



Amir Rep. leaves for US to lead UNGA delegation Page 2



KUWAIT WARNS AGAINST RISKS OF ATTACKS ON OIL TANKERS



Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

North Yemen: Merchants of war and legacy of betrayal

POLITICAL figures in North Yemen have earned a long-standing reputation as ‘crisis merchants’. Compelled by profit and the spoils of conflict, they repeatedly instigate wars, remaining utterly indifferent to the slaughter, hardship and immense suffering borne by their own people.

Their history offers abundant proof of their expertise in the arts of betrayal and treachery. This destructive influence on Yemen’s destiny is part of a historical pattern extending as far back as the era of Abraha Al-Ashram.

In light of this legacy, one must ask: Is history repeating itself once again? Were the Houthi drone strikes or the missiles aimed at Makkah at the height of ‘Operation Decisive Storm’ calculated attempts to destroy the Holy Kaaba?

Considering these developments brings to mind the famous statement of former North Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh who compared governing the country to “dancing on the heads of snakes,” such an assessment was not just rhetoric, as it accurately captured the volatile political environment in the North.

Reflecting on these historical developments, it is clear that former North Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh’s famous description of ruling his country as “dancing on the heads of snakes” was rooted in reality. His observation depicted the turbulent political landscape in the North. The volatile atmosphere was manifested throughout the anti-monarchy revolution, secessionist efforts, and the subsequent unification—a merger driven by Sana’a’s pressing internal pressures.

Just two years later, this dynamic culminated in a war between the North and the South, fueled by northern ambitions to monopolize power and reduce southerners to second-class status. There have been numerous instances when northern politicians betrayed the Arabs and the southerners.

All these happened during the 1962 Yemen War, which concluded through the mediation of King Faisal bin Abdulaziz (may Allah have mercy on him) who gifted the end of the war

to Jamal Abdul Nasser, until the invasion of Kuwait.

One recalls the stance of Sana’a at the time and Ali Abdullah Saleh brazenly bragging that he would seize billions from the Future Generations Fund of Kuwait once Saddam Hussein gained control—a statement he actually made and was widely reported by Yemeni and Arab media.

Today, we see that the Houthis replaced the ancient figure of Abraha with a contemporary Persian counterpart with the same agenda, and goes further by trying to alter social and religious cultures.

As we have stated repeatedly, it is unfortunate that Arab and Islamic nations have failed to take this threat seriously. Mere condemnation is no longer adequate, as such a statement failed to counteract the aggression that revealed the hidden agendas of the Tehran regime, which is targeting not just the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states but the entire Islamic world as well.

Since the rise of the Ayatollah regime, there has been a persistent effort to disrupt the Hajj pilgrimage and mar the experience of pilgrims. The Islamic world should have identified this harmful behavior much earlier, but it did not, hence, allowing the regime to extend its influence into other Arab nations.

The current actions of the Houthis-Iranian alliance are not simply responses to isolated incidents. They are part of a bigger and carefully orchestrated plan to achieve their broader objectives.

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Alerts put Riyadh, Al-Kharj on guard

Houthi attacks on Saudi unacceptable: EU

RIYADH, Sept 19, (Agencies): Saudi Arabia’s civil defense issued a second emergency warning within three hours on Saturday for residents of Riyadh and Al-Kharj Governorate, urging strict adherence to safety protocols as hazardous conditions persist amid escalating

regional tensions. The Directorate General of Civil Defense activated, then shortly deactivated, an alarm late Friday via the National Early Warning Platform for the southwestern governorates of Jeddah, Taif, Yanbu, Ola, Abha, Jazan and Khamis Mushait. Authorities urged the public to remain

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Kuwait's national flag is carried by shooting champion Sarah Al-Hawwal and athletics champion Ibrahim Al-Dhafiri during the athletes' parade at the opening ceremony of the 20th Asian Games in Nagoya, Japan, on Saturday. – See Page 16

Al-Munifi checks field readiness

Kuwait puts swift security response in focus

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 19, (KUNA): Assistant Undersecretary for Public Security Affairs Major General Hamad Al-Munifi stressed the importance of maintaining readiness and enhancing coordination between operations rooms and field forces to safeguard public security and safety.

This came during his inspection Friday of the operations rooms of the Security Directorates, Civil Defense and Rescue Police, according to a Ministry of Interior press statement.

At the Security Directorates Sector, Al-Munifi reviewed its duties and procedures and received a briefing on operations room mechanisms, field operations and coordination among security directorates.

He also reviewed security measures accompanying the return to schools to ensure students’ safety and secure school surroundings and access roads.

At the General Department of Civil Defense operations room, Al-Munifi reviewed workflow and readiness levels and received a briefing on coordination mechanisms and the handling of emergency reports and incidents.

He also inspected the General Department of Rescue Police operations room, where he reviewed procedures for receiving and dispatching reports and followed field readiness and response times.

The ministry said Al-Munifi commended the efforts exerted to maintain security and respond swiftly to reports.

Newswatch

KUWAIT CITY: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has expressed Kuwait’s appreciation for the “unanimous” recommendation of the International Atomic Energy Agency’s Board of Governors to represent the MESA regional group.

A ministry statement on Friday said the move, taken during the proceedings of the 70th session of the IAEA’s General Conference, reflected the trust placed in the State of Kuwait and its active role in supporting international efforts to foster cooperation regarding the peaceful use of atomic energy. (KUNA)

KUWAIT CITY: Kuwait on Friday condemned and denounced the bombing that targeted a mosque in Pakistan’s northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, which resulted in the death and injury of several police personnel and civilians.

In a statement, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reaffirmed Kuwait’s full solidarity with Pakistan and rejection of all forms of violence and terrorism, extending sincere condolences to the government, people and victims’ families while wishing the injured a speedy recovery. (KUNA)

– See Also Page 7

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan’s Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar and Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi on Saturday discussed latest regional developments during a telephone call. (KUNA)

Mexico seeks greater access to Kuwait’s lucrative market

By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 19: Eduardo Patricio Peña Haller, Ambassador of the United Mexican States to Kuwait, affirmed that Mexican-Kuwaiti relations are built on solid foundations of mutual respect, friendship and a shared commitment to enhancing cooperation.

Haller said his country aspires to deepen political dialogue, expand economic, trade, cultural and educational ties, and open new avenues for cooperation, including in the sports sector.

He made the statement in a ceremony organized by the Mexican Embassy on Saturday, marking the 216th Independence Day of Mexico.

Present at the event were Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs and Minister Plenipotentiary Nawaf Al-Ahmad, along with government officials, members of the diplomatic corps, and the Mexican community.

Haller stated that Mexico’s population currently stands at 133 million. He said his country ranks 13th among the world’s largest economies, 10th globally in goods exports, and fifth in agricultural and food product exports. “Furthermore, according to the World Trade Organization, Mexico is the world’s leading exporter of fruits and vegetables,” he added.

He explained that the occasion serves as an opportunity not only to commemorate the independence and



Photo by Rezk Tawfiq Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs and Minister Plenipotentiary Nawaf Al-Ahmad and Ambassador of Mexico Eduardo Patricio Peña Haller during the ceremonial cake-cutting.

showcase the history, heritage, culture and traditions of Mexico, but also to reflect on the trajectory of relations between the two nations and look toward future prospects.

He stated that Mexico and Kuwait established diplomatic relations in 1975, and that ties have since evolved through political dialogue and cooperation in the economic, trade, cultural and educational fields, alongside growing bonds between the two peoples.

He underscored the importance of continuing to develop the economic partnership, indicating that, according to the latest official Mexican trade data, Mexico’s exports to Kuwait have reached about \$51 million so far in 2026.

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Insults, assaults on public officials plunge 92%, says Justice Minister

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

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 19: As a result of recent legislative amendments that are part of a comprehensive legal reform process including the enactment of numerous laws and revision of existing legislation, Minister of Justice Counselor Nasser Al-Sumait announced 92 percent decline in cases of insult or assault of public officials while on duty.

Al-Sumait revealed that the number of such cases declined from 1,174 in the year preceding the implementation of the amendment to just 93 cases in the second year of its application in 2026.

He stated that Decree-Law No. 93/2024 is in line with the directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh

Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, who emphasized that “respecting security personnel is synonymous with respecting the system of governance. I will not tolerate undermining of their prestige or the respect due to them while they perform their official duties.”

He explained that the amendment, which took effect on Sept 15, 2024, tightened penalties for insulting, assaulting or resisting public officials.

It also established enhanced protections for judges, public prosecutors, and members of the police, army and National Guard forces.

It prohibits the victim, in this case the public official, from withdrawing the complaint, reaching a settlement with the accused or granting pardon.

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Kuwaitis get 90-day visa-free stays

Kuwait, South Korea pursue wider investment, tech links

By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 19: Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to the State of Kuwait H.E. Kim, Jang Hyun said his country is keen on elevating bilateral relations with Kuwait into a sustainable partnership.

According to Kim, this commitment entails boosting mutual investments and expanding cooperation in different sectors like artificial intelligence, digital transformation, defense, health, culture, energy and infrastructure.

Speaking during a meeting with media representatives, Kim disclosed that it is an honor to present his credentials to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, describing the occasion as one of the most memorable moments of his life. He praised His Highness’ gracious and friendly demeanor and the warm reception he received.

He added that His Highness the Amir expressed interest in strengthening investments and facilitating high-level visits and meetings.

He conveyed the greetings of the South Korean president to His High-



Photo by Rezk Tawfiq Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to the State of Kuwait H.E. Kim, Jang Hyun during a meeting with media representatives.

ness the Amir who, in turn, asked him to convey his warmest regards to the South Korean leader.

He stated that his priorities include strengthening cooperation in energy and infrastructure and extending it to artificial intelligence, digital transformation and knowledge exchange, while integrating modern South Korean technologies into project development and operations.

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2 ‘Need to overcome farmers challenges’



KFH reinforces its leadership with a suite of prestigious Euromoney Awards



stc named as ‘Innovation Partner’ at IDC CIO Summit Kuwait 2026

Prayer Timings			
Fajr	04:15	Asr	15:09
Sunrise ..	05:35	Maghrib ..	17:48
Zohr	11:42	Isha	19:05

Amir Rep. leaves for US to lead UNGA delegation

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 19, (KUNA): Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and the accompanying official delegation left the country Saturday morning for the United States.

His Highness will lead Kuwait's delegation participating in the 81st session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

His Highness was seen off at the airport by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Chief of the National Guard Sheikh Mubarak Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Al-Sabah, and Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah.

He was also seen off by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Shereedah Abdullah Al-Mousherji, Chief of the Crown Prince's Diwan Sheikh Thamer Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, President of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation Sheikh Eng. Humoud Mubarak Al-Hamoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and senior officials.

His Highness is accompanied by an official delegation comprising Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Director General of



Crown Prince Diwan photo
HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, sees off at the airport Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and senior officials.

the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority Sheikh Dr. Meshaal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and senior officials.

Kuwait Amir congratulates Chile, Saint Kitts and Nevis on Nat'l Day

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 19, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Friday a congratulatory cable to the President of the Republic of Chile Jose Antonio Kast on his country's National Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished him everlasting health and further progress and prosperity to Chile and its people.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent on Friday a congratulatory cable to the President of the Republic of Chile Jose Antonio Kast on his country's National Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Crown Prince wished the president everlasting health.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent on Friday a congratulatory cable to the President of the Republic of Chile Jose Antonio Kast on his country's National Day.

Saint Kitts and Nevis 10 012
His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations to Governor-General of Saint Kitts and Nevis Marcella Liburd on her country's independence day on Saturday.

His Highness wished Liburd a long healthy life and more prosperity and development for Saint Kitts and Nevis and its people.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations to Governor-General of Saint Kitts and Nevis Marcella Liburd on her country's independence day on Saturday, wishing her a long healthy life.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations to Governor-General of Saint Kitts and Nevis Marcella Liburd on her country's independence day on Saturday.

Key progress in 'nuke tech' use

Promoting peace, security: KISR

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 19, (KUNA): Kuwait has made significant progress in the peaceful use of nuclear technology through its long-standing cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), a senior KISR official said Friday.

Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) National Liaison Officer with the IAEA Dr. Habiba Al-Manea told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), following the conclusion of the 70th IAEA General Conference in Vienna, that the partnership is built on reliability and continuity.

She said sustained cooperation and achievements in nuclear and isotopic techniques demonstrate the strength of international cooperation in promoting peace, security and sustainable development.

KISR plays a central role in following up technical cooperation programs and directing them toward national priorities in coordination with beneficiary entities, she added.

Among the key achievements was the signing of Kuwait's Country Program Framework (CPF) for 2026-2035, which provides the strategic framework for technical cooperation over the next 10 years and identifies areas where nuclear science and technology can support sustainable development plans through capacity building and technology transfer.

Al-Manea said cooperation with the IAEA Technical Cooperation Division for Asia and the Pacific included the approval of five national projects under the 2026-27 program cycle.

Treatment

The projects cover cancer treatment through improved tumor targeting and groundwater studies aimed at identifying major sources of contamination using stable isotope techniques.

They also include improving food safety by identifying chemical and microbiological contaminants in milk, studying the impact of coke agglomeration on the performance of an up-flow moving-bed reactor using nuclear techniques, and establishing a national neutron activation analysis laboratory.

Two projects on forage production through mutation breeding and cancer treatment were also extended, she said.

Al-Manea said 2026 marked the start of implementing the new strategy, alongside active participation by Kuwaiti personnel in regional and international projects and training program, noting that the total budget allocated to Kuwait under the IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme for 2026-27 stands at around EUR 600,000.

She said the IAEA Technical Cooperation Division for Asia and the Pacific recognized KISR's regional role and training partnerships, affirming the institute's readiness to provide the capabilities



KUNA photo
Dr. Habiba Al-Manea

needed to implement technical cooperation projects.

Kuwait hosts four regional service and cooperation centers with the IAEA in the fields of medicine, the marine environment and radiation protection, in addition to the Radioactivity Measurement Laboratory, drawing on national expertise and advanced equipment supporting the agency's research program, she said.

Al-Manea said the Kuwaiti delegation met IAEA technical cooperation officials in the presence of Deputy Ambassador of Kuwait to Austria Bashar Al-Duwaisan and Khaled Al-Daikan of Kuwait's embassy in Vienna, where efforts to facilitate implementation of national projects were commended.

The delegation also participated in a meeting of the Co-operative Agreement for Arab States in Asia for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (ARASIA), which Kuwait joined in 2016, she added.

Kuwait completed eight regional ARASIA projects in environmental, agricultural and health fields in December 2025 and began five new projects, while also participating in preparations for the next cycle, during which leaders were selected for four projects, Al-Manea said.

She added that Kuwait's Integrated Nuclear Security Support Plan (INSSP) was reviewed with relevant national entities, resulting in the preparation of a nuclear risk matrix in December 2025 as part of a project assessing potential nuclear risks facing the country.

The delegation also met officials from the IAEA Department of Nuclear Safety and Security to develop the capabilities of personnel from national institutions, including the General Administration of Customs, Ministry of Interior, General Department of Civil Defense and Ministry of Health's Radiation Protection Department.

The cooperation includes training for front line officers on handling radiological incidents and using advanced radiation detection equipment, she said.

10 demands to boost agricultural sector 'Need to overcome farmers challenges'



Mohammad Ali Al-Mutairi welcomes Fahad Falah bin Jamea and Editor-in-chief Ahmed Al-Jarallah.



Editor-in-Chief Ahmed Al-Jarallah with Fahad Falah Bin Jamea.



Editor-in-Chief Ahmed Al-Jarallah, Ahmad Al-Asmoud, Saud Al-Farhan, Sunaitan Al-Zaabi, Rashid Saud and Mohammad Al-Mutairi.



Editor-in-Chief Ahmed Al-Jarallah, Consultant Naif Al-Mutairat, Saud Al-Farhan, Obaid Al-Azmi and Salem Shabib Al-Ajmi.

By Adnan Makkawi Jarada

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 19: Kuwaiti farmers have presented 10 demands to develop the agricultural sector.

These demands include addressing the challenges that farmers in Wafra and Abdaly are facing, supporting local production, and enhancing its role in maintaining food security.

The farmers presented their demands during the expanded meeting held at the Mohammad Ali Al-Mutairi Farm in Wafra last Thursday, on the occasion of the start of the new agricultural season 2026/2027.

Participants discussed the current condition of the agricultural sector, challenges hindering its development, needs of farmers, and requirements for raising production efficiency and improving the work environment in agricultural areas.

They stressed the importance of maintaining the stability of the agricultural sector, helping Kuwaiti farmers overcome obstacles, and developing services and infrastructure supporting production to increase reliance on local products and enhance their ability to meet market needs.

The farmers underscored the



Obaid Nasser Al-Azmi and Fahad Al-Hayyan.



Photos by Rizk Taufiq
Editor-in-Chief Ahmed Al-Jarallah and Abdullah Al-Mutairi.

need to continue supporting plant wealth, develop agricultural work mechanisms, and make use of the available potential in Wafra and Abdaly in order to achieve greater returns for the sector and increase its contribution to the food security system.

They emphasized the importance of strengthening communication and coordination with the authorities concerned with agricultural affairs and listening to the demands and needs of producers in order to reach practical solutions that contribute to addressing existing challenges and developing the sector in a sustainable manner.

Present at the meeting were Fahad Falah bin Jamea, Dean of Kuwaiti Journalism and Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah and Arab Times newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah, Vice President of Kuwaiti Farmers Union Fahad Jaber Al-Hayyan, Union Treasurer Obaid Al-Nafishan, farmers Nayef Al-Mutairat, Rashid Saud, Salem Shabib Al-Ajmi, Sunaitan Al-Zoubi and Abdullah Fahd Ayed, media figures Saud Al-Farhan, Ahmed Al-Aswad, Mohammad Al-Farhan, Dr. Ahmed Zaid Al-Azmi, Dr. Malqi Mohammad Al-Azmi, Abdullah Mohammad Al-Mutairi, a number of agricultural researchers, and workers at the farms and companies in Wafra.

IICO launches multiple projects worldwide

Kuwaiti aid for Gaza, Yemen and Turkiye needy

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 19, (KUNA): Kuwaiti humanitarian efforts continue extending support to communities in need worldwide, building on a longstanding humanitarian legacy guided by the wise leadership and under the "Kuwait Stands by You" campaign.

This work, carried out through cooperation between Kuwaiti charitable organizations and official bodies, takes various forms, from providing water and food to healthcare, education and empowerment, with human dignity at its core.

Recent Kuwaiti initiatives have included addressing water shortages in Gaza, performing hundreds of surgeries for patients in need in Turkiye and providing daily bread to families in Yemen.

In Gaza, the International Islamic Charitable Organization launched its "Water for All" project to provide safe drinking water to displaced and affected families in shelters.

IICO Director General Bader Al-Sumait told KUNA that the two-month project will provide nearly five million liters of drinking water to



Al-Sumait

more than 115,000 displaced and affected families, at a total cost exceeding KD 59,000.

Al-Sumait said the project addresses the severe water crisis caused by damaged infrastructure and disrupted safe water sources. Water is supplied from approved desalination plants to shelters.

He noted that since October 7, 2023, IICO has allocated more than USD 23 million to support over 8.4 million beneficiaries in Gaza through around 143 relief, healthcare, education and development projects, with 26 additional projects currently underway.

Its interventions have included food, water, shelter and healthcare, as well as education and empowerment, with continued support directed toward urgent needs and affected Palestinian families.

In Turkiye, Al-Safa Charitable Humanitarian Society recently concluded missions after two weeks of medical and relief work.

Al-Safa Chairman Mohammad Al-Shaya told KUNA that the Kuwaiti medical delegation performed nearly 300 surgeries for patients in need, covering general surgery, urology, ear, nose and throat procedures, and pediatric surgery, in addition to examinations and consultations.

The delegation worked in two groups from

September 1 to 14, extending the surgical program over two weeks and enabling more patients to receive treatment. One day saw 29 surgeries in various specialties.

Al-Shaya said the impact of medical projects extends beyond treating patients to their families and their ability to return to work and normal life, adding that the society seeks lasting benefits for beneficiaries.

The mission also included support for families, widows and orphans, along with food baskets, clothing, school bags and supplies, and income-generating projects such as providing tuk-tuks and sewing machines.

In Yemen, Kuwaiti humanitarian aid took the form of daily bread through the Kuwaiti Society for Cultural Communication's "Kuwait Charity Bakery" in Hadramout Governorate.

Society Director Abdullah Al-Shehab told KUNA that the 281-square-meter project targets poor, low-income and needy families, producing 10,000 loaves daily to meet a basic food need.

Al-Shehab said the project was established with support from Kuwaiti donors, under the society's field supervision and in cooperation with official authorities, covering construction, equipment and installation before opening and operation.

Rules set for media, celebrity participation in Hajj activities

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 19: The Ministry of Islamic Affairs directed licensed Hajj expedition bureaus to adhere to the regulations governing the participation of media personnel and celebrities during the upcoming Hajj season, in accordance with guidelines issued by the competent authorities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

In a circular issued by the Hajj and Umrah Affairs Department, the ministry emphasized that media personnel participation is strictly limited to performing media duties as part of the accredited media team of Kuwaiti Hajj expedition bureaus.

It also strictly prohibited including media personnel and celebrities in the administrative or organizational staff accompanying Kuwaiti Hajj bureaus in Saudi Arabia, thereby ensuring a clear separation between media functions and

the bureaus' administrative and organizational tasks.

The regulations also prohibit media personnel and celebrities present in Saudi Arabia from using social media platforms to commercially promote Hajj expedition bureaus.

The ministry called upon all licensees to comply with the circular and observe its provisions when compiling lists of accompanying staff, while adhering to all applicable regulations and instructions.

It stressed that violators will be held accountable for any infractions.

It is worth mentioning that this circular is part of the regulatory measures for the 1448 AH Hajj season, aimed at organizing the participation of media personnel and celebrities and defining their roles. It reinforces adherence to approved standards and clearly distinguishes between media work and the administrative and organizational duties of Kuwaiti Hajj expedition bureaus.

Urgent need to get rid of negative traits in life

“WHY don’t people agree on admiring a particular public figure, whether an artist, businessman, or official, when that person also possesses admirable qualities such as good character, honesty, integrity, and a commitment to doing good? The answer is simple - people are not all the same.” Kuwaiti citizen **Sheikh Ali Al-Jaber Al-Ahmad** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“While the majority of people fear God and strive to uphold justice, there is a minority characterized by negative traits such as malice, envy, and hatred. These individuals respond to almost any statement with unjustified attacks. They may even distort the words of beloved public figures, deliberately misinterpreting them to convey meanings contrary to what was intended. In doing so, they stir up hatred and reveal the malice and envy they harbor within themselves. The aim of such people is to tarnish the reputations of good and respected figures. They become enraged whenever beloved public figures are praised. They do not know how to express gratitude; instead, they focus on criticism and belittle every achievement. Such people will never rid themselves of these negative traits as long as they continue to deny the merits of others and remain too proud to acknowledge good deeds because of the hatred, malice, and envy they harbor.

“I pray to God that He does not count us among them and that He protects us from these harmful traits. We see many such people among us in Kuwait and throughout the Arab world. They engage in harmful behavior as readily as others pursue their hobbies every day. I advise those who suffer from these negative traits in their dealings with others to make a sincere effort to overcome them, so that they may spare themselves the condemnation of people in this world and the punishment of God in the Hereafter. These harmful traits include hypocrisy, backbiting, lying, betrayal, theft, bullying, and anger.”

Also:

“There are certain behavioral traits that distinguish a person of sound mind from others. The more we understand these traits, the easier it becomes to recognize people of sound mind, choose their company, and know whom to avoid,” Kuwaiti writer **Khaled Al-Janfawi** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“Among the defining traits of a person of sound mind are self-awareness and an understanding of their social and moral circumstances. They are fully conscious of what they say and do and understand the consequences of their words and actions. Another characteristic of a person of sound mind is the ability to control their emotions. They avoid recklessness and impulsive reactions and are not easily provoked.

“A person of sound mind frees themselves from illusions, superstitions, and false intellectual assumptions, and does not allow themselves to fall victim to them. A rational person thinks logically and objectively. A person of sound mind is not burdened by deep-seated psychological complexes, nor do they seek to compensate for perceived shortcomings through their behavior. A rational person does not harbor accumulated grudges. Instead, they speak and act with reason, balance, and moderation.

