



SAUDI VOWS SELF-DEFENSE AS KUWAIT, GULF STAND FIRM

Houthi barrage hits Saudi energy heartland, 73 hurt

Attacks raise new threat to global trade



Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

It is time to eliminate Houthi terrorism

IT IS good that the legitimate Yemeni Army finally confronted the Houthi terrorist group. This step should have been taken long ago. Nevertheless, it is better late than never.

Recently, the Houthi group crossed all boundaries in its continuous perpetration of terrorist acts both domestically and abroad.

The recent Houthi attacks on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which targeted civilian facilities, is a model of terrorist crime that can neither be justified nor tolerated under any pretext.

The Houthi group is a gang that entered a complex path with the success of the legitimate government in controlling strategic locations and several districts. This indicates that the group has become much weaker. The group is expanding the scope of the Iranian front in an attempt to alleviate the pressure on it internally.

The group is trying to achieve certain gains to salvage some of its dignity before its patron, the Iranian regime, which is now in dire need of the support of its proxies in light of the economic and military blockade, which made it lose its political composure.

I have repeatedly asserted that this group is an Iranian front, operating according to an agenda dictated by Tehran. The source of weapons, methods of smuggling them, and how experts from the Revolutionary Guard manage them are well-known and exposed.

Therefore, the current situation in Yemen appears to be a complex scenario that transcends the boundaries of a local civil war, especially with the announcement of the Presidential Leadership Council about the launching of Operation Integrated Deterrence.

If political, regional and international support is secured, the Operation Integrated Deterrence will undoubtedly lead to the decapitation of the snake that has spread its terrorism beyond the borders of Yemen to cover the Arabian Peninsula and Bab al-Mandab Strait.

Everyone is aware that the Houthi group intends to change the Yemeni reality—ideologically, religiously and politically, aiming at turning Yemen into an Iranian backyard, from which it can penetrate the Arabian Peninsula and achieve the goal of Tehran to dominate the Islamic holy places.

However, this plan was met with the decisiveness of the armies of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, most notably the Saudi Army.

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His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah receives Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah.

Acting PM presents officials behind record Lyrica bust

Crown Prince stresses Amir's security directives

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8, (KUNA): His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received on Tuesday Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, who introduced Director General of the General Department of Anti Drug Trafficking Brig. Gen. Mohammad Qabazard and Assistant Director General Brigadier General Sheikh Hamad

Mohammad Yousef Al-Sabah, along with other personnel.

The officials and personnel were involved in thwarting Kuwait's largest operation to manufacture and distribute Lyrica.

During the meeting, His Highness the Crown Prince stressed the need to implement the directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to safeguard

Kuwait's security and stability.

His Highness commended the Ministry of Interior's security role and the sincere efforts of its personnel in combating narcotics and protecting the nation and citizens, wishing them continued success.

Head of His Highness the Crown Prince's Diwan, Sheikh Thamer Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah attended the meeting.

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8, (Agencies): Kuwait and fellow Gulf and international partners on Tuesday issued strong condemnations of Houthi militia attacks that struck civilian and economic sites across southern Saudi Arabia, injuring 73 people, including women and children.

The Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs described the strikes as a flagrant violation of Saudi sovereignty and a breach of international humanitarian law, warning they risk undermining regional security. It also denounced the continued targeting of commercial vessels in the Red Sea, saying such acts threaten maritime navigation, global energy supplies and international trade.

Kuwait affirmed full solidarity with Saudi Arabia and support for all measures the Kingdom takes to safeguard its sovereignty, security and the safety of citizens and residents, stressing that Saudi security is integral to Kuwait's and the GCC's.

Saudi Arabia's Foreign Ministry said the militia targeted Abha, Khamis Mushait, Jazan and Najran, injuring 73 civilians, and reiterated the Kingdom's right to take all necessary measures to defend its sovereignty and protect its people under international law. It called for an immediate halt to escalation and urged implementation of UN Security Council resolutions, citing 2216 (2015) and 2722 (2024).

Maj.-Gen. Turki Al-Malki, spokesman for the Saudi-led Arab Coalition, called the attacks a serious and irresponsible escalation, accusing the militia of seeking to damage national resources and destabilise the region.

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Day by Day

SOMEONE once said that he lives well and happily because he does not compare his life with anyone else's.

He said he does not envy anyone or covet what others have. He is content with what he has. He does not like to pry into other people's intentions, and chooses instead to be content with his own good intentions and what he possesses. He believes that life has its ups and downs.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar



Ministry of Foreign Affairs photo
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Hamad Al-Mashaan receives Additional Secretary at India's Ministry of External Affairs Asim R. Mahajan.

Kuwait, India move to deepen ties

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Hamad Al-Mashaan received on Tuesday Additional Secretary at India's Ministry of External Affairs Asim R. Mahajan, on the occasion of his official visit to Kuwait.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs

said in a press statement that the meeting discussed bilateral relations between the two friendly countries and ways to strengthen and develop them in various fields, in addition to exchanging views on the latest regional and international developments. (KUNA)

Oman names Al-Shanfari as Ambassador to Kuwait

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8: The Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman announced the appointment of Ali bin Ahmed bin Salem Al-Shanfari as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Sultanate of Oman to the State of Kuwait.

The embassy congratulated Ambassador Al-Shanfari on gaining the trust of Sultan of Oman His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq who appointed him to the post, wishing him success in his diplomatic duties and in strengthening the fraternal relations between Oman and Kuwait.



Ali bin Ahmed bin Salem Al-Shanfari, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Sultanate of Oman to the State of Kuwait

7,019 teacher cuts to save KD 42 mln annually

200 patrols ready for Kuwait school rush

By Munif Naif and Inaas Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8: Acting Director of the Traffic Awareness Section at the General Traffic Department (GTD) in the Ministry of Interior Lieutenant Colonel Abdullah Bouhassan confirmed that GTD has completed its preparations for the start of classes for the new academic year next week.

These preparations are in line with the field and awareness efforts and the Prevention and Safety awareness campaign, aimed at ensuring traffic safety and smooth traffic flow during peak hours.

Bouhassan disclosed that the field preparations include the deployment of 200 traffic patrols in various locations and 420 traffic officers to intensify field presence, monitor

tor traffic flow and manage congestion.

He said GTD is using an integrated system of modern technologies to manage and monitor traffic. He explained that 258 intersections are connected to the control room, where traffic signals are programmed according to traffic density in order to regulate vehicle movement and reduce congestion.

He indicated that the surveillance system consists of 338 cameras for monitoring roads, intersections and traffic flow in order to immediately deal with traffic congestions.

He added that these preparations are in line with the commitment of GTD to ensure the highest level of traffic safety at the start of the academic year and the return of students to schools, as well as intensifying traffic awareness and urging drivers to strictly comply with traffic rules.

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UK 'bans' Israeli settlement trade

LONDON, Sept 8, (AP): The United Kingdom on Tuesday banned trade with Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, where it says "settler terrorists" are carrying out "ethnic cleansing" of Palestinians.

Foreign Secretary Ed Miliband said the U.K. will ban imports of all goods from the settlements and bar companies from providing services for the settlements, including financing, construction, infrastructure, real estate and advertising. He said France and Canada would also ban trade in goods from settlements.

"I do not believe the British people want us supporting the occupation by accepting products from settlements in our shops and supermarkets," Miliband said.

The economic impact is likely to be limited, since the settlements produce only a small amount of largely agricultural exports. But the move is a symbolic expression of displeasure with Israel by some of its closest allies, and new sign of its growing isolation as a result of the Gaza war.



KUNA photo
President of Kuwait's Audit Bureau Essam Al-Roumi with heads of supreme audit institutions in GCC member states.

GCC audit chiefs advance oversight, eye AI upgrade

MANAMA, Sept 8, (KUNA): Heads of supreme audit institutions in GCC member states held their 23rd meeting in Manama Tuesday, with the participation of President of Kuwait's Audit Bureau Essam Al-Roumi.

In a statement to KUNA on the sidelines of the meeting, Acting Assistant Undersecretary for Administrative, Financial and Legal Affairs and Prior Audit at the Audit Bureau Dr. Saud Al-Zamanan said all GCC member states were making concerted

efforts to advance oversight work and enhance the performance of the Gulf audit system.

He noted that the coordination and integration of efforts among GCC audit institutions reflected their keenness to keep pace with developments and their belief in the importance of joint action in advancing Gulf cooperation in the fields of auditing and accounting and achieving future aspirations.

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2 Al-Jarallah visits Al-Muajjal diwaniya



8 KFH empowers SMEs to integrate sustainability into their business operations



9 National Bank of Kuwait ends Summer 2026 by empowering youth through distinctive training & development programs



Prayer Timings

Fajr 04:09 Asr 15:17
Sunrise .. 05:29 Maghrib .. 18:01
Zohr 11:45 Isha 19:22



Antigua and Barbuda envoy



Tajikistan envoy



Cambodia envoy



Korea envoy



Amiri Diwan photos
Myanmar envoy

HH Amir receives credentials of newly-appointed ambassadors to Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received Tuesday credentials of Ambassador of Cambodia to Kuwait, Chhay Makara, Ambassador of Antigua and Barbuda Mohammad El-Zohbi, Korean Ambassador Jang Hyun Kim, Ambassador of Tajikistan Khusrav Noziri and Min Thein Myanmar's Ambassador

to the country.

Attending the ceremony were Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Chief of His Highness the Amir's office Jamal Al-Theyab, and Amiri Diwan Undersecretary Sheikh Abdulaziz Meshal Al-Sabah.

Amiri Diwan Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs Mazen Al-Essa, Assistant Foreign Minister Mubarak Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Minister Plenipotentiary Abdulmohsen Jaber Al-Zaid and Commander of the Amiri Guard Brigadier General Isa Abdullah Al-Qassab, were also in attendance.



Sheikh Jarrah Jaber



Mohammad Ishaq Dar

Kuwait, Pakistan review bilateral ties, discuss new developments

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8, (KUNA): Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah held a phone call Monday with Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement that the call reviewed bilateral cooperation and ways to develop it, in addition to discussing the latest regional developments and efforts to enhance security and stability in the region.

Build modern, sustainable Arab cities, says ATO chief

Arab Towns Organization confab kicks off in Oman

SALALAH, Sept 8, (KUNA): Secretary General of the Arab Towns Organization Kuwait's Bader Al-Ajeel stressed on Tuesday the importance of coordinating Arab efforts and joint action to keep pace with rapid global changes and build more innovative and sustainable Arab cities.

Speaking at the 20th General Conference of the organization, which opened in the Omani city of Salalah, Al-Ajeel said joint action would strengthen the organization's standing and place Arab cities at the center of attention at a time when urbanization has become one of the most prominent issues of the future.

The conference was attended by Governor of Dhofar Marwan Al-Saeed and delegations from Arab municipalities and cities, including a Kuwait Municipality delegation headed by Director General Manal Al-Asfour.

Al-Ajeel stressed that previous generations had carried the organization's goals, consolidated its standing and preserved its mission, adding that the responsibility today was to safeguard this legacy and build upon it.

He called on leaders of Arab cities participating in the conference to keep pace with the knowledge and technological boom that has emerged during the first quarter of the 21st century, commending the efforts of the organization's member cities and the local and Arab bodies supporting the conference.

He expressed full confidence that the 20th conference would mark the beginning of a new chapter and a qualitative shift in joint action, voicing hope that its discussions would produce effective decisions that strengthen the organization's progress and serve Arab cities.

Al-Ajeel said holding the conference under the theme "More Innovative and Sustainable Cities" carried special significance, praising Dhofar Governorate's success in presenting an outstanding model for utilizing its natural assets and environmental wealth to support local development and stimulate tourism.

He expressed gratitude and appreciation to the Sultanate of Oman, its leadership, government and people for hosting the conference and for their "sincere support" for everything that brings Arab cities together and unifies their efforts. He also praised the generous patronage provided by Dhofar Governor Marwan Al-Saeed for the conference.

He commended the efforts of Dhofar Municipality Chairman and current session President Dr. Ahmad Al-Ghassani and all its employees for ensuring the success of the event, as well as the efforts of former session President and Riyadh Region Mayor Prince Faisal bin Abdulaziz bin Ayyaf.

The Arab Towns Organization, in cooperation with Dhofar Municipality in Oman, is organizing the 64th Executive Council meeting and the 20th General Conference, with the participation of delegations from 22 Arab countries.

Scientific sessions are being held on the sidelines addressing smart cities, cybersecurity and the future of sustainable urban mobility in Arab cities, with the participation of academics and specialists.



KUNA photo

Kuwait's Bader Al-Ajeel with Omani officials at the opening of the Arab Towns Organization conference.

Dialogue sessions are also being held on enhancing the role of Arab Towns Organization institutions in empowering Arab cities and developing an Arab agenda for urban development, with the participation of officials from relevant Arab organizations and participating city leaders.

The Arab Towns Organization, headquartered in Kuwait City, was established in 1967 as an independent Arab regional, non-governmental and non-profit organization concerned with the affairs of cities and municipalities in Arab countries.

Conference

The 20th General Conference of the Arab Towns Organization (ATO) began on Tuesday in Salalah, Oman, under the theme "More Innovative and Sustainable Cities."

Delegations from Arab municipalities and cities, including a delegation from Kuwait Municipality headed by Director General Manal Al-Asfour are participating in the conference.

The conference, organized by the Arab Towns Organization in cooperation with Dhofar Municipality and under the patronage of Dhofar Governor Marwan Al Said, discusses key issues and challenges facing Arab cities, as well as ways to develop municipal work, enhance cooperation, and exchange expertise and experiences.

The 20th General Conference assumes particular importance amid the rapid changes taking place in cities and the challenges they pose in terms of urban expansion, population growth, infrastructure development and improved services, in addition to digital transformation, climate change and environmental sustainability.

These developments require the advancement of urban management methods and the utilization of innovation and modern technologies to build more efficient and resilient cities capable of addressing future challenges.

The conference, held once every three years, is an extension of a series of general conferences organized by the Arab Towns Organization over the past years, with discussions focusing on issues related to the development and future of Arab cities.

It is scheduled to examine opportunities to expand cooperation among Arab cities in the fields of innovation, digital transformation, sustainability, infrastructure and services development, and the use of data and modern technologies in city management. It will also address strengthening partnerships, exchanging knowledge and building the capacities of personnel working in the municipal sector.

The conference outcomes are expected to contribute to establishing new directions for the coming period and enhancing the ability of Arab cities to utilize innovation and technology in addressing urban challenges, while supporting policies and practices that promote sustainability and improve quality of life.

On Monday, the 64th Executive Council meeting of the Arab Towns Organization was held, chaired by Dhofar Municipality Director General Dr. Ahmad Al-Ghassani, who is also president of the current session, in the presence of Secretary General of the Arab Towns Organization, Kuwaiti Bader Al-Ajeel.

The Arab Towns Organization, headquartered in the State of Kuwait, was established in 1967 as an independent, non-governmental and non-profit Arab regional organization concerned with the affairs of cities and municipalities in Arab countries. It comprises 22 Arab countries and more than 650 member cities, with seven related Arab institutions affiliated with it.

The organization aims to support the excellence of Arab cities by working to build institutions, preserve heritage, sustain tourism, attract investment, promote sustainable growth and cultural vitality, advance digital governance and environmental sustainability, and develop data-driven policies.



From right to left: Uncle Abu Faisal, Editor-in-Chief Ahmed Al-Jarallah, colleague Bassam Al-Qassas, Jassem Al-Mansouri, Yousef Al-Mudhian and Abdulaziz Al-Zaid.

Al-Jarallah visits Al-Muajjal diwaniya

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8: Dean of Kuwaiti Journalism and Editor-in-Chief of the Arab Times and Al-Seyassah newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah visited the Al-Muajjal Diwaniya in Faiha on Tuesday, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Al-Jarallah had a discussion with all those present at the diwaniya, covering several

social issues and the concerns of citizens.

The visit was conducted in a friendly atmosphere, with the camaraderie and high level of communication that make the Kuwaiti diwanias distinguished, serving as social spaces for gathering and exchanging views on matters affecting the daily lives of citizens.



KUNA photo

Kuwait's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Hamad Al-Mashaan in talks with Iraq's Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein.

Deputy FM, Iraq FM discuss ties, regional developments

CAIRO, Sept 8, (KUNA): Kuwait's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Hamad Al-Mashaan discussed on Monday with Iraq's Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein bilateral relations and the regional developments.

This came during a meeting held by the two officials on the sidelines of the the 166th regular session of the Arab League Council at the ministerial level currently hosted by Cairo, the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a news statement.

The meeting also reviewed relations between the two sisterly countries and means

of developing them, and it focused on some files of common interest, it added.

Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Hamad Al-Mashaan also received Monday a phone call from UK Minister of State at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office Stephen Doughty.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a press statement that the call discussed bilateral relations between the two friendly countries and ways to strengthen and develop them, in addition to exchanging views on the latest regional and international developments and issues of common interest.

MoH marks 2026 Arab Health Day

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8, (KUNA): The Ministry of Health celebrated Arab Health Day 2026 by organizing events aimed at raising health and nutrition awareness to promote the concept of integrated healthcare, Monday.

The celebration this year was held under

the theme of "Towards a Long Life and Sustainable Quality of Life."

The Social Health department, in collaboration with the Nutrition and Social Service departments, organized awareness activities in Jahra and Al-Amiri hospitals, said the ministry in a statement.

Customs chief in surprise visit to 'Al-Abdali' borders

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8: The Director General of the General Administration of Customs (GAC), Yousef Khaled Al-Nuwaif, conducted a surprise, unannounced inspection visit to the Al-Abdali border crossing to review operations, readiness levels, and the implementation of customs procedures at various facilities, reports Al-Seyassah daily.



Al-Nuwaif

Al-Nuwaif emphasized that these surprise visits are part of ongoing field monitoring and performance evaluation.

He stressed the importance of continuously developing the work environment and enhancing the readiness of customs ports to strengthen national security and facilitate the movement of travelers and trade in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

CAPT extends deadline for 300,000 smart meter tenders

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8: The Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) has postponed the deadline for submitting bids for a tender to supply, install, operate, and maintain smart water meters for the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy to September 22, instead of September 9.

The ministry floated the tender for the supply of 300,000 smart water meters to replace old mechanical meters in all residential sectors.

It formed a committee to study the required specifications for the meters to be supplied, with the contract to be awarded to the best bidder that meets the technical specifications and requirements. The meters must be able to withstand high temperatures and incorporate advanced

electronic technologies that meet the defined criteria.

The ministry aims to implement its comprehensive digital transformation plan for providing services, particularly electricity and water, which are the two main services it provides to customers.

These meters are expected to help the ministry remotely monitor meter readings, detect leaks and tampering, and promote water conservation.

Meanwhile, the ministry recently obtained CAPT approval to float a tender for the construction, completion, and maintenance of a green building in Farwaniya Governorate.

This project is one of six tenders the ministry is seeking to float for the construction of environmentally friendly and energy-efficient green buildings to serve customers in the six governorates.

diwaniya

حيوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Mistreatment makes or breaks a pupil at school

“LAST August, a surveillance camera inside a classroom in India captured a six-year-old Grade 1 boy being severely reprimanded by his teacher, who then slapped him across the face for not doing his homework,” columnist **Ahmad Al-Dawas** wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

“The little boy was so terrified and deeply humiliated in front of his classmates that his heart stopped beating, and he died. The video later went viral online. In the United States, a Grade 5 teacher once told her students, “I love you all.” She excluded one student named Teddy because his clothes were always dirty, his academic performance was very poor, and he rarely participated in class. The teacher wronged the poor boy, unaware of the circumstances he was facing. She even took pleasure in marking his papers with a red pen and writing “FAILURE” on them.



Ahmad Al-Dawas

“One day, she was asked to review the reports written by his teachers about him over the previous years. She read that his Grade 1 teacher had reported, “Teddy is a brilliant, gifted child who does his work carefully and in an organized manner. The Grade 2 teacher wrote, “Teddy is a good student and well-liked by his classmates, but he is troubled because his mother has cancer.” The Grade 3 teacher wrote, “His mother’s death had a very difficult impact on him.” The Grade 5 teacher wrote, “Teddy is isolated and shows no interest in his studies.”

“It was then that Ms. Thompson realized what was happening and felt ashamed of herself for having been unfair to him. When the students brought their Christmas presents to the teacher, beautifully wrapped, Teddy’s present was wrapped in a grocery bag. The students laughed at his gift - a necklace with missing stones and a perfume bottle that was only a quarter full. But the teacher admired the necklace and the perfume, thanked him, put on the necklace, and dabbed some of the perfume on her clothes.

“Teddy waited for her outside the school and said, “Today, you smell like my mother.” The teacher burst into tears, deeply moved by his words. Years later, this teacher received an invitation from a medical school to attend that year’s graduation ceremony. It was signed, “Your son, Teddy, who had graduated as a doctor”. Teddy Stoddard is said to be one of the most renowned doctors in the world and the owner of the Stoddard Cancer Center.

“We hope the Ministry of Education will consider schoolchildren as the future leaders of the nation. Many children have been negatively affected by their experiences in our schools because of mistreatment. In 1962, I was a student at Al-Mubarakiya School. As you all know, the letter “F” in English resembles an old person’s cane. My teacher, Abdeen Bseiso, came in carrying a big stick and asked me to write the letter “F.” I wrote it correctly, but with a trembling hand. He shouted, “Not like that!” and struck me hard, as if he wanted to cut off my fingers. I could have grown to hate the English language because of that incident. But that didn’t happen. I graduated and went on to build a successful career at Kuwaiti embassies abroad. I even learned other languages, such as French, Portuguese, and Spanish.”

Also:

“The Ministry of Education has announced the reinstatement of the modular system for high school students, beginning with the current academic year, 2026/2027. This is a system the ministry had previously suspended several years ago,” Kuwaiti writer **Tariq Idris** wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

“I, along with some colleagues, experienced this system firsthand when I was a high school teacher. At that time, enrollment in the system was optional for students and their parents. However, today, the decision applies to all high school students in Grades 10 and 11, while Grade 12 students will continue with their current academic track. This means that school administrations will be implementing both systems during this academic year. I anticipate that the ministry may face challenges with Grade 12 examinations, particularly for students who struggle with the traditional high school exams in the first and second rounds.

“Will the ministry overcome this dilemma by offering easier exams for students taking the second round of the current curriculum, allowing all students in the modular system to complete the 2027-2028 academic year without difficulties? Of course, the modular system allows students to choose between scientific and literary courses according to their academic standing, inclinations, and abilities. The curriculum encompasses scientific, literary, and practical vocational subjects, including the introduction of Artificial Intelligence, which could potentially pave the way for future specializations in cybersecurity.

“Undoubtedly, the modular system aligns with the educational systems of some private high schools, such as American, British, and French schools. Some of these schools, I believe, implement their curricula over four academic

years. The curriculum or modular system in these foreign schools helps students determine their future university studies and areas of specialization after completing ten years of education, from kindergarten through primary and preparatory school, during which they acquire the necessary skills.

“Meanwhile, the announced government curriculum system begins in Grade 10. This means that the Kuwaiti government education system consists of two years of kindergarten, six years of primary school, three years of preparatory school, followed by three years of high school under the modular system. The American education system, by comparison, is based on ten years of schooling, divided into six years focused on acquiring cognitive skills, refining the learner’s personality, and developing their abilities, followed by four years of high school aimed at nurturing students’ interests and helping them determine their professional and academic future at university and beyond.

