Egypt contract through 2030

CAIRO, Sept 2: Hossam Hassan will remain in charge of Egypt's national team until 2030 after the Egyptian Football Association extended his contract, rewarding the coach for guiding the Pharaohs to a historic World Cup campaign.

The 60-year-old led Egypt to their first-ever World Cup victory, a group-stage win over New Zealand, before the team narrowly lost 3-2 to Argentina in the round of 16. Argentina later advanced to the final.

The Egyptian Football Association confirmed the extension following a meeting to finalize the new agreement. The federation had already approved the contract renewal in July

and formed a committee to review its duration and terms.

Hassan, who guided Egypt to the semifinals



The Egyptian head coach, Hossam Hassan.

of the 2025 Africa Cup of Nations, had previously said that he and his brother Ibrahim Hassan, the national team director, had been working without contracts since February 2026.

Egypt's all-time leading scorer took charge of the national team in February 2024 and guided them to their first World Cup appearance in eight years.

Hassan also made history by becoming the first Egyptian to represent his country at the World Cup both as a player and a coach.

Under his leadership, Egypt reached the knockout stage after drawing with Belgium and Iran and defeating New Zealand in the group phase.



Alexandra Eala, of the Philippines, reacts during her match against Mary Stoiana, of the United States, during the first round of the U.S. Open tennis championships in New York. (AP) – See Page 14

Sports

Al-Nasr makes early Zain Premier League statement

Kazma held by Sahel

By Hassan Mosa
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2: Al-Nasr has made a strong early statement in the Zain Premier League, winning its opening two matches to move alone at the top of the standings for the first time in years.

The “Red” side followed a 2-1 victory over Al-Salmiya in the opening round with another 2-1 win against Al-Fahaheel. The perfect record has given it early momentum, but it faces a tougher challenge on Friday when it meets



Al-Nasr coach Al-Adwani congratulates young players.

Al-Qadsia in the third round. Coach Dhafer Al-Adwani has put his trust in a number of young players, who have responded with encouraging displays in the first two matches. The team’s foreign players have also made a significant impact.

Kazma missed the opportunity to join Al-Nasr at the top after being held to a goalless draw by Al-Sahel, leaving both sides on four points.

Defending champion Kuwait Club is also on four points after recovering from their 3-3 draw with Al-Arabi in the opening round.

Kuwait Club claimed its first victory by edging Al-Qadsia 1-0 in the second-round highlight, a result that provided a major boost to the champion’s confidence while also handing them three valuable points.

Al-Shabab remains among the teams on four points after drawing 1-1 with Al-Sulaibikhat, who earned its first point of the campaign despite being reduced to 10 men midway through the second half.

Al-Salmiya bounced back from their opening defeat with a 2-0 victory over Al-Tadamon to record their first win and climb to sixth place.

Al-Jahra also took advantage of Al-Arabi’s difficulties, coming from behind to secure a 2-1 victory and move level with Al-Salmiya on four points. Al-Arabi slipped to ninth with just one point.

Al-Qadsia produced a tale of two halves against Kuwait Club. After



KUNA photo

Al-Sahel stands firm against Kazma attack.

dominating much of the first half, it faded after the break and could not cope with Kuwait Club’s growing

pressure, eventually conceding a late winner.

Al-Fahaheel and Al-Tadamon oc-

cupy the bottom two places without a point after losing both of its opening matches. Its meeting next Satur-

day offers one of them a chance to claim a first victory and climb off the foot of the table.

Kuwait handball team begins final Asian Games countdown



National teams director Faisal Siwan.

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

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 2: Kuwait’s national handball team has wrapped up its training camp in Slovenia as preparations intensify for the 20th Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, later this month.

The Blues played a series of friendly matches during a tournament in Slovenia, along with tests against Slovenian league champion Celje and clubs including Istria, Gradis, Trimo Trebnje and Zagreb.

The team will return to local training until next Wednesday before travelling to Japan for a final nine-day camp. Coach Aron Kristjansson will use the final stage of preparations to fine-tune the squad ahead of the start of the competition.

Kuwait was drawn in Group B with Bahrain, Iran, Kazakhstan and South Korea. They begin their campaign against Iran on September 19, face South Korea two days later and meet Kazakhstan on September 22, before completing the preliminary round against Bahrain on September 23.

National teams director Faisal Siwan said the Slovenia camp had delivered the intended benefits, particularly in helping the coaching staff implement their tactical approach and improve coordination among the players.

