



Kuwait Amir Representative sounds alarm at UN over Iranian aggression

'Peace is only way forward'

NEW YORK, Sept 26, (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 said the State of Kuwait and the other members of Gulf Cooperation Council as well as the Kingdom of Jordan have come under despicable Iranian aggression since last February though they are not party to the conflict in the region.

The Iranian attacks with ballistic and cruise missiles and drones represent a flagrant violation of the international law, the international humanitarian law and the UN Charter, he said in speech to the 81st Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York on Thursday.

He conveyed the greetings of His Highness the Amir to the newly-elected President of the UN General Assembly Dr. Khalilur Rahman, of Bangladesh, wishing him success in reforming, and restoring trust in, the UN Organization.

He said the brutal Iranian attacks targeted, systematically and recurrently, civilian property and vital facilities, including Kuwait International Airport, power and water stations, oil facilities, which reflects an aggressive approach aiming to disrupt life and vital infrastructure.

"Those attacks claimed lives and injured a number of innocent civilians, and inflicted huge material damage," His Highness the Amir's Representative regretted.

"In an effort to inflict further harm on the economies of the countries of the region and the entire world as well as the international trade and oil markets, Iran is obstructing maritime navigation and closing the Strait of Hormuz in order to use it as leverage in the war, in a manner that violates international law and relevant UN Security Council resolutions.



Delivering Kuwait's address to the 81st session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, 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, takes the podium at UN headquarters.

Crown Prince Diwan photos

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Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

To Iran's president, you have lied ... and lied repeatedly

THERE is a well-known Arab saying – "From what you say, I'd believe you. But looking at what you do, I'm baffled."

This sentiment perfectly captures the nature of the Iranian regime, whose president addressed the UN General Assembly on the subject of terrorism while pointing fingers at numerous other nations.

His speech brings to mind another familiar saying - "People who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones." It is a reminder of how remarkably persuasive a liar can sound when preaching about honor.

President Pezeshkian has conveniently overlooked 47 years of Iranian-backed global terrorism.

This history includes the establishment of proxy militias across Lebanon, Iraq, and Yemen, as well as crucial support for the former Syrian regime as it massacred civilians striv-

ing for freedom.

Moreover, since last February, Tehran has attempted to orchestrate global economic instability by threatening to shut down the Strait of Hormuz and directing its Yemeni proxy to blockade the Bab al-Mandab Strait.

The Iranian president also turned a blind eye to decades of relentless aggression against the Gulf states, which has persisted in various

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Domestic violence cases plunge 36% in six months: Al-Sumait

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 26, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Minister of Justice Counselor Nasser Al-Sumait said domestic violence cases registered with the Public Prosecution fell by 36 percent during the first six months of implementing the Domestic Violence Protection Law.

Al-Sumait told KUNA on Saturday that domestic violence cases fell by 365 to 646 from March 15 to September 13, 2026, compared to 1,011 cases during the same period in 2025.

He added that the decline reflects the impact of Decree-Law No. 11 of 2026, which strengthens protection for vulnerable family members by prohibiting waivers, reconciliation or pardons in certain domestic and sexual abuse cases.

Al-Sumait explained that the decline does not mean the issue has been resolved, noting that every domestic violence case threatens family stability and requires serious attention.

The Justice Minister reaffirmed that the ministry will continue monitoring indicators and assessing the law's impact, stressing that protecting the family is a shared national responsibility and legislation will evolve based on its effectiveness in



Kuwaiti Minister of Justice Counselor Nasser Al-Sumait

reducing crime and promoting security and stability.

The Cabinet approved the 31-article draft decree-law on domestic violence protection on February 10, later published in the Official Gazette in mid-March, to strengthen family protection, justice, dignity and stability.

30-day roadmap

Kuwait, Iraq form joint team to clear outstanding issues

NEW YORK, Sept 26, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait and the Republic of Iraq agreed on Friday to set up a joint working team to chart a roadmap for resolving the sticking points between both neighbors.

Based on the outcomes of the meeting between Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Iraqi Prime Minister Ali Al-Zaidi on the margins of the high-level week of the 81st session of the UN General Assembly in New York on Tuesday, the team is tasked with producing recommendations to the leaderships of both countries within 30 days.

The team will convene meetings alternately in Kuwait City and Baghdad until reaching the desired results, according to a joint statement.

Both sides affirmed full support to the work of the team and keenness on ironing out all sticking issues and opening a new chapter of cooperation and partnership to serve the common interests of the two peoples.

Italy reaffirms Kuwait partnership, backs unrestricted Hormuz passage

By John C. Fernandes

Online Media Manager, Arab Times

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 26: In a press conference organized at the Italian Embassy in Kuwait, H.E. Lorenzo Morini, Italian Ambassador to Kuwait, reiterated Italy's commitment to strengthening its strategic partnership with Kuwait across defense, security, trade, investment and other sectors, while supporting efforts to restore regional stability and ensure freedom of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz. He said the recent regional crisis had significantly affected both countries but also demonstrated the strength of their bilateral cooperation and Kuwait's resilience.

The ambassador said Italy had around 400 military personnel in Kuwait when the crisis began, mainly operating from Ali Al-Salem Air Base as part of the anti DAESH international coalition. The personnel were forced to remain in shelters for weeks because of the attacks, while Kuwaiti authorities provided logistical support, including food and water. He said there were no serious injuries among the Italian personnel, although there were some minor injuries. Most of the Italian military personnel were subsequently moved out of Kuwait because of security concerns, while around 50 Italian personnel currently remain in the country in support of Kuwaiti authorities.

The ambassador stressed that Italy believes the regional crisis can only be resolved through dialogue, a peaceful settlement and respect for international law, particularly the right to free navigation through the Strait of Hormuz. He said the issue affects not only Kuwait but also all GCC countries, Europe, Asia and other parts of the world because major energy and supply chains depend on maritime passage through the strategic waterway.

He noted that Kuwait among others is an important supplier of jet fuel to Europe, while Qa-



Photo by Rezk Tawfiq

H.E. Lorenzo Morini, Italian Ambassador to Kuwait, speaks at a press conference.

tar is a major supplier of natural gas to Italy, with such shipments depending on maritime passage through Hormuz. He warned that disruptions to the waterway affect the prices of gas, oil, food and other commodities globally because international prices are determined by supply and demand. He said the effects would be felt not only in Europe but also in China, Indonesia, Latin America and other regions.

Defense agreement nearing entry into force

The ambassador said Italy has completed the parliamentary ratification of a new defense cooperation agreement with Kuwait, with only a formal presidential signature remaining before Italy transmits its ratification to Kuwait. Kuwait had already ratified the agreement in June, and the ambassador said he hoped it would enter into force before the end of September.

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Other Voices

The UN budget between reform imperative and the funding crisis

By Tarek Yousef Alshumaimry

Former Observer of the Executive Council and Chairman of the Budget Committees at the Permanent Court of Arbitration – The Hague

The United Nations budget reflects the scale of resources approved by Member States to finance the Organization's core activities and programmes. The discussions surrounding the budget also reveal differences among Member States over spending priorities, administrative efficiency, and the functions that the Organization should undertake.

The United Nations deals with a wide range of issues, including peacekeeping, human rights, development, humanitarian assistance, and political mediation. As the scope of these responsibilities has expanded, Member States regularly debate the level of funding required, as well as the sources of funding and the mechanisms through which it is spent.

The debate is not limited to the overall size of the budget. It also covers the entities responsible for financing it, the timing of payments, and the distinction between the budget formally approved and the cash actually available to the Organization.

How Does the UN Budget Work

Article 17 of the Charter of the United Nations provides that the expenses of the Organization shall be borne by the Members as apportioned by the General Assembly.

Member States do not independently determine the amount of their contributions. Instead,

the General Assembly adopts a scale of assessments based on recommendations from the Committee on Contributions.

The methodology is primarily based on the capacity to pay. Under the scale of assessments for the 2025–2027 period, the minimum assessment for a Member State is 0.001%, while the ceiling applicable to the least developed countries is 0.01%. The overall ceiling for the contribution of any single Member State is 22%.

These limits differ from the scale used to finance UN peacekeeping operations, which applies additional adjustments to Member States' assessments.

Accordingly, assessed contributions constitute financial obligations of Member States rather than voluntary donations in the conventional sense. They also differ from voluntary funding provided by governments to specific programmes, funds, or agencies.

Who Decides the Budget

The process begins with the Secretary-General preparing the proposed budget. The proposal is then reviewed by the relevant committee dealing with administrative and financial matters. Following negotiations and revisions, the committee submits its recommendations to the General Assembly, which has the final authority to approve the budget.

Since 2020, the United Nations has moved experimentally from a biennial budget cycle to an annual budget cycle.

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Newswatch

RIYADH: Joint Forces of the Coalition to Support Legitimacy in Yemen intercepted and destroyed Saturday two drones launched by the Houthi militia targeting the Riyadh region.

Official Spokesperson for the Coalition Major General **Turki Al-Maliki** stated via his official account on social platform X that coalition air defense systems successfully tracked and thwarted the hostile attempt before reaching its intended target. (KUNA)



Al-Sager: Sustainability, operational resilience & cyber-security will shape the next phase of banking growth



KFH participates in Global Finance Roundtable hosted by the Central Bank of Kuwait



Ministry of Interior photos
Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah during the opening of the conference.



Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah during his meeting with the Malaysian Interior Minister Saifuddin Nasution Ismail.

'Need to battle crime together'

Kuwait in forefront: 1st Deputy PM

ABU DHABI, Sept 26, (KUNA): Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, led a delegation participating in the 15th United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, which opened earlier today.

In a statement to KUNA, Minister Al-Yousef emphasized that Kuwait's participation in the Congress reflects its commitment to active engagement in international forums dedicated to security and criminal justice.

He highlighted the importance of supporting joint efforts and fostering cooperation and coordination among nations to address security challenges, combat crime, and enhance security and stability.

He expressed his gratitude and appreciation to the UAE President Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed Al-Nahya and government for hosting the Congress and for the excellent organization and warm hospitality.

The Congress proceedings address ways to strengthen international cooperation and partnerships, as well as the exchange of expertise and best practices. These efforts aim to build capacity to tackle evolving forms of crime and enhance access to justice amidst rapid digital transformation.

The Ministry noted that, on the sidelines of the conference, Sheikh Fahad Al-Yusuf held meetings with the Syrian Minister of Interior Anas Khattab, and Malaysian Minister of Interior, Saifuddin Nasution Ismail.

The 15th United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice kicked off in Abu Dhabi, with the participation of Kuwaiti First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah.

The Kuwaiti delegation also includes Undersecretary of the Ministry of Justice Awatif Al-Sanad, as well as a number of specialists in the legal, judicial and security fields.

The conference, held until October 1st in ADNEC Center, includes between 3,000 to 5,000 participants from 97 countries, and a number of ministers, officials and experts in crime prevention and law.

The conference, themed "Accelerating crime prevention, criminal justice and the rule of law: protecting people and planet and achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the digital age", focuses on



Awatif Al-Sanad

crime beyond borders, cyber crimes, human trafficking, drugs, money laundering and crimes that impacts the environment.

The event will also discuss responsible use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and modern technologies in the criminal justice field, ensuring transparency and justice.

The conference is expected to adopt the Abu Dhabi Declaration during the high-level meetings in the first day. The declaration is set to turn international consensus into a set of priorities for crime prevention and criminal justice within the next five years.

The UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice is being held every five years since 1955, aiming to enhance international efforts in crime fighting and imposing law.

Meanwhile, Undersecretary of the Kuwaiti Ministry of Justice Awatif Al-Sanad stressed on Saturday that preventing and combating crime is a shared international responsibility, supported by international agreements and national legislation.

This came during Al-Sanad's address to the 15th United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, held in Abu Dhabi.

Al-Sanad said the conference is being held amid exceptional circumstances, citing Iranian attacks on GCC countries and other Arab states that targeted vital facilities, airports, infrastructure and residential areas in violation of international law and good-neighborly principles.

She explained that Kuwait, under its Vision 2035, has adopted crime-fighting policies and enacted laws addressing narcotics, domestic violence, beneficial ownership and commercial concealment.