“Will the Ministry of Education succeed in implementing its educational plans in a way that ensures that, in the future, no one will dismantle what has been achieved, reinstate the old system, or introduce an entirely new one? Educators, academics, and the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Teachers Society must carefully evaluate and assess all these issues.”

□ □ □

“The new employee was reviewing a procedure the department had become accustomed to when he encountered a step that seemed to contradict the written instructions,” Kuwaiti writer **Sami Abdulmohsen Al-Ruwaished** wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

“He asked his senior colleague about it, and the response came quickly and confidently. “We do it every time, and nothing happens.” This was not a defense of the procedure’s validity, but rather an admission that the error had been repeated so often that no one had been punished for it. This simple sentence encapsulates a phenomenon studied by the American sociologist Diane Vaughan, who described it as “Normalization of Deviance” in her organizational analysis of the Space Shuttle Challenger disaster.

“The problem was not that the organization suddenly decided to ignore the danger. Rather, abnormal signs had appeared before, yet the missions continued without catastrophe. As a result, the perception of what constituted danger, and what was considered acceptable, gradually changed. Herein lies one of the most dangerous errors in management thinking - confusing a sound outcome with the correctness of the practice.

“An employee might violate a procedure ten times without any problem arising. By the eleventh violation, the transgression may begin to seem more acceptable. A machine might continue to function while displaying a fault indicator. A technical system might keep operating despite underlying flaws. Sometimes, a team relies on a single individual to perform a critical task. Every day that passes without incident adds credibility to the practice, even though that credibility may not be deserved.

“Humans usually learn from results. If someone does something and no harm comes of it, they tend to underestimate the risk. With repetition, this becomes dangerously pervasive, transforming what was once considered an exceptional case requiring justification into a habit that needs no explanation. Consequently, it becomes an implicit norm that people defend with the phrase, “This is how we always do things.”

“The Quranic verse depicts this situation in God’s words, “Indeed, we found our fathers following a certain way, and we are following in their footsteps” (Quran 43:23). It is not necessarily correct simply because some people started doing it first. Here, the problem is not just the mistake itself, but the institutional memory that has gradually redefined deviation as acceptable. The question shouldn’t be whether a procedure has led to trouble, but whether the practice itself is right or wrong.

“Risks that have become acceptable simply because we have grown accustomed to them should be identified and examined. The solution isn’t to question every procedure, but to distinguish between three things - the established procedure, the justified exception, and the deviation we have become accustomed to. If repeated exceptions are not reviewed periodically, an organization might wake up one day to discover that the written rule is one thing, while the actual practice is quite another.

“The most dangerous aspect of normalizing deviation is that yesterday’s success can become an obstacle to conducting a comprehensive review. Past success doesn’t always prove that the approach was right. It might simply mean that the mistake got away with it again without us having to pay the price. Repeating mistakes without a catastrophe doesn’t mean they have become a safe procedure.”

— Compiled by Simi K. Kutty

KFF rescues two people drowning off coast

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8: Firefighters rescued two people after they were reported to be drowning off the coast of Abu Hasaniya on Tuesday morning, reports *Al-Seyassah* daily.

The Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) said teams from the Salmiya Fire Center, Marine Rescue Center, and Qurain Fire Station responded to the report.

The teams successfully rescued both individuals, who were confirmed to be in good condition.



KFF rescue boat arrives at the scene.

KFF photo

Gov. tours Shuwaikh to review traffic condition

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8: The Capital Governor and Acting Hawally Governor Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah inspected the Shuwaikh Industrial Area during a field tour to review traffic conditions and efforts to regulate traffic flow and enhance security and safety, reports *Al-Seyassah* daily.



Sheikh Abdullah

During the tour, Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah reviewed the traffic situation and the measures being taken to ensure smooth traffic movement and enhance security and safety in the area.

He commended the efforts of traffic officers and their important field role in regulating traffic and maintaining its smooth flow, emphasizing the importance of continued readiness and field discipline to enhance traffic safety.



KFF photo

A KFF inspector seals down one of the violating shops.

KFF drive shuts down 74 firms breaking rule

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8: On Monday evening, the Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) conducted an inspection campaign in the Shuwaikh Industrial Area of the Capital Governorate in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and the Environment Public Authority (EPA), reports *Al-Seyassah* daily.

The campaign aimed to identify buildings and facilities that violated safety and fire prevention requirements.

In a statement, the KFF said the campaign resulted in the administrative closure of 74 establishments and the issuance of notices and warnings to facilities that failed to meet the requirements of the KFF and other participating entities.

Mol seizes tankers, trucks used to carry stolen diesel

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8, (KUNA): The Ministry of Interior announced Tuesday the seizure of 21 tankers and trucks in two separate cases involving the theft, collection, transportation and resale of state-subsidized diesel, following directives from Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Saud Al-Sabah.

In a press statement, the ministry said the seizure included eight tankers and trucks in the first case and 13 in the second, after both cases were registered and all legal procedures, including those related to the Public Prosecution, were completed.

It added that some tanker owners were found to have rented out their vehicles under a leasing arrangement known as the “tadmeen” system, while being aware that they were being used in the illegal activity, thereby facilitating the collection, transportation and trafficking of stolen diesel.

The ministry affirmed that the measure is part of efforts to combat such crimes, protect public funds and deter anyone who uses vehicles and equipment to commit crimes or makes them available to others while knowing they will be used for illegal activities, while reinforcing respect for the law and safeguarding state resources.

216 in wrong parking

Car seized, KD150 fine for running a red light

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8: Traffic officers referred an individual to the traffic police station for running a red light, while his vehicle was impounded and the necessary legal measures were taken against him.

According to a security source, the traffic officers apprehended the individual for running a red light during one of their ongoing campaigns in the governorates.

The source pointed out that the fine for running a red light, if settled amicably, is KD150.

“If the case is referred to the court, the law stipulates imprisonment for one to three years and a fine of KD600 to KD1,000 or any one of these two penalties,” he added.

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Illegal hospital parkings: Officers from the General Traffic Department at the Interior Ministry issued 216 traffic violation citations to the drivers of vehicles parked illegally in front of hospitals within 24 hours.

According to a security source, the traffic officers continued their ongoing campaign at the hospitals, resulting in the issuance of 216 traffic violation citations.

The source urged motorists to fully abide by the Traffic Law.

7 yrs jail, KD1.2mn fine in funds scam

Ex-top Mol official loses job

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8: The Criminal Court, presided over by Judge Khaled Rashad, with Judges Abdulhadi Al-Hajri and Abdulaziz Al-Maadadi as members, sentenced a former senior official at the Ministry of Interior to seven years in prison with hard labor, dismissed him from his position, and ordered him to repay 1,293,700 dinars and 600 fils, in addition to fining him double that amount, on two related charges.

The case concerns a tender for the maintenance of border cameras, the supply and installation of an underground invisible system, and the maintenance of networks and equipment.

The court also sentenced a foreign defendant in absentia to seven years in prison with hard labor and ordered his deportation after serving his sentence.

The court decided to refrain from sentencing seven other defendants, including a former senior official, requiring each of them to provide a financial guarantee of 500 dinars and pledge to maintain good conduct for one year.

The case included charges of facilitating the embezzlement of public funds, harming national interests, forgery, and dereliction of duty.

The court had previously overturned the Public Prosecutor’s decision to dismiss the case and ordered the defendants to stand trial based on the observations contained in the State Audit Bureau (SAB) report regarding the contracts in question.

In its reasoning, the court emphasized that a public employee holding a leadership position at the country’s borders bears more than an administrative responsibility, as they are entrusted with safeguarding public funds and protecting national security.

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Jordanian swindler held: The Criminal Security Department referred a Jor-

danian expatriate in his thirties to the Public Prosecution on charges of fraud, deception, and operating an investment business without legal authorization or a license from the competent authorities, reports *Al-Anba* daily.

The defendant defrauded three citizens of approximately KD 25,000 under the pretext of investing and trading their money on the global stock market.

According to a security source, three citizens, including a woman, reported to Salhiya Police Station that they had been defrauded by the defendant.

The victims said they had given the defendant sums of money for investment purposes and provided evidence confirming that he had received the funds.

The case file was referred to the Criminal Investigation Department, where the necessary investigations were conducted and confirmed the defendant’s involvement. He was subsequently arrested and interrogated.

The defendant confessed to receiving the funds for the purpose of investing and trading on the global stock market, relying on his experience in the field. He claimed that fluctuations in stock prices and the losses he incurred prevented him from recovering the depositors’ funds or returning the money to them.

The Public Prosecution ordered the accused to be transferred to the Central Prison pending his referral to court.

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588 ‘suspicious’ items seized: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry announced that the Capital Governorate Inspection Department, under the Commercial Control and Consumer Protection Directorate, seized a warehouse containing 588 assorted items that violated public morals, public order, and Islamic law, reports *Al-Seyassah* daily.

The ministry explained that the action was taken in response to a violation of Article 10, Clauses 1 and 2, of Ministerial Resolution No. 216/2014, which issued the executive regulations for Law No. 117/2012, amending certain provisions of Decree-Law No. 10/1979 concerning the supervision of trade in goods, services, and crafts, and its amendments.

The warehouse was immediately closed, a violation report was filed, the necessary legal procedures were completed, and the violators were referred to the Commercial Prosecution.

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Colonel Ali Ashour to be honored in Scotland for contributions to national security



Colonel Ashour is the first fellow from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in the defense field, specializing in a program that combines naval engineering with science, technology, and their applications in security and defense.



Colonel Ali Ashour

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8: The Kuwaiti security establishment is preparing to honor Colonel Ali Ashour of the Kuwaiti Coast Guard, which operates under the Ministry of Interior, in Scotland in September 2026.

According to a press release, the recognition is in appreciation of his research contributions to national security, scientific capacity building, and the strengthening of cooperation with the United Kingdom and Commonwealth countries.

Colonel Ashour will be a speaker at the MAST Focus Forum in Glasgow, which brings together officials, decision-makers, military leaders, and experts in defense, security, technology, and industry. He will discuss the future of national security and resilience in light of the rapid transformations taking place in the international system.

The forum will examine frameworks and tools that help decision-makers assess risks and uncertainties and connect political, technological, and economic variables with infrastructure security, state continuity, and decision-making capacity.

Colonel Ashour's recognition stems from his research contributions to the resilience of national infrastructure, evidence-based policymaking, and scientific capacity building between Kuwait and the United Kingdom, particularly in the interconnected areas of autonomous systems, technological transformation, strategic feasibility, and future capability development.

This reflects a broader shift in the concept of security within the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

Training

Capacity building is no longer solely dependent on training, education, staff colleges, exercises, or the acquisition of systems and equipment. Instead, security and defense leaders and planners in the Gulf states, in collaboration with international partners, are moving towards a more comprehensive concept based on the resilience of the state as a whole. This approach links defense and security to energy, the economy, transportation, communications, technology, and the continuity of essential services.

Under this model, the Gulf states are no longer merely recipients of international expertise. They have become partners that contribute knowledge and experience, participate in developing capacity-building methods, and prepare for future transformations.

Colonel Ashour is the first researcher from outside the Commonwealth to be selected for a strategic defense research partnership in the field of autonomous systems, a collaboration between the British company BAE Systems and the Peridynamics Research Centre.

Colonel Ashour's research focuses on the future of critical and marine systems,

CSISR science and systems, digital twins, the validation of artificial intelligence applications, vertical AI analytics, the transition to autonomous systems, and the strategic viability of future capabilities.

The research addresses the question of how a nation can safeguard the continuity of its critical capabilities and services while simultaneously supporting economic growth, investment, and public confidence.

General Martin Smith DL CB MBE, Chief of Staff of the Royal Marines and former Commander of the Special Boat Service (SBS), stated, "Colonel Ashour represents the next phase in the evolution of the UK-Kuwait defense and security architecture, and within the broader context of UK-GCC relations.

Colonel Ashour contributes to the transition from cooperation and knowledge transfer towards joint capability building, evidence-based capability development, and the enhancement of strategic alternatives, ultimately leading to the establishment of sovereign pathways and state-building capabilities.

I congratulate the State of Kuwait and its leadership, whose long-term investment in human capital has enabled the emergence of such capabilities. Colonel Ashour's achievements demonstrate what institutional strength, sovereign capability, and an active Gulf contribution to shaping the future of the regional and international security architecture can yield."

Colonel Ashour's contributions have been subject to continuous scientific and professional evaluation, including peer review and recognition from British professional bodies, culminating in his election to three of the highest fellowships awarded by engineering and marine science institutions in the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth.

Colonel Ashour is a Fellow of the Royal Institute of Naval Architects (FRINA), the highest professional membership of the Royal Institute, which operates under the patronage of His Majesty King Charles III.

He also holds a Fellowship of the Institute of Marine Engineering, Science and Technology (FIMarEST), one of the Institute's highest professional memberships.

Colonel Ashour is the first fellow from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in the defense field, specializing in a program that combines naval engineering with science, technology, and their applications in security and defense.

He is also a Fellow of the Institution of Engineers in Scotland (FIES) and was previously elected to the Institution's Council. This allowed him to contribute to professional and strategic discussions on the role of engineering in supporting the economy and national resilience within decision-making circles in Holyrood and Westminster.

Colonel Ashour's role extended to both defense and civilian education, where

he served as a visiting lecturer and a member of committees concerned with structuring defense education and preparing national capabilities to meet comprehensive defense requirements.

He contributed to the development and classification of educational curricula and the design of strategic transition pathways between civilian and defense education. This helped link science, engineering, and technology to the nation's security and defense needs.

Knowledge

Colonel Ashour worked at the intersection of universities and defense institutions, facilitating the transfer of knowledge from scientific research to education and training, and ultimately to the planning and development of national capabilities.

The scientific and defense institutions and organizations in which Colonel Ashour's academic and professional career has extended include the Royal Naval College at Dartmouth (BRNC), the Royal Naval University Units (URNU), the Defence STEM Undergraduate Scheme (DSUS), the Australian Defence Science and Technology Group (DSTG), the U.S. Office of Naval Research (ONR), and the UK Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL), as well as other academic and defense institutions in the UK, the Commonwealth, and the U.S.

This career path forms part of the security partnership between Kuwait and the Gulf states, on one side, and the UK and the Commonwealth, on the other, at pivotal moments in the region's history.

These include Operation Vantage in 1961, the Dhofar War, the Tanker War, the role of the Royal Navy's Armilla patrols, the international coalition that liberated Kuwait in 1991, the War on Terror, and efforts to protect Gulf security, infrastructure, and freedom of navigation against regional threats, including the activities of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard and its proxies.

This partnership has been pursued in parallel with political efforts and mediation aimed at de-escalating tensions and restoring regional stability.

Colonel Ashour will participate in the MAST Forum in Glasgow alongside General Martin Smith, former Commandant-in-Chief of the Royal Marines and CEO of CyberPrism, and Stuart McDonald, former MP for Glasgow South and former Scottish National Party Defence Spokesperson.

The initiative is attracting the attention of several prominent British decision-makers and figures in the fields of defense, security, and national resilience, including Keir Paddenock, Leader of the Official Opposition; Ben Wallace and Sir Grant Shapps, former UK Defence Secretaries; Lord Case, former Cabinet Secretary; and Ciaran Martin, Founding CEO of the National Cyber Security Centre.

'Mitigate threat of dust storms'

'Kuwait maintains air quality'

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8: The Kuwaiti GeoSciences Society called for concerted efforts to maintain air quality, as it is a shared societal environmental responsibility aimed to protect human health and the environment and ensure environmental sustainability, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

On the occasion of the International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies, celebrated annually on Sept 7, Chairman of the Society Dr. Mubarak Al-Hajri pointed out that the international community selected this day to raise awareness and strengthen partnerships in reducing air pollution to protect public health and the environment.

He confirmed that Kuwait is among the countries in the region most affected by dust or sandstorms due to its geographical location and arid desert climate. He said dry and dust-laden northerly winds affect the country, particularly in late spring and summer.

He indicated that the intensity and frequency of these storms increased in recent years due to several factors, such as record-high temperatures, topsoil dryness, and decline in natural vegetation cover. "This makes the country vulnerable to dense dust storms that lead to a sharp deterioration in air quality and, at times, zero horizontal visibility," he added.

He warned about the environmental, health and economic consequences of dust storms. He explained that fine particles suspended in the air, along with pollen and other pollutants, could lead to a remarkable increase in allergies, respiratory problems and asthma.



KUNA photo
An air pollution monitoring station in Al-Shuaiba, south of Kuwait City.

"They also cause material losses due to sand encroachment and accumulation on highways and vital infrastructure throughout the country," he added.

He pointed out that these storms travel as trans-boundary pollutants, carrying bacteria, fungi, viruses and pollen, as well as industrial pollutants picked up by the storm as it passes over cities, hence, reducing air quality in areas thousands of kilometers away from its point of origin.

On the reasons behind the vulnerability of the country to these storms, he cited overgrazing, removal of vegetation cover, and poor water resource management as contributing factors that transform vast areas into new sources of dust that become airborne even with the slightest wind.

Continued from Page 1

GCC audit

Dr. Al-Zamanan added that the meeting's agenda included approving topics for the seventh session of the GCC competition for research and studies in auditing and accounting, as well as approving a report on the findings of a study of recommendations contained in the winning research papers of the sixth competition.

The Bahraini Audit Bureau had prepared the report, he said, adding that a mechanism for selecting topics for the seventh session would also be presented.

He said the meeting also discussed the Secretariat General's report on training programs implemented in 2025 and 2026, as well as activities to be organized by GCC supreme audit institutions during the Gulf Week for Financial and Administrative Oversight.

The heads of the audit institutions approved a recommendation by the under-secretaries at their 27th meeting to refer again the proposed project to establish an artificial intelligence-powered electronic platform containing the outputs of the GCC Committee of Supreme Audit Institutions to the technical committee for further study.

The project will be examined with the participation of specialists from administrative, financial, legal and technical fields to assess the feasibility of establishing the platform, he said.

Dr. Al-Zamanan, on behalf of the President of the Audit Bureau, expressed appreciation to all employees of Bahrain's Audit Bureau for their efforts in hosting, welcoming and organizing the meeting, hoping that its contributions and recommendations would have a positive impact in supporting the objectives of all member institutions.



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Smoke billows from one of the towers of the World Trade Center as flames and debris explode from the second tower on Sept 11, 2001. (AP)

One attack, many Americas: Why 9/11, many griefs land differently 25 yrs later

NEW YORK, Sept 8, (AP): When the planes crashed and the buildings fell on that sunny September morning 25 years ago, the shock waves of dismay and grief went far past downtown New York City, rural western Pennsylvania and just outside Washington, D.C.

They radiated through every part of the United States in communities large and small, tearing at Americans’ sense of safety and their place in the world. Hearts were broken across the nation, not just of those who lost their loved ones but among strangers who mourned for them, the Sept. 11 attacks leaving no one unaffected in an unwanted moment of horrifying togetherness.

A quarter of a century later, the effects linger. We all live in a post-9/11 world, with its security strictures and surveillance. But here’s the thing: Americans don’t all live in the SAME one. What the attacks and their aftermath have come to mean isn’t a single viewpoint shared by everyone, for reasons chronological, political and personal.

It’s a tapestry of meaning and grief as varied as the nation in which 9/11 took place.

It’s somewhat inevitable. After all, the mere passage of time means tens of millions of young Americans have been born since then. For them, 9/11 is something to learn about in history lessons.

But people’s views of 9/11 and its aftermath have also been shaped by human factors like policies and actions taken by those in power. And the America that was attacked was already a nation with its own history and tensions, with stress points of dispute and disagreement put under additional strain by the catastrophic event.

“The same event, whether it’s a disaster or a shock or even the recovery process is completely different depending on your network,” says Daniel Aldrich, a professor at Northeastern University who studies communities and resilience.

Those networks can exist in a range of ways and layers. Among them: those who lost loved ones; those who spent months clearing the rubble and debris from ground zero; those who were motivated to join the military; those who lost jobs in hard-hit industries like tourism and air transportation; those who came from certain countries and communities viewed with heightened suspicion after the attacks.

Different networks overlap in Jenna McPartland’s family. She was expecting her first child with her husband, Ariel Jacobs, who was killed at the World Trade Center. She gave birth days later to their son, Gabriel, whose life was irrevocably altered by an event he didn’t experience.

Trump approval ratings slip

GOP confident about keeping Senate majority, now fight for control wide open

WASHINGTON, Sept 8, (AP): Republicans appeared to have a firm grip on the Senate heading into the final two years of President Donald Trump’s term. But with less than two months until Election Day, control of the chamber is now up for grabs.

Democrats have found themselves competing in states that once seemed beyond their reach as President Donald Trump’s slipping approval ratings and voters’ dissatisfaction with the economy create a difficult political environment for Republicans. But races Democrats once counted on winning have also become more complicated.

It’s a battle that’s expected to exceed \$3.4 billion in spending across all races during the midterm campaign. The implications are huge for Trump’s agenda and his ability to fill administration jobs and open court seats for the remainder of his term, as the Senate is empowered to confirm or block presidential nominees.

Republicans say it’s unlikely for everything to break in Democrats’ favor, but they acknowledge they’re facing a difficult landscape. Senate Majority Leader John Thune told South Dakota’s KELOLAND News last week that he does “worry” about losing the chamber.

“I’m a realist,” Thune said. “I don’t ever try and sugarcoat things. I think it’s a competitive environment right now.”

Democrats need to net four seats to win the majority. The original path had been to hold Michigan, Georgia and New Hampshire while winning back Republican-held seats in Alaska, Maine, North Carolina and Ohio. But things have changed.

“We now have multiple paths for the majority,” Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer said last month. “We found new states - Iowa, Texas - which people a year ago weren’t even paying attention to.”

Some of the states where Democrats were feeling most optimistic at the start of the election cycle, such as Michigan and Maine, have grown murkier.

In Michigan, where there’s an open seat this fall, no GOP candidate has won a Senate race since 1994. But Democrats are struggling to unite behind nominee Abdul El-Sayed. The favorite of progressives narrowly defeated moderate US Rep Haley Stevens in the August primary, and feelings remain raw from a bruising contest that saw nearly \$70 million spent against El-Sayed.

Republicans believe Mike Rogers, who lost the 2024 Senate race



US Sen Susan Collins responds to reporters at the Capitol in Washington on July 14. (AP)

Democrats also saw a prime opportunity to finally defeat five-term Republican Sen. Susan Collins in Maine, where Democratic Vice President Kamala Harris won more votes than Trump in 2024.

Progressive Graham Platner easily won the nomination in June, but he left the race the next month over an assault allegation that he denies. Democratic delegates in late July chose Troy Jackson, a lesser-known former state legislative leader, to replace him.

Jackson has been forced to play catch-up. Collins and aligned super PACs have spent almost \$80 million so far, according to the ad-tracking firm AdImpact, while Jackson and Democratic-aligned groups have spent and reserved close to \$45 million since he became the nominee.

Democrats increasingly see a real possibility in Texas, a state that has been an elusive goal for decades, and other GOP-led states including Iowa, Alaska and Ohio.

In Texas, Democrat James Talarico faces state Attorney General Ken Paxton, who ousted four-term incumbent Republican Sen. John Cornyn to win the GOP nomination. Senate GOP leadership backed Cornyn, seeing him as the stronger general election candidate.