“A person of sound mind is organized in their thinking, evaluates matters logically and objectively, and avoids dwelling on negative thoughts. They do not allow themselves to be consumed by emotionally destructive or deceptive thinking. A sound mind does not rely excessively on emotionally charged language that is not based on facts. Instead, it tends to use objective language. A person of sound mind guards their tongue, thinks before speaking, and avoids gossip or discussing matters that do not concern them.”

“The world that stood with Kuwait during the ordeal of the Iraqi invasion is not the same as the world that justified Saddam Hussein’s aggression against Kuwait with various pretexts and excuses,” columnist **Khaled Ahmad Al-Tarrah** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“The world is well acquainted with the voice and image of the late Sheikh Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah - the ambassador, minister, eloquent

diplomat, and steadfast politician who waged political and media battles in Washington, D.C. Sheikh Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah worked tirelessly, day and night, in coordination with the legitimate political leadership in Taif. He did not stop at the liberation of Kuwait, nor did he adopt a passive or conciliatory stance after liberation, whether during his tenure as Minister of Information or afterward. He continued to confront slander and allegations, regardless of their source.

“Sheikh Saud chose confrontation, set the record straight, and reshaped the political and media narrative. He also exposed attempts by some members of the Muslim Brotherhood who visited Washington and inserted themselves into the Kuwaiti popular delegation’s visit, where some sought to influence American policy. Ambassador Sheikh Saud Al-Nasser put an end to these interventions, documenting his position and presenting his information through Arab television channels and the Kuwaiti press.

“No criticism of Sheikh Saud’s statements went unanswered. He responded with well-documented and precise arguments that exposed and refuted the fallacies. Sheikh Saud also revealed the positions of the former US Ambassador to Baghdad, April Glaspie, which were characterized by sympathy for the Baghdad dictator Saddam Hussein and an exaggerated admiration for his personality, despite his political and intellectual instability.

“Discussions about Ambassador Glaspie’s positions were not a secret in Kuwaiti circles; rather, they were the subject of open and objective debate in Washington, within the corridors of the US State Department, and even with the ambassador herself. At the time, I disagreed with the decision to suspend publication of the newspaper “Sawt Al-Kuwait” (Voice of Kuwait). However, Sheikh Saud explained to me the financial, administrative, and political irregularities that prevented its continuation, as well as the reasons why their details could not be disclosed to the public.

“I tried to persuade him to reconsider the decision in order to preserve a national media project that could have been further developed and utilized. However, circumstances beyond his control necessitated closing this file and turning the page. The discussion of the statesmen who served Kuwait during the invasion and liberation is endless. Perhaps we are not exaggerating when we recall the significant national role of the late Amir Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah (May God have mercy on him), when he was Crown Prince



Dr. Al-Tarrah

and Prime Minister. Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah played an influential role in organizing the Jeddah Popular Conference and the National Assembly’s Fact-Finding Committee. “Documenting history, especially on the anniversary of the Iraqi invasion and liberation, is indivisible and should not be neglected. We have sheikhs and citizens, men and women, and national figures whose roles deserve to be documented and remembered, foremost among them the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad, who played a prominent diplomatic role, both regionally and internationally, in defending Kuwait’s cause, alongside Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah, Sheikh Saud Al-Nasser, and others who contributed to creating bright chapters in Kuwait’s history.

“We hope that the relevant authorities will take the initiative to document the political, diplomatic, and national biographies of Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad, Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah, Sheikh Saud Al-Nasser, and other prominent Kuwaiti figures, so that the national narrative may be complete. History bears witness to those who shaped it, not merely those who narrated it. Sheikh Saud Al-Nasser was not simply an ambassador or a minister; he was one of the most prominent architects of Kuwait’s political and media narrative abroad and one of the most important voices defending the legitimacy of the state.

“All Kuwaiti figures who bore the responsibility of defending the homeland, both at home and abroad, deserve recognition, not only for their personal contributions, but also as a matter of truth, the preservation of national memory, and a message for future generations.”

– Compiled by Simi K. Kutty



KUNA photos
Kuwait’s Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Khaled Al-Shuraian participated in Aqaba Process meeting in Paris in the presence of French President Emmanuel Macron, King Abdullah II of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and the President of the Lebanese Republic General Joseph Aoun.

Lebanon security discussed at top brass Paris meeting

PARIS, Sept 19, (KUNA): Kuwait’s Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Khaled Al-Shuraian participated Thursday in Aqaba Process meeting in Paris. A statement by Kuwait’s Ministry of Defense on Friday said, the “meeting was held in the presence of French President Emmanuel Macron, King Abdullah II of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and the President of the Lebanese Republic General Joseph Aoun.

Al-Shuraian, took part in the meetings, which were attended by various chiefs of staff, commanders, military experts, and representatives from allied and friendly nations and international

organizations.

The meeting addressed ways to support and enhance the capabilities of the Lebanese Army and the Internal Security Forces.

Discussions also focused on mechanisms for coordinating international efforts and exchanging views on security challenges, aiming to bolster the security and stability of Lebanon and the region.

Al-Shuraian participation in Paris meetings reflects on Kuwait’s commitment to strengthening military cooperation and coordination with allied and friendly nations, as well as its support for international efforts to consolidate regional security and stability.



Kuwait’s Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Khaled Al-Shuraian in talks with a top military commander at the meeting.

Airport customs seizes multi-type drugs, nabs traveler from Beirut

172 foreign booze bottles found with trafficker

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 19: Customs inspectors at Kuwait Airport’s Terminal 4 (T4) thwarted an attempt to smuggle narcotics and psychotropic pills as part of the General Administration of Customs’ ongoing efforts to combat the smuggling of illicit substances into the country, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a statement, Customs officials explained that the seizure occurred during the inspection of luggage belonging to a passenger arriving from Beirut. Inspectors discovered seven pieces of hashish weighing a total of 530 grams, along with a bag containing cocaine weighing 1.15 grams.

The inspection also resulted in the seizure of 74 boxes of Lyrica, classified as a psychotropic substance, containing a total of 4,144 capsules.

Officials noted that the seizure report is being finalized and that standard legal procedures are underway to refer the suspect and the confiscated items to the Drug Control General Department.

The General Administration of Customs reaffirmed its inspectors’ commitment to performing their duties with vigilance and competence and to firmly confronting anyone attempting to smuggle illicit substances into the country, in order for safeguarding community security and safety.

firming its inspectors’ commitment to performing their duties with vigilance and competence and to firmly confronting anyone attempting to smuggle illicit substances into the country, in order for safeguarding community security and safety.

Liquor peddler arrested: The Criminal Security Sector, represented by the Ahmadi Investigation Department, apprehended a non-Kuwaiti suspect involved in trafficking imported alcohol, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In an official statement, the Ministry of Interior explained that the arrest followed an investigation and verification of credible information. The suspect was detained in the Jaber Al-Ahmad area as he left his residence.

Upon questioning, the suspect confessed to trafficking imported alcohol and led investigators to a storage location within his home, where 172 bottles of imported alcohol and KD 465,750 were seized.

Investigations revealed suspected money laundering linked to the illicit activity. The suspect used his bank accounts to facilitate sales by sending payment links to buyers and depositing the

proceeds, thereby making the funds appear legitimate.

The ministry confirmed that necessary legal measures are being taken against the suspect in preparation for referring him to the competent authorities for further proceedings.

B’deshi in drug trafficking: The Criminal Security Sector of the Ministry of Interior, represented by the Drug Control General Department’s International Control Department, apprehended a Bangladeshi national involved in trafficking narcotics and psychotropic substances, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a statement, the Ministry of Interior explained that the operation resulted in the seizure of the following items:

- 800 A4 sheets infused with “Chemical,” a synthetic drug
- 2 ampoules of liquid “Chemical”
- 2 precision scales.

The seized items were in the suspect’s possession for trafficking and personal use. The suspect and the seized materials have been referred to the competent authorities for the necessary legal action.

Traffic chaos to ease as roads to Salmiya reopen

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 19: The Ministry of Public Works announced the opening of the slow lane and the right shoulder on the Fifth Ring Road, opposite the control tower, in the direction of Salmiya, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

It also announced the opening of the King Fahad Road exit for traffic traveling from the City to the Fifth Ring Road toward Salmiya, as well as the King Fahad exit for traffic traveling from Ahmadi to the Fifth Ring Road toward Salmiya.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Public Works, in coordination with the General Traffic Department, announced the closure of Al-Ghawas Street in Sabahiya, specifically between Blocks 1 and 2, for traffic traveling from the first roundabout towards South Al-Sabahiya to the Hamad Al-Zuwair roundabout, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Traffic will be diverted to the opposite side of the road, which will be reconfigured to provide one entry lane and two exit lanes as part of the Ghawas Street project.

The ministry stated that the closure will take effect at dawn on Sunday, September 20, 2026.

Use seat belts, kids less than 10 must sit behind

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 19: Major Musaed Al-Aslawi, Head of the Traffic Awareness Department, emphasized the importance of adhering to traffic safety measures to protect children, stressing that all vehicle passengers must wear seatbelts, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Speaking to Kuwait Radio, Major Al-Aslawi stated that children under the age of 10 must sit in the back seats using age-appropriate safety seats and must not be allowed to exit the vehicle from the traffic side.

He stressed that children should not be allowed to cross the road near schools unless accompanied by an adult.

Meanwhile, fire broke out in an apartment building in Mangaf early Friday morning, resulting in injuries to two individuals, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In an official statement, the Kuwait Fire Force explained that firefighting teams from the Mangaf and Fahheel stations rushed to the location and brought the fire in the apartment building under control.

The building was evacuated and the firefighting teams battled, controlled, and extinguished the blaze. The injured individuals were handed over to the paramedics for treatment.

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Other Voices

50 years of Vietnam-Kuwait ties: traditional amity to strategic alliance for sustainable development

By H.E. Dr. Nguyen Duc Thang
Ambassador of Vietnam to the State of Kuwait

In 2026, Vietnam and Kuwait commemorate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations (1976-2026). Over the past five decades, the relationship has been built on friendship, solidarity and political trust, gradually expanding from traditional friendship into substantive cooperation across a wide range of fields. The elevation of bilateral relations to a Strategic Partnership during the landmark visit of the Vietnamese Prime Minister to Kuwait in November 2025 has opened a new chapter, providing a stronger framework and fresh momentum for deeper and broader cooperation.

A friendship that has stood the test of time

The bonds between Vietnam and Kuwait have been nurtured by the solidarity and support of the Kuwaiti people during Vietnam's struggle for national independence and reunification. In the past, many Kuwaitis took to the streets to express their opposition to the Vietnam war, while Kuwaiti media loudly voiced support for and admiration of the will and resilience of the Vietnamese people. On the other hand, Vietnam fully supported Kuwait's efforts to regain its sovereignty following the Iraqi invasion. These expressions of solidarity laid an important foundation for the enduring friendship between our two peoples.

In January 1976, Kuwait became the first country in the Gulf region to establish diplomatic relations with Vietnam. During Vietnam's post-war reconstruction, Kuwait provided practical assis-

tance through the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) to implement many transportation, irrigation, and socio-economic development projects in several localities. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Kuwait also timely granted 600,000 doses of vaccines to Vietnam. Such valued support has further strengthened our two friendly countries.

In recent years, in the face of common challenges in the region and around the world, Vietnam and Kuwait have regularly exchanged views and coordinated their positions in support of one another at various international forums. This cooperation has been prioritized on issues such as maintaining an environment of peace, stability and development; participating in the United Nations Human Rights Council; respecting the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS 1982); promoting a two-State solution for the Palestinian people; strengthening the GCC-ASEAN cooperation; and expanding cultural exchanges among countries and regions.

Economic relations entering a more dynamic phase

Economic ties have become a key pillar of relations between Vietnam and Kuwait. In so far, Kuwait is Vietnam's largest investor from the Middle East with total investment of more than US\$3.5 billion, focusing into the Nghi Son Refinery and Petrochemical Complex in Thanh Hoa Province. The project is more than a major investment. It is an obvious example of the complementarity between the two economies and the shared interests that underpin our



Dr. Nguyen Duc Thang

partnership.

Kuwait is also Vietnam's largest trading partner in the Middle East and Africa. Bilateral trade reached from 7 to 7.5 billion USD in the past 3 years, reflecting the growing scale and depth of commercial ties. Vietnam imports mainly crude oil, petrochemical products and industrial inputs from Kuwait, while Vietnamese electronics, mobile phones, agricultural and aquatic products, textiles and garments, wooden products and consumer goods are becoming increasingly visible in the Kuwaiti market.

Vietnam and Kuwait are both seeing new opportunities as they transform their growth models and deepen international integration. Vietnam is pursuing strong growth while largely investing in infrastructure, science and technology, innovation and digital transformation. Its GDP grew by 8.02% in 2025 and has been targeted to double-digit rate by the Government in the years ahead. Its to-

tal trade has ranked among the world's top 15 and expected to surpass 1,000 billion USD in 2026. Foreign investors are quite optimistic to register approximately US\$41 billion of FDI in the first 8 months of 2026, up more than 55% year-on-year. At the same time, Kuwait is advancing economic development and diversification under the Kuwait Vision 2035.

Amid significant changes across the region, Kuwait is steadily strengthening its resilience, consolidating its economic foundations and playing an increasingly active role in the Gulf. According to the IMF, Kuwait's real GDP is projected to grow by 3.8% in 2026, while the non-oil sector is expected to expand by 3.0%. This reflects the growing importance of economic diversification as a driver of growth and creates further scope for international cooperation as well as for a more intensive partnership between Kuwait and Vietnam.

A new chapter of the strategic partnership

The elevation of bilateral relations to a Strategic Partnership in 2025 has established a favorable framework for expanding and diversifying cooperation. The two sides have set an ambitious goal of increasing bilateral trade to US\$12-15 billion by 2030, while broadening engagement in investment, energy, oil and gas, petrochemicals, emerging technologies, artificial intelligence, digital transformation, food security, defense and security, and responses to non-traditional challenges.

Notably, Kuwait could look into investment opportunities to expand its presence in Vietnam, particularly in

infrastructure, energy, finance, logistics and technology. Vietnam, for its part, can further develop exports to Kuwait, including agricultural and aquatic products, Halal food, electronics and industrial goods. Food security stands out as an area with clear potential, combining Kuwait's need to diversify sources of supply with Vietnam's strengths in agricultural production and food processing. Furthermore, the digital economy, education, tourism, cultural exchange and human resource development offer additional avenues for closer cooperation.

Vietnam deeply values the friendship and practical support extended by generations of Kuwaiti leaders and people. The 50th anniversary marks a milestone for the two countries to reflect on a proud journey and look forward to a brighter future. The foundation laid over the past fifty years and the political trust of the leaders of both countries provide a solid basis for taking the Strategic Partnership forward in a more substantive, dynamic and effective manner.

In the coming years, the two countries can better leverage their complementary strengths, expand the flow of trade, investment, energy, technology and people-to-people exchanges, and enhance the connectivity between Southeast Asia and the Gulf region. Through these efforts, the Vietnam-Kuwait relations nurtured over the past half century will continue to be transcended into new cooperative achievements, bringing tangible benefits to the people of both countries and making a positive contribution to regional peace, stability and prosperity.

MoU to 'boost' defense bonds

Kuwait, Canada discuss Gulf

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 19, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and his Canadian counterpart Anita Anand signed a MoU on cooperation between the Kuwaiti Ministry of Defense and the Canadian Commercial Corporation



Sheikh Jarrah

(CCC) in the field of defense and security.

The signing of the document came at the end of the meeting between the two ministers as part of Sheikh Jarrah's visit to Ottawa on Thursday, according to a statement from the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

During the meeting, both sides reviewed the progress of the friendly relations in all areas, and they agreed to open new horizons for the mutually beneficial cooperation.

Both sides also exchanged views on several regional issues, notably the situation in the Gulf region and efforts aiming to deescalate the tensions and promote security and stability, the statement added.



The Kuwaiti Dive Team volunteers remove waste and fishing nets dumped around the Jahra Nature Reserve.

Kuwait Dive Team launch drive to get Kuwait Bay rid of waste

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 19, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti Dive Team launched Saturday an environmental campaign to clean Kuwait Bay, coinciding with World Cleanup Day.

Team Chairman and Foundation Chairman Waleed Al-Fadhel told KUNA that the global event, observed Sunday, brings millions of volunteers together to protect coasts and beaches from plastic and waste threatening marine life and humans.

Since its establishment in 1986, the team has prioritized marine environmental protection and maritime safety, recovering hundreds of sunken boats and ships and removing hundreds of tons of waste and abandoned fishing nets.

Al-Fadhel said the team works with relevant government bodies to clean Kuwait's shores and remove waste from Kuwait Bay, including Ashairiy and Sulaybiqhat, as well as the Jahra Nature Reserve in cooperation with the Environment Public Authority.

He noted that these sites are important habitats and stopovers for migratory birds and resident species, supporting global eco-

logical balance and biodiversity.

Kuwait Bay is also a historical and environmental resource and a key source for the country's desalination and power-generation facilities, supporting infrastructure and development activities.

The bay and surrounding areas host major ports and commercial waterways, serving as vital maritime links for imports, exports, shipbuilding and logistics connecting Kuwait with regional and global markets.

Al-Fadhel said Kuwait Bay is classified as the world's second-largest fish and shrimp nursery, making it a natural reservoir of marine resources and an important source for the local fishing sector and food security.

He added that northern areas such as Al-Subiyah offer promising opportunities for sustainable development and ecotourism, leveraging their unique geological and historical features.

Al-Fadhel stressed that the team seeks a Kuwait sea free of waste, while promoting volunteerism and turning environmental responsibility into sustainable community behavior.



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Continued from Page 1

North Yemen:

Now, it is imperative for the international community to take a decisive action to address the disruption of the global economy caused by the instability of maritime security in Bab al-Mandab Strait and the Strait of Hormuz.

Alerts put

Early Saturday, civil defense issued its first emergency warning for Al-Kharj Governorate, instructing residents to seek immediate shelter in interior rooms or sturdy buildings, away from windows, balconies, and open areas. People outdoors were told to take cover behind solid barriers, avoid gathering or filming hazardous sites, and stay away from exposed locations.

The alerts come as the European Union condemned Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia as “unacceptable,” warning they harm the global economy and stressing the need to safeguard freedom of maritime navigation. EU High Representative Kaja Kallas said she had spoken with Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan about diplomatic efforts to end the fighting in Yemen and restore freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz.

Kallas added that Europe continues to help protect shipping in the Red Sea from Houthi attacks, noting

Stable and equitable development represents a mainstay for protecting human dignity, she said, reaffirming Kuwait's support to international co-operation based on constructive dialogue and away from any politicization or discrimination.

Insults, assaults

Al-Sumait commended the efforts of the Ministry of Interior and security personnel, emphasizing that the results reflect the synergy among state institutions in upholding respect for public officials while performing their duties, preserving the prestige of the state, and reinforcing the rule of law.

Mexico seeks

He added that the exports includ-

He emphasized that Mexico attaches great importance to its relations with Kuwait and to the friendship cemented over decades, noting that the Independence Day celebration also marks the Mexican-Kuwaiti friendship and a shared commitment to build a stronger alliance.

Kuwait, South Korea

He confirmed the capability of South Korean companies to utilize artificial intelligence, smart office systems and facility management technologies to develop smart airports, thereby, raising efficiency and improving services and passenger satisfaction.

He also highlighted that South Korean equipment features a high level of interoperability with systems from other companies and suppliers.



Kuwait's Army Chief of Staff, Lieutenant General Khaled Al-Shuriaan with his French counterpart, French Army Chief of the Defence Staff General Fabien Mandon.

Kuwait's Army Chief, French counterpart eye defense boost

In a press statement issued by Kuwait Ministry of Defense, Al-

The meeting also addressed various topics of mutual interest and efforts aimed at bolstering regional security and stability, taking place within the framework of his official visit to France.

Kuwait embassy alerts citizens

Portugal face-covering ban takes effect Sept 23

The law bans face coverings on roads and in public places, facilities providing services to citizens, as well as at sporting events and activities and demonstrations.

For assistance or inquiries, citizens may contact the embassy's emergency number at 00351916666645 or the Foreign Ministry's Consular Communication Center at 00965159.

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President to meet Venezuela’s Rodriguez in New York

Trump will be at airport to greet Xi when China’s leader arrives for US state visit

WASHINGTON, Sept 19, (AP): The first state visit by the leader of China in more than a decade takes place next week when President Xi Jinping arrives in Washington for high-stakes talks - and a little schmoozing - at the White House with President Donald Trump.

When Xi’s plan lands at Joint Base Andrews just outside Washington on Wednesday, Trump will be there to welcome Xi for the state visit, senior administration officials told reporters. That’s unusual -- Trump typically meets foreign leaders at the White House.

The heart of the visit comes Thursday when Trump and first lady Melania Trump welcome Xi and his wife Peng Liyuan at an arrival ceremony held indoors on the State Floor of the White House. Trump and Xi will also participate in a review of troops in the Rose Garden before they retreat behind closed doors for their talks.

The first lady and Peng Liyuan will hold a separate engagement while their spouses get down to business. Details were not released during a call the officials held Friday to brief reporters on Xi’s visit.

Xi and his wife will also be the guests of honor Thursday as Trump and the first lady host the Chinese delegation for a state dinner in the East Room. Trump described the dinner as an event everyone wants to attend. Both leaders will deliver remarks.

“Thousands of people would love to be at that dinner,” Trump told reporters Friday in the Oval Office. He appeared to lament that the 1,000-person ballroom he is adding onto the White House will not be available for the soiree because it is still under construction. “This is a very tough ticket for me.”

“I’ve told a lot of very good friends of mine, ‘you just can’t come,’” Trump said. But some of the Republican president’s tech industry friends have been invited. Among the executives scheduled to attend the state dinner are Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, Tesla and SpaceX’s Elon Musk, Sundar Pichai of Google and Michael Dell, the CEO of Dell Technologies, the White House said.

Also on the guest list are Nvidia’s Jensen Huang, OpenAI’s Sam Altman, Jane Fraser, the CEO of Citigroup, and Tim Cook, who recently stepped down as the CEO of Apple.

Next Friday, Xi and Peng Liyuan are scheduled to return to the White House for a private tea with the Trumps, who will then take them on a tour of the National Archives, the home of some of the United States’ most important founding documents as the nation celebrates its 250th anniversary.

Xi will head for Joint Base Andrews after the tour.

As for other substantive parts of the visit, US officials said Washington and Beijing may be ready to ease some tariffs on some nonstrategic goods.

Discussing the visit during a call with reporters, senior US officials said



US President Donald Trump, (left), participates in a welcome ceremony with China’s President Xi Jinping at the Great Hall of the People on May 14, 2026,v in Beijing. (AP)

such a move might affect a narrow band of goods that would advantage both sides. The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity under ground rules set by the White House, did not elaborate.

But they said they did not expect the United States would be ready to ease export controls to allow for a greater flow of rare earth minerals, critical components in a wide range of products, into the global market.

The officials said China maintaining an acceptable flow of such minerals would be discussed, but there was unlikely to be an exchange involving reduced US export controls.

Separately, Treasury Secretary Bessent will meet over the weekend in New York with Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng to discuss a range of economic issues, according to a person familiar with the plans who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the details publicly.

Artificial intelligence will be a focus of the talks, the person said.

In Beijing, China’s commerce ministry announced that He would lead a delegation to the US from Saturday to Wednesday for economic and trade consultations.

Also on the agenda will be China’s stockpiles of rare earth minerals, essential to everything from smartphones to fighter jets.

US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer will join Bessent on Sunday for the meeting with He, Greer’s office announced Friday evening.

Trump visited China in May, as well as in his first term, for talks with Xi, who rolled out the red carpet for his American counterpart.

Xi was last in the United States for a state visit in September 2015 during the administration of Democrat Barack Obama.

Also:

WASHINGTON: US President **Donald Trump** will meet with **Delcy Rodriguez**, the acting president of **Venezuela**, for the first time next week since his administration carried out an operation to capture the nation’s former leader and effectively put Rodriguez in charge.

The gathering in New York City between the two leaders will be a “pull-aside” - diplomatic speak for a meeting that is more casual than a formal bilateral sit-down - said **Mike Waltz**, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations. Trump will be in town for the annual United Nations General Assembly.

