



Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Embassy commemorates 96th National Day Page 2



Bahrain King affirms strong, enduring bonds with Kuwait Page 5



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, participates in the Arab-US summit hosted by US President Donald Trump.

Amir Representative takes part in high-level Middle East talks

NEW YORK, Sept 23, (KUNA): The 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, participated Tuesday in a joint high-level summit hosted by US President Donald

Trump on the sidelines of the 81st UN General Assembly.

The meeting convened leaders and heads of delegation from GCC states, Jordan, and broader Arab and Islamic nations participating in the UN High-Level Week to address critical security challenges across the Mid-

dle East.

Discussions focused on regional security threats, including Iranian attacks targeting regional states, maritime navigation safety in strategic international waterways, global energy supply stability, and the ongoing crisis in the Gaza Strip.

Participating leaders underscored the vital importance of the strategic partnership and continuous coordination with the United States to reinforce regional and global security, support immediate de-escalation efforts, and advance a comprehensive and just peace framework across the region.

Death verdicts hold in wife, child crimes

Sectarian posts cost citizen KD 10,000

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 23: The Court of Appeals, presided over by Judge Nasr Salem Al-Haid, with Judges Miteb Al-Ardhi and Saud

Al-Sanea as members, upheld two death sentence rulings issued against Kuwaiti citizens in separate cases.

The first case involves a citizen accused of killing his wife by running over her in Mutlaa desert, while the second is the kidnapping and sexual assault of a Syrian child

in Hawally.

In the first case, the court upheld the death sentence imposed on a citizen convicted of killing his wife during Eid Al-Fitr. Case files indicate he beat her and then ran over her in Mutlaa desert.

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KFF steps up rain response

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 23: Major General Talal Al-Roumi, Chief of the Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), inspected the Support Center on Tuesday morning to assess the readiness of KFF teams for the rainy season and evaluate the operational efficiency of vehicles and equipment designated to respond to unstable weather conditions, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a statement posted on its X account, KFF explained that the tour included a comprehensive review of the equipment and vehicles prepared for rapid intervention operations.

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KFF photo
Major General Talal Al-Roumi inspects readiness of firefighting teams to deal with the rainy season.

Seven top specialists join Kuwait's 'Visiting Doctors'

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 23: The Ministry of Health is set to welcome seven renowned physicians from around the world as part of its "Visiting Doctors" program in October 2026.

The visiting specialists will provide consultations at several hospitals, including Al-Razi, Jaber, Al-Babtain, Ibn Sina, and Mubarak Al-Kabeer hospitals.

The visiting specialists are:

■ Dr. Jamal Ali Al-Asiri from Saudi Arabia, an expert in foot and ankle orthopedic surgery, who will be available at Al-Razi Hospital from October 4 to 8.

■ Dr. Boris Turker from the UK, a specialist in robotic colorectal surgery, who will visit Jaber Hospital from October 10 to 13.

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KIB awarded 'Best Bank for Real Estate Banking Services & Innovation in PropTech in Kuwait for 2026' by the WUAB



Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah, offers condolences to UAE Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum and the Al-Maktoum family. Sheikh Hamad was accompanied by Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah and Head of the Diwan of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Thamer Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Amir Representative offers condolences over demise of Sheikh Ahmad bin Rashid

ABU DHABI, Sept 23, (KUNA): Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh

Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah, offered condolences to UAE Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum

and the Al-Maktoum family over the death of Sheikh Ahmad bin Rashid Al-Maktoum.

The condolences were conveyed at Zaabeel Majlis in Dubai.

Sheikh Hamad was accompanied by Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah and Head of

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MS treatment center, sports hub get Municipal Council green light

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 23: In a significant development, the Municipal Council's Technical Committee convened on Tuesday and approved the Ministry of Health's request to allocate a 20,000-square-meter site in the Granada area, within the Al-Sulaybikhat coastal zone.

The site will be used to establish a Multiple Sclerosis (MS) treatment center, with dedicated entry and exit points.

Committee Chairwoman Munira Al-Ameer explained that the decision is in line with a Cabinet resolution to accept a donation from Kuwait Fi-

nance House (KFH) to construct the center. Kuwait Municipality must now allocate the site to the Ministry of Health, allowing the donor to begin construction.

The relevant departments have the authority to make minor adjustments to the site's location or dimensions, provided that the total area remains within the approved limits, should any conflicts arise with existing infrastructure or regulatory requirements.

In another health-related matter, the committee considered the Ministry of Health's request to allocate Plot No. 162 in the Second Industrial Zone of Shuwaikh (Block 2, New Shuwaikh)

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HORIZON TALK

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

The legend of Iraqi journalist Younis Bahri: between fact and fiction

The Iraqi who used to enter in the presence of Hitler without permission.

He mastered 17 languages, held 15 nationalities and married 90 women.

He met Adolf Hitler in Munich, Germany.

On the radio, he would broadcast, "This is Berlin, the voice of the Arabs."

The grandfather of the Iranian Revolution leader, Khomeini, was from India.

He ruled a state until his death, taking everything, but building nothing.

A man asked the director of a nursing home: "What is required to admit my father?"

The director replied: "A photo of him borrowing money to pay your tuition fees!"

Did your father ever consider putting you in an orphanage when you were young?

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KUNA photo

Kuwaiti Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Sheikh Sabah Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah

Kuwait, Saudi ties 'etched' in history

RIYADH, Sept 23, (KUNA): Kuwait-Saudi relations represent a unique model of a shared destiny shaped by history and strengthened by the positions of the two countries' leaderships, Kuwaiti Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Sheikh Sabah Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah said Wednesday.

In a statement to KUNA marking Saudi Arabia's National Day, the ambassador said history bears enduring testimony to the depth of the bilateral relationship, recalling that the Kingdom's founder, King Abdulaziz bin Abdulrahman Al-Saud, embarked from Kuwait on his historic journey to reclaim Riyadh, from which the unification of Saudi Arabia began.

He added that history later embodied the same meaning when the late Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah returned to Kuwait from Saudi Arabia following the liberation of Kuwait from the Iraqi occupation in 1990.

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AMIR REPRESENTATIVE MEETS WORLD LEADERS AND ECONOMIC GIANTS AT U.N.G.A.

Ties, trade, investment boost targeted

Invest in local talent, help develop leadership skills

NEW YORK, Sept 23, (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 met Tuesday with Iraqi Prime Minister Ali Al-Zaidi and his accompanying delegation, on the sidelines of the high-level week of the 81st session of the UN General Assembly in New York.

The meeting reviewed bilateral relations between Kuwait and Iraq and explored prospects for cooperation in various fields of mutual interest, in addition to discussing the latest regional and international developments.

The meeting was attended by Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Director General of the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority Sheikh Dr. Meshal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi, and Kuwait Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Tareq Al-Bannai.

Canada

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, met Tuesday with Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney during the opening session of the high-level week of the 81st UN General Assembly.

The talks touched on the close relations between Kuwait and Canada and ways to enhance and develop them across various fields.

The two sides agreed to work toward establishing a strategic dialogue between the two friendly countries, chaired by their respective foreign ministers, to provide an institutional and regular framework for consultation and coordination and help elevate bilateral relations to broader horizons in a manner serving the common interests of both countries and



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 meets the Canadian PM.

their peoples.

They also discussed key issues and topics on the UN General Assembly agenda, as well as the latest regional and international developments.

Icelandic PM

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, met Tuesday with Icelandic Prime Minister Kristrun Frostadottir at the UN headquarters in New York.

The meeting was held on the sidelines of the high-level week of the 81st session of the UN General Assembly.

The two sides touched on the bilateral relations between Kuwait and Iceland and ways to develop them in a manner serving the interests of the two friendly countries and peoples. They also discussed a number of topics of mutual interest.

The meeting was attended by Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Director General of the Ku-

wait Direct Investment Promotion Authority Sheikh Dr. Meshal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi and Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Tareq Al-Bannai.

Egypt's PM

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 received late Tuesday Egyptian Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly and his accompanying delegation at the headquarters of the Kuwait Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York, on the sidelines of the High-Level Week of the 81st session of the UN General Assembly.

At the onset of the meeting, His Highness the Crown Prince conveyed the greetings of His Highness the Amir to Egypt's President Abdelattah Al-Sisi, wishing him everlasting well-being and further progress and prosperity to Egypt.

The meeting reviewed the deep-rooted historical and fraternal relations between Kuwait

and Egypt and discussed means of enhancing and upgrading them for wider horizons in all fields in a way that achieves mutual interests of the two countries and their brotherly peoples.

Both sides also shared views on the key topics listed on the UN General Assembly's agenda and the latest international and regional developments, affirming the need to continue coordination and consultation toward them.

BlackRock CEO

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 received late Tuesday BlackRock Inc. Chief Executive Officer Larry Fink and his accompanying delegation at the headquarters of the Kuwait Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York, on the sidelines of the High-Level Week of the 81st session of the UN General Assembly.

During the meeting, discussions focused on economic and investment topics of mutual

interest, as well as the latest global developments.

Both sides also discussed means of enhancing bilateral cooperation, as well as the importance of developing human capital and investing in national professionals through the sharing of expertise.

Goldman Sachs CEO

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 received late Tuesday Goldman Sachs CEO David Solomon and his accompanying delegation at the headquarters of the Kuwait Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York, on the sidelines of the High-Level Week of the 81st session of the UN General Assembly.

Both sides discussed means of strengthening bilateral cooperation, as well as a number of economic and development-related topics and promising investment opportunities in Kuwait.

They further discussed investing in national talent to help develop leadership and technical skills and build capable professionals who can keep pace with the rapid changes taking place in the investment and financial markets, along with the latest economic developments at the regional and international levels.

KKR Co-Chief Executive Officer

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 received late Tuesday KKR & Co. Inc. Co-Chief Executive Officer Scott Nuttall at the headquarters of the Kuwait Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York, on the sidelines of the High-Level Week of the 81st session of the UN General Assembly.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed investment cooperation opportunities, reviewed promising opportunities and the company's cooperation with Kuwait, and exchanged views on the outlook for the global economy and current financial challenges.

Bonds with Kuwait transcend boundaries: Ambassador Al-Saud

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Embassy commemorates 96th National Day



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah is welcomed by the Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait Prince Sultan bin Saad bin Khaled Al Saud.



Prince Sultan bin Saad bin Khaled Al Saud, Ambassador of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques to Kuwait.



Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah and Arab Times Ahmed Al-Jarallah, colleagues Saud Al-Farhan and Mohammad Al-Farhan with the Saudi Ambassador.

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 23: The Embassy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in Kuwait commemorated the 96th National Day of the Kingdom through a vibrant celebration.

The event was infused with a patriotic spirit, highlighting the profound, historical and fraternal connections between the two nations.

Attendees included His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah, various ministers, senior officials, ambassadors, heads of diplomatic missions, members of the diplomatic community in the country, and Dean of Kuwaiti Journalism and Editor-in-Chief of the Arab Times and Al-Seyassah newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah.

The celebration witnessed extensive participation, showcasing the high regard in which Saudi Arabia is held and the exceptional relationship it maintains with Kuwait—a bond founded on brotherhood, shared destiny, and collaborative efforts in multiple sectors.

Guests lauded the ongoing developmental and civilizational progress of the Kingdom, as well as its significant role on both the regional and international stages.

Prince Sultan bin Saad bin Khaled Al Saud, Ambassador of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques to Kuwait, asserted that the Saudi-Kuwaiti relationship is characterized by unwavering brotherhood, genuine affection and a common history.

He said the connection between the two countries goes beyond geographical boundaries, rooted in familial ties and a shared destiny that links their ruling families and peoples.

In his speech, Prince Sultan stated that this occasion evokes the legacy of giving initiated by the Kingdom's founder, King Abdulaziz bin Abdulrahman Al Saud—may Allah have mercy on him.

He drew attention to a photograph of the Founder, taken during his time



in Kuwait, which was displayed during the speech.

He pointed out that the image encapsulates the unique nature of the relationship between the two brotherly nations and their mutual support over the years.

He invited the audience to reflect on the image, describing it as "a story of brotherhood, a memory of a nation, and a message of love depicted in a single moment."

On the other hand, Steven Butler, Chargé d'Affaires at the US Embassy in Kuwait, congratulated the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on its National

A huge number of dignitaries and diplomats attended the ceremony.

Day, expressing his happiness over participating in the celebration.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the event, Butler said, "Congratulations to our Saudi friends," emphasizing that the partnership and friendship between the United States and the Kingdom are deep-rooted, span generations, and remain of great importance until today.

Meanwhile, British Ambassador to Kuwait Qudsi Rasheed congratulated the Saudi Ambassador and all Saudi friends and colleagues on the Kingdom's National Day, affirming that it is an occasion worthy of celebration.



Rasheed indicated that Saudi Arabia plays a significant role in its relations with the United Kingdom and Kuwait, as well as in the region as a whole.

Similarly, French Ambassador to Kuwait Olivier Gauvin congratulated Saudi Arabia on its National Day, highlighting the Kingdom as a close partner and friend of France.

During the celebration, Gauvin described French-Saudi relations as close, encompassing cultural, economic and military spheres.

He cited the recent visit of His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed

bin Salman to Paris and his meetings with the French President, while expressing his pride in attending the event and conveying his country's congratulations to the Saudi representative in Kuwait.

Ambassador of the State of Palestine to Kuwait Rami Tahboub congratulated Saudi Arabia on its National Day.

He extended his congratulations to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait Prince Sultan bin Saad bin Khalid Al

Saud and the Saudi people, wishing the Kingdom continuous progress, prosperity and leadership within the Arab and Islamic worlds.

Tahboub expressed his pride in the distinguished relations between Palestine and the Kingdom, while commending its role in supporting the Palestinian cause and mobilizing support for the Palestinian people—particularly through its leadership, alongside the French Republic, of the Alliance for the Two-State Solution.

Russian Ambassador to Kuwait Vladimir Zheltov expressed his happiness over participating in the Saudi Embassy's celebration of the Saudi National Day, while pointing out the large turnout at the event.

Zheltov affirmed that Russia values its close ties with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, highlighting the role of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in strengthening these ties.

He added that he enjoys a good relationship with the Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait and looks forward to continuous cooperation with Saudi friends, especially in Kuwait.

Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Kuwait Yang Xin congratulated the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on its National Day, emphasizing the strength of bilateral relations between China and the Kingdom.

He confirmed the outstanding cooperation between the two countries at the bilateral and multilateral levels, expressing his wishes for an even more prosperous future for the Kingdom, its government and its people.

Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to Kuwait Dr. Zafar Iqbal congratulated the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on its National Day, extending his congratulations to Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait, and the Saudi people.

Iqbal underscored the deep ties uniting Pakistan and the Kingdom, stating that Pakistanis share the joy of this occasion with their Saudi brethren and cherish it deeply.

Photos by Rizk Taufiq

HORIZON TALK

Ahmed Al-Jarallah



The legend of Iraqi journalist Younis Bahri: between fact and fiction

THE story of Younis Bahri, an extraordinary Iraqi figure, captivates the imagination. Known for his audacious encounters, he famously entered in the presence of Adolf Hitler without permission.

Throughout his life, Bahri established 16 radio stations, mastered 17 languages, held 15 nationalities, and engaged in 90 lawful marriages, along with more than 200 civil unions.

His legacy includes fathering 365 sons, while the number of daughters remains a mystery, and bragged about having more than a thousand grandchildren.

Born in Mosul between 1900 and 1904, Bahri earned the nickname ‘Al-Bahri’, meaning ‘The Sailor’, after graduating as a naval officer from the Military Academy in Istanbul.

He furthered his education at the Cavalry Military Academy in Munich, Germany in 1921.

His literary contributions are significant. He authored numerous books and traveled extensively, mastering various languages, such as French, German, Italian, Spanish, Turkish and English.

Notably, he founded the first Arabic radio station in Europe, the Berlin Arabic Radio, in 1939, which broadcasted from Germany to the Arab world. Through this platform, he famously declared, “This is Berlin, the voice of the Arabs.”

While some aspects of his life might be embellished, the legend of Younis Bahri endures, reflecting a remarkable journey filled with achievements

- The Iraqi who used to enter in the presence of Hitler without permission.
- He mastered 17 languages, held 15 nationalities and married 90 women.
- He met Adolf Hitler in Munich, Germany.
- On the radio, he would broadcast, “This is Berlin, the voice of the Arabs.”
- The grandfather of the Iranian Revolution leader, Khomeini, was from India.
- He ruled a state until his death, taking everything, but building nothing.
- A man asked the director of a nursing home: “What is required to admit my father?”
- The director replied: “A photo of him borrowing money to pay your tuition fees!”
- Did your father ever consider putting you in an orphanage when you were young?

and adventures.

* * *

Turning to the Iranian Revolution, we encounter the enigmatic figure of Imam Khomeini.

According to some accounts, Khomeini’s grandfather hailed from India and signed his name as ‘Hindi’, meaning ‘Indian’.

His life was marked by exile. He was forced from Iran to Iraq during the Shah’s regime and later sought refuge in France.

In France, his image was carefully crafted by intellectuals as a symbol of opposition, even if the revolution itself criticized western influences.

In 1979, he returned to Tehran on a French plane, accompanied by 120 foreign journalists, enjoying blanket western media protection.

When asked about his feelings upon returning, his response was a simple, “Hichi,” which means ‘nothing’.

This seemingly innocuous word would later carry profound implications, as Khomeini executed the translator of this phrase three years later.

The word ‘nothing’ was not just a slip of the tongue, as it became the guiding principle for his governance.

Khomeini ruled Iran until his death, amassing power while leaving a legacy of destruction rather than construction.

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The Takaful Society for Prisoner Care signed a cooperation and partnership agreement with the Rehabilitation and Reform Department at the Ministry of Islamic Affairs.

Deal signed to alleviate inmates, families woes

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 23: The Takaful Society for Prisoner Care signed a cooperation and partnership agreement with the Rehabilitation and Reform Department at the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The agreement aims to enhance collaboration in supporting and rehabilitating inmates, caring for their families, assisting in humanitarian cases, and alleviating the financial distress of debtors.

It includes the implementation of religious, rehabilitative, psychological, social and training programs, as well as providing support for the children of inmates to cover their educational and daily living needs.

Court upholds 3 years jail in defamation case

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 23: The State Security Circuit of the Court of Appeals upheld a lower court’s ruling sentencing Nasser Al-Munaifi to three years in prison, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The conviction stemmed from charges of publicly challenging the rights of His Highness the Amir through the X platform, as well as insulting members of the judiciary and questioning their integrity. The charges were brought following a complaint filed by the State Security Agency.

The Public Prosecution charged Al-Munaifi over content posted on his X account that included statements deemed offensive to His Highness the Amir, as well as remarks targeting the judiciary and casting doubt on the integrity of its members.

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Media figure acquitted: The Court of Cassation upheld the acquittal of media figure Aisha Al-Rashid in a case filed by the Iranian Embassy regarding the content of an episode of her YouTube program, particularly what she described as “Iranian sleeper cells” and Hezbollah in Kuwait, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The case was filed against Al-Rashid who was accused of insulting Iran when she discussed the Iranian activities in the region, cells linked to Iran, and the role of Hezbollah in Kuwait

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40 kg food destroyed: The Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN) conducted an inspection tour of several food establishments in the Ardiya Industrial Area as part of its ongoing regulatory efforts to ensure compliance with approved regulations and health requirements, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The inspection uncovered several violations, including the handling of expired and adulterated food products, as well as breaches of health standards and worker certification requirements. Also, 40,660 kilograms of expired food products and items of unknown origin were destroyed.

PAFN affirmed that it would continue its regulatory inspections to safeguard food safety and protect consumer health.

28,890 citations, 241 cars seized

Scores held in massive traffic crackdown

By Munif Naif
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 23: The General Traffic Department at the Ministry of Interior continues its traffic enforcement campaigns in various governorates.

Within one week, these efforts resulted in the issuance of 28,890 traffic violation citations, while 241 vehicles were impounded and 25 individuals were referred to the traffic detention center.

On Sept 14-20, the authorities responded to 3,030 traffic reports, apprehended 29 individuals wanted by law, 35 with expired residency permits, five who failed to present valid identification, five found to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, eight juveniles were referred to the Juvenile Prosecution, 28 wanted vehicles were seized, 241 vehicles and two motorcycles were impounded, and 25 individuals were put under protective custody and the necessary legal measures were taken against them.

Regarding traffic incidents, the authorities handled 1,315 collisions and 182 accidents resulting in injuries. Patrols maintained their field presence and rapid response to reports and accidents, thereby, ensuring public safety.

In addition, the Traffic Affairs and Operations Sector reaffirmed its commitment to

continue their traffic campaigns and field monitoring to prevent violations and behaviors that endanger the public.

It urged road users to strictly comply with the traffic regulations to protect lives and properties. Moreover, the Rescue Police General Department conducted intensive security and traffic campaigns in the governorates on Sept 13-19.

These efforts are part of ongoing initiatives to intensify security presence, apprehend violators and wanted individuals, and ensure discipline and traffic safety on the roads. A total of 1,936 security operations were carried out, 1,349 traffic violations were recorded, 102 individuals wanted by law were apprehended, 90 individuals were detained for committing Residency Law violations, 36 for failure to present valid identification, and 13 wanted vehicles were impounded.

The weekly statistics from the rescue police patrols revealed that 15 suspects were referred to the Drug Control General Department, five vehicles were impounded, 107 traffic accidents were dealt with, and 415 incident reports were filed.

On the humanitarian front, the rescue police patrols provided assistance in 878 cases, fulfilling their security and humanitarian roles by responding promptly to reports and supporting road users.

The Rescue Police General Department continues its active operations in the governorates, ensuring the protection of all individuals on the roads.

10-year jail for 21 defendants upheld in money-wash cases

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

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 23: The State Security Division in the Court of Appeals, headed by Judge Abdullah Al-Sanea, with Judges Mohammad Jaafar and Saud Al-Mutairi as members, issued its rulings on several cases of money laundering, practicing banking activity without a license, publicly challenging the rights of His Highness the Amir, and joining the ISIS.

In the first case, the court upheld the 10-year prison sentence imposed on 21 defendants—including citizens, Bedouns, Yemenis, Syrians and Egyptians—for money laundering and practicing unlicensed banking activity through 17 commercial companies, in addition to forging bank documents.

The court fined the defendants a total of KD202 million, double the funds involved in the crime, and the companies were fined KD101 million -- amount involved in the crime.

The Public Prosecution charged the defendants with forming a group and laundering around KD101 million resulting from crimes that harmed national interests, forging bank documents, and establishing fake companies to collect the salaries of expatriates in Kuwait and transfer the money to Syria.

They were also charged with practicing unlicensed banking activity and

laundering money by purchasing goods from China and transferring the money back to company accounts.

The accused were arrested after the investigations conducted by the State Security Unit and Financial Investigation Unit.

In the second case, the court upheld the 10-year prison sentence imposed on a citizen and two Egyptians, fined them KD199.588 million, and fined the commercial entities KD99 million (money laundering amounts).

The court also permanently banned them from engaging in any commercial activity, while acquitting one citizen and other Egyptians.

The defendants were accused of practicing unlicensed banking activity by trading in foreign currencies related to expatriates’ salaries in Kuwait and transferring the money to others in Egypt by depositing them in company accounts as legitimate revenues and profits, which harmed the national interests.