Paxton has been shadowed for decades by legal and ethical questions, including indictments for securities fraud, though he was not convicted.

Talarico and allied groups have spent nearly \$30 million on advertising since the May runoff, compared to less than \$3 million by pro-Paxton groups. The political fund associated with Trump last week spent \$10 million on TV and digital ads to help Paxton - the first major general election investment by MAGA Inc. for the midterms. Senate GOP leaders had petitioned Trump’s political team to spend some of the more than \$400 million it had last month to help Paxton.

Democrats have also upped their spending in Alaska, Iowa, Ohio and North Carolina, all states currently held by Republicans. The GOP, meanwhile, is feeling more optimistic about New Hampshire as well as Michigan, while spending more to defend seats in Iowa and Alaska.



Firefighters try to extinguish a fire following a Russian missile attack in Kyiv, Ukraine on Sept 8. (AP)

Russian barrage, Ukrainian strike kill four, ending pause in attacks

KYIV, Ukraine, Sept 8, (AP): Two people were killed when Russia bombarded the Ukrainian capital Kyiv with drones and missiles overnight, local authorities said Tuesday, and a Russian-installed official in illegally annexed Crimea said a Ukrainian attack killed two people there.

The attacks came soon after the warring countries had paused attacks on each other’s capitals over the weekend as US envoys made a renewed push to narrow the differences between Moscow and Kyiv and steer them toward a peace settlement.

With neither side able to deliver a knockout blow in the war that started after Moscow’s February 2022 invasion, and with armies on the front line largely stuck, Russia and Ukraine have in recent months intensified their air war in an effort to grind each other down.

The visit to Moscow and Kyiv by Washington envoys Jared Kushner and Steve Witkoff produced no significant breakthrough that might stop the fighting.

The main targets of Russia’s overnight attack were Kyiv and the southern Odesa region. At least 16 people were wounded in Kyiv, Ukraine’s Interior Minister Ivan Vyhivskiy said. There was no immediate tally of casualties in Odesa.

Explosions were heard in Kyiv for nearly five hours, according to Vyhivskiy. More than 50 sites were damaged in Kyiv during the Russian overnight attack Tuesday, including residential buildings, dormitories, schools, shops, gas stations and a flour production plant, he said.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha called it “a horrific attack” and accused Russian President Vladimir Putin of undermining U.S. peace efforts.

“His ballistic missiles speak louder than his words on diplomacy,” Sybiha said on X, referring to Putin. “Strike after strike on residential buildings brings him no closer to winning this war - it is nothing but senseless terror.”

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in a post on Telegram that the attack was complex and appeared deliberately designed to cause maximum damage, involving ballistic and cruise missiles, anti-ship missiles

and Shahed drones.

The Russian Defense Ministry said its forces overnight launched a massive strike with “land-, air-, and sea-based precision weapons, as well as long-range unmanned aerial vehicles” on Ukrainian military industry facilities. It provided a detailed list of its targets.

The targets included places storing Ukrainian drones and cruise missiles, as well transport, logistics and distribution centers for military cargo in Kyiv and the Kyiv region, the ministry said.

Infrastructure in the port of Chornomorsk in the Odesa region used for “unloading military cargo” also was struck. Additionally, the Russian forces hit a tanker carrying fuel and lubricants for the Ukrainian armed forces, the ministry said.

In the meantime, a Ukrainian attack on Crimea killed two people and wounded one, the peninsula’s Russian-installed governor Sergei Aksyonov said.

The Russian attack caused damage and fires in at least five districts of the capital, Ukraine’s State Emergency Service said. The Kyiv City Military Administration said civilian infrastructure was damaged in at least 16 locations.

A 26-story non-residential building was hit in the Holosiivskiy district. Rescuers saved one person during a search and two people were evacuated from an apartment in a 16-story residential building, officials said.

People also were trapped in a five-story, residential building in Solomianskyi district, according to authorities.

Kyiv resident Iryna Barisenkova, 61, said she heard explosions while traveling on public transport and was told there was a large fire near the Darnytskyi Vehicle Repair Plant on the capital’s left bank.

“Everything was thundering on the left bank,” Barisenkova said. “It was just brutal.”

Barisenkova said she had slept well during the previous two nights while Witkoff and Kushner traveled to Kyiv and then stayed in the city.

EU leaders slam funeral honors for Mladic

Serbia govt proposes dissolving Parliament

BELGRADE, Serbia, Sept 8, (AP): The Serbian government on Monday proposed dissolving Parliament, setting in motion a procedure for scheduling an early parliamentary election that could see President Aleksandar Vucic switch to the post of prime minister.

The vote is seen as a test of Vucic’s tight rule in Serbia after over a year of mass street protests. It will be held in an atmosphere of heightened political tensions as ruling populists seek to hold on to power despite widespread popular discontent.

Vucic is expected to formally set the date later this week. He has said that the ballot likely will be held on Oct. 25.

Protests in Serbia started after a train station tragedy on Nov. 1, 2024, in northern Serbia’ killed 16 people. The protesters demanded accountability for the concrete canopy collapse in Novi Sad and an end to corruption they believed was the cause for bad renovation work.

More than a year of demonstrations sometimes drawing hundreds of thousands of people shook Vucic more than ever during his 14 years in power. The president and his right-wing Serbian Progressive Party have been accused of curbing democratic freedoms and of ties to organized crime, which he has denied. Serbia’s bid to join the European Union has stalled under Vucic, who has maintained close ties with both Russia and China.

Also:

BRUSSELS: Top European Union officials on Tuesday expressed shock after Serbia gave a hero’s funeral to Ratko Mladic, a Bosnian Serb general who died while serving a life sentence for war crimes, and questioned Serbia’s fitness to join their bloc.

Mladic was buried in Belgrade on Monday with military honors. The head of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Porfirije, led the funeral service and Serbian army soldiers carried Mladic’s flag-draped coffin at the cemetery.

Several Serbian government ministers attended the service for the man known as the “Butcher of Bosnia” and found guilty of committing the continent’s first genocide since World War II. Mladic is still considered a hero by many Serbs.



Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic waves a Serbian flag during a rally of the ruling Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) in Belgrade, Serbia, on June 27. (AP)

America

Hurricane Lowell to cause major rains: Hawaii Gov. Josh Green closed schools and government offices on the westernmost islands of Kauai and Niihau and on Oahu for Tuesday as Hurricane Lowell was expected to pass nearby, bringing damaging winds, mudslides, possible tornadoes, dangerous rip currents and as much as 24 inches (about 60 centimeters) of rain to some areas on Kauai.

The closures, which include community colleges and state and county offices, were put into effect for Oahu and Kauai County, which was under a hurricane warning issued by the National Hurricane Center. Kauai County includes the major islands of Kauai, which has a population of over 73,000, and Niihau, where there are fewer than 100 residents.

A portion of the vast Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument was also included in the warning.

The weather agency also warned late Monday of the possibility of “several tornadoes” near Kauai and Niihau in the evening and overnight, with tornadoes also possible on other Hawaiian Islands.

A tropical storm warning was in effect for Oahu, which has close to 1 million residents.

The National Hurricane Center said the core of the storm was expected to pass near or just west of Niihau late Monday and early Tuesday. While the winds - which were strong enough to make Lowell a Category 2 hurricane as of Monday afternoon - were expected to weaken, the storm was expected to remain a hurricane at its closest approach to the islands. (AP)

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Federal investigators probe cargo crash: The five people killed when an Amazon cargo jet ran off a runway at Miami International Airport were all inside a



This satellite image provided by CIRA/NOAA shows three storms, from left, Hurricane Lowell, Hurricane Karina and Tropical Storm Marie in the Pacific Ocean on Sept 2. (AP)

van carrying seven people from a cleaning company, and an SUV hit outside of airport property, National Transportation Safety Board Chairwoman Jennifer Homendy said Monday.

Homendy called the scene of Sunday’s crash “utter devastation.” She didn’t detail how many people were in the SUV or where the dead were located.

Homendy walked the route the Boeing 767 followed, noting tire marks from the pavement into the grass, the destroyed van carrying the cleaning crew, torn fencing, navigational equipment, and the crushed SUV outside airport property.

The debris included vehicle air bags, equipment from the vehicles, the airplane and the airport, and “fencing everywhere,” Homendy said.

“It’s pretty extensive. Hard to see and I’m sure it must have been very difficult for the responders as well,” Homendy said. (AP)

Relations and exchange programs between nations flourishing

N.Korea, Russia open first road link across shared border

PYONGYANG, Sept 8, (AP): Russia and North Korea opened the first road bridge across their narrow stretch of border Monday, creating a new physical link between the two countries as they expand cooperation.

North Korea only shares a 17-kilometer (10.5-mile) border with Russia, a tiny part of its porous northern border that stretches more than 1,400 kilometers (870 miles) and is mostly shared with China. But Pyongyang and Moscow have hailed the bridge’s opening as yet another key moment in their booming ties.

Relations and exchange programs between Russia and North Korea have been flourishing, with North Korea supplying ammunition and troops to support Russia’s war against Ukraine in return for economic and military assistance.

The bridge built over the Tumen River is 1-kilometer (0.6-mile) long and has two lanes, which will allow up to 300 vehicles a day to pass through a newly built border crossing point, the Russian government said in a statement. It was named after the late Soviet military officer Yakov Novichenko, who has been credited with protecting North Korean founder Kim Il Sung - the grandfather of current leader Kim Jong Un - from an assassination attempt in Pyongyang in 1946.

The bridge links North Korea’s Rason and Russia’s Khasan, border cities of the two countries. The bridge’s inauguration ceremony took place simultaneously in the two cities, with Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin and North Korean Premier Pak Thae Song attending via video link.

“I am convinced that the expansion of transport infrastructure near the border will give a powerful boost to the further development of trade, economic,

technological, scientific and cultural cooperation between the Russian Federation and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea,” Mishustin said.

Pak said the bridge’s completion is “a significant event adding a new dynamic movement to the overall bilateral cooperation,” according to North Korea’s official Korean Central News Agency.

While the bridge could accommodate a possible increase in small-scale freight transport and the movement of people, some experts say it’s still unclear how much that small bridge could expand traffic between the countries.

About 98% of North Korea’s external trade in 2025 was with China. The South Korean government said last year that there were at least 17 active road and rail links across the North Korea-China border.

There are also concerns that the new bridge could facilitate the movement of military equipment or trade in violation of UN resolutions against North Korea over its nuclear program. Vehicle traffic can be more difficult for satellites and other intelligence assets to monitor than the countries’ aging rail route, where cargo must be transferred between rail cars at the border, according to some experts.

North Korea and Russia, which are already served by a railway bridge and air service, agreed to construct the bridge in 2024. Construction began last year.

Tass, a state-run Russian news agency, said the existing 67-year-old railway route between the countries was “insufficient” to meet their growing transportation needs, and that the new road bridge would facilitate “year-round traffic.”



In this photo provided by the North Korean government, a truck from Russia arrives in Rason, North Korea after crossing the first road bridge across their shared border on Sept 7. (AP)



An aerial drone photo taken on Sept 6, 2026 shows rescuers working in Mingkeng Village of Suichuan County, Ji'an City, east China's Jiangxi Province. (Xinhua)

Mudslides, landslides kill 6 in east China’s Jiangxi

Six people have been confirmed dead and nine others remain missing after a series of mudslides and landslides struck Suichuan County in east China's Jiangxi Province.

In Mingkeng Village in Gaoping Township, a mudslide and landslide on Saturday left five dead and seven others missing as of Tuesday noon, according to local officials.

After days of torrential rain, one person was confirmed dead and two others were reported missing after landslides struck Zuo'an Township and Tanghu Township in the same county.

Search and rescue operations, road reinforcement and prevention of secondary disasters are underway. (Xinhua)

Africa

Husband of Tanzania’s president dies: The husband of Tanzania’s President Samia Suluhu Hassan died Monday while undergoing treatment in a hospital in Zanzibar, the country’s vice president said.

Hafidh Ameir Hassan became Tanzania’s first gentleman in 2021, when his wife took office as the country’s first female president following the death of President John Magufuli. Hassan had been receiving treatment for a heart condition.

Vice President Deogratius Ndejemi announced Hassan’s death and expressed his condolences to the family. He said arrangements were being made for his burial in the family’s native Zanzibar, a semi-autonomous archipelago that is part of Tanzania.

President Hassan is serving a second term after winning a disputed election in 2025 with more than 97% of the vote. Candidates from the two main opposition parties were barred from running.

The couple had four children, three sons and a daughter who is a lawmaker.

Kenyan President William Ruto expressed sorrow on behalf of his government and people. “President Samia has lost a lifelong companion, her children a beloved father, and Tanzania a distinguished son,” he wrote.

Burundi’s President Evariste Ndayishimiye also



Hassan

sent condolences to President Hassan and the people of Tanzania. (AP)

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South African worker abducted: A South African man was among a group of up to 20 workers abducted in Mozambique during an attack by insurgents on a hunting camp, South Africa’s foreign ministry said Monday.

The Department of International Relations and Co-operation said the 30-year-old man was among five South Africans working at the wildlife reserve who were caught up in last week’s attack. Of the other four, two had returned to South Africa, and two remained safe in Mozambique.

“Embassy officials are working with Mozambican authorities and are monitoring the situation and developments in Niassa Province,” the department told The Associated Press. Three US citizens are thought to have been evacuated from the area.

The attack is thought to have been carried out by militants linked to the Islamic State group, which launched an insurgency in neighboring Cabo Delgado province in 2017.

The US Embassy in Mozambique, which acknowledged the attack in a statement, did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Local police said at least 11 people, including children, were abducted during the attack on the town of Marangira, in Niassa province. It wasn’t immediately clear why there was a discrepancy in the number of people abducted between South African and Mozambican authorities. (AP)

Devastating floods test new govt

Nepal endures months of political upheaval

NEW DELHI, Sept 8, (AP): The flash floods two weeks ago swallowed settlements and swept away roads and bridges in Nepal’s mountains and river valleys. Roughly 7,500 homes were destroyed, another 20,000 need rebuilding and at least 12 hydropower projects were damaged. The damage estimate so far of \$2.56 billion is a staggering bill for a country with a total budget of \$14 billion for the current fiscal year.

The losses come at a challenging time for the Himalayan nation, which is emerging from a year of political upheaval after an uprising toppled the previous government. The new administration must now repair damaged infrastructure and restore political stability. At the same time, it faces a bigger challenge in developing a more resilient country as climate change increases Nepal’s exposure to extreme weather events.

“It is a wasteland out there. The rebuilding is not going to be easy,” said Sumnima Udas, a member of Parliament and chairperson of a committee on international relations and tourism.

The disaster is an early test for 36-year-old Prime Minister Balen Shah, who took office in March after months of political turmoil.

The upheaval began last September, when youth-led protests over corruption and a social media ban spiraled into violence. Security forces opened fire on demonstrators, killing dozens, while government buildings and politicians’ homes were set ablaze. Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli resigned, and the country entered a period of uncertainty under a caretaker government.

Shah, a former mayor of Kathmandu and political outsider, emerged from the unrest as the face of a new generation. His party won a sweeping victory in March, giving him a mandate to overhaul a political system widely blamed for failing to deliver.

Now his government faces a different kind of crisis. It must show that it can deliver competent government while taking on the enormous task of rebuilding after the floods.

So far, it has mobilized the army, police, helicopters and medical teams and coordinated with local authorities on evacuations and relief. Thousands have been rescued, but blocked roads, debris-filled hydropower tunnels and shortages of specialized equipment and trained personnel have hampered efforts to reach remote sites, exposing the limits of Nepal’s emergency response capacity.

Those challenges have been compounded by an administration with little experience managing a crisis of this scale, with many of its leaders new to national government.

Guna Raj Luitel, editor of Kathmandu-based The Diplomat Nepal magazine, said the government’s lack of experience had left it ill-equipped to respond to a catastrophe of this magnitude.

“Nepal is a disaster-prone country, but we have failed to learn from the past,” he said.

By Tuesday, more than 1,300 people had been reported dead in Nepal and Tibet, with about 5,000 still missing. While search and rescue operations continue, Nepal will need more than emergency help.

Udas, the lawmaker, said Nepal requires stronger disaster warning systems and infrastructure built for increasingly volatile conditions. It may also have to reconsider where roads, settlements and hydropower projects are built to reduce the risk of repeating the same losses, she said.

Disaster authorities’ preliminary damage estimate of \$2.56 billion is nearly a fifth of Nepal’s annual government budget of about \$14 billion. The full cost of rebuilding has yet to be calculated, though some estimates put it at \$4 billion to \$5 billion.

Asia

Flights to and from Jakarta resume: Flights to and from Indonesia’s capital and nearby regions resumed Tuesday after ash from a volcanic eruption forced two days of airport closures that halted nearly 3,000 flights.

Soekarno-Hatta International Airport and Halim Perdanakusuma Airport serving Jakarta and three other regional airports reopened just after midnight, Transportation Minister **Dudy Purwagandhi** said. Two resumed normal operations by late morning after one reopened Monday.

Purwagandhi said the airports were allowed to resume operations only after authorities determined conditions were safe for aviation. He said airport authorities and airlines were required to inspect all aircraft before flights resumed.

“Pilots and flight crews were also instructed to remain aware of restricted airspace zones established around areas affected by volcanic ash,” Purwagandhi said. Aviation authorities temporarily restrict aircraft from areas where ash has been detected because volcanic particles can damage engines and other critical systems.

The continuous eruption of Anak Krakatau with lava fountains and loud booms ended Sunday but the volcanic island remained active Tuesday morning. Eruptions were reported at 5:08 a.m. and 5:34 a.m., though the height of the ash column could not be observed due to fog and weather conditions.

The airport closures Sunday and Monday disrupted



Purwagandhi

nearly 2,961 flights, including 622 international services, and affected about 341,000 passengers.

The government also authorized schools in areas affected by volcanic ash to shift temporarily to online learning to reduce students’ exposure to ash.

Anak Krakatau is a volcanic island in the Sunda Strait between Indonesia’s main islands of Java and Sumatra. Its name means “child of Krakatau,” and the volcano is the offspring of the infamous Krakatau, whose monumental 1883 eruption triggered a period of global cooling.

An eruption of Anak Krakatau in 2018 caused a tsunami that killed at least 430 people in Sumatra and Java. Researchers believe volcanic activity triggered an underwater landslide and caused a large chunk of Anak Krakatau’s southwest slope to collapse and displace a large volume of water.

The volcano remained at Indonesia’s second-highest alert level since July, and authorities advised residents, tourists and fishermen to stay at least 3 kilometers (1.9 miles) from the active crater. (AP)

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3 killed in Vietnam truck-motorcycle collision: Three people, including two children, were killed and another child was injured in a collision between a truck and a motorcycle in southern Vietnam’s Dong Nai city on Tuesday morning, local media Tuoi Tre reported.

The accident occurred at around 8:30 a.m. at an intersection in Phuoc Tan ward when the truck collided with a motorcycle carrying a woman and three children, according to the report.

The collision left the woman and two children dead at the scene, while another child was taken to hospital for emergency treatment, the report added.

Local authorities are investigating the cause of the accident. (Xinhua)

Naval engineer Espino becomes first woman to lead Panama Canal

PANAMA CITY, Sept 8, (AP): Naval engineer Ilya Espino de Marotta takes the helm Monday as the first woman to lead the Panama Canal administration, stepping into the role at a challenging time for the vital maritime route.

Buoyed by her leadership of the multi-billion-dollar expansion project last decade, Espino moves up from deputy administrator to take full command of the canal. Only three other Panamanians have held the position since the United States handed over the interoceanic waterway in late 1999.

Her appointment to the canal’s top post is already seen as a symbol of women’s capability for executive leadership roles in the industry. The canal serves as the engine of the Panamanian economy and handles nearly 3% of global maritime trade.

Shortly before taking office, Espino told The Associated Press that her priority would be advancing the project to build a reservoir on the Indio River within the canal’s watershed. The \$1.5 billion project aims to secure drinking water for 50% of the Central American nation’s 4 million people and to support the future operation of the canal, opened by the U.S. in 1914.

The canal’s Board of Directors



Ilya Espino de Marotta, (center), takes over as Panama Canal Administrator in Panama City on Sept 7. (AP)

had previously appointed her to lead this \$1.5 billion plan, which encompasses community resettlement and environmental considerations. It is the largest project since the waterway’s expansion, which opened in June 2016 at a cost exceeding \$5.25 billion. Officials expect the reservoir to be completed by late 2031 or 2032.

For Espino, the goal is to guarantee future water supplies without compromising reliability in the eyes of the shipping industry. If customers

perceive that the canal is not seeking a long-term water solution, they could shift their cargo to other routes.

That project, which has sparked protests from certain communities, is taking on greater significance as the canal faces another period of low rainfall caused by the El Niño phenomenon, which recently led waterway authorities to restrict the number of ships making the daily crossing between the Atlantic and the Pacific.



A drone view of the aftermath of flash flooding along the Trishuli river amidst fresh water surge warning in the Trishuli Bazaar area of Nuwakot district, Nepal, on Aug 30. (AP)

Boursa Kuwait ends marginally lower

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait ended Tuesday's trading session marginally lower, with the All-Share Index shedding 9.79 points, or 0.11 percent, to close at 8,924.74 points. Trading activity totalled 560 million shares across 34,146 transactions, worth KD 136.8 million (about USD 418.6 million).

The Main Market Index gained 47.81 points, or 0.52 percent, to settle at 9,257.01 points. Trading in the segment reached 365.8 million shares through 22,931 transactions, valued at KD 63.8 million (approximately USD 195.2 million). Meanwhile, the Premier Market Index declined 22.56 points, or 0.24 percent, to 9,317.21 points.

Business

Second edition of Business Sustainability Program for SMEs

KFH empowers SMEs to integrate sustainability into their business operations

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) continues, for the second consecutive year, to organize the “Business Sustainability Program” dedicated to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), the first initiative of its kind within the Kuwaiti banking sector. The program reflects the Bank’s vision to promote sustainable development and reinforce its leading role in supporting the entrepreneurial ecosystem, enabling SME owners to achieve sustainable growth.

The program aims to help participating companies integrate sustainability principles into their operations, strategies, and business models, thereby enhancing their competitiveness and long term growth. It also demonstrates KFH’s commitment to strengthening its relationships with customers in this segment and providing them with added value through specialized initiatives and modern, effective channels.

Yousef Almutawa

The KFH Group Chief Corporate Banking Officer, Yousef Almutawa stated during the program’s opening ceremony: “KFH has successfully established its position as a key partner for companies of all sizes and sectors through its comprehensive suite of financing and banking solutions, supported by a diversified financing portfolio that covers multiple vital economic sectors.”

Almutawaadded that the Bank places exceptional focus on SMEs, driven by its belief in their pivotal role in supporting sustainable economic growth, creating job opportunities, and fostering innovation and entrepreneurship.

He emphasized that these efforts reflect the Bank’s commitment to its economic and developmental responsibilities and its role in supporting national development projects in Kuwait. He noted KFH’s leadership as the first banking institution to establish a dedicated SME financing department, offering an integrated package of financing and banking solutions, in addition to knowledge-sharing and advisory support to help SMEs grow their businesses.