Waltz also told reporters on a Friday call that Trump will meet with **Andy Burnham**, the **United Kingdom** prime minister, and Japanese Prime Minister **Sanae Takaichi**. The Trump-Burnham meeting will be their first since Burnham became prime minister in July.

Trump also will meet with leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council, which includes **Saudi Arabia**, the **United Arab Emirates**, **Qatar**, **Oman**, **Kuwait** and **Bahrain**. The meeting comes as the **U.S.** has struggled to find an end-game to the Iran war after more than six months.

Rodríguez took over in Venezuela after a surprise U.S. military raid in January that captured then-leader **Nicolás Maduro** and brought him to the **United States** to face drug trafficking charges.

The first meeting between Trump and Rodríguez, who had been Maduro’s vice president, comes after the two countries announced an agreement last month to give the **United States** a stake in Venezuela’s vast oil reserves. She described the deal as a step toward economic recovery that will modernize the country’s oil industry.

Senior administration officials said they couldn’t confirm whether Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu would seek a meeting with Trump while in **New York** for the UN General Assembly, but suggested it was unlikely. The officials, who insisted on anonymity as a ground rule for holding the call, said that Netanyahu’s time in New York would be quite limited during the Israeli electoral season, and that the prime minister wasn’t expected to arrive there until after Trump leaves.

Iran war’s cost grows to \$43.6 bln in new United States military estimate

WASHINGTON, Sept 19, (AP): The US military’s price tag for the Iran war has grown to \$43.6 billion as of Sept3, according to a new estimate provided this week to lawmakers.

The figure from US Central Command, which oversees operations in the Middle East, offers the most up-to-date cost for the conflict since it was launched by the United States and Israel on Feb 28. A Congressional Budget Office report released Tuesday said the war had cost \$38 billion through Aug. 1 and will continue to rack up expenses of around \$3 billion a month depending on the conflict’s intensity.

The new breakdown, seen by The Associated Press and reported earlier by Bloomberg and Punchbowl News, also showed the continued use of expensive munitions by American forces. Weapons costs jumped by more than \$6 billion in just over a month, from \$21.7 billion listed in the CBO report to \$28.1 billion in US Central Command’s estimate.

The financial cost is just one measure of the impact of the Iran war, which also is affecting oil prices and the stock market and has led to deaths and injuries of American troops. The political



US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, (left), and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Dan Caine, (right), arrive for the POW/MIA National Recognition Day Ceremony at the Pentagon on Sept 18, in Washington. (AP)

costs will be calculated in November’s midterm congressional elections, with Republicans facing increasing headwinds from the war’s unpopularity.

The latest cost estimate has emerged as the Trump administration pushes for a historic \$1.5 trillion military budget proposal. The White House also is asking Congress to approve a \$95 billion package that would help fund the Iran war and other priorities.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth called for the budget’s passage during a speech Friday in Austin, Texas, at Saronic Technologies, which makes drones for the Navy.

“We’re asking for \$1.5 trillion in the current budget to make generational investments to keep our country strong and sustain good, high-paying jobs for American manufacturers like Saronic,” Hegseth said. “We will deliver on this generational investment. We will fund this department.”

‘Vote accurate, secure’ Early voting begins in US midterm elections

HENRICO, Va., Sept 19, (AP): In-person voting for this year’s midterm elections began Friday, ushering in the final six weeks for Americans to decide which party they trust to lead Congress through a cost-of-living crisis, a prolonged war in Iran and other pressing issues.

Election administrators say they are prepared and confident the vote will be accurate and secure. Nevertheless, President Donald Trump has continued efforts to denigrate certain voting methods and reshape how elections are run, through court challenges, a federal hunt for noncitizen voters and a pressure campaign to force election officials to share sensitive voter data.

Friday was the start of early voting in Virginia. Voters in a few other states, including Minnesota and South Dakota, can cast absentee ballots in person, typically at a local election office or voting center. More expansive early voting is scheduled to begin in those and other states in the coming weeks.

At a voting location in Fairfax, Virginia, 18-year-old college student Sanya Singhal was among the first to vote early in person Friday morning, arriving well before the site opened to get in line.

“Why not just have a little fun in life, you know, try to be the first early voter?” she asked. “I really want to participate in my democracy.”

At a voting location in suburban Richmond, a poll worker rang a bell as the building opened and about a dozen voters in line began to file in. Stephen Gura was excited to be the first.

“This election is critical. We need to stop the Trump agenda,” said Gura, who added that he voted for U.S. Sen. Mark Warner, a Democrat, and Shannon Taylor, the Democratic



Voters pick up their ballots on the first day of early voting in Minnesota at the Elections & Voter Services building on Sept 18, in Minneapolis. (AP)

nominee against Republican incumbent Rob Wittman in the 1st Congressional District.

The Nov. 3 election includes votes for governor and state legislature in most states and will determine whether Republicans maintain control of the US House and Senate. If Democrats retake Congress, it will alter the trajectory of the final two years of Trump’s term, most likely leading to investigations and other oversight efforts.



Houses covered in snow are seen on the coast of a sea inlet of Nuuk, Greenland on March 7, 2025. (AP)

Denmark’s leaders cautiously optimistic about US announcement of Greenland deal

COPENHAGEN, Denmark, Sept 19, (AP): Denmark’s government was cautiously optimistic on Saturday about Donald Trump’s announcement of a deal on Greenland to bolster US military presence there but keep the island under Danish control, following months of threats by the U.S. president to seize the semiautonomous territory of a NATO ally.

In Greenland, the Arctic island’s top leaders echoed that stance and said the deal had been long in coming.

Trump said on Friday that the agreement would give the United States “permanent control over security, and all other needs, in Greenland, completely addressing ALL of our many US concerns.”

Denmark and the US already have a long-standing security agreement that has allowed the US to deploy forces in Greenland, and it was not immediately clear how this deal was different from that.

After Trump’s announcement Friday, the office of Denmark’s prime minister, Mette Frederiksen, said the deal will be signed by all three governments next week during the United Nations General Assembly, but parliamentary action is still needed by the Danish and Greenland gov-

ernments before it can be enforced.

“Next week could be a good week ... for Greenland, Denmark, and the United States alike,” Danish Foreign Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen wrote on Instagram Saturday morning.

“A period of uncertainty will hopefully be replaced by a binding agreement that strengthens security in the Arctic and the North Atlantic - and thus also our shared security within NATO and Europe - while respecting the Kingdom’s red lines,” he added.

Greenland’s government leader Jens-Frederik Nielsen said he was happy about the deal, which he said “benefits not only our collective security, but also the continued development here in the country.” The foreign minister of Greenland, Múte B. Egede, said he was pleased that “we now have an agreement within reach.”

“It has taken some time,” he told Denmark’s TV2 broadcaster. “I’m pleased that we finally have an end product within reach. And it’s about time.”

Trump said that with the agreement, the US would “immediately” begin the process of developing a larger military presence on the mineral-rich Danish territory.

Ukraine’s Zelenskyy hosts leaders from 7 countries for regional summit

KYIV, Ukraine, Sept 19, (AP): Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy hosted leaders and representatives from seven regional countries for talks on deepening cooperation on Friday, after overnight Russian strikes in multiple regions sparked fires and caused several deaths and injuries.

The inaugural summit of the so-called “Carpathian Eight” brings together Ukraine, Romania, Serbia, Poland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Austria and Hungary, with the European Union also involved. It comes as US-mediated efforts to end Russia’s 4 1/2-year full-scale invasion have stalled, with the issue of territorial concessions in eastern Ukraine among the central sticking points. Ukraine is also seeking security guarantees from partners for a deal.

The summit also comes as three days of voting began in Russia’s first wartime parliamentary election, which features virtually no opposition to President Vladimir Putin’s party and is all but certain to secure the Kremlin’s political dominance.



From left: First Vice President of the Senate of the Czech Republic Jiri Drahos, Prime Minister of Poland Donald Tusk, President of Romania Nicu-sor Dan, President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelensky, President of Serbia Aleksandar Vucic, President of the Federal Council of Austria Christine Schwarz-Fuchs and State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs Marek Estok hold a joint press conference following the Carpathian 8 summit in Bukovel, western Ukraine on Sept 18. (AP)



Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson arrives at the Moderate Party election watch night in Stockholm, Sweden on Sept 13. (AP)

Sweden Prime Minister Kristersson to resign

STOCKHOLM, Sept 19, (AP): Sweden’s left-leaning opposition won a narrow majority in the country’s national election, a complete vote count showed.

The Swedish Election Authority said the four opposition parties won 176 seats in the 349-seat Riksdag, Sweden’s parliament, in Sunday’s election. The four parties that make up or support the outgoing conservative-led government total 173 seats.

Center-right Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson posted a letter on X shortly after the final results were announced, saying he would resign from his position as the head of government.

Magdalena Andersson, the opposition leader and a former prime minister, said that “the Swedish people have voted for a new direction for our country, voted for cohesion and against division,” Swedish news agency TT reported.

Shooting at high school in Philippines leaves 2 students and gunman dead

MANILA, Philippines, Sept 19, (AP): A shooting at a high school in the southern Philippines on Friday left two 14-year-old students and the teenage gunman dead and wounded at least eight people, local government and police officials said.

The shooting at Banga National High School in the South Cotabato town of Banga is under investigation, the Philippine National Police said in a statement. Police officers secured the campus and coordinated with school officials and medical responders, the statement said.

South Cotabato Governor Reynaldo Tamayo said the two students killed were a boy and a girl, both 14. He said the gunman also shot himself and died.

Banga Mayor Albert Palencia told DZBB radio that the gunman hit 10 students in the classroom next to his, two of whom died while eight were wounded. A person who was hyperventilating was also brought to a hospital, according to the governor.

Tamayo said the gunman's best friend told officials that the teenager was a member of an online "true crimes community." Authorities were investigating the



In this handout photo provided by the Philippine Red Cross, Red Cross members provide assistance during an exercise in Camarines Sur province, Philippines on Sept 18. (AP)

account and whether it had any connection to the shooting, he said.

Mayor Palencia said the 16-year-old gunman told his friends to go home after lunch because "he was going to do something" and they might get involved. He said the shooter's classmates thought it was a joke.

After lunch, the gunman started shooting students in the classroom next to his, hitting 10 of them. He

then changed the magazine of his 9 mm gun and shot himself, Palencia added.

He said the gun belonged to the shooter's father, a Department of Education employee, who hid the weapon in a vault, which was destroyed by his son.

Police found posts made by the shooter in the online community, where young people involved in school shootings are idolized, Palencia added.

Malaysia king allows Najib to serve rest of graft sentence under house arrest

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia, Sept 19, (AP): Malaysia's king on Friday granted former Prime Minister Najib Razak a rare royal clemency, allowing him to serve the remainder of his prison term for graft under house arrest.

The decision came at a suddenly convened Pardons Board meeting, a week after the board deferred Najib's latest clemency application. It marked an unprecedented use of house arrest as a form of royal clemency in Malaysia and could renew debate over the rule of law and the treatment of Malaysia's most prominent corruption convict.

Najib, 73, has been imprisoned since August 2022, when Malaysia's top court upheld his conviction in a case linked to the multi-billion dollar looting of the state investment fund 1Malaysia Development Berhad.

Najib set up the 1MDB development fund shortly after he took office in 2009. Investigators say at least \$4.5 billion was stolen from the fund and laundered by Najib's associates through layers of bank accounts in the U.S. and other countries. The funds were allegedly used to finance Hollywood films and extravagant purchases that included hotels, a luxury yacht, art and jewelry.

He was originally sentenced to 12 years in prison and fined 210 million



Former Malaysian prime minister Najib Razak arrives at the Kuala Lumpur High Court complex escorted by prison officers in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on April 4, 2024. (AP)

ringgit (\$51.5 million) in 2020 for abuse of power, criminal breach of trust and money laundering involving 42 million ringgit (\$10.3 million) channeled into his bank accounts from SRC International, a former unit of 1MDB. In January 2024, the Pardons Board chaired by the then-king halved his sentence to six years and reduced his fine to 50 million ringgit.

A government statement said Friday that Sultan Ibrahim Iskandar granted a

"conditional pardon" for Najib. He will be allowed to serve the remainder of his prison term under house arrest until Aug. 23, 2028, if he pays the 50 million ringgit fine (\$12 million) imposed by the court, it said.

Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said the constitution provides for the king's absolute powers and urged the public to accept the decision. He said it wouldn't weaken the government's fight against graft and abuse of power.

Indonesia welcomes its first aircraft carrier, prompting debate over cost and military ambitions

JAKARTA, Indonesia, Sept 19, (AP): Indonesia welcomed its first aircraft carrier Friday, a former Italian warship that the government says will strengthen the archipelago nation's maritime security and disaster response capabilities.

The 41-year-old former ITS Giuseppe Garibaldi, with capacity for short takeoff and vertical landing aircraft and helicopters, was welcomed with a military ceremony upon its arrival at a naval base in North Jakarta's Tanjung Priok seaport.

Italy in March agreed to give the carrier, which was retired in 2024, to Indonesia in a move aimed at boosting Italy's broader defense engagement with the Southeast Asian country. Italy is seeking deals on submarines and aircraft, and gifting the carrier to Indonesia also saves it the cost of decommissioning the ship.

"We intend to use the ship primarily for military operations other than war, although it can also be deployed for combat missions if necessary," Indonesian Navy chief Adm. Muhammad Ali told reporters after the ceremony. He said the carrier could serve the navy for another 15 to 20 years and could accommodate 14 helicopters or more, depending on its size.

Indonesia will become the second country in Southeast Asia with an aircraft carrier. Thailand's HTMS Chakri Naruebet was commissioned in 1997 after being procured from Spain along with

carrier-capable AV-8S Matador jump jets.

Ali said the carrier will be commissioned into the navy next week as the KRI Sriwijaya, honoring the Srivijaya empire, a maritime kingdom based in Sumatra that became one of Southeast Asia's dominant naval and trading powers between the seventh and 13th centuries. Previously, the navy would name the carrier as KRI Gajah Mada.

Defense development was one of the top priorities for President Prabowo Subianto's administration, as he has advocated an expansion of the military through the purchase of submarines, frigates, fighter jets, and missiles and pushed for more defense cooperation with various countries.

But the Garibaldi acquisition has raised questions about whether Indonesia needs an aircraft carrier at all and whether the government should be spending millions of dollars to refurbish and operate an aging warship.

Indonesia's Finance Ministry approved \$450 million in financing for the aircraft carrier program in 2025. However, some lawmakers have warned the overall bill could be far higher. TB Hasanuddin, a member of Parliament's Commission I, said the cost of retrofitting the carrier alone could reach 16 trillion rupiah (about \$900 million).

Unlike major naval powers that use aircraft carriers to launch fighter jets far from home shores, Indonesia views the vessel as a mobile command

center and support hub for helicopters, uncrewed aircraft and maritime operations across its thousands of islands.

Speaking during a disaster management meeting early this month, Prabowo said the vessel would help authorities combat forest and peatland fires that regularly blanket parts of Southeast Asia with hazardous haze.

"We will refurbish it and convert it into a carrier for helicopters and drones," Prabowo said in a video briefing. "This will greatly help our disaster response."

He also outlined plans to operate drones from the ship and use it as a mobile platform that could be rapidly deployed to help in the event of natural disasters. Monsoon flooding, earthquakes and volcanic activity are common across Indonesia.

Operating a carrier is extremely costly, however, and experts have questioned whether Indonesia's leadership has thought through whether one is necessary for the country's defense or disaster-relief needs.

The acquisition comes as Southeast Asia's largest economy faces growing fiscal pressures. Prabowo's government has been funding an ambitious free nutritious meals program and other costly initiatives while economists have warned about slowing growth, weaker state revenue and widening budget constraints, prompting closer scrutiny of major government spending projects.



Military aircraft fly in formation above the Giuseppe Garibaldi, a former Italian Navy aircraft carrier, as tugboats guide it toward Tanjung Priok port in Jakarta, Indonesia, on Sept 18. (AP)

Lula ramps up federal push against organized crime in Rio ahead of election

RIO DE JANEIRO, Sept 19, (AP): Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva unveiled a pilot plan Friday to expand the federal government's role in fighting organized crime in Rio de Janeiro, spotlighting a major voter concern in the lead-up to October's presidential election.

The plan expands existing joint operations among federal, state and municipal authorities along Rio's key highways and in selected territories, with a focus on increased shared intelligence, coordinated policing and inspections.

Sen. Flávio Bolsonaro, Lula's main rival and son of ex-President Jair Bolsonaro, and US President Donald Trump have accused Lula of insufficient action to curb organized crime groups that control large swaths of Rio and remote areas such as the Amazon.

"This is a new beginning to create a new template for public security in this country," Lula said. "God wanted us to begin with Rio de Janeiro, because if it works in Rio, it will work across the country."

Efforts include expanding coordinated policing, inspections, intelligence and surveillance along the



Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva waves to supporters during a presidential reelection campaign rally in Guarulhos, greater Sao Paulo area, Brazil on Sept 18. (AP)

state's main logistics corridors to target cargo theft and weapons and drug trafficking, while also going after the financial networks of organized crime.

"Lots of people ask why Lula, who has been president three times, hasn't already taken responsibility for pub-

lic security," Lula said. He said most of the public security has been in the hands of state governments since the 1988 Constitution, a mistake he said his government wishes to rectify.

Some observers say Lula's government accelerated efforts to combat organized crime after Rio's deadliest police operation last year, when more than 120 people were killed. Polls afterward showed an increase in then-Gov. Claudio Castro's approval rating and strong support for the deadly raid.

In May, Lula launched a \$2 billion anti-organized crime project that included beefing up the fight against arms trafficking, attacking the finances of criminal organizations, raising the quality of homicide investigations and investing in the country's prison system.

On Friday, Lula again criticized Trump's decision earlier this year to classify the First Command of the Capital, or PCC, and the Red Command, or CV, as foreign terrorist organizations, saying that while the groups terrorize local populations they are not terrorist organizations because they seek profit rather than political change.



An Army soldier and local residents look at a damaged portion of a mosque after a bomb exploded in Kohat, in northwestern Pakistan on Sept 18. (AP)

Security forces end 20-hour standoff

Pakistan mosque bombing kills 21

PESHAWAR, Pakistan, Sept 19, (AP): Pakistani security forces ended on Saturday a standoff with militants holed up inside a police compound in northwestern Pakistan, officials said. The confrontation began Friday after a suicide bomber rammed an explosives-laden vehicle into a mosque, and gunmen stormed the facility, killing 21 people and wounding 103 others.

The coordinated attack occurred at a compound in Kohat in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, which borders Afghanistan. Many of the casualties were police officers and people attending prayers at a mosque.

Several militants took up positions inside the complex, and a shootout with security officers ensued, police official Mohammad Sadiq said. The complex houses the police's Special Branch intelligence agency, offices of the Counter Terrorism Department, and houses of counterterrorism officers who have carried out operations against militants across the province in recent years.

Sadiq said the operation ended after 20 hours. Security forces were searching the compound and nearby areas, and the bodies of eight attackers were recovered, according to local police. Bursts of gunfire could be heard in the compound as additional security personnel arrived, residents said, before the operation ended.

Sadiq said two attackers detonated explosives inside the compound Saturday morning and that police had killed six assailants so far, not including the bombers. It was unclear whether the new explosions caused additional casualties or how many militants remained inside.

The suicide attack on Friday brought down an outer wall of the police offices and badly damaged the mosque.

Funeral prayers for police officers killed in the assault were held late Friday at the police lines in Kohat, and their bodies, and those of killed civilians, were returned to their families for burial, Sadiq said.

No group immediately claimed responsibility for the assault, but suspicion was likely to fall on the Pakistani Taliban, formally known as Tehrik-e-Taleban Pakistan, or TTP, which has intensified attacks on police and other security forces in recent years.

The TTP is separate from but allied with Afghanistan's Taleban, which returned to power in 2021. Pakistan frequently accuses the Taliban government in Kabul of sheltering TTP leaders and allowing militants to carry out cross-border attacks. Afghanistan's government denies the allegations.

President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif condemned the attack in separate statements and expressed sorrow over the deaths. Zardari said eliminating militants was essential to national security.

The attack comes a day after a roadside bomb struck a security forces convoy in the northwestern Hangu district and killed six soldiers. Government troops also conducted raids in various areas Thursday and killed 10 militants believed to be members of the Pakistani Taleban, the military and police said.

Pakistani Taliban have stepped up attacks on police and civilians in recent years. In 2023, a suicide bomber killed 101 people in an attack inside a mosque in Peshawar, the capital of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

Africa

Nigeria police use tear gas during protests: Police in central Nigeria fired tear gas Friday at crowds who gathered to protest the deaths of 37 miners while in custody on illegal mining charges, with activists disputing the official line that they may have died of a disease outbreak.

The deaths are under investigation. The civil defense corps said the miners, who were arrested earlier this week on suspicion of mining illegally, had died as a result of a suspected illness and that their bodies were sent to a hospital for examination. However, survivors told The Associated Press the detainees were packed in a poorly ventilated cell and suggested the victims died of suffocation.

The protesters claimed the miners were killed in retaliation for earlier attacks by some miners on officers. The government suspended the commandant of Niger state's civil defense corps on Friday. (AP)

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Sanction against Eritrea ruling party lifted: The United States lifted sanctions against Eritrea's ruling party and the military that the Biden administration imposed, according to the US Department of the Treasury.

The sanctions were issued in 2021 over humanitarian and human rights concerns in the northern Ethiopian region of Tigray, which suffered violent conflict



Families and relatives of miners who were arrested on suspicion of illegal mining wait outside a hospital where their bodies are stored in Minna, Nigeria, on Sept 17. (AP)

at the time. Eritrean forces backed Ethiopian troops against fighters loyal to the regional government of Tigray in the conflict that ended with a peace accord in November 2022.

The Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control said in a Friday statement that sanctions against some Eritrean individuals, including Hagos Ghebrehiwet, a key financial official, have been removed. The state-owned Red Sea Trading Corporation was also on the list. (AP)

Oil price down \$5.24 to \$114.94 pb

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 19, (KUNA): Kuwait oil price went down by USD 5.24 to reach USD 114.94 per barrel (pb) on Friday, compared with USD 120.18 the previous day, according to the Kuwait Petroleum Corpora-

tion (KPC) on Saturday. In global markets, Brent crude dropped 95 cents to reach USD 103.87 pb, and US West Texas Intermediate crude also went down by USD 1.61 to stand at USD 100.30 pb.

Business

The power behind AI: Investing in the energy needs of artificial intelligence

By NBK Wealth

For most of the past decade, the story of artificial intelligence was software and chips: the models that could write, code, and reason, and the processors that trained them. Electricity was an afterthought, an operating expense rather than a subject for investors. As the technology scales, the constraint is shifting from what happens inside the chip to whether enough power, and enough physical infrastructure, exists to operate at scale.

The sums are large enough to matter for portfolios. International Energy Agency (IEA) estimates for data center capacity imply cumulative investment of around USD 3.9 trillion until 2030. These facilities can now draw as much electricity as heavy industrial plants, and their appetite is growing far faster than the grids that feed them. For long-term investors, this is less a technology story than an infrastructure and energy one, with its own opportunities and risks.

How Big the Demand Really Is

Data centers consumed an estimated 485 terawatt-hours (TWh) in 2025, about 1.5% of world electricity (IEA). The speed of travel matters more than today's share. The IEA's central projection has consumption more than doubling to about 945 TWh by 2030, slightly more than Japan uses today, and reaching 1,200 TWh by 2035.

The United States accounts for about 45% of global data center electricity use, ahead of China at 25% and Europe at 15% (IEA). Estimates of the US share by 2030 vary by study, which is itself worth noting: 11.8% from Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, within a range of 9.5% to 15.3%; 9% to 17% from the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI), an industry research body; and 11% to 12% from McKinsey. All start from roughly 3% to 5% today. A rounding error in national power demand a few years ago, the sector is on track to take nearer one-eighth of it.

The forecast range is wide and the outcome will depend on many factors. The central and most likely scenario, however, is that consumption multiplies over the next four to five years.

The Physical Infrastructure

This demand turns an intangible industry into a physical one. Running AI at scale requires generation, transmission lines, transformers, cooling, water, and land, which broadens the investment theme well beyond a handful of



technology names.