Investigations and tracking of fund movement revealed that the accused were involved in multiple crimes through coordination with merchants in sisterly and friendly countries.

According to the results of investigations, this coordination harmed the financial and economic systems and weakened confidence in the banking systems of Kuwait and other countries.

Asian gang caught gambling in Mahboula flat ‘deported’

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 23: Six Asian expatriates were referred to the Deportation Department after being apprehended inside an apartment in Mahboula that was being used for gambling, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to security sources, the raid took place after criminal investigation detectives received information that an Asian expatriate was using an apartment in Mahboula to host regular weekend gambling sessions.

Detectives investigated and monitored the apartment to verify the information before carrying out the raid. They subsequently found the operator along with five other Asian nationals actively gambling. A total of KD 160 in wagered money was found in the suspects’ possession.

During questioning, the suspects admitted to gathering weekly to gamble. They were subsequently referred to the Deportation Department pending the necessary legal proceedings and their deportation from the country in connection with the offense.

Meanwhile, the General Administration of Customs (GAC) announced that offic-

ers from the Air Cargo Customs Investigation and Research Department seized 568 items, including shoes and jackets bearing counterfeit brand names, from a shipment arriving by air from China, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Although the shipping documents described the cargo as furniture and chairs, the total weight recorded on the bills of lading was 883 kilograms.

In a statement, GAC explained that the seizure followed a thorough inspection prompted by suspicions raised by the Investigation and Research Department. The shipment was found to contain counterfeit goods in violation of laws and regulations governing intellectual property rights and prohibiting the importation of counterfeit merchandise.

Standard customs and legal procedures have been initiated concerning the shipment and the seized items.

GAC affirmed its ongoing commitment to maintaining strict oversight of incoming shipments and thwarting attempts to import illicit or counterfeit goods into the country.

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TO KUWAIT

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Feast
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FROM 10 KD → 8.750 KD, ALL THE WAY TO 100 KD → 75.950 KD.

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8.750 KD

50 KD

38.950 KD

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16.950 KD

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MoH sacks, fines medical pros for committing work blunders

‘Patient safety, healthcare priority’

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 23: The Ministry of Health imposed a fine of KD7,000 on an internal medicine consultant and suspended him from work for three months, in addition to suspending the professional practice license of an ophthalmology consultant for one year.

These measures were taken after the specialized technical committees proved that the abovementioned staff committed professional errors and violations.

This is in compliance with the directives of Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi and in line with ongoing efforts to tighten oversight of private health facilities.

The ministry stated that the committees confirmed the violations committed by the internal medicine consultant who also serves as the medical director for private health facilities. Three penalties were imposed on him -- KD4,000 fine, KD3,000 fine and suspension from work for three months. It clarified that the two fines, totaling KD7,000, were imposed in accordance with Clause Three, Paragraph Two, Article 75 of Law No. 70/2020 regarding the practice of medicine and allied professions, as well as the rights of patients and health facilities.

In a separate incident, the report of a specialized technical committee confirmed the medical error and professional violation committed by an ophthalmology consultant at a private medical center. A decision was issued to suspend his professional practice license for one year. The ministry indicated that the suspension decision is in line with Clause Four, Paragraph One, Article 75 of the same law.

It affirmed the continuation of its rigorous oversight over public and private healthcare facilities and its commitment to take legal action against any party proven to have committed violations.

It also warned that there is no leniency in terms of patient safety, quality of healthcare, and adherence to professional standards, and that all measures are taken based on inspections, investigations and the findings of specialized technical committees, in accordance with the legal and procedural frameworks. It added that these measures aim to protect the rights of patients, hold violators accountable, and guarantee professional discipline in the health sector.



Dr. Al-Awadhi

PAMA survey on Sahel app to assess beneficiary satisfaction

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 23: Alia Al-Saqer, acting Director General of the Public Authority for Minors' Affairs (PAMA), announced the launch of an online survey through the Sahel application that aims to measure beneficiaries' satisfaction with PAMA's management and growth of their funds, assess the quality of services provided, and identify their needs and aspirations,



Al-Saqer

as part of the government's Family Protection Program, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Al-Saqer explained that the survey measures satisfaction with the management and growth of funds, the ease and speed of disbursing entitlements, the clarity of information regarding funds and investments, and the adequacy of financial allocations in relation to beneficiaries' needs and circumstances.

The survey also seeks beneficiaries' views on activities and programs they would like to see expanded for those under PAMA's care, including religious, recreational, social, and sports activities, programs on financial management, saving, and investment, vocational training and summer employment, and educational, skills-development, and technology programs.

Al-Saqer encouraged beneficiaries to participate in the survey through the Sahel app, emphasizing that the results would help enhance PAMA's services and programs, strengthen its ability to meet the needs and aspirations of those under its care, and improve the overall quality of services provided to them.

2nd conference on innovation strategies in Waqf, Sustainable Development to be held Sept 28

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 23: The Second Conference on Innovation Strategies in Islamic Endowment (Waqf) and Sustainable Development will take place in Kuwait on Monday, September 28.

According to a press release, the conference, which is sponsored by Dr. Amthal Hadi Al-Huwaila, Minister of Social Affairs and Family and Childhood Affairs, is titled "From Traditional Waqf to Sustainable Investment Waqf."

The event will be held at the Kuwait National Library from 10:00am to 4:00pm.

The Al-Awazem Charitable Society, headed by Hamad Zaid Al-Bseis, is organizing the conference in collaboration with the Global Center for Sustainable Development, the Regional Network for Social Responsibility, and the Superior Achievement Institute for Private Training and Management, Economic, and Financial Consulting.

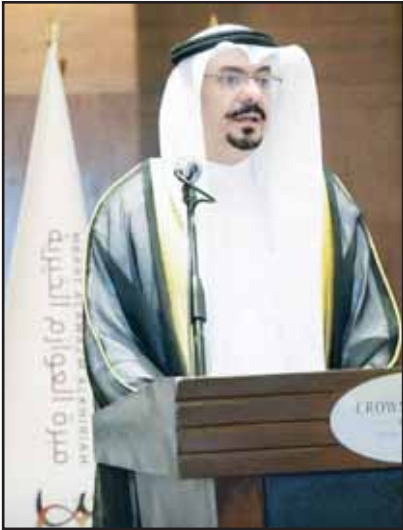
A distinguished group of experts and stakeholders in the fields of Waqf and sustainable development will participate in the conference.

The conference aims to explore the future of Islamic Waqf and develop strategies to expand its ecosystem, shifting from conventional models toward institutional and sustainable investment models.

Within a framework of governance, transparency, and innovation, this transformation seeks to improve the effectiveness of Waqf asset management and enhance its potential to generate long-term social and developmental impact.

The conference will address eight main topics:

- The conceptual and jurisprudential framework for investing Waqf funds
- Sustainable Waqf investment models
- Waqf governance and risk management
- Aligning Waqf investments with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)



Hamad Zaid Al-Bseis

- Financial and technological innovation
 - Financial sustainability and investment portfolio diversification
 - Legislation and regulatory oversight governing Waqf activities.
- The conference will also highlight leading Arab and international experiences in the field.
- Along with Waqf, sukuk (Islamic bonds) and financial technologies, the event will also explore the latest developments in digital transformation and artificial intelligence, opening the door to the creation of new tools for managing Waqf assets and expanding their resources.
- The conference is being held as part of efforts to strengthen the developmental role of Waqf (endowments) and integrate sustainability into its management, making it an effective tool for financing projects and initiatives that can have a lasting impact on society.



Jahra Governor Hamad Al-Habashi meets acting Director General of the Environment Public Authority (EPA) Nouf Behbehani and her accompanying delegation.

‘Need to intensify efforts to tackle environment issues’

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 23: Jahra Governor Hamad Al-Habashi met with acting Director General of the Environment Public Authority (EPA) Nouf Behbehani and her accompanying delegation to discuss ways to intensify concerted efforts in various environmental issues, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Present at the meeting were Advisor to the Jahra Governor retired Major General Fahad Abdullah Al-Mayaah, Director for Public Relations and Media at EPA and its official spokesperson Shaikha Al-Ibrahim, Nasser Al-Shammari and Bashayer Al-Qattan from the Public Relations and Media Department, and Head of the Environmental Sustainability Team in the

governorate Al-Bandari Al-Habashi.

They talked about environmental protection, preservation of natural resources, particularly the Jahra Reserve and its ecological significance, and ways to support efforts to protect it and raise community awareness regarding the importance of biodiversity and wildlife.

The Governor affirmed the commitment of Jahra Governorate to solidify cooperation with EPA and other concerned entities, in addition to supporting environmental initiatives and programs that contribute to the achievement of sustainability goals and to raise environmental awareness throughout the governorate.

News in Brief

‘Sign lingo key to empowering handicapped merge in society’

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 23, (KUNA): Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwaila said Wednesday that expanding the use of sign language is essential to empowering persons with disabilities and ensuring their full participation in society.

In a statement to KUNA marking the International Day of Sign Languages, observed annually on Sept 23, Al-Huwailah said sign language is a fundamental right to communication and an important means of participation and empowerment.

She stressed the need to expand the use of sign language across institutions and services to ensure persons with disabilities have barrier-free access to information and services.

Al-Huwaila also highlighted the importance of raising public awareness of sign language and supporting initiatives and programs that promote its use, saying such efforts would strengthen social inclusion and equal opportunities.

She affirmed Kuwait's continued attention to the rights of persons with disabilities, noting that the Public Authority for Disability Affairs (PADA) would continue developing

its services and enhancing coordination with relevant bodies to further support their empowerment and participation.

Al-Huwailah stressed that sign language is not merely a means of communication, but a human right and an essential component of building a more inclusive and equitable society.

Housing allocations Sept 24: The Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) announced that the Women's Housing Committee will oversee the allocation of housing for Kuwaiti women in the Sulaibiya and Taima areas on Thursday, September 24, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The allocation is intended for applicants who submitted requests for rental housing, updated their information, and received notifications through the Sahel application.

PAHW said the allocation process will begin at 11:00 am at Abbas Marafie Hall in PAHW theater.

It stressed the importance of applicants attending in person or being represented by an authorized proxy holding a valid power of attorney.

Room Description	Price
One night stay in a Queen Bed Cabana for 2 persons with inclusive of Breakfast	BD 53.361 / Net
One night stay in a Two Bedroom Chalet for 4 persons inclusive of Breakfast	BD 119.173 / Net

Terms & conditions apply

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Continued from Page 1

Death verdicts

The court previously referred the defendant for psychiatric evaluation to check his mental state. The ensuing report concluded that he feigned symptoms of a non-existent illness, determined through the test for malingering, thereby, confirming there are no grounds to absolve him of criminal responsibility for his actions.

In the second case, the court upheld the death sentence imposed on a citizen convicted of kidnapping a nine-year-old Syrian boy from Maidan Hawally while the latter was on his way to perform Eid prayers. The defendant beat the child, took him to his residence and sexually assaulted him.

According to the case details, Capital Governorate detectives apprehended the defendant within 24 hours of committing the crime. The child was found naked on the street in front of a school in Rawda. It was revealed that the defendant had a prior criminal record of kidnapping and sexual assault.

In the third case -- the incitement of sectarian strife and contempt for the Sunnis, the court overturned the four-year prison sentence imposed to a citizen.

Instead, the court ordered him to pay a fine of KD10,000, suspended the implementation of the sentence for three years and required bail payment of KD1,000.

This ruling is based on the X platform posts of the defendants, as the court deemed such posts offensive to the Sunnis.

KFF steps

The equipment included advanced hydraulic water-extraction pumps, electric and mechanical pumps of various sizes and capacities, and portable boats designed to access areas inaccessible to standard fire vehicles. These resources will support rescue and evacuation operations for individuals trapped in their vehicles or homes.

Major General Al-Roumi reviewed the approved field plans, team and equipment deployment strategies, and KFF's readiness to respond immediately to potential reports and incidents.

He emphasized the importance of maintaining the highest level of readiness and rapid response capabilities to protect lives and property and minimize damage.

The tour was attended by acting Deputy Head of Civil Protection Brigadier General Omar Abdulaziz Hamad, along with several senior officials from KFF.

Amir Representative

the Diwan of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Thamer Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah, arrived in the United Arab Emirates to offer condolences over the death of Sheikh Ahmad bin Rashid Al-Maktoum.

Sheikh Hamad was received upon arrival by Minister of State for Federal National Council Affairs Abdulrahman Mohammad Al-Owais, Kuwait Ambassador to the UAE Jamal Mohammad Al-Ghoneim, and Kuwait Consul General in Dubai Khaled Abdulrahim Al-Za'abi.

MS treatment

for insect and rodent control services, in accordance with Cabinet Decision No. 659.

The committee approved the request for a 22,500-square-meter site, allowing the relevant departments to adjust its location or dimensions, provided the total area does not exceed the approved limit, if conflicts arise with existing infrastruc-

ture or regulatory requirements.

Furthermore, Al-Ameer said the committee reviewed a request from the Ministry of Interior to amend a previous Municipal Council decision concerning the headquarters of the police-mounted unit (cavalry and camel corps) in the Central Zone.

The proposed amendment includes renaming the site to serve as the headquarters of the Police Sports Federation and expanding the premises to accommodate sports fields and various athletic activities.

The technical recommendation called for approving the expansion of the site from its original area of 75,000 square meters to approximately 102,000 square meters, to be used for sports fields and athletic activities.

The approval also includes relocating the existing service road between the site and the Arabian Horse site. The road must maintain a minimum width of 17 meters and a 4-meter setback, in accordance with the attached site plan.

In addition, a detailed traffic study must be submitted before the project is finalized. Compliance with the requirements set by the Subcommittee on Utilities and Public Services, along with coordination with the subcommittee prior to implementation, is also mandatory.

Regarding regulatory matters, Eng. Al-Ameer stated that the committee discussed a proposal to amend Articles 2 and 8 of Ministerial Resolution No. 322 of 2023 concerning the subdivision and partitioning of land designated for construction.

The proposal was reviewed in light of a study by the Legal Department examining the feasibility of revisiting certain conditions governing subdivision and partitioning projects, particularly those related to real estate regulation, property rights, and the procedures applicable to such projects.

In line with the technical recommendation, the committee approved the proposed amendments to Articles 2 and 8.

Seven top

- Dr. Nicholas Johannes Weschner from Germany, a specialist in endoscopic orthopedic deformity surgery, who will be at Al-Razi Hospital from October 10 to 14
 - German specialist in spinal endoscopy, Dr. Raed Reda Mustafa Abu Hussein, who will be available at Al-Razi Hospital from October 11 to 15.
 - Dr. Mustafa Hamdi from Belgium, an expert in plastic and burn surgery, who will visit Al-Babtain Hospital from October 20 to 25.
 - Dr. John Beo-Hong from South Korea, a specialist in microsurgery, plastic surgery, and lymphedema treatment, who will visit Ibn Sina Hospital from October 24 to 28.
 - Dr. Omar Adel Rahim, a urology specialist from the United States, who will be at Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital from October 28 to 31.
- The Ministry of Health said further details about the visiting doctors and appointment scheduling are available through the Salem app and the unified government application Sahel.

Kuwait, Saudi

These two milestones encapsulate the special nature of the relationship between the two countries and underscore the firmly established reality that Kuwait and Saudi Arabia share common security and destiny, he said.

The ambassador stressed that ties between the two countries extend beyond geographical borders to encompass deep historical and social bonds and shared interests passed down through generations.

He said Saudi Arabia's National Day is a cherished occasion for Kuwait and its people, given the Kingdom's historical and strategic depth for Kuwait, praising its comprehensive development and rapid achievements across various fields.



Bahrain News Agency photo
Bahraini King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa receives Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah.

Bahrain King affirms strong, enduring bonds with Kuwait

MANAMA, Sept 23, (KUNA): Bahraini King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa affirmed Wednesday Bahrain's pride in its strong and longstanding bonds with Kuwait, which continue to grow stronger and closer amid mutual commitment to developing and bolstering them in all domains.

The King made the remarks while welcoming visiting Kuwaiti First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, according to Bahrain's official news agency (BNA).

Bahraini Crown Prince and Prime Minister Prince Salman bin Hamad Al-Khalifa was present.

During the meeting, the King asked Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef to convey his greetings and best wishes to His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and to the Kuwaiti people for continued progress and prosperity.

He commended His Highness the Amir's leading role in and contributions to supporting and developing the distinguished Bahrain-Kuwait ties, as well as Kuwait's commendable positions towards the Kingdom of Bahrain and its efforts to strengthen joint Gulf action.

He also highlighted the strong cooperation and coordination between Bahrain and Kuwait across all sectors, including security, which serve the interests of both countries and further strengthen their longstanding ties.

The King underlined the significance of continued consultation and coordination between the two countries, particularly amid the current circumstances in the region.

For his part, Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef conveyed His Highness the Amir's greetings and appreciation to the King of Bahrain as well as his best wishes to the Kingdom and its people for continued development and prosperity under the King's leadership.

He expressed his thanks and appreciation to the King for the reception and generous hospitality, commending his efforts and continued commitment to strengthening the longstanding ties and cooperation between Bahrain and Kuwait and lauding Bahrain's commendable positions under the leadership of the King.

Separately, visiting Kuwaiti First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah and Bahraini Minister of Interior Lt. Gen. Rashid bin Abdullah Al-Khalifa discussed Wednesday means to bolster bilateral security cooperation.

During the meeting, both sides also addressed the latest regional and international developments in a way that contributes to strengthening security and stability and cementing Gulf security cooperation, said the Bahraini Ministry of Interior in a press release.

وزارة التجارة والصناعة
Ministry of Commerce & Industry
مجلس التعاون
State of Kuwait

RECALL INFORMATION

JAGUAR

Jaguar I-Pace (2021)

RECALL REASON

Jaguar has discovered a thermal overload in the High Voltage (HV) traction battery pack, which may result in smoke or fire inside or outside the vehicle.

REMEDY

It is necessary to install and update the vehicle software in order to avoid possible thermal overload in the High Voltage traction battery pack. The company will contact the customers to inform them with the issue. Kindly visit the dealership if you own a Jaguar I-Pace (2021).

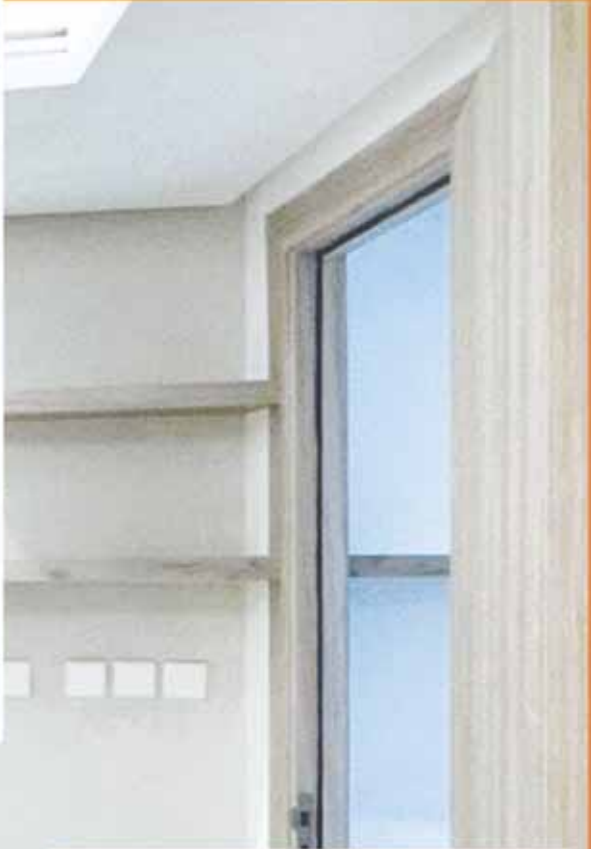
CONTACT

Please check to Kuwait Automobile & Trading Co. (Al-Zayan)
Phone: +965 1808010
Fax: +965 24765638

This Recall is run pursuant to articles (42,43,44,45,46,47 and48)of no.(27/2015) issuing the executive by laws no.(39/2014)on Consumer Protection

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Formal state dinner at White House on Thursday

China’s Xi kicks off state visit to US with planeside welcome from Trump

WASHINGTON, Sept 23, (AP): When Chinese President Xi Jinping arrives in Washington on Wednesday, he’s expected to get a rare greeting from President Donald Trump, who will be on the tarmac to welcome his counterpart’s plane instead of waiting for him to drive up to the White House.

Trump’s decision to greet Xi at Joint Base Andrews just outside Washington rather than receiving him at the executive residence shows how far the US president is going to honor China’s leader as he makes his first state visit in more than a decade.

The White House has not released many details about Wednesday’s greeting, but Trump is expected to participate in an arrival ceremony at the base with Xi and his wife, Peng Liyuan. The salutation will kick off a three-day visit that’s expected to be saturated with pomp, even by White House standards. The state visit, complete with a formal state dinner at the White House on Thursday, is supposed to reciprocate for the ceremonial grandeur that marked Trump’s May visit to China.

But it’s also a showy patina at a time when tensions between the two geopolitical rivals are high over trade, artificial intelligence, Trump’s war with Iran and China’s designs on Taiwan.

Beyond using the visit to try to keep “strategic stability” between the two countries, Trump seems to be pulling out all the diplomatic stops to show off for Xi. He has lavished praise on him as a “great leader” and described a warm relationship with the man he has called a friend. That’s all while he’s given Xi a pass on many issues.

Mississippi Sen. Roger Wicker, the Republican chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, criticized the “lavish welcome.” He said during a speech on the Senate floor on Tuesday that Trump should not have invited the Chinese leader “based on all of the troubling issues we have with President



US President Donald Trump, (left), and Chinese President Xi Jinping, (right), shake hands before their meeting at Gimhae International Airport in Busan, South Korea on Oct. 30, 2025. (AP)

Xi and the Chinese Communist Party.”

Wicker archly suggested a list of topics that Trump could discuss with Xi at the state dinner, such as “the purposes of China’s massive military buildup,

or about China’s clear support for Iran,” saying that “during every minute of dialogue” Trump should keep in mind that “his guest is a brutal, unelected and oppressive dictator who seeks to dominate his neighbors and whose massive military arsenal is aimed directly at the United States of America.”

Trump has made it clear he wants to wow Xi, telling reporters in recent weeks that he was delighted his new “work of art” helicopter landing pad would be ready for the visit while bemoaning that his massive White House ballroom would not.

On Wednesday, Trump is expected to try to match the pageantry he was met with in China earlier this year. Xi wasn’t there to meet Trump - he sent Chinese Vice President Han Zheng instead. But there was a long red carpet rolled out to meet Air Force One in Beijing. Along the sides were a military honor guard, a military band and about 300 Chinese youths waving Chinese and American flags and chanting, “Welcome, welcome! Warm welcome!” The children were wearing white and light blue uniforms that mirrored the traditional paint colors of the presidential plane.

Trump’s airport ceremony will be followed on Thursday by more formalities, including an arrival ceremony at the White House and a review of troops. Before the black-tie dinner - which will feature tech industry leaders like Nvidia’s Jensen Huang and SpaceX’s Elon Musk - the two leaders are expected to dive into the weighty issues behind closed doors, even as expectations are low that the trip will produce any major breakthroughs in the relationship.