Yousef Almutawa, Mohammad Alarbeed, and Zein AlAbdeen Itani with the training program participants.

- **Almutawa:** Leadership in supporting and financing companies of all sizes and sectors
- **Itani:** Sustainability became essential to the success of enterprises
- **Alarbeed:** Sustainability is a key driver of business success and competitiveness

Zein AlAbdeen Itani

For his part, the Acting Deputy General Manager SMEs at KFH, Zein Al-Abdeen Itani, affirmed that the second edition of the “Business Sustainability Program” reflects the Bank’s ongoing commitment to supporting the development and growth of the SME sector in Kuwait, and enhancing the added value of their business models by embedding sustainability concepts that have become essential to the success of modern enterprises.

Itani highlighted that KFH, using its leading expertise in Islamic finance, has succeeded in providing an integrated ecosystem of banking and financ-

ing solutions tailored specifically to this segment. These include cash-based financing such as Mura-baha, Tawarruq, and Ijara, as well as non-cash solutions such as Letters of Guarantee and Letters of Credit, in addition to digital banking services that facilitate business management and enhance operational efficiency.

He added that the Bank’s role extends beyond financing to include advisory support, knowledge exchange, and contributing to the sustainable growth and expansion of its customers.

Mohammad Alarbeed

In his remarks during the program’s opening, the Executive Manager of Governance and Sustainability at KFH, Mohammad Alarbeed, welcomed the participants, emphasizing that the program

reflects the Bank’s commitment to supporting its customers and partners and enabling them to benefit from best practices in sustainability.

Alarbeed stated, “We are delighted to launch the second edition of the ‘Business Sustainability Program’ for SMEs, driven by our belief in the importance of sustainability as one of the key drivers of business success and competitiveness, and in recognition of the vital role SMEs play as a fundamental pillar of the national economy.”

He explained that sustainability is no longer a theoretical concept, but rather a critical factor in enhancing corporate readiness, credibility, competitiveness, and long-term performance.

Alarbeed added that through this program, KFH aims to empower its customers and partners to adopt practical and applicable sustainability practices that help them build clear strategies, achieve their objectives, and strengthen opportunities for sustainable growth.

He noted that the program was fully developed and designed based on KFH’s practical expertise and accumulated experience in the field of sustainability, with the purpose of transferring this knowledge directly to customers and ensuring they receive maximum benefit.

Zain upgraded to MSCI ‘AA’ ESG rating

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8: Zain Group, a leading Tech Co providing innovative ICT and digital lifestyle communications across eight markets in the Middle East and Africa, hvas recently seen its Morgan Stanley Capital International (MSCI) Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) rating upgraded from ‘A’ to ‘AA’, marking a significant milestone in the Group’s ongoing commitment of sustainable growth, sound governance and responsible business leadership.

This makes Zain the highest-rated company in Kuwait across all industries within the MSCI ESG assessment universe and places the Group in the Leader category among a global peer universe of 164 telecommunications companies.

Zain cemented its position among the highest-performing telecommunications companies in the GCC, reinforcing the momentum of its long-term ESG journey and demonstrating the effectiveness of the Group’s approach to identifying and managing material ESG risks and opportunities.

Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO, Bader Al-Kharafi commented, “Achieving an ‘AA’ ESG rating marks a defining milestone in Zain’s transformation into a purpose-driven TechCo. It is a collective, Group-wide achievement that validates the disciplined execution of our ‘4WARD-Progress with Purpose’ strategy. Across Zain’s ecosystem, our Boards, governance structures and sustainability teams are embedding sound environmental, social and governance practices into strategic decision-making and operational execution.”

He added: “Our progression to an ‘AA’ rating demonstrates that credible ESG leadership is built through consistent action, transparent measurement and accountability. By ensuring that our governance frameworks remain aligned with evolving international standards and best practices across every business function, we have strengthened our ability to anticipate risks, safeguard stakeholder trust and create lasting value. This progress also advances our purpose: ‘Better Lives. Lasting Connections.’”

The latest assessment recognized Zain’s continued advancement across several material areas, with the Group performing above the telecommunications industry average in privacy and data security, labor management, environmental practices and corporate behavior, including internal controls and policies.

Zain’s data security practices were identified as leading those of industry peers, supported by pre-emptive



- Zain’s ESG rating ranks it among global telecom leaders of 164 companies
- **Bader Al-Kharafi:** “Rating marks a defining milestone in Zain’s transformation into a purpose-driven TechCo and validates the execution of our ‘4WARD-Progress with Purpose’ strategy”

measures, established incident-response mechanisms and provisions for conducting due diligence on the data-security practices of suppliers.

The assessment also recognized the Group’s efforts to strengthen employee engagement and responsible workplace practices through measures to support a culture in which ethical conduct, employee experience and accountability are treated as core components of long-term business performance.

Zain’s ‘AA’ rating reinforces the strategic importance the Group places on effective oversight, ethical leadership, transparent reporting and disciplined risk management. These practices provide stakeholders with greater confidence that the company is being managed responsibly while supporting its ability to navigate an increasingly complex technological, regulatory and geopolitical environment.

MSCI ESG Ratings assess companies’ resilience to financially relevant, industry-specific sustainability risks and opportunities. Companies receive an industry-relative rating on a seven-level scale ranging from ‘AAA’ to ‘CCC’, based on their exposure to relevant risks and the effectiveness of their management practices.

Zain builds on this progress by strengthening its ESG frameworks, enhancing performance measurement and embedding responsible practices across its operations, supply chain and digital ecosystem. Through its 4WARD strategy, the Group remains focused on generating sustainable value for shareholders, customers, employees, communities and the wider economies it serves.

Reputation management in GCC has changed. Is your organization ready?

By Lisa Sweis

Managing Director, TRACCS Kuwait & Qatar

For years, organizations in the GCC managed reputation through a familiar cycle: monitor coverage, respond to crises, issue statements, rebuild. It was reactive by design. A threat would emerge, communications would mobilize, and the organization would attempt to recover lost ground.

That model was built for a slower, more forgiving environment. It is not built for the speed, scale, and scrutiny of the current GCC market, where stakeholder opinion is formed in real time across Arabic and English channels.

The GCC today is undergoing a structural transformation. Vision 2030 and parallel Gulf initiatives are reshaping industries, institutions, and stakeholder expectations. Boards now scrutinize brand equity alongside financial performance. Investors, employees, and communities are forming opinions continuously, not only during moments of crisis.

As organizations navigate this increasingly complex environment, communications can no longer be viewed as a standalone function. Reputation today is shaped by the combined impact of leadership decisions, stakeholder engagement, media narratives, digital conversations, and customer experiences. At TRACCS, we see this as part of a broader, integrated 360-degree communications approach that connects these elements to business outcomes. This shift requires organizations to rethink a long-standing assumption: that reputation management and crisis management are the same.

Crisis management includes both response and preemptive preparation. Reputation management is the ongoing work of building and sustaining trust. Organizations that confuse the two are effectively waiting for problems to appear before investing in solutions.

In most cases, reputational risk



Lisa Sweis

does not originate in the communications function. It originates in decisions, or the absence of them. By the time a narrative threat becomes visible externally, the leadership choice that created it has already been made.

This is why reputation can no longer be treated as a communications output. It must be embedded in how organizations think and decide. The most resilient organizations in the region are those that assess narrative risk at the same stage they assess operational, financial, and legal risk before decisions are finalized, not after they are announced.

Reputation is also shaped long before a crisis emerges. Public sentiment is visible every day in reviews, complaints, customer interactions, ratings, and online conversations. Organizations that pay attention to these signals can act before dissatisfaction becomes a reputational issue.

The tools available to support this shift have advanced considerably. Real-time sentiment analytics, predictive risk modeling, and natural language processing across Arabic and English media now allow organizations to move from responding to events to anticipating them.

The value of these tools is not in the technology itself. It is in helping leaders understand emerging concerns, identify changing stakeholder expectations, and evaluate how decisions are likely to be received. When

used effectively, these insights support stronger strategies and better-informed decisions. The question is no longer, “What happened to our reputation?” It is, “What is likely to happen next, and what should we do about it now?”

In our work across GCC markets, we have seen that predictive intelligence is only valuable if leadership is equipped to act on it. That means communications must operate as a strategic function, integrated into executive decision-making rather than consulted after the fact.

This represents a significant shift from traditional public relations models that have historically focused on visibility, messaging, and response. Today, organizations require communications partners that are advisory-led, data-informed, and forward-looking, capable of tracking how people feel in real time, predicting what may happen next, and turning that into strategy and decisions. At TRACCS, this is the model we have built: 360-degree communications informed by AI and data-led insight, helping leaders anticipate challenges and act preemptively rather than simply react when issues arise.

Reputation risk now sits firmly on the enterprise agenda. Organizations need advisors who can combine analytical capabilities with regional insight and a deep understanding of stakeholder behavior among both Arabic- and English-speaking audiences.

The organizations that will define the next chapter of reputation management in the GCC will be those that treat reputation as a leadership responsibility, embedding it into decision-making from the outset.

In an environment where trust influences investment, growth, talent attraction, and long-term resilience, reputation is no longer just a communications consideration. It is a business imperative. For organizations ready to make that shift, TRACCS offers integrated capability and regional expertise to help leaders stay ahead of the narrative, not behind it.

Construction attracts KD 283.2 mln

Kuwait sees surge in construction FDI

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8: Kuwait is witnessing transformation in its development landscape due to the growing foreign direct investment (FDI), which has become the lifeblood of urban development and pillar of the comprehensive economic modernization strategy.

This growth reflects the ambitious vision of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to guarantee a sustainable future that reduces dependence on traditional oil revenues and establishes a robust national production base built on effective partnership with the global private sector.

This will reshape the investment landscape in the country, positioning it as a safe, stable and viable destination for international investors in the long term.

The newspaper obtained a copy of the latest annual report issued by Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA), which revealed a significant leap in the attractiveness of the local investment environment.

The construction and infrastructure sector attracted foreign capital of about KD283.2 million. With this substantial financial achievement, the sector ranked third among the most dynamic and attractive economic sectors for foreign investors, achieving a market share of 14.36 percent of total investments flowing into the country.

These indicators confirm the success of the legislative and regulatory policies adopted by the country to help the business environment and attract major international companies, thereby, adding value that goes beyond cash flow and building a knowledge-based economy through international expertise.

In a related development, economic reports and analyses issued by international and local financial institutions confirm that expansion in the infrastructure sector is the cornerstone for achieving a qualitative leap in the Kuwaiti national economy and reshaping its position on the global competitiveness map.

This developmental approach is not limited to improving the daily lives of citizens and expatriates, as it extends to being the main driver for attracting foreign direct investment.

From this perspective, the importance of foreign investment in the construction and infrastructure sector cannot be confined to providing liquidity or financial financing. It includes the transfer and localization of advanced engineering technologies and the importation of modern management methods used in the implementation of mega-projects worldwide.

The reports explained that major international companies contribute to raising the efficiency of on-site implementation and reducing the timeframes for completing vital state projects, while ensuring adherence to the highest international quality standards and environmental sustainability principles, which have become essential for modern projects.

The reports indicated that the presence of international companies in the Kuwaiti market creates a positive and healthy competitive environment that motivates national companies and local contractors to develop their tools and modernize their administrative and technical systems to keep pace with global standards.

The reports also emphasized that the greatest benefit for the macroeconomy is cooperation between the local and international construction sectors to build a solid foundation of national expertise and human resources.

This expertise will enable individuals to acquire unique and high-quality technical skills through interaction with experts and engineers from global companies, paving the way for a new generation of Kuwaiti talent capable of leading future development projects with competence.

This is true given that the construction sector is the primary engine driving many related economic sectors, such as building materials manufacturing, logistics, transportation, insurance and banking.

Therefore, the strong entry of foreign investors into the construction sector not only reflects a successful economic reality, but also charts a future course that confirms Kuwait’s confident progress towards consolidating its position as a leading and attractive financial and commercial center in the region.

The international investment in the local construction sector is considered a fertile and ideal environment for expanding foreign capital in the country.

Essam Ahmed named Head of Accounting Advisory Services

KPMG bolsters advisory arm with new partner

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8: KPMG Kuwait has announced the promotion of Essam Ahmed to Partner – Head of Accounting Advisory Services, effective 1 September 2026. This is a significant strategic move on the firm’s part to boost its advisory arm, which also spans management consulting, risk consulting, and deal advisory.

Essam brings 34 years of experience across Kuwait and Egypt, 21 years of which have been at KPMG Kuwait. In 2005, he founded the firm’s Accounting Advisory Service practice and has since helped position it as a trusted advisor to businesses across Kuwait, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and family-owned businesses, supporting them through increasingly complex accounting, reporting and financial management requirements.

Commenting on the appointment, Dr Rasheed Al-Qenae, Managing Partner, KPMG in Kuwait, said, “I am delighted to announce Essam Ahmed’s promotion to Partner. Essam has been instrumental in building and developing our Accounting Advisory Services



Essam Ahmed

practice, demonstrating exceptional technical expertise along with leadership and dedication throughout his tenure. His commitment to quality, innovation and client service has contributed significantly to the growth of our firm and the value we deliver to businesses in Kuwait.”

Over the years, Essam has led mul-

tiples engagements for clients across the industrial, contracting, retail, food and beverage, real estate, education, healthcare and e-commerce sectors. His extensive experience spans cost, financial and management accounting, internal controls, financial forecasting and reporting, designing accounting systems and creating cost-control frameworks.

One of Essam’s key focus areas is supporting small and medium-sized enterprises and family-owned businesses. His experience in establishing full accounting systems for new ventures, setting up cost-control frameworks and strengthening their accounting processes has helped numerous businesses build strong financial foundations and thus make informed strategic decisions.

“In alignment with the Kuwait Vision 2035 that focus on SMEs, KPMG Kuwait remains steadfast in its commitment to supporting entrepreneurs and business owners at every stage of their entrepreneurial journey,” concluded Dr Rasheed.



Kon Program



ALT Program

Al-Mattar: Investing in youth & building their capabilities is a true investment in Kuwait’s future

National Bank of Kuwait ends Summer 2026 by empowering youth through distinctive training & development programs

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8: The National Bank of Kuwait concluded its summer 2026 season with an extensive series of training and development programs and initiatives that successfully reached hundreds of young people and children across various age groups, which reflects the Bank’s unwavering commitment to social responsibility and its long-term vision of supporting and developing national talent, while empowering future generations with the knowledge and skills needed to keep pace with the demands of the future.

Whether implemented or sponsored by NBK, these summer season programs embodied a comprehensive approach to investing in human capital in diverse fields, including banking, financial literacy, social entrepreneurship, artificial intelligence, practical training, and digital media, which reflects the Bank’s commitment to providing high-quality educational and training opportunities that cater to the interests of young people and keep pace with the rapidly evolving labor market.

Through its various programs and initiatives, NBK reached more than 500 children and young participants, in addition to those participating in the summer training program at the Kuwait Times newspaper. This demonstrates the broad scope of the Bank’s initiatives and its dedication to engaging various age groups, ranging from children to university students.

Continuous Investment in Future Generations

On this occasion, Manal Al-Mattar, EVP - Head of Group Corporate Communications at the National Bank of Kuwait, commented: “At NBK, we believe that investing in youth is an investment in Kuwait’s future, which is why we are committed to launching and sponsoring programs and initiatives that build their capabilities, develop their skills, and enhance their readiness for future demands. The wide variety of our summer programs reflects our commitment to providing meaningful educational and training opportunities that cater to different age groups and help prepare a generation capable of innovation, creativity, and active contribution to the development of society and the national economy”.

“These programs,” Al-Mattar added, “fall within NBK’s corporate social responsibility strategy that prioritizes education and human capital development, driven by the belief that empowering youth intellectually and professionally is a cornerstone of sustainable development. We will continue to provide further developmental and educational opportunities that equip young people with the practical experience and skills needed to succeed in their academic and professional lives”.

NBK Aspire: An Early Glimpse into the Banking Sector

The NBK Aspire program saw the participation of 66 students aged 15 to



Manal Al-Mattar



NBK Aspire

18, offering them a firsthand look at the banking environment and the sector’s operational mechanisms through practical experience across various departments.

The program helped enhance the participants’ professional knowledge and develop their personal and practical skills, enabling them to gain a clearer understanding of modern work environments and the requirements for future professional success.

Little Bankers: An Educational Experience Strengthening Family Bonds

As part of its commitment to employees and their families, NBK organized the Little Bankers program, featuring the participation of 280 children of employees, aged between 6 and 11.

The program went beyond simply instilling financial literacy and awareness in children through a specially designed, interactive banking experience to further enhance employee well-being and foster a positive work environment. This initiative reflects the bank’s culture, viewing its staff as one family and helping to boost employee loyalty and strengthen both family and organizational ties.

Additionally, the program helped develop the participants’ communication,

teamwork, and creative thinking skills through an educational and interactive approach tailored to their age group.

Social Entrepreneurship and Creating Impact

In terms of promoting entrepreneurship and innovation, NBK continued its strategic support for the KON social entrepreneurship program, which saw the participation of 66 young people aged 12 to 16.

The program focused on helping participants develop ideas and initiatives that benefit society and the environment, while also promoting concepts of social entrepreneurship, sustainability, and innovation, and cultivating leadership skills that empower them to create a positive impact in their communities.

NBK Strive: Embracing the Future through Artificial Intelligence

NBK continued to invest in future-ready skills through the NBK Strive program, which helped 15 university students explore the latest artificial intelligence applications and tools, as well as their practical uses across various work environments.

The program contributed to the development of innovative solutions and ideas applicable to the Bank’s various departments, while also enhancing the digital skills and technical capabilities that have become essential in today’s job market.

“ALT”: Early Practical Experience

Through its sponsorship of the ALT program, NBK provided comprehensive training experience for 56 trainees aged 10 to 15.

The program offered participants the opportunity to gain hands-on experience across various organizations and business activities, which helped them develop skills such as responsibility, independence, and communication, while also allowing them to explore different work environments and acquire early practical experience that enhances their future readiness.

Supporting Young Media Talent

The Bank’s efforts extended to the media sector through its sponsorship of the Kuwait Times summer training program. Targeting university students from diverse academic backgrounds, the program provided intensive practical training in journalism, content creation, photography, and digital media.

The program also helped participants gain hands-on professional experience and familiarized them with the demands of modern media work, further enhancing their prospects for future career development.

A Lasting Impact Beyond the Summer Season

The success of NBK’s summer programs and initiatives in 2026 reaffirms its leadership in supporting and developing youth, as well as its pivotal role as an active partner in building national capabilities and preparing future generations.

Through these diverse programs, NBK has continued to translate its vision into action, which believes that investing in people is the cornerstone of sustainable development. It maintains that empowering youth with education, knowledge, and practical experience represents one of the most vital investments contributing to a more prosperous future for Kuwait.

Bandar Abbas sees trade collapse

US blockade deepens economic pain in Iran

BANDAR ABBAS, Sept 8, (AP): In the Iranian port city of Bandar Abbas on the Strait of Hormuz, a waterfront once busy with boats, trucks and workers has fallen quiet. It’s a front line of the economic pain that the United States now hopes to intensify after six months of war.

The Associated Press visited the city shaken by new U.S. airstrikes targeting coastal areas in the past week, and found anger along with growing anxiety about simply getting by as a U.S. blockade of Iranian ports continues.

A taxi driver, Hamid Hajizadeh, said he does not understand Americans. “They are heroes in movies, but here they killed people in schools, wedding ceremonies and other places. They bombed roads and bridges,” he said.

In this city of over 700,000 people, residents have a closer view than almost anyone of events on the strait that have seized global attention. They say their location has brought little but danger and discomfort over the past half year.

Mohammad Torabian works at the dock providing services to passengers. Before the war, he said, as many as 50 trucks carrying food and meat would unload there every day. Now, with the U.S. blockade that’s aimed at keeping Iran from exporting its oil, much of the dock is empty. “The business right now is terrible,” Torabian said. He estimated that about 500 people had been earning a living around the dock but “there is no job here.”

The fortunes of Bandar Abbas have long been tied to the sea and nearby Shahid Rajaei, one of Iran’s largest commercial ports. Shahid Rajaei has the capacity to handle 100 million metric tons of cargo a year, according to a report in July by Iran’s state-run IRNA news agency.

Iranian officials have sharply criticized the blockade, which the U.S. imposed in April and then imposed again after negotiations with Tehran on a path to end the war fell apart. Washington has since vowed more economic pressure over the strait, which is crucial to global shipping of oil, natural gas and related products.

Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, the lead negotiator in talks with the U.S. that collapsed, warned earlier this month that an

escalation of the blockade would be met with a military response.

In Bandar Abbas, the effects are spreading through nearly every layer of the economy, from ships and dock workers to customs-clearing companies and shopkeepers.

Mahsa Shojaei, an accountant with a customs-clearing company, said much of its business before the war involved importing rice, tea and coffee from India and Pakistan.

Now, Shojaei estimated that 80% to 90% of her company’s workload has disappeared. A business that might have handled around 100 customs-clearance files during a certain period now processes only about 10, she said. At the same time, the cost of bringing cargo through customs has risen.

The economic damage has spread beyond the waterfront, especially as Iran’s currency reaches record lows. In the retail markets, merchants said customers are disappearing as purchasing power deteriorates.

Mehrdad Jahangiri sells children’s clothing at a shop that supports both his household and his father’s. He said sales have fallen by about half compared to the same period last year.

“There are simply no customers,” Jahangiri said. “The market has become very quiet.”

The timing of the war was especially damaging for merchants. It began just before the Iranian New Year, Nowruz, traditionally one of the busiest shopping periods. Merchants rely on families to spend more than during ordinary months. The war wiped out much of that expected business.

Now another crucial shopping period is slipping away. In the weeks before schools reopen later in September, families traditionally buy new clothes for their children. This year, Jahangiri said, the usual crowds have barely materialized.

The downturn has become severe enough that the shop sometimes falls behind on rent and accumulates debts in the market, something he said had not happened before.

“People’s pockets are empty and incomes have fallen,” he said.

Asked whether his family had been forced to cut back on everyday expenses, Jahangiri’s answer was immediate. “Absolutely,” he said. “It has changed a lot.”

Iran raises fuel prices for heavy consumers

TEHRAN, Sept 8, (AP): Iran early Tuesday introduced a higher price for its heaviest users of gasoline, state media reported, in the latest economic pinch caused by months of war. It’s the second such hike since December.

Such gas price increases can be sensitive and contribute to inflation. An increase in 2019 sparked nationwide protests and a crackdown that reportedly killed over 300 people.

Without specifically mentioning the war with the United States, the government’s announcement cited the “current situation,” adding that the extra money from the price increase will be given to households.

Under the new system, people buying more than their quota of 110 liters (29 gallons) of gasoline a month now must pay 100,000 rials (about 7 cents) per liter, or twice as much as they have been paying since December.

Iran still has some of the world’s lowest gasoline prices, but the price increase adds to daily pressures for many of the country’s more than 90 million people. Already, the currency has been dropping to record lows, and purchasing power has weakened. On Monday, the U.S. dollar was trading at 2.22 million rials.

Keramat Veis Karami, the CEO of the state oil distribution company, on Monday said the new gasoline rate would affect 15% of consumers, the official IRNA news agency reported.