Kuwait has prioritized combating cyber-crime through its Information Technology Crimes Law, while supporting international efforts against illicit electronic activities and regulating digital commerce and consumer protection, she added.

Al-Sanad said that Kuwait has also strengthened legislation and mechanisms on mutual legal assistance, counterterrorism, money laundering and terrorism financing, enhancing local and international cooperation.

She thanked the UAE and President Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed Al-Nahyan for hosting the conference, praised Japan's support for the Kyoto Declaration, and welcomed Uzbekistan's decision to host the 16th UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

Al-Sanad said that the Congress is a key platform for shaping international crime-fighting policies, particularly amid emerging crimes and evolving methods of criminal activity.

Cooperation, compliance key

Mol urges caution around stray dogs, calls for reports via 112

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 26: The Ministry of Interior has issued a public safety advisory, urging citizens and residents to remain vigilant when encountering stray dogs and to refrain from approaching or provoking them.

In a press release, the ministry highlighted the need to closely supervise children and protect elderly family members, especially in neighborhoods and around public facilities where stray dogs tend to gather.

To help authorities respond effectively,

the ministry asked the public to report locations of stray dog congregations by calling the emergency number 112 and providing exact details. It said coordinated measures would then be implemented with the relevant bodies to address the issue safely.

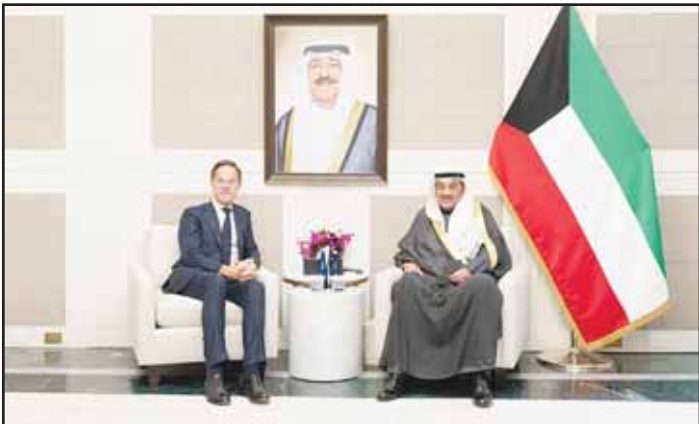
The ministry underscored that community cooperation and compliance with preventive guidelines play a crucial role in enhancing public safety and preventing potential harm.



Prayer Timings

Fajr 04:20 Asr 15:04
Sunrise .. 05:39 Maghrib .. 17:39
Zohr 11:39 Isha 18:56

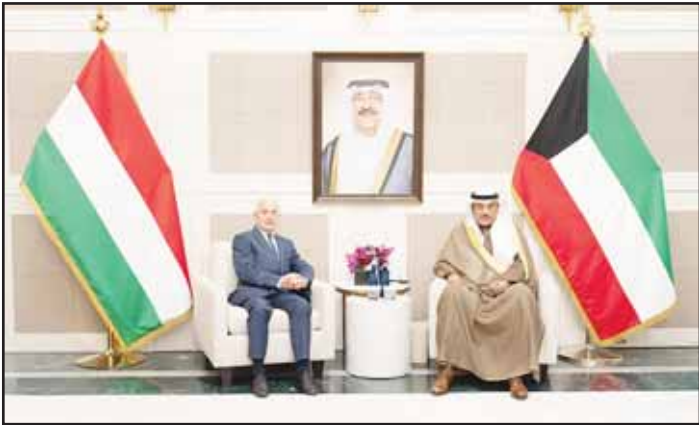
Kuwait, UNHCR discuss ways to alleviate suffering of refugees, displaced persons



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 NATO chief.



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 Irish 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 meets the Hungarian President.



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 Comoros President.

NEW YORK, Sept 26, (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 received on Friday UN High Commissioner for Refugees Barham Salih on the sidelines of the 81st UN General Assembly session.

The meeting reviewed the humanitarian partnership between Kuwait and the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), and discussed ways to enhance the humanitarian response and alleviate the suffering of refugees and displaced persons around the world.

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 (KDIPA) Sheikh Dr. Meshal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi, Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the UN Ambassador Tareq Al-Bannai, Director of the Office of His Highness the Crown Prince Maj. Gen. Ahmad Al-Duie, and Assistant Foreign Minister for the Minister of Foreign Affairs Office Minister Plenipotentiary Abdullah Nasser Al Obaidi.

NATO chief

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 received on Thursday NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte on the sidelines of the high-level 81st session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

The meeting reviewed the distinguished partnership and cooperation between the State of Kuwait and NATO within the framework of the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, and the follow-up on training and technical cooperation programs through the NATO Regional Centre in Kuwait, along with developments on regional and international levels.

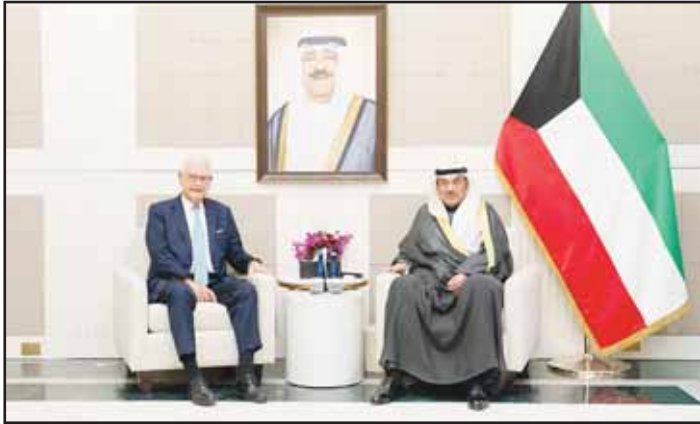
Hungarian President

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 on Friday President Andras Baka, of the friendly Republic of Hungary, and his accompanying delegation on the sidelines of the 81st UN General Assembly session.

At the outset of the meeting, hosted at Kuwait's Permanent Mission to the United Nations, His Highness the Crown Prince conveyed the greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to the Hungarian president, expressing wishes for good health and for the Hungarian people to enjoy lasting progress and prosperity.

Irish PM

The Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-



Crown Prince Diwan photos
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 Limak Holding Board Advisor Volkan Bozkir and Chairperson Ebru Ozdemir.

Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received on Thursday Irish Prime Minister Micheal Martin on the sidelines of the high-level 81st session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

The meeting discussed bilateral relations and means of boosting and developing them in a manner that achieves common interest of both friendly nations, along with regional and international developments.

Comoros President

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 received President of the Union of the Comoros Azali Assoumani on the sidelines of the 81st UN General Assembly.

The meeting, held at Kuwait's Permanent Mission to the United Nations on Friday, discussed bilateral relations and means to develop them on all levels, in addition to latest regional and international developments, as His Highness relayed greetings of His Highness the Amir to President Assoumani, and wishes of lasting prosperity and progress to the brotherly people of the Comoros.

The meeting was attended by Director General of the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) Sheikh Dr. Meshal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi, Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the UN Ambassador Tareq Al-Bannai, and Director of the Office of His Highness the Crown Prince Maj. Gen. Ahmad Al-Duie.

Scale AI CEO

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, received CEO of Scale AI Francis deSouza and his accompanying delegation on the sidelines of the 81st UN General Assembly.

The meeting, held at Kuwait's Permanent

Mission to the United Nations on Friday, discussed fostering joint cooperation in the fields of AI applications, big data, and digital transformation; to explore ways to leverage advanced technology solutions to support and develop vital government and economic sectors in the State of Kuwait; and to qualify national talent and build their capabilities in these areas.

CEO of GE Vernova

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, CEO of GE Vernova Scott Strazik and his accompanying delegation on the sidelines of the 81st UN General Assembly.

The meeting, held at Kuwait's Permanent Mission to the United Nations, reviewed ongoing cooperation between Kuwait and the global energy firm, exploring strategies to strengthen strategic partnerships in energy project development and enhance power generation plant efficiency.

Discussions covered updates regarding the GE Technology Center in Kuwait, which celebrated its 10th anniversary, underlining the vital role of human resources development, knowledge transfer, and capacity building for national talent to sharpen economic competitiveness and advance Kuwait Vision 2035 goals.

Limak Holding executives

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, received Friday Limak Holding Board Advisor Volkan Bozkir and Chairperson Ebru Ozdemir.

The meeting, held at Kuwait's Permanent Mission to the United Nations on the sidelines of the 81st UN General Assembly, covered progress updates on strategic construction and infrastructure developments executed by Limak Holding in Kuwait, including projects related to the Kuwait International Airport (T2) expansion.

Discussions also highlighted the company's initiatives for training national cadres, knowledge transfer, and institutional capacity building, aiming to strengthen economic competitiveness in alignment with Kuwait Vision 2035 goals.

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 (KDIPA) Sheikh Dr. Meshal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi, Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the UN Ambassador Tareq Al-Bannai, and Director of the Office of His Highness the Crown Prince Major General Ahmad Abdulrahman Al-Duai.

Charity performs cataract ops in India

Kuwait aid for needy flows despite challenges

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 26, (KUNA): Kuwait's humanitarian initiatives continue to shape a vibrant fresh actuality across various regions, leading the international relief scene as one of the most efficient approaches of delivering humanitarian and relief aid.

As the world faces protracted crises and severe lack of funding, the State of Kuwait has continued to write new chapters of its pioneering humanitarian journey, turning conventional aid into a lifeline and a source of sustainable hope.

In the context of the expansion of its development projects, Namaa Charity opened five mosques to serve beneficiary communities, provide suitable places for prayer, and cement social cohesion.

Regarding the health sector, the charity performed 150 cataract surgeries in India for patients suffering from vision impairment that had mired their daily lives, giving them a fresh opportunity to resume their work and education.

It has adopted initiatives that transcend immediate relief to build a more stable life for communities in need, springing from a firm principled standing that safeguards human dig-

nity and bolsters self-reliance as the core pillars of charitable work.

This vivid humanitarian presence surpasses immediate relief interventions to touch the depth of human empowerment, spearheading a genuine Kuwaiti approach that restores sight to patients, creates lifelines through the digging of fresh-water wells, and equips families with sources of livelihood.

In this context, Kuwait's Direct Aid Society has carried out three eye surgery camps in September in Uganda, Togo and Tunisia, bringing the total number of camps implemented since early 2026 to 54.

These facilities have benefitted 222,000 people across 14 African countries and Yemen, as part of the charity's efforts to combat blindness and provide healthcare to the most vulnerable populations.

Speaking to KUNA, the Society's Director-General Dr. Abdullah Al-Sumait said that the September camps provided screening and treatment services to as many as 4,907 patients and performed 1,503 sight-restoring surgeries.

Al-Sumait added that the charity aims to conduct 114 eye camps in 2026, in collaboration

with health authorities in the host countries.

The charity has also executed a project in the city of Mukalla in Hadhramaut Governorate in Yemen to distribute 10 fishing boats in the context of the 12-year-long "Kuwait by Your Side" initiative.

The Estijabah Foundation for Humanitarian Aid and Relief, which has implemented the project, said that the initiative is meant to strengthen sustainable economic empowerment and help beneficiary families turn from a state of need to productivity and self-reliance.

Several Yemeni officials have commended the project as significant humanitarian and development support for Yemen and a sign of togetherness and solidarity between Kuwait and Yemen.

In the same context, Chief of Estijabah Foundation's Relations Saleh Baqlaqel highlighted the charity's commitment to translating the support provided by the Direct Aid Society into tangible projects.

He added that the handover of boats and equipment was done in collaboration with relevant authorities to ensure the aid reached the intended beneficiaries and achieved a sustainable developmental impact.

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Kuwait to host 2nd confab on innovation strategies in Islamic endowment, sustainable development Sept 28

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 26: Advisor Hamad Zaid Saud Al-Bseis, the United Nations Ambassador for Community Partnership and Chairman of the Board of Directors of Al-Awazem Charitable Foundation, said the Islamic endowment system has transitioned from being an option to a requirement due to the rapid changes in societal needs, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press statement, Al-Bseis pointed out that the critical shift from preserving endowment assets to investing and developing them in a sustainable manner guarantees continuous contributions and maximizes their social and developmental impact.