On Friday, Xi and Peng will be back at the White House for a private tea with the president and first lady Melania Trump before joining them on a tour of the National Archives in Washington. The White House has said they will view historic documents underscoring the relationship between the two countries.

GOP tries to hold line against Dems in midterms

Republicans dump cash into red states

WASHINGTON, Sept 23, (AP): Republicans are growing increasingly grim about their chances in November, with aligned groups pumping money into reliably red states and candidates scrambling to distance themselves from unpopular White House policies.

From Texas to Ohio and Alaska to Iowa, campaigns are grappling with a fed-up electorate that is sour on the president and angry over soaring fuel prices driven by an unpopular war. While Republicans are flush with unprecedented cash that could move the needle in some races, overall the mood is glum heading into the election’s final stretch as campaigns try to counter palpable Democratic enthusiasm to maintain their narrow lead in the House and Senate this November.

“Everybody is tired. You see the poll numbers. Everybody is cranky about gas prices,” said Jeanette Hoffman, a Republican strategist from New Jersey. “The party in power is playing defense. This is a referendum on the incumbents.”

After mounting pressure from endangered candidates in battleground states, groups affiliated with President Donald Trump finally began unleashing their stockpile of campaign cash earlier this month, joining with Republican committees that have amassed a record fortune that dramatically eclipses their Democratic counterparts.

“Republicans have air superiority. House Democrats are scrambling to catch up with the very limited resources they have,” said Mike Marinella, a spokesperson for the National Republican Congressional Committee.

But the spending underscores the extent to which Republicans are playing defense.

Three Trump-aligned groups - MAGA Inc., No Going Back PAC and Safety and Affordability PAC - have spent more than \$163 million on advertising and air time since Sept. 1. Nearly 40% of that money - more than \$63 million - has been spent in states and districts where Trump won by 10 percentage points or more in the 2024 election, according to an Associated Press analysis of data from AdImpact, which tracks media spending and ad buys.

That includes 12 House districts and three states with major Senate races.

In Texas, Republicans have spent nearly \$107 million on ads and reservations since the beginning of the month trying to bolster scandal-

plagued attorney general Ken Paxton in his Texas Senate race against Democratic state Rep. James Talarico. The spending, which is for ads through Election Day, is nearly four times as much as Democrats in a state Trump won by nearly 14 points.

Further north in Ohio, Republican spending to defend Sen. Jon Husted has exceeded \$152 million, compared to \$90 million on behalf of Democratic nominee Sherrod Brown, according to AdImpact.

Terry Casey, an Ohio Republican strategist, said both Republicans and Democrats are “kind of sitting on pins and needles because of the national and economic circumstances.” The outcome, he said, would depend on whether Democrats can turn out voters.

States that Trump won by wide margins - like Texas, Iowa, Ohio and Alaska - have become some of the most competitive battlegrounds in the midterms.

The White House is even investing time in states that haven’t been considered competitive for years. Vice President JD Vance recently traveled to Kansas to campaign for Sen. Roger Marshall, who is facing a challenge from Democratic nominee Adam Hamilton.



US Vice President JD Vance speaks during a rally at Koury Convention Center in Greensboro, NC, on Sept 21. (AP)



Rescue workers put out a fire at the Intrade trade center after a Russian drone strike on Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine on Sept 21. (AP)

Russia pounds Kyiv with drones, killing two and wounding 23

KYIV, Ukraine, Sept 23, (AP): Russia hammered Ukraine’s capital, Kyiv, with drones in daylight attacks on Wednesday, hours before Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy was due to address world leaders at the UN General Assembly.

Two people were killed and 23 were wounded in Kyiv and palls of black smoke floated above the city following the latest in what have been daily Russian attacks that torment Ukrainian civilians. The drones set off fires and damaged buildings in Kyiv and elsewhere in Ukraine overnight, authorities said.

Zelenskyy was in New York for the annual gathering as part of his diplomatic effort to shore up and recruit further international support for his country’s grueling 4½-year fight against Russia’s invasion.

Zelenskyy met on Tuesday with US President Donald Trump, who has shown impatience with the lack of progress in talks aimed at ending the war and the escalating aerial attacks by both sides this year.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, who is accused by NATO officials and European governments of sabotage, espionage and other threats, is not scheduled to attend the U.N. gathering this year.

Ukraine has hit back at Russia by

damaging oil refineries that are a vital pillar of the country’s economy.

Zelenskyy said at the start of his US visit that he had proposals to make about possible de-escalation in the war. Urgent issues for Kyiv are halting devastating Russian strikes on Ukraine’s power grid and ensuring Ukrainian grain can be shipped to world markets through the Black Sea despite the war.

Ukraine also needs more US-made Patriot air defense systems as a shield against Russian ballistic missiles, but Patriots are in short supply after the war in Iran began.

In Zaporizhzhia, in southeastern Ukraine, two men aged 37 and 39 were wounded by a strike that started a large fire at a shopping mall. Emergency services said the fire spread across about 6,000 square meters (1.5 acres) before coming under control.

The Russian Defense Ministry said that its forces overnight struck Ukraine’s military-industrial and energy sector facilities, logistics centers, and sea vessels.

It said that its air defenses intercepted more than 500 Ukrainian drones over multiple Russian regions, as well as illegally annexed Crimea and waters of the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea.

Trump signs US-Denmark-Greenland agreement to bolster Arctic security

UNITED NATIONS, Sept 23, (AP): US President Donald Trump on Tuesday signed an agreement with Denmark and Greenland aimed at strengthening Arctic and North Atlantic security, paving the way for more U.S. bases in Greenland and easing tensions over his repeated calls for the vast island to become part of the United States.

The signing on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York comes days after Trump announced the deal to bolster the US military presence on Greenland but keep it under Danish control. The agreement would still apply if Greenland eventually chooses independence.

“This is tremendous for Europe and for the United States and for everybody,” Trump said just before the agreement was signed. “And for Greenland, it’s going to be incredible.”

Trump has expressed his desire to acquire Greenland since as long ago as 2019 and, during his second term, issued threats to seize the semiautonomous territory from Denmark, a NATO ally. On Tuesday, he did not respond to questions about whether a US acquisition of Greenland was off the table.

Officials from the US, Greenland and Denmark negotiated for months behind the scenes, searching for solutions to address some of Trump’s security concerns about the mineral-rich island.

Trump’s designs on Greenland strained relations within NATO, with Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen warning a US takeover would amount to the end of the Atlantic alliance.

The standoff unsettled many of Greenland’s roughly 56,000 people and drove a wedge between the



President Donald Trump signs a security agreement with Denmark’s Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen and Greenland’s Prime Minister Jens-Frederik Nielsen during the United Nations General Assembly on Sept 22, at the UN headquarters. (AP)

US and Denmark and its European Union partners, who stepped up security exercises on and monetary support for the island.

Trade and hopes for a resource grab have factored into concerns about Greenland’s future. About two-thirds of its territory sits inside the Arctic Circle, where melting sea ice has opened additional shipping routes.

The United States was prominent in Greenland for decades but, since 1945, the US military presence in Greenland has decreased from thousands of soldiers on 17 bases and installations to roughly 200 soldiers on the remote Pituffik Space Base in the northwest. The base supports missile warning, missile defense and space surveillance operations for the US and NATO.

Addressing the United Nations General Assembly ahead of the signing, Trump said the US would “immediately begin the process of developing a large military presence in the appropriate locations,” including “building two very major military bases.”

Denmark’s parliament approved a bill last year to allow US military bases on Danish soil, widening a 2023 agreement made with the Biden administration that gave US troops broad access to air bases in Denmark.

Trump previously insisted the US needed to “take Greenland,” to prevent Russia or China from doing the same. Though Trump said he would rather “make a deal” for the territory, he added, “one way or the other, we’re going to have Greenland.”

Europe

US army plane crashes in Germany: An American military aircraft crashed at a US air base in western Germany on Tuesday, injuring the pilot, the American military said.

In a statement, the US Air Base Spangdahlem said that the pilot ejected and was receiving medical care. It also said the plane, which was an F-16 Fighting Falcon assigned to the 52nd Fighter Wing, crashed around 2:30 pm local time, and that the cause of the crash was being investigated.

The local German district, where Spangdahlem is located, had said earlier that fire and emergency teams responded to the incident. Spangdahlem is home to an F-16 fighter jet squadron with about 20 aircraft, the German news agency dpa reported. (AP)

British man pleads guilty to negligence: A British man on Monday pleaded guilty to a charge of negligence in the fatal fall of his 3-year-old son from a hotel window during a family vacation at a resort in Cyprus.

The 37-year-old defendant, who hasn’t been named publicly, will again appear in court on Oct 5 for mitigation and sentencing. Paphos District Court judge Froso Christodoulides said. His parents accompanied him in court.

The man’s lawyer, Alexandros Alexandrou, said he would ask the court to lift travel restrictions against his client so that he can reunite with his wife and 5-year-old daughter in the U.K. until sentencing.

The court last month allowed the defendant to attend his son’s funeral back in the UK.

The defendant and his family were reportedly a few days into their vacation at Cyprus’ southwestern resort town of Paphos in July when the boy fell from the hotel’s fourth-floor window. (AP)



Delegates applaud during the opening of an international conference on combating online scams in Phnom Penh, Cambodia on Sept 23. (AP)

Experts call for criminal prosecutions

Cambodia dismantles scam compounds

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia, Sept 23, (AP): Cambodia’s prime minister said Wednesday the country had eradicated the large-scale scam compounds it became known for globally, without providing significant new evidence.

Other governments and experts said Cambodia has not done enough against the perpetrators of the scam industry that has harmed people globally and called for criminal prosecutions.

“As a result of our efforts, we have completely dismantled all large-scale scam compounds in the kingdom. Even as organized syndicates attempt to fragment into smaller decentralized operations, our law enforcement apparatus stays vigilant and ready to dismantle any emerging threats in the system,” Prime Minister Hun Manet said in a speech at a conference on tackling cyberscams.

Cambodia was hosting the two-day conference with the UN Office



Evidentiary materials are displayed at the Phnom Penh Municipal Police headquarter following an operation against scam centers in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, on Sept 22. (AP)

on Drugs and Crime and Interpol. It took reporters to a few empty scam compounds Tuesday to showcase its

efforts to close them.

Cambodia declared success in August after shutting down hundreds of scam compounds. Hun Manet and other speakers noted that no country could tackle the issue alone and each called for joint efforts.

Experts said Cambodia has not done enough to shut down the criminal structures that allowed the compounds to flourish but agreed many compounds appeared to have been shut.

“The Cambodian government has indeed closed most of the large compounds, but it has done comparably little to dismantle the criminal organizations running those cyber-scam operations or to investigate and punish Cambodian business and political elites who protected and profited from these criminal enterprises,” said Mark Taylor, an anti-trafficking consultant and former head of an anti-trafficking program in Cambodia.

Gunmen kill 2 police officers guarding polio workers

Pakistani officials say Afghan Taleban shelled border, Kabul denies attack

PESHAWAR, Pakistan, Sept 23, (AP): Afghanistan’s Taleban forces shelled Pakistani border posts overnight after Pakistani troops foiled what they described as a cross-border infiltration attempt by militants, local Pakistani officials said Wednesday.

The spokesman for Afghanistan’s Taliban government, Zabiullah Mujahid, denied any attacks by the Afghan Taleban forces.

The conflicting statements came just days after Pakistani fighter jets struck sites in eastern Afghanistan that Islamabad said were militant hideouts, an escalation between Kabul and Islamabad that threatens mediation efforts by regional powers.

Security forces neutralized two rudimentary drones, allegedly launched by the Afghan Taleban regime, before they could enter Kohat city in northwestern Pakistan, the officials said.

It underscored the Pakistan armed forces’ round-the-clock vigilance and the readiness of their air-defense systems to counter emerging aerial threats from Afghanistan, they said.

The airstrikes ended several

weeks of relative calm following months of cross-border hostilities. Also, earlier this month, Pakistani security forces killed 15 militants attempting to cross into the country from Afghanistan.

Four local Pakistani officials said Wednesday that militants attempted to infiltrate Pakistan from areas near Afghan border posts in Paktia and Nangarhar provinces, allegedly with support from the Afghan Taleban forces.

The officials referred to the militants as Fitna-ul-Khawarij, a term Islamabad uses for the Pakistani Taliban, a group that is separate but allied with the Afghan Taliban. Pakistan has repeatedly accused Afghanistan’s Taleban government of allowing militants to operate from its territory and carry out attacks across the border, an accusation that Kabul denies.

After Pakistani troops thwarted the infiltration attempt, Afghan Taliban forces allegedly fired mortars and other heavy weapons at Pakistani border posts, the four officials said. Pakistani forces responded with artillery fire, targeting Taleban border posts, mortar sites, and defensive positions.



In this photo taken with a smartphone, army soldiers and local residents gather at the site of a powerful bomb exploded at a mosque in Kohat, in northwestern Pakistan, on Sept 18. (AP)

The officials said Afghan Taleban forces subsequently abandoned several positions and suffered casualties. The four officials spoke on condition of anonymity as they were not authorized to talk to the media about the latest flare-up.

The accounts could not be independently verified. The latest escalations threaten mediation efforts

by China, Turkey, Qatar and Saudi Arabia to broker a lasting peace between Kabul and Islamabad.

In Monday’s airstrikes, Pakistan’s Information Ministry said 28 militants were killed, while Afghan authorities said at least three civilians died and four others were wounded. The UN mission in Afghanistan confirmed the civilian

casualties and Kabul formally protested the attack.

On the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York, Pakistani Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar expressed concern about what he said was the presence of more than two dozen anti-Pakistani militant groups in Afghanistan.

Monday’s Pakistani airstrikes followed a shootout with militants in Hangu, a district in northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province near the Afghan border, that killed six Pakistani security personnel. Days earlier, a suicide bomber struck a mosque inside a police compound in the nearby city of Kohat.

Eight gunmen then stormed the compound, triggering a 20-hour gunbattle that killed at least 21 people, most of them police officers. No group had claimed responsibility for the attacks.

Pakistani authorities blamed the violence on the Pakistani Taleban and allied militant groups. The Pakistani Taleban, formally known as Tehrik-e-Taleban Pakistan, have stepped up their attacks on Pakistani security forces, boosted by the Afghan Taleban’s return to power in Afghanistan in 2021.

Also:

QUETTA, Pakistan: Gunmen shot and killed two police officers assigned to protect polio workers during a door-to-door vaccination campaign in southwestern Pakistan on Tuesday, officials said.

The attack in Balochistan province’s **Nushki** district came a day after the government launched a weeklong campaign to vaccinate more than 31 million children.

The polio workers, who were administering oral vaccine drops to children inside a home, were unharmed, local police official **Munawar Zaman** said

No group has immediately claimed responsibility.

Separatist militants and the Pakistani Taliban have previously attacked security forces and civilians in Balochistan and elsewhere in Pakistan.

Interior Minister **Mohsin Naqvi** condemned the attack in a statement. Pakistan and neighboring Afghanistan remain the only countries where transmission of wild poliovirus has not been interrupted, according to the World Health Organization.

Sri Lankan court sentences 15 to life in prison for roles in '19 Easter bombings

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka, Sept 23, (AP): A Sri Lankan court convicted 15 men on Tuesday for helping to organize the 2019 Easter bombings on churches and hotels that killed 267 people, sentencing them each to at least 200 years in prison after a trial that lasted more than five years.

Another nine men were freed after being acquitted of similar charges in the same trial.

The April 21 attacks, which were inspired by the Islamic State group, were among the deadliest attacks in Sri Lanka’s history. They targeted three churches and three hotels across the island nation during Easter services and celebrations.

The dead included 42 foreigners, and the attacks also wounded 574 people and devastated communities across the country.

The verdict was delivered amid tight security, with hundreds of police officers deployed around the courthouse. The three-judge High Court panel also ordered the property of the defendants confiscated under the country’s tough anti-terror law.

None of those believed to have directly participated in the attacks are alive, but authorities filed 23,270 charges in 2021 against 25 suspects accused of planning or inspiring the attacks. The charges included murder, conspiracy to commit terrorism, and firearms and explosives offenses under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. All 25 were members of Sri Lanka’s Muslim minority.

One of the men charged died before the trial concluded.



An unidentified man convicted for his involvement in the 2019 Easter bombings is escorted to a prison in Colombo on Sept 23. (AP)

Prosecutors said the defendants were part of a well-planned attack carried out with the intention of killing Christian worshippers and tourists. They said the court has seen a video recorded the day before the bombings in which attackers with covered faces pledged allegiance to then-Islamic State leader Abu Bakhr al-Baghdadi and vowed to fight to make Sri Lanka an Islamic nation.

They said one of the defendants had traveled to Syria and fought for the IS group.

In the courtroom, the accused appeared relaxed, chatting and laughing with each other during breaks. They asked for and were granted a

prayer break during the lengthy reading of the judgment.

Seven of the defendants who did not have attorneys spoke for themselves during the sentencing hearing. Mohamed Ibrahim Mohamed Naufer, who is an Islamic cleric who prosecutors said inspired the attacks with radical preaching, refused to ask for leniency.

He was sentenced to 220 years in prison with hard labor.

“What I did or didn’t do only God and I know,” said Mohamed Ibrahim Saadiq Abdulla. “In the end all people will be resurrected and God will judge everyone,” he said.

He was given 240 years in prison with hard labor.

Nine defendants were freed after the court found that the charges against them were not proven.

Those freed tearfully hugged the rest as they were separated from the convicts.

Of the remaining defendants, five were sentenced to 200 years, four to 220 years, three to 240 years each and one to 260 years, based on their involvement in conspiring and aiding the attacks.

The convicts have the right to appeal to the Supreme Court.

The bombings shook the island nation and revived memories of the 26-year conflict with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, widely known as the Tamil Tigers, a separatist group that fought to establish an independent state for Sri Lanka’s ethnic Tamil minority and was known for bombing public places.



Members of a women’s church group sing next to a melted candle as they pay their respects at the site where the body of a woman was discovered the previous week, in Kempton Park, South Africa, east of Johannesburg on Sept 17. (AP)

2 arrested in series of killings of women

Mass shooting in S.Africa kills 11

CAPE TOWN, South Africa, Sept 23, (AP): Three shooters killed at least 11 people including a woman who was believed to be pregnant in a late-night attack at a house party in South Africa, police said Wednesday.

Three others were wounded in the mass shooting Tuesday night in KwaMakhutha township around 30 kilometers (19 miles) south of the city of Durban on the east coast.

The people had gathered at the house for a party when the suspects entered the house and opened fire, police said. Ten people, including the pregnant woman, died at the scene and an 11th was declared dead at the hospital.

Authorities did not immediately give out details on the condition of the three people who were wounded.

Police said they were searching for three men and no arrests had been made.

The motive for the shooting was not known, police said, but added that some of the people at the house were known to police as part of investigations into criminal activity. Police said they couldn’t give out any more information on those investigations.

“Although the motive of the shooting cannot be confirmed yet, (a) feud between rival groupings cannot be ruled out,” police said.

Thami Ntuli, the premier of Kwa-Zulu-Natal province, told reporters at

the scene that the killings were “really disturbing.” He said that there were known problems with drug dealing and illegal firearms in the largely impoverished community.

It’s the latest in a series of mass shootings in South Africa recently, including one in June when multiple shooters killed 12 people in a poor neighborhood in Johannesburg that police linked to criminal gangs. Two mass shootings two weeks apart in December killed 21 people. They were also carried out by multiple gunmen.

South Africa has extremely high rates of violent crime, with official police statistics recording 5,427 homicides in the latest three-month period between April and June at an average of nearly 60 homicides a day.

Shootings are the most common form of homicide in South Africa and police and crime experts have long said that one of the biggest problems is that there is a high number of illegal firearms in circulation.

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa authorized the deployment of soldiers on the streets in some areas earlier this year to combat violent crime in what critics said was an admission that police were failing.

Soldiers were deployed to areas around Johannesburg, the city of Cape Town and in Eastern Cape

province on the south coast in the ongoing operation, but not to Kwa-Zulu-Natal province where the latest shooting happened.

The bodies of some of the victims of Tuesday night’s shooting were laid out on the ground and covered with white sheets outside the small house where the shooting took place. They were later carried away on stretchers to pathology vans.

Also:

JOHANNESBURG: Police in South Africa said Monday that they arrested two suspects in connection with one of a series of killings of women in the same area on the outskirts of Johannesburg.

The nine killings of women in their 20s and 30s in the municipality of **Ekurhuleni** over the last two months has triggered anger in South Africa, which has high rates of violence against women.

Police have been investigating whether the killings were connected, raising fears that a serial killer or killers might be operating in the area.

The suspects, two women, appeared in the Boksburg Magistrates Court on Monday, police said, after being arrested in connection with the killing of a woman whose body was found last week in Ekurhuleni, east of Johannesburg.

Morocco votes for new parliament

CASABLANCA, Morocco, Sept 23, (AP): Moroccan voters are choosing a new parliament Wednesday in an election shaped by mounting frustration among young people, high unemployment despite a thriving economy, and demands for better schools, hospitals and housing.

Voting centers across the North African kingdom will open from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. local time, allowing nearly 16 million registered voters to cast ballots for the 395-seat House of Representatives.

The vote will determine the next prime minister and the makeup of the government, which will serve alongside a powerful monarchy that retains broad authority over strategic affairs. Results are expected Thursday.



People cast their vote inside a polling station during the legislative elections in Rabat, Morocco on Sept 23. (AP)

Oil price down \$2.34 to \$106.96 pb

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 23, (KUNA): Kuwait oil price dropped by USD 2.34 to reach USD 106.96 per barrel (pb) in Tuesday’s trading, compared with USD 109.30 in the previous day, according to the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on Wednesday.

In global markets, Brent crude went down by USD 1.09 to reach USD 99.25 pb, and US West Texas Intermediate crude fell by 79 cents to USD 94.99 per barrel.

Business

Recognizing the Bank’s PropTech innovations and integrated real estate solutions

KIB awarded ‘Best Bank for Real Estate Banking Services & Innovation in PropTech in Kuwait for 2026’ by the WUAB

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 23: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) received the “Best Bank for Real Estate Banking Services and Innovation in PropTech in Kuwait for 2026” award from the World Union of Arab Bankers (WUAB), in recognition of its leadership in providing integrated real estate banking services and its efforts to develop innovative digital solutions that enhance the experience of customers and investors.

KIB was honored during the Arab Banks Awards and Commendations of Excellence 2026 ceremony, held in Istanbul, Türkiye, in the presence of leading figures from the Arab banking sector, as well as representatives of international and regional institutions. Representing KIB at the ceremony were Eng. Fahad Al-Saleh, Senior Manager of Real Estate Advisory and Digital Solutions at KIB’s Real Estate Department, and Eng. Hussam Al-Kolak, Real Estate Expert and Digital Lead for Real Estate Management at KIB.

This recognition reflects KIB’s deep-rooted expertise in the real estate sector, spanning more than five decades since its establishment in 1973 as Kuwait Real Estate Bank, as well as its success in leveraging technology to develop an integrated ecosystem of real estate solutions encompassing financing, advisory, valuation, and real estate asset management.

Commenting on the achievement, Al-Saleh said: “We are proud that KIB has received this award, which recognizes our extensive experience in the real estate sector and reflects the success of our approach in combining specialized expertise with innovation to deliver services and solutions that keep pace with market developments and



the evolving needs of customers and investors. We will continue to build on this expertise in ways that enhance service efficiency and support the continued development of Kuwait’s real estate sector.”