The CEO said consumption reached a record high at 145 million liters (38 million gallons) per day in August, while domestic production capacity was 122 million liters per day. The rest of the supply is imported.

Raising prices can help calm high consumption, which experts have blamed on aging cars and spare parts in Iran as well as insufficient public transportation.

But experts also say increases in gasoline prices will lead to higher inflation in a country that’s already struggling with an annual inflation rate of about 67%, according to the country’s statistics center, a government agency.

Cheap gasoline has been viewed for generations as a birthright in Iran, sparking mass demonstrations as far back as 1964, when a price increase forced the shah to put military vehicles on the streets to replace those of striking taxi drivers.

An hour after the new pricing went into practice, two of eight gas stations visited by The Associated Press were closed to regulate the price rate of the

pumps. The six others were active, and a dozen cars were in line in each.

Security was tight around the filling stations and both uniformed and plainclothes police were visible around.

In the queue, Asghar Rahimi, a 34-year-old Tehran resident, said the price increases will not stop. “The tiny amount cannot help government to manage problems like poverty and unemployment,” Rahimi said. “This was the first step. In coming months, they need to raise it again.”

Another resident, Ali Salari, 55, feared the raise in price will affect prices of other goods, including bread and meat.

“It has been that way ever since government manipulated gas prices,” Salari said.

Tehran citizen Hamid Mirzei, 43, said food prices have kept rising and a grocery trip just for staples, like beans and lentils, can cost up to 100 million rials (\$73).

“Life has become difficult for all of us. Even basic groceries are becoming unaffordable,” Mirzei said.

“If gasoline prices go up as well, things will only get much worse,” he added.

Oil prices press higher

World shares and US futures decline

BANGKOK, Sept 8, (AP): World shares and U.S. futures skidded Tuesday as flaring conflict in the Middle East pushed oil prices higher.

A wave of Houthi attacks on oil facilities and utilities in Saudi Arabia’s southern region has escalated renewed fighting between an important U.S. ally and Iranian-backed rebels in Yemen.

In early European trading, Germany’s DAX declined 0.3% to 25,922.44 and the CAC 40 in Paris fell 0.2% to 8,291.43. Britain’s FTSE 100 was nearly unchanged, at 10,824.32.

The future for the S&P 500 was down 0.2%, while that for the Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 0.7%.

Tokyo’s Nikkei 225 gave up early gains, sinking 1.7% to 65,269.33 as major exporters were sold due to a surge in the value of the Japanese yen.

Shares in Toyota Motor Corp. shed 4.1%, while electronics maker Panasonic Holdings Corp. fell 5.8%.

Early Tuesday, the U.S. dollar slipped to 153.86 Japanese yen from 154.34 yen. The yen has gained value against the dollar in the past few days on expectations that the U.S. and Japanese governments might intervene to prevent the yen from weakening further. Last week, the dollar briefly rose to about 160 yen.



Currency traders work near a screen showing the Korea Composite Stock Price Index (KOSPI), the foreign exchange rate between U.S. dollar and South Korean won, SK Hynix and Samsung Electronics Co. stock price at the foreign exchange dealing room of the Hana Bank headquarters in Seoul, South Korea, Tuesday, Sept. 8, 2026. (AP Photo/Ahn Young-joon)

The government reported that the economy grew at a slightly faster annual pace in the April-June quarter than earlier reported, at 1.4%. Earlier, the Cabinet Office had estimated the annualized growth rate at 1.1%.

The revision reflects stronger business investment than earlier reported, though overall investment still contracted, at minus 0.9%, Norihiro Yamaguchi of Oxford Econom-

ics said in a commentary.

“The boost to consumption from policy measures seen in April-May is already fading, and supply-side-driven inflation will accelerate ahead as firms will pass on increased costs, deteriorating consumers’ purchasing power,” he said.

South Korea’s Kospi fell back after an early rally, losing 0.6% to

6,954.52. Shares in Samsung Electronics handed back early gains to slip 0.2%.

Hong Kong’s Hang Seng lost 0.4% to 25,317.18, and the Shanghai Composite index edged 0.2% higher, to 3,940.55.

China said its exports jumped 25% year-on-year in August, driven by strong demand for autos and high tech items.

In Australia, the S&P/ASX 200 declined 1% to 8,920.80.

On Friday, the S&P 500 lost 0.4% and the Dow industrials fell 0.5%. The Nasdaq composite gave back 0.3%.

Wall Street will get important updates about inflation this week. The U.S. will release its August report for inflation at the wholesale level, called the Producer Price Index, or the PPI, on Thursday. It provides details on prices for businesses before they pass along the costs to consumers.

On Friday, the U.S. will release its better-known Consumer Price Index, for August. The CPI is closely watched and provides details on price changes for specific grocery items, furniture, and clothing, among other categories. It also details price changes for services ranging from car maintenance to travel and restaurant dining.

G20 split as China backs record export-led growth

China’s August exports surge 25% on autos, chips

BANGKOK, Sept 8, (AP): China’s exports jumped 25% in August from a year earlier on strong demand for autos and high-tech goods as its record trade surplus widened further, its customs agency said Tuesday.

The data was broadly in line with what economists had expected and comes just ahead of a planned meeting between Chinese leader Xi Jinping and U.S. President Donald Trump. That’s set for late September, though Beijing has not yet confirmed the exact date for the visit.

Trade is expected to be among the key topics of discussion between Trump and Xi when the two leaders meet.

China’s global imports climbed 28.2% in August from a year earlier, up from July’s 27.5% rise. Exports grew 23.9% year-on-year in July. The trade surplus expanded in August to \$119.1 billion from \$112.5 billion in July.

Policymakers in the U.S. and elsewhere have raised concerns over China’s ballooning trade surplus, which surged to a record \$1.2 trillion for the whole of last year. Beijing has said that it is not seeking to maximize its trade surplus.

In August, China’s exports to the U.S. totaled \$42.5 billion, up 34.4% year-on-year, in part due to a base effect after higher U.S. tariffs caused exports to fall last year. U.S. exports to China last month were \$13.3 bil-

lion, leaving a trade surplus in China’s favor of about \$29.2 billion, according to Chinese data.

Exports to the EU rose 6.6%, while those to Southeast Asia and Latin America rose 30.2% and 17.5%, respectively.

Exports have consistently outpaced imports and are “set to lead to a new record-high trade surplus this year,” said Lynn Song, chief economist for Greater China at the Dutch bank ING.

China has weathered disruptions from the Iran war better than many other countries. It also has been exporting more to Southeast Asia, Latin America and Africa, shielding it from the impact of higher U.S. tariffs.

Exports of autos in August grew 43% year-on-year while semiconductor exports surged 129.8%, the customs data show.

“China is very competitive in its tech goods exports,” said Chi Lo, a senior market strategist for Asia Pacific at BNP Paribas Asset Management. In recent months, rising exports of electric vehicles, industrial machinery and semiconductors have helped fuel China’s robust shipments globally.

“China has moved aggressively up the value chain and has become a major player in AI infrastructure and industrial automation,” he said.

At home, China is still struggling to boost its economy as consumption and investment remained sluggish following a yearslong real estate sector downturn. On Sunday, China said it was injecting around \$54 billion into state banks and insurers to help lift its economy.

China’s continued reliance on exports to fuel growth prompted 19 members of the Group of 20 large economies to agree to address such economic imbalances at a recent meeting of top financial officials in Asheville, North Carolina. China was the lone dissenting G20 member after U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent described China’s trade surplus as a barrier to global economic growth.

The strategic stalemate between China and the U.S. will likely remain, said Lo of BNP Paribas. “Both sides hold each other hostage in some strategic products, with the U.S. withholding high-end tech goods from being sold to China and China withholding rare-earth exports to the U.S.,” he said.

China and the EU are also set to meet for ministerial level trade talks in the fall, as the EU struggles to reduce its roughly 1 billion euros-a-day trade deficit with China.

The EU implemented measures in July to protect its steel industry and has limited tax-exempt imports of Chinese e-commerce small parcels.

Japan protests as China imposes new measures against its exports of a key chipmaking material

BANGKOK, Sept 8, (AP): Japan has protested against Chinese controls that will limit its exports of a key chemical used to make computer chips, saying Tuesday that Tokyo is studying the potential impact on Japanese companies.

China imposed the curb on imports of dichlorosilane from Japan, saying its exports of the material, also known as DCS, have violated anti-dumping regulations and harmed China’s domestic industry.

Beginning Tuesday, companies importing the chemical compound from Japan must provide cash deposits to China’s customs at rates of up to 99.2%. The measure applies to Shin-Etsu Chemical and Denal Silane, among other Japanese exporters of DCS.

Beijing says the measure is provisional as an investigation continues. A final ruling will come later.

Relations between China and



A staff organise flags from China, left, and Japan before the start of the 28th ASEAN Plus Three Summit in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on Oct. 27, 2025. (AP Photo/Vincent Thian, Pool, File)

Japan have been strained since November, when Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi angered

Beijing by suggesting Japan’s military could intervene if China used military force on Taiwan, a

self-ruled island Beijing claims as its territory.

In Tokyo, Japan’s top government spokesperson, Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kihara, protested against the controls and said Tokyo would “respond appropriately” to avoid unfair harm to Japanese companies.

China’s commerce ministry launched its anti-dumping probe into Japanese DCS as part of various measures against Japan. Beijing has also imposed export controls on Japanese firms for dual-use items that can be used for military purposes.

DCS is used in a chemical vapor process to put thin layers of silicon, oxide, or other films in semiconductor logic and memory chips. The global market for DCS is highly competitive, but Japan is the leading producer of ultrapure DCS for computer chip fabrication.

Shenzhen forum urges openness, innovation, cooperation

APEC ‘China Year’ spotlights Asia-Pacific community

SHENZHEN, Sept 8, (Xinhua): As the Asia-Pacific embraces a more digital, intelligent and green future, Chinese modernization is creating fresh opportunities for the region and beyond, said participants at the Asia-Pacific Media Forum.

As an important part of the APEC “China Year” events, the forum, held on Saturday in the southern city of Shenzhen, brought together more than 400 representatives from over 40 countries and regions, as well as participants from the United Nations and other international organizations.

They expressed hope that the 33rd APEC Economic Leaders’ Meeting, to be held in Shenzhen this November, will give fresh impetus to the building of an Asia-Pacific community, deepen regional cooperation and promote shared prosperity.

ASIA-PACIFIC COMMUNITY

As the host of APEC 2026, China has set “Building an Asia-Pacific Community to Prosper Together” as the theme of this year’s event.

“The Asia-Pacific Community is a partnership built on mutual respect, peaceful coexistence, shared prosperity, and cultural diversity. It is not merely a geographical concept but a community connected by common aspirations for stability, economic development, and human progress,” said Saeed Ahmad, director-general of Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation.

Home to one-third of the planet’s population, the Asia-Pacific accounts for over 60 percent of global economic output and nearly half of global trade, making it a key driver of global economic growth.

Kamphol Mahanukul, president of the Thai-Chinese Journalists Association, said that the Asia-Pacific miracle was not a historical coincidence, but was forged through a collective commitment to openness, practical cooperation and mutual respect.

“The rise of Asia is a beautiful thing. It is helping provide a dynamic motor not just for the Asia-Pacific but for the global economy,” said

Sourabh Gupta, resident senior fellow at the Institute for China-America Studies.

“The path to shared prosperity in the Asia-Pacific runs through cooperation, not coercion; through open trade, not walls; through dialogue, not division,” said Shezra Mansab Ali Khan Kharal, Pakistan’s minister of state for climate change and environmental coordination.

Openness, Innovation, Cooperation

Openness, innovation and cooperation are the three pillars of the APEC “China Year”. Participants said they reflect the priorities of APEC economies and could, with greater emphasis, give a further boost to regional innovation and economic integration.

“A prosperous and stable Asia-Pacific requires economies to preserve channels for trade, investment and dialogue even when external conditions become more difficult. An open and interconnected region also gives businesses more options to diversify markets, suppliers and logistics networks,” said Nguyen Ha Phuong, principal researcher at the Institute for Asia-Pacific Studies under the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences.

You Sang Chul, head of the China Institute of the Korea JoongAng Daily, said Shenzhen had demonstrated how emerging technologies had become part of everyday life, citing autonomous vehicles and drone delivery services as examples.

He noted that China was leading global innovation in areas such as AI while integrating digital and green technologies into its modernization drive, providing valuable experience and new opportunities for other Asia-Pacific economies.

As the APEC “China year” has gathered momentum, member economies have stepped up practical cooperation in areas such as food security, fisheries and marine affairs, and energy.

Felipe Cuadra, general counsel of Chile’s daily La Tercera, said that Asia-Pacific cooperation had opened up broad new opportunities for Chile and that Latin America needs diverse

and reliable partners to better withstand external shocks.

Chinese Modernization, New Opportunities

The APEC “China Year” coincides with the first year of China’s 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-2030). At this new historical juncture, China is deepening reforms and pursuing higher-standard opening-up, creating new opportunities for the Asia-Pacific and beyond through its modernization.

After touring the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge, Felix Paz Quiroz, general director of the Peruvian news agency Andina, described the cross-sea link as an engineering marvel.

He said the visit reminded him of Peru’s Chancay Port, another major transportation hub, voicing the hope of drawing on China’s experience to develop the port into an important gateway connecting Latin America and Asia.

In recent years, China has shared the benefits of its institutional reforms with the rest of the world.

From expanding its pilot free trade zones and advancing the Hainan Free Trade Port in the south to further opening its education, finance, and healthcare sectors, China has steadily advanced institutional opening-up by aligning its rules, regulations, management and standards with international practices.

Diego Ruzzarin, director of Mexico’s MPV Media, depicted China as an important source of inspiration for Global South countries over the past four decades, offering valuable experience for their development.

As China continues to open up, its unilateral visa-free policies have been extended to more countries, while “China Travel” and “China Shopping” have continued to gain traction as themes online.

Ivan Sinichkin, deputy editor-in-chief of Russian newspaper Rossiyskaya Gazeta, said the growing flows of people and goods reflect shared commitment among APEC economies to pursue common development through the opportunities created by Chinese modernization.

success,” the company said.

Huawei is the world’s biggest supplier of gear for wireless telecom networks but the company is banned from selling equipment to U.S. carriers over fears it poses a security risk. It has also been blacklisted by other Western allies like Canada and Britain. The company makes phones and other consumer electronics but has been cut off from other lines of business. More recently, it has expanded into chipmaking as the boom in artificial intelligence fuels demand for microprocessors.

During President Donald Trump’s first term in office, his administration raised national security concerns about Huawei and began lobbying Western allies against including the company’s products in their next-generation high-speed wireless networks. The U.S. announced the criminal charges in early 2019 and has since expanded the allegations.

Chinese officials said the U.S. government has engaged in “economic bullying” and improperly used national security as a pretext for “oppress-

What to know about Canada-US trade war

TORONTO, Sept 8, (AP): Canada struck back at U.S. President Donald Trump on Tuesday with tariffs on about \$20 billion worth of U.S. goods, in response to the latest round of tariffs on Canada.

The outcome could resonate far beyond Canada, showing other governments whether a smaller U.S. ally can withstand Trump’s economic pressure.

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney says U.S. demands could hollow out key Canadian industries and limit the country’s independence, while Trump’s threats to Canadian sovereignty have rallied the public behind him.

“Carney and Canada have become symbolic of resistance to him,” Canadian historian Robert Bothwell said. “And what he’ll want to do is make an example of Carney and Canada and theoretically terrify everybody else while in fact showing them that they need to remove themselves even further from the United States.”

The tariffs hit hundreds of American products, including steel, aluminum, cheese, appliances, clothing, cosmetics and farm equipment, at rates of 15%, 25% or 50%.

Here’s what to know.

Canada says its tariffs match Washington’s dollar for dollar and rate for rate. They take effect at 12:01 a.m. Tuesday under an executive action known as an order in council and cover about \$20 billion in American goods, roughly 6% of the \$333.6 billion the United States exported to Canada last year.

RBC Economics, the research arm of the Royal Bank of Canada, said the measures were unlikely to dent U.S. growth overall but could hit some businesses hard.

Canada has already gone beyond tariffs in other ways. Eight of its 10 provinces continue to restrict or ban sales of U.S. alcohol. The Distilled Spirits Council says U.S. spirits exports to Canada fell more than 70% year over year after those restrictions took effect.

Since Canada-U.S. trade talks collapsed Aug. 21, Trump and his administration have unleashed a barrage of tariffs, threats and personal attacks portraying Canada as weak and dependent.

On Monday, Trump threatened to ban the sale of aircraft from Canada’s Bombardier, unless they manufacture planes in the United States.

“NO MORE SELLING BOMBARDIER IN THE UNITED STATES!” Their products aren’t good enough!” Trump posted on Truth Social. “If they want our Market, they must build here, and stop treating America like a ‘piggybank.’”

Flavio Volpe, president of APMA Canada, a manufacturing trade group, responded on X that Bombardier uses U.S.-made GE and Honeywell jet engines and employs about 3,000 U.S. workers.

Trump previously warned that Canada’s economy could collapse if Carney continued treating him as “the enemy” and threatened consequences “worse than anything that has ever happened to a Canadian Politician.”

U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer has threatened that Washington could ban some Canadian goods outright in response.

Trump even renamed Lake Ontario “Lake America,” a change ignored and ridiculed in Canada. Google and Apple bent to Trump’s pressure and changed their maps for U.S. users. On Monday, he published a map of North America covered in the U.S. flag on social media.

“After renaming a gulf and a lake, maybe the next step for him is to rename a river?” said Daniel Béland, a political scientist at McGill University.

Trump’s trade war and repeated talk of making Canada the 51st state have fueled anger and rallied support for Carney. Canadians have sharply cut travel to the United States and boycotted U.S. goods.

The current trade war began after Trump returned to office and imposed a series of tariffs on Canadian goods despite having negotiated and repeatedly praised the

North American trade agreement during his first term. Many of those tariffs violate the pact.

The rupture is especially striking because the countries have long shared one of the world’s closest relationships, with deeply integrated economies, close defense and security cooperation, vast cultural ties and, before relations deteriorated, about 400,000 people crossing the border each day.

Carney has said talks can resume when the Americans “stop doing memes, stop throwing shade, stop trying to be tough” and become serious.

So far, Trump’s pressure has backfired in Canada, strengthening support for Carney rather than forcing concessions.

Nelson Wiseman, professor emeritus of political science at the University of Toronto, said Trump’s 2024 reelection deepened Canadians’ distrust of the United States - not just its government, but the judgment of Americans.

“Canada-U.S. relations, even without confrontation, will never be what they were before Trump,” he said.

At the World Economic Forum in Davos in January, Carney warned that great powers are using economic integration to coerce smaller countries. The speech helped establish him as the leading voice among countries looking for ways to resist Trump.

Trump responded a day later by saying Canada “lives because of the United States” and warning: “Mark, remember that next time you make your statements.”

Carney will address the European Parliament next week, giving him another major stage.

“The Canadian public is behind the Carney government and the world is watching what will happen next,” said Béland, the McGill political scientist. If Canada’s defiant approach succeeds, he said, it “could be used as a template” for resisting the Trump administration’s trade policies.

Trump has also threatened 50% tariffs on Canadian vehicles, auto parts and steel next year if Canada does not “fall in line,” a potentially devastating escalation for industries built around deeply integrated North American supply chains.

“We want the cars to be made in Detroit and in South Carolina and in Tennessee and in all of our places where we make cars. We don’t want them to be made in Canada,” Trump said.

A 50% auto tariff could hammer Canadian plants and raise vehicle prices across North America because parts and finished vehicles cross the border repeatedly during production.

Carney says Washington’s terms could leave Canadian industries “gradually wound down in Canada and wiped out.”

Canada starts at a disadvantage: The U.S. economy is roughly 13 times larger, and Canada sends more than 70% of its exports south of the border.

But Béland said this is not a normal trade fight. He pointed to Trump’s domestic unpopularity, the approaching midterms and court challenges that could undo more U.S. tariffs.

“Under normal conditions, this would be a very long shot for Canada,” he said.

But Washington has vulnerabilities too. U.S. refineries rely on 4 million barrels of oil a day from Canada, and American farmers depend heavily on Canadian potash fertilizer. So far, however, Canadian leaders have ruled out using some of that leverage by taxing or restricting critical exports.

Canada entered this round with some economic momentum. Its economy grew at a 3.2% annualized rate in the second quarter, more than twice the 1.5% pace in the United States.

Industry Minister Mélanie Joly put the government’s ambition plainly:

“I’m convinced that we will be able to show the world that Canada will win this trade war.”

China’s Huawei Technologies faces racketeering trial in New York

NEW YORK, Sept 8, (AP): Huawei Technologies, a leading Chinese tech company, faces a criminal racketeering trial in New York over charges that it stole technology, plotted to steal U.S. trade secrets and committed wire and bank fraud, among other crimes.

Jury selection is scheduled to begin Tuesday.

The indictment alleges that, besides stealing trade secrets, Huawei and some of its subsidiaries did business in North Korea despite U.S. sanctions there and installed surveillance equipment that helped Iran spy on protesters during 2009 anti-government demonstrations in Iran.

Huawei’s lawyers have tried to get the broad criminal case dismissed, arguing in court filings that the U.S. allegations were too vague and impermissibly tried to extend American authority abroad. The company said in a statement that the narrative pushed by U.S. prosecutors is “demonstrably false.”

“Long-term investment in innovation, backed by the utmost respect for intellectual property, has been the driving force behind Huawei’s business

ing Chinese companies.”

U.S. prosecutors accused Huawei of using a Hong Kong shell company known as Skycom to sell equipment to Iran in violation of U.S. sanctions. They also charged its chief financial officer, Meng Wanzhou, with fraud, saying she misled HSBC bank about the company’s business dealings in Iran.

Meng, the daughter of Huawei’s founder, was arrested in Canada in late 2018 on a U.S. extradition request but released in September 2021 in a high-stakes prisoner swap that freed two Canadians held by China and allowed her to return home.

As part of the deal, the U.S. dropped its extradition request and said it would dismiss the fraud charges against Meng.

The biggest maker of network gear, Huawei struggled to hold onto its market share under sanctions that have blocked its access to most U.S. processor chips and other technology. The limits led it to ramp up its own development of computer chips and other advanced technologies.



Ellen Burstyn receives the Golden Lion for lifetime achievement during the 83rd edition of the Venice Film Festival in Venice, Italy, on Monday, Sept. 7, 2026. (AP)

Marilyn Monroe, reimagined at 100

At 93, Burstyn roars into Venice with Golden Lion

VENICE, Sept 8, (AP): Of all the roles Ellen Burstyn might have been offered in her 90s, that of Marilyn Monroe seemed fairly unlikely. But then one day Maggie Gyllenhaal came to her apartment to talk about a wild idea: What if she played Monroe at 100?

"It sounded like a good idea to me," Burstyn told The Associated Press.

Their 17-minute short film, "Flesh Impact," had its world premiere Monday at the Venice Film Festival, where Burstyn, 93, also received a Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement.

Though Burstyn never met Monroe, who died at 36, there was overlap. They shared a massage therapist, who would tell stories about his late friend. He even told Burstyn that she was actually

quite like Monroe, and lent her one of Monroe's old books called "The Thinking Body," which had some treasures like old receipts inside.

"I knew that she was not what she presented as her persona and that actually that's a persona that she created," Burstyn said. "She created the whole concept of Marilyn Monroe and played it."