“The camp achieved its objectives. The coaching staff was able to apply their tactical ideas and playing methods, while the friendly matches helped raise the team’s level of readiness for the Asian Games,” Siwan said.

He acknowledged the strength of Kuwait’s group but expressed confidence in the squad.

“Our group is certainly not easy and features strong teams, but we are confident in our players’ abilities and their capacity to take responsibility and deliver a performance that matches the ambitions of Kuwaiti handball at the Asian Games,” Siwan added.

Best of the Rest

Serie B side Cremonese fires coach: A victory for Serie B club Cremonese at Serie A side Parma wasn’t enough to save Marco Giampolo’s job.

The coach was fired immediately after guiding Cremonese to a 2-0 win in the second round of the Italian Cup.

The moves comes after Cremonese lost its opening two matches in the second division without scoring a goal, and conceding four. But it had also won its Italian Cup opener, beating Sampdoria 2-0 in the first round. (AP)

Italy second in spending with an outlay of \$1.34 billion

English clubs spend a staggering \$4.7B in transfer window, Fernandez signing caps \$600M City spree

LONDON, Sept 2, (AP): English soccer flexed its unrivaled spending power by embarking on an unprecedented \$4.7 billion outlay on players in the summer transfer window - and Manchester City saved the biggest signing of the lot right to the very end.

Argentina midfielder Enzo Fernandez became one of the most expensive players in soccer history by completing a marquee move to City from Premier League rival Chelsea for 125 million pounds (\$169 million) in the final hours of the window that closed across Europe on Tuesday.

City’s spending alone on new players this summer - its first in the post-Pep Guardiola era - soared past \$600 million, a record splurge by a club in a single transfer window. With the expenditure of Chelsea and Tottenham also well over \$400 million, England’s top-flight clubs showed they’re in a league of their own when it comes to financial might.

That’s mainly down to the competition’s huge domestic and international broadcasting deals, which dwarf those of its less-watched European rivals, but also because of a recent tweak to Premier League’s financial rules that now allows clubs with the biggest revenues and turnover - like City and others who regularly benefit from Champions League largesse - to have greater spending power in the transfer market.

Deadline day passed with the combined spending of top-flight clubs in Spain, Italy, Germany and France - Europe’s other so-called “Big Five” leagues - coming to \$3.8 billion, according to figures on soccer industry website Transfermarkt. That’s far less than that of the Premier League’s 20 teams.

The previous highest spend by English teams in one window was 3.14 billion pounds (\$4.25 billion) in 2025.

Fernandez, who hasn’t started a game since being sent off against Spain in the World Cup final in July, became the latest big-money signing as part of City’s \$440-million midfield rebuild under Guardiola’s successor, Enzo Maresca, that also includes the arrivals of England’s Elliot Anderson (\$155 million) and Morocco’s Ayyoub Bouaddi (\$117 million).

Also joining City on deadline day was Senegal winger Iliman Ndiaye from Everton for an initial \$81 million.

Abu Dhabi-controlled City recouped almost \$400 million in sales this window - among the departures were Spain’s World Cup-winning captain Rodri and midfield stalwart Bernardo Silva - and the club let Jack Grealish leave on another season-long loan to Everton on Tuesday.

The fee for Fernandez is a joint British record, the same as Liverpool paid last year for Alexander Isak.



In this file photo, Argentina’s Enzo Fernandez leaves the match after receiving a red card during the World Cup final soccer match between Spain and Argentina in East Rutherford, N.J., near New York. (AP)

They are tied in fourth place in the all-time list of most expensive soccer players, after Neymar (Barcelona to PSG for 222 million euros), Kylian Mbappé (Monaco to PSG for 180 million euros) and Ousmane Dembele (Borussia Dortmund to Barcelona for 148 million euros), according to Transfermarkt.

“He is a complete midfielder: technically gifted, hardworking, tenacious and a goalscorer,” City director of football Hugo Viana said of Fernandez, who joined Chelsea for a then-British record 106.7 million pounds (\$131.4 million) in early 2023.

Tottenham’s summer recruitment has been almost as remarkable as City’s and the London club was active right up to the deadline on Tuesday, signing two players from Chelsea. Ukraine winger Mykhailo Mudryk joined on a season-long loan, a month after he was cleared to play again following a doping case, and defender Tosin Adarabioyo moved on a permanent deal.

Chelsea responded to its sale of Fernandez by attempting to sign Senegal midfielder Lamine Camara from Monaco, but Sky Sports reported that the French club backed out of the deal.