From his side, Al-Kolak said: “At KIB, we focus on leveraging technology



KIB - WUAB Real Estate Award 2026

simplify the customer experience and develop tools that provide easier and more efficient access to real estate services and information. This recognition serves as an incentive for us to continue advancing our digital solutions and keeping pace with developments in PropTech,

further enhancing the experience of customers and investors.”

In the field of PropTech, KIB continued to advance its digital ecosystem, led by the “KIB Aqari” platform, which brings together a range of real estate services, including property valuation, third-party property man-

agement, real estate financing, and digital rent collection.

The Bank also launched the banking sector’s first construction cost calculator for residential plots, as well as the first digital real estate financing calculator for investment and commercial projects. In addition, KIB developed a

real estate database and an online platform for accredited property valuers, with the aim of accelerating valuation processes while enhancing their accuracy and transparency.

KIB also reinforced its commitment to global professional best practices by joining the International Valuation Standards Council (IVSC), becoming the first bank in Kuwait to join the organization. This milestone supports the adoption of international standards and enhances the quality and reliability of real estate valuation processes.

These efforts are aligned with KIB’s commitment to Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) standards by enhancing transparency and efficiency across its real estate services, developing digital solutions that support more informed and accurate decision-making, and adopting international best practices and professional standards in real estate valuation and advisory services.

It is worth noting that the World Union of Arab Bankers organizes the “Arab Banks Awards and Commendations of Excellence” ceremony through The Banking Executive Magazine, with the aim of highlighting outstanding achievements across the Arab banking sector. Since their launch in 2015, the awards have become one of the sector’s prominent events.

Headquartered in the Lebanese capital Beirut, the Union brings together more than 500 members from across the Arab banking sector and works to strengthen cooperation and communication among Arab banking institutions and leaders, while contributing to the development of the banking sector across the region.

Al-Fulaij: Sustainability key to national preparedness

KPC CEO enhances oil spill, waste monitoring systems

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 23, (KUNA): Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) CEO Sheikh Nawaf Saud Al-Sabah said that environmental sustainability is an integral part of the oil sector’s responsibility, stressing KPC’s commitment to supporting state efforts to address potential environmental pollution risks, particularly those related to oil sector operations.

He made the remarks during a workshop organized by KPC at the Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) theater on crisis management, integration of hydrocarbon materials and waste transportation systems, and mechanisms for controlling oil spills.

The workshop was held under the patronage of Minister of Oil Tariq Al-Roumi and in the presence of State Minister for Sustainability Dr. Reem Al-Fulaij.

Sheikh Nawaf said key areas related to oil sector operations include accelerating environmental incident reporting, continuously updating emergency plans, and employing modern technologies for monitoring, tracking and surveillance.

These measures, he said, would contribute to building a more effective national system for responding to risks and protecting people, the environment and vital facilities.

He highlighted the workshop as a new step in longstanding cooperation between the oil sector and various state agencies, describing it as a practical translation of shared convictions. Addressing challenges, he added, requires exchanging expertise in ways that serve Kuwait and enhance its sustainability.

In turn, Dr. Al-Fulaij said recent regional developments have shown that sustainability is no longer limited to protecting the environment and its resources, but has become an essential part of national preparedness, risk management and ensuring the continuity of vital sectors under different circumstances.

She said the cabinet had tasked the ministry with coordinating with relevant government agencies to monitor national preparedness for potential environmental risks.

Al-Fulaij noted that the ministry had prepared a national environmental risk register identifying eight major risks and response pathways, aiming to develop a clear national picture of risks, define responsibilities, and assess preparedness.

“True preparedness does not begin when a crisis occurs, but before it, by knowing, assessing and preparing for the risk,” she said.

The workshop addressed best practices in waste management, tracking and monitoring transport vehicles, marine spill response and crisis management, providing an opportunity to turn accumulated expertise into practices that strengthen Kuwait’s environmental risk management system, she added.

Meanwhile, KPC Deputy Managing Director for Sustainability Eng. Abdullah Al-Ayyar reviewed the workshop’s objectives, saying Kuwait’s oil sector has accumulated extensive institutional expertise through past experiences, strengthening its capabilities to manage environmental crises and respond effectively to emergencies.

He said the workshop builds on lessons learned over past decades and seeks to further develop operational systems and procedures while strengthening a culture of preparedness, coordination and joint action among relevant entities.

The workshop covered KPC’s approach to crisis management, KNPC’s



Kuwait Petroleum Corporation CEO Sheikh Nawaf Saud Al-Sabah speaking.



Dr. Reem Al-Fulaij, State Minister for Sustainability



Representatives from the corporation and government entities responsible for environmental risk management attending the workshop held at Ahmadi.

experience in combating oil spills and managing waste, and Kuwait Oil Company’s preparedness and response to marine oil spills.

Other sessions addressed GPS vehicle tracking and electronic fuel-level measurement systems used in transportation operations, as well as mechanisms for tracking and monitoring the speed of waste-transport vehicles in northern and western areas operated by Kuwait Oil Company.

The workshop brought together representatives of government agencies concerned with environmental risk management, with open discussions and question-and-answer sessions following each presentation to facilitate the exchange of views and expertise.

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mental risk register identifying eight major risks and response pathways, aiming to develop a clear national picture of risks, define responsibilities and assess preparedness.

“True preparedness does not begin when a crisis occurs, but before it, by knowing, assessing and preparing for the risk,” Al-Fulaij said.

She stressed that the oil sector occupies a vital position in this system, given the advanced expertise of KPC and its subsidiaries in safety, waste management, handling hazardous materials, and responding to spills, accidents and crises. Such expertise, she said, represents a “national asset” that can be built upon and utilized at the state level.

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In turn, KPC CEO Sheikh Nawaf Saud Al-Sabah said environmental sustainability is an integral part of the oil sector’s responsibility and mission, stressing KPC’s commitment to supporting state efforts to address potential environmental pollution risks, particularly those related to oil sector operations.

He said key areas include accelerating environmental incident reporting, continuously updating emergency plans, and employing modern technologies for monitoring, tracking and surveillance. These measures, he added, would contribute to building a more effective national system for responding to risks and protecting people, the environment and vital facilities.

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shop as a new step in longstanding cooperation between the oil sector and various state agencies, describing it as a practical translation of shared convictions. Addressing challenges, he added, requires exchanging expertise in ways that serve Kuwait and enhance its sustainability.

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The workshop brought together representatives of government agencies concerned with environmental risk management, with open discussions and question-and-answer sessions following each presentation to facilitate the exchange of views and expertise.

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 23: ABCK–AmCham Kuwait welcomed members, government officials, diplomats, business leaders, and partners to its annual Back to Business 2026 Reception, held at Hyatt Regency Al Kout, bringing the business community together for an evening of centered advocacy, investment, commercial engagement, and the Chamber’s priorities for the next half of the year.

The event marked the start of a new season of programming for AmCham Kuwait and provided participants with the opportunity to reconnect while sharing the Chamber’s direction for the remainder of 2026 and beyond.

Among those in attendance were H.E. Ambassador Hamad Suleiman Mashaan Al-Mashaan, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs; Brigadier General Feras Al-Qattan, Kuwait Air Defense Commander of the Ministry of Defense; H.E. Steven Butler, Chargé d’Affaires of the United States Embassy in Kuwait; Mr. Mohammed Mulla Yaqoub, Deputy Director General for Business Development at KDIPA. Ambassadors, members of the diplomatic corps, government representatives, international businesses, and AmCham Kuwait members and partners also attended.

In her welcome remarks, Dr. Arezou Harraf, Chair of AmCham Kuwait, outlined the Chamber’s strategic direction for the next three years, centered on three key pillars: advocacy, industry ecosystems, and strategic access. She emphasized that the Chamber is increasingly focusing on measurable outcomes for members, particularly through stronger engagement with decision-makers, sector-specific advocacy, and more structured access to institutions that shape the business environment in Kuwait.

Dr. Harraf said, “Our initiatives are about creating measurable value. We want everything we do to leave our members with something tangible they can point to: an issue resolved, a partner found, or a door opened.”

Dr. Harraf also highlighted AmCham Kuwait’s efforts to deepen its relationship with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, with the aim of ensuring that the priorities and experiences of American companies operating in Kuwait are represented in the broader commercial discussions.

She noted continued work toward strategic initiatives with the Petrochemical Industries Company (PIC), aimed at strengthening private-sector feedback channels, sector roundtables, investment promotion, and connections between Kuwait’s petrochemical sector and American technology providers, investors, and strategic partners. The

evening also featured remarks by H.E. Steven Butler, Chargé d’Affaires of the United States Embassy in Kuwait, reflecting continued engagement between the U.S. Embassy and the American business community in Kuwait. This was followed by a keynote from Mr. Mohammed Mulla Yaqoub, Deputy Director General for Business Development at KDIPA, who shared insights into Kuwait’s investment outlook, competitiveness, and opportunities for international companies looking to invest and expand in the country.

The participation of senior government and diplomatic representatives underscored the importance of sustained dialogue and direct engagement between the private sector, government institutions, and diplomatic partners. For AmCham Kuwait, these relationships are a crucial part of its advocacy work, creating channels for dialogue, enabling private-sector perspectives to be shared with relevant decision-makers, and helping identify opportunities and challenges affecting businesses operating in Kuwait.

AmCham Kuwait recognized the support of its partners: KRH (Gold Sponsor), Prime One Group (Silver Sponsor), IFA International Travel & Tourism (Travel & Tourism Partner), and Hyatt Regency Al Kout (Hotel Partner). Their continued support plays an important role in enabling AmCham Kuwait to deliver programs and initiatives for its members and the wider business community.

Looking ahead, AmCham Kuwait’s Vice Chair of the Board, Mr. Mohammad Al-Ali, highlighted upcoming activities through the remainder of 2026, including Focus Groups, sector roundtables, workshops, and advocacy discussions across sustainable finance, AI, food safety, healthcare, energy, investment, banking and finance, and SME development. These programs form part of the Chamber’s broader effort to provide members with practical opportunities to engage with government institutions and industry stakeholders and one another, while identifying issues that can be addressed through our collective advocacy.

The evening continued with dinner and networking, giving attendees the opportunity to reconnect with colleagues, meet new contacts, and engage with Kuwait’s business, government, and diplomatic communities. Members were also introduced to networking tools available through AmCham Kuwait’s Glue Up platform, including the membership directory, digital business cards, industry-based searches, and direct member-to-member connections.



Photo during the event.

Application & issuance stages can be quickly & easily completed anytime, anywhere

National Bank of Kuwait launches integrated digital experience for obtaining credit cards via mobile app



Mohammed Al-Othman

Al-Othman:
The launch of the digital credit card experience marks a new milestone in the digital transformation journey led by NBK. Customers can add cards directly to their digital wallets and begin using them immediately. We will continue to solidify our position at the forefront of institutions that make digitalization a strategic pillar of their operations. The future of banking relies on utilizing technology, data, and artificial intelligence to deliver more integrated experiences. We will continue investing in the development of advanced digital products and services that predict customer needs and enhance their well-being. We operate under a comprehensive strategy that places the customer at the heart of everything we do and utilize the latest technologies to redefine the banking experience.



Al-Othman added: “We operate according to a comprehensive strategy that places the customer at the heart of everything we do and utilize the latest technologies to redefine the banking experience. We have focused on integrating customer-centric digital solutions into their daily lives while simplifying procedures, and customers can now view suitable card options, apply

for them, and complete the entire process digitally”. Moreover, Al-Othman stated: “We will continue to invest in developing advanced digital products and services that predict customer needs and enhance their financial well-being, which supports our leadership in digital innovation and retail banking, while meeting customers’ growing aspirations for integrated, accessible banking services within an ever-evolving digital landscape”. Al-Othman emphasized that NBK will continue to solidify its position at the forefront of institutions that make digitalization a strategic pillar of their operations, noting that the future of banking relies on utilizing technology, data, and artificial intelligence to deliver smarter, more comprehensive experiences. The launch of this service aligns with the Bank’s strategy to accelerate digital transformation; NBK aims to be the financial partner best prepared for the future of banking and to remain closest to its customers by predicting their needs and meeting their aspirations with the highest standards of quality and innovation.

GCC banks post record profits as lending regains momentum

By KAMCO Invest

The GCC banking sector navigated a complex operating environment in Q2-2026 despite regional geopolitical disruptions and a higher for longer interest rate environment weighing on broader earnings momentum. Nevertheless, key banking sector metrics indicated a moderation in lending growth over the last two quarters compared to the historical highs of previous years. Revenues and net income, meanwhile, reached new record highs during the quarter anchored by record corporate performances in Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

Aggregate banking revenues set another record at USD 36.2 Bn and the q-o-q growth of 2.4% was the strongest in three quarters. Nevertheless, revenues faced headwinds in certain markets as net interest margins narrowed further across the region. Funding costs have steadily climbed, catching up with asset yields as depositors shift funds into term products. Despite this, bottom line performance remained robust for larger economies in the region as economic activity in the non-oil sectors of Saudi Arabia and the UAE provided a strong counterbalance, driving corporate loan demand and offsetting softer retail credit expansion.

Aggregate GCC banking sector net profits reached a new record high of USD 17.7 Bn during Q2-2026, up 5.6% q-o-q and 7.2% y-o-y, even as the war and the near closure of the Strait of Hormuz pulled regional activity sharply lower. UAE and Saudi-listed banks reported 8.2% and 8.4% y-o-y increase in net profits to USD 6.8 Bn and USD 6.6 Bn, respectively. Oman and Kuwaiti banks also registered similar elevated net profit growth of 9.9% and 7.5%, respectively.

Aggregate gross loans reached USD 2.59 Trillion at the end of the quarter, growing 2.6% q-o-q against 2.2% in Q1-2026, which had been the weakest sequential reading in eight quarters. The y-o-y comparison strengthened to 11.6%, and net loans grew 2.7% to USD 2.51 Trillion. Growth was broad based, with all six country aggregates expanding during the quarter. UAE-listed banks led the region for a second consecutive quarter with growth of 4.5%, helped by Emirates NBD completing its purchase of a majority stake in India’s RBL Bank in June, a deal that added AED 44 Bn of loans to the group, while Omani banks followed at 4.1% and Kuwaiti banks recovered to 2.3%. Total assets for the sector closed the quarter at USD 4.07 Trillion, up 1.4% q-o-q, with Islamic banks accounting for 27.7% of the total.

Highlights - GCC Banking Sector

This report analyzes the financials reported by 55 listed banks in the GCC for the quarter ended Q2-2026. Data for individual banks have been aggregated to the country level. Some of the key observations from the most recent financial quarter for the GCC Banking Sector includes the following:

Energy shocks and sticky inflation upend global rate cuts...

The global interest rate environment has entered a complex and fragmented phase, departing sharply from the coordinated easing that the market was pricing-in earlier this year. The coordinated easing cycle everyone expected has not just stalled, it has gone into reverse in parts of the developed world as central banks across advanced economies find themselves dealing with a structural higher for longer reality. The war in the Middle East and the resulting energy price spike pushed inflation higher across major economies, forcing developed market central banks to abandon their easing cycles. A profound divergence has emerged between Western central banks with lingering price pressures and Asian authorities navigating domestic growth challenges, which makes the current divergence one of the widest in years.

In the United States, the FOMC left the federal funds rate unchanged for the fifth consecutive meeting at 3.50% to 3.75% on 29-July-2026, but the vote was 9 to 3 with three officials pushing for a 25 basis point increase. In addition, the new Fed chair’s first Jackson Hole appearance on 28-August-2026, where he warned that the summer’s better than expected inflation readings did not convince him that underlying trends had improved in any meaningful way. His comments signaled that policymakers may need to raise rates again if inflation fails to show sufficient progress toward its 2% target. As a result, financial markets reacted swiftly to the hawkish tone with two year yields jumped more than 12 bps and the probability of a September-2026 rate hike shot up to over 60% from 35% the day before. August payrolls also came in better than expected at 162,000 against a consensus of 53,000, with unemployment steady at 4.1%, and June and July were both revised higher, by 11,000 and 44,000 respectively. Meanwhile, inflation remained mixed with headline CPI cooling to 3.4% in July-2026 and core CPI at 2.5%, the softest since March 2021, yet the Fed’s preferred PCE gauge held at 3.7% headline and 3.3% core.

Meanwhile, the ECB moved decisively in June-2026, raising all three key rates by 25 bps and lifting the deposit facility rate to 2.25%, marking the first rate hike since 2023, catalyzed directly by surging global energy costs and supply chain shocks stemming from the Middle East conflict. With core inflation expected to stay elevated, market participants are heavily pricing in another ECB hike by September-2026 although growth concerns remains a key constraint with the latest staff projections put Euro area growth at just 0.8% this year, revised down on the back of the war’s hit to commodity markets and real incomes. The Bank of England chose to proceed with extreme caution, maintaining its base rate at 3.75% for a fifth consecutive meeting in late July-2026. However, the decision was a hawkish hold. Three policymakers voted to raise rates to 4% due to concerns that volatile energy prices could lead to persistent inflation, which currently hovers near 2.6% to 2.9%.

On the other hand, China is dealing with an entirely opposite problem. The PBOC left the one year LPR at 3.00% and the five year at 3.50% in August, the fifteenth straight month of no change, and the reasoning has shifted from patience to something closer to constraint. Despite key indicators pointing to cooling domestic demand and softer consumption, Chinese authorities refrained from further monetary easing. Instead of implementing widespread rate cuts, Beijing is leaning heavily on targeted structural tools and liquidity injections to support small enterprises, technology and consumption while keeping corporate borrowing costs near record lows.

The near-term outlook for policy rates shows sustained divergence with the ECB most likely to move, and a hike on later this week hiking the deposit rate to 2.50%. The Federal Reserve is shifting focus to the upcoming employment and inflation data to determine if a September rate hike is necessary, effectively pushing any major easing cycle into next year at the earliest and the new dot plot will matter more than the decision itself. The BoE will probably hold again, though the dissenting group is growing and another energy driven inflation could reverse the current status quo. China is expected to keep rates at current lows, balancing economic support with caution over global volatility, with a reserve requirement cut a likely lever than any LPR reduction. The primary risk to all these paths remains the durability of the energy shock. A sustained easing of tensions and a slide in crude oil could quickly soften the hawkish tilt taking the pressure off the hawks within weeks. And, a renewed escalation would do the opposite.

Credit growth remains resilient but uneven...

Based on data from GCC central banks, total outstanding credit facilities across the six GCC member states reached approximately USD 2.20 Trillion at end-June 2026, up 8.8% year on year and 1.7% from March 2026. Saudi Arabia remained the largest market at 41.4% of the regional total, followed by the UAE at 26.9% and Qatar at 18.4%. UAE banks recorded the fastest headline growth at 13.8% Y-o-y, followed by the Oman at 12.7%. The Q2-2026 data points to resilient regional credit demand, but the composition was uneven. Infrastructure-linked utilities, government-related borrowing, consumer credit, and selected cross-border activity are supporting growth, while weakness remains visible in parts of mining, trade, real estate, and financial-sector lending. Saudi Arabia posted its first quarterly GDP contraction since 2023 at 4.8% y-o-y and the IMF cut its full year

growth forecast for the Kingdom to 1.7% as the oil sector declined. PMI readings in Kuwait and Qatar stayed in contraction through most of the quarter, while the UAE index fell close to the neutral 50 mark in June before rebounding to 52.7 in July. Project awards followed the same path, dropping 25.4% q-o-q to USD 59.4 Bn although they remained 30% above the same quarter of 2025, with Saudi Arabia the only market in the region to record a sequential increase at USD 30 Bn.

Kuwait’s total credit facilities reached KWD 54.75 Bn for residents at end-June 2026, rising 5.9% y-o-y and 1.1% q-o-q. Growth was led by Public Services (+103.1% y-o-y, from a small base), Crude Oil & Gas (+29.1%), NBFC lending (+22.5%), Industry (+12.6%), and Purchase of Securities (+10.6%). Total Personal Facilities rose 3.9%, supported by installment loans, while consumer loans were broadly flat. Trade (-8.9%) and Agriculture (-15.0%) remained weak. However, total credit facilities declined marginally during July-2026 by 0.2% to reach KWD 54.65 Bn.

Saudi banking credit reached SAR 3.42 Trillion at end-June 2026, increasing 7.3% y-o-y and 1.9% q-o-q. Electricity, Water, Gas & Health was the strongest reported sector, rising 24.9% y-o-y and 11.7% q-o-q, while Finance & Insurance grew 16.8% y-o-y and Construction increased 6.1%. Manufacturing and Transport remained above year-earlier levels but softened slightly during Q2. Agriculture (-9.4% y-o-y) and Mining (-4.5%) were the main weak areas. In July-2026, credit rose a further 0.4% from June to reach SAR 3.54 Trillion by the end of July-2026. The annual increase in Q2-2026 amounted to approximately SAR 233.1 Bn, with the reported Utilities and Health category contributing SAR 49.5 Bn and Finance & Insurance adding SAR 28.1 Bn. The sector mix indicates that infrastructure and institutional activity remain important growth pillars.

Outstanding credit facilities reported by UAE banks reached AED 2.18 Trillion at end-June 2026, expanding 13.8% y-o-y and 1.7% q-o-q, the fastest headline growth in the GCC. Electricity, Gas & Water (+44.0% y-o-y), Government (+33.3%), Transport (+16.4%), and Financial Institutions (+16.1%) led the annual increase. Q2 momentum was supported by Consumption lending (+2.9% q-o-q), Construction & Real Estate (+4.2%), and Transport (+11.1%), although Financial Institutions and Trade eased from March. Personal loans for business remained 1.5% below the prior year. Total credit added approximately AED 263.9 Bn over the year; consumption lending contributed AED 75.1 Bn, Government AED 61.3 Bn, and Financial Institutions AED 35.8 Bn. The breadth of these gains reduces reliance on a single sector, although the q-o-q pullback in Financial Institutions and Trade indicates some moderation beneath the strong headline result.

Qatar credit facilities reached QAR 1.47 Trillion at end-June 2026, up 5.9% y-o-y and 1.0% q-o-q. The headline increase was highly dependent on credit outside Qatar, which surged 120.6% y-o-y and 12.8% q-o-q; domestic credit rose only 0.4% y-o-y and edged down 0.1% during Q2-2026. General Trade (+6.7% y-o-y), Consumption (+5.7%), and Services (+2.9%) provided domestic support. Public Sector credit, Real Estate, and Industry contracted, with Industry down 17.2%. Credit outside Qatar contributed QAR 76.5 Bn of the QAR 81.4 Bn annual headline increase, or roughly 94%, highlighting the concentration of growth. Total credit continued to show growth, registering an increase of another 0.6% in July-2026.

Bahrain’s total outstanding credit facilities reached BHD 13.54 Bn at end-June 2026, increasing 8.5% y-o-y and 2.3% q-o-q. General Government credit was the main growth driver, rising 70.9% y-o-y and 3.6% q-o-q, while mortgage lending increased 5.9% y-o-y and total business-sector credit grew 2.2%. Real Estate Activities (+9.0%) and Other Service Activities (+5.2%) also expanded. Wholesale & Retail Trade, Financial & Insurance, and Construction remained below year-earlier levels. General Government lending contributed approximately BHD 716.7 million of the BHD 1.07 Bn annual increase, accounting for about two-thirds of headline growth. Private activity was more moderate: business-sector credit rose only 2.2% y-o-y, while weakness in trade and financial services suggests that the recovery remains uneven across commercially sensitive sectors. Headline credit growth in July was broadly unchanged masking mixed sector movements.