Once, she saw her in a nightclub and Monroe nodded at her.

"She was so startlingly beautiful and she caught my eye and ... I felt that she recognized me," Burstyn said. "I was very early in my career. And the fact that she recognized me, I just felt so honored and pleased."

The Monroe short came about in somewhat unconventional fashion, through the luxury car

company Genesis, whose chief marketing officer Amy Marentic approached Gyllenhaal about doing something around what would have been Monroe's 100th birthday in June.

Gyllenhaal asked for a week-end to think about it, and landed on Marilyn, at 100, "doing basically the most vulnerable, one of the most vulnerable things I think an actor can do, which is audition, alone on a stage."

Burstyn was the first actor she thought of.

"I just had this feeling maybe this is an opportunity for her to think about things in a new way," Gyllenhaal said.

The two found that they shared a similar language and approach to the work.

"We are interested in the depth

of what's being revealed. And we both want to go there," Burstyn said. "If we're going to be doing anything, we're gonna be doing it from there."

Though nothing has really changed very much in how Burstyn chooses roles over the years - she just wants to be moved or challenged - having a set populated largely by women was a far cry from how things were when she was starting out.

"When I first started working, which was 150 years ago, there were no women on the set. There were no women crew. There was no woman behind the camera. If a woman was on set, that meant that she was an actress," Burstyn said in a news conference Monday. "Then, slowly, thanks to blessed Gloria Steinem who just

died, the consciousness started to change."

Burstyn is also in a feature film, Kornél Mundruczó's "Place to Be" alongside Taika Waititi, that's playing at the festival. She's feeling "slightly overwhelmed" by the whole thing.

"I have been asking myself, why do I deserve this? What have I done? It's a long career," she said. "And I finally came to it today that I wouldn't have had this career without my training."

Perhaps that is a bit modest for someone who has won an Oscar, for "Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore," a Tony and two Emmys for her acting. In her over 50 years in the business, she's appeared in around 150 films and is a co-president of The Actors Studio. Burstyn even teaches acting classes occa-

sionally, continuing the legacy of her mentor and acting coach Lee Strasberg.

"Her artistry, which could illuminate pain and everyday resilience with dignity, irony and courage, remains an absolute model of authenticity in performance and civic engagement within the craft of acting," festival director Alberto Barbera said in a statement.

Sitting alongside Gyllenhaal the day before the big award, she described her outfit, a gown, and wondered if it was too much. Her director assured her it wasn't: This was her day.

"I'm just really very happy to be here and very grateful to receive this award and grateful to this lady who put me in this interesting and deep and funny and wonderful movie," Burstyn said.

Sandra Bullock, Nicole Kidman return to their witchy roots

'Practical Magic' casts its spell anew, 28 years later

LOS ANGELES, Sept 8, (AP): Sandra Bullock and Nicole Kidman view "Practical Magic" very differently today than they did when they made it 28 years ago.

In 1998, the film received mixed reviews and had a modest box office performance. It has since become a cult favorite, embraced by a new generation who found the romantic comedy through social media clips. The two Oscar winners are returning to their roles of witchy sisters Sally and Gillian Owens in "Practical Magic 2," in theaters on Sept. 10, giving them a chance to reckon with the original's rocky reception and its unlikely second life.

Both films trace their roots to Alice Hoffman's novels: "Practical Magic," published in 1995, inspired the original film, while her 2021 novel "The Book of Magic" expands the Owens family's story and provides inspiration for the sequel.

Bullock recalls a promotional push for the original film that became memorable - for the wrong reasons.

"I had so much trauma from the press junket from the first one because it was brutal," Bullock recalls. "We were not well-received because we were 'too much,' 'too witchy,' 'too many women,' 'too many tones.' I'm like, 'Have you lived a day in a life as a woman?'"

"We didn't stumble, but it stumbled, but it didn't really stumble. Maybe it needed to marinate a little bit. We were marinating," said Bullock. "But here we are, and how lucky are we that we're still here to be able to go reap the benefits and the rewards of our work?"

The movie eventually found the audience it had missed in theaters, and Bullock said she realized there had been a reappraisal about six years ago.

"I was still harboring so much shame," she said. "I was like, 'Oh my god, the things that were said, I'm sorry, we thought we were doing something nice.' And turns out we did. It was just 28 and change years too early."

Part of that second life, Bullock believes, reflects a broader change in the way people have come to view the word "witch."

"A witch has always been a negative connotation. It was presented that way. The word is being taken back, and there's ownership of it from the community saying,



Sandra Bullock, left, and Nicole Kidman pose for photographers upon arrival at the premiere of the film 'Practical Magic 2' on Wednesday, Aug. 26, 2026, in London. (AP)

"I'm a witch and I'm proud," Bullock said.

For Kidman, the film's resurgence became personal. "People started just coming into my life who would go, 'You want to know what my favorite film of yours is? 'Practical Magic.' And suddenly I was like, 'What? Wow, OK,'" she said.

When it came time to make the sequel, Bullock sat down with her children and their friends to watch the original.

"I wanted fresh eyes," she said. "Because we were embarking on the new chapter, the new baby witches coming in. I wanted to understand it from a point of

view I didn't have. I wanted to see what they had to say."

As producers, Bullock and Kidman also faced the practical realities of mounting a legacy sequel on a budget. Among the challenges was recreating one of the original film's most recognizable elements: the Owens house.

The production rebuilt the house on a London back lot as a full structure, rather than the temporary exterior shell used for the original film.

"It was an incredibly tough fiscal time. We were hedging the dollar," Bullock said. "We're not a big superhero film, so you don't get the luxury of a big price tag."

Kidman added: "And we also knew the responsibility of bringing it in on a certain price because then you go, 'OK, we can breathe a bit,'" she said. "I think when a budget blows out, you're like, 'Oh my gosh, the stress.' And we don't need any more stress in our lives. It's stressful enough."

The sequel continues the story of the younger generation of Owens women, with Joey King and Maisie Williams playing Kylie and Antonia Owens, the daughters of Sally.

"I really appreciate that it's like a passing of the baton. I think it's beautiful," King said. "It just felt like we were stepping into their world and doing this with them, and it's a real gift and honor to be considered the people who are taking the batons."

Producer Denise Di Novi, who also produced the original and cast King in her first leading role in 2010's "Ramona and Beezus," said the new characters could carry the story forward.

"We would love to make a third one, and I think there's so much more to do with Kylie and Antonia," she said. "At the end of the movie, spoiler alert, but you kind of feel like the Sally and Gillian characters are kind of the elder aunts, you know, and Kylie and Antonia are the ones launching off into the world as witches."

Williams is also hoping to expand on the younger Owens women's story: "We're so there for it. There's so much more of 'Book of Magic' that we didn't get to explore," she said.

Proposals give under-16s more feed control & stronger protections

Australians may opt out of social algorithms

CANBERRA, Australia, Sept 8, (AP): Australian social media users would be given a choice to opt out of algorithms under proposed laws announced by the government Tuesday that would let users have more control over what they see on their social media feeds.

“We’ll require social media platforms to provide user empowerment tools that give people over the age of 16 genuine and enduring choice about what they see in their feeds,” Prime Minister Anthony Albanese told reporters in Canberra.

The proposed legislation would also protect children from content that promotes eating disorders, hostile ideas about women, pornography, crime, dangerous stunts and that causes serious mental health distress.

The move for more user control and to keep children safer online follows Australia introducing world-first laws in December last year that ban children younger than 16 from holding accounts on the world’s largest social media platforms including Instagram, Facebook and TikTok.

“It gives users choice and it will hold the big tech companies responsible for inaction. If they don’t follow our laws, they will face significant penalties,” Albanese added. Penalties under the proposed Digital Duty of Care legislation could be as high as 109.2 million Australian dollars (\$78.6 million).

Social media platforms would be required to send a notification to new and existing users offering them a choice over their default feed, a government statement said.

Users would be able to opt in to having their default feed include personalized content recommended by an algorithm. Alternatively, users could see the content of friends and creators they choose to follow. Digital services including online games, apps and artificial intelligence chatbots would also be required to protect children from design features that have negative behavioral impacts such as addictive features and those that have an effect on self-esteem, the statement said.

In April, Australia’s online safety watchdog said it was considering court action against Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok and YouTube, alleging they are not doing enough to keep Australian children younger than 16 off their platforms.



A teenage boy uses his phone in Sydney, Nov. 8, 2024. (AP)

Archaeology

Inscribed funerary façade

Spanish-Egyptian team finds 5th Dynasty tomb at Saqqara

CAIRO, Sept 8, (KUNA): A joint Spanish-Egyptian archaeological mission has discovered a tomb dating to the late Fifth Dynasty, specifically the reign of King Djedkare Isesi, in the Saqqara archaeological area in Giza Governorate.

In a statement Monday, the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities said that the newly discovered tomb is a medium-sized mastaba containing two funerary chapels.

One belonged to a man named Yunmin, who held several senior positions, including judge, court director and head of scribes responsible for reviewing petitions and complaints.

The second chapel belonged to his father, Iti, who held scribal positions related to the administration of agricultural lands and offerings, the statement added.

Secretary-General of the Supreme Council of Antiquities Dr. Hisham El-Leithy said the discovery was significant as it provides new archaeological information about the Saqqara necropolis during the late Fifth Dynasty.

It also sheds further light on the nature and architectural and artistic styles of tombs, as well as the administrative positions held by senior state officials during this period of ancient Egyptian history.

He noted that the mastaba site had been known since the excavations of French archaeologist Auguste Mariette in the 19th century, but had never previously undergone systematic archaeological excavation and documentation, giving particular importance to the mission’s work and the discovery.

Head of the mission from the University of Barcelona, Dr. Josep Oller, said the tomb contains two funerary chapels opening onto the eastern wall of the mastaba, with Yunmin’s main chapel located on the northern side.

Oller explained that excavations inside the chapel revealed a distinctive architectural façade bearing funerary texts and an offering formula, as well as a depiction of the tomb owner in a formal pose.

He added that the chapel walls were decorated with high-quality relief scenes depicting agricultural activities and processions transporting offerings to the tomb. Many of the scenes retained their original colors, reflecting the high artistic standards of artists of that period.

The southern chapel belonged to Iti, Yunmin’s father, and contains a false door and colored wall decorations depicting offering scenes, although a significant portion of the decorations has been lost.

The mission operates under a joint scientific project between the Autonomous University of Barcelona in Spain and Egypt’s Supreme Council of Antiquities and continues its archaeological excavations and research in the area north of Saqqara.



Yunmin’s mastaba tomb at Saqqara, newly uncovered by a Spanish-Egyptian mission and dating to the reign of King Djedkare Isesi. KUNA photos

70-meter Norman conquest embroidery draws crowds

Bayeux Tapestry returns to Britain after centuries



The 70-meter-long Bayeux Tapestry is displayed during a press preview at the British Museum in London after returning to England, following a historic agreement between the UK and France, Monday, Sept. 7, 2026. (AP)

LONDON, Sept 8, (AP): After a wait of almost 1,000 years and a journey of hundreds of miles, the Bayeux Tapestry’s big moment is here.

The embroidered panorama depicting the last successful invasion of England goes on public display at the British Museum this week, back on British soil for the first time since the 11th century.

Tickets are sold out for months, and the museum expects 1 million visitors to see the tapestry before the exhibition ends in July 2027. Schoolchildren across the U.K. will get special history lessons on it. King Charles III and French President Emmanuel Macron have already had a private viewing.

It’s an extraordinary level of excitement for what Prime Minister Andy Burnham jokingly called a 70-meter (230-foot) “reminder of one of Britain’s biggest defeats.”

Like a medieval comic strip, the tapestry tells a vivid tale of betrayal, bloodshed, suffering and conquest, depicting a pivotal moment in European history: the Norman conquest of England in 1066.

It illustrates events leading up to the Battle of Hastings, when William, Duke of Normandy defeated King Harold’s Anglo-Saxon army. The invasion made William the first Norman king of England, brought the French language and French settlers to England and forever intertwined the two countries’ fates.

Exhibition curator Michael Lewis said at a preview Monday that “1066 is the most important event in English history,” and there is a “propaganda element” stitched into the tapestry.

He said it was designed to tell English people that “Harold was king, you probably weren’t crazy to follow him, but the status quo has completely changed now. William is king and you need to kind of accept the new reality.”

The tapestry’s 58 scenes begin with English nobleman Harold Godwinson traveling to France, where he swears an oath to William, perhaps agreeing to back the duke’s succession to the English throne. But when English ruler Edward the Confessor dies, Harold is crowned king, leading William to assemble a fleet and set sail for England.

The final sections depict the climactic battle: archers with longbows, charging cavalry, sword-wielding knights, hand-to-hand combat and mutilated bodies.

Brutal violence sits alongside domestic detail. Soldiers steal livestock, cook dinner, eat using their shields as plates, burn down an English house as a woman and child flee. People steal from the bodies of the dead.

Margins at the top and bottom of the fabric brim with people, fish, dogs and winged beasts, sometimes acting as ironic commentary on the main action.

It remains remarkably vivid, and would have been even more powerful for its 11th-century viewers, Lewis said.

“Maybe they would even have tried to pick out themselves in the story of these events,” he said.

For historians, the tapestry is an invaluable source of insight into 11th-century life: shipbuilding, fashion, cuisine, architecture, armor, even astronomy. At one point Halley’s comet streaks across the sky, as it really did in 1066.

Scholars still debate its mysteries. Was the arrow that hits Harold in the eye, killing him, a later addition? A final scene, possibly depicting William’s coronation, is missing. Historians even argue about the exact number of equine and human penises on display - either 93 or 94.

Leonie Hicks, professor of medieval studies at

Canterbury Christ Church University, says one reason the tapestry remains so famous is because its vivid, childlike illustrations are “very meme-able.”

“It can be used to comment on current politics or mark memorable events,” Hicks wrote in a blog-post, noting a recent magazine cover that showed Burnham on horseback advancing on his predecessor Keir Starmer, depicted as Harold with an arrow in his eye.

“The margins contained Big Ben and Larry the cat,” she said.

The tapestry was likely commissioned by William’s half brother Bishop Odo of Bayeux and has spent almost 1,000 years in the French town. But historians believe it was probably stitched by women in southeast England, not far from the site of the battle. The king noted at a reception with Macron last week that it might just as accurately be called the Canterbury Embroidery.

Governments on both sides of the Channel have hailed its loan as a symbol of a Franco-British friendship. But getting it to London took years of diplomacy. After decades of failed British requests to borrow the tapestry, an agreement was announced in 2018, delayed by COVID-19 and Brexit tensions, and finally confirmed by Macron during a state visit to the U.K. last year.

Some French cultural figures, and the late British artist David Hockney, opposed the move because of the risk of damage to the fragile artifact.

Insured for 960 million euros (\$1.1 billion), the tapestry was nestled inside climate-controlled shockproof packaging before being transported by road and rail to the museum under police escort, arriving in the dead of night. It’s being displayed flat, in what curators say is a robust state-of-the-art case, rather than hanging as it was in Bayeux.

4 Renoir paintings stolen from French Riviera Museum

PARIS, Sept 8, (AP): Thieves stole four valuable Renoir paintings Tuesday from a small museum on the French Riviera, but abandoned two of them as they fled, the local mayor said. Police are searching for the perpetrators.

A group of “well-equipped” and “well-informed” thieves entered the Renoir Museum

in Cagnes-sur-Mer via the garden, the town’s mayor, Bryan Masson, told reporters at the scene.

They sliced through a fence with an electric knife or saw, entered the museum through the ground floor, and then cut the clips securing the artwork frames, Masson said in remarks carried

by local broadcaster Ici Azur.

The museum’s alarm system went off at 5:48 a.m. local time, and police arrived five minutes later, the mayor said. Their swift arrival “forced the burglars to flee in haste and helped limit the scale of the theft,” the mayor said in a written statement sent to The Associated Press.

Americans’ satisfaction with schools at low point, new Gallup finds

NEW YORK, Sept 8, (AP): Americans’ satisfaction with the quality of K-12 education in the country has hit a low point, driven by a growing political divide and concerns that schools are not preparing children for college and future jobs.

Just 32% of American adults say they are “completely” or “somewhat” satisfied with the U.S. school system, according to an August poll published Tuesday by Gallup and the Walton Family Foundation and shared exclusively with The Associated Press. That’s an 11-point drop over the past two years and the lowest since Gallup began poll-

ing on the subject 27 years ago.

At the same time, dissatisfaction has increased to a high of 67%.

Experts on education and school policy say the findings are deeply concerning but not surprising.

Democrats are driving the recent slide, with their satisfaction dropping about 19 points since President Donald Trump’s second term began in 2025. Independents’ satisfaction appears to be down as well, about 10 points from 2024, while Republicans’ satisfaction has also fallen slightly, about 6 points.



The headquarters of the U.S. Department of Education, March 12, 2025, in Washington. (AP)

The Trump administration has played a role in eroding public confidence by depicting schools as political battlegrounds, raising concerns about what teachers should be allowed to say in the classroom and moving to abolish diversity programs and dismantle the Education Department, said Jack Schneider, director of the Center for Education Policy at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

“It’s terrifying. We’re on the precipice of the dissolution of the public education system as we have known it,” Schneider said. Democrats, he said, are also particularly concerned by Trump’s signature school choice

program that will use taxpayer-supported scholarships to pay for kids’ private school tuition.

But politics alone does not explain the dissatisfaction. Gallup polling shows public confidence in schools generally has declined since the COVID-19 pandemic closed classrooms, exacerbating academic declines, mental health issues and other problems.

Headlines have consistently told a story of a national drop in test scores, especially in reading, which sends a message that schools have struggled to rebound since COVID lows.

Al-Sanad emphasizes importance of early diagnosis

Kuwait marks World DMD Day, highlights advances in care and treatment

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8: Official spokesperson of the Ministry of Health Dr. Abdullah Al-Sanad said the World Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy (DMD) Day, observed on Sept 7 annually, is an important occasion to raise awareness about this rare genetic disease, highlight the needs of those affected and their families, and emphasize the importance of early diagnosis and comprehensive healthcare.

Al-Sanad explained that DMD causes progressive muscle weakness, with symptoms typically appearing during childhood. He revealed that the ministry handles the disease through the implementation of a comprehensive system that includes awareness, prevention, diagnosis, treatment and ongoing follow up, tailored to the needs of each individual case and stage of the disease.

He stated that the healthcare journey starts with identifying cases through outpatient clinics, conducting the necessary tests to confirm the diagnosis, and then referring patients to the Kuwait Center for Genetic Diseases at the Ghanima Al-Ghanem Premature Infants and Genetics Building, for further evaluation, treatment and specialized follow up program.

He pointed out that healthcare is provided by a multidisciplinary team,

including specialists in neurology and musculoskeletal diseases, physical therapy and rehabilitation, cardiology, respiratory medicine, orthopedics, endocrinology and bone health, and nutrition and swallowing, in addition to genetic counseling and psychological, social and educational support.

He added that a comprehensive assessment is done upon diagnosis, as well as regular monitoring of muscle strength, mobility and response to treatment, and regular check of cardiac health, respiratory function, bone health, growth and nutrition. He said follow up is intensified according to the progress and needs of the patients, supporting the maintenance of their health, mobility, and independence as much as possible.

In the area of prevention, Al-Sanad disclosed that the Kuwait Center for Genetic Diseases, in coordination with the relevant departments and technical units in hospitals, provides genetic counseling and testing for families at risk of transmitting the disease, including pre-implantation genetic testing for medically appropriate cases.

He affirmed that Kuwait provides modern and approved treatments for

DMD patients, such as gene therapy for cases meeting medical criteria, within the framework of rigorous evaluation and specialized follow up, while keeping pace with advancements in the care of patients with genetic and rare diseases.

He highlighted the pioneering role of the country in raising global awareness of the disease, stating that during the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly, Kuwait submitted a draft resolution to declare Sept 7 as World Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy Day.

This draft resolution, sponsored by 128 countries, was adopted as Resolution A/RES/78/12 on Nov 29, 2023, and the occasion was officially recognized DMD Day starting in 2024.

Al-Sanad emphasized that this initiative embodies the deeply rooted humanitarian approach of Kuwait and its commitment to support those with rare diseases and their families, putting health and human rights issues among the priorities of international action.

He added that awareness, early diagnosis and regular follow up are essential for improving the quality of life of those affected. "Every person with DMD deserves access to appropriate care at the right time, and for him and his family to find an integrated health system that accompanies them through various stages of the treatment journey," he concluded.



Chairman of the Council of Ophthalmology Departments at the Ministry of Health, Dr. Ahmed Al-Foudari, inaugurates the Retinal and Vitreous Surgery Unit at Jahra Hospital.



The medical team performs the first precision retinal surgery at Jahra Hospital.



The medical team that performed the first precision retinal surgery at Jahra Hospital.

Kuwait launches advanced retinal surgery unit at Jahra Hospital

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8: The Ministry of Health (MoH) on Monday inaugurated the Retinal and Vitreoretinal Surgery Unit at Jahra Hospital's Ophthalmology Department, coinciding with the successful performance of the hospital's first precise and complex retinal surgery. The move marks a significant step in expanding and upgrading ophthalmology services across Kuwait, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press statement, the MoH confirmed that Dr. Abdulrahman Al-Otaibi carried out the first precision retinal surgery at Jahra Hospital, officially launching retinal and vitreous surgery services at the facility. The initiative

aims to bring specialized eye care closer to patients and reduce the need to refer complex cases to other hospitals.

Dr. Ahmed Al-Foudari, Chairman of the Council of Ophthalmology Departments at the MOH, said the new unit reflects the council's ongoing vision to provide comprehensive therapeutic and surgical ophthalmology services across all regions of Kuwait. He emphasized that improving the geographical distribution of specialized care will make it easier for patients to access treatment while raising the quality and efficiency of healthcare delivery.

Dr. Al-Foudari commended the medical and organizational efforts led by

Dr. Hussain Al-Ansari, Head of the Ophthalmology Department at Jahra Hospital, in preparing the department to offer this advanced level of precision surgery.

The inauguration of the Retinal and Vitreoretinal Surgery Unit represents a qualitative addition to Jahra Hospital's ophthalmology and surgical services, Dr. Al-Foudari noted. He described it as another milestone in the MOH's broader plan to develop precision medical services and expand their availability across government hospitals, enhancing access to specialized care and improving overall service quality.



Kate Fitzsimmons, right and Jacob Barefoot, center, gather plant material from a Kernza research field on July 28 at The Land Institute in Salina, Kan. (AP)

Farmers turn to perennial grains as one solution to extreme weather

BELOIT, Kansas, Sept 8, (AP): Bryce Black kneels in a wheat field battered by intense drought. He holds two strands, remarking on how small the seed head is compared with what's normal.

After a late October rain last year, the fourth-generation farmer was optimistic about his 1,800 acres (728 hectares) of winter wheat. But a dry winter and spring brought extreme drought when the wheat needed moisture to establish itself. He ended up harvesting about 1,500 acres (607 hectares), but the yield was the lowest he's had since taking over his family's farm in 2017.

"It was just a grit your teeth and get through it type of deal," said Black, who also grows corn, soybeans and milo on his family's 4,500-acre (1,821 hectare) farm. "It is disheartening, you know? And it's kind of hard to know what to do."