He announced that Kuwait will host the second conference on innovation strategies in Islamic endowment and sustainable development on Sept 28, 2026 at the

Kuwait National Library, under the patronage of Minister of Social, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah and titled, “From Traditional Endowment to Sustainable Investment Endowment”. He said the conference is a scientific and professional platform for exploring the future of endowments and enhancing their tools.

He elaborated that the



conference is organized by Al-Awazem Charitable Foundation in collaboration with the Regional Network for Social Responsibility, Global Center for Sustainable Development, and Superior Achievement Institute for Private Training and Administrative, Economic and Financial Consultations. He added it will be a gathering of experts and those interested in endowment affairs and sustainable development.

He indicated that the conference is significant due to the need to improve governance, transparency, efficiency and innovation in managing endowment assets. He explained that the aim is to align endowment investments with societal needs and sustainable development goals, thereby, transforming endowments into sustainable financing sources for initiatives and projects with

a lasting impact.

He disclosed that the conference will cover jurisprudence and conceptual framework for investing endowment funds, sustainable investment models, governance and risk management, financial sustainability and portfolio diversification, financial and technical innovation, legislation and oversight, leading Arab and international practices, role of artificial intelligence, digital transformation, and endowment instruments and financial technologies as tools for improving endowment management and resource development.

He reiterated that the main objective is to establish a more sustainable endowment model to expand its role beyond traditional giving to create a lasting impact that benefits individuals, society and future generations.

‘Water-logging harms produce’

Farmers output good despite challenges

By Adnan Makkawi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 26: Young farmer Abdulwahab Atallah Al-Sakran reported a worsening problem - groundwater is seeping to the surface across dozens of farms - both old and new - located along Road 800 in the Wafra agricultural area.

He said, “The phenomenon of waterlogged farms in various parts of Wafra, especially along Road 800, is a source of concern for us productive farmers.”

Al-Sakran revealed that his father’s farm is a long-established one, located in Plot 9 along Road 800. Spanning 160,000 square meters, the farm supports diverse agricultural activities, including crop cultivation, livestock and poultry rearing, and even tilapia farming.

He said, “We focus on open-field farming. As the 2026/2027 agricultural season begins, we are cultivating corn and pumpkins across large field areas. We also harvest dates from our palm

trees, which receive our utmost care, including varieties such as Barim, Anbara, Hasawi, Sukkari, Barhi, and Ajwa Al-Madina. These are among the rarest fruit-bearing palm varieties in the country.

Furthermore, our focus is on and expansion of corn cultivation across vast fields, staggered over several planting periods, stems from the fact that corn serves as food for both humans and livestock. It enjoys a thriving market, presents a beautiful sight across the fields, and contributes to achieving the food security we aspire to.

We are expanding our onion cultivation. Currently, we are sowing seeds in the farm’s climate-controlled nursery for cauliflower, cabbage, lettuce, hot and sweet peppers, and eggplant.

We also have “Hasawi” and Indian onion seeds available to expand the cultivation of dry bulb onions - a crop with high consumer demand and good financial returns for farmers,

despite the long time it takes to mature in the soil.

The disbursement of government cash subsidies for local production is often delayed. This creates a problem for us, as we are committed to paying rising monthly labor wages and covering increasing farm expenses.

Another issue we face is the interruption of the treated water supply to our farm and to most farms in the Wafra area.

There is also the problem of poor market conditions for most of our produce during periods of peak local production. This stems from the fact that we plant without a scientific or practical plan that takes into account actual consumer demand for each crop variety that thrives in Kuwait.”

Farmer Abdulwahab Atallah concludes by highlighting a challenge he and many other Wafra farmers face: birds devouring seeds and young green plants in open fields, as well as spiny-tailed lizards (Dhabb) consuming green leaves and seeds buried in the soil.

He said, “Despite these obstacles, we continue on the path of goodness - the path of our forefathers - by cultivating and developing the land of Wafra.”



Al-Sakran



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Italy reaffirms

He explained that the agreement provides a framework for cooperation in areas including training, joint exercises, exchange of expertise, materials and information. Specific areas of cooperation can subsequently be covered by separate agreements under the broader framework. He stressed that the agreement is not a government-to-government contract for a particular weapons system or piece of equipment.

Regarding Kuwait’s Eurofighter programme, he said Italian company Leonardo was still in the process of delivering the final three aircraft but that deliveries had been delayed because of the security situation. He said the aircraft were ready in Italy but it was necessary to wait for conditions to stabilize before completing the deliveries.

Economic and investment ties

The ambassador said economic and commercial cooperation was among the issues discussed during the recent political consultations between Kuwait and Italy. Italy wants to encourage partnerships between the two countries’ private sectors and increase both Kuwaiti investment in Italy and Italian investment in Kuwait.

He said Italian companies are already operating in Kuwait, both as service providers and through locally established companies, but Italy wants to expand their presence. At the same time, he highlighted opportunities for Kuwaiti investments in Italy, particularly in the food production and distribution sector.

The ambassador said Italy is discussing opportunities for Kuwaiti investment in Italian small and medium-sized enterprises involved in food production. Such companies could also establish partnerships with Kuwaiti private-sector companies and potentially contribute to food production in Kuwait.

He said southern Italian regions such as Sicily, Calabria and Sardinia have climatic conditions that in some respects are comparable with Kuwait, giving Italy relevant expertise in food production in challenging environments. The ambassador linked the issue to food security, saying the regional crisis had demonstrated the importance of maintaining reliable supply chains.

The ambassador also clarified that Italy cannot take independent decisions on trade measures involving Kuwait, as trade policy falls under the European Union. “When we negotiate a trade agreement, it’s not Italy with Kuwait. It’s always European Union with GCC or European Union with Kuwait,” he said. He noted that the EU is currently discussing with Kuwait a Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA), which he described as a first step toward a common free-trade agreement between the GCC and the European Union. Any trade restrictions involving individual countries are decided at the EU level in Brussels, rather than by individual member states. He added that consumer boycotts are a separate matter and are not something governments should seek either to promote or prevent.

Health cooperation

Health is another area in which the ambassador sees opportunities for expanded cooperation. He said Italy has expertise in areas including diabetes treatment, osteoporosis, rehabilitation, telemedicine and home care, while both countries face challenges associated with ageing populations.

He proposed stronger partnerships between Kuwaiti and Italian medical sectors, including cooperation between universities. He said Kuwait has strong healthcare infrastructure while Italy has expertise and personnel that could complement Kuwaiti capabilities.

Civil protection and emergency response

The ambassador also highlighted cooperation in civil protection following a recent visit by Kuwaiti civil protection and emergency-response officials to Italy.

He said Kuwait is developing a new national civil protection system to respond to emergencies, natural disasters and the consequences of climate change. Italy, he said, could share its experience in developing an integrated emergency-response system, including cooperation with neighboring GCC countries.

He explained that Italy’s own civil protection system is integrated with the wider European system, allowing countries to provide mutual assistance during emergencies.

Italy praises Kuwait’s response to the crisis

Asked about Italy’s assessment of Kuwait’s role during the crisis, the ambassador praised what he described as Kuwait’s resilience and response.

He said essential services including food, energy and water continued without major disruption, despite the crisis, while the Kuwaiti authorities responded effectively to the security situation. He also referred to Kuwait’s air-defense response and the number of attacks and interceptions.

On the diplomatic front, he said Kuwait has traditionally played a role in promoting dialogue, diplomacy, respect for international law and the United Nations. He described Kuwait as an important interlocutor

for Italy because of its relations with GCC countries and other regional partners.

The ambassador said the upcoming GCC - European Union summit, scheduled for the end of October, could provide an important opportunity for the two sides to coordinate their positions and resources in support of a settlement based on international law.

Italian business delegation to visit Kuwait

On economic cooperation, the ambassador announced plans for a visit to Kuwait by the president of Assolombarda, the business association representing companies in Lombardy, including Milan.

He said the visit is planned for early October and would provide a direct channel between Italian and Kuwaiti private-sector companies. Assolombarda has more than 7,000 companies under its umbrella, according to the ambassador, and represents a significant part of Italy’s industrial and commercial sector.

Visa numbers affected by regional crisis

The ambassador said the number of Italian visas issued in 2026 was around half the level recorded during the same period in 2025, largely because very few visas were issued during March, April, May and the first half of June amid the regional crisis.

He clarified that the decline was concentrated in tourism visas. Business and family visas remained at similar levels, while student visas increased compared with the previous year.

On reports about possible changes to Italy’s visa system, he said Italy could not independently introduce changes to the Schengen visa system because such decisions require agreement among the member states and relevant European institutions.

Italian radar replaces damaged Kuwait airport system

The ambassador revealed that an Italian company had supplied the radar system at Kuwait International Airport and that the system was damaged during the recent conflict. Italy subsequently found a replacement part seven months after the equipment’s needs extended time to be produced. He identified Leonardo as the Italian group involved.

He also said Italy supplies Kuwait with defense equipment and that an Italian air-defense system known as Skyguard is in service in Kuwait. The system has been repeatedly upgraded and is now undergoing another update to address evolving threats, including newer types of drones. He described it as complementary to the Patriot system and said it combines missiles and guns depending on the type of threat.

Cooperation with Kuwait National Guard

The ambassador said Italy is negotiating a cooperation agreement with the Kuwait National Guard, including areas where Italy’s Carabinieri have specialized expertise.

Potential areas include the protection of archaeological sites, combating the smuggling of illicit materials and of archaeological artifacts and works of art, protection of strategic infrastructure and VIP protection. The agreement could also facilitate exchanges of information and personnel.

Naval and military training cooperation

On maritime security, the ambassador said Italy is working to expand cooperation with Kuwait. Two Kuwaiti naval officers are currently attending a three-month course at an Italian academy.

He said Italy is also pushing within the European Union to consider expanding the mandate of an existing naval security mission around the Bab el-Mandeb area to cover the Gulf region but stressed that such cooperation would require agreement among the countries concerned, including GCC states.

The ambassador said almost 30 Kuwait Air Force personnel, two naval officers and personnel from the Kuwait National Guard are currently undergoing training or participating in training programmes in Italy. He explained that the cooperation includes both long-term academic programmes and shorter specialized courses.

He said Italy remains ready to contribute to international initiatives aimed at regional stabilization and the protection of freedom of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz.

Regarding the remaining Italian military personnel in Kuwait, the ambassador said their presence is not limited to the Eurofighter programme. He explained that the Eurofighter programme is a contractual relationship between the Kuwait Air Force and Leonardo, an Italian company in which the Italian government controls 51 percent of the shares. According to the ambassador, Italy’s role is comparable to that of a “director of works,” overseeing the quality of services provided under the contract and ensuring they comply with the agreement and applicable laws. The Italian personnel provide maintenance and technical support, training and facility management, and assist with aircraft movements when required. He added that the pilots were trained by the company under the control and supervision of the Italian government or Italian government-controlled Italian facilities.

Continued from Page 1

To Iran’s

forms from 1980 to the present day.

In recent escalations, the regime laid bare its true intentions by launching missile and drone strikes against civilian populations and critical energy infrastructure across Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, and even Oman, a nation actively mediating between Washington and Tehran to reduce tensions.

Masoud Pezeshkian’s appearance at the United Nations exemplifies the double-dealing that has defined Iranian foreign policy for decades.

When the Revolutionary Guard openly boasts in daily communications of its support for the Houthi militia’s war on Saudi Arabia, its targeting of holy sites, and its disruption of Red Sea commerce, it explicitly confirms its own state-sponsored terrorism and that of its regional proxies.

Early in the conflict, the Iranian president offered apologies for attacks on Gulf nations; yet, on that exact same day, the Revolutionary Guard proceeded to bombard Kuwait and Bahrain.

This glaring contradiction illustrates that power does not reside with diplomatic figures in “tailored suits,” nor with the Supreme Leader, who remains hidden from the public eye and issues only written statements.