Oman total outstanding credit facilities stood at OMR 30.25 Bn at end-June 2026, rising 12.7% y-o-y and 3.4% q-o-q. Government credit increased 61.2% y-o-y and 20.3% q-o-q, Public Enterprises rose 20.4% y-o-y, and Private Sector credit grew 9.8%, showing that expansion extended beyond the public sector. Total credit eased 0.1% in July as Public Enterprise and Non-Resident lending declined, although Private Sector credit continued to rise. In absolute terms, Private Sector lending contributed roughly OMR 2.11 Bn of the annual increase, the largest share. Private Sector credit generated approximately OMR 2.11 Bn, or about 62%, of the OMR 3.42 Bn annual increase, while Public Enterprises added OMR 872.6 million. This combination provides a comparatively balanced growth profile, but the sharp q-o-q rise in Government credit and the July reversal in some public categories indicate that monthly volatility may remain elevated.

Lending growth rebounds partially in Q2 after an eight-quarter low in Q1...

Aggregate lending by listed GCC banks regained momentum during Q2-2026 after a soft first quarter. Gross loans at the GCC level reached a new record of USD 2.59 Trillion, a q-o-q increase of 2.6% against 2.2% in Q1-2026, which had been the weakest sequential reading in eight quarters. Growth is still a shade below the 2.7% recorded in Q4-2025, so the quarter is better read as stabilization than as a return to the pace of last year, but it does suggest that the pull back in credit appetite immediately after the outbreak of the war was only temporary. The y-o-y comparison strengthened to 11.6% and the recovery was broad based, with all six country aggregates reporting sequential gains. Islamic banks again outpaced their conventional peers, growing financing 3.3% during the quarter against 2.4%.

UAE-listed banks were the clear outlier, with gross loans growing 4.5% during the quarter to USD 816.5 Bn. Central bank data pointed the same way, with gross credit reaching AED 2.76 Trillion at the end of June, up 18.1% y-o-y, and foreign credit rising 37.5% y-o-y to AED 582.4 Bn, or roughly a fifth of the total loan book. Emirates NBD was the single largest contributor after completing its USD 2.8 Bn purchase of a majority stake in India’s RBL Bank in June, a transaction that brought AED 74 Bn of assets and AED 44 Bn of loans into the group and lifted its gross loans 17% in the first half to AED 771 Bn. First Abu Dhabi Bank grew net loans 16% y-o-y to AED 661 Bn and moved its full year loan growth guidance to the upper end of its low to mid teens range, which suggests the UAE aggregate is unlikely to give up its lead in the second half.

Omani banks were next with growth of 4.1% to USD 88.2 Bn, extending a strong run for lenders in the Sultanate. Central Bank of Oman data showed total outstanding credit rising 12.3% y-o-y to OMR 38.2 Bn at the end of June, with non-financial corporations taking 48.2% of private sector credit and households a further 43.2%. Sohar International was the standout among the listed banks, growing loans, advances and Islamic financing 43% y-o-y, while Bank Muscat, which accounts for close to a third of sector assets, expanded its book 6.3% during 1H-2026 and guided to 6% - 7% growth for the full year. Oman remains the GCC market least exposed to the conflict and the lending data through the quarter reflects that.

Saudi-listed banks added 1.6% to reach USD 876.1 Bn, a subdued figure by the Kingdom’s standards and consistent with what SAMA data has been showing. Credit to the private sector grew 6.8% y-o-y in June, down from a range of 16% to 18% for much of last year, with retail mortgage growth moderating to single digits and the composition of new lending shifting away from households towards corporate borrowers. Al Rajhi Bank trimmed its loan growth guidance during the quarter, while SNB pointed to improving project and SME demand and expects related drawdowns to become visible during the second half. Bahraini banks grew 1.9% to USD 60.1 Bn and Qatari banks 1.4% to USD 460.3 Bn, the latter matching QNB’s own sequential

loan growth of 1.4% and its full year expectation of around 6.1%, at the lower end of its guidance range.

Kuwaiti banks returned to growth, with gross loans rising 2.3% q-o-q to USD 290.6 Bn after the 1.1% decline recorded in Q1-2026. CBK data showed trade facilities and merchandise imports witnessing sharp declines during Q2-2026. However, the rest of the book more than made up the difference, with housing loans up 3.8% during 1H-2026 against a 1.6% decline in consumer lending, and total utilised cash credit facilities rising 1.9% to KWD 64.93 Bn. The temporary regulatory measures the central bank introduced in March, which eased liquidity and capital requirements, gave banks the room to keep lending through the disruption, and lenders have since been competing hard for quality borrowers with preferential pricing on personal loans.

Customer deposit growth eases after a strong first quarter...

Total customer deposits reported by listed GCC banks reached a record USD 2.92 Trillion at the end of Q2-2026, registering q-o-q growth of 1.7%. That is half the 3.4% recorded in Q1-2026 and brings deposit growth back in line with the trend of the past two years, with the y-o-y comparison against Q2-2025 coming in at 6.8%. The slow-down reflected mixed trend at the country level with four out of six country aggregates showing growth while two showed a quarterly decline.

Omani banks recorded the strongest growth for a second consecutive quarter, adding 6.2% to take deposits to USD 96.0 Bn. Central Bank of Oman data showed sector deposits up 13% y-o-y to OMR 37.3 Bn at the end of June, with Bank Muscat alone growing its deposit base 13.2% over the year to OMR 11.2 Bn. UAE-listed banks were next with growth of 2.6%, holding above the USD 1 Trillion mark at USD 1.07 Trillion. Central bank data showed resident deposits in the UAE rising 1.2% m-o-m in June to AED 3.18 Trillion, with government and government-related entity deposits growing 2.2% and 4.1% during the month and accounting for around a quarter of the resident total, a reminder of how much of the region’s funding base remains public sector linked.

Saudi banks grew deposits 2.1% to USD 862.6 Bn, recovering part of the ground lost during the second half of last year. System wide deposits in the Kingdom grew faster than loans during the quarter and the SAMA loan-to-deposit ratio eased to 79.0% in May from 80.3% at the end of 2025, which points to a modest improvement in a funding position that has been tight for some time. Qatari banks grew 0.8% to USD 457.3 Bn, with sector deposits reported by the central bank up 5.8% since the start of the year and public sector balances rising 3.2% during June alone. Deposits at QNB were flat q-o-q as the group deliberately reduced its reliance on non-resident funding, lifting borrowings from banks and debt securities 8.7% q-o-q in their place.

On the other hand, two country aggregates showed declines during the quarter. Kuwaiti banks saw deposits fall 1.1% to USD 357.3 Bn and Bahraini banks 1.3% to USD 82.8 Bn. In both cases the decline came after an unusually strong first quarter rather than from any visible funding stress, and the annual picture remains solid with the sequential dip looks more like timing around large corporate and government balances than a structural outflow.

Loan-to-deposit ratio reaches a new high...

The aggregate net loan-to-deposit ratio for the GCC banking sector rose to 85.9% at the end of Q2-2026 from 85.0% in Q1-2026, a new high for the series and the ninth consecutive quarter above the 80% mark. The increase reflected a higher growth in lending with loans growing at 2.7% during the quarter while deposits registering a growth of 1.7%. The same arithmetic is visible at the individual bank level, most clearly at First Abu Dhabi Bank, where net loans grew 16% y-o-y against deposit growth of 5%, leaving a wider gap to be filled in wholesale markets.

The spread across countries remains wide. Saudi-listed banks were again the most stretched at 100.1%, marginally below the 100.5% recorded in Q1-2026 but above the 100% mark for a third consecutive quarter. Qatari banks were next at 95.1%, up from 94.2%, followed by Omani banks at 87.5%, the only aggregate to improve during the quarter after a strong run of deposit gathering. Kuwaiti banks saw the ratio climb to 77.9% from 75.2% as deposits declined, UAE banks moved up to 74.1% from 72.7% and Bahraini banks to 70.9% from 68.8%, with the last three still comfortably below the regional average.

The elevated ratio in Saudi Arabia continues to highlight the funding challenge facing banks in the Kingdom, where loan books have grown faster than the deposit base can comfortably support. The gap is increasingly being bridged in the debt markets, with Saudi issuers raising USD 49.3 Bn in bonds and sukuk during H1-2026, close to half of all GCC issuance for the period and with corporates rather than sovereign entities accounting for the bulk of the regional total. Bank sukuk is priced well above the cost of retail and corporate deposits, so the shift in funding mix is likely to keep pressure on Saudi margins even with lending growth running at modest levels. There are early signs of relief, with SAMA data showing deposits outpacing loans during the quarter, but the structural gap has not closed.

Net interest income reaches a new record...

Aggregate net interest income reported by GCC-listed banks rose 1.9% q-o-q to a record USD 24.9 Bn during Q2-2026, a clear improvement on the 0.9% growth recorded in Q1-2026. Policy rates across the region were unchanged through the quarter, with GCC central banks tracking a Federal Reserve that has held the funds rate at 3.50% to 3.75% since December-2025 and that came close to tightening at its July meeting, when three regional presidents dissented in favour of a 25 bps increase. Total interest income reached USD 57.3 Bn against interest expense of USD 32.4 Bn. With the bulk of repricing now behind them, banks are relying on volume rather than rate to grow the interest line.

Saudi-listed banks reported the highest net interest income in the region at USD 8.7 Bn, followed by UAE banks at USD 8.4 Bn and Qatari banks at USD 3.7 Bn. Kuwaiti banks were broadly flat at USD 2.7 Bn, Bahraini banks recovered part of the ground lost during Q1-2026 to reach USD 0.8 Bn and Omani banks continued their run of steady quarterly gains at USD 0.7 Bn. Individual results showed the same pattern, with QNB lifting net interest income 11% y-o-y to QAR 9.4 Bn, First Abu Dhabi Bank growing the line 15% and Al Rajhi 16%, in each case on the back of a larger book rather than better pricing.

Interest income grew 3.8% q-o-q while interest expense grew 5.2%, the first quarter in three where that has happened. The reported cost of funds still fell to 4.5%, so the pressure is volume rather than price as banks lean on syndications and sukuk to fund the loan-deposit gap. That makes the headline margin look better than the underlying economics.

Non-interest income leads the topline higher...

Total banking revenues grew for a fifth consecutive quarter during Q2-2026, reaching a record USD 36.2 Bn. The q-o-q increase of 2.4% was the strongest in three quarters and a marked improvement on the 0.9% recorded in Q1-2026. Non-interest income did the heavy lifting, rising 3.6% q-o-q to USD 11.3 Bn and lifting its share of total revenue to 31.2%. Fee and trading lines were supported by the volatility in energy and currency markets during the quarter, which worked in favour of banks with sizeable treasury and transaction banking operations.

Saudi-listed banks registered the largest sequential increase in revenues after a weak first quarter, with the ten listed lenders in the Kingdom reporting combined net profit of SAR 24.87 Bn, up 12.5% y-o-y on higher financing and investment income. UAE-listed banks remained the largest revenue pool in the region at USD 13.4 Bn, and non-funded income accounted for 41% of First Abu Dhabi Bank’s revenues with fees and commissions up 20% y-o-y. QNB reported an 11% q-o-q increase in fee income, which offset a 4 bps decline in its margin, leaving Qatari banks broadly flat at USD 5.3 Bn. Kuwaiti and Omani banks also improved during the quarter, taking their revenues to USD 3.9 Bn and USD 1.1 Bn respectively.

Gulf Bank responds to customer demand & extends the deposit period for KD 1.5 million draw until 30 Nov 2026

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 23: In response to customer demand, Gulf Bank has announced changes to the schedule of the AIDanah Millionaire Account grand-prize draw for KD 1.5 million. The deposit and qualification period has been extended until 30 November 2026, instead of 30 September 2026.

The Bank also announced that the grand-prize draw will be brought forward to 4 February 2027, ahead of the Holy Month of Ramadan, instead of 10 February 2027. This is in line with the governance and transparency standards applied to AIDanah Millionaire Account draws, which are conducted under the supervision of global audit firms RSM and Grant Thornton and broadcast live across Gulf Bank’s social media channels.

Gulf Bank confirmed that the extension of the deposit and qualification period follows requests from customers who expressed an interest in having more time to grow their balances and savings and increase their chances of winning the grand prize, one of the largest cash prizes offered in Kuwait’s banking sector.

Gulf Bank noted that the AIDanah Account continues to reinforce its position as one of the leading savings accounts in Kuwait’s banking market, offering exceptional winning opportunities and competitive benefits that encourage customers to grow their savings and achieve their long-term financial goals.

The Bank encouraged customers looking to increase their chances of winning to benefit from the extended period through 30 November 2026



by growing and maintaining their AIDanah balances. Every increase in a customer’s balance helps enhance their eligibility and chances of winning the grand prize.

The AIDanah Millionaire Account is one of Gulf Bank’s flagship savings products, offering customers exceptional opportunities to win significant

cash prizes. It reflects the Bank’s continued commitment to promoting a culture of saving and delivering rewarding banking experiences, while providing valuable opportunities that help customers fulfil their aspirations, achieve their ambitions, and improve their quality of life. This further reinforces Gulf Bank’s position as a trusted partner that supports all segments of society.

AIDanah customers enjoy a wide range of benefits. It is the only account in Kuwait that carries forward unused draw chances from one year to the next, as part of a program designed to reward customers for their loyalty to Gulf Bank. The minimum balance required to enter all draws is only KD 200, giving customers more opportunities to participate in draws throughout the year, including the grand-prize draw.

Customers’ chances of winning increase as their savings grow and remain in the account for longer, through a distinctive loyalty program that enhances the customer experience. The account also offers full flexibility to deposit and withdraw funds at any time, while customers remain eligible to participate in draws in accordance with the approved terms and conditions.

Gulf Bank concluded by reaffirming its commitment to offering innovative savings programs and competitive benefits that enhance the customer experience and provide exceptional opportunities to win valuable prizes, alongside comprehensive banking services that meet customers’ evolving needs and support their future financial plans.

States challenge \$1.4 bln offshore wind buybacks

California, New York sue over wind lease buybacks

WASHINGTON, Sept 23, (AP): Democratic attorneys general from California and New York sued the Trump administration Tuesday over its plans to buy back offshore wind leases as President Donald Trump seeks to discourage the expansion of wind energy in favor of fossil fuels.

California Attorney General Rob Bonta said he is suing over removal of a project off his state’s coast planned by Chicago-based Invenergy. The Trump administration said in June that it’s buying back the company’s U.S. offshore wind leases for four wind projects on the East and West coasts.

New York Attorney General Letitia James, meanwhile, led seven states in suits seeking to block the Invenergy deal and another proposal with Blueprint Wind, which agreed in April to end a wind farm under development off the New York and New Jersey coast.

The deals would hand energy companies \$1.4 billion in taxpayer dollars in exchange for the cancellation of multiple projects. In all, the Trump administration has pledged nearly \$4 billion to companies to walk away from projects across the country.

The Interior Department, which oversees offshore development, did not respond to requests for comment. The department started buying back offshore wind leases in March after federal courts thwarted Trump’s efforts to stop offshore wind development through executive action.

In exchange for reimbursements of lease fees, companies are investing in fossil fuel projects and geothermal energy. Interior Secretary Doug Burgum has said that companies “are shifting investment back toward dependable, secure energy infrastructure that can power our economy and lower utility costs.”

James called the deals illegal and said they will ultimately increase Americans’ electricity bills by sabotaging states’ ability to meet growing energy demands.

“Americans are facing increasing energy costs because this administration would rather pay off energy companies than let us build the new power sources we need,” James said in a statement. “These illegal backroom deals take money that should have gone toward lowering New Yorkers’ bills and hand it to fossil fuel projects in other states.”

Bonta said that as a national and global leader in the fight against climate change, California finds itself enmeshed in “avoidable and unnecessary bat-



Wind turbines can be seen from Patterson Pass Road in Livermore, Calif., Wednesday, Aug. 10, 2022. (AP Photo/Godofredo A. Vásquez, File)

tlies with our own federal government” to advance climate action and move toward clean energy.

Trump, who often talks about his hatred of wind power, has said his goal is to not let any “wind-mills” be built. Offshore wind produces electricity cleanly. Oil, coal and natural gas emit carbon pollution when burned.

Bonta, speaking at a Climate Week event in New York City, said climate action needs to match the scope, speed and scale of the problem.

“Because we have to go to court and block an unlawful action by the Trump administration each time, it takes time. It slows the process down and we know we are running out of time and we need to be urgent and aggressive,” Bonta said Tuesday in remarks just before Trump addressed the U.N. General Assembly.

“We’re still all in, in California,” Bonta said. “No matter what the Trump administration does, we’re going to push to participate in the climate action that is needed to meet this moment and to

rise to the occasion.”

Later Tuesday, Bonta and other officials participated in a Climate Week panel about state leadership on wind energy. California Energy Commission Chair David Hochschild said at the New York City Bar that states retain the ability to drive a transition away from fossil fuels.

While Trump can slow it down and make it more expensive, Hochschild said, “he can’t put the genie back in the bottle.”

New York State Energy Research and Development Authority President Doreen Harris said states are all confident they’ll ultimately succeed in court, but need more energy infrastructure for a reliable grid.

“The reality is, even if successful, the question becomes who is going to invest?” Harris said. She added, “we just want to get back to building.”

Attorneys general in Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Rhode Island and Vermont joined New York’s suit.

‘Trade deal could be reached by Dec’

Carney says Canada and India aim to wrap up trade talks by G20 before Modi’s Canada visit

TORONTO, Sept 23, (AP): Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney said Tuesday that trade negotiations with India are making “good progress” and that the two countries are aiming to conclude talks by the G20 summit in mid-December.

Carney also said India had, to his understanding, confirmed that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi would visit Canada around that time, though the precise date had not been finalized.

“We are making good progress in our trade negotiations with India,” Carney said at a news conference on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly.

Carney said he and Modi had committed to try to conclude negotiations by the G20. The summit is scheduled for Dec. 14-15 at Trump National Doral in Miami.

Carney wants to double Canada’s non-U.S. trade

over the next decade and has made India part of a broader effort to reduce the country’s dependence on the United States as relations deteriorate under President Donald Trump.

Last week, Carney embraced the prospect of Canada becoming the European Union’s first associate member, saying deeper ties with Europe would help ensure no country could control Canada’s markets or undermine its sovereignty.

Carney also struck a deal with China earlier this year allowing a limited number of Chinese electric vehicles into Canada at a sharply reduced tariff in exchange for China lowering tariffs on Canadian canola.

Canada and India formally launched negotiations on a comprehensive trade agreement in March, with both governments committing to conclude talks by the end of 2026.

The rapid economic rapprochement follows a deep diplomatic rupture over the 2023 killing of Canadian Sikh activist Hardeep Singh Nijjar in British Columbia. Former Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said there were credible allegations linking agents of the Indian government to Nijjar’s killing.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police later said it had evidence allegedly linking Indian government agents to homicides and other violent acts in Canada. Trudeau said Indian diplomats had collected information about Canadians that was passed to organized crime and resulted in violence. Canada expelled six Indian diplomats amid the allegations. India denied involvement and accused Canada of harboring Sikh separatists.

Carney has moved quickly to rebuild ties. His visit to India earlier this year was the first bilateral visit by a Canadian prime minister since 2018.

EU, Philippines reach preliminary free trade deal

BRUSSELS, Sept 23, (AP): The European Union and the Philippines have reached substantial agreement on a new free trade deal, the latest bilateral agreement that Brussels is pursuing as it seeks to diversify its economy amid tensions with traditional trading partners including China, Russia and the United States.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen tweeted Tuesday, “we just agreed on a free trade deal,” but EU officials later clarified that it was a preliminary agreement, and that a full deal would take further negotiations.

The EU’s top trade negotiator, Maroš Šefcovic, said he and Philippine Trade Secretary Maria Cristina Aldeguer-Roque have been negotiating a deal aimed at boosting the nearly 30 billion euros (around \$35 billion) of annual trade between the 27-nation EU and the Southeast Asian nation of 115 million people.

Šefcovic said it would create “a modern, forward-looking partnership between the EU and the Philippines, one that will open new opportunities for our exporters and investors, strengthen our supply chains and deepen bilateral economic ties for years to come.”

He said he expects it to be finalized within a year or two. Parliaments on both sides will also need to ratify it.

EU-Philippine trade is dominated by electronics, with the EU exporting aircraft, pork and pharmaceuticals while importing semiconductors, integrated circuits and industrial machinery made in the Philippines.

The EU has sought growth and stability through new trade links from Australia to Argentina as the bloc itself is beset by a geopolitical maelstrom, including conflicts in the Middle East and the war in Ukraine that have throttled traditional sources of energy.

The Philippines has already reached deals with two other ASEAN members, Vietnam and Singapore. The European Commission is also negotiating separate deals with Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia, while a broader free trade agreement between the EU and ASEAN remains a long-term goal.

Moscow, Beijing and Washington all pose their own kind of challenges to the EU: hybrid attacks that officials across the EU blame on Russia; China’s gargantuan trade imbalance and a near-monopoly over critical mineral supplies; and a Trump

administration critical of European policies on defense, migration, and technology regulation.

The EU deal with the Philippines roughly tracks with the “middle powers” strategy laid out at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, earlier this year by Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney. Last week, he was the guest of honor in the European Parliament in Strasbourg at the annual State of the European Union speech by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

She said then that the EU would forge a new kind of “associate membership” for Canada.

“In this new world, we must urgently reimagine our partnerships,” von der Leyen said during her speech.

And at the same time, nations around the world have sought out the EU to weather “sudden changes very often on the fundamental principles of how trade is being done,” said Šefcovic, the trade negotiator.

“My phone was ringing all the time,” he said. “When the world goes in such turbulence and turmoil, you work closely with your friends and close partners.”

Trump weighs diesel export ban, high prices ripple across economy

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

By Vidya Mani
University of Virginia

Diesel fuel powers long-distance trucks, freight locomotives, boats and barges, farm machinery, construction and mining equipment, and backup generators. Its concentrated energy powers efficient engines that can haul heavy loads and refuel machines quickly. Those are all excellent attributes for long periods of heavy work on the move or in locations not connected to the electricity grid.

So when diesel prices hit record highs, as they have, that increases the costs of essentials like food, transportation and even other energy sources. On Sept. 14, 2026, the U.S. Energy Information Administration said national average diesel prices were US\$6.52 a gallon, which is up more than 23 cents - 3.6% - from a week earlier, and up nearly \$2.78 - 74% - since the same week in 2025.

The U.S. war with Iran, and to a lesser extent the Russian war with Ukraine, have disrupted oil production, refinery output and petroleum supply chains across the world, which are part of my field of study on how geopolitical friction reshapes global supply chains. These conflicts have gone on long enough now - more than six months between the U.S. and Iran, and more than a four years of direct battle between Russia and Ukraine - that most companies and countries have run out of any extra supplies they might have had on hand.