When these weather events occur, farmers often look for new ways to protect their crops and their bottom line.

A small number are putting perennial grains in rotation to build resilience against extreme weather like drought and intense rainfall. Researchers are working to develop perennial versions of common annual grains like wheat, sorghum and rice, but the work is slow. And widespread adoption by farmers is challenging because perennial crops don't yield as much, harvesting can be difficult and the market is still developing.

Despite the challenges, Black is intrigued.

"I'm in survival mode," he said. "If you can plant something and then you don't have to go back for four or five years ... that would save so

much money, so much labor, everything. That's what makes it enticing."

Five years ago, David Mueller planted a 12-acre (5 hectare) field of Kernza, a perennial grain similar to native grasses found in parts of Europe and western Asia.

Perennial grains don't require yearly planting, harvesting and replanting. Instead, they are planted once every few years.

Researchers say their root systems, which can reach several feet down, can access water deeper in the ground. That helps them better withstand short-term drought. And when heavy rain hits, the larger root structures can absorb excess water that would otherwise run off and erode the soil. Those deeper roots also sequester more carbon, reducing pollution in the atmosphere.

Kernza is one of several perennial grains under development at The Land Institute in Salina, Kansas, about an hour's drive north of Mueller's farm. The institute, which formally began domesticating Kernza in 2001, works with researchers and farmers around the world to develop perennial versions of wheat, rice, sorghum and other grain and oil seeds.

Some farmers in Southeast Asia and parts of Africa have started planting and harvesting perennial rice in their fields. Kernza, though, is furthest along and was first harvested on a farm in 2010.

In the U.S. last year, Kernza was cultivated on 3,511 acres (1,421 hectares), compared with 37.2 million acres (15.1 million hectares) of winter, spring and Durum wheat harvested or planted in 2025-26.

Mueller's Kernza field is one of

almost 100 acres (40 hectares) he has planted since 2018. He's used the crop to rebuild soil with drainage issues or to reestablish organic matter on his family's farm in Halstead, Kansas, where they also farm about 600 acres (243 hectares) each of corn and soybeans.

He also said Kernza uses about a third of the fertilizer that wheat needs, and because it's planted once every few years, he doesn't have to run gas-burning farm equipment as often.

"Not only are we able to utilize those acres profitably, but then we also build up that soil and work on some benefits to make it hopefully profitable to raise other crops on those fields in the future," Mueller said.

A 2024 United Nations report suggests that by 2050, soil degradation could cause more than \$20 trillion in losses to the global economy. Farming perennials is less disruptive to that carbon-capturing soil.

Soil serves as a reservoir, capturing planet-warming carbon dioxide from the atmosphere that plays a role in climate change, experts say. Annual cultivation - the plow, plant, harvest and repeat cycle - strains soil formation, which takes thousands of years and rapidly degrades the farmland. Perennial roots can also bring that carbon deeper into soils, where it is less likely to be disturbed, said Laura van der Pol, The Land Institute's lead soil ecologist.

And soil that has more carbon in it tends to be better for plants.

"Incorporating perennials into our agriculture seems like really the only option to have soil for generations if we want to continue to grow food," van der Pol said.

Cyclospora outbreak followed years of declining FDA foreign inspections

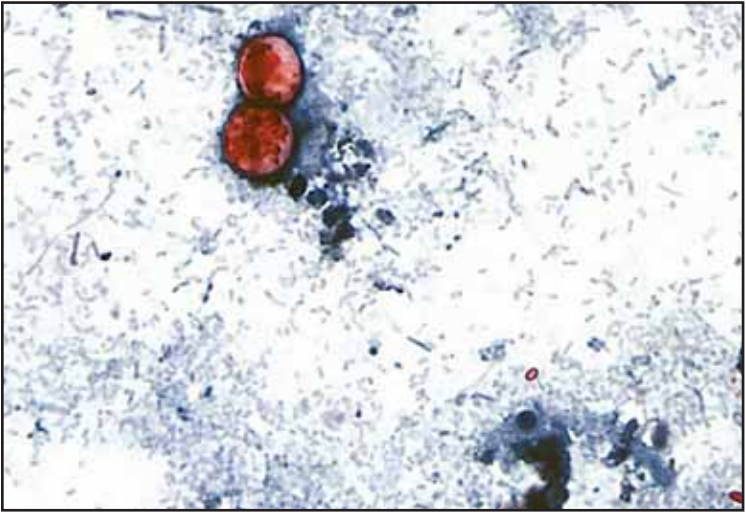
WASHINGTON, Sept 8, (AP): A nationwide outbreak of cyclospora tied to contaminated lettuce has heightened safety concerns about imported food, while underscoring a longer-term trend: U.S. regulators are conducting fewer international inspections to catch contaminated produce before it lands on American plates.

Food and Drug Administration inspections of foreign food sites - including the Mexican farm linked to the ongoing outbreak - are down nearly 35% since 2019, the year before the COVID-19 pandemic, according to agency records. The pandemic kicked off a wave of retirements and departures among FDA inspectors that continues to this day.

Even before COVID-19, the agency had long failed to hit its congressionally mandated targets for international inspections. And recent staffing cuts, reorganizations and other upheavals under President Donald Trump could mean even fewer inspections in the years ahead, according to former senior FDA officials.

"When you look at the numbers of inspections balanced against the responsibility of the FDA - in terms of all the firms domestically and internationally under its oversight - the agency just can't achieve what is required," said Michael Rogers, who spent nearly 35 years in various inspection roles within the agency. He added that FDA continues to do many things "very well with limited resources."

The Trump administration has proposed new approaches to stretch agency resources - including a pilot program of one-day inspections. Rogers and other officials say the abbreviated inspections are not equiva-



This undated photo taken through a microscope and provided by the CDC shows Cyclospora cayetanensis oocysts found in a fresh stool sample which had been prepared with a formalin solution and stained with safranin. (AP)

lent to traditional ones, which can take a week or more to document serious problems.

FDA officials have long made the case that inspections are only one tool to oversee safety.

"Inspections will never be the only way to ensure the safety of imported products given the massive volume coming into the country," said Susan Mayne, FDA's former food director who is now at Yale University. "That's why FDA uses border inspections, importer inspections, sampling and other tools."

But the outbreak in iceberg lettuce has also laid bare the potential downsides of those approaches.

In July, regulators were forced to retract a faulty test result that they claimed found cyclospora on a sample of Taylor Farms' lettuce obtained at the border. Despite the error, FDA officials say they are confident the

company's farm is the source of the diarrhea-causing parasite. Mexican food authorities, however, say they have not found any positive samples or other red flags there.

A spokesperson for the Department of Health and Human Services, which oversees FDA, said the agency's investigation is ongoing. Additionally, FDA officials are studying how many foreign inspections should be conducted annually "to ensure oversight comparable" to the U.S. food supply.

FDA inspectors arrived at the Taylor Farms site in Guanajuato, Mexico, in mid-August, about one month after the recall was announced July 17.

It was their first visit there since 2019. That year marked an all-time high for foreign food inspections before the FDA pulled most of its staff from the field during the pandemic.

Study finds strong genetic link between gut health, depression

SYDNEY, Sept 8, (Xinhua): Researchers in Australia have identified a strong genetic link between gut-related health conditions and depression, offering new insights into why physical illnesses often accompany the mental health condition.

Physical illnesses can contribute substantially to poor health outcomes in people with depression, who die up to 12 years earlier than those without the condition, according to a statement released Tuesday by Australia's QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute.

The study, published in Nature Genetics, examined the genetic relationship between major depressive disorder and four groups of physical diseases: cardiovascular, metabolic, gastrointestinal and immune disorders.

While all four groups were genetically linked to depression, gastrointestinal diseases including irritable

bowel syndrome, gastroesophageal reflux disease, gallstone disease and peptic ulcer disease showed the strongest association, the statement said.

Researchers found that genetic risk factors linked to these physical illnesses overlapped with almost half of those involved in depression.

Lead author and QIMR Berghofer PhD Student **Damian Woodward**, said the findings highlighted the importance of looking beyond the brain when treating depression.

"We found gastrointestinal diseases had the strongest shared genetic relationship with depression, confirming that the gut-brain axis plays a key role in why depression commonly occurs alongside physical illness," Woodward said.

"The gut is often referred to as the second brain, sharing many of the same signaling chemicals and containing a high number of nerve cells," Woodward said, adding that the study identified genetic factors affecting communication between the gut and brain that may contribute to depression, gut dysfunction and immune-related conditions.



Woodward

Pakistan asks public to ignore speculation amid discipline probe

PCB initiates inquiry after recalling 7 players from England

ISLAMABAD, Sept 8, (AP): The Pakistan Cricket Board is conducting an internal “disciplinary” inquiry against unnamed players after recalling seven cricketers and two coaches midway through the tour of England. “The PCB has initiated an internal disciplinary inquiry following media reports concerning discipline and conduct, which are currently being reviewed internally,” its media director Amir Mir said on X. “The PCB handles such matters in accordance with its standard procedures. The process is being conducted under PCB regulations, ensuring that all concerned individuals are given due consideration.” There was speculation in local media that the PCB had obtained data from the mobile phones of Imam-ul-Haq and Mohammad Rizwan before both players flew back to Pakistan.

According to Geo News, the phones of both players were taken into possession by the team’s security officer after Pakistan lost the second test by 194 runs at Lord’s. The news channel said phones were handed back to the players hours before they left UK. “At this stage, any speculative reports or unverified claims circulating on certain platforms, particularly those originating from hostile external sources, should not be regarded as credible,” Mir said. “The Board advises stakeholders and the public to rely on official PCB communications.” Pakistan made sweeping changes in a knee-jerk reaction to its two brutal defeats at Lord’s and Headingley in the first two tests of the three-match series. The PCB not only summoned back seven play-



In this file photo, Pakistan’s Mohammad Rizwan, left, stands with batting partner Saud Shakeel as they await third umpire’s decision on Rizwan’s wicket on day four of the second cricket test match between England and Pakistan in London. (AP)

ers, it also replaced test coach Sarfaraz Ahmed with Mike Hesson and brought in bowling coach Ashley Noffke to take over from Umar Gul. Noffke was unaware of any disciplinary inquiry as Pakistan prepared for the third and final test, starting in Birmingham from Wednesday. “I sit outside of that decision-making model,” Noffke told reporters after the team’s practice session at Edgbaston. “There’s one thing that I’ve learnt about being in Pakistan and coaching for a period of time -- nearly 15 months now with the white ball team - is there’s always something going on in the background. And whether or not it’s in or out of our control, most of the time it’s out of the player’s control, they need to focus on the cricket that they have in front of them because there’s some really

great opportunities here for young cricketers that are highly skilled.” One of the four selectors Aaqib Javed and PCB chairman Mohsin Naqvi have defended the changes midway through the series, which have drawn criticism from the likes of former Pakistan cricketers Shahid Afridi and Shoaib Malik. Wicketkeeper-batter Rizwan, opening batter Imam and Salman Ali Agha, who captained the team in the first test, were among the first batch of the seven players who left the team before Hesson had joined the squad in the UK. Fast bowler Khurram Shahzad and left-arm spinner Ali Usman both played in the first two tests before being released while all-rounder Aamir Jamal and Mohammad Awaiz were sent home without getting a chance at either Lord’s or Headingley.

Pietersen joins England as mentor

Bavuma to lead South Africa against Australia in ODI series

JOHANNESBURG, Sept 8, (AP): Captain Temba Bavuma was named in South Africa’s one-day international cricket squad on Monday for a three-game series at home against Australia this month. Bavuma will lead the Proteas after being rested for an ODI series away against Namibia starting on Wednesday. South Africa plays Australia in 50-over games on Sept. 24, 27 and 30, before a three-test series between them next month. Fast bowler Gerald Coetzee was also recalled after last playing an ODI at the 2023 Cricket World Cup in India. Batsmen Quinton de Kock and David Miller were included in the 16-man squad, while Aiden Markram will be available for the second and third ODIs, Cricket South Africa said in a statement. Fast bowler Kagiso Rabada was out of the series with injury. **South Africa:** Temba Bavuma (captain), Ottneil Baartman, Corbin Bosch, Matthew Breetzke, Gerald Coetzee, Quinton de Kock, Tony de Zorzi, Bjorn

Fortuin, Marco Jansen, Keshav Maharaj, Kwen Maphaka, Aiden Markram, David Miller, Lungi Ngidi, Ryan Rickelton, Tristan Stubbs. Meanwhile, former England batsman Kevin Pietersen has been named a specialist mentor to help England’s men white-ball team succeed at next years’ World Cup in southern Africa, the England and Wales Cricket Board said. Pietersen will join up with England men’s white ball head coach Brendon McCullum for September’s IT20 ODI series against Sri Lanka and will go on the team’s white-ball tours to Australia and South Africa in the winter, home series against Pakistan and New Zealand in the summer and the 50-over World Cup co-organized by South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia Oct. 4 - Nov 21. “Putting on the England uniform again for the first time since 2014 is a profound honor and a deeply special moment,” Pietersen said. “We have an incredibly talented white-ball squad, and I am excited to get in the trenches and work relentlessly hard with these players to maximize their potential. To be a part of Brendon’s think tank over the next 12 months is a fantastic opportunity, and I cannot wait to get started.” McCullum welcomed the move. “I’m particularly excited for our batters to get the opportunity to work with him,” he said. “(He) has a unique understanding of what it takes to perform at the highest level, which will be hugely valuable to our players. We’ve always respected each other and had a strong appreciation for what the other brings to the game, so I’m really looking forward to working together.” Pietersen scored more than 5,500 runs for England in 136 ODIs and 37 T20 matches. In his 104 test matches, he scored 8,181 runs. He was dismissed from the England team after an embarrassing 5-0 loss at the 2013-14 Ashes series in Australia. Pietersen was a mentor for Delhi Capitals in the Indian Premier League last year.



In this file photo, South Africa’s captain Temba Bavuma leaves the field after losing his wicket during the third One Day International cricket match between India and South Africa in Visakhapatnam, India. (AP)

Best of the Rest

Mac Allister ‘sad’ over contract: Liverpool midfielder Alexis Mac Allister says he was left “very, very sad” by the club’s decision not to offer him a contract extension. He’s still holding out hope for a new deal. Mac Allister, a Premier League winner with Liverpool in 2024-25, said on Tuesday he had options to leave Liverpool in the offseason. He argued he doesn’t need to prove he deserves the sort of extension given to his midfield teammates Dominik Szoboszlai and Ryan Gravenberch this year. “I received the news that the club was not in a position to offer me a new contract, which of course makes me very, very sad because I think everyone can see that I give my 100% for this football club every single day in training, games,” he said ahead of Liverpool’s Champions League opener against Atletico Madrid on Wednesday. “I see Dominik and Ryan renewing their contracts and that makes me very happy because they deserve it, but at the same time it makes me a little bit sad that I didn’t get mine. Of course, there is still time. I think the fans don’t need to worry because I will give my 100% until the last day I’m here. (AP)

❑ ❑ ❑

Injured Lyles ends season: Olympic champion sprinter Noah Lyles shut down his season because of injury and will not compete for the \$150,000 first prizes in this week’s track Ultimate Championships. Lyles, who grabbed his left hamstring and pulled up in the final of the 200 meters at U.S. nationals in July, said on social media he discovered he had a “small strain” after that race that “caused some other things to flare up, and it’s made it hard for me to continue practicing.” Lyles’ name was not on the entry list released Monday by World Athletics for the first-of-its-kind event, which begins Friday. (AP)

❑ ❑ ❑

Ecclestone held at Portugal airport: Former Formula 1 boss Bernie Ecclestone was detained at a Portuguese airport on Monday - and released hours later - for possession of a firearm. Ecclestone, 95, arrived at Tires Airport near Lisbon, where officers from the Portuguese Public Security Police airport division found a shotgun in his possession for which he lacked a permit. In an interview with the Daily Mail, Ecclestone admitted he brought the weapon from Switzerland for pigeon shooting. (AP)

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Usyk won’t be a ‘back-up plan’ after Fury suggests fight with Joshua is off

LONDON, Sept 8, (AP): Oleksandr Usyk won’t be Tyson Fury’s “back-up plan” after Fury challenged Usyk to a trilogy fight because he can’t nail down a long-awaited bout with Anthony Joshua. Negotiations for a lucrative all-British fight between former heavyweight champions Fury and Joshua have dragged on without a firm date or venue, and key financial questions left open.

In a video packed with insults and expletives on Instagram late Sunday, Fury laid the blame with Joshua, branding him “weak-minded” and suggesting he lacked the courage to take the fight. “This will only lead me to a fight with Oleksandr Usyk,” Fury said. But Usyk’s manager Sergey Lapin said in a statement to Sky Sports News that “Usyk is not Tyson’s back-up plan. If Fury needs an

opponent, he should visit the Ready to Fight platform. They can help him find a worthy opponent there. “Oleksandr is always open to big challenges. But serious intentions are backed by a concrete offer, not statements in the press.” Usyk (25-0) vacated his three heavyweight world titles in June and said he wanted one “last dance” fight before retirement. He beat

Fury twice in 2024. “Let’s do it again. Let’s run it back in November,” Fury said. “The ball is now in your court, Oleksandr. Do you want to fight me this year, 2026, or are you calling quits? Let me know because I am now looking for a new opponent.” Fury (36-2-1) and Joshua (30-4) both won tuneup fights in July that were expected to be a prelude to their all-British bout.

BERLIN, Sept 8, (AP): Breanna Stewart and Napheesa Collier set the tone early to help the U.S. bounce back from its worst offensive performance in 50 years.

Stewart had 11 of her 19 points in the first quarter and Collier scored seven of her 12 in the second as the Americans routed the Czech Republic 105-64. “I just wanted to be better. I just wanted to really lead by example,” Stewart said. “Not only just from stats, but just the way that I was communicating to my teammates. This is a big moment for all of us and we need to take full advantage of it.” Stewart was coming off the worst shooting game in her stellar career for USA Basketball. She missed her first eight shots against Italy on Sunday before hitting the go-ahead basket in the 55-52 gritty win on Sunday. She got going early against the Czechs and finished 8 of 11 from the field to along with seven rebounds and six assists while playing only 17 minutes. “I knew the ball had to go in the basket for me, like come on,” Stewart said with a smile. “I was trying to get out early, rebound and run and put pressure on the rim. I thought that overall as a team, we did a really good job of seeing the lanes that we weren’t running last night and running them today.” The Americans won their 33rd in a row in the tournament, going back to a semifinal loss to Russia in the 2006 World Cup. Next up for the U.S. is the quarterfinal round on Thursday. They’ll face the winner of the Hungary vs. Japan game which takes place Tuesday. Stewart had 11 points in the first 10 minutes as the U.S. jumped out to a 29-15 lead. The Americans had only 30 points in the first half against Italy. They kept it going in the second quarter behind Collier. “We weren’t happy with our performance yesterday, really on either



Czechia’s Julie Pospisilova guards Breanna Stewart, of the United States, during the Women’s Basketball World Cup match between the United States and Czechia in Berlin. (AP)

side,” Collier said. “So just coming with the mindset that we’re going to play as hard as we can, we’re going to be aggressive.” U.S. coach Kara Lawson said she just needed to remind her two veterans how good they are between the two games. “They’re both complete players and there’s no doubt when they’re playing at a really high level our team clicks and so it was it was great to see them both come out with great aggression with great confidence. Confident in who they are and what we were doing.” The Americans extended the advantage to 57-33 at the half. They weren’t challenged in the second half by the Czechs as the lead ballooned to more than 40 points. Stewart finished short of her World Cup career-high of 23 points set against China in 2018.

The Czech Republic finished winless in pool play. The Czechs were playing in their first World Cup since 2014. They won the silver medal when they hosted the event in 2010. Also in Group B, Hungary (2-1) defeated South Korea (1-2) 82-73 to finish second. Iyana Martin led Spain to a 79-59 win over Japan with 20 points and four rebounds, sending Spain (2-1) straight through to the quarterfinals as Group A winner because of its head-to-head record against Germany. Japan finished third in the group while Mali was eliminated despite its shock win over Spain on Saturday. After running the United States close the night before, Italy struggled to find the same energy levels in a 71-51 defeat to China, which secured second place in Group D and a play-

off against Puerto Rico on Wednesday. China’s 7-foot-3 teenage sensation Zhang Ziyu scored 8 points while Han Xu lead the team with 19 points and 10 rebounds in front of a raucous crowd at the Max-Schmeling-Halle in Berlin. Matilde Villa led Italy with 15 points and acknowledged the game against the U.S. on Sunday took a toll. “We spent a lot of energy, mentally and physically, and I think we felt it,” Villa told the Associated Press. “But yes, we didn’t approach the game in the right way, and this has to be a lesson for us. Now we will take a day off, recover, and then we will think about the next game.” Italy (1-2), back in the tournament after a 32-year wait, next faces Australia on Wednesday for a place in the quarterfinals.

Antonelli’s feat at Monza shows how he’s shifting F1 spotlight from Ferrari in Italy

MONZA, Italy, Sept 8, (AP): For so long, Formula 1 in Italy has meant Ferrari. No longer. Or at least not for now. Not with Kimi Antonelli dominating the series. The 20-year-old Mercedes driver’s charge from the back to win his home grand prix sealed Antonelli’s place in the pantheon of Italian sports performances. Having started 19th, it was the furthest back any driver came from to win in more than four decades. What’s more is that Antonelli became the first home driver to win the Italian GP in 60 years. “We’ve seen it with other great ones in the past - Lewis (Hamilton), who did it at some of the races - that’s what he’s shown,” Mercedes team principal Toto Wolff said after Sunday’s race. “There’s just no stopping when a driver and a car are one. There’s nothing that can stop them.” In an editorial, the Gazzetta dello Sport called it “one of the most memorable” feats in F1 history. And it happened on a day to forget for Ferrari. Hamilton, the seven-time world champion who



Mercedes driver Andrea Kimi Antonelli of Italy celebrate on the podium after winning the Italian Formula One Grand Prix race, in Monza, Italy. (AP)

Antonelli replaced at Mercedes, finished sixth - more than 20 seconds behind Antonelli - and Ferrari teammate Charles Leclerc crashed just five minutes in. Ferrari fans cheered at the end anyhow - for

Antonelli. When he body surfed on the crowd that invaded the track for the podium celebration, most of the fans holding him aloft were wearing red Ferrari hats. “Even the red-clad Ferrari fans have fallen in love with (Antonelli), dedicating the same amount of cheers as they had for Michael Schumacher, Fernando Alonso and Charles Leclerc when they won the Italian Grand Prix,” the Gazzetta said. The Gazzetta added that Antonelli joins Alberto Tomba, Marco Pantani, Valentino Rossi and Jannik Sinner among Italy’s sports heroes, calling him “just a kid who lives next door” who has become “a superhero.” Antonelli celebrated in true Italian style - by eating spaghetti from the trophy’s bowl. It was a well-deserved meal. Antonelli had to perform 26 passes to take the checkered flag in the biggest charge from the back since 1983 when John Watson won at Long Beach from starting 22nd.

Head coach praises players for their commitment

Niaz: Al-Sulaibikhat training camp progressing well

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

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8: Al-Sulaibikhat has stepped up preparations for the volleyball 2026-2027 season with a training camp in Cairo, Egypt, where the team played its first friendly match as part of its intensive preparations. The camp runs until September 17.