Real authority belongs to a militant apparatus headquartered at “Khatam al-Anbiya” - an organization that effectively dominates the entire state apparatus.

This dynamic explains the chaotic signals originating from Tehran’s decision-making structure.

As observed repeatedly, the regime’s ultimate goal remains regional dominance and the fundamental alteration of the Middle East’s cultural, social, and economic landscape.

For nearly seven months, official statements claimed that strikes were directed solely at U.S. military positions.

In reality, Iranian weapons targeted residential neighborhoods, power grids, water desalination plants, commercial airports, and shipping vessels across Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and the UAE.

Simultaneously, regime spokespersons preached neighborly goodwill, peaceful coexistence, and regional partnership along both shores of the Arabian Gulf.

This facade fell apart completely when the Speaker of the Iranian Parliament displayed a map labeling the area as the “Persian Gulf” during an official visit to Baghdad.

This gesture served as a clear attempt to dictate the identity of the Gulf, reflecting an ingrained Persian superiority complex that has lingered since the defeat of the Sasanian Empire at the Battle of Dhi Qar.

When a country is governed by shadowy factions, internal instability is inevitable.

Power fractures into competing centers of authority, fragmenting the nation into semi-autonomous entities with conflicting agendas.

If the international community continues to offer this regime lifelines through endless negotiation and compromise, violent proxy networks will continue to terrorize Yemen, Iraq, and Lebanon. The threat of extremism will endure, masked by a deceitful diplomacy that preaches peace while waging war.

It remains deeply ironic that a rogue state- internationally condemned for its aggressive exploits - claims the moral high ground on the United Nations stage.

The UN

In December 2022, the General Assembly decided to retain the annual budget system on a permanent basis.

The annual system enables Member States to review resources and priorities more frequently. However, it also increases the extent to which the budget is linked to annual negotiations and the economic circumstances prevailing in each year.

The Evolution of the Budget in Figures

The General Assembly approved a budget of approximately \$3.12 billion for 2022. The 2023 budget stood at approximately \$3.4 billion following negotiations and adjustments.

The budget for 2024 amounted to approximately \$3.59 billion, while the budget for 2025 rose to \$3.72 billion.

For 2026, the General Assembly approved a budget of \$3.45 billion.

The 2026 budget is therefore approximately \$270 million lower than the 2025 budget, representing a decline of around 7.3%.

At the same time, the final approved budget for 2026 is approximately \$330 million higher than the final approved budget for 2022, representing an increase of around 10.6%.

What Is the UN80 Initiative

The United Nations launched the UN80 Initiative in 2025 to review the way the Organization operates as it marked the 80th anniversary of its establishment.

The initiative is based on three main tracks:

First: reforms aimed at improving efficiency and reducing operating costs.

Second: a review of the Organization’s functions, including identifying areas where duplication or overlapping responsibilities exist.

Third: examining how the UN system can be restructured to become more efficient and responsive.

From a professional perspective, the reduction in the 2026 budget can be understood as being linked to an administrative reform programme rather than simply an automatic decline in funding.

Determining whether these reforms

will result in greater efficiency, however, requires an assessment of their outcomes after implementation.

The Approved Budget vs. Available Cash

The regular budget approved by the General Assembly differs from the amount of cash actually available to the Organization at any given time.

When Member States delay the payment of their assessed contributions, the United Nations may face difficulties in financing certain activities according to the planned timetable, even when the final budget has been formally approved.

In 2025, reports indicated that the Organization faced cash-flow pressures and adopted measures that included reducing expenditure and delaying certain recruitment activities.

The United States and China: The Largest Contributors

The United States is the largest contributor to the UN regular budget, with an assessment of 22%, the maximum percentage assigned to a single Member State under the scale of assessments for 2025–2027.

China accounts for 20.004% under the same scale, making the two countries together responsible for approximately 42.004% of the regular budget, or more than 40%.

They are followed by Japan, Germany, the United Kingdom, and France, according to the scale of assessments for 2025–2027.

These figures mean that any change in the position of a major contributing country regarding the size of the budget or the timing of its payments can have an impact on both negotiations and the cash available to the Organization.

Positions of Member States on Budget Reductions

As the largest contributor, the United States has called for greater efficiency and a review of spending. US policy towards certain international bodies and programmes has also varied between administrations.

Subsequent US positions regarding reductions in participation in certain international institutions and bodies have once again brought the issue of the future of US financing for the United Nations to the forefront.

China, whose official assessment under the 2025–2027 scale stands at 20.004%, is the second-largest contributor. Discussions concerning China therefore include both the size of its contribution and the timing of payments, as a delay in a major contribution can affect the Organization’s liquidity during a particular period.

Japan, Germany, the United Kingdom, and France are also among the major contributors. To varying degrees, these countries support improvements in efficiency, financial oversight, and the reduction of duplication. At the same time, they generally emphasize that reductions in resources should not disrupt mandates approved by Member States.

Some countries support reducing administrative expenditure or eliminating duplication while opposing cuts to field programmes. Other countries may support increased funding in specific areas while calling for reductions elsewhere.

Consequently, disagreements generally focus on the scale of reductions, the timing of programmes, which functions can be reduced, and the level of oversight required, as well as the impact of budget reductions on developing countries and field missions.

Who May Benefit and Who May Be Affected

Countries that bear the largest shares of assessed contributions may benefit if a reduction in the final approved budget results in lower financial obligations in the future.

The Organization itself may also benefit if the review succeeds in eliminating duplication, improving management, and directing resources towards higher-priority programmes.

At the same time, developing countries and countries hosting UN missions could be affected if resource shortages result in reductions in programmes or services.

Potentially affected areas include assistance to civilians in conflict zones, refugees and displaced persons, human rights programmes, and development programmes.

The least developed countries could also be affected, as could mediation and conflict-prevention efforts, humanitarian assistance programmes, and peacekeeping operations.

Peacekeeping: A Separate Budget

The final approved regular budget of \$3.45 billion does not represent all United Nations expenditure.

The budget for peacekeeping operations is separate from the regular budget. The peacekeeping budget for the 2024–2025 financial period amounted to approximately \$5.6 billion.

Peacekeeping missions require continuous funding for troops, equipment, transportation, security, and logistical operations. Delays in contributions can therefore affect their ability to carry out certain tasks, even when the peacekeeping budget itself has been formally approved.

When analysing the United Nations’ financial situation, it is therefore essential to distinguish between the UN regular budget, the peacekeeping budget, voluntary funding for programmes and funds, and in-kind contributions supporting UN projects.

Some Countries Face Difficulties in Making Their Contributions

Several factors can affect a country’s ability to make payments, including inflation, higher interest rates, wars, and other crises that may increase military and security expenditure for some governments.

Domestic economic pressures are also among the factors that may explain part of the financing difficulties. However,

these factors alone do not establish the reason for every country’s payment delays, as financial and political circumstances differ from one country to another.

The impact of the budget reduction cannot therefore be assessed solely by looking at the overall figure.

It must also be assessed in terms of which programmes will be affected, how many positions will be eliminated or redistributed, and how resources will be reallocated.

It is also essential, when analysing the figures, to distinguish between the proposed budget and actual expenditure, as well as between the approved appropriations and the cash actually available to the Organization.

Ultimately, the challenge facing Member States is to strike a balance between controlling expenditure, preserving the United Nations’ core responsibilities, and ensuring that the Organization has the resources required to carry them out effectively.

Kuwait Amir

“In this regard, the State of Kuwait expresses its profound appreciation to the fraternal and friendly countries that have stood by it and demonstrated solidarity with it, as well as to the sponsors of the Security Council Resolution 2817 and other resolutions issued by the Human Rights Council and the International Maritime Organization.

Those resolutions condemned the Iranian aggression as a threat to international peace and security, called for its cessation, affirmed the inherent right of states to self-defense pursuant to Article 51 of the UN Charter, and stressed the importance of ensuring freedom of navigation without restriction or condition,” he pointed out.

“Based on its belief that the security and stability of the Arabian Gulf constitute a fundamental pillar of regional and international peace and stability, as demonstrated by the repercussions of the war and Iranian attacks, the State of Kuwait reiterates its support for all diplomatic efforts aimed at de-escalation and reaching a peaceful resolution to the ongoing conflict.

“The State of Kuwait commends the efforts and mediation by the sisterly State of Qatar and the friendly Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and emphasizes the need to reach sustainable regional understandings based on a firm commitment to the principles of good-neighborliness, respect for the sovereignty of states, non-interference in their internal affairs, refraining from the use or threat of force, ending support for proxies and militias, and addressing the security concerns of all countries of the region, including Iran’s nuclear program, ballistic missiles, and unmanned aircraft.

“The State of Kuwait stresses the need

to ensure the freedom and safety of navigation and the right of passage through the Strait of Hormuz and the Bab El-Mandeb Strait, in accordance with international law and the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea,” His Highness the Amir’s Representative said.

Dealing with Kuwait’s foreign policy, His Highness the Amir’s Representative said his country adheres to, and is guided by, the principles of the UN Charter, particularly respect for the principle of neighborliness, respect for the sovereignty of states, and non-interference in their internal affairs of other states.

“From this perspective, the State of Kuwait regards the brotherly Republic of Iraq as a neighbor with whom we share close relations and as a partner in security and stability.

“Since the fall of the former regime in 2003, Kuwait has been keen to support Iraq and stand by it in confronting its security, political, and economic challenges, with the aim of restoring its regional and international role and standing, in the belief that a stable, secure, and prosperous Iraq represents a shared interest for Kuwait and the region as a whole.

“In this context, the State of Kuwait commends the steps taken by the Iraqi Prime Minister Ali Al-Zaydi to place weapons exclusively in the hands of the state and strengthen Iraq’s bilateral relations with neighboring countries.

“We look forward to strengthening confidence-building measures between the two countries, advancing bilateral relations toward broader and wider horizons, and resolving all outstanding issues between the two countries, foremost among them completing the demarcation of the maritime boundary beyond Marker 162, in accordance with the rules of international law and the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

“We also stress the importance of complying with the bilateral security and technical agreements and understandings signed between the two countries, foremost among them the Agreement Regulating Navigation in Khor Abdullah and the 2008 Security Exchange Protocol.

“These constitute legal and practical instruments for regulating navigation, protecting the environment, combating terrorism and illicit trafficking in arms and drugs, and enhancing common security.

“The State of Kuwait calls upon Iraq to cooperate with the High-Level Representative of the UN Secretary-General, pursuant to Security Council Resolution 2792, in order to achieve the desired progress and results in determining the fate of Kuwaiti prisoners and missing persons, as well as nationals of third countries, and in recovering Kuwaiti property, including the national archives,” he said.

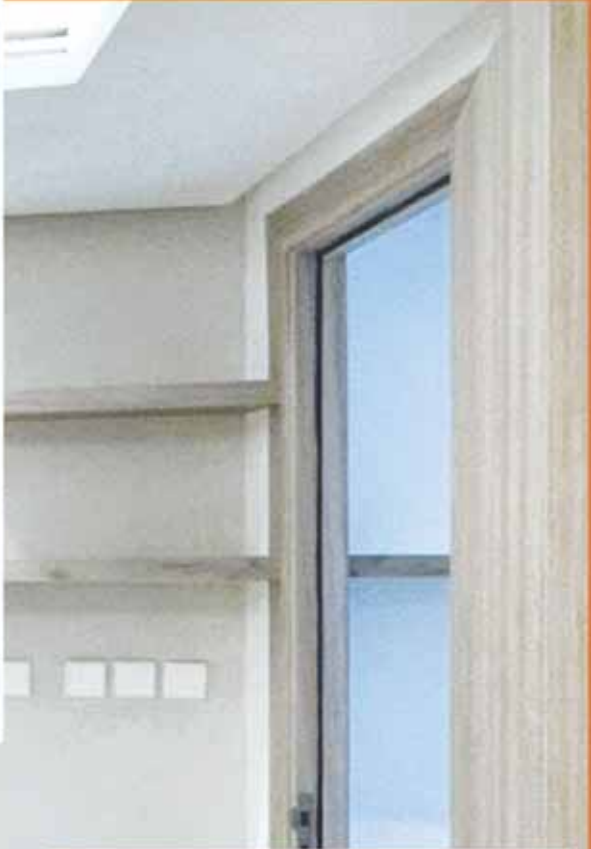
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Supreme Court lets WH use revamped federal voter eligibility database for now

US President Trump vows to campaign in midterm battlegrounds

MONTGOMERY, Alabama, Sept 26, (AP): US President Donald Trump vowed to campaign in 35 of the most competitive battleground races in the final sprint to November’s midterm elections.