Liverpool signed 18-year-old goalkeeper Lucca Brughmans from Belgian team Genk in a deal that reportedly could be worth up to 30 million pounds (\$35 million). Brughmans has gone back to Genk on loan for the rest of the season.

Newcastle signed Belgium forward Matias Fernandez-Pardo from Lille for a reported 51 million pounds (\$59 million) and sent Nick Woltemade on loan to Juventus, with the Germany striker having spent just one season in the Premier League after a

69 million pounds (\$93 million) move.

It has been a summer of heavy change at Aston Villa, with a number of star players - Ollie Watkins, Morgan Rogers, Ezri Konsa and Emi Martinez, among them - leaving and a slew of new arrivals. Its business continued Tuesday with the signing of Ibrahim Mbaye, a two-time Champions League-winning winger from Paris Saint-Germain.

There were some late signings still to be announced as clubs finalized the paperwork.

The deadline passed with Everton not concluding the signing of U.S. striker Folarin Balogun from Monaco, and neither club made an official comment about the proposed deal. British broadcaster Sky Sports reported there were some last-minute hitches.

Italy was second in spending to England, with an outlay of \$1.34 billion, according to Transfermarkt.

As well as signing Woltemade, Juventus brought in midfielder Pape Matar Sarr on loan from Tottenham.

Beto moved to Fiorentina from Everton as the replacement for Moise Kean, who joined Como - the team coached by Cesc Fábregas and in the Champions League this season - on loan.

Robinho Junior, the 18-year-old son of the former Brazil player Robinho, signed with Genoa and English forward Jonathan Rowe was loaned from Bologna to Atalanta.

With Real Madrid quiet - having already made its signings like Yan Diomande and Denzel Dumfries earlier in the window - rival Barcelona made a notable purchase by bringing in striker Gabriel Jesus from Arsenal on a three-year deal.

The Brazilian endured an injury-disrupted time at Arsenal, but was part of last season’s title-winning squad.

He is the latest forward to leave the Emirates Stadium during this window, following Leandro Trossard’s move to Besiktas and teenager Ethan Nwaneri joining Borussia Dortmund on loan. Gabriel Martinelli is also expected to depart to Saudi Arabia.

Canada striker Jonathan David joined Atletico Madrid on loan from Juventus.

Bayer Leverkusen made the biggest splash in Germany on Tuesday by announcing the signing of Ivory Coast right back Guéla Doué - the older brother of France star Désiré Doué - and the return of winger Moussa Diaby three years after he left for Aston Villa.

Leverkusen was reportedly paying an initial 30 million euros (\$35 million) to Strasbourg for Doué and 27 million euros (\$31 million) to Al-Ittihad for Diaby.

Diaby scored 49 goals in 172 games for Leverkusen between 2019-23. He spent just one year in England before his move in 2024 to Al-Ittihad, where he won the Saudi title in 2024-25.

Kushner says he regrets involvement with FIFA’s World Cup sell-off plan

NEW YORK, Sept 2, (AP): FIFA’s intended investment partner Josh Kushner has said he regrets getting involved in Gianni Infantino’s failed World Cup sell-off plan that provoked a huge rift in global soccer and has pulled him into legal action.

In his first comments about the ongoing crisis for FIFA, Kushner acknowledged that “we failed to appreciate the political dynamics of global football.”

“Had we known what this would devolve into, we would

not have gotten involved,” Kushner said in comments made to Axios.

Kushner and his investment firm Thrive Capital were targeted last week by European soccer body UEFA by a court filing in Manhattan seeking evidence for a potential criminal complaint against Infantino in Switzerland for financial mismanagement. However, the UEFA filing states that “neither Thrive nor Kushner is an anticipated defendant” in a potential legal case.

Under Infantino’s plan revealed in late July, Thrive and Kushner were to be the anchor investors intending to pay FIFA \$4.2 billion for a 20% stake in a subsidiary that would run the soccer body’s commercial events, including the World Cup.

The project provoked a furious reaction from global soccer officials and a third deep rift with UEFA during Infantino’s 10-year presidency.

European soccer officials previously blocked Infantino’s

divisive plans for a \$25 billion project for new competitions with Japan’s SoftBank in 2018, and his failed push in 2021 to play the men’s World Cup every two years instead of four.

“The idea behind (the project) was to direct more capital and equity equally amongst all 211 member countries, providing significantly more investment to underdeveloped nations to nurture local talent, support grassroots football, enhance the fan experience, and ultimately grow the global game everywhere,” Kushner said in the statement to Axios.