On the generation side, no single fuel wins. The IEA expects renewables to meet about half the growth in data center demand, adding more than 450 TWh by 2035, helped by short build times and low cost. Natural gas carries much of the rest, particularly in the United States, where policy and cheap supply favor it. Nuclear contributes over a longer horizon, and the sector is reviving interest in it, with the first small modular reactors, compact units built in stages, expected around 2030 (IEA). Beneficiaries span utilities, independent power producers, the gas and nuclear supply chains, and the equipment makers between them.

The grid is becoming a bottleneck, and bottlenecks reward whoever can relieve them. New transmission lines take four to eight years to build in advanced economies and wait times for transformers and cables have doubled in three years (IEA). Equipment that was a quiet corner of industrial manufacturing is suddenly scarce, and utilities, long treated as low-growth defensive holdings, are being reassessed as demand growth returns for the first time in decades. AI can also relieve some of the strain it creates: the IEA estimates that AI-assisted grid management could free up as much as 175 GW of transmission capacity without a new line being built.

Funding

The scale of spending is reshaping how these projects are financed. The USD 3.9 trillion estimated over the coming five years is too large to come from corporate balance sheets.

That gap between ambition and internal cash flow is drawing in outside capital, and this is where the theme connects to private markets and matters more to portfolios than any demand forecast. The five largest hyperscalers issued roughly USD 35 billion of debt a year between them from 2020 to 2024, rising to USD 93 billion in 2025 and about USD 132 billion in the first seven months of 2026 (Vanguard). Broader estimates including chipmakers, developers and utilities run several times higher. Companies that were structurally cash-rich a few years ago now rank among the market's larger borrowers.

New structures are appearing alongside the debt. In August 2026, NVIDIA announced partnerships with multiple global asset managers to establish platforms intended to mobilize more than USD 500 billion of third-party capital, giving cloud operators and enterprises dedicated pools of funding for NVIDIA based systems. The arrangement treats computing capacity as productive infrastructure capable of long-duration, usage-linked revenues. Implementation is early, but it shows the build-out drawing capital traditionally associated with energy, transport, and real estate.

For diversified portfolios, much of the genuine exposure may therefore sit in infrastructure, private credit and real assets rather than in listed technology shares alone.

A Regional Angle: The Gulf Steps In

This is not only an American story, and the shift outward is directly relevant to investors in this region. Boston Consulting Group expects roughly 35% of global data center power capacity to sit outside the United States by 2028 as operators seek power, land, and greater control over computing resources.

The Gulf region is positioning itself as a key beneficiary. Saudi Arabia's HUMAN is targeting up to 2 GW of AI data center capacity, while the UAE has announced a 5 GW campus in Abu Dhabi described as the largest AI data center project outside the United States. Qatar has also committed capital to large-scale data center development. The region benefits from competitive power costs, improving connectivity, and a strategic location that provides access to a large share of the world's population. For regional investors, this is a rare case where a major global infrastructure theme is developing close to home.

Key Risks and Considerations

None of this, however, moves in a straight line, and the risks deserve careful scrutiny. The first risk is demand itself.

Forecasts for AI electricity consumption depend on assumptions around adoption, monetization, and efficiency that could prove wrong. Continued advances in chips and models may reduce power requirements faster than expected.

The second risk is execution. Grid connection queues, long lead times for key equipment, and shortages of skilled labor can all delay projects. The IEA estimates that a meaningful share of planned data center capacity faces the risk of delay.

The third risk is financial. AI infrastructure is extremely capital intensive, leaving little room for error in return assumptions. A social dimension is also worth noting: if the growth in power demand is not managed effectively, higher electricity costs for households and businesses could attract political and regulatory scrutiny.

None of these risks cancels the theme. Together they argue for treating it as a long-duration infrastructure allocation, sized with care and diversified across the value chain rather than as a single wager on the eventual winners of the AI race.

Key Takeaways

■ The constraint on AI is shifting from chips and software to electricity and physical infrastructure, turning an intangible industry into an energy and real-assets story.

■ Data center electricity demand is set to more than double globally, from about 495 TWh in 2025 to around 945 TWh by 2030, with the United States moving toward 9% to 17% of national power use by 2030, against 4.4% currently.

■ Meeting that demand relies on renewables, natural gas, and eventually nuclear, reviving utilities, power equipment, and grid infrastructure as growth sectors after decades of stagnation.

■ The investment implied through 2030 is too large for technology balance sheets alone, opening the theme to infrastructure, private credit, and real-asset investors rather than only listed technology shares.

■ The Gulf is emerging as a major hub as capacity moves outside the United States, giving regional investors exposure to a global theme close to home.

■ The risks are real: wide uncertainty in AI demand, grid and equipment bottlenecks, high capital intensity, and cooling sentiment argue for a diversified, long-term approach rather than a concentrated bet.



NBK launches 'NBK Reach' for Kuwaiti students in UK

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 19: The National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) has announced the launch of "NBK Reach," a specialized program designed to develop and prepare Kuwaiti students studying in the United Kingdom. The initiative aims to identify and attract promising national talent, enhance their professional readiness, and foster early engagement with the banking sector, further helping to cultivate a generation of Kuwaiti talent capable of leading the future of business and the economy.

This program reflects NBK's belief in the importance of investing in young national talents and its ongoing commitment to supporting Kuwaiti students throughout their academic and professional journeys. It provides a professional training environment that enables them to bridge the gap between knowledge and application, while gaining hands-on experience and professional skills needed to enter the workforce with confidence and competence.

The NBK Reach program offers a comprehensive professional development experience tailored for high-potential Kuwaiti students in the United Kingdom. It provides them with firsthand insight into the banking work environment and opportunities to participate in specialized training and development programs. Additionally, participants benefit from professional mentorship and direct interaction with the Bank's leadership and experts, helping enhance their skills and broaden their career horizons.

The program also gives participants the opportunity to undergo practical training at NBK's London office, enabling them to gain firsthand insight into operations at a leading banking institution and acquire hands-on experience within a professional environment that reflects global banking standards.

NBK Reach allows students to explore various roles and functions within the banking and financial sectors and interact with the Bank's teams and experts. This fosters the development of their professional and personal skills, enhances their understanding of the business environment, and better prepares them to launch their careers after graduation.

Moreover, the program reflects NBK's innovative approach to attracting and engaging national talents early in their academic journeys, which contributes to building a future batch of qualified professionals capable of keeping pace with the rapid transformations across various economic sectors, particularly the financial and banking industries.

On this occasion, Gadeer Al-Kooheji, Senior Vice President - Head of Talent Ac-

quisition at NBK Group Human Resources, said: "We believe that investing in youth is an investment in Kuwait's future, which is why we launched the 'NBK Reach' program. We aim to build effective bridges of communication with outstanding Kuwaiti students in the United Kingdom, enabling them to gain firsthand insight into the banking work environment and acquire practical experience and valuable skills that will support their future careers".

Al-Kooheji added: "The program reflects our strategy to develop human capital and attract promising national talents early in their academic journeys, and it enhances the readiness of Kuwaiti youth to engage in vital sectors, namely the financial and banking industry. Additionally, this program contributes to preparing a generation capable of keeping pace with the demands of a changing labor market".

Moreover, Al-Kooheji emphasized that "NBK Reach" is a pioneering initiative within Kuwait's banking sector, offering a comprehensive development pathway for Kuwaiti students studying in the United Kingdom, noting that the program embodies the Bank's commitment to attracting and developing national talent, in alignment with "Kuwait Vision 2035," which aims to develop human capital and build an economy driven by knowledge and innovation.

These initiatives reflect NBK's position as a top employer of choice for Kuwaitis, particularly young talents seeking to build distinguished careers, driven by its sustained investment in developing national talents and its attractive work environment that fosters professional and leadership growth. By enabling employees to realize their ambitions, the Bank strengthens its ability to attract and retain top talents for the long term.

It is worth noting that NBK consistently adopts impactful initiatives across various sectors that support the community and promote sustainable development, most notably through investments in education. This approach underscores the Bank's commitment to creating added value for society, not only through high-quality banking services but also by actively contributing to the preparation of a skilled generation capable of leading Kuwait's development journey.



Gadeer Al-Kooheji

China's oil stockpile cushions global shock

WASHINGTON, Sept 19, (AP): It could be much worse.

When President Donald Trump launched his war against Iran in late February, energy analysts issued dire warnings that oil prices could more than double during a protracted conflict and urged investors and motorists to buckle up for a bumpy ride.

The war grinds on and oil prices certainly remain volatile. But the most dire projections have not yet come to pass six months into a conflict that has no end in sight.

Chinese President Xi Jinping, who is making a much-anticipated state visit to Washington next week, could make a credible argument that the world has his country's energy strategy to thank for that.

It's unclear how much the two leaders will discuss Iran during the visit, which comes as Trump's Republican Party faces pressure from voters over high gasoline prices, and as China's buffer is being further tested as the conflict in the Middle East spreads. Trump, who has sought to keep a fragile trade truce with Beijing intact, has been careful in public comments about differences with Xi over the country's relationship with Iran.

"We've been free-riding off Beijing in a weird way," said Rosemary Kelanic, director of the Middle East program at Defense Priorities, a Washington think tank. "China's doing it because they understand that they're on the train that Trump is driving off a cliff. If oil prices go way up, that hurts the global economy. If it hurts the global economy, it hurts them."

Beijing spent years and billions of dollars amassing the world's largest oil stockpile, building its strategic reserve to about 1.4 billion barrels by the end of last year, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration's estimates. To protect China from foreign supply risks, Xi made energy self-reliance a part of the country's latest five-year plan.

Drawing from the massive stockpile allowed China, the world's second-biggest oil consumer and Iran's top buyer, to dramatically cut crude imports once the U.S. and Israel began their bombardment and Tehran effectively closed the Strait of Hormuz. The country was also helped by its shift toward electric vehicles in recent years and increasingly tapping into other energy alternatives.

China's oil import diet in turn helped ease global demand, softening the upward price effects for the United States, Europe and beyond.

"The Chinese deserve credit," said retired U.S. Navy Rear Adm. Mark Montgomery, an analyst at the Foundation for Defense of De-

mocracies, a hawkish Washington think tank. "They did in 10 years what took us 25 years after the 1973 oil crisis to do: really build a kind of strategic petroleum reserve that could allow you to weather this."

But that resilience faces new challenges. Attacks by Iran-backed militias this month led Saudi Arabia to temporarily shut a vital pipeline that transports crude across the kingdom to ports on the Red Sea.

The Yemen-based Houthis have also seized two strategic islands in the southern Red Sea, bolstering the Iran-backed rebels' ability to disrupt a key maritime shipping route. Planned talks among Gulf nations focused on reopening the Strait of Hormuz, which were supposed to take place earlier this week, have also been put on hold.

Before he meets Xi, Trump is set to meet Tuesday with leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council in New York, on the sidelines of the annual United Nations General Assembly. The group includes Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Oman, Kuwait and Bahrain.

Analysts at Bank of America last week forecast oil at \$83 a barrel for the second half of the year "in light of more persistent disruptions to Hormuz," but said they still expected shipping through the strait to gradually pick up.

But if violence escalates and keeps a chokehold on traffic, prices could reach \$95 to \$120 a barrel, while damage to major energy infrastructure could produce spikes of up to \$150 a barrel, the analysts wrote.

Brent crude averaged about \$69 per barrel last year and currently is hovering around \$100. Brent crude briefly peaked in late April, touching \$126.

How China has weathered the volatile oil market caused by Trump's war is ultimately seen by Beijing as "a vindication of Xi's last five-year plan and his focus on self-reliance," said Jonathan Czin, a former senior CIA analyst who is now at the Brookings Institution.

The war in Iran - and its impact on the global economy - is expected to be on the agenda for the Trump-Xi talks. But the prospects of the world's two biggest powers coming up with a breakthrough appear dim.

Over the course of the conflict, the Trump administration has faced resistance when urging Beijing to use its considerable economic leverage to press the Islamic Republic to end the war and reopen the Strait of Hormuz.

Chinese officials, who have expressed strong opposition to the U.S. war, also have bristled at more recent administration threats to ratchet up economic pressure on nations and entities still

doing business with Iran.

To be certain, analysts say there's little altruism in how China came to sit on its massive stockpile of oil.

Experts believe Beijing was driven by contingency planning for potential military action to take over the self-ruled island of Taiwan, which China considers its own territory. Tapping the reserves now has been far from ideal for Beijing - but seeing global oil prices skyrocket was not ideal, either.

The leaders last met in Beijing just four months ago, and could meet twice more later this year.

After the talks in May, Trump claimed Xi agreed with him that a nuclear-armed Iran is a bad idea and that the Strait of Hormuz must be reopened. Chinese officials have neither affirmed nor denied Trump's telling of the private conversation.

The U.S. administration has also warned China not to aid Iran's military effort. But earlier this week, Trump downplayed a Wall Street Journal report that Chinese entities had supplied Tehran with satellite images of a Jordanian military base ahead of an Iran strike in July that killed three U.S. soldiers working there.

"You know, when they say that China spies on us, I say you're right, and we spy on them too," Trump told reporters.

Trump at the outset of the war called the conflict a "little excursion" that would last a matter of weeks.

He also has repeatedly predicted that oil prices will quickly plummet once the conflict ends. Less than three months into the conflict, he even declared "everybody was wrong" because the most dire projections for oil prices didn't come to pass.

The White House did not respond to queries on whether Trump credits China's actions with helping keep oil prices from hitting the worst-case levels.

But energy analysts credit Beijing's slashing imports as having the single greatest impact on moderating prices since the start of the war. China's crude imports averaged just 8.1 million barrels per day in the second quarter. That's almost 4 million barrels per day, or 32% lower than in the first three months of the year, according to U.S. data.

"It's remarkable how China managed the market," said Michael Lynch, president of Strategic Energy and Economic Research, a firm providing consulting services and analysis in the oil and gas industry. "They didn't panic and by turning to their inventories they kept the price down for everybody."

Other Voices

Oil prices back to their normal level?

By Kamel Al-Harami
Independent Oil Analyst

Are oil prices back to their normal level, or are they within the current range of \$100 to \$119 per barrel, truly reflecting the level at which oil should be traded globally?

These prices would also provide some relief to oil-producing countries by helping them reduce their debts or generate a surplus in their annual budgets, should such levels remain for the balance of the year. This could result in the long-awaited budget surplus.

In Kuwait, we need oil prices above \$95 per barrel to reach a more comfortable and balanced budget, something we have eagerly awaited. Such favorable figures would give the government greater flexibility in implementing its programs, rather than forcing it to squeeze the budget, potentially canceling important projects or limiting the expansion of strategic ones.

Without interference from Parliament, this could be the best opportunity for the government to move forward and demonstrate its achievements to the public. It is not for us to debate such an issue, but it is time for the government to proceed with its long-term plans and clearly present its objectives, plans, and long-term vision.

We do not know for sure how long oil prices will remain at their current levels or what it would take to bring them down further. Is this simply the result of strong



Al-Harami

demand in the absence of tight availability, or is there concern about increasing production and disrupting the comfortable market situation?

Looking at Kuwait's current-year budget, ending in March 2027, we are facing a shortage of KD 10 billion against projected revenues of KD 16.3 billion and expenditures of KD 26 billion, based on a balanced oil price of \$90.5 per barrel for our crude oil.

Today, oil prices are at \$104 per barrel, putting us \$14 above the budgeted oil price. As long as prices remain at this comfortable level, we can hopefully maintain a positive surplus. Hopefully, the next six months will pass without the challenges that could make them particularly crucial and critical.

The nightmare surrounding oil prices over the next six months is keeping some oil-producing countries awake at night, particularly those whose fiscal years end in March 2027. Others may feel more at ease, with their budgets ending on December 31 of this year.

Oil prices do not appear likely to weaken in the coming months amid high demand for oil and the current embargo on Iranian oil exports, which is making oil markets jittery and raising concerns about future price levels. More importantly, oil inventories are down, while strategic reserves are at their lowest levels, causing alarm and concern in the event of any disruption to oil supplies. This could trigger major or panic buying as countries seek to replenish their strategic oil reserves. This could lead to higher oil prices for the remainder of the year.

Oil-producing countries should therefore feel encouraged for the remainder of the year, benefiting from high oil prices and positive returns on their investments.

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Recognizing the bank’s excellence in Wealth Management, Sustainable Growth, & Digital Services

KFH reinforces its leadership with a suite of prestigious Euromoney Awards

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 19: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has further strengthened its leadership position after receiving a suite of prestigious awards at the Euromoney Awards for Excellence and Islamic Finance 2026, namely:

- Best Islamic Wealth Management Bank in the Middle East
- Best Islamic Wealth Management Bank in Kuwait
- Best Islamic Bank in Kuwait for Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG)
- Best Digital Bank in Kuwait

These awards underscore KFH’s success in developing Sharia-compliant wealth management services, embedding Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) principles and standards across its operations, thus reaffirming its commitment to innovation, enhancing customer experience, and creating sustainable value. The awards also reflect the Bank’s remarkable achievements in digital banking and the cumulative results of its continuous investments in technology and innovation. The awards were received by Deputy General Manager Private Banking and Wealth Management at KFH, Ghazi Al-Enzi, Executive Manager Governance and Sustainability at KFH, Mohammad Alarbeed, Executive Manager Tam Banking, Ahmed Allothman, during the Euromoney Awards ceremony held in Dubai.

Leadership in Sharia-Compliant Wealth Management
KFH’s winning of the Best Islamic Wealth Management Bank in the Middle East and Best Islamic Wealth Management Bank in Kuwait awards reflects the Bank’s success in developing its private banking and wealth management business and transforming it into a comprehensive advisory platform that integrates Sharia-compliant banking, financing, and investment solutions.

According to Euromoney, KFH restructured its private banking and wealth management operations under a unified framework and introduced a new operating model aimed at enhancing customer experience, strengthening investment capabilities, and delivering more advanced Islamic wealth management solutions. This transformation was supported by investments in specialized talent, technology, and the continuous development of KFH Capital, the Bank’s investment arm.

The magazine noted that one of KFH’s strategy keypillars is redesigning its customer relationship management model through a specialized advisory framework that brings together relationship managers, investment specialists, financing specialists, and account managers. This strategy enables customers to benefit from integrated expertise tailored to their banking, financing, and investment needs.

Euromoney also highlighted KFH’s focus on human capital development, noting that private banking and wealth management teams completed advanced training programs with Moody’s, obtained professional certifications from the Chartered Institute for Securities & Investment (CISI), and participated in specialized advisory programs in Islamic wealth management.

On the investment services level, the magazine pointed to the launch of KFH’s Global Discretionary Portfolio Management Service, which is based on the Bank’s in-house investment outlook and asset allocation model. The service offers clients a diversified multi-asset investment approach through an open architecture of Sharia-compliant investment funds.

Digital innovation played a pivotal role in this success. Euromoney noted that KFH Capital implemented a new asset management system to unify the management of funds and investment portfolios, while also enhancing the KFH Wealth App, providing clients with more efficient access to their investments. The launch of the Allfunds Platform in Kuwait further expanded access to Sharia-compliant investment opportunities.

The magazine added that KFH achieved record profits in the private banking



Ghazi Al-Enzi and Ahmed Allothman receiving the awards.

and wealth management sector, alongside notable growth in assets under management during the evaluation period, reinforcing its position as the benchmark for modern Islamic wealth management built on an advisory-led approach in Kuwait.

Excellence in ESG
KFH’s award as Best Islamic Bank in Kuwait for ESG reflects the Bank’s comprehensive approach to sustainability and responsible banking.

According to Euromoney, KFH implemented an integrated ESG framework across financing activities, operational processes, and community investment, contributing to measurable environmental efficiencies, broader access to essential services, and enhanced governance and institutional oversight.

The magazine noted that sustainability considerations have become an integral part of KFH’s banking activities through increased investment in green and sustainability-linked sukuk, as well as the financing of national infrastructure projects, including wastewater treatment facilities that support water reuse and improve resource efficiency.

Euromoney also highlighted KFH’s efforts to reduce energy consumption across its branch network by utilizing energy-efficient systems, upgrading cooling infrastructure, and introducing automated control systems that enhanced operational efficiency.

In this context, KFH completed several certified green buildings, including facilities awarded GSAS Gold and LEED Gold certifications, reflecting tangible improvements in energy and water efficiency and waste management, while supporting the adoption of sustainability standards within Kuwait’s commercial real estate sector.

On the social front, Euromoney praised KFH’s Creating Shared Value (CSV) platform, through which more than 200 community initiatives were implemented. These initiatives included allocating KD 8 million for the restoration of 17 buildings in Souq Al-Mubarakiya and dedicating KD 18 million to support a specialized cardiac care center.

The initiatives were further supported by over 3,000 volunteer hours, the distribution of more than 18,000 meals during Ramadan, and assistance to 1,680 families, contributing to healthcare support, preservation of national heritage, and strengthening essential community services.

The magazine also noted that KFH maintained robust governance standards

through direct Board-level oversight, comprehensive emissions measurement, and the integration of sustainability considerations into credit evaluation processes, ensuring alignment between sustainability objectives, risk management, and capital allocation decisions.

Digital Excellence and Tam Digital Bank
Euromoney stated that KFH is leading Kuwait’s digital banking landscape through the strategic development of Tam Digital Bank, Kuwait’s first Sharia-compliant digital bank.

Tam’s digital strategy is built on four key investment pillars: digital infrastructure, cybersecurity and compliance, product innovation, and seamless customer experience. This strategy has enabled the launch of a fully mobile banking platform offering instant, secure, and user-friendly banking services, with a particular focus on customers aged 15 years and above.

This approach has further strengthened KFH’s leadership in digital transformation across the region while maintaining strict Sharia governance standards and high operational resilience.

Through a clearly defined digital vision and measurable improvements in customer experience and engagement levels, KFH has reinforced its position as a leader in digital banking services in Kuwait. Through Tam, the Bank demonstrates that disciplined investment, customer-centric design, and continuous innovation can be translated into sustainable long-term digital leadership.

KFH successfully strengthened its digital presence through the development of its technological infrastructure and the expansion of services offered through various digital channels and platforms, in addition to smart branches and self-service devices. This has driven a significant transformation in banking services, increased utilization rates, and improved quality and operational efficiency indicators.

The Bank has implemented a comprehensive digital transformation model based on a clear customer-centric strategy that delivers tangible operational outcomes. During 2025, KFH executed more than 600 million digital transactions and provided over 200 integrated digital services through KFH Online, further establishing digital banking as a primary banking choice for customers.

KFH continues to keep pace with rapid developments in financial technology (FinTech), data engineering, digital product design, and intelligent solutions, while adhering to the highest standards of quality, reliability, governance, and cybersecurity requirements. These efforts contribute to enhanced operational efficiency, higher productivity, shorter service delivery times, and increased customer satisfaction and trust. In corporate banking, the Bank continued enhancing the eCorp platform by introducing and integrating advanced systems that create added value and improve operational efficiency for businesses and institutions, while enhancing the user experience.

Euromoney
The Euromoney Awards for Excellence are among the most prestigious awards in the global financial industry. Institutions are evaluated according to rigorous criteria that include innovation, service quality, digital capabilities, and the ability to create added value for customers.

For more than five decades, Euromoney has been one of the world’s leading references for assessing performance and excellence in the banking and financial sectors, recognizing institutions that achieve exceptional levels of performance, innovation, and customer service. The Euromoney Awards for Excellence honor financial institutions that set global benchmarks in performance, innovation, and customer impact, making them among the most respected international accolades in the financial services industry.



A group photo taken during the summit, featuring stc representatives in the center.

Executives share perspectives on digital foundations

stc named ‘Innovation Partner’ at IDC CIO Summit Kuwait 2026

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 19: Kuwait Telecommunications Company – stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, participated as the ‘Innovation Partner’ at the fifth edition of the IDC CIO Summit Kuwait 2026, held at Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa. The Summit, held under the theme “The Rise of Agentic Systems”, brought together technology leaders and decision-makers to discuss the developments shaping artificial intelligence, digital transformation and the future of enterprise technology in Kuwait. stc’s participation in the summit aligns with its commitment to support platforms that promote knowledge sharing and provide leaders with opportunities to exchange experiences and insights with one another.

The fifth edition welcomed 261 participants, including senior executives, decision-makers and specialists from across the technology and digital transformation landscape. The agenda addressed a wide range of issues facing technology leaders today, covering areas such as artificial intelligence, digital infrastructure, cybersecurity and workforce transformation. Senior representatives from stc, including members of the Company’s executive team, also took part in the Summit as speakers and panelists, sharing their perspectives on key topics shaping the future of technology and business. Their participation provided an opportunity to contribute stc’s experience and insights to the wider discussions taking place throughout the event, while engaging directly with leaders from across Kuwait’s technology ecosystem.