The near-complete closure of the Strait of Hormuz has dramatically reduced the flow of crude oil across the world - a raw material necessary for producing gasoline, diesel, jet fuel and heating oil. Ukrainian attacks on Russian refineries, which have intensified through 2026, have restricted the flow of Russian diesel to the global market.

Put together, all this means that there’s not much diesel fuel left lying around, and lots of people want to buy what is available, as well as what little is produced each day. It’s all a matter of supply and demand. If demand remains constant and supply drops, prices rise. The effects of rising prices are broad and widespread both economically and geographically.

Farming and harvesting are seasonal operations that depend heavily on diesel-powered equipment. When farmers face high fuel costs, they may restrict or postpone their planting and harvesting operations, which means less food is produced for sale to markets and customers.

Higher diesel costs also translate into higher processing and transportation costs for food and basic staples. In particular, refrigerated trucks carrying vegetables, dairy and meat products to retail markets are heavily dependent on diesel.

Long-haul trucks move consumer goods across the country from warehouses and distribution centers to retail stores and homes. A trucking industry research firm has estimated that a 20% increase in fuel costs can translate into a 4% increase in operating costs.

Trucking is not a high-profit-margin business. So any increase in costs gets passed on to the consumers who buy whatever is being shipped.

High diesel prices have a double effect on public transit.

First, buses and trains powered by diesel fuel incur a direct increase in fuel costs.

Second, the crude oil supply shortages have led to higher diesel and gasoline prices. When gas is expensive, people shift to public transit to save money, leading to increased demand for transit.

Although diesel prices have spiked faster and stayed higher longer than prices for gasoline, passengers save money by sharing the costs of transit.

Air fares also more expensive, because diesel and jet fuel are produced from the same production process.

Diesel is used for a relatively small percentage of U.S. power generation, but it’s substantially more common in many countries, including where there aren’t widespread interconnected power grids. Anyone using diesel genera-

tors for primary or backup power has to pay more for diesel.

And shortages of crude oil supplies and loss of refinery production capacity means less availability of less heating oil - which is also produced through the same process as diesel. That is expected to lead to higher energy prices for consumers in the coming winter.

Consumers will experience different price changes depending on their locations, which affects both the distances goods need to travel and the amounts of fuel available.

For instance, the average diesel price in California has topped \$8 per gallon, but the Gulf Coast is seeing a relatively cheaper price of \$6.03 a gallon.

In part, that difference is because there are many refineries and terminals along the Gulf Coast, while California has very few pipeline connections to other refining regions. Its refineries depend on crude oil imports from the Middle East.

In addition, California’s efforts to curb air pollution mean it requires a more refined version of diesel fuel that emits fewer pollutants. So fuel companies in California can’t just bring in diesel from elsewhere.

Taxes and fuel surcharges also make a difference in diesel prices. The federal government imposes a flat tax on diesel of 24.4 cents a gallon. But state and local taxes vary. California’s state diesel tax is 48.2 cents a gallon, plus a 13% sales-tax rate, on top of which there may be additional local taxes.

In some cases, state policies to lower these taxes are thwarted. In Georgia, where state lawmakers suspended fuel taxes from March through June 2026, many counties kept their taxes on fuel sales.

In part to fuel its own military’s efforts in Ukraine, but also to help keep its domestic economy going, Russia - normally the world’s second-largest diesel exporter after the U.S. - suspended diesel exports in early July 2026, and has extended that until at least the end of the year.

The customers whose demand was formerly met by Russian diesel are now seeking other sources. Diesel producers in the U.S. are raising their prices at home, because they could make more money selling their fuel overseas.

The U.S. actually produces more diesel fuel than it consumes. But it still imports some, because it’s not always easy to get U.S. diesel from where it’s produced to where it’s used. Sometimes, and some places, it’s easier to ship in diesel from elsewhere.

Some Republicans in Congress have proposed a ban on diesel exports from the U.S., and President Donald Trump has said he supports one. If that were to happen, it could help make diesel cheaper, especially near Gulf Coast refineries that normally export a lot of their diesel. It could put less upward pressure on trucking and equipment bills and consumer prices.

But the benefits would depend on how long the ban lasted, what exactly it banned, how diesel was moved around the U.S. and how much of their savings oil companies, trucking companies and merchants passed on to regular Americans.

There are substantial risks, too. Without export shipping to handle the volume, fuel storage near refineries may fill up. If it can’t be moved easily and economically to other states, refineries could reduce how much diesel they make - which would mean also cutting production of gasoline, jet fuel and heating oil.

And overseas diesel prices would likely rise if U.S. exports disappeared, meaning regions in the U.S. that still need imports would pay even more, not less. A diesel-export ban could offer short-term relief to some buyers while shifting costs to others or weakening production incentives.

The energy crunch from the two wars and continued attacks on production and transportation infrastructure will continue to affect the U.S. and global economy for an extended period. Alternate shipping routes, release of reserves, export bans and additional subsidies are some of the short-term measures that can alleviate the worst of the pain.

But until crude oil production and refinery capacity expands, people will need to live with higher prices. (AP)

MILAN

FASHION



Jil Sander



Jil Sander



Jil Sander



Jil Sander



Jil Sander



Jil Sander



Models wear creations part of the Diesel women's Spring-Summer 2027 collection presented in Milan, Italy, Tuesday, Sept. 22, 2026. (AP)

Denim deconstructed

Martens exits

Diesel in style

MILAN, Sept 23, (AP): Diesel creative director Glenn Martens went out with a racy, body-positive collection during Milan Fashion Week on Tuesday, ending a tenure that revitalized and revolutionized the brand.

The runway, bathed in red light, set the stage for a provocative show. That was driven home midway when Diesel models planted in the stands began moaning in sexual revelry from their seats, alone, in pairs and threesomes, to the soundtrack "Love to Love You Baby."

"Every season we try to do something unexpected. This one was a bit more ... experimental," Martens said backstage. "I think the whole celebration of being body positive and loving each other is part of the Diesel DNA."

The collection featured knitwear that appeared to disintegrate into denim and leather, part of the brand's trademark textile innovation. Martens employed trompe l'oeil - an artistic technique that gives a three-dimensional appearance to a flat surface - to create the illusion of luxe shearling and leather. Shorts became gradually shorter until the final look was little more than a strip of fabric across the bum.

Laser-cut T-shirts looked as if they were falling apart and had simply been thrown on during a morning-after "walk of shame," an impression reinforced by smudged lipstick.

In the seats, writhing turned to headbanging for the runway finale, and Martens received a standing ovation. He leaves Diesel, which he joined in 2020, but stays on at parent company OTB's Maison Margiela, the avant-garde Paris couture house.

At Diesel, "we never pretended to be a luxury brand, even though we were on during fashion week," Martens said. "We also wanted to do more alternative things, and think about the community. I think that's what I try to celebrate, but also with respect for the clothes."



Diesel



Diesel



Diesel



Diesel



Taylor Swift performs at the Monumental stadium during her Eras Tour concert in Buenos Aires, Argentina on Nov. 9, 2023. (AP)

First since wedding

Taylor Swift announces new song ‘Patient Zero’

NEW YORK, Sept 23, (AP): Taylor Swift has announced a new song, “Patient Zero” - her first since her starry wedding this summer. It releases Friday.

She made the announcement in true Swift fashion. On Tuesday morning, the pop powerhouse launched a cryptic countdown clock on her website, displayed atop a red curtain and due to end at 2 p.m. Eastern.

Her dedicated fans, known as Swifties, quickly got to work attempting to decode whatever news was forthcoming, noting that her official Instagram bio was changed to read “And, baby, that’s sh0w business f0r y0u,” with each “o” replaced with a zero.

Now it appears clear that the gesture was a reference to the new song’s title. Once the countdown timed out, her website updated to reveal three, limited-edition CD variants of the new track: one with a double-sided cover as well as an acoustic and piano version, for \$3.99 each.

It is her first new song since marrying Kansas City Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce at Madison Square Garden in July.

Swift’s last album, “The Life of a Showgirl,” was released last October, and she contributed a song to the “Toy Story 5” soundtrack in June.

On Monday, it was announced that Swift will receive the inaugural Artist Director Honors at the MTV VMAs on Sunday, becoming the most awarded artist in VMA history.

Currently, Swift is tied with Beyoncé for the title. They have 30 each.

The new award aims to recognize artists “whose work behind the camera has expanded the possibilities of music video and advanced the art of visual storytelling.”

Swift has nine nominations at this year’s award show, following only Madonna, who leads with 11.

Her appearance at Sunday’s show raised the specter of further announcements, as Swift has been known to make news onstage.

At the Emmys last week, Swift appeared in a pre-taped skit, playing a rookie in the “Law & Order: Special Victims Unit” office.

Mariska Hargitay’s Olivia Benson went through two large crime boards to make connections between Swift’s songs, and the Emmy-nominated shows to see if she would attend the telecast. One of the detectives called it a “rabbit hole.” (In reality, Swift was at Arrowhead Stadium during the award show, and sitting alongside Tom Cruise, to watch the Chiefs open the NFL season against the Denver Broncos.)

In one pointed moment, Swift looked to the camera and appeared to utter a series of hints: “Sachcharide. Ares. From the Vineyard. North or South,” she said. Fans have urgently been trying to decode the message since.

934 denarii buried near Cologne

Archaeologist finds Germany’s largest hoard of Roman coins

BERLIN, Sept 23, (AP): An amateur archaeologist who discovered several Roman silver coins in a field in western Germany realized he had stumbled upon something bigger when his metal detector kept beeping.

Oliver Riedl called the authorities for help and a group of experts who began digging immediately discovered a total of 934 Roman silver denarii. It is the biggest coin treasure ever found in Germany from the time of Roman Emperor Hadrian, the local office in charge of archaeological monuments said Tuesday.

“It was clear to me that there was something bigger buried here,” Riedl said, describing how his metal detector continued signaling even after he had found several coins near Wesseling, south of Cologne a year ago.

The hoard of coins, which weighs 3.1 kilograms (6.8 pounds), went on display at the LVR-LandesMuseum Bonn on Tuesday.

The collection of coins was probably buried deliberately in the second quarter of the second century A.D., according to the LVR Office for the Preservation of Archaeological Monuments in the Rhineland.

“Of course, we can only speculate about the motives, but it’s very likely that someone wanted to keep this money safe. After all, banks didn’t exist back then,” said Erich Classen, state archaeologist and the director of the office.

Classen said it wasn’t clear why the treasure was never recovered before, adding that “perhaps the owner died before that could happen, without being able to pass on the knowledge about the coins.”

Treasure troves from ancient Roman times or other distant eras are not uncommon. However, few from the second century are as extensive as the one found in Wesseling, the archaeological office said, adding that it was difficult to estimate the coins’ value at the time.

However, the pay of Roman legionaries, which is well documented in written sources, provides a point of reference.

“At that time, an ordinary soldier in the legion earned 300 denarii a year. However, about half of that was withheld for food and equipment,” said Rahel Otte, a research associate at the archaeological office.

“A legionary would therefore have had to save all of his disposable income for about six years to amass the Wesseling hoard,” Otte said. She added that it remains unclear exactly who ultimately amassed this considerable fortune.

The Cologne area was under Roman control roughly from 39 BC to AD 459. The Romans established a presence in the region under General Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa to secure their empire’s border along the Rhine River, setting up a military outpost which later became Colonia Agrippina - today’s Cologne.



Roman coins, including the one coin, centre, dating from 148 B.C., when Rome was still a republic without an emperor, are on display at the LVR State Museum, in Bonn, Germany, Tuesday Sept. 22, 2026. (AP)

Music

Country heartbreak hit tops Hot 100 for record 23 weeks

How Langley’s ‘Choosin’ Texas’ became 2026’s hit

NEW YORK, Sept 23, (AP): Ella Langley’s “Choosin’ Texas,” a simmering, midtempo, country-and-then-some heartbreak song released last October, is indisputably 2026’s biggest hit.

“Choosin’ Texas” is also the longest-running No. 1 hit in the U.S., having spent 23 weeks at the top spot on the all-genre Billboard Hot 100, it was announced Tuesday.

That means the track has surpassed various records set by Shaboozey’s “A Bar Song (Tippy),” Lil Nas X’s “Old Town Road,” Whitney Houston’s “I Will Always Love You” and most impressively, Mariah Carey’s “All I Want For Christmas Is You.” Her holiday classic held the previous record, with 22 weeks at No. 1.

The song’s laid-back sound, cross-genre appeal and heartache narrative are a few reasons why. But its dominance still comes as a surprise.

Luminate, the industry data and analytics company, found that “Choosin’ Texas” brought in 911 million on-demand streams in the U.S. and 1.26 billion globally as of mid-August. Considering that Langley started 2023, around the time she made her Grand Ole Opry debut, with under 1 million monthly listeners on Spotify - and now boasts of over 32 million - her rise has been meteoric.

Historically, country listenership has centered on radio play. That has changed somewhat as the genre grows in popularity, solidifying around what Luminate’s Jaime Marconette describes as a “younger, streaming-forward listener.” He says it is a “multiyear narrative accelerated” by hits like “Choosin’ Texas.”

Claire Heinichen, a senior editor at Spotify, says the song’s growth has been both explosive and consistent. “Choosin’ Texas” “started big,” she says, moving from the platform’s leading country playlist, ‘Hot Country,’ to its larger, generic offerings because it works across audiences.

“It made its way into ‘Today’s Top Hits,’ which is our biggest global flagship playlist, but it’s also showing up in ‘Mood’ and ‘Moments’ playlists because it fits so well in ‘driving’ or ‘chill’ or ‘cookout,’” Heinichen says. “It really can work everywhere.”

It’s not just country music fans who are connecting with “Choosin’ Texas.”

“The song’s success on a playlist like ‘Today’s Top Hits’ is an indication that this is working for audiences who are not seeking out one specific genre,” Heinichen says. “It’s definitely growing in every direction.”

Go straight to Langley’s voice for another explanation for the song’s success. It’s “like syrup,” says Nate Sloan, a musicologist, assistant professor at the University of Southern California and co-host of the podcast “Switched On Pop.”

She sings in long phrases that lull the listener into the song’s rhythm, from its opening guitar line to its coda. “It’s almost like a trance,” Sloan says.

It also pulls from other genres; a cross-pollination found in much modern country. Langley’s “Choosin’ Texas” features shimmering disco grooves, not unlike Kacey Musgraves.

“It’s a little more rock or even kind of soul-inflected,” Sloan says. “Part of the reason songs like ‘Choosin’ Texas’ are able to resonate with such a wide audience is because, musically, they’re bringing in a lot of diverse influences.”

Charles L. Hughes, a Rhodes College professor and author of “Country Soul,” says the song sounds like many different eras of country music and, simultaneously, contemporary.

To his ears, “Choosin’ Texas” pulls from a late 1970s, early ‘80s era of country musicians who pulled R&B and pop into their sound - think Ronnie Milsap, Barbara Mandrell and Charlie Rich - but it isn’t stuck in that period. Those sounds are filtered through a post-Musgraves, post-Miranda Lambert songwriting style, with Langley’s idiosyncratic charms. (Lambert and Langley are two of the song’s four cowriters.)

“The best country music has one foot in the past and one foot into the present, if not the future,” Hughes says. “And that’s what she’s doing.”

Even for its light, bright musicality, “Choosin’ Texas” is an unusual hit, because it doesn’t possess the features that historically make up a No. 1 smash. It’s super specific - with its detailed descriptions of characters and geography in the lyrics - which is “antithetical to what you usually expect from a big, hit pop song that’s supposed to appeal to everyone,” says Sloan. It’s also “chill,” Sloan says. “It’s not bombastic or anthemic.”

“It has no big moments,” says Hughes. But it has both a subtle dance pulse and steel guitar, so “it sounds country, but it doesn’t automatically turn off people who are allergic to certain kinds of country sounds.”

There’s a sparkle that transgresses genre lines, but it does so while sounding mellow - the kind of track that inspires repeat listens.

“Choosin’ Texas” continues a great tradi-



Ella Langley holds her award for Female Artist of the Year during the 61st annual Academy of Country Music Awards in Las Vegas on May 17, 2026. (AP)

tion of “songs that country women do about what men do in bars,” says Hughes.

It’s straightforward: She’s losing her lover to someone else. She’s not going to fight for him - it’s a song of resignation that ends with her drinking alone as he chooses Texas (an-

other woman) over her (and Tennessee). It’s a universal heartbreak theme with potential for cross-generational resonance: It works for both the insecurity of a first breakup and a long-term relationship ending over another woman, or a move.

Two former winners vie for elite twice-winners club

Marlon James and Stuart make Booker shortlist

LONDON, Sept 23, (AP): Marlon James and Douglas Stuart have a chance to become only the fifth author to win the Booker Prize twice after both were named Tuesday on the shortlist for arguably the U.K.’s most prestigious fiction accolade.

Judges of the award whittled down the 13 semifinalists announced in July to six on Tuesday and said the short-listed books are “moving, pacey, funny, violent, intriguing, horrifying and hopeful.” They were selected from an original 163 submissions.

The Booker Prize celebrates the best works of long-form fiction by writers of any nationality, written in English and published in the U.K. and/or Ireland between October 2025 and Sept. 2026. The winner stands to win 50,000 pounds (\$67,000) and a trophy named Iris, so-called after the 1978 winner Iris Murdoch.

“Most of these books were beginning to feel like old friends after at least two readings,” said historian Mary Beard, head of the judging panel. “And it was painful to have to let some of them go, with their now bent spines and dog-eared pages, their brilliant capacity to make us think, argue and sometimes disagree.”

The list includes James’ “The Disappearsers,” about a group of gay men in his native Jamaica in what was a hostile environment in the 1980s; Stuart’s “John of John,” a story of father-son secrets on a remote Scottish island. James won the Booker in 2015 for “A Brief



Jamaican author Marlon James poses with the award after his book, “A Brief History of Seven Killings,” was named as winner of the 2015 Booker Prize for Fiction in London on Oct. 13, 2015. (AP)

History of Seven Killings” and Stuart won in 2020 for “Shuggie Bain.”

If either were to win, they would be the fifth author to have been awarded the Booker Prize twice, joining J.M. Coetzee, Peter Carey, Hilary Mantel and Margaret Atwood.

Also on the shortlist is Pulitzer Prize laureate Elizabeth Strout, whose heartfelt small-town tale “The Things We

Never Say” once again celebrates the lives of those in her native New England. Strout’s “Oh William!” was a finalist in 2022. She won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 2009 for “Olive Kitteridge.”

The others on the list are British authors Rebecca Perry for Medieval-to-modern tale “May We Feed the King”; 81-year-old M. John Harrison, who would become the oldest winner of the award if his postapocalyptic tale “The End of Everything” wins; and the quirky campus novel “Black Bag” from Luke Kennard.

It’s only the second time in the past decade that men have outnumbered women on the shortlist.

Beard said the judging panel, which included Pulp frontman Jarvis Cocker and American novelist Patricia Lockwood, concluded their deliberations “neatly propped up against one another, almost glowing.”

“These novels range from the hilarious to the discomfiting, from the frighteningly strange to the alarmingly domestic, from the powerfully shocking to the intriguingly understated,” she said.

Founded in 1969, the Booker Prize has a reputation for transforming writers’ careers and is open to novels from any country published in the U.K. and Ireland. Last year’s winner was “Flesh” by Hungarian-British writer David Szalay.

This year’s winner will be announced on Monday, Nov. 9.

Lawmakers seek federal AI department

Sanders, Casar unveil bill to curb advanced AI

WASHINGTON, Sept 23, (AP): Two leading progressive lawmakers, Sen. Bernie Sanders and Rep. Greg Casar, are unveiling legislation Wednesday that would ban artificial superintelligence and create a federal agency to oversee advanced AI as some of the industry’s own leaders urge Congress to impose guardrails on the advancing technology.

The bill, provided first to The Associated Press, would also pause advanced AI development until guidelines are implemented while creating the Department of Artificial Intelligence. Multiple employees at leading AI companies are endorsing the bill.

“It doesn’t take a genius to say, ‘slow it down,’” Sanders, I-Vt., said in an interview with AP. “Do we really want to develop a super intelligence that when it becomes smarter than human beings could act independently of human control? I don’t think we do.”

Congress has so far done little to rein in the AI industry even as some of its most prominent leaders warn about potentially catastrophic risks. President Donald Trump has resisted recent calls for greater government oversight, putting him at odds with tech leaders including Anthropic’s Dario Amodei, OpenAI’s Sam Altman and xAI’s Elon Musk.

The legislation would permanently prohibit artificial superintelligence, which it defines as a system that exceeds human cognitive ability or has sufficient capabilities to plan and execute the destruction or disempowerment of humanity.

It would temporarily pause development of the most advanced AI systems until new federal safety rules are established by a new Department of Artificial Intelligence. Ad-



Sen. Bernie Sanders speaks about topics including politics and artificial intelligence, Monday, June 8, 2026, at the National Press Club in Washington. (AP)

vanced AI systems would then need federal approval before they could be deployed. Violations could carry significant penalties, including up to 20 years in prison in some cases.

A number of current employees at AI companies and experts signed on in support of the bill, according to a statement shared with AP.

Juan Felipe Cerón Uribe, a researcher in OpenAI’s Safety Systems, said in a statement supporting the bill that “superintelligence could either go extremely right or extremely wrong” and that “we shouldn’t be playing such games.”

Swante Scholz, a software engineer at Google DeepMind

reported Monday. She became the only female speedcuber to achieve an average below 4.5 seconds, it said.

The association listed Lian on its website as the record holder for the fastest women’s average time solving the 3x3x3 cube.

Wearing a red hairband with a bow, Lian looked serious as her small fingers moved quickly during the Wuhan competition. She smiled proudly and clapped after one attempt took her only about 3.54 seconds.

CCTV said Lian first tried to solve a Rubik’s Cube when she was 4 years old, and it used to take her 90 seconds to

solve it. She initially lacked the confidence to compete, but became more enthusiastic about the puzzle as her results improved and she gained recognition. That encouraged her to train harder and persevere through challenges, it said.

“She was an introverted kid. Now, she is very confident wherever she goes,” her mother Lin Yangxi was quoted as saying.

CCTV said Lian has mastered more than 1,300 solving formulas and recently spent roughly two to three hours daily on training. Her parents also brought her to Shanghai to learn from top coaches, it added. (AP)

Variety

BEIJING: A 6-year-old Chinese girl has set a new women’s world record by solving Rubik’s cubes at an average pace of just over four seconds per cube.

Lian Yunzhi first broke the record earlier this month with an average time of 4.52 seconds at a World Cube Association-certified competition in the central Chinese city of Wuhan and improved to 4.27 seconds at another race in the southern city of Guangzhou, state broadcaster CCTV

Fall and winter mark peak season for common respiratory infections

Does my kid have COVID-19 or just cold? Pediatric nurse explains how to tell – and why it matters

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

By Ann Sheehan
Michigan State University

Fall and winter mark the peak season for common respiratory infections such as respiratory syncytial virus, or RSV; influenza, better known as the flu; and the common cold. These illnesses - along with COVID-19, which tends to peak in both late summer and winter - often begin with symptoms that look very similar, so telling them apart can be tricky - especially when the beginning of cold and flu season in the fall can be the tail end of summer seasonal allergies.

So if your child comes down with symptoms like a cough, runny nose or sore throat, should you keep them home?