Instead, he will begin October by stumping in Alabama and Oklahoma, two of the most Republican states in the nation. His events are sure to draw enthusiastic crowds of fans, but his choice of destinations is a reminder of his deep unpopularity in much of the country during a campaign season he’s sought to make all about himself.

Trump will hold rallies next week in Durant, Oklahoma, and Mobile, Alabama, where he is sure to draw crowds, but he has also raised eyebrows.

While organizers insist the rallies are in locations with media markets that span state lines and they will help bolster broader turnout, Trump’s itinerary is yet another sign of the uphill fight that his party faces. Republicans have already been pouring money into red states once considered safe as they try to shore up candidates facing an unhappy electorate that has soured on Trump and his policies.

Some Republicans have also been distancing themselves from the president in recent weeks as they try to appeal to voters beyond Trump’s “Make America Great Again” base. They have removed or downplayed references to the president on their websites and increasingly voiced opposition to his unpopular war with Iran.

But Trump’s events - Thursday in Durant and Friday in Mobile - are also likely to deliver something else he craves: adoring crowds. He is almost guaranteed to fill the venues with the kind of die-hard supporters who fueled his political rise, projecting excitement as he tries to bolster enthusiasm and rally Republicans.

“The President’s ability to engage with and activate low-propensity voters is unmatched. That’s why he’ll be barnstorming the country to activate the voters we need to win in November,” said Republican National Committee spokesperson Natalie Baldassarre, promising more October rallies to come.

Democrats, meanwhile, celebrated the announcement. “The political floor is falling out from underneath Trump and Congressional Republicans, forcing them to scramble to spend and campaign in deep red territory in the final weeks,” said Viet Shelton, spokesperson for the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee.

The RNC noted that Durant, Oklahoma, is on the Texas border and next to the Dallas-Fort Worth media market, and will draw Republicans in Texas, which has emerged as one of the most critical states on the map. Scandal-plagued Attorney General Ken Paxton, whom Trump backed over incumbent Sen. John Cornyn, is locked in a tight race against Democrat James Talarico. Gov. Greg Abbott is also facing a stronger-than-expected challenger in Democrat Gina Hinojosa.



US President Donald Trump greets supporters as he arrives on the stage at the Republican convention on Sept 10, in Dallas. (AP)

Mobile is next to Florida’s panhandle, a Republican stronghold where high turnout can help bolster Trump-backed candidates running for Senate and governor. However, Florida Republican Sen. Ashley Moody is not expected to attend.

In Oklahoma, Trump will be stumping for Mike Mazzei, whom he backed as the Republican nominee for governor during a competitive primary. Mazzei is running against Oklahoma’s Democratic House Minority Leader Cyndi Munson.

“This race continues to get more competitive - and national Republicans are right to be worried about Mazzei,” Democratic Governors Association spokesperson Kevin Donohoe said in a statement.

Alabama, meanwhile, holds deep nostalgia for Trump and his early supporters. He held his first mega-rally in Mobile more than a decade ago, drawing some 30,000 people to a college football stadium. The crowd made clear to skeptics of his campaign that he was more than a celebrity novelty.

“I think it’s very natural that he would host a rally here as he is gearing up for the midterm elections,” said John Wahl, the Republican candidate for lieutenant governor and former chair of the Alabama Republican Party.

Although Republicans remain the heavy favorites in Alabama’s statewide campaigns, they face a more challenging political landscape this year.

Former Democratic Sen. Doug Jones is mounting a vigorous campaign for Alabama governor against one of Trump’s most vocal allies, Republican Sen. Tommy Tuberville, who said he welcomed the president’s visit.

Also:

NEW YORK: The Supreme Court on Friday lifted restrictions on a controversial federal voter database before November’s elections, granting President **Donald Trump** a temporary win in his aggressive campaign against noncitizen voting. The court’s three liberal-leaning justices publicly dissented from the decision.

The emergency order allows states, for now, to use the Trump administration’s revamped version of a Department of Homeland Security program, called Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements, or SAVE, in their efforts to verify the eligibility of voters on their rolls. It’s a program that has drawn scrutiny for its use of voters’ sensitive personal data and its tendency to wrongly flag some eligible voters as noncitizens.

States’ use of the SAVE program is voluntary, limiting the ruling’s impact on the midterm elections. Existing law also blocks most states from systematically purging voters from their rolls within 90 days of an election, said **David Becker**, an election law expert who leads the Center for Election Innovation and Research. He said DHS itself has admitted the data is not perfect.

Maine Secretary of State **Shenna Bellows**, a Democrat who has refused to participate in the SAVE program, said the ruling will have no effect in her state because it “does not force states to change the way we run our elections.”

The plaintiffs and their lawyers in the case called the ruling “profoundly disappointing” and said it puts “millions of Americans at risk of being unlawfully targeted by the administration’s unreliable voter purge database” before the midterms.

On X, **James Percival**, the general counsel for DHS, responded to a post about the decision with, “Yes, you read that right. We had to file an emergency petition in the Supreme Court just so we could use government data to help states stop noncitizens from illegally voting.”

The White House did not immediately respond to a message seeking comment.

The court’s order puts on hold a federal judge’s June ruling that had deemed the Republican administration’s recently revamped version of SAVE illegal. U.S. District Court Judge **Sparkle L. Sooknanan** had blocked the use of the tool, saying it violated Americans’ privacy rights and could result in voters being wrongly removed from the rolls.

WH uses rare authority to claw back nearly \$1bln in spending approved by Congress

WASHINGTON, Sept 26, (AP): US President Donald Trump is canceling nearly \$1 billion in spending approved by Congress, the White House announced on Friday, using a rare and contested power to axe funding for immigrant services and diversity-focused initiatives.

Trump’s Office of Management and Budget described the funding cut as focused on “the most harmful government spending.”

Most of the cuts are focused on Health and Human Services programs that serve refugees and unaccompanied minors accused of being in the country illegally. The administration says the funds are no longer necessary because illegal border crossings have diminished considerably.

Also targeted for cuts were a Department of Education program for migrant students, a Department of Justice office focused on reducing racial tensions, a business development initiative for minority entrepreneurs, housing counseling services from the Housing and Urban Development

Department and a series of grants from the Health and Human Services Department that the administration called “outright harmful and blatantly ideological.”

A White House press release announcing the funding rescissions notes that some of the organizations are led by people who worked in the administration of Democratic President Barack Obama.

Trump’s move was condemned by Sen. Susan Collins of Maine, a Republican in a tough reelection campaign and chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee.

Collins said in a statement that the action came without warning or consultation. She also said she would work to address with colleagues “these illegal actions.”

“Not only is the delay itself an impoundment that was not reported to Congress, but also it is a usurpation of Congress’s appropriations powers,” Collins said. “OMB is an agency of the executive branch. It does not get to decide which programs are worth funding.”

Under federal law, Congress has 45 days to review the president’s proposed spending cuts before they take effect. But Trump made that all but impossible by announcing them with just five days left in the federal fiscal year and the House out of session through the November election. The Government Accountability Office, which is an arm of Congress, says the maneuver known as a “pocket rescission” is illegal.

Collins called it the latest attempt by OMB to “undermine Congress’s Constitutional power of the purse.”

A year ago, Trump issued a pocket rescission for the first time in nearly 50 years by blocking \$4.9 billion in congressionally approved foreign aid. The U.S. Supreme Court declined to block those rescissions, saying that Trump’s authority over foreign affairs weighed heavily in its decision. This year, Trump is targeting domestic spending.

The use of a “pocket rescission” fits into a broader pattern by the Trump administration to exert greater control over the U.S. government,

eroding Congress’s power.

What was essentially the last pocket rescission occurred in 1977 when then-Democratic President Jimmy Carter rescinded it, and the Trump administration argues it’s a legally permissible tool, despite some murkiness, since Carter had initially proposed the clawback well ahead of the 45-day deadline.

The administration has also fired federal workers, imposed a historic increase in tariffs, and started the war in Iran without going through Congress, putting the burden on the judicial branch to determine the limits of presidential power.

Sen. Patty Murray of Washington, the lead Democrat on the Senate Appropriations Committee, described the White House action as “theft from the American people, plain and simple.”

“These are funds Congress has delivered on a bipartisan basis and should be helping people-not cut off by a president more focused on building a ballroom than investing in families,” Murray said.



The US Capitol is seen on Sept 25 in Washington. (AP)



Firefighters work at the scene following Friday’s powerful blast in Athens’ Plaka district on Sept 26. (AP)

Blast in Greece injures two, rescuers pull 2 unconscious

Rescuers combing through the rubble of a building that collapsed in a blast in the Greek capital’s tourist district of Plaka, near the ancient Acropolis, recovered two unconscious people and searched for four others, authorities said Saturday.

The blast on Friday morning was believed to have been caused by a massive gas leak, Athens Mayor Haris Doukas said on Friday night. He said that neighboring buildings were also damaged and were

evacuated.

The fire department said that a second person was found unconscious in the rubble of the two-story house in Plaka, the historic part of Athens that lies at the foot of the Acropolis hill, Greece’s most visited ancient monument.

Earlier Saturday, an unconscious woman was taken away by an ambulance. Two other women were injured from an adjacent building on Lysikratous Street, fire brigades

said.

The search and rescue involved 30 firefighters and three dogs. An investigation into the blast was underway.

Video footage from the scene showed rubble strewn across the street, with parked cars smashed by falling debris. The people rescued by the fire department from the adjacent building were all tourists, resident Andreas Martzaklis said. (AP)

Pope warns ‘paradise of machines’ could undermine humanity

PARIS, Sept 26, (AP): Pope Leo XIV warned Friday that a “paradise of machines” risked undermining humanity as he opened a trip to France by posing fundamental questions about what it means to be human in the age of artificial intelligence, a nuclear arms race and other threats to life itself.

Leo raised existential concerns about scientific progress, life and human rights during his opening speech to President Emmanuel Macron and authorities at the Élysée Palace and then to diplomats and United Nations employees at the headquarters of UNESCO, the UN culture and education organization.

With wars plaguing Europe and the Middle East, he reaffirmed the Vatican’s opposition to nuclear weapons and said the nuclear deterrence doctrine was “mistaken” since it was just fueling a new arms race.



French President Emmanuel Macron, (right), hosts Pope Leo XIV at the Elysee Palace for a meeting with authorities, civil society and the diplomatic corps in Paris on Sept 25. (AP)

“Peace is not a balance of power; rather, it is built day by day through dialogue and justice,” he said.

Leo has an intense four days in France.

Yet thousands of people lined his motorcade route, waving French and Holy See flags, with some braving hours of the unseasonable heat to catch a glimpse of him. The turnout underscored the surprising level of interest in Leo’s visit, the first official state visit by a pope to France in 18 years.

For Macron, who is barred from seeking a third term in May elections, hosting the American pope is something of a capstone. Pope Francis had refused repeatedly to make a proper state visit to France during his 12-year pontificate and pointedly refused to join the inauguration of the rebuilt Notre Dame cathedral in 2024 that Macron had championed.

7 dead as Russia, Ukraine exchange strikes

KYIV, Ukraine, Sept 26, (AP): Russian attacks killed four people across Ukraine Saturday, officials said, as the aerial war between Moscow and Kyiv intensifies.

Russia has hammered Ukraine with cruise and ballistic missiles, powerful glide bombs and jet-powered drones while front-line progress has slowed, some 4½-years after Moscow launched a full-scale invasion of its neighbor.

“It is essential that our partners not forget: Russia is escalating every single day. If the Russians have chosen to make their strikes even more brutal, the world must choose stronger responses to keep the war from spreading further,” Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy wrote on Saturday morning.