As part of the Summit agenda, Ahmad Al Failakawi, General Manager – Applications at stc, delivered a presentation titled “The foundation everything else stands on.” During the session, Al Failakawi shared stc’s perspective and experience in technology and innovation, highlighting the importance of having the right digital foundations in place as organizations continue to modernize their operations and adopt new technologies. His participation also pro-



A glimpse of the honoring of Dhari Al-Quraishi by stc.

vided an opportunity to highlight the capabilities and solutions that can help organizations progress in their digital transformation journeys.

Eng. Dhari Al-Quraishi, Chief Technology Officer of stc, participated in the panel discussion titled: “For The CIO – By The CIO Tracks: The CIO Talent Agenda: How CIOs, CHROs, and Business Leaders Are Shaping the Future Workforce.” The discussion explored how technology, human resources and business leaders are responding to changing workforce requirements as new technologies reshape roles, skills and organizational priorities. Al Quraishi also represented stc as a member of the IDC Kuwait Advisory Council 2026, contributing alongside technology leaders from different sectors to the wider dialogue around the priorities and developments influencing Kuwait’s technology landscape.

Throughout the Summit, stc welcomed visitors to its dedicated booth in the main event hall, where representatives were available to introduce the range of solutions offered to both individual and corporate customers. Visitors had the opportunity to learn first-hand about stc’s business solutions, advanced digital services and connectivity capabilities, while discussing how these offerings can support different customer requirements. The booth also provided a closer look at the depth and flexibility of stc’s business portfolio, particularly the level of customization available to address the varying needs of startups, SMEs and large

corporations.

At the conclusion of the Summit, Al-Quraishi received an award on behalf of the Company during the IDC CIO Excellence Awards segment. The recognition acknowledged stc’s contributions in digital innovation, as well as its role as Innovation Partner and active participation throughout the Summit. Al Quraishi’s receipt of the award also reflected the Company’s continued involvement in advancing technology, innovation and enabling digital transformation in Kuwait.

In a statement, stc indicated that its participation in the IDC CIO Summit aligns with the Company’s focus on supporting innovation and enabling digital transformation across different sectors. Events of this nature provide an important opportunity to share knowledge with technology leaders, understand the priorities facing organizations and contribute to discussions around how emerging technologies can be applied in a practical and sustainable way.

The Company added that maintaining close engagement with customers and decision-makers also enables stc to better understand the changing requirements of organizations in Kuwait. Through its participation in specialized technology platforms and continued investment in its digital capabilities, stc aims to provide solutions that respond to those requirements while contributing to the development of Kuwait’s digital economy.

FTSE Russell review reshuffles micro-caps

Boursa Kuwait ends week mixed, CBK holds discount rate at 3.5%

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 19, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait closed its weekly trading last Thursday amid continued speculation and profit-taking on selected shares, particularly banks, following the Central Bank’s decision to keep the discount rate at 3.5 percent.

Trading was also influenced by FTSE Russell’s semi-annual review of several listed stocks.

The week opened with mixed performance, as liquidity reached about KD 123 million (USD 376.3 million), with 51 percent directed to the Premier Market and 49 percent to the Main Market.

Nine of 13 sectors gained, led by technology at 4.54 percent, while three declined, led by energy at 0.46 percent. Utilities remained unchanged.

On Monday, market indices extended gains for a second consecutive session, led by the Main Market, while liquidity eased slightly to KD 121.8 million (USD 372.7 million).

The market’s total capitalization exceeded KD 54.045 billion (USD 165.3 billion), a new record, amid selective trading in leading, small and mid-cap stocks ahead of third-quarter closings.

Midweek trading was marked by continued speculation and profit-taking, while investors awaited the Federal Reserve’s monetary policy decision and implementation of the FTSE Russell review.

Wednesday saw record liquidity of KD 144.2 million (USD 442.6 million), despite continued profit-taking and mixed index performance.

Investors also awaited the FTSE Russell review, whose periodic changes influence foreign investment flows into emerging markets.

The semiannual review included downgrading Jazeera Airways from the small-cap to micro-cap category, while adding Automated Systems, Inovent, Commercial Facilities and Thouraya General Trading to the micro-cap category.

The review also removed Burgan Drilling, Kuwait Cement and Kuwait Company for Process Plant Construction and Contracting from the same category.

In the final session, trading opened with marginal gains after the Central Bank kept the discount rate at 3.5 percent, reducing funding costs.

The bank said monetary and financial stability remained strong and that the rate reflected a balanced approach to supporting growth while containing inflation-



Boursa Kuwait

ary pressures.

The Main 50 Index continued its advance for a seventh consecutive week, reaching new record levels amid expectations of companies’ third-quarter financial results.

Market capitalization stood at KD 53.3 billion (USD 163.6 billion), down 0.33 percent week-on-week from KD 53.5 billion (USD 164.2 billion).

Meanwhile, Al-Shall Consulting’s weekly report said most sector indices posted gains between February 24 and September 15, 2026, despite the US-Iran war, although performance varied.

The report noted technology posted the strongest gain at about 1,455.6 percent, despite its marginal 0.3 percent share of market capitalization. Insurance ranked second, gaining 35.8 percent.

Basic materials ranked third, rising 26.4 percent, while telecommunications gained 11.3 percent, real estate 9.9 percent, financial services 7.3 percent and healthcare 5.3 percent.

Consumer goods gained 4.9 percent, while energy and industrials rose 3.8 percent and 2.7 percent, respectively. Banking gained only 1.2 percent, while consumer services and utilities declined 2.1 percent and 4.9 percent, respectively.

Al-Shall said it had no current explanation for the varying sector performances, but noted that the results were better than expected given the war’s repercussions on public finances and the economy.

Buy one, get one free

Jazeera launches biggest-ever sale

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 19: Jazeera Airways has launched its biggest-ever sale, giving travellers the chance to buy one ticket and get the second for free with 3 million seats available for travel across the airline’s entire network.

From 20 to 26 September 2026, passengers booking eligible flights can use promo code J9B1G1 to capture even more opportunities to travel with family and friends for less.

With 3 million seats included in the offer and a travel period running from 24 September 2026 to 27 March 2027, the promotion covers more than six months of travel.

The sale also comes as Jazeera Terminal 5 (T5) at Kuwait International Airport returns to 24-hour operations, providing passengers with greater flexibility and convenience as Jazeera Airways continues to expand its flight schedule and connectivity from Kuwait.

Whether it is a quick getaway within the GCC, a winter break in Prague or Krakow, exploring Africa through Addis Ababa, discovering Aswan and the Nile, or visiting family and friends across the Middle East and South Asia, Jazeera Air-



Jazeera Airways aircraft

- Across the entire Jazeera Airways network
- Special Winter destinations such as Prague and Krakow, new destinations including Addis Ababa and Aswan
- Travel period over six months

ways’ biggest-ever sale puts twice the travel within easier reach.

Paul Carroll, Chief Commercial Officer, Jazeera Airways, said:

“This is our biggest-ever sale, with 3 million winter seats included in our Buy One, Get One Free offer across the entire Jazeera Airways network. With T5 now back to 24-hour operations and almost six months of travel included in the promotion, there has never been a better time for our

passengers to plan their next journey. Whether it is a winter holiday, a family visit, a trip with friends or simply an opportunity to discover somewhere new, this offer makes it easier to travel together and experience more for less.”

Passengers can book through the Jazeera Airways website: jazeeraairways.com or mobile app using promo code J9B1G1 until 26 September 2026.

Bank promotes secure use of accounts, digital services at orientation

KIB promotes banking awareness among AIU students during orientation for new students

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 19: In line with its continued support for the banking awareness campaign “Let’s Be Aware” (Diraya), launched by the Central Bank of Kuwait and the Kuwait Banking Association in collaboration with local banks, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) participated in the new student orientation at the American International University (AIU), held at the start of the new academic year. The participation formed part of the Bank’s efforts to support youth and strengthen their banking knowledge and awareness, particularly around the safe use of banking services and ways to protect themselves from fraud.

The event saw the participation of a KIB team, which engaged directly with students and responded to their questions, while also providing advice and guidance on best practices for protecting their accounts and banking information from fraud attempts. The team also introduced students to the key risks associated with the use of banking and digital services and explained how to navigate them safely.

The Bank’s team also emphasized the importance of safeguarding banking information and never sharing PINs, passwords, or one-time passwords (OTPs) with anyone. Students were also advised to remain cautious when dealing with suspicious links, messages, and phone calls.

Commenting on the participation, Mariam Al-Nasser, Head of Branches and Premier Banking from KIB’s Retail Banking Department said: “University events provide an important opportunity to engage with students as they begin a new stage in their lives and introduce them to the essential practices they should follow when managing their accounts and using banking and digital services. Through these engagements, we aim to highlight some of the most common methods used by fraudsters, explain how to recognize and avoid fraud attempts, and reinforce the importance of exercising caution when faced with requests for banking information or personal data. We are also committed to presenting this guidance in a practical and accessible way, helping students develop sound banking habits from the very beginning of their banking journey.”

KIB’s participation in the event reflects its continued commitment to promoting financial and banking literacy across different



KIB’s Mariam Al-Nasser

segments of society, with a particular focus on youth, while contributing to the adoption of responsible and secure practices when using banking and digital services.

Through its participation in the orientation, KIB sought to establish direct channels of communication with students and provide banking information in a clear and accessible manner, helping to strengthen their financial awareness and empower them to make safer decisions from the start of their university journey.

It is worth noting that KIB continues to support educational and community initiatives aimed at building a generation that is more financially and banking-aware, while empowering young people to protect their personal information and accounts and use modern banking services safely.

Through a network of branches spread across the State of Kuwait, KIB offers a broad range of banking products and services, as well as innovative digital banking solutions in line with international best standards. As part of its duty towards the community, the Bank also encompasses a leading social responsibility program that aims at positively impacting all members of the community through a wide range of impactful initiatives and activities.

Today, KIB has taken concrete steps in implementing its new strategic objectives. The Bank has cemented its role as a key player in the local banking industry and has continued to maintain its strong financial performance; enabling it to be globally recognized for its strong credit rating and financial position.

Ottawa launches ‘new alliance’ with Europe

Mark Carney says Canada is ‘strong’ as US borrowing costs rise & Europe ties deepen

TORONTO, Sept 19, (AP): Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney has cast Canada as moving quickly beyond its historical reliance on the United States after a whirlwind week in which he embraced the prospect of becoming the European Union’s first associate member.

Carney, who returned from Europe on Thursday night, said Canada and Europe had “launched a process for a new alliance.” He also called the latest U.S. tariffs a “miscalculation” and repeated that suspending trade talks with Washington last month was the right decision.

“Amidst this global rupture, we must move forward,” Carney said.

He spoke Friday to Liberal lawmakers gathered in Ottawa ahead of a new session of Parliament, his first public remarks since returning Thursday evening from Strasbourg.

A day after telling the European Parliament that Canada and Europe needed greater resilience so no country could control their markets, impair their sovereignty or dictate their choices, Carney pointed Friday to Canada’s fiscal position as another source of strength.

Carney, a former head of the central banks of both Canada and England, also appeared to contrast Canada with the United States as U.S. government borrowing costs remain significantly higher than Canada’s.

“We’re now seeing financial markets starting to change the pricing ... to separate the strong from the weak,” Carney said. “We are the strong. We are Canada strong.”

The remarks capped a seven-day stretch in which he hosted Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, convened major global investors in Toronto, met new U.K. Prime Minister Andy Burnham in Liverpool and addressed the European Parliament.

In Strasbourg, Carney embraced a shift toward Europe, calling for a far deeper alliance spanning energy, critical minerals, defense, artificial intelligence, research and other strategic sectors where he says Canada can no longer afford to depend on a single country.

The next major step is an Oct. 29-30 Canada-EU summit in Montreal.

President Donald Trump has imposed tariffs on

Canadian goods, repeatedly talked about making Canada the 51st state and threatened additional economic measures. Trade negotiations collapsed last month and remain suspended.

Carney also touted a business tax break announced at this week’s Canada Investment Summit that is expected to cut the effective tax rate on new investment to 6.4%, less than half the U.S. rate.

“We didn’t need a big beautiful bill. We needed a targeted initiative,” Carney said, drawing laughter with an apparent jab at Trump’s signature tax-and-spending law.

Carney also appeared to mimic Trump while boasting that a major clean-energy project would produce the equivalent of “18 Hoover Dams,” repeating the phrase as he twice used the president’s familiar accordionlike hand gesture.

The government announced nearly half a trillion dollars in investment commitments around the summit.

“In the last seven days, we have stood shoulder to shoulder with an ally, we’ve catalyzed record investment into our country, we’ve deepened our ties with Europe,” Carney said.

Governor Bailey: War-driven oil volatility may force rate rise

BoE holds rates but appears ready to hike soon

LONDON, Sept 19, (AP): The Bank of England kept interest rates on hold Thursday while indicating that it could raise them soon in order to dampen inflationary pressures emanating from the fallout of the Iran war.

The decision was widely anticipated, with six members of the Monetary Policy Committee voting to keep rates unchanged, while three backed a quarter-point increase to 4%.

Though borrowing rates were kept on hold, financial markets think it’s more likely than not that the bank will back an increase at one of the next two policy meetings, either in November or December.

“So far higher global energy costs have had a limited effect on price and wage setting in the U.K.,” said Bank Governor Andrew Bailey. “But the longer this volatility persists, the bigger the impact it will have on inflation, and the more likely it is we will need to raise Bank Rate to ensure that inflation falls back to our 2% target.”

Like other central banks, the inflation outlook will be key. Some have already decided to start raising borrowing costs again, including the U.S. Federal Reserve on Wednesday.

The minutes accompanying the Bank of England’s decision showed that inflation is now expected to rise to around 4% in the first quarter of next year

from the current 3.1% as households face another increase in their domestic energy bills. That would take inflation further above the bank’s target rate of 2%.

Interest rates in the U.K. had been trending downward from a 15-year high of 5.25% until the U.S. and Israel attacked Iran in late February. The Iran war led to sharp increases in oil and gas prices, partly because the crucial Strait of Hormuz has been largely closed to traffic ever since.

The Bank of England’s rate-setters meet on Nov. 5 and many economists believe that will be a natural moment for a change of course as they will be armed with the latest quarterly economic forecasts and Bailey will be subsequently holding a press briefing.

“So it is a natural starting point for a hiking cycle,” said Felix Feather, economist at asset management firm Aberdeen.

As well as impacting the cost of personal loans and mortgages, the uptick in interest rate expectations is a growing problem for the British government as the servicing of its debt accounts for a higher proportion of its spending.

Before the next meeting, the government will unveil its annual budget, which could have an impact on the inflation outlook and hence interest rate expectations.

Highest in 31 years

Bank of Japan lifts benchmark rate to 1.25%

TOKYO, Sept 19, (AP): Japan’s central bank on Friday raised the benchmark interest rate to 1.25% from 1.0%, a 31-year-high.

The Bank of Japan has been trying to normalize monetary policy after decades of keeping interest rates near or below zero to try to encourage more borrowing and spending to counter deflation and pull Japan’s economy out of the doldrums.

The rate increase in the uncollateralized overnight call rate, a short-term rate, was expected at the end of the two-day monetary policy board meeting and has widely figured into recent global markets.

Bank of Japan Gov. Kazuo Ueda said the decision was reached after looking at various risks like the war in Iran, the expanding market demand for artificial intelligence and currency fluctuations.

“The Japanese economy is continuing to recover gradually,” he told reporters, while noting inflation was close to the targeted 2%.

Analysts have said another increase was possible

later this year or early next year. When asked about further hikes, Ueda stressed more time is needed to see if price increases stay stable, along with needing to monitor wage growth and other risk factors.

Two of the nine-member board dissented, expressing concerns about the strength of Japan’s economic growth, according to Ueda.

The U.S. Federal Reserve also raised its key rate this week. The U.S. increase Wednesday, the first since 2023, was made in an effort to quell stubbornly high inflation.

The U.S. has also been pressuring Japan to raise rates because of concerns about the weakening yen.

The nations intervened together recently to prop up the yen. Despite the Bank of Japan’s move, the U.S. dollar grew stronger, momentarily reaching above 157 yen. It reached above 160 yen earlier this year.

The Bank of Japan has set a target inflation rate of about 2%. Inflation is about that now in Japan,

although some consumers complain that the recent surge in prices is too much, especially in gas and oil-related products.

“With crude oil prices remaining elevated, the Bank of Japan is expected to implement an additional rate hike sooner rather than later to limit the risk that consumer inflation exceeds the underlying inflation rate,” said Harumi Taguchi, an economist at S&P Global Market Intelligence.

Higher rates may also weigh on the economy because of heavier borrowing costs for small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as higher mortgages, she added.

Analysts are also worried about the aggressive public spending promised by the government of Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, such as tax cuts and aggressive defense investments, when public debt is already ballooning.

Tokyo’s benchmark Nikkei 225 rose after the Bank of Japan decision was announced, edging up 1.4%.

Engineering talent, chip-design skilling key to India’s edge, says PM

Modi urges tapping India’s potential at SEMICON India 2026

NEW DELHI, Sept 19, (KUNA): Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi appealed to tap the country’s potential as he held a roundtable with top executives and leaders in the semiconductor field after inaugurating the SEMICON India 2026 in New Delhi.

In his inaugural address Modi said that India’s semiconductor ecosystem is expanding rapidly and new opportunities for innovation, investment and growth are opening up. He further said that India has gained world’s trust in addition to its growing economy and demographic dividend.

He also appealed to the young talents who are researching in India to come forward while urging the youth who are researching abroad to join the development of advanced technologies in India.

The Indian PM spoke of the vast pool of engineering talent and the extensive skilling initiatives specifically tailored for chip designing.

He challenged industry leaders to spearhead local research and development, ensuring mutual growth for both businesses and the nation’s youth. “There is benefit for the industry in this, and the youth power of India will also get strength from this,” asserted Modi.

Tackling the critical issue of energy security for high-performance computing, Modi outlined the massive power requirements generated by AI data centers and the necessity of uninterrupted electricity for manufacturing plants. He detailed the nation’s aggressive expansion in the power sector, including a leap to over 160 GW in solar capacity, the opening of nuclear energy to private players, and the development of small modular reactors.

During the Semiconductor Roundtable with leading CEOs, Modi urged to actively participate in the next phase of India’s semiconductor growth. He stressed that India should aspire to be among the early leaders in emerging technologies and reiterated his government’s commitment to a predictable and responsive policy environment.

The CEOs appreciated Modi’s leadership and sustained efforts to strengthen India’s semiconductor ecosystem and expressed confidence in India’s potential to build capabilities across the semiconductor value chain. CEOs, heads and representatives of various organisations including SEMI, Micron, Infineon, Applied Materials, ASML, Merck, Tokyo Electron Ltd, Fujifilm, AMD, Intel, Tata Electronics, Lam Research, Rapidus, and several other companies participated in the event.

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Budget deficit doubles target

Russia’s war economy shows strain; deficit hits 2.8% of GDP

FRANKFURT, Sept 19, (AP): The frictions in Russia’s wartime economy are growing, as massive military spending balloons the budget deficit. Consumers and businesses are gloomier. Growth has slowed.

None of that, however, signals an imminent financial crisis or economic collapse, economists say. With crucial oil export revenues holding up due to high prices from the Iran war, the government is able to find the money to pay for its 4 1/2-year-old invasion of Ukraine, at least for now.

Meanwhile, low unemployment and government largesse in poor regions help keep a lid on consumer grumbling.

That picture suits the Kremlin’s narrative of stability ahead of Russia’s stage-managed parliamentary election that got underway Friday and concludes Sunday.

But economists warn that longer-term problems are gnawing at the foundations - and could one day result in a crisis.

Indicators of consumer sentiment have drifted down since a peak in 2024-25, when increased military spending was pumping up growth and wages. More recently, consumers have coped with higher gasoline prices and shortages due to Ukrainian drone attacks that knocked out refineries. And many small businesses have lost inventory and customers due to strikes against online retailers Wildberries and Ozon.

At the same time, growth has slowed from a peak of over 4% annual expansion in 2023-24. The government foresees 0.6% this year, and the economy shrank in the first quarter before rebounding somewhat in the second.

The consumer sentiment index compiled by the Levada Center, an independent Russian pollster, fell to 94 over the summer, down from 116 in spring and summer of 2025. Readings under 100 indicate that consumer sentiment is more negative than positive.

People asked about the election in Moscow responded with mostly basic concerns about pensions and prices.

Alexander Vertukhin, a 72-year-old retired military prosecutor, said the government should be focusing on “a decent standard of living for pensioners.”

As for his own situation, “I’m doing fine, both financially and in every other respect,” he said.

“Overall I’d like housing to become more affordable, I’d like pensioners to be able to live decently instead of merely surviving,” said Dmitry Kirillin, 26. “I’d also like travel in our country to be more affordable. Those are the main things that first come to mind, if I gave it more thought I could probably name more.”

He added, “I’d like prices to rise more slowly, if that’s possible in the current situation.”

The gasoline situation and Wildberries strikes have made the war more visible to people but don’t constitute a crisis, said Chris Weafer, CEO of the Macro-Advisory Ltd. consultancy active across the former Soviet Union. He described the economy as in a state of “tolerable stability” and the public mood as “grumbling” but not protesting.

“The economy is under strain - it’s stagnant to the effect that it’s stable but not growing,” Weafer said. “But it’s not facing recession either.”

Most people “are not that affected” by the Ukrainian strikes, he said. “Just because your shopping habits are disrupted, that’s not going to change the public support for the Kremlin.”

President Vladimir Putin’s approval rating has declined in recent months but remains higher than it was before the war started in 2022.

One key sign of stress is Russia’s budget deficit and the government’s efforts to find new sources of money. Putin has resorted to increasing

value-added tax paid by consumers at the cash register, raising a raft of other fees and tightening taxation of small businesses. But the deficit has continued to climb.

By the end of July, budget data showed a deficit of 2.8% of annual economic output - almost twice the original annual budget target. Available resources in Russia’s reserve fund have dwindled to 1.6% of GDP, meaning the Kremlin needs to borrow from domestic banks.

That, however, means paying high borrowing costs, with interest rates on Russian bonds as high as 17%, according to Janis Kluge, an expert on Russia’s finances at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs.

Budget stress is “adding to doubts about how long Russia can sustain the war,” he wrote in a recent report. Russia’s central bank has kept rates high to contain the inflation caused by war spending. That stresses civilian companies who don’t get the privileged access to credit afforded defense firms.

Another source of war funding has been increased private lending by Russia’s compliant banks to defense-related companies, meaning those debts are not showing up in the deficit figures.

Over the long term, Western sanctions deprive Russia of new investment that would make the economy more productive.

And the risk factors - high spending, low growth, rising debt and elevated borrowing costs - lead some economists to warn that while Russia’s economy has not collapsed, its structural foundations are eroding dangerously.

The current trajectory is “unsustainable,” according to Torbjörn Becker at the Stockholm School of Economics. Still, “the timing of a crisis remains highly uncertain.”

Oil export earnings, which had fallen below \$10 billion per month ahead of the Iran war, rebounded to \$15.8 billion by June and \$13.8 billion in July.

Russia’s budget constraints “may effectively disappear for as long as elevated energy prices persist,” Becker wrote.

To change that, tougher measures against Russia’s sanctions-evading oil tanker fleet must be a priority, he argued.

Money for defense factories and enlistment bonuses has been a boon to Russia’s provinces, which are poorer than Moscow and St. Petersburg. With factories often running full blast, unemployment is 2.2% nationwide.

The Uralvagonzavod tank factory in Nizhny Tagil in the Urals region increased its workforce from about 20,000 to more than 38,000 since the invasion of Ukraine as it launched 24-hour production, according to a recent report from the Center for Strategic & International Studies on Russia’s defense industries. Kupol, which makes drones and surface-to-air missiles, is the largest industrial enterprise in the Udmurtia region on the Volga River and more than doubled its output in 2025.

Shortages of skilled labor are restraining production in defense firms and across the economy, compounded by the emigration of several hundred thousand mostly younger people due to fears of conscription and political repression.

Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said month-to-month deficit figures were volatile and that “this is not a figure that should be cause for concern. Macroeconomic stability is absolutely ensured.”

But the chief economist of Russia’s state-owned VEB.RF state development bank, Andrei Klepach, warned in a speech that due to sanctions and economic isolation, “we’re falling behind in the technological and economic competition in the world,” and that “we can’t win the competition in this war of attrition.”

He was fired.



This image released by Searchlight Pictures shows John Malkovich in a scene from “Wild Horse Nine.” (AP)

‘Wild Horse Nine’ blends secrets, satire and sorrow

McDonagh turns CIA history into dark comedy

TORONTO, Sept 19, (AP): Stop me if you’ve heard this before. Martin McDonagh has unveiled a dark comedy of mischievous wit and melancholy soulfulness, and it’s immediately been hailed as one of the best movies of the year.

Yes, the British-Irish writer-director of “The Banshees of Inisherin,” “In Bruges” and “Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri” has been here before. But McDonagh’s latest, “Wild Horse Nine,” is also something different and more provocative.

The film, which has played to standing ovations across the Venice, Telluride and Toronto film festivals, stars John Malkovich and Sam Rockwell as CIA officers who have recently laid the groundwork for the 1973 coup in Chile. But they’re now taking a trip to Easter Island, as one says, “to see the heads” - the Moai stone sculptures. Chris (Malkovich) is dying of cancer and increasingly loose-lipped about his colorful CIA past, including a presidential assassination.

Their conversation, as is typical in McDonagh’s brilliant, barbed dialogue, is laced with deeper ruminations on regret and death, with more absurd digressions mixed in. In one memorable scene, Chris traces a connection between democracy, homosexuality and good cheese.

“I wanted those guys to feel like an old married couple in a way,” McDonagh says.

He recently met a reporter for coffee in Toronto to talk about “Wild Horse Nine” and why he’s so eager for the conversation it might generate. Searchlight Pictures releases the film Nov. 6.

AP: You wrote “In Bruges” after a trip to the Belgian city. This came out of a trip to Easter Island. How important is travel to your writing?

McDonagh: Very much. I love to travel. I like traveling alone. It always prompts some kind of thinking. Bruges was just a weekend trip for fun and the town became a character literally while I was there. Fifteen years ago I went to Easter Island with the hope that something similar would happen to the Bruges scenario. It looked like a beautiful backdrop to some kind of story to tell but it took a bunch of iterations of it before it became what you saw.

AP: Do you feel like being removed from regular life frees you?

McDonagh: Maybe things seem much more cinematic. I never had any desire to write something set in London, for instance, and I never have. I don’t see it with fresh eyes. I do like traveling around America. I used to get trains around America a lot. It feels like a CinemaScope window across the West. I feel like finding the place is going to be key to my next project, which I don’t have right now. Part of that is: Where do you want to spend six months of your life? South of France sounds good! And where is cinematic that hasn’t been captured before?

AP: Do you tend to start with two characters talking? Some of your films are centered on odd couples.

McDonagh: The odd couple talking thing, I did three or four versions of



Martin McDonagh poses on the red carpet for the film “Wild Horse Nine” during the Toronto International Film Festival in Toronto, on Monday, Sept. 14, 2026. (AP)

that. They were talking fine but there was no purpose or reason for them to be there. But I had always been fascinated with what the CIA did in Chile in the 1970s. When I thought about that, everything fell into place. It wasn’t just two cranky old guys talking.

AP: I’ve never seen a CIA agent character like Malkovich’s character — a guy who just wants to spill all the beans.

McDonagh: I don’t think they’re as classy as John. I think we’re painting way too good a picture of the CIA. He’s erudite. He’s got a sense of humor. He regrets stuff. And I don’t think they do.

AP: He’s ready to be up front about some of the U.S.’s underhanded dealings. Do you feel like it’s a time for frankness about America’s darker side?

McDonagh: Even while we were still editing it, it felt more and more like it was a commentary on the modern day, especially with a lot of the recent stuff that Trump’s been doing. It wasn’t the direct purpose of it, but I kind of liked that it felt that way. The tragic thing is: history keeps repeating itself, and more and more stupidly and less and less secretively. They kept their horrible stuff secret back then. It’s like they don’t care what people think about it anymore. I think that’s a darker place we’re in now. Shame doesn’t come into it.

AP: There’s a moment in the film when Malkovich’s character suggests

peaceful protest marches have no effect. What do you think?

McDonagh: Whether or not I agree with it or not is for a later chat. I’m not saying the pacifist version is wrong or doesn’t work at times. But I do think the CIA and KGB and most vicious governments around the world are more happy with polite protest marches.

AP: You had twice before, for “Seven Psychopaths” and your play “A Beheading in Spokane,” tried to work with Malkovich. What drew you to him?

McDonagh: He can be ultra dangerous and you feel scared of him more than most. Maybe Joe Pesci. I was scared the first time I had a Zoom with him. But also his dexterity with comedy. But mostly knowing that in the silent moments you’d see acres of sorrow and regret when he’s seemingly not doing anything - when he’s just looking out of a window or listening to a Dictaphone or smoking a cigarette.

AP: Was it at all purposeful to have Malkovich playing a memoir-writing CIA officer like he did in the Coen brothers’ “Burn After Reading”?

McDonagh: Not at all. In fact, I had kind of forgotten that whole section of that film until I rewatched it a few months ago. I hope that they don’t think I stole the whole memoir-of-a-CIA-guy bit from him. (Laughs) But John’s so good at everything that history is going to repeat itself.

AP: As much acclaim as Malkovich is rightly getting, Rockwell is also great even if his performance is less eye-catching.

McDonagh: It’s not but it’s completely generous. I think it’s still one of his best-ever performances. It’s not as showy as some of the previous things I’ve done with Sam or some of Sam’s other brilliant work. But there aren’t many who could convey the love that’s there without bawling his eyes out. You feel like it’s an equal two-hander at the same time as John’s character will always be the lead.

AP: Do you identify more with either of their characters?

McDonagh: John’s got a lot of me. I like the outrageousness and the danger of where he goes sometimes. In my more sarcastic, anarchistic moments, I find that sort of stuff funny. He’s an awful guy, he’s done awful things. But on top of that, I do feel like he says a lot of funny stuff that I agree with - even if it’s just cheesiness. (Laughs) A scene like that, you know you’re being naughty but I think the principle of it is actually sort of loving and weirdly pro-democratic, pro-gay and pro-cheese.

AP: Coming out of the pandemic, you talked about committing to writing a movie every year.

McDonagh: That’s gone away! (Laughs) I realize after a year or two I’m fundamentally lazy. But this feels like a quite short time between.

AP: Well, choosing to make a movie on Easter Island probably doesn’t speed things up.

McDonagh: But it does combine vacation time on an island with making a movie. (Laughs) That’s what I’m going to do next. Tahiti, 1900, two blokes.

Game-born nightmare ‘Resident Evil’ runs on gore, gags, and guts

“Only use guns in video games,” says Bryan (Austin Abrams), our frustrated protagonist, trying to piece together a machine gun while his impatient companion urges him to hurry. “It’s confusing in real life!”

It’s the most on-the-nose remark in “Resident Evil,” a movie born of video games that’s trying to just be a movie. But it breaks the tension, it cuts through the slithery gore for a moment - and most importantly, it makes us giggle.

Rarely is it more clear that humor is a key asset to a horror film than in Zach Cregger’s highly entertaining survival-horror, zombie-infestation tale, and luckily Abrams is up to the task. Appealing but not cutesy, scruffy but charming, and basically genuine and kind, his Bryan is the perfect Everyman - a medical courier who somehow ends up as one of the only humans in a world of oozing tentacle monsters.

There will be many seeing this film who are aficionados of the games, and they will find Easter eggs to make them happy. The good news for all the other moviegoers is that we’re none the wiser.

Cregger (“Barbarian,” “Weapons”) has certainly chosen his star wisely. As Bryan, Abrams ends up narrating most of the film - mainly because most of those around him

are, well, no longer exactly human.

We first meet Bryan on a wintry night, wrapping up his shift with an organ delivery. But then he’s offered one more job that night - for double pay - and says OK, even though it’s in a snowy mountainous area, and he doesn’t have chains on his car or boots.

Soon he’s on his way to Raccoon City, losing his cell signal, which makes it hard to talk to girlfriend Michelle, who has just found out some life-changing news. In any case, suddenly a body smashes into his car.

This is just one of many well-executed jumpy moments - I know I either screamed at this one, or the next.

Bryan now gets out of his car to follow a set of footsteps in the snow, never the best idea. He finds a woman, bloody and disfigured, all misshapen, but somehow believes she’s fairly normal. We won’t reveal how she figures in the overall plot line, but it’s sort of sweet how Bryan approaches each increasingly terrifying scenario as a minor hurdle in an otherwise manageable night.

He soon finds himself trudging, car-less, from the frigid road to a yard with a terrifying dog, then a barn, then a farmhouse. The environments change every 10 minutes or so, each with new challenges. Just like ... a video game?

In one sequence, Bryan finds a shivering young girl, in an old RV, begging for help. He wants to help but realizes that she, too, is infected with the nefarious virus turning townspeople into quivering masses of tentacles. He ends up having to shoot her in the face. “This isn’t real,” he says, narrating. “I like kids!”

A couple in a car picks Bryan up, but their time together does not go smoothly. At least it gets Bryan closer to the place he’s been aiming for all along. And he discovers what he’s been carrying in that organ case.

And then things really hit the fan. Bryan races down a street dodging infected people, who are landing from above with major splats. Cregger has talked about a scene in which Abrams came close to getting killed by a heavy bag filled with fake blood and guts. Just doing the math here: this was probably it. The scene gets applause.

An elevator shaft. A science lab. A warren of sewers. Cregger finds new levels - er, scenarios - to up the ante. Most traumatic: a really messed-up maternity ward.

The onslaught, though, gets a little tiresome, and we become harder to impress. It’s Abrams who mostly keeps things moving with his almost-but-not-completely-overwhelmed, I’ll-get-through-this-right? shtick. This is a minor moment, but I liked the few

clever seconds when we spy our hungry courier downing a snack: milk from the carton, and a handful of Life Cereal nuggets, from the box.

A little sprinkle of Life, amid the murderous mayhem.

“Resident Evil,” a Sony Pictures release, has been rated R by the Motion Picture Association “for strong bloody violence, gore and language throughout.” Running time: 90 minutes. Two and a half stars out of four. (AP)



This image released by Sony Pictures shows Austin Abrams in a scene from “Resident Evil.” (AP)

‘Everything’s On the Table’

Chef David Chang explores US food in new CNN travel series

NEW YORK, Sept 19, (AP): In an episode of his new CNN travel series, chef David Chang is cruising down the highway on his way to Las Vegas when he stops at a humble truck stop off Interstate 15.

The town is Hesperia, California, and the producers wanted Chang to try an Indian restaurant near a wind-shield repair store. But Chang spots a Mexican cantina that looks promising.

He naturally chooses to eat at both, freaking out his camera crew.

“I just wanted to taste things. When I see something, I’m like, ‘Oh, that looks interesting. I would like to taste that,’” he says in an interview. “To the dismay of the producers and the team, they’re like, ‘No, no. We got to go here.’ I was like, ‘You don’t understand. I told you guys that if we’re going to do the show, everything’s on the table.’”

“Everything’s On the Table” might be a good alternative title for the six-part “The Detour with David Chang,” where the famed founder of the Momofuku global restaurant chain pairs with a companion and hits the open road, eating his way through America. It begins airing Sunday.



This image released by CNN shows David Chang in a scene from the new CNN travel series, “The Detour with David Chang.” (AP)

Chang chows down on Filipino food in South Las Vegas, bites into a traditional Czech puff pastry in Texas and tries Haitian food for the first time in Miami. The show’s motto is: “All we’ve got is a destination. Everything else is a detour.”

He’s paired by friends and strangers alike, from “American Fiction” director and writer Cord Jefferson to

comedian, actor and writer Cristela Alonzo, who shows him her Texas. In Tennessee, he rides with Christina Tosi, the Milk Bar creator, who is almost a surrogate sister.

The show is about exploring and connecting with locals to find hidden gems, like the spot that serves killer Cuban fritas at a laundromat. Or the chefs who take barbecue and

combine Asian flavors, creating oak-smoked pulled pork with Penang curry. Or the family serving Honduran food truck breakfast that helps heal Chang’s terrible rum hangover.

“I love going out to eat, but as I get older, staying inside, not doing as much, is also nice. And I think that over the past few years, I’ve certainly been calcified,” says Chang. “Anytime you get out of your comfort zone or your little bubble, I think it’s a good reminder that there’s so much other stuff out there.”

Chang joins a crowded field of celebrity travel hosts, which includes Daniel Dae Kim, Tony Shalhoub, Rainn Wilson, Eugene Levy, Stanley Tucci,

Orlando Bloom, Zac Efron, José Andrés, Chris Hemsworth, Will Smith, Eva Longoria and Ewan McGregor. Awkwafina is on deck.

All owe a debt to Anthony Bourdain, who inspired millions to share his delight in food and the bonds it created. Bourdain died in 2018. Amy Entelis, executive vice president of talent, CNN Originals and creative development, notes that Chang is the first chef to host a CNN original series since Bourdain.

“Dave isn’t setting out to define

American food or find the ‘best’ restaurant in every city. It’s almost the opposite,” she says. “He gets in the car, talks to people and follows recommendations that take him somewhere he didn’t expect to go. At a time when an algorithm can tell you where to eat, where to stay and what to see, there’s something really appealing about just getting a little lost and seeing what you find.”

The seed of the series was planted when Chang and executive producer Morgan Neville were chatting one day about what it was like to discover new indie rock bands back in the old days before the internet and influencers, and the joy when you found one.

“I felt like that was sort of how I felt about food as well,” says Chang. “Listen, it’s easier to eat than ever before. But, in some ways, it is harder to find something that is meaningful to you.”

One show highlight is the delightful way he ends up at an Ethiopian restaurant in Las Vegas after listening to the recommendation of a taxi driver. Eating slow-cooked chicken and injera - the sour, spongy flatbread - reminded Chang of how good that cuisine is.

“I will die on the hill that Ethiopian food is one of the world’s greatest cuisines. There’s nothing like it, and it’s a singular approach to texture, flavor, and the kind of food that everyone loves these days - communal dining, where everyone can eat the same thing but customize it themselves.”

He learns that in Texas the Holy Trinity is brisket, ribs and sausage, but some local chefs are also putting their own spins on classic dishes. Like pitmaster Chuck Charnick-art at the eatery Barbs in Lockhart, who adds serrano glaze on her ribs and zests fresh limes over them. “It feels like I have a front-row seat to Dylan going electric,” Chang says in admiration.

Throughout the series is Chang’s gentle humor and willingness to try and do anything, dropping references to the painter Rothko, musician John Coltrane and director Terrence Malick along the way. And, of course, always popping corn nuts.

“When you think about it, I’m getting paid to go eat and hang out with friends,” he says, laughing. “I have nothing to complain about. And it’s a nice reminder that this is literally a dream job.”

How to know if you can trust AI’s answer to your question

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

By Leo S. Lo
University of Virginia

I recently typed a simple question into Google search: How much screen time is too much for teenagers? Instead of presenting links, as Google had been doing for many years, it gave me an AI-generated answer. The artificial intelligence agent cited a number, then complicated that reply, noting that quality and balance of time could matter more than the number of hours, and that “too much” time could depend on a teenager’s sleep, exercise, school demands and mood.

I tried another search: Should I take a daily aspirin? This time the AI answer presented me with medical information, warned about risks and offered more tailored guidance if I provided my age and medical history.

These were good replies. What interested me was that they were different kinds of replies.

Debate about AI answers has focused on accuracy: Did the system get the answer right? That matters, but accuracy is only one test. Each kind of answer requires a user to judge something different.

I find it useful to sort AI answers into an “answer typography” of four broad types: factual, interpretive, constructive and strategic. A factual claim can often be checked against a source. An interpretation can be accurate and still reflect choices about which evidence matters. A construction can be well reasoned and still be wrong for the person receiving it. A beautifully written strategic document may not be true. Yet AI presents all four types of answers in much the same fluent, authoritative form; the differences are easy to miss.

I’m university librarian and dean of libraries at the University of Virginia who leads national efforts to develop AI competencies for library professionals, and I consult widely on AI literacy. I first proposed the typography in the Journal of Academic Librarianship.

The four categories are not airtight boxes. A response from an AI agent can reflect several types. That said, I describe each type of answer below, and offer guidance for deciding whether a reply is ready to use or needs more investigation.

A factual answer makes a claim that can, in principle, be checked against evidence. When was the University of Virginia founded? What is the chemical symbol for gold?

To determine whether a factual answer is robust enough for you to use, verify the claim against an appropriate source. If the answer cites a source, follow that link instead of simply treating the answer itself as proof.

An interpretive reply is built on evidence, but there is not a single takeaway. How much

screen time is too much for a teenager? Does remote work raise productivity? The answer depends on what evidence is included, what is left out and how disagreement is understood.

Google’s initial answer to my screen-time question indicated that two hours was a limit for teenagers. Then it noted that pediatric guidance puts more weight on the quality and context of screen use than on simple hours. The American Academy of Pediatrics says there is no exact recommended amount for teens and emphasizes the kind of screen use and what activities it might be displacing. A question that looked numerical turned out to require interpretation.

To assess interpretive answers, do more than check facts. Ask yourself what evidence the system emphasized, what it left out and whether another defensible interpretation exists. A useful follow-up question to present to the search engine is: “What is the strongest evidence for a different conclusion?”

Constructive answers are made rather than discovered. Ask AI to draft a cover letter, write a eulogy, suggest a lesson plan or reorganize a paragraph - there is no single correct result.

You can judge the response by considering purpose, audience and voice. A eulogy can be grammatically perfect and still sound nothing like the person delivering it, or it may land flat on family members hearing it. It may not capture the deceased person well, either. Consider these kinds of effects as you read.

Strategic questions ask what to do. Should I take a daily aspirin? Should I buy the house? The answers combine information with judgment about goals, risks, trade-offs and personal circumstances.

My aspirin search shows why context matters. Google warned about risks, told me to consult a medical professional and offered more tailored information if I provided my age, cardiovascular history and risk of bleeding. That caution matches the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force guidance. It says the decision to start low-dose aspirin for prevention of heart attacks and strokes should be individualized and weigh cardiovascular benefit against bleeding risk.

For strategic answers, ask what the system would need to know before its advice could reasonably apply to you individually. Consider the stakes, the alternatives and whether a qualified person should be involved. For the aspirin question, a useful follow-up would be: “What details about my age, medical history or bleeding risk could change this advice? What should I discuss with my doctor before deciding?” The final judgment remains yours because you are the person who has to live with the outcome.

My questions began as ordinary Google searches. I did not open a chatbot. The AI-generated responses simply arrived, and links were appended. (AP)

Obituary

‘Barely Breathing’ artist brought pop to Broadway

Duncan Sheik, ‘Spring Awakening’ composer, dies

NEW YORK, Sept 19, (AP): Duncan Sheik, the Tony- and Grammy-winning singer-songwriter who crafted the music for “Spring Awakening,” has died. He was 56.

Sheik died Thursday night, according to a post on his Instagram page. “The world has a lost a singular talent, and deeply influential voice in music and theater,” the post reads. “His musical legacy will continue to inspire generations to come.”

Sheik had been best known for his lasting radio hit “Barely Breathing” when he turned his sights on Broadway with “Spring Awakening,” resulting in the envelope-pushing show that musicalized teenage angst.

“With the exception of our director, we are all kind of Broadway outsiders. We wanted to shake things up a bit. And we just set out to make this really cool piece of theater,” Sheik told The Associated Press in 2007, as the show swept Tony nominations.

Sheik also tackled musicals based on “American Psycho” and “Alice in Wonderland,” and “Barely Breathing” spent 55 weeks on the Billboard Hot 100, peaking at No. 16. But he was probably best known for “Spring Awakening,” which ran for over 860 performances on Broadway starting in 2006.

“His deep feeling and his delight gave us so much beauty,” playwright and actor Eisa Davis wrote. “Duncan, thank you for your friendship and for the sublime music.”

The musical - adapted from a 19th-century play by German playwright Frank Wedekind, with music by Sheik and lyrics by playwright Steven Sater - is frank in its portrayals of incest, abortion and suicide. It’s intended partly as a warning that teens need good information about sex to avoid tragic mistakes.

“I don’t mean to be disrespectful to more traditional theater composers,” he told the Los Angeles Times in 2015. “I love Stephen Sondheim. But it’s my mission to make sure that the theater is paying attention to what the rest of the world is listen-



Duncan Sheik poses for photographers upon arrival at the Olivier Awards in London, England, Sunday, April 12, 2026. (AP)

ing to.”

Sheik and Sater were practicing Buddhists who met while chanting. They were collaborating on Sheik’s third album, “Phantom Moon,” when Sater mentioned he was working on a new production. Neither had written a musical before.

“I said to Steven, ‘I’m happy to do this musical, but I only want to do it if the music in the play is the kind that I and my peers can get behind stylistically and relate to and enjoy,’” Sheik told the AP in 2006.

They made a pact: They’d retain the provincial, 19th-century Germany setting but with, as Sater put it, “the characters breaking into pop-contemporary when they sing.”

“Spring Awakening” won eight

Tony Awards, including best musical, as well as the Grammy for best musical show album.

“Sheik’s music, spare in its simple orchestrations, lush in the lapping reach of its seductive choruses, embodies the shadowy air of longing that infuses the show, the excitement shading into fear, the joy that comes with a chaser of despair,” The New York Times said in its review.

The show is beloved in the musical theater community for breaking ground in staging and content, alongside the likes of “Rent” and “Hamilton.” It returned to Broadway in 2015 in a well-received production by Deaf West Theatre. An off-Broadway version is slated to open this fall, as is his musical “Memoirs

Diana’s famous ‘revenge dress’ goes on show ahead of Sotheby’s auction

LONDON, Sept 19, (AP): Revenge has rarely been so stylish.

A striking black dress worn by the late Princess Diana on the day her estranged husband publicly admitted adultery is going up for auction at Sotheby’s, with a presale estimate of up to \$300,000.

First, the “revenge dress,” as it has become known, is going on an international tour, testament to the enduring global fascination with Diana almost 30 years after her death.

The garment, which went on public display Friday at Sotheby’s in London, was worn by Diana on June 29, 1994, the broadcast date of an interview in which the then-Prince

Charles acknowledged infidelity.

Diana, who knew the revelation was coming, chose to wear the figure-hugging, off-the-shoulder silk dress by Greek designer Christina Stambolian for a gala at London’s Serpentine Gallery.

Morgane Halimi, Sotheby’s global head of handbags and fashion, said Diana chose the “beautiful and powerful outfit” as a way to seize control of her own story.

“She always used fashion as a way of expression, but this time (it) was a way to communicate her personal expression of herself,” Halimi said. “The way she felt on that day is that, ‘I’m taking back the story and I’m



A dress worn by the late Princess Diana and known as the “Revenge Dress,” designed by Christina Stambolian, is unveiled at Sotheby’s auction house in London, Friday, Sept. 18, 2026, ahead of its Dec. 9 auction in New York, where it is estimated to sell for US\$150,000-300,000. (AP)

here and I stand for myself.”

Images of Diana in the dress, accessorized with a sapphire necklace, black pumps and bright red nail polish, shot around the world. The Sun tabloid proclaimed on its front page the next day: “Revenge is chic.”

The following year Diana gave an interview in which she acknowledged her own extramarital affair, and famously said “there were three of us in this marriage,” in reference to Charles’ paramour Camilla Parker-Bowles, now Queen Camilla. Charles and Diana divorced in 1996, a year before Diana was killed in a car crash in Paris at the age of 36.

Variety

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump said that he was banning CNN, MSNOW and Politico from the White House due to what he called unfavorable coverage, and threatened that more such media prohibitions could be coming - offering his administration’s latest test of constitutional First Amendment protections guaranteeing the freedom of the press.

Trump has long bristled at news coverage he maintains casts him in a negative light, and has a history of filing lawsuits against news organizations, while lashing out at individual reporters in person or over social media.

The move follows the president’s decision, in February 2025, to keep Associated Press journalists out of the Oval Office, Air Force One and other

events too small for a full press corps, in retaliation for the news outlet’s decision not to follow his lead in changing the Gulf of Mexico’s name.