As a primary care pediatric nurse practitioner, I help families make informed decisions about this question and other aspects of their child’s health.

Sending your child to school when they are sick can make recovery longer and spread illness to classmates and school staff. And all of these common infections can have serious consequences for some members of the school community - or their families - who have underlying health conditions that raise the risk of complications.

Figuring out whether your child has COVID-19, the flu, RSV or the common cold is important because some of these illnesses can cause serious complications in certain children.

COVID-19 has a higher risk of severe or long-term health effects, including long COVID. The others are not harmless, however. The flu can cause significant illness and hospitalization, and RSV can be especially serious for infants, young children and those with chronic health conditions.

All four of these illnesses spread easily. Keeping children home when they are sick helps reduce that spread, protecting vulnerable children and school staff.

Colds are caused by a variety of viruses - which is why they are so common. Frequent cold symptoms include coughing, sneezing, sore throat and a runny nose. These symptoms are generally mild and usually improve on their own

within about 7-10 days.

COVID-19, on the other hand, is caused by a single virus called “severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2”, or SARS-CoV-2.

The symptoms of COVID-19 tend to last longer - 7-14 days, with some lingering for three to four weeks. Beyond common cold symptoms like a cough, sore throat and runny nose, people sick with COVID-19 often have body aches, shortness of breath and difficulty breathing, headache, fatigue, fever and loss of taste and/or smell.

One sign that often differentiates COVID-19 is stomach symptoms such as abdominal pain, vomiting and diarrhea. Not all children experience these symptoms, but they are not associated with the common cold.

The symptoms of the flu, caused by the influenza A or B virus, tend to come on very quickly, unlike the gradual onset of a cold or COVID-19. Symptoms last about 3-7 days, and they’re very similar to those of COVID-19 - except they don’t usually include loss of taste or smell.

RSV symptoms align with those of a cold, but include a decreased appetite. Also, RSV affects the lungs and can lead to serious lung infections and hospitalization, especially for infants and toddlers. The symptoms can last three to four weeks.

If your child has symptoms that could be one of these viruses, keeping them home from school is a good idea. It helps protect other children and school staff from becoming ill.

A general rule of thumb for making the call is to consider whether your child can comfortably participate in classroom activities. If the answer is yes, then it’s likely fine to send them to school. But if they’ve had a fever in the past 24 hours, or have diarrhea, nausea or vomiting, it’s best that they stay home and rest.

The American Academy of Pediatrics notes that children with certain medical conditions, including obesity and diabetes, immune system deficiencies and complex medical conditions, may be more likely to become seriously ill if they contract COVID-19, RSV or the flu.

Figuring out from symptoms alone whether your child has COVID-19 is often impossible. A home COVID-19 test can be a useful tool if you suspect COVID-19 - for example, if your child has some of the symptoms or was exposed to someone with COVID-19 - or if your child has a chronic medical condition that puts them at high risk of complications.

Killing endangered wildlife legal if they aren’t the target: new Trump administration rule

BILLINGS, Montana, Sept 23, (AP): Killing endangered animals while logging a forest or building a dam would not be considered illegal unless the animals were specifically targeted, under a new interpretation of the Endangered Species Act by President Donald Trump’s administration that marks a sea change in how the landmark environmental law is enforced.

A directive sent to US Fish and Wildlife Service employees this week says imperiled animals or plants must be intentionally targeted for their killing to be considered illegal.

That’s a sharp turnaround from past practice at the wildlife service, which historically held people liable even for accidentally harming protected species such as grizzly bears, manatees and spotted owls.

Experts said the change would allow timber companies to log forests in the Pacific Northwest even if they knew that doing so could kill imperiled birds nesting in the trees, or for developers to build a dam knowing it would kill salmon.

“This cuts against the entire history of the Endangered Species Act,” said Dan Ashe, who led the Fish and Wildlife Service under former President Barack Obama.

“It just creates a huge loophole,” added Ashe, who is now president of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. “It completely relieves people of any responsibility for their actions, even consequences that can be easily predicted.”

Encouraged by Republican lawmakers and industry lobbyists, officials under Trump have moved to dismantle key parts of the endangered species law and make companies exempt from its regulations. Administration officials have said they are returning the law to its original intent, following a 2024 Supreme Court decision that limited the authority of federal agencies to interpret environmental statutes passed by Congress.

States and conservation groups have filed numerous lawsuits seeking to turn back the changes.

The new interpretation of what it means to harm - or “take” - a species was detailed in a Sept. 14 directive from Fish and Wildlife Service Director Brian Nesvik.

“Felling a tree is not a take of the bats roosting in it unless the tree is felled for the purpose of killing or capturing them,” Nesvik wrote, adding that the bats would only be impacted “indirectly and accidentally.”

The directive, reported earlier by The New York Times, leans heavily on a dissenting opinion from former Justice Antonin Scalia in a 1995 Supreme Court case. It comes on the heels of a new rule from the wildlife service in July that narrowed the definition of “harm” under the Endangered Species Act, or ESA.

Nesvik’s directive will guide how that new rule is put into action, according to a Thursday statement from the Interior Department, which includes the Fish and Wildlife Service.

“Under the guidance, the ESA’s prohibition on ‘take’ continues to prohibit conduct including harassing, pursuing, hunting, shooting, wounding, killing, trapping, capturing or collecting protected wildlife,” Interior Department officials said.

For decades, the government had defined harm to imperiled animals broadly to include encroachments on places where they live. Environmentalists warn the recent moves, if allowed to stand, will speed extinctions by letting protected species be killed and opening the door to habitat destruction.

“This is basically a free-for-all,” said Noah Greenwald with the Center for Biological Diversity, an environmental group. “It’s a radical reinterpretation that would put polluters and other industry before the natural world.”



A northern spotted owl flies after a mouse jumping off the end of a stick in the Deschutes National Forest near Camp Sherman, Ore on May 8, 2003. (AP)

Trump announces all 50 US states joining Medicaid drug pricing model

WASHINGTON, Sept 23, (AP): US President Donald Trump announced that all 50 states will join in on a program set to provide Most Favored Nation pricing to some drugs within the Medicaid program, bringing the net price of selected drugs down to prices paid in certain other countries.

The Trump administration claims that Medicaid will save billions on prescription drug costs as a result of the plan, dubbed the Medicaid “GENEROUS” model. Experts say the savings are unclear since the content of the deals isn’t public.

“This one thing alone should win us the midterms,” Trump told reporters in the Oval Office Friday, flanked by Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Administrator Mehmet Oz and others.

Friday’s announcement comes as cost-of-living issues are at the forefront of voters’ concerns ahead of the midterm elections in November. In a way to address affordability concerns, Trump has cut deals with pharmaceutical companies so that the cost of some drugs in the US would not be dramatically higher than in other affluent nations. But critics say his administration has not presented a viable plan for broadly addressing rising health costs, especially after Republicans let expire Affordable Care Act subsidies earlier this year that sent plan costs soaring.

Last year, Trump signed an executive order instituting a “Most Favored Nations” policy, where the US would commit to paying the same price for medications as the nation that pays the lowest price anywhere in the world.

The White House in May estimated that Trump’s deals with pharmaceutical companies to lower some of their US prescription drug prices to levels charged in other countries could save \$529 billion over the next 10 years.

Patients in Medicaid, the state and federally funded program for people with low incomes, already pay a nominal co-payment of a few dollars to fill their prescriptions, but lower prices could help state budgets that fund the programs.

Trump said, “Every state will have the ability to use those extra billions of dollars to invest in other healthcare improvements or something else.”

The true cost of the claimed savings is unclear since few details of the deals struck by the Trump administration and participating pharmaceutical



US President Donald Trump speaks as South Dakota Gov Larry Rhoden, (from left), Arkansas Gov Sarah Huckabee Sanders, Mehmet Oz, administrator of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Mississippi Gov Tate Reeves and Abe Sutton, director of the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation, listen during an event about healthcare in the Oval Office of the White House on Sept 18, in Washington. (AP)

companies have been made public, making it hard to independently verify the projected savings.

Kush Desai, a White House spokesman, pointed to drug deals negotiated during former President Joe Biden’s term under the Inflation Reduction Act that did not include commercially sensitive information and said experts “now poking holes at the Trump administration for also not wanting to disclose commercially sensitive information should be regarded as either an idiot or partisan hack.”

Kathy Hempstead, a senior policy adviser at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, told The Associated Press that there is significant pressure on the administration to provide more granular data to justify its cost-savings claims, and that the lack of information creates a barrier to legislative action.

“He is saying Congress should codify all of his MFN arrangements,” Hempstead said. “But it’s kind of unreasonable because it’s not clear what Congress would actually do. No one knows what is in these deals.”

She added that there is concern about whether the current administration’s tenure will affect the longevity of these price cuts and whether prices will revert once the administration leaves.

Some want to see more people benefit from lower drug pricing.

JD Hayworth, a former Republican congressman and spokesperson for the Pharmaceutical Reform Alliance, said in a statement that Friday’s announcement reflects “meaningful progress, but that progress remains incomplete,” as millions of Americans not enrolled in government healthcare want lower drug prices.

Also:
WASHINGTON: Health and Human Services Secretary **Robert F. Kennedy Jr** gave the keynote address at a conference of an anti-vaccine activist group he once chaired, telling the hundreds in attendance that they had a friend in President **Donald Trump’s** White House.

It was Kennedy’s first time appearing at the Children’s Health Defense conference since he became secretary. Kennedy took leave from the group when he launched his bid to become president in 2023, but his speech served as a sort of homecoming, offering him a platform from which to hail the administration’s steps to scale back vaccine guidance and reassure the activists in attendance that he was working to turn their priorities into policy.

“Let me be clear: You have a strong and steadfast friend in the White House. We’ve accomplished in 19 months things that would have seemed unthinkable two years ago,” he said.



A firefighter sprays water in an attempt to extinguish a wildfire burning through a peatland forest in Pulang Pisau, Central Kalimantan, Indonesia on Sept 5. (AP)

El Nino-driven heat could cause nearly half million more deaths, says group

BENGALURU, India, Sept 23, (AP): This year’s powerful El Nino and the record global heat it’s driving, along with severe droughts, wildfires and shrinking water supplies, could lead to nearly half a million more deaths worldwide by the end of February, according to a research report released Wednesday.

The grim warning by the University of Chicago-based Climate Impact Lab says that as many as 451,000 more heat-related deaths between June and the end of February could be attributed to El Nino, compared with heat deaths expected in a typical year.

The heaviest toll, the group says, is expected in poorer countries, already struggling with food insecurity and high energy costs, partly due to climate change and the fallout of the war in Iran.

Michael Greenstone, a co-founder of the group and the study’s co-author, said the heat danger will likely persist beyond February - even though this El Nino is expected to end by then. The fallout of the

weather phenomenon could be felt well into next summer, he added.

The research, he said, shows that heat is most dangerous in places that are already hot and relatively poor.

“If you’re already in a hot place, the extra couple of degrees are going to be much more dangerous,” he said. Wealthier places, he added, generally have greater access to air conditioning, reliable water supplies and functioning health systems.

The study combined seasonal temperature forecasts with localized estimates of how high temperatures affect mortality across more than 24,000 regions worldwide.

Researchers estimated the additional heat-related deaths by comparing deaths expected under El Nino-driven high temperatures with deaths expected if temperatures remained similar to what they have been in the last three decades. The projected fatalities are for the entire El Nino period, from June 2026 until the end of February 2027.

The study by Greenstone and his colleagues also warns that the Global

South - a term that isn’t geographical but a reference to developing countries in general - will bear the heaviest burden of the excessive heat.

The researchers behind the report found that the Sahel region in Africa - countries along the semiarid southern fringe of the Sahara Desert - is expected to be the hardest-hit, with about 66,800 additional deaths caused by El Nino-driven heat.

Other major hot spots include South and Southeast Asia and parts of Latin America, according to the report. The researchers project about 19,400 additional heat-related deaths across the Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand and Cambodia, as well as 19,300 in Indonesia, 15,800 in India and 13,300 in Brazil.

With such staggering numbers, there are recommended measures that governments can take, the report says. They include heat-warning systems, cooling centers, hydration stations, protections for outdoor workers, expanded hospital capacity and targeted outreach to elderly people and other vulnerable groups.

SPORTS

FIA member clubs to gather in Philippines for congress

Sulayem highlights importance of Asia-Pacific region to future of motor sport, mobility

DUBAI, Sept 23: Mohammed Ben Sulayem, President of the FIA, has highlighted the importance of the Asia-Pacific region to the future of both motor sport and mobility ahead of the Federation's regional congress in Boracay in the Philippines next week.

The Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA), the global governing body for motor sport and the federation for mobility organisations worldwide, will be hosted by the Automobile Association Philippines (AAP) for the annual event getting under way on Tuesday.

The congress will see 120 delegates from Member Clubs across Asia and the Pacific uniting in Boracay for three days of collaboration, innovation and knowledge sharing. Throughout the week, attendees will discuss priorities to advance safe and sustainable mobility for road users and drive greater motor sport accessibility.

Mohammed Ben Sulayem, Presi-

dent of the FIA, said: "The Asia-Pacific region is central to the future of both mobility and motor sport, and our Member Clubs are at the heart of that progress. From improving road safety and embracing innovation to creating new opportunities for people to participate in motor sport, our Clubs are delivering real impact for their communities."

"The FIA Asia Pacific Congress gives us an important opportunity to bring that expertise together, share ideas and strengthen collaboration across one of the most diverse and dynamic regions in our Federation."

The Asia-Pacific region is one of the FIA's most diverse and dynamic, spanning some of the world's fastest-growing mobility markets and an expanding motor sport community. The Congress will provide Member Clubs with an opportunity to share expertise and develop practical solutions which respond to the specific needs of their members and communities.



Mohammed Ben Sulayem, President of the FIA.

Across mobility, discussions will focus on road safety, innovation, sustainable and accessible transport, tourism and the changing needs of road users, building on the FIA's

work to support Clubs in delivering meaningful impact at a national and regional level.

Motor sport sessions will explore opportunities to increase participa-

tion, strengthen grassroots competition and create more accessible pathways into the sport, supporting the FIA's ambition to make motor sport more affordable and accessible around the world.

The programme will also showcase the work and innovation of FIA Member Clubs across Asia-Pacific, providing a platform to share successful initiatives which can be adapted and scaled across the region.

FIA Region II President and President of host club the Automobile Association Philippines, Augustus 'Joe' Ferreria said: "The strength of this region comes from the diversity, knowledge and ambition of our Member Clubs. Bringing our community together in the Philippines gives us the opportunity to learn from one another, identify shared challenges and develop solutions that can support Clubs across the region."

"The Asia Pacific Congress is an

important moment for us to build on the progress already being made and ensure our Clubs have the tools, knowledge and connections they need to continue growing."

The Congress follows a period of significant activity for the FIA across the region. The FIA has expanded its Safe Mobility 4 All & 4 Life programme into Asia-Pacific, supporting Member Clubs and authorities with training and practical tools to improve road safety, while initiatives including the FIA Innovation Challenge continue to showcase Club-led solutions which can be shared and scaled across the Federation.

Across motor sport, the region continues to play an important role at every level of competition, from grassroots participation and regional championships through to the FIA's major World Championships with Malaysia set to host the Bahrain Grand Prix in the days following the congress.



South Africa's André Esterhuizen, center, is tackled by New Zealand's Jordie Barrett, left, and his teammate Tupou Vaa'i during a third international test rugby match between South Africa and New Zealand, in Johannesburg, South Africa. (AP)

Etzebeth, Hooker retain spots

South Africa makes 13 changes for Wallabies rugby test in Perth

PERTH, Australia, Sept 23, (AP): South Africa has made wholesale changes - a total of 13 - to its starting lineup for Sunday's one-off rugby test against the Wallabies in Perth, Western Australia.

Only lock Eben Etzebeth and winger Ethan Hooker retained their starting roles from the team that beat the All Blacks 43-28 at Baltimore to seal a 3-1 series win in the inaugural Rugby's Greatest Rivalry.

Etzebeth will extend his record as the most capped Springbok of all time to 147 test matches.

Props Jan-Hendrik Wessels and Zachary Porthen will join forces with hooker Johan Grobbelaar in a new-look front row, while two-time World Cup-winning flyhalf Handre Pollard returns from a calf injury to form a new halves pairing with fit-again scrumhalf Herschel Jantjies.

Centre Andre Esterhuizen has been named skipper, making him South Africa's 68th captain.

Lock Franco Mostert will play his first test since facing Wales last November.

Despite the mass changes, only three players named in the starting lineup have fewer than 10 test caps - winger Edwill van der Merwe, lock Paul de Villiers and prop Porthen.

"Australia poses a completely different threat to New Zealand in the way they play, so we believe these combinations would be best suited for the challenge that we will face against them," South Africa coach Rassie Erasmus said.

"This is going to be a big challenge against a team that has been playing good rugby, and who have won four of their last five matches, with their other result being a draw against the Pumas in Argentina."

Erasmus had no second thoughts about allowing veteran duo Pieter-Steph du Toit and Damian de Allende to return home so they could spend time with family.

"They had a heavy workload in the last few months, and they deserve a break," Erasmus said.

South Africa Squad:

Aphelele Fassi, Edwill van der Merwe, Canan Moodie, Andre Esterhuizen (captain), Ethan Hooker, Handre Pollard, Herschel Jantjies, Marco van Staden, Elrigh Louw, Paul de Villiers, Franco Mostert, Eben Etzebeth, Zachary Porthen, Johan Grobbelaar, Jan-Hendrik Wessels. Reserves: Malcolm Marx, Ox Nche, Wilco Louw, Lood de Jager, Jasper Wiese, Morne van den Berg, Sacha Feinberg-Mngomezulu, Quan Horn.

Madrid calls for new La Liga chief

MADRID, Sept 23, (AP): Real Madrid called for a new Spanish league president on Tuesday, arguing that Javier Tebas's comments against the club regarding refereeing complaints were "intolerable."

Madrid released a statement hours after Tebas criticized the club for attacking the refereeing crew in the team's 2-1 loss at Atletico Madrid on Sunday. It said that "given this inappropriate behavior," Spanish soccer "urgently needs a leader capable of managing it and developing its full potential with the fundamental duty of neutrality."

"It needs someone who understands the nature of their role, as the president of La Liga is not the owner of the competition but a manager serving the clubs that comprise it and entrust him with its direction," Real Madrid said. "The clubs need someone who serves this mission with honesty."

Tebas responded to Madrid's statement saying he "fully" agreed with one thing: "The president of La Liga is not the owner of the competition. Neither is the president of Real Madrid."

"I am neither the owner of La Liga nor will I manage it as if it belonged to a single club," Tebas said on social media. "I respect everyone. I am beholden to no one."

Madrid and Tebas have often traded barbs on various issues related to Spanish and European soccer.

Madrid said Tuesday it does not accept Tebas' use of "his institutional position to continue discrediting and attacking Real Madrid."

"It is also very concerning that



Real Madrid's head coach Jose Mourinho speaks to Referee Miguel Angel Ortiz Arias during a Spanish La Liga soccer match between Atletico Madrid and Real Madrid in Madrid. (AP)

someone who is responsible for representing and protecting the interests of all La Liga clubs is repeatedly obsessed with targeting Real Madrid, turning our club into a constant subject of his public attacks," it said.

Tebas said on X that Madrid is always finding an excuse to complain, and that it uses the alleged referees' mistake as a way to hide its deficiencies. Tebas was responding to an article that talked about an alleged conspiracy against Madrid.

"To claim that referees are targeting Real Madrid is to live in another galaxy," Tebas said. "That narrative serves as a smokescreen to mask other shortcomings that are glaringly obvious in these opening matches of the season."

INDIANAPOLIS, Sept 23, (AP): Caitlin Clark had 27 points, nine assists and seven rebounds, and Kelsey Mitchell added 20 points to her WNBA single-season scoring record as Indiana beat Minnesota 96-77.

Indiana kept alive its faint hopes of earning the No. 4 seed in the playoffs and home-court advantage in the first round for at least one more day.

Mitchell extended her league record to 27 consecutive games with 20 or more points by making a 3-pointer with a little more than two minutes to play. Aliyah Boston added 17 points and seven rebounds for the Fever.

Chloe Bibby scored all of her 15 points on 3s for Minnesota. Liatu King finished with 12 points on a night the Lynx was without Olivia Miles. The record-breaking rookie was a late scratch because of an injured left calf, and her absence clearly had an impact. Miles broke Clark's single-season scoring record by a rookie on Sunday.

Mystics 79, Sun 69

In Washington, Shakira Austin had 25 points and 13 rebounds to help the Washington Mystics beat the Connecticut Sun for their franchise-record 27th win of the season.

Washington (27-16) set the previous mark of 26 wins in 2019, en route to the franchise's only WNBA championship.

The Mystics stretched their lead over Dallas and New York (tied for seventh) to one game with two days remaining in the regular season. Diamond Miller led Connecticut (10-33) with 19 points. Leila Lacan and Raegan Beers scored 11 points apiece. McMahon had 13 points and Sonia Citron 12 for the Mystics.

Sky 97, Tempo 85

In Chicago, Gabriela Jaquez and Sydney Taylor scored 18 points apiece, Kamilla Cardoso added 17, and beat Toronto to snap a five-game losing streak.

The Tempo (11-31) has lost seven in a row and 19 of its last 20.



Minnesota Lynx guard Kayla McBride (21) defends Indiana Fever guard Caitlin Clark (22) in the first half of a WNBA basketball game in Indianapolis. (AP)

Jaquez was 8-of-10 shooting and Cardoso made 8 of 11 from the field. Jacy Sheldon scored 12 points and Courtney Vandersloot had 10 points and nine assists for the Sky (16-27).

Cardoso scored eight points during an 18-2 third-quarter run that gave Chicago a 62-48 lead with 3:29 left in the period.

Isabelle Harrison scored 17 of her 21 points in the first half and had 13 rebounds for Toronto. Laura Juskaite added 20 points.

Aces 89, Sparks 79

In Las Vegas, four-time MVP A'ja Wilson scored 18 points and grabbed 10 rebounds to lead the Aces to a victory over Los Angeles and clinch at least a No. 3 playoff seed for Las Vegas.

The Aces (30-13), on a six-game

winning streak, will get home-court advantage in the first round of the playoffs, which begin Sunday. If the standings hold, they would face No. 6 seed Washington (27-16) in the best-of-three series.

Chelsea Gray scored 17 points of for the Aces. Stephanie Talbot had 14 points and Jackie Young totaled 14 points and 11 assists.

Nneka Ogumike, who was honored before the game, scored 17 points to lead the Sparks (16-27). Erica Wheeler added 16 points.

Fire 90, Valkyries 82, OT

In Portland, Carla Leite made the tiebreaking basket with 1:57 left in overtime and then converted a three-point play with 26.5 seconds to play as Portland ended the season with a victory over Golden State. Leite

finished with 18 points for the Fire (17-27), who snapped a four-game losing streak. Bridget Carleton led the Fire with 26 points, including five 3-pointers.

Gabby Williams had 17 points for Golden State (31-12), which led 17-0 but had its six-game winning streak snapped. The loss clinched the No. 1 seed in the playoffs for the Minnesota Lynx.