He listed “numerous strikes on residential homes” in the cities of Kyiv and Zaporizhzhia, and the Odesa, Sumy, and Kharkiv regions.

Two women in Zaporizhzhia died when they were trapped beneath the rubble of their destroyed home, Zaporizhzhia’s regional military ad-



Rescuers work on a site of a house destroyed after a Russian strike on residential neighbourhood on Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine, on Sept 26. (AP)

ministration said. A separate Russian attack on the city of Sumy also killed two people, local officials said.

Zelenskyy appealed at the United Nations earlier this week to countries to starve Russia of revenue through sanctions and trade bans, denying Moscow the money it needs to prolong the war. But despite years of diplomatic efforts, there is no sign of a breakthrough in ending the war.

Meanwhile, Ukraine’s long-range drones have targeted Russian oil refineries and businesses. A Ukrainian drone attack on the southern Krasnodar region killed three people and wounded two, local officials said Saturday.

Writing on Telegram, regional Gov. Veniamin Kondratyev said that a Ukrainian attack sparked fires at two industrial sites, but did not give further details. Russian media outlets later reported that a local oil refinery was targeted in the strike.

Europe

5 down while crossing Kupa river: Five migrants have drowned while trying to cross the Kupa river on the border between Croatia and Slovenia, Croatian police said on Friday.

An officer who arrived first at the scene jumped into the river, which is called Kolpa in Slovenia, police said. He helped rescue five other people from the river, while the remaining migrants crossed into Slovenia, a statement said.

No other details were immediately available.

Croatia lies on the so-called Balkan land route used by migrants trying to reach Western Europe. People fleeing war and poverty in their countries in the Middle East, Asia and Africa often face perils on their monthslong journeys. (AP)

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Austrian Armed Forces hold exercise: The Aus-

trian Armed Forces have launched a large-scale exercise in the eastern state of Burgenland to strengthen their capabilities to counter potential drone threats and protect critical infrastructure, state broadcaster ORF reported.

A drone defense system has been deployed at Pinkafeld Airport in Burgenland as part of the exercise. The system was designed to detect electromagnetic radiation of aircraft and interfere with their control capabilities. A sector jammer has also been used to prevent drones from approaching protected areas.

About 300 Austrian soldiers took part in the exercise, with activities conducted in the regions of Pinkafeld, Wieselack and Riedlingsdorf, the report said.

The exercise came as European countries seek to strengthen protection for critical infrastructure amid changing security challenges. The Austrian Armed Forces said the activities were intended to improve operational readiness and enhance their ability to respond to evolving threat scenarios. (Xinhua)

Heavy rain and flooding in Bangkok disrupt traffic, prompt evacuations

BANGKOK, Sept 26, (AP): Inces-sant rain hammered several areas of Thailand’s capital on Saturday, dis-rupting traffic and forcing hundreds to evacuate, as authorities declared the city a disaster area.

Thailand’s Meteorological Depart-ment warned that the deluge, which has been pouring since Thursday afternoon, would continue in most parts of the country through Sunday.

Accumulated rainfall in many ar-eas of Bangkok since Thursday ex-ceeded 30 centimeters (11.8 inches), officials said. Floodwaters spread across the city, particularly in the central and eastern parts, blocking roads and stopping traffic.

While not all parts of Bangkok were submerged, the city declared all of its 50 districts a flood disaster area to allow authorities to respond rapidly to the crisis.

More than 84,000 people in 21

provinces nationwide were affected by flooding as of Saturday, especial-ly in the central region. Authorities sent emergency warning messages through the cellphones, the govern-ment said.

Hwang Hwan-chung, who flew from South Korea and has visited Bangkok a dozen times, said he had never seen such “crazy” weather, adding that he couldn’t find a taxi.

Sukanya Tongsuk, a resident, said the current flooding was similar to the last time Bangkok was hit in 2011.

Meanwhile, Dutch resident Bjorn Franken, who has lived in the capi-tal for two years, said he was able to cope although one event he wanted to attend had been canceled.

Many businesses in Bangkok closed on Saturday due to flooding.

Cars crawled along waterlogged roads in parts of Bangkok, and bikers were seen pushing their motorcycles.

Authorities said some regional bus services from Bangkok to the eastern provinces were suspended.

Phetchaburi Road, one of the capi-tal’s busiest, was unusually quiet as vehicles were turned back by floods. Some were left partially submerged.

Residents made their way through murky waters, carrying fresh water and food. Some were barefoot and others wearing rubber waders while several wrapped plastic bags around their feet to keep dry.

Air traffic control authorities con-firmed flight operations were normal but some flights might face delays.

Bangkok Gov. Chadchart Sittipunt said despite the heavy rain, flooding should recede once the rain subsides, as city officials work to drain flood-waters as quickly as possible.

More than 200 shelters were set up across the city and about 900 people have moved in, Chadchart said.



Streets flooded after heavy rains in Bangkok, Thailand on Sept 26. (AP)

‘Promise of more meetings to come’

Xi to see Trump again soon as Chinese president wraps up US visit

WASHINGTON, Sept 26, (AP): Chinese President Xi Jinping wrapped up his state visit to Wash-ington on Friday by announcing that he will meet President Donald Trump two more times before the end of the year, doubling the number of face-to-face discussions between the leaders of the world’s two largest economies in 2026.

The promise of more meetings to come capped off a three-day state visit that has been criticized by some in the US for being heavy on pomp and light on substance, though Trump said they discussed the war in Iran. The two leaders have made a show of working to preserve harmo-ny, but there were no major break-throughs this week on issues such as trade or the safety of artificial intel-ligence.

Some trade analysts were struck by how few tangible accomplish-ments seemed to come from the meeting. Little was announced out-side of the promise of more meetings and Washington and Beijing agree-ing as Xi landed in the US to extend their trade truce only a few months

until January.

“A lot of pomp and circumstance or sound and fury but signifying nothing. There’s just not a lot there,” said Scott Lincicome, vice president of general economics at the Cato In-stitute.

“Another summit without tangible results merely allows China to run out the clock on Trump’s second term without significant conces-sions,” said Jeff Moon, a former US trade official and diplomat in Presi-dent Barack Obama’s administration who runs the China Moon Strategies consultancy.

Though Trump administration of-ficials have played down the impact of any assistance that China may be providing to Iran as the war stretches to nearly seven months, U.S. Am-bassador to China David Perdue said Friday that Trump asked Xi to avoid providing help to Tehran.

“We made it very clear to them weeks ago that, you know, any help that they would give Iran - whether it be direct or indirect, whether it be in-telligence or parts or military equip-ment - was totally unacceptable,”



US President Donald Trump, first lady Melania Trump, China’s President Xi Jinping and his wife Peng Liyuan, with Bradford Wilson, Archivist of the United States, view the Constitution, Bill of Rights and other documents at the National Archives on Sept 25 in Washington. (AP)

Perdue told CNBC in an interview Friday. “President Trump made that very clear again yesterday.”

Xi extended an invitation for Trump and first lady Melania Trump to go to the Asia-Pacific Economic Coop-

eration summit in Shenzhen, China, in November and noted that they could meet again a month later at the G20 summit at the Trump National Doral Miami golf club in Florida.

“We do welcome Mr President

and the first lady to visit China,” Xi said.

Trump responded, “We will, and we’ll be speaking a lot.” He later confirmed the two meetings in a post on social media.

Trump on Friday took Xi to visit the National Archives, showing off the sacred texts of US democracy to the leader of the world’s most pow-erful communist country.

Trump, a Republican, has been seeking to demonize Democrats as communists during the run-up to the November midterm elections, a mes-sage that has been muddled by the red-carpet treatment he has given Xi this week.

The visit comes as the US cele-brates the 250th anniversary of its founding.

The Archives has a special exhibit marking the semiquincentennial, titled “The American Story,” which highlights the country’s accomplish-ments and advances, along with im-ages depicting its darker moments.

Trump showed Xi one copy of the Declaration of Independence on Thursday - a wall-mounted copy he

keeps in the Oval Office.

Inside the nation’s vault of re-cords, where the Declaration of In-dependence, the US Constitution and the Bill of Rights are held, Xi peered at the documents that are kept under protective glass as a guide spoke about them.

After viewing the Constitution, Trump told reporters waiting nearby that the two leaders discussed how old their nations are.

“We’re just comparing,” Trump said. “Ours goes 250 years, which is great, and we’re proud of it. But theirs goes 6,000 years.”

He added: “There’s a little dif-ference between 6,000 and 250, but we’re very proud of our 250.”

Xi’s day began at the White House, where Trump and the first lady hosted the Chinese leader and his wife, Peng Liyuan, for tea in the White House’s Red Room.

Their visit fell during China’s Mid-Autumn Festival, a national holiday when families traditionally gather to celebrate the end of harvest, sharing mooncakes, round pastries filled with a sweet paste, over tea.

Africa

Congo plane crash kills 14: At least 14 people, including two senior military officials, have died in a plane crash in Congo, the military said Friday.

The two senior military officials are Lieutenant General Mutombo Katalayi Tiende, head of the military court, and Lieutenant General Bakumi Likulia, auditor general of the armed forces.

“In addition to the two general officers, twelve members of the delegation and the crew members also lost their lives in this accident,” Major General Efomi Ekenge, spokesperson of the Congo-lese military, said in a statement.

The plane was returning to the capital city, Kinshasa, from southwestern Kikwit when it de-veloped a technical fault and crashed in Kenge where everyone on board died, according to local officials.

An investigation has been opened to determine the cause of the accident, Ekenge said. (AP)

Morocco’s PAM wins election: Morocco’s Au-thenticity and Modernity Party (PAM) won the most seats in the country’s parliamentary elec-tion, taking 97 of 395 seats in the House of Rep-resentatives, according to final results announced by the Interior Ministry on Friday.

The party, founded by a royal adviser close to King Mohammed VI and known by its French acronym PAM, fell short of an absolute majority and will need to negotiate with other parties to form a governing coalition.

The election was shaped by mounting frustra-tion among young people, high unemployment despite a thriving economy and demands for bet-ter schools, hospitals and housing.

It was the first vote since the deadly mass mi-gration attempts to Ceuta in July and the Gen Z-led protests last year. (AP)

Lat/Am

Peru faces human rights court: Peru faced the final day of a landmark hearing before a regional human rights court Friday over allegations that it failed to protect Indigenous peoples living in isolation in the Amazon from logging and other activities encroaching on their territory.

The two-day hearing before the Inter-Ameri-can Court of Human Rights in Montevideo, Uru-guay, marks the first time the tribunal has consid-ered a case involving Indigenous peoples living in isolation in Peru.

The case centers on the Mashco Piro, Yora and Amahuaca peoples, who live in remote areas of the Peruvian Amazon. Indigenous organizations say logging concessions and other incursions have pushed outsiders deeper into forests used by the groups, increasing the risk of violent encoun-ters and exposure to diseases to which isolated peoples may have little immunity. (AP)

Colombia severs ties with Iran: Colombia’s For-eign Ministry said that the country formally severed diplomatic relations with Iran effective Sept. 19.

The decision was based on Colombia’s for-eign policy principles concerning national and hemispheric security and the fight against trans-national crime, taking into account alleged links between the Iranian government and interna-tional terrorist groups and other “narco-terrorist” organizations that Colombia considers a security threat, the ministry said.

“These events have eroded Colombia’s con-fidence in the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran,” the ministry said in a statement.

The statement stressed that the severing of dip-lomatic relations does not constitute a break in consular relations, in accordance with the Vienna conventions on diplomatic and consular rela-tions. (Xinhua)

Suicide bombing at police checkpoint in Pakistan kills 11, injures 30: officials

DERA ISMAIL KHAN, Pakistan, Sept 26, (AP): A suicide bomber det-onated an explosives-laden vehicle at a roadside police checkpoint in northwestern Pakistan on Saturday, killing at least 11 people and wound-ing about 30 others, officials said, in a sign of increasing violence in the region bordering Afghanistan.

The attack occurred in Dera Ismail Khan, a district in Khyber Pakh-tunkhwa province, said Bilal Faizi, a spokesman for the provincial emer-gency service. Local police chief Safdar Baloch said most of those killed and wounded were security personnel and passersby.