The AP filed suit and the case is ongoing. Since returning to office, however, Trump has pursued other legal action against a variety of different outlets, including The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal and the BBC.

Trump seeking to block White House access for CNN is especially notably, however, as it could upend the traditional five-network television pool that travels with the president and tracks his every move - meant to provide independent coverage of his actions and interactions for the Americans who elected him and the world. (AP)

WASHINGTON: Governor Gavin Newsom, of California, issued an executive order to the implementation of new third-party oversight of safety and security risks in AI systems, as well as independent audits.

Calling for national adoption of California’s AI framework, the order directs actions to address the dangers of recent AI incidents, according to a statement posted to Governor Newsom’s official website on Friday.

The executive order convenes a group of world-leading experts to provide, within two months, a guide for California to reinforce and strengthen its AI safety and security laws. Proposals under consideration include requiring independent third parties to write safety plans for frontier AI companies, as well as requiring companies to develop an emergency shutoff, or “kill switch,” for frontier models. (KUNA)

Chest Diseases Hospital at Hisham Al-Saqer Cardiac Center marks World Patient Safety Day

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 19: The Chest Diseases Hospital at the Hisham Al-Saqer Cardiac Center organized an awareness event to mark World Patient Safety Day, which is celebrated annually on Sept 17, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This year’s event was held with the theme, “Safe Care for Life,” underscoring the importance of embedding safety practices in all stages of healthcare.

The event highlighted the safety of care provided to patients with non-communicable and chronic diseases, including heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, cancer and

respiratory conditions, given the need for continuous monitoring and integration in various medical specialties and levels of care.

Participants included Hospital Director Dr. Salah Al-Shayji, Head of the Medical Staff Dr. Jamal Al-Fadhli, representatives of the medical, technical and administrative departments, and healthcare providers.

The organizers underscored the importance of fostering shared awareness of safety principles among patients and healthcare providers, particularly those with chronic

conditions.

The areas of focus included ensuring accurate and safe diagnoses, safe use of medications, minimizing preventable medical errors, and enhancing effective communication between patients and their treatment teams.

The event is in line with the ongoing efforts of the Health Ministry to spread the culture of patient safety, improve healthcare services, and strengthen partnerships with patients and their families to ensure continuity of care and achieve optimal health outcomes.

Fiji declares HIV emergency, expands testing as cases surge

WELLINGTON, New Zealand, Sept 19, (AP): Fiji has declared an HIV national emergency after data showed 1 in 60 people in the South Pacific island nation was estimated to be infected.

The government says it is boosting testing and treatment efforts to fight a surge in new infections, which have increased 12-fold over the last 15 years, according to the Joint United Nations Program on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS). However,



Lalabalavu

agencies now had to work together on the crisis, officials said this week.

The latest figures showed about 9,000 people were living with HIV in 2025 in a country which has fewer than a million people, according to the UN agency. It said only 39% of patients knew their HIV status and just 22% were receiving antiretroviral treatment.

Fiji officials said 1 in every 60 adults in the country has HIV, compared to 1 in 167 five years ago. Among pregnant women, 1 in every 50 has HIV.

“This means HIV is now a national crisis and the government is treating it like one. No more business as usual,” Fiji’s Health Minister **Antonio Lala-balavu** said in a video statement on Facebook. “More people in Fiji are living with HIV than ever before.”

Florida confirms a death from dengue

As Europe warms, Italy sees West Nile virus spread farther and longer

ROME, Sept 19, (AP): Italian health authorities see evidence that rising temperatures and longer warm seasons are helping mosquitoes spread West Nile virus across a wider area, during more months of the year.

More than 650 infections have been reported in Italy so far this year, accounting for roughly half of all cases recorded in Europe, according to local health authorities.

“Higher temperatures linked to climate change help mosquitoes reproduce and extend the transmission season, increasing the chances that infected mosquitoes will spread the virus to people,” said Antonino Bella, researcher at Italy’s National Institute of Health, or ISS.

West Nile has been considered endemic in Italy since 2020, when cases started to surge, and is now reported every summer and early fall. About 80% of infected people develop no symptoms, while most others experience a mild flu-like illness. Severe neurological complica-

tions occur in a small minority of cases, mainly among older adults and people with underlying health conditions.

Experts say this year’s case numbers are broadly in line with recent seasons.

But warmer temperatures favor mosquito reproduction and can mean the transmission season sometimes lasts as late as November, Bella explained. Areas once largely unaffected are increasingly reporting infections, reflecting a gradual expansion of the virus across the country.

Italy’s experience with the virus is drawing attention from European countries located farther north. A Belgian research team visited the ISS last May to study Italy’s research and surveillance system after the country began recording locally acquired West Nile cases.

The Netherlands this year has reported more than two dozen West Nile cases, the first since 2020, as



Researchers keep mosquitoes in a laboratory enclosure to study mosquito-borne diseases at the Italian National Institute of Health in Rome on Sept 18. (AP)

well as several deaths, according to its public health institute.

“There’s no doubt that warming weather will expand the period of replication for the virus and the vector in more countries,” said Marc-Alain Widdowson, who leads the Pandemic Threats, Communicable

Diseases, and AMR Division at the World Health Organization’s Europe office.

“You’ve got to be careful not to say that climate change is all of it, but certainly a warming climate means that we have a longer mosquito season, so that the vectors can survive for longer. Warm temperatures also mean that the virus itself will survive better,” he added.

Experts note that Italy’s extensive monitoring network, which tracks mosquitoes, birds, blood donors and human infections, also helps explain why the country detects so many cases.

“There are definitely trends which we think are contributing to increased activity,” Widdowson said, citing a warming climate, loss of biodiversity and changes in land use. A longer mosquito season creates more opportunities for transmission, he added, while declines in bird diversity may favor species that are efficient reservoirs of the virus.

Also:

NEW YORK: Florida is experiencing one of its worst surges of dengue fever in decades, and the toll now includes a death.

The Florida Department of Health confirmed the death Friday, though it didn’t provide further details. It’s one of more than 130 locally acquired dengue cases reported so far this year in **Hillsborough County**, which typically sees only a handful.

“This is wildly unusual for us,” said **Chris Wilkerson**, a spokesperson for the county.

The Tampa Bay Times first reported the death, described as an elderly Tampa woman who died Sept. 4.

Dengue is caused by a virus spread by a type of warm weather mosquito that is expanding its geographic reach because of climate change, experts say. The current Florida outbreak is likely due to recent weather conditions that allowed the virus-spreading mosquitoes to multiply.

Why do I talk in my sleep? A sleep psychologist explains

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

□ □ □

By Michael R. Nadorff
Mississippi State University

Curious Kids is a series for children of all ages. If you have a question you’d like an expert to answer, send it to CuriousKidsUS@theconversation.com.

Why do people speak while they are sleeping? - Mubina, age 15, Uzbekistan

Everyone sleeps, but not everyone understands much about sleep. One of my favorite parts of being a sleep psychologist is that when people hear what my job is, they always have tons of questions, like why do we need to sleep? Why do we dream? Do dogs dream? I get that one a lot, and the answer is yes!

Sometimes people want to chat about their sibling they share a room with who mumbles nonsense out loud all night long. Or maybe they’ve been teased themselves after delivering a complete but one-sided conversation while fully asleep at a slumber party.

I’ve studied sleep for almost two decades, and I’m still not tired of discussing different aspects of it, especially what are called parasomnias: things your body does or your mind goes through while you’re asleep, such as nightmares, sleepwalking or talking in your sleep. Most are common and completely harmless; they only count as a disorder when they happen so often that they cause real problems.

Sleep is not one single thing; you go through several stages of sleep every night.

About a quarter of your sleep is what’s called REM sleep, short for rapid eye movement. This is the stage when most dreams, especially the vivid ones, happen.

Non-REM sleep, which includes the deeper stages of sleep, usually takes up between 75% and 80% of your night. It is an important stage of sleep where your body really throttles down, allowing it to rest and repair itself.

Doctors refer to these stages all together as your sleep architecture. People go through cycles of these stages roughly every 90 minutes each night. Non-REM sleep makes up more of your sleep right after bedtime, and then REM becomes a higher proportion of sleep in the early morning hours.

All mammals, from mice to cats to elephants, appear to sleep in some form or another. Researchers have found sleep is important for many things. When you’re asleep is when a lot of your memories get strengthened so they’ll last long term. Sleep is when growth typically happens in kids, and it is one of the times when your immune system is most active.

Sleep is an important time for your brain and body to recharge and take care of themselves. Doctors recommend that teens get 8-10 hours of sleep per night, and even more for younger kids: 10-13 hours for little kids ages 3-5, and 9-12 hours for bigger kids ages 6-12.

Even though someone who is asleep may look pretty much shut down for the night, their brain is not turned off. Different parts of the brain are active doing different things during different parts of the night.

Scientists think that sleepwalking happens when the parts of the brain re-

sponsible for language and speech are active while other parts of the brain that would typically prevent your mouth from physically talking are asleep.

For the most part, sleepwalking is not even words. Usually it’s mumbles, laughs or whispers. If a sleepwalker does use language, it is most commonly the word “no” - that’s about 5% of all words that are said while asleep. If the sleepwalker is saying words, they’re often questions and sometimes profanity. Rarely are the things sleepwalkers say polite, and often it sounds like they’re having a conflict with someone.

Sometimes it can sound like the sleepwalker is having a real conversation, pausing to allow the other person to speak - even if there’s no one else in the room. Researchers suspect you might be overhearing one side of a verbal exchange from a sleepwalker’s dream. What a sleepwalker is saying out loud during REM sleep matches what they’re dreaming about at that moment about 80% of the time, according to studies in sleep labs.

You may be able to actually interact with someone who is sleepwalking; researchers have found that roughly half the time a sleepwalker will respond to a spoken question or statement. But don’t get excited that you can get someone to spill their secrets or reveal something they don’t want to. There’s no scientific evidence of this happening.

There is not a ton of research on sleepwalking yet, but it appears that this phenomenon can happen in any stage of sleep. Studies do suggest there are differences between the sleep of people who sleepwalk and those who don’t. For instance, one study found that sleepwalkers get more than an hour and a half less sleep per night and roughly half as much REM sleep as non-sleepwalkers.

The best explanation we have for sleepwalking is that the brain does not fall asleep all at once, and for some people the areas responsible for sleep remain active longer than the parts that help keep them quiet.

This phenomenon is fairly common, with over two-thirds of people sleepwalking at one time or another. It isn’t something to be concerned about if it has happened to you, though it does increase your likelihood of experiencing other parasomnias such as sleepwalking.

Sleepwalking is far more common in childhood. Researchers don’t fully understand why, but we do know that children have more of what’s called slow-wave non-REM sleep. The proportion of slow-wave sleep you have each night declines as you grow older, so it is possible that less sleepwalking comes with this change in sleep architecture.

Looking at the big picture, sleepwalking is considered normal. But if you’re bothered by it - or by other parasomnias, such as sleepwalking, night terrors or bed-wetting - remember, they all become less common as you grow up. And there are treatments you can get from a sleep psychologist like me.

One last tip: Scientists do know that sleepwalking, as well as several other parasomnias, is more common when you’re overtired. So, the next time you talk in your sleep, you’ll know that it’s nothing to worry about, but perhaps a sign that you need to catch up on some extra zzz’s when you can. (AP)

Scientists hope deeper-rooted soybeans can withstand climate extremes, store more carbon

CHAMPAIGN, Ill., Sept 19, (AP): Research scientist Ashish Rajurkar kneels in the dirt, lifting a large clod of soil tangled around a soybean plant. He knocks away pieces of earth from the plant’s roots, which slope straight down instead of out to the side like typical soybean plants.

Researchers hope roots like these could help crops withstand some effects of climate change while also drawing more carbon from the atmosphere and storing it underground. Carbon dioxide released by burning fossil fuels traps heat in the atmosphere, driving human-caused climate change.

For years, scientists have explored ways to remove some of that carbon from the atmosphere, including through direct air capture, changes to ocean chemistry so seawater can absorb more carbon, and reforestation. Now, researchers at the Salk Institute for Biological Studies are testing whether deeper root systems could become another tool.

But scientists still need to show how much additional carbon those roots can store under real farming conditions, how long the carbon would remain underground and whether the crops can maintain yields.

An \$18 million grant from the Bezos Earth Fund will help Salk researchers test those questions in the field by measuring how resilient these plants are to drought and other climate stressors, how much carbon they can store and for how long, and how to get the plants onto farms at scale.

Wolfgang Busch, director of the institute’s Harnessing Plants Initiative, said the issue is pressing.

“We are actually steering in a direction that is very concerning,” he said. “It will become harder to grow enough food for enough people.”

Over the last six years, Salk scientists uncovered the genetic information of hundreds of versions of common row crop plants such as soybeans and sorghum from around the world, creating an “encyclopedia” of plant genomes, said Todd Michael, a research professor at the institute.

After identifying 347 genes related to carbon storage and root growth, scientists were able to edit the plants’ DNA and create ones with roots that penetrate the soil further down.

“We wanted to leverage the natural variation of a given plant,” Michael said. “We just have to be able to make the right crosses to bring in those genetics.”

During droughts, they hope the roots will allow plants to access water below the top layer of soil while also storing carbon farther underground, where it may be less vulnerable to being released when farmers till their fields.

Researchers are also trying to



Ashish Rajurkar, a research scientist at the Salk Institute, examines a greenhouse of genetically-engineered soybeans on Sept 1, at a research farm in Champaign, Ill. (AP)

boost carbon storage by growing larger root systems so more carbon-rich plant material is left in the soil, and by increasing suberin, a cork-like substance in roots that contains carbon and decomposes more slowly than many other plant tissues.

Researchers hypothesize that more steeply shaped root systems may also allow farmers to plant more crops in a smaller area, potentially increasing yield.

Salk scientists think longer, bigger roots could also absorb more nitrogen and other fertilizer runoff, which can cause algae blooms and lead to low-oxygen environments that kill marine life.

Based on earlier lab results, Salk researchers estimate one hectare (2.5 acres) of deeper- and bigger-rooted soybean plants could store an additional metric ton of carbon dioxide per year. How long that carbon stays stored depends on how deep the roots can grow and the surrounding environment in the soil. Initial results from the field are expected this fall, Busch said.

At one of these field sites at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Salk is growing deeper-rooted soybean plants under a canopy that can open and close to control the amount of rainfall plants receive, testing how the plants perform in drought conditions. Using underground cameras and sensing equipment, research partners at the university can track the amount of carbon in the soil and view the root structure’s growth in real-time.

But there is still uncertainty

about how these plants will perform outside a lab. Salk researchers hope data collection at the site in Illinois, along with ones in Missouri, Kansas and Iowa, will provide accurate estimates of carbon storage and crop yield.

Because most plant breeders haven’t focused on root systems in the past, “we don’t really know what the real trade-off is,” Busch said. “You have to test it in the field.”

Busch acknowledges that getting new seed technology into farmers’ fields can be difficult. Having a crop that has clear benefits to farmers and large seed companies is key to getting it adopted rapidly. He noted that companies and farmers adopted herbicide-resistant crops in less than a decade once the technology was introduced.

“Historically it’s clear, if you have a technology that is interesting to a big seed company, it will go out there very, very fast,” he said.

And large-scale adoption on farm fields will be required to have the kind of carbon-reduction impact Salk scientists want. A 2025 study that Busch co-authored modeled that about a gigaton of carbon dioxide per year could be removed from the atmosphere by 2040 if deeper-rooted soybean, corn, cotton and canola crops were adopted in countries where genetically-modified crops are already grown.

Adoption could be rapid because deeper-rooted crops could be planted on current farm fields using existing agricultural infrastructure and land, according to the study.

Andrew Bovarnik, head of global food systems for the United Nations Development Programme, cautioned new crop technologies can take longer to implement than researchers expect. Farmers’ decisions are shaped not only by what happens on their fields, he said, but also by seed companies, commodity buyers, government subsidies, trade rules and access to financing.

“There’s a sense that if you innovate and come up with a good idea, then boom, it can happen,” Bovarnik said. “But it tends not to. We are stuck in a system that is pretty entrenched.”

Farmers are also reluctant to take risks on unfamiliar crops, he said, particularly without evidence they won’t bring unintended problems such as greater susceptibility to disease or heat.

Subsidies and other incentives could help speed adoption, Bovarnik said, but even if deeper-rooted crops prove useful, their impact will depend on how land is used, how soils are managed and whether crops such as soy are being grown for the most efficient or beneficial purposes.

“Always keep looking at that bigger strategic, systemic lens to food,” Bovarnik said, “not just the end-of-pipe innovation.”

Busch also acknowledged that crop and seed development can take years. Ambitious solutions, he said, require fast funding.

“It’s a race against time,” he said of climate change. “We are racing against limiting the damage and crossing tipping points, where it’s much harder to return from.”

SPORTS

Strengthening youth foundations

15 global coaches selected to develop Kuwait's young players, says Bashar

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 19: The Public Authority for Sports is working with the Kuwait Football Association to bring 15 international coaches to Kuwait to develop under-12 players at local clubs.

Acting Director General Bashar Abdullah said the initiative aims to lay a strong foundation for young players, stressing the importance of proper development at an early stage. As a former player, he said he understands the key role this age group plays in shaping a player's future.

Abdullah said the 15 coaches were selected based on specific qualifications and criteria following a review of nearly 150 coaching profiles from around the world. The selection process was carried out in cooperation with FIFA and specialized international football development programs.

Abdullah said the authority places particular emphasis on youth development and age-group teams and is working to provide young players with the right conditions to improve and progress.

He thanked everyone involved in completing the project over the past three months and expressed hope that the initiative would produce tangible results in the coming period.



Bashar Abdullah, Acting Director General of Kuwait's Public Authority for Sports.

New sports added to Games

Al-Musallam: Nagoya ready for Asian Games

NAGOYA, Japan, Sept 19: Asian Olympic Council Director General Hussein Al-Musallam said Nagoya is fully prepared to host the Asian Games, which run from September 19 to October 4 and feature 45 National Olympic Committees and around 11,000 athletes.

Al-Musallam said preparations for the Games have been completed to a reassuring standard, with the necessary organizational and technical arrangements in place to ensure a successful continental sporting event.

He expects fierce competition among the participating athletes as they target podium finishes and medals. The Games feature 469 events across more than 43 sports.

The Nagoya Games will also introduce several sports to the Asian Games program, including mixed martial arts, padel, surfing, virtual taekwondo and teqball, highlighting the growing diversity of the competition and its inclusion of emerging sports.

The event has generated strong international media interest, with more than 10,000 accreditation applications submitted by journalists and media representatives seeking to cover the continent's biggest multi-sport event across television and other media platforms.



Hussein Al-Musallam, Director General of the Olympic Council of Asia.

Mitchell breaks season scoring record as Fever defeat Toronto

Valkyries secure fifth straight victory

TORONTO, Sept 19, (AP): Kelsey Mitchell scored 33 points to set a WNBA season scoring record, Caitlin Clark had 28 points and matched a season high with 14 assists and the Indiana Fever beat the Toronto Tempo 103-85 for its eighth win in 10 games.

With a 3-pointer in the third quarter, Mitchell eclipsed the 1,021 points A'ja Wilson scored for Las Vegas in 2024. Mitchell has 1,034 points this season.

Mitchell also scored at least 20 points for the 25th consecutive game, extending her WNBA record. She shot 12 for 17 and went 7 for 11 from 3-point range.

Clark shot 7 for 15 and went 2 for 8 from distance for her 14th double-double in her first game since helping the U.S. win the women's FIBA World Cup in Germany. She made 12 free throws without a miss.

The game was the first for both teams following a nearly three-week World Cup break.

Clark also had 14 assists in a home win over Toronto on June 16.

Toronto's Laura Juskaitė scored 22 points and Kiki Rice had 18. Isabelle Harrison and Temi Fagbenle each scored 16 points but the Tempo lost their fifth straight.

Toronto started its inaugural season 9-9 but has gone 2-21 since.

The Tempo were without guard Marina Mabrey. On Wednesday, the team said Mabrey will miss the final four games of the season because of a right adductor injury. Mabrey hasn't played since a home loss to Indiana on Aug. 18.

Raptors guard Immanuel Quickley attended the game.

Valkyries 82, Fire 66

In San Francisco, Kaitlyn Chen scored 17 points off the bench with a career-high five 3-pointers, Laeticia Amihere also scored 17, and the Golden State Valkyries returned from the break for the FIBA Women's Basketball World Cup to beat the Portland Fire for their fifth straight victory.

Tiffany Hayes had 13 points and seven assists, while Kayla Thorn-



New York Liberty forward Breanna Stewart (30) dribbles downcourt as Minnesota Lynx guard Maya Caldwell (3) defends during the second half of a WNBA basketball game in Minneapolis. (AP)

ton contributed 13 points and four rebounds. Veronica Burton made a franchise-record six steals as the Valkyries played without star Gabby Williams and top reserve Janelle Salaun, both of whom played for the French team that lost to the U.S. 97-79 in the World Cup final on Sunday.

Golden State coach Natalie Nakase served as an assistant for the Americans, and she is being cautious with her team's health ahead of the WNBA playoffs. The Valkyries (30-11) are in second place behind Minnesota in the league standings. Frieda Buhner scored 14 points and Nyadiew Puoch had 11 points and eight rebounds for the Fire.

Portland guard Carla Leite, also on the French team, started and missed her initial four shots before finishing with 12 points and six assists. The Fire lost their third straight game and sixth out of their last sev-

en.

Valkyries forward Cecilia Zandavasini played for Italy in the World Cup and also rested Friday.

Chen shot 6 for 10 and 5 of 8 from deep as Golden State finished 13 of 37 from 3-point range, also getting three 3s apiece from rookie Juste Jocyte and Thornton.

Liberty 93, Lynx 81

In Minneapolis, Breanna Stewart scored 24 points and grabbed 10 rebounds, Jonquel Jones had 18 points and 10 rebounds, and the New York Liberty beat the slumping Minnesota Lynx in a possible first-round playoff matchup.

Stewart moved past Sue Bird and into ninth place on the WNBA's career scoring list with 6,806 points. She's five points behind Cappie Pondexter for eighth place.

Stewart also had four assists and

three steals. Sabrina Ionescu scored 17 points, with six assists and three steals. Pauline Astier scored 14, and reserve Marine Johannes 13.

Olivia Miles scored 20 points to lead Minnesota, losers of three straight. Kayla McBride scored 16, Napheesa Collier 14, Courtney Williams 12 and Natasha Williams 11.

Miles converted a three-point play for a 69-67 Lynx lead with 8:18 left. Stewart responded with a 3-pointer on New York's following possession and the Liberty never trailed again.

New York outscored the Lynx 23-12 the rest of the way.

Despite the loss, Minnesota retained the WNBA's top seed while the Liberty moved up to sixth.

New York (25-16) has won eight of its last 11. The Lynx (31-10) have dropped three straight for the first time this season.



In this photo made with a smartphone, jockeys ride their horses into the newly-opened Belmont Park in Elmont, N.Y. (AP)

'It's an amazing feeling'

Horse racing returns to rebuilt Belmont Park after renovation

NEW YORK, Sept 19, (AP): They're off and running at the new Belmont Park, as horse racing returned Friday following a three-year absence for a \$550 million reconstruction project that modernized the historic track.

Fans in the sellout crowd of 6,000 cheered before a field of 10 left the starting gate just after 1:30 p.m. at the home of the Belmont Stakes, the third leg of the Triple Crown. Lisa Joy, a filly ridden by jockey Antonio Fresu, won the first race there since July 9, 2023.

"It's an amazing feeling to be part of this historical track and historical reopening of Belmont Park," Fresu said afterward. "They seem to be doing a tremendous job. The track is fantastic. The grandstand looks fantastic, all the facilities, so I'm really, really happy to be part of it."

The new facility is futuristic and white, a departure from the massive brick grandstand that occupied the space from 1968 until its demolition. New York Gov. Kathy Hochul before a ribbon-cutting ceremony in the expanded paddock area called it the start of a whole new era of racing in a state that has Belmont Park on the border of Queens and Long Island to go with venerable Saratoga Race Course upstate.

"With the new Belmont Park, New York enters into a league of its own," Hochul said. "All eyes of the racing world are on this place. Everybody's

paying attention to what we're unveiling here."