The teams traded free throws and 3-pointers to open overtime before Leite's layup gave the Fire an 84-82 lead. Kaila Charles missed a 3-point attempt for the Valkyries before Leite's step-back 20-foot jumper and free throw put Portland up 87-82. The Fire made free throws the rest of the way for the final margin.

We want to make some real noise, says Udoka

Udoka demands more from Rockets after early exits

HOUSTON, Sept 23, (AP): Coach Ime Udoka is looking for much more from the Houston Rockets after they won 52 regular-season games before losing in the first round of the playoffs in each of the last two years.

"We're not here to just make the first round, we want to make some real noise," Udoka said Tuesday as he began his fourth year in Houston. "Everybody's hungrier for that and to take the next step and not plateau."

The Rockets kicked off the NBA season Tuesday as the first team to hold media day. They'll open preseason with two games against the Dallas Mavericks on Oct. 9 and 11 in Macao, China.

Houston's media day had a much more optimistic tone this year with the return of point guard Fred VanVleet, who missed all last season after tearing an ACL just before last year's event.

"I'm definitely more excited than I was going into last season," general manager Rafael Stone said. "The way Fred's injury hit right on the eve of the season, that was hard on everybody and so maybe I was a little bit more nervous. And this year I feel like I know what to expect more from this group, which lends itself to some excitement for me to see what's going on."

Udoka said VanVleet has been fully cleared for training camp and the point guard can't wait to get back on the court with his team.

"Where I am right now, with the season about 30 days out, I feel really good," he said. "It's going to be a process still, so you guys see won't see the finished product, but I'm in a really good spot."

Along with the return of VanVleet, the Rockets welcome back big man Steven Adams, who was



Houston Rockets head coach Ime Udoka signals a play from the sideline during a home game.

limited to only 32 games last season because of an ankle injury that required surgery. Their biggest offseason addition was 2021-22 Defensive Player of the Year Marcus Smart, who the Rockets hope will make fellow defensive star Amen Thompson take another step in his fourth season.

Kevin Durant was healthy throughout the regular season, starting 78 games in his first year in Houston after a blockbuster trade from Phoenix. But he was limited to only one game in the play-

offs because of an ankle injury as the Rockets lost to the Lakers in six games.

Udoka said he hopes to get Thompson and Durant's minutes down after the two ranked first and second in minutes played in the regular season last year.

That was news to Durant, a 16-time All-Star who turns 38 next week.

"It's been the same message from me for a long time, I'm better on the court," he said. "The team is better when I'm on the court."

Durant said he isn't opposed to sitting out in the fourth quarter if the Rockets have the lead but he's opposed to doing so just to get him off his feet.

"Not just for the sake of getting my minutes down just because he's older or he played a lot of minutes," Durant said. "That's what I'm supposed to be training for is to play the long haul, play 48 minutes a night. I get the concern, but if the game needs me to be out there, I want to be out there."

Udoka said a big focus this season will be finishing games after more than half of Houston's 30 losses came in games where they had double-digit leads.

Fixing that problem combined with the return of VanVleet and Adams has Stone optimistic that this could be a big year for the Rockets as they chase their first title since winning back-to-back championships in 1994-95.

"We obviously had some challenges last year, particularly on the injury front and lost quite a few games that that we thought we could have won and we still had a good year," Stone said. "So, I think there's just a lot of meat on the bone for us to improve upon."

Chinese 13-year-old Yu Zidi clinches third swimming gold medal

Afghan female cyclist wins silver at Asian Games after disguising herself as man to train

NAGOYA, Japan, Sept 23, (AP): The easy part for Fariba Hashimi was winning a silver medal in the women's cycling road race at the Asian Games.

The nearly impossible part for the female cyclist from Afghanistan was trying to train in her country. To do that, she dressed as a man in a place where women have few rights.

"All the time when I was going to training," she said, "I was dressing as a guy."

She said she also hid her face when she could in order to not be recognized.

"Because sometimes when they recognized me, they were trying to throw ... stone(s) or hitting me," she said.

Hashimi won silver Tuesday in a time of 2 hours, 50 minutes, 5 seconds, which marked another leg in a journey that began in 2021 when she left Afghanistan.

"In 2021, when the Taliban moved into my country, I escaped my country because I wanted to follow my dream," she said. "I want to show the Afghanistan women in the world that ... we can have an opportunity."

Hashimi talked about having many dreams for women in Afghanistan, dreams for herself and dreams that may take time to be realized.

"I'm really, really happy and I'm full of emotion. I don't know how I can explain it for you," she said.

"I hope one day I come back in my country and ride the streets of Kabul - and riding with the women side by side to share the same passion," she explained.

"And I hope in the future changing some things," she added. "I think we are really tired of the situation of our country and I hope the Taliban is watching."



In this image made from video, Afghanistan's Fariba Hashimi, who won the Silver Medal for Women's Road Race, speaks with the Associated Press in Shinshiro, Japan. (AP)

Meanwhile, Chinese 13-year-old Yu Zidi won her third swimming gold medal in the Asian Games on Wednesday, taking the women's 400-meter individual medley in 4 minutes, 28.56 seconds.

She was less than five seconds off the world record held by Canadian Summer McIntosh at 4:23.65.

Yu took the 200 butterfly and 200 IM earlier in the games in times that put her within reach McIntosh. McIntosh won all three of these events two years ago in the Paris Olympics and holds the world records in each event.

Yu seems certain to face off with McIntosh in the swimming world championships next year in Budapest, Hungary, and a year later at the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

China won six of the seven events on Wednesday, the fourth day of competition in the pool, and has now won 21 gold medals in 27 events in swimming. The Chinese won 28 gold medals in the pool in the Asian Games in 2023 in Hangzhou, China, and are a cinch to surpass that total.

Two days remain in the pool and Yu may still swim a relay.

In addition to Yu, China also got gold medals on Wednesday from Yu Yiting in the women's 100 fly (56.41), and Peng Xuwei in the women's 100 backstroke (59.30).

Zhang Zhanshou won the men's 200 free in 1:43.49 with another gold for Tang Qianting in the women's 100 breaststroke in 1:04.98. China also won the mixed medley relay.

The only non-Chinese gold medalist on Wednesday was Shoon Mitsunaga of Japan, who won the men's 100 fly in 50.56.

Man City salvages draw at Bayern in return to Women's Champs League



Bayern's Giulia Gwinn, right, collides with Manchester City's Beth Mead and Lauren Hemp, left, during the women's Champions League opening phase soccer match between FC Bayern Munich and Manchester City in Munich, Germany. (AP)

Arsenal earns late win at home to HB Køge

LONDON, Sept 23, (AP): Manchester City rallied from two goals down to draw 2-2 at Bayern Munich in its return to the Women's Champions League at the start of the league phase.

Two-time European champion Arsenal needed a stoppage-time winner to defeat HB Køge 1-0 at home, while Inter Milan, making its debut in the competition proper, edged visiting Håcken by the same score.

Benfica won 2-1 at Juventus with a pair of goals by Marit Bratberg Lund, and Real Madrid and Paris Saint-Germain drew 1-1 in the Spanish capital, with Felicia Schröder scoring for the hosts two minutes into the match and PSG equalizing with a second-half penalty by Sakina Karchaoui.

Bayern, a semifinalist last season, got off to a quick start with Giulia Gwinn scoring in the 11th minute and with an own-goal by Kerstin Casparij in the 28th.

City began its rally before halftime, with Beth Mead netting in the 45th. Carlotta Wamser, who just joined City from Bayer Leverkusen,

completed the comeback with a shot from inside the area in the 86th for her first Champions League goal.

"It feels very special. It's a dream as a kid to play in the Champions League and play against the best players in the world," Wamser said, according to UEFA.com.

Forward Khadija Shaw missed a 62nd-minute penalty kick for City, which became the first English team not to lose away to Bayern in Europe.

"We lost intensity a bit in the second half and made too many mistakes and too easy mistakes, and at this level it goes against you, so we have to learn from it," Bayern midfielder Linda Dallmann said. "We had the chances, especially at the end, we had two big chances. At this level, you have to score. I think we deserved it at the end. But it's our fault, we have to work on that."

City made it to the quarterfinals two seasons ago, being eliminated by Chelsea, but didn't qualify for the European tournament last season.

"We want to show what we're about in Europe," Mead said. "We showed that in the second half here, now we need to do it for 90 minutes. Obviously it's a very different competition com-

pared to domestic football. Hopefully we can get up to speed quickly and show what we're about against Madrid (in the next game)."

It made it back after its first year under coach Andrée Jégliert, who helped the team end Chelsea's dominance of the Women's Super League to claim its first league title in a decade. City also won the FA Cup to complete a domestic double.

It was Bayern's first competitive match at its new venue, the Sportpark Unterhaching.

Arsenal, the 2024-25 champion, was headed to a scoreless draw against Danish club HB Køge at home when Mariona Caldentey converted a penalty kick three minutes into stoppage time.

HB Køge, playing in the competition proper for the first time since the 2021-22 season, withstood the Arsenal pressure for most of the match until conceding the late penalty.

"For the whole 90 minutes, we worked so hard," Arsenal midfielder Kyra Cooney-Cross said. "We never give up. We are a hard-working team and we always want to score goals, create chances, but at the moment it is quite difficult. We got the three points and that is all that matters."

Little concern to U.S. captain Brandt Snedeker

Scheffler dominates golf, but Cups have proved a different challenge

MEDINAH, Ill., Sept 23, (AP): Scottie Scheffler is the undisputed No. 1 player in the world, a winner of 25 tournaments worldwide and three legs of the career Grand Slam, all within the last five years.

It just doesn't look that way when it comes to team competition.

His record in the two Presidents Cups he has played is 3-5-1. Scheffler avoided a complete shutout in the Ryder Cup last year by beating Rory McIlroy in singles to go 1-4-0 for the week at Bethpage Black, lowering his record in those matches to 3-6-3.

This is of little concern to Scheffler, or to U.S. captain Brandt Snedeker.

"Scottie Scheffler being Scottie Scheffler is the most important thing for us as a team," Snedeker said Tuesday after another cool, cloudy day of practice at rain-softened Medinah. "We can't ask him to do more than he can do. He can only deliver five points at his best if he goes out and plays un-

believable. We just want Scottie to go out there and be comfortable."

Snedeker was at Medinah in 2012 for the Ryder Cup when Tiger Woods didn't win any of his four matches as Europe rallied to win.

That was always the most curious part of Woods' incomparable career - a world beater except in the Ryder Cup, where he had a career mark of 13-21-3. He fared

much better in the Presidents Cup (27-15-1), a product of being on so many winning teams.

Being the best in golf often comes with a target on the back, that extra level of motivation for the player - or players in team formats - trying to beat him.

Scheffler made his Ryder Cup debut in 2021 before he had won on the PGA Tour. Most memorable that week was starting with

four straight birdies to go 4 up in four holes and beating Jon Rahm, 4 and 3. Scheffler, a captain's pick, was unbeaten in three matches at Whistling Straits.

Remarkably, he went eight consecutive matches in both cups without winning (three matches were halved) until he and Russell Henley won the opening match at the 2024 Presidents Cup.

Some of it Scheffler attributes to the fickle nature of match play over 18 holes. He has played well and lost, played mediocre and won. That happens with everyone. There's another part of him, however, that wonders if the effort is in overdrive.

"When you look at this format - and maybe my record hasn't matched up to what I think that it should be - could it be trying too hard? I think that's definitely a factor, for sure," Scheffler said. "For me, it's different in the sense that you also have a partner with you and you're playing for somebody outside yourself, and that's a lot different as well."



USA players pose for a team portrait prior to the start of the Presidents Cup golf tournament against the International team at Medinah Country Club in Medinah, Ill. (AP)

15 international youth coaches to be selected

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 23: The Public Authority for Youth and Sports will hold a press conference at 11 a.m. today at its headquarters in Al-Riggaa to announce the selection of 15 coaches to work with the youth teams of 15 Kuwaiti football clubs.

The coaches will be selected from around 150 CVs submitted by candidates from various countries as part of a joint initiative between the authority and the Kuwait Football Association to recruit international coaches for the under-12 age group.

Acting Director General Bashar Abdullah said the project reflects the importance of laying a strong foundation for young players and developing them properly from an early age. As a former player, he said he understands the importance of this stage in a player's career.

Abdullah explained that the coaches were evaluated according to specific qualifications and criteria following a review of nearly 150 CVs. The process was carried out in cooperation with FIFA and specialized international programs.

The 15 selected coaches will be assigned to 15 Kuwaiti clubs to work with their youth sectors.



The Public Authority for Youth and Sports Acting Director General, Bashar Abdullah.

Abdullah stressed that the authority attaches great importance to youth development and age-group teams and is committed to providing young players with the appropriate environment to develop their abilities.

He thanked everyone involved in the project over the past three months and expressed hope that its positive impact would become evident in the coming period.

'I can't wait to get started'

Noffke leaves role with Pakistan's cricket team to take over as Netherlands coach

AMSTELVEEN, Netherlands, Sept 23, (AP): Former Australia international Ashley Noffke has left his role as bowling coach of Pakistan's cricket team to take over as Netherlands head coach.

Noffke has signed a two-year contract, the Netherlands said Wednesday, and is tasked with qualifying the team for next year's 50-over World Cup and the T20 World Cup in 2028.

"This is a talented, motivated group," Noffke said, "and my goal is to continue that development and take the program further. My approach starts with connection, before the tactics or the plan. I can't wait to get started."

The 49-year-old Noffke has been with Pakistan since 2025 as an assistant coach and head bowling coach, having previously coached in England, his native Australia and New Zealand.

He played T20 and ODI cricket for Australia, as well as for Royal Challengers Bangalore in the Indian Premier League.

Noffke replaces Ryan Cook, who stepped back to spend more time with his family.

The Dutch have qualified for the last six T20 World Cups, but only one 50-over World Cup since 2011.

England extended its white-ball dominance over Sri Lanka by winning the first one-day international by 89 runs on the back of a 67 by captain Harry Brook and a five-wicket haul by part-time spinner Will Jacks.

It comes after England won the T20 series between the countries 3-0 last week.

Jacks (5-22) had also contributed with the bat by providing crucial late-innings runs for England with 46 not out before the hosts were restricted to 265.

Sri Lanka never threatened on a slow, low pitch and was all out for 176.

Brook hit England's only half-century but contributions also came from opener Ben Duckett (32), Joe Root (44) and Jos Buttler (31).

For the visitors, debutant legspinner Sachindu Colombage (3-44) claimed the wickets of Root and Buttler in an impressive first international cricket match.

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NEWS



Kuwait's kata team in action at the Asian Games.

Sports

Kuwait adds gold, silver to Asian Games haul



Sayed Mohammed Al-Mousawi, Sayed Salman Al-Mousawi and Mohammed Hussein display their kata gold medals.



Abdullah Al-Rashidi, Mohammed Al-Daihani and Mohammed Al-Awad celebrate on the podium.

Kata team produces composed and technically precise performance for title

NAGOYA, Japan, Sept 23: Kuwait added two more medals to its tally at the 20th Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, with the national team winning gold in team kata and silver in team skeet.

The kata team of Sayed Mohammed Al-Mousawi, Sayed Salman Al-Mousawi and Mohammed Hussein produced a composed and technically precise performance to finish first and claim the gold medal.

The trio displayed strong synchronization and accuracy throughout the rounds, earning top honors before celebrating on the podium to the sound of the Kuwaiti national anthem.

Kuwait also secured silver in team skeet, with Abdullah Al-Rashidi, Mohammed Al-Daihani and Mohammed Al-Awad finishing second after a closely contested competition.

The Kuwaiti trio hit 348 targets as the battle remained tight until the final rounds, securing another podium finish for Kuwait's shooting team.

Al-Awad also competed in the individual skeet event, reaching the final rounds before his campaign ended early. Kuwait's other participants were unable to advance.

In squash, Ammar Al-Tamimi reached the men's singles round of 16 after edging China's representative 3-2 in a competitive encounter. Bader Al-Maghrabi was eliminated in the round of 32 after a strong showing.

Kuwaiti athletes will compete in several sports today as the delegation looks to add to its medal tally.

In swimming, Jana Hussein and Mona Al-Farisi will compete in the women's 50m freestyle at 4 a.m., while Mohammed Al-Zubaidi and Abdulrazzaq Al-Duwaihi will race in the men's 50m butterfly at 4:14 a.m.

Hassan Al-Foudari and Abdulrahman Al-Manea will contest the men's individual épée qualifiers in fencing at 4 a.m.

Al-Tamimi returns to action in the squash men's singles round of 16 at 8:45 a.m.

In shooting, Abdullah Al-Turqi and Iman Al-Shammaa will compete in the mixed team skeet qualifiers at 4 a.m., with the final scheduled for 8:45 a.m. if they qualify.

Kuwait's athletics campaign begins with Madawi Al-Shammari in the women's 100m at 12:41 p.m. Issa Al-Zankawi and Abdullah Al-Zankawi will compete in the men's discus final at 2:55 p.m., with both targeting another podium finish for Kuwait.

UAE seeks winning start vs Yemen in Gulf Cup

Bahrain launches title defense against Qatar

JEDDAH, Sept 23: Defending champion Bahrain launch its Gulf Cup 27 title defense against Qatar at 9 p.m. today at Prince Abdullah Al-Faisal Stadium in Jeddah in the opening round of Group B.

Bahrain is targeting a third Gulf Cup crown after winning the previous edition and the 2019 tournament. Croatian coach Dragan Talajic will count on several key players from the title-winning squad, including goalkeeper Ibrahim Lutfalla, Waleed Al-Hayam, Mahdi Humaidan, Kamil Al-Aswad and Mahdi Abduljabbar.

Bahrain and Qatar have faced each other 19 times in Gulf Cup history, with both teams recording five wins, while nine encounters ended in draws. Qatar have scored 16 goals in those meetings, compared with 12 for Bahrain.

Qatar is looking for a strong start as they attempt to end an 11-year wait for the Gulf Cup. Their last title came in 2014, while a fourth championship remains the target.

Spanish coach Julen Lopetegui



A file photo of Bahrain celebrating with championship trophy.

has retained the core of the squad that featured in the 2026 World Cup qualifying campaign and finals, providing Qatar with a group of experienced players as they begin their Gulf Cup campaign.

The UAE will seek a winning start to Gulf Cup 27 when it faces Yemen at 6:55 p.m. today at King

Abdullah Sports City Stadium in the opening round of Group B.

Under Croatian coach Zlatko Dalic, the UAE is determined to avoid another early exit after being eliminated in the group stage of the previous edition.

Dalic has named a 26-player squad led by goalkeeper Khalid

Eisa, with experienced players Fabio Lima and Nicolas Gimenez among the key figures. The attack includes Sultan Adil, Othman Kamara and Ali Saleh.

The UAE has played 117 Gulf Cup matches, recording 41 wins, 31 draws and 42 defeats, scoring 122 goals and conceding 143.

Yemen has made 36 appearances in the tournament, winning once, drawing six and losing 29. They have scored 15 goals and conceded 89.

The UAE has dominated its four previous Gulf Cup meetings with Yemen, winning all four and scoring 11 goals while conceding two.

Yemen, coached by Algerian Noureddine Ould Ali, arrives with renewed confidence after securing qualification for the 2027 Asian Cup. It is targeting its first semifinal appearance in Gulf Cup history.

Yemen prepared in Doha, where it defeated Kuwait 2-1 in a friendly, and will look to carry that momentum into its tournament opener.

Al-Nasser takes weightlifting bronze

ATHENS, Sept 23: Kuwaiti weightlifter Mohammed Al-Nasser claimed the bronze medal at the World Masters Weightlifting Championships in Athens, Greece, adding another international achievement to his record.

The championship has attracted more than 1,520 athletes from 76 countries, making it one of the biggest editions in the history of Masters weightlifting.

Al-Nasser said he was proud to represent Kuwait and raise the national flag on the international stage. He entered the competition aiming for gold, but the strong field and narrow differences in the overall standings saw him settle for third place.

He pledged to work harder and return stronger in future competitions, promising to challenge for the top spot in upcoming championships.



Kuwaiti weightlifter Mohammed Al-Nasser.

Kuwait volleyball team takes on Arab Contractors in Cairo friendly



Team manager Abdullah Al-Najdi with Kuwait volleyball stars.

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 23: Kuwait's men's volleyball team will face Arab Contractors today in its second friendly during a training camp in Cairo as part of its preparations for the Arab National Teams Championship in Amman, Jordan, from October 5 to 15.

Kuwait opened its friendly schedule two days ago against the Egyptian Army, with the match ending 2-2 after the teams shared the four sets. The game allowed coach Julian Alvarez and his staff to assess the players' physical and technical readiness.

Alvarez, assisted by Zaid Al-Kadhi, is using the Cairo camp to improve the team's fitness, work on tactical and technical aspects, and build understanding between experienced players and younger members of the squad.

Team manager Abdullah Al-Najdi said the camp is progressing according to plan, praising the players for their commitment to the intensive training program and their cooperation with the coaching and administrative staff.

He said the Kuwait Volleyball Association and delegation management, headed by Dr Jaber Al-Marri, are providing the necessary support to ensure the camp achieves its objectives.

Al-Najdi also stressed the importance of facing Egyptian clubs, describing the matches as valuable preparation against strong opposition.

He added that Kuwait hopes to compete strongly at the Arab Championship, building on the progress shown during its recent West Asia Championship campaign, as the team continues its efforts to restore Kuwait volleyball to the regional stage.

Asian champion could be without Japanese player Yasuhiro

Handball Club World Championship opens with Burgan flying Kuwaiti flag

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

CAIRO, Sept 23: The Handball Club World Championship opens in Cairo today, with Kuwait's Burgan making a historic appearance after being crowned Asian champions.

The tournament brings together 10 clubs from around the world, including host Al Ahly of Egypt, defending champion Barcelona of Spain, Füchse Berlin of Germany, Veszprem of Hungary and Brazil's Pinheiros.

The preliminary round features Zamalek against Los Angeles, with the winner advancing to the group stage. Veszprem will face the University of Sydney for the other remaining group-stage spot.

Burgan will begin its campaign tomorrow against German powerhouse Füchse Berlin.

Barcelona, Montada Derb Sultan of Morocco, Pinheiros and the winner of Zamalek-Los Angeles make up Group A. Group B features Al Ahly, Füchse Berlin, Burgan and the winner of Veszprem-University of Sydney.



Injured Japanese player Yasuhiro with an official.

Teams eliminated in the preliminary round will play for ninth and 10th place, while the group-stage teams will compete for positions from first to eighth.

Burgan arrived in Cairo after a training camp

in Bosnia, where it played several friendlies. However, the Asian champion could be without Japanese player Yasuhiro, who suffered an injury during the team's final training session before departure.

Club president Anwar Al-Otaibi heads the Burgan delegation, which includes vice president Mohammed Nasser, handball director Abdulaziz Najeeb, coach Yaqoub Al-Mousawi, assistant coach Nasser Bukhadra, fitness coach Saud Al-Sammak and performance analyst Faisal Al-Nassar.

Al-Otaibi said the Club World Championship represents an important opportunity for Burgan to test themselves against the world's top teams and gain valuable experience ahead of the new season.

He acknowledged that the club's financial resources and current preparations do not match the scale of the tournament, but said Burgan's priority is to maximize the technical benefits of the experience and gain exposure to different international handball styles.