Al-Sulaibikhat faced Misr Petroleum in the opening friendly, with Tunisian head coach Niaz Salam using the game to work on the team's technical and tactical organization, as well as its collective performance.

The camp is also focused on improving the players' physical and technical fitness while building greater understanding and cohesion within the squad, particularly following the arrival of several new players.

Al-Sulaibikhat will play its second friendly against the Egyptian Army next Sunday before taking



A file photo of Al-Sulaibikhat players in action.

on Zamalek the following Tuesday in its third warm-up game.

Salam praised the players for their commitment to the camp's demanding schedule, which in-

cludes two training sessions each day, morning and evening. He said the opening friendly provided valuable lessons for the team and thanked the club's management

for arranging the camp, which he believes will benefit the squad during the domestic season.

The coaching staff sees the Cairo camp as an important opportunity to assess the team's readiness and evaluate individual performances, particularly those of the new arrivals and foreign professionals. The club is hoping the preparations will lay the foundation for a strong campaign and competitive results in the upcoming season.

The delegation is headed by Salem Mutaib and includes Egyptian technical director Ahmed Refaat, Tunisian head coach Niaz Salam and 20 players. The squad's foreign professionals are Ghanaian Ibrahima and Cuban Yassel.

The team also includes recent signings Mubarak Abdulhadi, Nasser Dashti, Abdulrazzaq Al-Loghani, Yousuf Kated, Abdulrahman Al-Mutawa and Faisal Muhareb, along with Abdullah Gholoum, who has joined on loan from Qadsia.

Political neutrality breached

Infantino faces fresh ethics complaint over Trump ties



FIFA President Gianni Infantino with US President Donald Trump.

ZURICH, Sept 8: FIFA President Gianni Infantino is facing a fresh ethics complaint accusing him of abusing his authority and breaching political neutrality over his close relationship with US President Donald Trump.

Human rights group FairSquare has submitted the complaint to FIFA's Ethics Committee, alleging that Infantino violated several provisions of FIFA's Code of Ethics.

According to the complaint, the incidents cited all involve Trump and collectively suggest that Infantino abused his position in an effort to gain the US president's favor.

"Taken together, these incidents provide compelling evidence that, in his pursuit of favor with the US president, the FIFA president has abused his authority, violated his duty of political neutrality and breached his duty of loyalty, at a minimum," the complaint said.

FairSquare also alleged that evidence pointing to Infantino seeking personal benefits from such conduct makes the accusations particularly serious.

Four of the eight incidents cited in the latest complaint were also included in a submission filed by the organization last December, following FIFA's decision to award its inaugural Peace Prize to Trump, which attracted widespread criticism.

FairSquare said the new complaint includes allegations concerning Infantino's involvement in the controversy surrounding the red card shown to US forward Folarin Balogun during the World Cup hosted by the United States, Mexico and Canada earlier this year.

FIFA suspended Balogun's ban following his red card, allowing him to feature in the US team's next match after Trump reportedly intervened through a phone call with Infantino.

The organization described the latest allegations as evidence of a recurring pattern of misconduct and failures at the highest level of football leadership.

Infantino is also under pressure over plans to sell stakes in FIFA competitions, including the World Cup, to private investors. Those plans were subsequently abandoned.

The controversy has developed into one of the biggest challenges of Infantino's presidency since he took office in 2016. UEFA has threatened to boycott FIFA events and is preparing legal action over the proposed investment plans, citing concerns about possible breaches of fiduciary duties.

Despite the growing criticism, Infantino has confirmed that he will stand for re-election as FIFA president in March.

Neom achieves major feat

Al-Hilal's 47-game unbeaten run in Saudi league shattered by home loss

RIYADH, Sept 8, (AP): Al-Hilal's 47-game unbeaten run in the Saudi Pro League ended after a 2-0 home loss to Neom on Monday.

It was the first league defeat for coach Simone Inzaghi, who arrived from Inter Milan in June 2025, and it also stopped Al-Hilal's perfect start of five wins in five matches this season.

Inzaghi selected all three of his high-profile attackers, signed this summer from Premier League clubs for a combined fee reported at more than \$200 million.

Brazil international Gabriel Martinelli made his first start since arriving in Riyadh from Arsenal on Thursday, four days after former Aston Villa striker Ollie Watkins joined. Cyrenscio Summerville signed for the 19-time Saudi champion in July from West Ham.

Despite such firepower, Al-Hilal failed to hit the target for the first time this season and went behind after 15 minutes as former Chelsea defender Kalidou Koulibaly scored an own goal. Ivory Coast midfielder Amadou Kone added the second just before halftime.

Cristiano Ronaldo's Al-Nassr can move level on points with league leader Al-Hilal with a win on Thursday against Abha.



Neom players celebrate victory over Al-Hilal.

"We achieved a major feat and came away with a great result. I am extremely happy with what the team produced," Galtier said at the post-match press conference.

"We entered the game with the right mentality, and I asked the players to make things difficult for Al-Hilal throughout the match. Games like this require some luck, and we got it today. I hope this victory gives us an additional boost and raises our ambitions for the coming period," he added.

Resilient Lazio goes joint top



Udinese's Jurgen Ekkelenkamp, left, and Lazio's Romano Floriani Mussolini in action during the Serie A soccer match between Udinese and Lazio in Udine, Italy. (AP)

Sociedad takes dramatic victory Elche

MILAN, Sept 8, (AP): Lazio won for the third time in a row in Serie A while Real Sociedad beat struggling Elche 3-2 in a gripping game and Getafe and Celta Vigo drew 1-1 in La Liga.

Davide Frattesi scored for the third game in succession as Lazio came from a goal behind to beat Udinese 2-1.

Frattesi got winners for Lazio in 1-0 wins over Genoa and Bologna and he slid in to convert a low cross in the 75th minute to cancel out Jesper Karlstrom's 49th minute opener.

He was replaced by Albert Gudmundsson a few minutes later and two minutes from time the Icelandic bulleted home a header on his Lazio debut.

The win took Lazio joint top with nine points from three games, alongside Roma and Inter Milan.



Lazio's Davide Frattesi celebrates scoring during the Serie A soccer match between Udinese and Lazio in Udine, Italy. (AP)

Udinese remained in 10th.

Daniel Maldini, who was on loan from Atalanta, put Cagliari a goal up when he glanced home a header from a first half corner and, although the home side was on top

for most of the match it could not add to the score.

Paul Mendy saw a low shot hit the base of the post early in the second half and Maldini struck the woodwork with a free kick soon after.

The win lifted Cagliari into the top half of the table, while Lecce fell to 14th.

Real Sociedad won away from home in La Liga for the first time since February thanks to a 90th minute goal from Luka Sucic.

Job Ochieng put Sociedad 1-0 up after 11 minutes and Yangel Herrera added a second with the help of a goalkeeping flap 20 minutes later.

However, momentum shifted after Sociedad's Jon Martin was shown a red card for a bad tackle in the 65th.

On-loan striker Thomas Lemar got a goal back for Elche four minutes later and then Fer Nino bundled home an equalizer nine minutes later.

Elche missed a string of opportunities to grab its first win of the

season and it paid the price when Susic scored on the break in the dying seconds.

Sociedad was ninth, with seven points from five games, while Elche was joint bottom with one point.

Celta Vigo was still looking for its first win of the season after drawing at Getafe 1-1.

Celta failed to clear a corner kick from the right and Uruguayan striker Martin Satriano pounced on the loose ball to score the opener from point-blank range.

Celta's equalizer after 57 minutes also came from a corner, Carl Starfelt heading home the counter.

Getafe's Zaid Romero was sent off after receiving a second yellow card midway through the second period and although Celta pushed forward for the winner it was not to be for a team with just two goals in five league matches this term.

Getafe was in 15th place, and Celta was a place and a point behind.

Erasmus urges Boks backs to risk more as series finale with New Zealand looms

BALTIMORE, Sept 8, (AP): South Africa finally spread its wings in the rugby test series with New Zealand and coach Rassie Erasmus wants his side to fly high in the finale.

The Springboks, from 1-0 down, seek to win the series 3-1 on Saturday at the NFL home of the Baltimore Ravens while the All Blacks are hoping to square the first traditional series between them in 30 years.

South Africa scored one try in the first test (lost), three tries in the second test (won) and four in the third test (won) last Saturday in Johannesburg where they were at their most expensive yet.

Their traditional set-piece strength was decisive - a penalty try from a pushover scrum and a lineup maul that marched New Zealand back to its posts - but the forwards' fearsome power was complemented by two well-taken backline tries.

"Damian (de Allende) was good on Saturday, Jesse (Kriel) was very good, Ethan (Hooker) did well, so I think the guys are getting better," Erasmus said on Monday at the

team announcement.

He praised the changes in their evolving attack coached by former All Black Tony Brown.

Erasmus believed they might have put too much focus in the first test on stopping New Zealand and not taking more risks in a game they controlled for the first hour at Ellis Park.

"At the end of the day you just need to outscore your opposition," Erasmus said. "If it means they score four tries and you kick five drop goals like Jannie de Beer at the 1999 World Cup against England, you just need to score more points than them."

Erasmus made only two changes to the side which beat New Zealand 29-24 last Saturday for the fourth test.

Damian Willemse returned to fullback for the injured Cheslin Kolbe, and scrumhalf Morné van den Berg was given his first start in the series, dropping Cobus Reinach to the reserves.

"We feel that the team is well settled and all the players delivered in their respective roles in the last

two matches, so we believe selecting the same matchday squad, and naming Damian back in his regular position, makes sense," Erasmus said.

Kolbe broke his jaw making a tackle. He covered for Willemse, who suffered a hamstring problem in the second test.

As for the No. 9 jersey, Erasmus rewarded Van den Berg for "a fantastic impact" off the bench.

Kolbe's injury and Sacha Feinberg-Mngomezulu's yellow card drew Manie Libbok in at flyhalf from the 10th minute, and he excelled. But Erasmus wasn't persuaded to retain Libbok at flyhalf and Feinberg-Mngomezulu at fullback in Baltimore.

"Manie definitely did really well for us," the coach said. "There are some areas where Sacha's not 100% hit his straps for us yet. But we must remember he was out for a very long time (after ankle surgery in May) and it's only his fourth game back."

"Manie, we feel he can come on after five minutes if Sacha gets injured, and we know he can handle

the pressure, but we might need him later in the game like we did last weekend."

Erasmus said he could have played flyhalf Handre Pollard, who was withdrawn from the second test because of a calf injury. But he added Pollard and lock Franco Mostert, who has been sidelined since June, were on track to face Australia on Sept. 26 in Perth.

New Zealand names its side on Thursday and changes are guaranteed after series-ending injuries to captain and No. 8 Ardie Savea (shoulder), flanker Luke Jacobson (elbow) and center Quinn Tupaea (knee).

Squad

South Africa: Damian Willemse, Kurt-Lee Arendse, Jesse Kriel, Damian de Allende, Ethan Hooker, Sacha Feinberg-Mngomezulu, Morné van den Berg, 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, Cobus Reinach, Manie Libbok.

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Arsenal's Viktor Gyokeres, front right, plays the ball during a training session in London, Tuesday, Sept. 8, 2026, ahead of the Champions League soccer match between Napoli and Arsenal. (AP)

Sports

Preliminary agreement reached for friendly against Lusail

Kuwait heads to Doha with 19 players for Gulf Cup preparations

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

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8: Kuwait will travel to Doha at 3 p.m. today for a short training camp as part of its preparations for the 27th Gulf Cup in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, from September 23 to October 6.

The camp is expected to include a friendly against Qatari club Lusail on September 13, subject to final confirmation.

Kuwait will begin the Doha camp with 19 players, with eight Kuwait Club players excluded as they prepare to face UAE side Al-Wahda on September 16 in the AFC Champions League Two. The players are Khaled Al-Rashidi, Saud Al-Houshan, Mohsen Falah, Reda Hani, Abdullah Al-Qurzaei, Ahmed Al-Dhafiri, Mohammad Daham and Yousuf Nasser.

Portuguese coach Helio Sousa has selected 27 players for the national team, including the eight Kuwait Club players who will join the squad later.

The rest of the squad comprises Abdulrahman Al-Fadhli, Rakan Al-Saeed, Fahad Al-Hajeri, Khaled Sabah, Yousuf Al-Haqan, Abdulaziz Naji, Abdulwahab Al-Awadhi, Rashed Al-Dosari, Muath Al-Dhafiri, Khaled Al-Morshed, Jassim Al-Matar, Athbi Shehab, Nasser Faleh, Mahdi Dashti, Eid Al-Rashidi, Yousuf Majed, Mubarak Al-Feneini, Abdullah Al-Awadhi and Shabib Al-



Players intensify training for the Gulf Cup.

Khalidi.

The Blues wrapped up its Kuwait training at Ali Sabah Al-Salem Stadium before heading to Doha. The team will then travel to Jeddah next Monday for a longer camp that will run until the start of the Gulf Cup and include a friendly against Yemen on September 18.

Kuwait has been drawn in Group A alongside hosts Saudi Arabia, Oman and Iraq. The Blue will face Saudi Arabia in the tournament opener on September 23, meet Iraq on September 26 and conclude the group stage against Oman on September 29.

Group B features Bahrain, the UAE, Qatar and Yemen.

Dr. Abdulmajid Al-Bannai, head of the Kuwait Football Federation's medical committee, said psychological factors can contribute to injuries, particularly muscle cramps and tears.

He stressed that clubs are responsible for ensuring national team players arrive at camp in strong physical condition.

Al-Bannai said the current injuries within the Kuwait squad are mainly bruises of varying degrees, with Mohammad Daham and Rashed Al-Dosari among those affected.

He added that if the recovery process continues positively, Kuwait should enter the Gulf Cup with a complete squad.

Rybakina surges into US Open quarterfinals as No. 1 beckons



Coco Gauff, of the United States, returns the ball to Iva Jovic, of the United States, during the fourth round of the U.S. Open tennis championships in New York. (AP)

Qualifier Qinwen makes a run to last eight

NEW YORK, Sept 8, (AP): Elena Rybakina overpowered Naomi Osaka at the U.S. Open and is a win away from the No. 1 ranking in women's tennis.

She just has to beat Zheng Qinwen, which won't be easy. Even when Zheng goes down - way, way down - she refuses to stay there.

Rybakina advanced to the quarterfinals Monday with a 6-1, 6-4 victory over Osaka in a matchup of power-hitting Grand Slam champions. The No. 2-seeded Rybakina is guaranteed to replace Aryna Sabalenka atop the WTA rankings if she reaches the semifinals in Flushing Meadows.

"Of course I want it, I don't know anyone who wouldn't wish this, but definitely that's one of my goals," Rybakina said. "I try to approach the same way, try to do everything I can, fight until the end my next match and let's see what's going to happen."

Trying to stop her will be Zheng, who made a daring escape from a 5-0 deficit for the second straight match. The 2024 Olympic gold medalist from China beat No. 8 seed Iga Swiatek 7-5, 6-3 to become the first qualifier to reach the final eight in Flushing Meadows since Emma Raducanu won the title in 2021.

Two days after she was down 5-0 in the third set before winning the final seven games to stun No. 22 Madison Keys 1-6, 7-6 (3), 7-5, Zheng quickly dropped the first five games against Swiatek, the 2022 U.S. Open champion.

"I guess to come back 0-5 yesterday is not lucky, that's all I can say," Zheng said.

Rybakina won the Australian

Open this year for her second major title and her No. 2 ranking is her career best. Even if she loses Wednesday, she can still get to No. 1 if neither Sabalenka, Coco Gauff or Jessica Pegula wins the title.

Rybakina was too good for Osaka, who won two of her four Grand Slam titles at the U.S. Open but appeared to be struggling with a foot or ankle problem. The match lasted just 1 hour, 6 minutes, with Rybakina closing it out with an ace. She leads the WTA Tour in that category.

Zheng was a U.S. Open quarterfinalist in 2023 and 2024 - the year she reached the Australian Open final - but after her ranked dropped following elbow surgery she had to go through qualifying this year to reach the main draw. Raducanu's title five years ago made her the first qualifier to win a Grand Slam title in the Open era, which dates to 1968.

Swiatek couldn't convert two set points serving at 5-1 and Zheng fought off another when Swiatek served with a 5-3 lead. She said she was so focused on each point that she even forgot the score.

Swiatek came in with a 7-1 record against Zheng, with the only loss two years ago in the Olympic semifinals in Paris. Zheng came back from a 4-0 deficit in the second set that day to stop Swiatek's 25-match winning streak at Roland Garros, where she has won four French Open titles.

Swiatek got treatment on her left thigh in the second set but said her problems were neither physical nor mental.

"It was more that I started making mistakes from easy balls and Qinwen stopped doing mistakes," Swiatek said. "She played the balls better."

Gauff beat No. 14 Iva Jovic 6-1, 6-4 to return to the U.S. Open quarterfinals

for the first time since winning her first major title at the tournament in 2023. She lost in the fourth round in each of the last two years.

The No. 4 seed will face French Open champion Mirra Andreeva, the No. 5 seed who came back to beat No. 24 Anastasia Potapova 5-7, 6-4, 6-3, after helping her opponent when she injured her knee in the final game of the match.

Botic van de Zandschulp outlasted Arthur Gea 3-6, 6-7 (0), 7-6 (7), 7-6 (3), 6-4 in 5 hours, 13 minutes, the fourth-longest match in U.S. Open history. He will play top-seeded Alexander Zverev, who beat No. 21 No. 21 Lucian Darderi 6-2, 6-2, 7-6 (3).

Gea, a Frenchman who got in the tournament when 2022 runner-up Casper Ruud pulled out with a back injury, had a match point in the third-set tiebreaker in a bid to become the first lucky loser to reach the quarterfinals of a men's major. A lucky loser is a player who loses in the final round of qualifying but reaches the main draw when another player withdraws.

Also going five sets - though a mere 3 hours, 50 minutes - was Karen Khachanov's 7-5, 4-6, 6-7 (6), 6-1, 6-4 victory over No. 14 Learner Tien. Tien was trying to give the host country four men in the U.S. Open quarterfinals for the first time since five made it in 1995. No. 8 Ben Shelton, No. 11 Frances Tiafoe and Alex Michelsen all advanced Sunday, along with defending champion Carlos Alcaraz.

Khachanov will play No. 28 seed Alexander Blockx, who beat No. 24 Francisco Cerundolo 6-3, 4-6, 7-5, 7-5 to become the first man from Belgium to reach the U.S. Open quarterfinals.

Kuwait Club renews contract of Lipovina

Kuwait gears up for Asian Games with final training camp in Japan

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8: The Kuwait national handball team will travel to Japan today for its final overseas training camp ahead of the 20th Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya, scheduled for September 19-29.

Kuwait will open its Group B campaign against Iran on the first day of competition. Kuwait's group also features Bahrain, Kazakhstan and South Korea.

Kuwait Handball Federation Secretary-General Qayed Al-Adwani heads the delegation, which also includes Treasurer Khaled Taleb and team manager Fahad Rabie. Icelandic coach Aron Kristjansson leads the technical staff, assisted by Heini Janssen, while Mehdi Al-Bakoush serves as physiotherapist.

The 16-player squad consists of Hussein Dashti, Mohammad Buayabes, Hassan Safar, Abdullah Al-Khamis, Saleh Al-Mousawi, Saif Al-Adwani, Hamoud Al-Adwani, Aziz Salmeen, Haider Dashti, Fawaz Al-Mashari, Yousuf Dhaif, Aziz Dhaif, Abdulrahman Al-Shammari, Aziz Al-Shammari, Mohammad Ali and Hussein Al-Mutawa.

Meanwhile, Kuwait Club has signed Haider Dashti from Al-Salmiya to strengthen their senior handball squad for the upcoming season. Ali Marzouq Al-Ghanem signed the agreement on behalf of Kuwait Club.

Dashti is considered one of the league's notable players and is expected to add quality to a Kuwait Club side aiming to maintain its



Al-Ghanem, Haider Dashti complete Kuwait Club deal.

dominance in domestic competitions while competing strongly on the international stage.

Kuwait Club has also appointed Brazilian coach Marcos Oliveira as head coach for the new season, replacing Algerian Said Hijazi.

The team is reshaping its squad ahead of the new campaign. Among those who have departed are Qatar international Frankis Marzo, Portugal's Victor Iturriza and local players Mohammad Amer, Mishari Sawan, Yaqoub Asiri, Mohammad Al-Balushi, Mishal Taha and Ali Safar.

Kuwait Club, meanwhile, has renewed the contract of Montenegrin professional Vladan Lipovina and signed Bahrain's Mohammad Habib. Management is continuing its efforts to further strengthen the squad with additional quality additions.

PSG must leave 'comfort zone' to win Champs League three-peat: Enrique

PARIS, Sept 8, (AP): Coach Luis Enrique says Paris Saint-Germain will need to get out of its "comfort zone" if it is to emulate the trio of clubs that have achieved European three-peats.

PSG starts another Champions League title defense on Wednesday against Slovan Bratislava at the Parc des Princes.

Only Real Madrid (1956-60, 2016-18), Ajax (1971-73) and Bayern Munich (1974-76) have won three successive European Cup/Champions League trophies.

"Everyone is excited and motivated to play against us," Luis Enrique said on Tuesday. "We have to accept it and step out of our comfort zone. I'm ready to show that you have to reinvent yourself every day."

PSG is not in the best possible form, taking just two points from three games in Ligue 1 and conceding six goals already.

His team's faltering start is not enough to worry Luis Enrique. He knows very well that last season PSG needed time to find its rhythm before winning both Ligue 1 and the Champions League. Plus, PSG had to go through the Champions League playoffs over the past two seasons.

"If we only look at the results it's a disastrous start to the season," he said. "But as a coach you know how to assess and judge everything that happens on the pitch. There are things to improve, but I think we deserve more points."

As for his team's leaky defense, the Spanish tactician believes working on small details will pay off if his players manage to stay focused throughout matches.

"We haven't always been lucky whenever the opponents have taken shots. We've conceded some very good goals. I'm not worried," he said. "We'll see at the end of the season what we deserve. I'm calm, but we need to improve."

Captain Marquinhos admitted to "a few mistakes that are not at our level." "As a defender, it's especially painful when you concede goals," he said. "We've conceded quite a few at the start of this season. We watched the videos and work to improve more and more. We just have to be honest and sincere with ourselves and look at what we can do better. We have a coach who is honest with us, and we know what we need to improve."

PSG's ambition this season is to qualify directly from the main phase of the Champions League. The club has been handed a tough draw with matches against Manchester City, Barcelona and Aston Villa.

"I put pressure on the team all the time," Luis Enrique added. "I'd like us to finish among the top eight teams and avoid the playoffs, but with our very difficult draw you're going to drop points. It will be like the last two years - difficult to qualify."

In its quest for a three-peat, PSG is betting on stability. It has been the European club generating the highest transfer revenues from departures this summer - more than 400 million euros (\$464 million) - but has sold only players who were used in a substitute role by Luis Enrique. The only big name to leave was France forward Bradley Barcola in the biggest signing of the summer transfer window.

Meanwhile, PSG has reinforced its squad with the arrivals of Ferran Torres, Maghnes Aklouch, Mika Godts, Lucas Digne and Alessandro Longoni. The new players have not yet settled in and Luis Enrique said he was paying particular attention to them.