For now, the first two floors are open to the public while work is completed on the third, fourth and fifth in time for the spring. They are expected to be ready for the Wood Memorial, a key prep race for the Kentucky Derby that takes place in early April.

"We'll show off the whole facility that day," New York Racing Association President and CEO David O'Rourke told The Associated Press. "The bones are here. Now we're going to flesh this out."

The Belmont Stakes returns June 5 after a three-year run at Saratoga. The Breeders' Cup is back next fall, with the sport's world championship weekend taking place in New York for the first time since 2005.

"If you build it, we will come," said Dora Delgado, the Breeders' Cup executive vice president and chief racing officer. "We knew they had the capability. They knew what we needed from a facility, so it was just perfect."

Delgado likened the new Belmont Park to Ascot Racecourse in England and what Arlington Park outside Chicago used to look like before closing in 2021.

"It's state of the art," Delgado said. "They have created something here that's just astonishing, and it's a first for New York racing to have this kind of facility."

Italy & Inter Milan soccer legend Mazzola dies at 83

MILAN, Sept 19, (AP): Sandro Mazzola, the former Inter Milan captain who was one of Italy's most acclaimed players, has died. He was 83.

His death was announced on Saturday by Inter, the soccer club where he spent his entire 17-year playing career. No cause of death was given but Mazzola had been suffering from a long, unspecified illness.

"FC Internazionale Milano, its President Giuseppe Marotta, Vice President Javier Zanetti, head coach Cristian Chivu and his staff, the players, and everyone at Inter mourn with profound sorrow the passing of Sandro Mazzola, a Nerazzurri and world football legend," Inter said in an emotional statement.

"Sandro Mazzola was one of the greatest footballers in history. Not only in the history of the Nerazzurri."

A product of the Inter youth academy, Mazzola made his Serie A debut as a teenager in 1961, against Juventus, scoring his team's only goal in a

9-1 rout. Mazzola, an attacking midfielder or second striker, went on to net 158 goals in 565 matches for Inter, helping the Nerazzurri to four Serie A titles and two European Cups.

He also won the European Championship with Italy in 1968. Mazzola, who scored 22 goals in 70 matches for the Azzurri, played in three World Cups, reaching the final with Italy in 1970.

Mazzola was runner-up in the 1971 Ballon d'Or, behind soccer great Johan Cruyff.

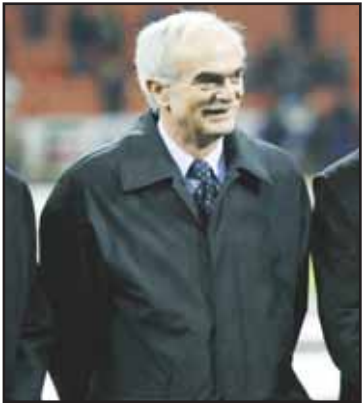
"The passing of Sandro Mazzola is a source of deep sorrow for me and for all of Italian soccer," said Giovanni Malagò, president of the Italian soccer federation. "We have lost a legend, one of the figures who helped make our soccer great on the global stage."

"Sandro was an icon, a captain, and a champion who defined an era and became part of our collective memory."

Mazzola was the son of another iconic player, Valentino Mazzola, who died in the Superga air disaster along with the whole "Grande Torino" team in 1949, when Sandro was 6 years old. "He was Valentino's son - a man who managed to turn a monumental surname into an equally magnificent legacy, built on talent, personality, courage, and extraordinary humanity," Malagò said.

"I like to think that he has finally reunited with his father and with those champions alongside whom he wrote one of the finest chapters in the history of Italian soccer."

After Mazzola scored two goals to help Inter beat Real Madrid 3-1 in the 1964 European final, Real Madrid star Ferenc Puskás told him "You are worthy of your father Valentino" as the duo swapped shirts.



In this file photo, Inter Milan's former player Sandro Mazzola poses for the camera prior to the start of the Champions League match.

Leaders seek scrutiny and member payouts

Infantino opponents call for \$10 million FIFA payments from World Cup reserves



In this file photo, FIFA President Gianni Infantino gestures as he attends the Women's U20 World Cup opening match between Poland and Argentina in Katowice, Poland. (AP)

built close ties to Trump ahead of this year's World Cup held in the U.S., Canada and Mexico, and was a regular visitor to the White House.

The call for \$10-million payments

to the national federations - who will elect the next president - is a clear counter to Infantino's offer of \$20 million for each to support his now-failed project.

The message in Friday's letter appears to be reassuring FIFA members they will get increased funding even without Infantino in the office he has occupied since 2016.

The letter says already promised FIFA funding - \$20 million for each of the 211 through 2030 - "would continue in full as already committed."

FIFA was approached for comment.

Ceferin and Montagliani told Infantino they want a full and independent analysis of FIFA's finances ahead of an Oct. 15 meeting in Zurich, to help decide how much money can responsibly be given to member federations.

The UEFA and CONCACAF leaders shape as key players at the scheduled meeting next month of the Infantino-chaired FIFA Council - its first since his secretive private equity plan was revealed by press reports in late July.

"Lastly, please note we will be informing the other four confederation presidents to support this motion," Ceferin and Montagliani wrote.

Al-Jahra Club enters new phase after funding restored

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 19: Al-Jahra Club's board of directors has welcomed the restoration of the club's financial and administrative allocations, thanking the Minister of State for Youth and Sports Affairs Dr Tareq Al-Jalahma, Acting Director General of the Public Authority for Youth and Sports Bashar Abdullah, Sports Organizations Director, Jarrah Al-Saedi; and the authority's legal department, headed by Mishal Al-Asousi, for their efforts in resolving the matter.

In a statement, the board said the suspension of financial allocations had created significant difficulties in carrying out its responsibilities. Despite the challenges, it continued to work with the financial committee formed by the authority until the issue was brought to a close and the allocations were reinstated.

The board noted that the funding suspension affected the club's sports teams as well, with some facing the possibility of halting their activities. It said the club re-



Jahra Club President Yousef Karim with Bashar Abdullah. maintained committed to fulfilling its responsibilities and ensuring that its teams continued to operate despite the difficult circumstances.

The board also expressed its appreciation to the players, their families, and the technical and administrative staff for their cooperation and patience during the past period, praising their commitment in dealing with the challenges.

It described the restoration of the club's financial allocations and rights as an important step toward overcoming the impact of the previous period and beginning a new phase centered on stability and clarity. The board said it would continue its sporting activities in an organized manner while working toward the objectives it had previously announced.

The board stressed that its decision to explain the circumstances surrounding the suspension was not intended to escalate the issue or blame any party. Rather, it sought to present a complete picture to the public and relevant authorities and highlight the responsibilities the board had assumed while continuing its work under difficult conditions.

Kuwait to host inaugural Asian Esports and Mind Sports Games



Dr. Tareq Al-Jalahma and Kuwait Olympic Committee President and head of the Kuwaiti delegation Sheikh Fahad Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah signed an agreement with Olympic Council of Asia President Sheikh Joaan bin Hamad Al Thani.

NAGOYA, Japan, Sept 19: Minister of State for Youth and Sports Affairs Dr Tareq Al-Jalahma and Kuwait Olympic Committee President and head of the Kuwaiti delegation Sheikh Fahad Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah signed an agreement with Olympic Council of Asia President Sheikh Joaan bin Hamad Al Thani for Kuwait to host the inaugural Asian Games for Esports and Mind Sports in 2027.

The agreement was signed on the sidelines of the opening ceremony of the 20th Asian Games in Nagoya, Japan, where the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Games got underway yesterday and will continue until October 4, bringing together athletes from across Asia.

Arsenal loses for first time in title defense; more pain for Tottenham



Arsenal's goalkeeper David Raya misses the ball during the English Premier League soccer match between Brighton & Hove Albion and Arsenal in Brighton, England. (AP)

Everton edges Ipswich 1-0

LONDON, Sept 19, (AP): Arsenal slumped to a first loss of its Premier League title defense - and it was a heavy one at Brighton.

After four straight wins for the champions, the 3-0 defeat at Amex Stadium on Saturday came somewhat out of nowhere, and conceding the third goal from a corner - typically an area of strength for Arsenal - summed up an unusually sloppy performance from Mikel Arteta's team.

Pascal Gross and Charalampos Kostasoulas scored in the first half with shots from outside the penalty area, before Chema Andres completed the win with a header at the back post from Gross' corner.

The victory will have been especially sweet for Brighton manager Fabian Hurlzeler, who said "only one team tried to play football" after his team's narrow home loss to Arsenal last season.

Arsenal has often struggled against Brighton, which was the last team to inflict such a heavy defeat on the Gunners in any competition - winning 3-0 at Emirates Stadium in May 2023.

It completed a brilliant week for Brighton, which beat Coventry 5-0 in the league last weekend and came from two goals down in midweek to beat Manchester United 3-2 away in the English League Cup.

Manchester City - the other team to win its first four games - can now move three points clear in the standings by beating Sunderland on Sunday.

Fresh off a \$400 million summer spend, Tot-



Tottenham Hotspur's Savio, center, is closed down by Aston Villa's Matty Cash, left, during the English Premier League soccer match between Tottenham Hotspur and Aston Villa, at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium in London. (AP)

tenham remains without a win in five league games this season after losing 3-2 at home to Aston Villa.

Johan Manzambi, a 20-year-old attacking midfielder who starred for Switzerland at the World Cup, made his first start for Villa and scored the opening goal against the run of play in first-half-stoppage time. He set up another for fellow new signing Nicolas Jackson, before Emi Buendia's long-range strike in the 79th sent Villa on its way to a first league win of the campaign.

Conor Gallagher and Jan Paul van Hecke grabbed late consolations for Spurs - its first league goals this season - but it is now two losses and three defeats in the league for Roberto De Zerbi's team, which also lost in the English League Cup this week.

After back-to-back 17th-place finishes in the

20-team Premier League, Tottenham's leadership oversaw a huge squad rebuild in the offseason in a show of confidence in De Zerbi.

There's been no payback so far in terms of results and De Zerbi - a combustible Italian coach - is under growing pressure heading into a long international break.

To make matters worse for Tottenham, World Cup-winning Spain right back Pedro Porro was forced off midway through the first half with an injury.

Fast starts helped Newcastle and Everton claim wins over promoted teams.

Newcastle scored twice in the first seven minutes - through Lewis Hall and Joe Willock - to set up a 2-1 victory over previously unbeaten Hull.

Thierno Barry's 11th-minute goal was enough for Everton to beat Ipswich 1-0.

Brentford climbed to third in the Premier League after a crushing 3-0 win over London rival Chelsea.

It was a puzzling display by Xabi Alonso's Chelsea side, which has now gone three league games without a win.

Jaidon Anthony, Igor Thiago and Fabio Carvalho all scored in the second half for Brentford.

"Disappointed with the second half, disappointed with the result," Chelsea manager Alonso said. "This is not how to compete in the Premier League. We were punished."

"At the moment we are not being consistent enough to compete during the whole game, 45 minutes is not enough, you need to compete for the whole game. It's about everything, it's about tactical things that we need to keep improving and do much better."

Burgan completes Bosnia camp ahead of Club World Champ'ship

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

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 19: Burgan's first-team handball squad returns today after completing a training camp in Bosnia, where the team played several friendly matches as part of its preparations for the IHF Men's Club World Championship in Egypt's New Administrative Capital from Sept. 24 to Oct. 1.

Burgan will travel to Cairo next Wednesday for the final phase of preparations. The Kuwaiti side has been drawn in Group B alongside German giants Füchse Berlin, hosts Al Ahly of Egypt, and the winner of the preliminary clash between Hungarian club Veszprém and Sydney of Australia.

The delegation is headed by club president Anwar Al-Otaibi and includes vice president Mohammed Nasser, handball director Abdulaziz Najeeb, head coach Yacoub Al-Mousawi, fitness coach Saud Al-Sammak, assistant coach Nasser Bukhadra and performance analyst Faisal Al-Nassar, along with the players and professional stars, including Spain's Angel Hernández and Japan's Yasuhiro.

Burgan secured its place in the Club World Championship after winning the Asian Club Handball Championship for



IHF Men's Club World Championship trophy. the first time in June, marking a major achievement for the club and Kuwaiti handball.

The tournament appearance is particularly significant as Burgan becomes the sixth Kuwaiti club to win the Asian title and qualify for the Club World Championship, adding another milestone to the history of Kuwaiti handball.

Kane blazes to 100 Bundesliga goals in record time as Bayern routs Union

MUNICH, Sept 19, (AP): Bayern Munich star Harry Kane scored twice on a historic night, becoming the fastest player to reach 100 goals in the Bundesliga as his team thrashed Union Berlin 7-0.

England striker Kane, 33, achieved his milestone by converting a 39th-minute penalty to extend Bayern's lead to 3-0 before halftime. Jamal Musiala had opened the scoring in the 18th, while Michael Olise added another in the 43rd.

Kane struck again in the 54th, bringing his total to 101 goals in 99 matches.



Kane

The previous record for the fastest to a century was set at 123 games by Dieter Müller, a prolific striker for Cologne in the 1970s.

Olise then completed a hat-trick in the 73rd and 76th. Ismael Saibari was also on target.

"Very proud, to be honest, to reach 100 goals in the Bundesliga," Kane said. "Obviously, I've done it in the Premier League, so now to have it in a different league is something I'm really proud of. All I can say is a big thanks to the team."

On average, Kane has found the net once every 78.3 minutes since his arrival in Germany in 2023, surpassing the likes of Erling Haaland (87 minutes), Robert Lewandowski (100) and Gerd Müller (105).

OCA says Taiwan Sports Minister's ban misunderstanding

'Politics have already entered into the Asian Games'

NAGOYA, Japan, Sept 19, (AP): The president of the Olympic Council of Asia acknowledged Saturday that politics - in the form of a welcoming ceremony involving Taiwan - had already entered into the Asian Games.

He did not sound pleased about it, speaking just hours before the official opening ceremony on Saturday.

Some events at the Asian Games began several days ago to accommodate a packed schedule and more than 17,000 athletes and officials. Up to 5,000 are housed on a cruise ship.

"I don't think, you know, the politicians or politics should be involved in sports," said Sheikh Joaan bin Hamad Al Thani, speaking with media at the Asian Games.

He is the younger brother of the Amir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim bin Al Thani.

Sheikh Joaan was asked about an incident Friday at the Asian Games in which Taiwan's sports

minister, Lee Yang, was temporarily barred from a welcoming ceremony and a flag-raising.

Lee was later allowed to participate and the OCA attributed the incident to a misunderstanding.

"We don't mix sports with politics and we already have," Sheikh Joaan said. "We're going to take - if something like this will happen, we have our way of taking care of it. And all the delegations know what the protocol is and what should be done, and what shouldn't be done."

Lee is a two-time Olympic gold medalist in badminton. He won gold twice in doubles - 2020 and 2024 - each time defeating a Chinese pair in the final.

Taiwan competes in the Asian Games and the Olympics under the name of Chinese Taipei and without its flag due to China's claim on the island off its east coast.

Taiwan media reported the OCA had issued

an order barring Lee. Taiwan media reported that Taiwan officials asked to see the order but officials were unable to produce it.

"We chose to stick to our principles," Chen Shih-kwei, a vice president of the Chinese Taipei Olympic Committee, said.

"We asked the local organizing committee and the OCA to uphold the Olympic spirit, so that we could attend all events equally and with dignity," Chen added. "We insisted on this, and then negotiations began. We stood firm on our dignity and principles."

Lee later told Taiwanese reporters that "we are doing our best to safeguard our rights and do not want to be subjected to any form of suppression."

"We also hope more Taiwanese athletes can perform at their best and give their all at the games so that Taiwan can be more visible on the international stage."

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NEWS



Kuwait Olympic Committee President and head of the Kuwaiti delegation at the 20th Asian Games, Sheikh Fahad Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah cheers Kuwaiti athletes during the opening ceremony.

Sports

Kuwait's 120 athletes 'poised' for challenge as Asian Games kick off



Kuwait delegation marches with national flag at Asian Games opening ceremony.

Al-Hawwal and Al-Dhafiri carry Kuwait flag at opening ceremony

NAGOYA, Japan, Sept 19: The 20th Asian Games, Aichi-Nagoya 2026, officially got underway in Nagoya, Japan, on Saturday and will run until October 4, with athletes from across Asia competing in 43 sports.

The opening ceremony at Mizuho Park Stadium was attended by Minister of State for Youth and Sports Affairs Dr Tareq Al-Jalahma and Kuwait delegation head and Kuwait Olympic Committee President Sheikh Fahad Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, along with senior officials and heads of Olympic committees from the participating countries.

Kuwait Olympic Committee President and head of the Kuwaiti delegation at the 20th Asian Games, Aichi-Nagoya 2026, Sheikh Fahad Nasser praised the opening ceremony.

He commended the impressive presentation of the ceremony, saying it demonstrated a high level of organization and readiness befitting the scale and importance of the continental sporting event.

Sheikh Al-Nasser expressed hope that Kuwait's athletes will enjoy successful Games and deliver strong performances that reflect their preparations and meet the expectations of Kuwaiti sports fans.

Japan is hosting the Asian Games for the third time, following Tokyo in 1958 and Hiroshima in 1994. More than 11,000 athletes representing 45 countries and regions are taking part in this edition.

Kuwait is represented by 120 athletes competing in 16 sports. Shooting champion Sarah Al-Hawwal and athletics champion Ibrahim Al-Dhafiri had

the honor of carrying Kuwait's national flag during the opening parade.

The two athletes expressed their pride at being selected for the role, describing the opportunity to carry the national flag at the continental event as both an honor and a major responsibility.

They said the moment they had eagerly awaited would serve as an added source of motivation for them and their teammates to produce their best performances and compete for podium finishes.

The Kuwaiti delegation is seeking strong results in Nagoya and hopes to build on the country's record at previous Asian Games, particularly in shooting, athletics, handball and martial arts.

Kuwait teqball player Zaid Al-Eidan suffered a hamstring injury during his semifinal against South Korea and was forced to withdraw.

Al-Eidan was scheduled to play Indonesia in the bronze-medal match but will be unable to compete because of the injury.

In the doubles competition, Kuwait's Abdulwahab Al-Qattan and Basel Ahmed lost 2-1 to Lebanon in the semifinals. They will face Indonesia in the bronze-medal match at 5:30am.

Dalal Al-Saeed begins her Asian Games campaign in the women's individual kata, competing in the round of 32 at 4am. Abdullah Shaaban follows in the men's under-60kg kumite round of 32 at 6:15am.

Swimmer Khaled Al-Otaibi will compete in the men's 200m individual medley heats at 4:08am.

Kuwait's athletes will be aiming to advance through the opening rounds and secure places in the finals.

Kuwait resumes training after Yemen loss

KFA, Zain arrange flights for Kuwait fans to Jeddah

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

JEDDAH, Sept 19: Kuwait's national team will return to training today at the Saudi Arabian Football Federation's facilities in Jeddah as preparations continue for Gulf Cup 27, which kicks off on September 23 and runs through October 6.

Head coach Hélio Sousa gave the players a day off yesterday following Friday's 2-1 friendly defeat to Yemen. Mohammed Daham scored Kuwait's goal, while Ahmed Maher and Omar Al-Dahi were on target for Yemen.

The friendly allowed Sousa to assess his players' readiness and fitness levels ahead of the tournament. Yousif Nasser and Mohsen Falah missed the Yemen match after experiencing muscle discomfort but are expected to rejoin the squad in today's training session.

Kuwait has been drawn in Group A with hosts Saudi Arabia, Oman and Iraq. The Blue team will face Saudi Arabia in its opening match on September 23, meet Iraq on September 26 and complete the group stage against Oman on September 29. Group B features Bahrain, the UAE, Qatar and Yemen.

Meanwhile, Kuwait Football Association President Sheikh Ahmad Al-Yousef praised the support provided by Zain Kuwait and its Vice Chairman and Group CEO Bader Al-Kharafi to Kuwaiti sport and the KFA.

Sheikh Al-Yousef said the KFA and Zain had arranged two flights to take Kuwait fans to Jeddah for



Kuwait Football Association President, Sheikh Ahmad Al-Yousef.

the national team's opening match against Saudi Arabia. The package includes return airfare, match tickets and transportation at subsidized rates.

He also praised Zain for its continued support of Kuwaiti sport, noting that the company has consistently backed major sporting events and initiatives.

The KFA announced that registration for fans wishing to attend the Kuwait-Saudi Arabia match will open on Sunday through its website. The two flights will accommodate up to 450 fans, with registration requirements and conditions to be announced.

The package is priced at KD 80 for business class and KD 40 for economy class, covering return flights, match tickets, and transportation. The KFA will coordinate with fans in Jeddah to arrange distribution of the match tickets.



Mohammed Daham dribbles the ball during Kuwait-Yemen friendly match.

Kuwait off to flying start at Asian Games



A Kuwaiti player scores against Iran during the opening game.

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

NAGOYA, Japan, Sept 19: Kuwait's national handball team opened its Asian Games campaign with a 26-24 victory over Iran in Group B in Nagoya, Japan.

The Blues produced a solid performance to overcome a strong Iranian side and claim their first two points of the tournament. Kuwait controlled key stages of the match and showed good technical organization and determination to secure a positive start to its campaign.

The team will now look to build on the victory in its remaining group matches as it targets a place in the second round and a deep run in the competition.

Kuwait's preparations for the Asian Games included

overseas training camps in Slovenia and Croatia, followed by a domestic camp. The team then completed its preparations in Tokyo, where the players trained daily and played one friendly match to improve their technical and physical readiness.

Kuwait was drawn in Group B alongside South Korea, Iran, Uzbekistan and Bahrain. The team is aiming to maintain its strong start and produce results that underline the progress of Kuwaiti handball at the continental level.

The Kuwait squad consists of Hussein Dashti, Mohammed Bouyabes, Hassan Safar, Abdullah Al-Khamis, Saleh Al-Mousawi, Saif Al-Adwani, Hamoud Al-Adwani, Aziz Salmeen, Haider Dashti, Fawaz Al-Mashari, Yousif Dhaif, Aziz Dhaif, Abdulrahman Al-Shammari, Aziz Al-Shammari, Mohammed Ali and Hussein Al-Mutawa.

Blues need big win over Philippines and favor to advance

Kuwait U-23 faces uphill task after Uzbekistan defeat

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

NAGOYA, Japan, Sept 19: Kuwait's U-23 national team faces a difficult task to reach the knockout stage of the Asian Games after suffering a 2-0 defeat to Uzbekistan yesterday in Group C.

Kuwait must beat the Philippines by at least three goals in its final group match and hope Uzbekistan defeats Vietnam by two goals. If Vietnam win or draw against Uzbekistan, Kuwait will be eliminated regardless of the result against the Philippines.

Uzbekistan lead Group C with six points, followed by Vietnam on four, Kuwait on one and the Philippines with no points.

Bakhromov put Uzbekistan ahead in the sixth minute before doubling the lead in the 36th minute.

Kuwait came close to reducing the deficit through Al-Salama in the 32nd minute, but his effort went just wide.

Uzbekistan was reduced to 10 men when Fayzullayev was sent off after receiving a second yellow card. Kuwait tried to capitalize on the numerical advantage, with Muntaser Abdul-Salam seeing his free-kick blocked in the 52nd



Players in action during Kuwait match against Uzbekistan at the Asian Games.

minute, but the Blue team could not find a way back into the game.

Coach David Doniga made several

changes in an effort to revive Kuwait's attack, but Uzbekistan held firm to secure all three points.

Best of the Rest

South Korea reaches Davis Cup finals: South Korea became the first Asian nation to reach the Davis Cup Final 8 after clinching its match against India 3-1 on Saturday.

The South Koreans came from a set down in both singles matches to lead 2-0.

It lost the opening doubles Saturday but Soonwoo Kwan beat Sumit Nagal 6-1, 6-2 in the first reverse singles to advance South Korea to the Davis Cup finals in Bologna, Italy, in November. (AP)

□ □ □

Hall scores lone goal in Red Bulls victory: Julian Hall scored early in the second half and keeper Ethan Horvath was never tested for the New York Red Bulls in a 1-0 victory over New York City FC on Friday night at Yankee Stadium.

Hall scored unassisted in the 57th minute for his 10th goal this season. The 18-year-old forward scored three times in his first 38 appearances.

Horvath did not have to make a save for the Red Bulls (9-11-6). It was his fourth clean sheet in 26 starts in his first season in the league. (AP)