The Pakistani Taleban, known as Tehrik-e-Taleban Pakistan, or TTP, claimed responsibility for the attack in a statement. Pakistan has experi-enced a surge in militant attacks in recent years, many of them claimed by the TTP and the outlawed Baloch Liberation Army, or BLA, a separat-ist group mainly active in neighbor-ing Balochistan province.

The TTP is separate from but closely allied with the Afghan Tali-ban, which returned to power in Af-ghanistan in 2021.

Pakistani officials have repeatedly accused the Afghan Taliban of allow-ing TTP members to operate from



Taleban security officers inspect the scene of what Taleban officials said were Pakistani airstrikes in Khost province, Afghanistan on Sept 24. (AP)

Afghan soil and have demanded that Kabul prevent cross-border attacks into Pakistan. Afghan authorities have denied allowing their territory to be used for attacks against other countries.

The latest attack came two days after fighting between Pakistan and Afghanistan along their southwest-ern border killed at least 13 Afghan Taleban, according to Pakistan’s government. It was the latest escala-tion between the neighbors following

Pakistani strikes on alleged militant hideouts inside Afghanistan this week. The renewed hostilities threat-en mediation efforts by China, Tur-key, Qatar and Saudi Arabia aimed at securing lasting peace between the two countries.

Dera Ismail Khan is near South Waziristan, a former militant strong-hold where the Pakistani military has carried out several operations in re-cent years.



A worker clears mud from a house damaged by flash floods at Nuwakot, Nepal on Sept 23. (AP)

A month after Nepal floods, thousands still missing and families face long recovery

KATHMANDU, Nepal, Sept 26, (AP): After spending five years working in Saudi Arabia, Narayan Prassan returned to his home in Nepal with savings, only to lose his house in the 2015 earthquake. He went abroad again, earned enough to rebuild his home and settled happily with his family.

Last month’s floods have de-stroyed everything once more.

With his home in a designated danger zone and no clear idea of where his family will resettle, Pras-san is staying with his wife and chil-dren at a relative’s house and mull-ing another stint overseas.

“This flood has taken everything,” he said. “I don’t know what to do.”

A month after devastating floods swept through parts of Nepal, thou-sands are displaced like Prassan and rescuers continue searching for thousands others missing, including many believed trapped in six hydro-power project tunnels. The disaster has left the government facing a long and costly recovery, with families confronting the loss of loved ones,

homes and livelihoods.

Prime Minister Balendra Shah used his first address to the U.N. General Assembly on Thursday to highlight the flooding as a warning about the growing climate risks fac-ing the Himalayan region.

“The disaster was not just a local tragedy, but a warning to the world,” Shah said. “I ask you today: Have we really heard that warning?”

Shah also called for greater in-ternational support for Nepal’s re-covery and stronger regional coop-eration to prepare for climate-related disasters.

“Climate change does not recog-nize borders. Glaciers and floods do not travel with stamps and pass-ports,” he said.

Nepal’s disaster management agency said 1,453 bodies had been recovered and 5,644 people re-mained missing. Only 112 bodies had been handed over to relatives, while 1,333 were temporarily buried pending identification. In neighbor-ing China, officials reported 261 for-eign nationals among the missing.

Tents have been set up at the Ne-pal Police Hospital in Kathmandu, where relatives can provide DNA samples to help identify the dead. Authorities are comparing the sam-ples with DNA collected from re-covered remains.

Laboratory officials declined to provide details, citing privacy con-cerns, but said experts from India, China, the United States, Singapore and South Korea were assisting with the work.

Rabi Kumar Thapa Magar, a hy-dropower worker who lost his wife, brother, sister-in-law and mother, said he identified his wife from a photo of the dead - but authorities had buried her body before the fam-ily could see it.

Authorities declined to release the body pending DNA matching, a pro-cess they said would take at least a month. The family later performed symbolic final rites using an effigy.

Many others are still processing the grief.

Pasang Maya Tamang, 32, who lost her young son in the floods, said

she still dreams of him pleading for help.

“The body of my son has been re-covered but I was not able to see him for the last time. I am very sad about that. I hear in my dreams him say-ing why I left him alone,” Tamang said at a shelter home in the flood-affected town of Nuwakot.

Her son had gone to school with a neighbor when the flood hit. By the time she learned what had happened, the school had already been swept away. His body was recovered three days later in a southern district, but she was unable to travel there to see him.

The Aug. 26 flood hit in the morn-ing, around the time students were arriving at schools or making their way there. Some children’s bodies were later recovered still wearing ties bearing their school’s logo, said Asta Man Dangol, a resident in Nu-wakot.

“The older students were able to run uphill and escape, but the little ones who were not able to run fast ... were swept away,” he said.

Oil price down \$4.78 to \$108.69 pb

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 26, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti oil price fell by USD 4.78 to hit USD 108.69 per barrel (pb) in Friday's trading, compared with USD 113.47 the day before, said the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on Saturday.

In global markets, Brent crude went down by USD 2.28 to reach USD 104.32 pb, and US West Texas Intermediate crude dropped by USD 2.20 to USD 92.41 per barrel.

Business

Alshamlan: Resilience, innovation, & sustainable growth are essential for Kuwait's financial future

KFH participates in Global Finance Roundtable hosted by the Central Bank of Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 26: KFH Group Chief Executive Officer, Khaled Yousef Alshamlan, emphasized that building resilience before crises occur, accelerating responsible innovation, deepening capital markets, and advancing sustainability are key priorities for supporting Kuwait's long-term economic growth and financial stability.

Alshamlan made these remarks during his participation in the Global Finance Banking & Economic Roundtable, hosted by the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) in partnership with Global Finance magazine, which brought together leading banking executives to discuss developments in Kuwait's banking sector, economic outlook, and growth opportunities.

The roundtable was held under the gracious participation of H.E. Basel Al-Haroon, Governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait, and provided a platform for constructive dialogue on the resilience of Kuwait's banking sector, economic diversification efforts, sustainable growth, and the future of financial services amid evolving regional and global developments.

Building resilience

During the roundtable, Alshamlan emphasized that recent geopolitical developments have reinforced the importance of building resilience before crises occur, noting that strong capital positions, liquidity buffers, and asset quality remain fundamental pillars of banking stability.

He said "With the prudent oversight of the Kuwaiti Banking sector by the regulator we have strong balance sheets, liquidity discipline, good governance, and trust. The CBK's latest soundness figures show that the banking sector maintains a Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR) of 18.5% and a gross non-performing financing ratio of 1.6%, reflecting the resilience and soundness of local banks."

Alshamlan explained that resilience today extends beyond traditional financial metrics to include diversified funding sources, cybersecurity readiness, supply-chain awareness, scenario planning, and the ability to continue serving customers during periods of disruption.

"At KFH, resilience is embedded in our business continuity planning and digital infrastructure strategy, ensuring the uninterrupted availability of critical bank-



Khaled Alshamlan with H.E. Basel Al-Haroon, Governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait, and banking leaders.

ing and digital services even under stressed market conditions," he said, adding that KFH's geographic diversification across regional markets further supports sustainable growth and operational flexibility.

Priorities of Kuwait's banking sector

Addressing the future priorities of Kuwait's banking sector, Alshamlan noted that while significant progress has been achieved in digital transformation and artificial intelligence, the next phase of development will depend on how effectively banks leverage capital, technology, and talent to support economic growth.

He highlighted the importance of the Mortgage Law and Developer Law, describing them as transformative initiatives capable of addressing housing demand and stimulating economic activity.

Alshamlan pointed out that according to the latest figures from the Public Authority for Housing Welfare, more than 108,000 Kuwaiti families currently have pending housing applications. He noted that the Mortgage Law is expected to provide effective financing solutions that can accelerate housing development and reduce waiting times.

He noted that the law could boost banking sector credit growth from 6-7% currently to 8-9%, while creating new growth opportunities and enhancing asset-liability management capabilities across the sector.

Capital market development

Commenting on capital market development, Alshamlan said Kuwait's Financing and Liquidity Law has established a framework that allows government financing locally and internationally within a KD 30 billion debt ceiling and repayment periods of up to 50 years.

He pointed out that the law is important not only because it enables government funding, but also because it lays the foundation for a deeper and more efficient capital market and allows the government to use their assets more efficiently.

He explained that sovereign bonds and Sukuk play a vital role in strengthening liquidity management and financial stability while helping establish a domestic sovereign yield curve, giving banks and corporates a local benchmark for pricing and issuing debt rather than relying on international markets.

Alshamlan also highlighted the strong demand seen in June of 2026 with the CBK KD 550 million issuance of treasury bonds and public debt tawarruq, where all tranches were oversubscribed, indicating this is a proof of investor confidence and the potential for further market development. He indicated that the government sukuk framework will further expand Kuwait's Islamic capital markets and attract a broader investor base.

Technological innovation

Discussing technological innovation, Alshamlan stressed that artificial intelligence is playing an increasingly important role in today and the future of banking. Technology Innovation is moving fast, but the challenge is how to use it safely. For banks, maintaining and building trust is important. Success of AI will come from the value it creates for the customer and how it improves efficiency and decision making.

Sustainability

On sustainability, Alshamlan said ESG considerations have evolved from a reporting requirement into a core strategic component of governance, risk management, financing policies, and disclosures across the banking industry.

He noted that sustainability is increasingly driven by the objectives of Kuwait Vision 2035, as well as evolving expectations from regulators, investors, and rating agencies.

"For KFH, Islamic finance and banking standards are in harmony with sustainability principles by creating long term value for society. ESG is part of our Strategy, and we screen financing for environmental and social risk. This is supported by Board oversight and dedicated sustainability functions. We also publish our Carbon Footprint every year along with our Sustainability Report. The CBK's Sustainable Finance guidelines since 2022 have also pushed the sector toward stronger reporting, board-approved ESG policies," he said.

"Building a future-ready banking sector requires a balanced approach that combines financial strength, responsible innovation, sound governance, and sustainable growth. These pillars will continue to support Kuwait's long-term economic development and prosperity," Alshamlan concluded.

Other Voices

Two vital oil choke-points under threat

By Kamel Al-Harami
Independent Oil Analyst

Two openings are vital to the global transit and transportation of oil. One is the Strait of Hormuz in the Arabian Gulf, while the other is Bab El-Mandeb in the Red Sea. Together, they account for approximately 15 million barrels of oil per day - 10 million barrels through the Gulf and 5 million barrels through the Red Sea.



Kamel Al-Harami

Both maritime openings face threats almost daily, creating uncertainty in oil markets and contributing to higher global oil prices. As a result, oil prices are being traded at nearly \$100 a barrel, with no end to the uncertainty in sight in the coming days. Both are increasingly vulnerable to disruptions that could affect oil supplies moving to both the East and the West, with the risks potentially persisting for an extended period.

With OPEC's basic price reaching approximately \$115 a barrel, prices are approaching their highest levels, except during periods of actual war between countries or serious disruptions to oil supplies from the Arabian Gulf.

This situation has less to do with the availability of oil and more to do with its delivery and the ability of oil tankers to transport crude from its point of origin to markets around the world.

At the same time, it becomes more difficult to purchase and transport crude oil for storage and the replenishment of strategic oil reserves when transportation routes and supply sources are exposed to attacks or other forms of disruption.

Otherwise, how do we explain Iran's attacks on Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar? The stated purpose is to disrupt oil production and exports, create concerns about potential shortages in global oil markets, and fuel uncertainty in the international oil market.

Today, oil markets and consumers are focused on replenishing their stocks and rebuilding declining invento-

ries, filling storage facilities to capacity in anticipation of any closure of the Gulf or the Red Sea and seeking to remain safe during the crisis.

There are now talks about oil prices reaching \$120 a barrel. While this appears to be an optimistic scenario, certainly no one wants to see prices reach that level. Such a situation could arise in the event of a major or complete closure of the Gulf, even with strategic reserves in place.

As for the availability of strategic reserves through the Red Sea via the so-called "East-West" pipeline, its current capacity is estimated at no more than 4 million barrels per day, while other sources put the figure at around 2.7 million barrels per day. The pipeline has the potential to reach 7 million barrels per day, but not at present. It has been designed to accommodate 7 million barrels per day in the coming years.

There is also growing consideration of building up and storing oil outside the producing countries.

This would be expensive, while also raising questions about how much oil should be stored and where. Most importantly, however, there is no certainty that the host country would allow the stored crude to be transported when needed, particularly if it faces shortages of its own. In such circumstances, the host country could have greater control over the stored oil and prioritize its own needs rather than allowing it to be exported. Therefore, storing oil outside one's own country raises many questions, with no assurance that answers will be available when they are most needed.

Certainly, there are no guarantees when oil and other goods are placed in someone else's hands. In times of need, security and access cannot always be guaranteed.

Let's hope the two openings stay safe and secure and that oil continues to flow freely to the world without disruptions or fear. The Gulf and the Red Sea must remain safe and free from threats, as they represent vital routes for the uninterrupted flow of oil to all parts of the world.



Email: nafitkuwaiti@yahoo.com

First FM meeting since 1999 boosts trade, tourism ties

Kuwait, El Salvador open a new chapter in bilateral ties

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 26: Kuwait Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah met with El Salvador's Foreign Minister Alexandra Hill Tinoco on Friday, September 25, 2026, at the headquarters of Kuwait's 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.

The meeting reviewed bilateral relations between Kuwait and El Salvador and ways to strengthen and develop cooperation across various fields. The two ministers also discussed the latest regional and international developments. During the meeting, the two ministers signed an agreement between the Government of Kuwait and the Government of El Salvador on visa exemptions for holders of diplomatic, special and official passports.

The ministerial meeting provides fresh momentum to more than two decades of diplomatic relations between Kuwait and El Salvador, with the two countries identifying new opportunities for cooperation in trade, investment, tourism, food security, renewable energy and development. The meeting was the first official bilateral meeting between the foreign ministers of Kuwait and El Salvador since the two countries established diplomatic relations in December 1999, a milestone that the Salvadoran Embassy described as an important new chapter in bilateral relations.

The talks also provided renewed momentum to political dialogue and opened greater



Kuwait, El Salvador sign visa-exemption pact for diplomatic passports.

scope for Kuwait's engagement with Central America and Latin America. Diplomatic relations between Kuwait and El Salvador span more than 26 years. El Salvador further strengthened its diplomatic presence in Kuwait with the opening of its embassy in November 2024, headed by Ambassador H.E. Juan Carlos Staben Boillat. The move reflects San Salvador's interest in deepening its relations with Kuwait and expanding engagement with the wider Gulf region.

The latest ministerial meeting comes against the backdrop of efforts by both sides to translate longstanding diplomatic friendship into more practical economic and development cooperation. According to the September 2026 World Tourism Barometer prepared by

UN Tourism, El Salvador recorded a 37 percent increase in international tourist arrivals during the first half of 2026 compared with the same period a year earlier. The country has increasingly gained international attention for the transformation of its tourism sector, with the Salvadoran Embassy highlighting the growth in visitor arrivals and the country's changing international tourism profile.

The Embassy also pointed to improvements in El Salvador's security environment as an important factor in strengthening confidence among visitors, investors and international partners.

Kuwait Fund partnership marks another milestone Economic and development cooperation has also entered a new phase with the signing of the first loan agreement be-

tween El Salvador and the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED). The agreement provides a foundation for a longer-term development partnership between the two countries and adds an economic dimension to their growing diplomatic engagement.

The two countries have identified several areas with potential for expanded cooperation, including food security, tourism, coffee and agricultural products, renewable energy, education, trade and investment, and development cooperation. For Kuwait, stronger engagement with El Salvador could also provide opportunities to deepen economic links with Central America, while El Salvador sees Kuwait as an important partner for expanding its connections with the Gulf.

El Salvador is also presenting itself as a potential gateway to Central America and the wider Latin American market, offering international partners opportunities for commercial and investment engagement in the region. More than two decades after diplomatic relations were established, Kuwait and El Salvador are now looking to build a relationship that extends beyond political ties.

The latest ministerial talks, the opening of El Salvador's resident embassy in Kuwait and the first KFAED loan agreement together point towards a broader framework of cooperation. The focus now is on turning diplomatic goodwill into practical partnerships in development, investment, trade, tourism and people-to-people relations.

KNPC reshuffles security, firefighting & HSE leadership

By Najeh Bilal
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 26: Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) Wadha Al-Khateeb confirmed the issuance of Administrative and Organizational Circular No. 30/2026 -- a well-planned initiative proving the dedication of the company to achieve the utmost operational efficiency and ongoing innovation in the oil refining industry, especially after its merger with Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company (KIPIC), which created new opportunities for growth and excellence.

The newspaper obtained a copy of the circular, which mandates new leadership transfers and appointments affecting the Security and Firefighting sector, as well as the Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) sector.

The circular, which was issued on Wednesday, was addressed to Deputy CEOs, department managers and team leaders, stipulating the transfer of Omar Ahmed Al-Mulhem to the position of Manager of the Security and Firefighting Department, reporting directly to the deputy CEO for Support Services, while Hamoud Saif Al-Rashoud was appointed Manager of the Health, Safety and Environment Department, reporting to the same deputy CEO.

The circular designates Sept 27 as the official date for the implementation of these organiza-

tional decisions in the relevant sectors, signaling the start of a new phase of productivity and operational and security excellence.

Moreover, a source confirmed to the newspaper that the company took these decisions to improve operational performance, align with its ambitious aspirations and reinforce its fundamental pillars.

This comes as a time the oil industry is undergoing rapid transformations, requiring high flexibility and renewed managerial mindset—one that ensures the company maintains its leading position locally and globally, while activating its role as a major refining and innovation powerhouse in the region and the world.

Through these vital structural changes, KNPC intends to inject young talent into important leadership and supervisory posts and utilize highly qualified national professionals to improve the work environment and modernize operational and technical mechanisms.

This managerial approach fosters a renewed leadership mindset and the adoption of modern strategies that boost productivity and ensure adherence to the highest global standards of occupational and environmental safety.

These appointments provide significant momentum for the expansion plans and mega-projects following the historic merger. By combining accumulated field expertise with an innovative and modern leadership, and focusing

on advanced technological solutions in the refineries, the company aims to improve overall operational performance, guarantee the security of oil facilities and vital refineries in accordance with the highest international standards, and fulfill contemporary security and environmental requirements.

This move is in accordance with the long-term strategy of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC), which prioritizes national talent in building a sustainable oil future and supporting the national economy. It is a crucial move, considering KNPC is spearheading the domestic refining sector—the lifeblood of the local oil industry.

The company bears the responsibility of transforming extracted crude oil into products with high added economic value and solidifying the international standing of Kuwait as a reliable and secure global energy supplier.

KNPC has excelled in covering all domestic needs for high-quality petroleum products and clean environmental fuel, supplying power and water generation plants and fuel stations throughout the country, while exporting advanced petroleum derivatives that meet the strictest global environmental standards.

It plays a vital role in processing and liquefying natural gas associated with oil operations, thereby, providing cooking gas and clean liquefied gas for domestic consumption and export.

Global Finance Kuwait Banking & Finance Roundtable with CBK and Bank CEOs

Al-Sager: Sustainability, operational resilience & cyber-security will shape the next phase of banking growth

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 26: Mr. Isam Al-Sager, Vice Chairman and Group CEO of National Bank of Kuwait (NBK), participated in a roundtable on the future of Kuwait’s banking and financial services sector. During the discussion, he shared his perspective on the key challenges and opportunities facing the sector, emphasising the importance of establishing institutional resilience before crises emerge, accelerating digital transformation and strengthening sustainability practices to support sustainable growth and long-term financial stability.

Organised by Global Finance, the roundtable convened Mr. Basel A. Al-Haroon, Governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait, alongside the CEOs of Kuwaiti banks for a discussion on the key challenges and structural shifts reshaping the banking sector in Kuwait and globally.

Building Resilience Before Crises Emerge

Al-Sager highlighted that one of the most important lessons from recent geopolitical and economic volatility is that resilience must be established before a crisis emerges. This requires maintaining strong capital and liquidity, applying disciplined risk management and strengthening operational agility.

Risks rarely arise in isolation and are becoming increasingly interconnected. Geopolitical tensions can trigger market volatility, disrupt supply chains, heighten cyber threats and create funding pressures, making it essential for institutions to assess the wider indirect effects of global developments.

Growth and financial stability should not be viewed as competing objectives, but as mutually reinforcing. Resilient financial institutions can absorb shocks while continuing to finance economic activity and support development, even during challenging periods.

Strengthening resilience, however, should not come at the expense of the banking sector’s role in the real economy. This calls for a balanced approach to risk-taking rather than a broad withdrawal from, or reduction in, financing activity.

Strengthening Coordination and Institutional Readiness

Al-Sager called for greater cooperation and coordination among banks, regulators and public institutions, noting that information sharing, stress testing, and contingency and crisis response arrangements are key to strengthening confidence and reinforcing stability across the financial sector.

He explained that NBK embeds geopolitical risk across strategic planning, risk management and scenario analysis, in line with the Central Bank of Kuwait’s emphasis on strengthening operational readiness and business continuity.

Moreover, he added that the Bank has developed and implemented best-in-class business continuity and crisis management practices, supported by regular testing, which have enabled it to maintain operational efficiency and service continuity across different conditions and crises.

Modernising Infrastructure and Diversifying Sources of Growth

Turning to the banking sector’s priorities over the next three to five years, Al-Sager said that modernising the sector’s underlying infrastructure is a strategic priority. This includes upgrading core banking systems, strengthening data management capabilities and selectively expanding cloud adoption to support business



Isam Al-Sager with H.E. Basel Al-Haroon, Governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait, and banking leaders.

- Managing geopolitical risk and advancing responsible innovation are key to banking growth going forward
- Data quality is as important as technology in shaping the future of banking
- AI and sustainability are key drivers of banking sector competitiveness
- Strong capital and liquidity, together with disciplined risk management, form the foundation for absorbing shocks
- The most resilient institutions are those that build their preparedness and business continuity plans during stable periods
- Growth and financial stability should not be viewed as competing objectives
- Global challenges require the banking sector to redefine what constitutes strength
- Human capital is a critical strategic resource that requires collective efforts across stakeholders to develop a generation capable of leading the transformation ahead
- AI should strengthen the quality and speed of decision-making, but human judgement must remain central
- More diversified and resilient sources of growth are essential to strengthening banking sector competitiveness
- Sustainability is increasingly being treated as a financial and strategic discipline
- Integrating sustainability into risk management and capital allocation has become a strategic imperative
- Banks have an important role in financing the transition towards a more sustainable economy

needs and improve operational efficiency.

He highlighted the need for more diversified and resilient sources of growth through further expansion in transaction banking, capital markets, Islamic finance and advisory services. This would support sustainable growth and reduce reliance on traditional revenue sources.

Furthermore, Al-Sager emphasised the banking sector’s important role in expanding private-sector participation and advancing the objectives of Kuwait Vision 2035 by financing SMEs, infrastructure, strategic projects and emerging economic sectors.

Investing in Human Capital

Al-Sager explained that sustainability, operational resilience and cybersecurity should form part of the same strategic agenda as the banking sector’s future growth.

He added that successful execution will ultimately depend on developing talent and human capabilities. Human capital has become a critical strategic resource,

requiring collective efforts among financial institutions and educational and regulatory bodies to develop a generation capable of leading the transformation ahead.

AI Moves From Applications to the Core of Banking Operations

Turning to digital transformation, Al-Sager said that the greatest opportunity lies in embedding AI into core banking workflows rather than limiting its use to isolated or narrowly focused applications.

He explained that AI can drive meaningful transformation across customer service, credit assessment, fraud detection and risk analysis, helping improve efficiency and the quality of banking services.

Data availability and quality, Al-Sager noted, will be as important as the technology itself. AI should strengthen the quality and speed of decision-making, while human judgement must remain central to banking.

Innovation and control must also advance together, supported by appropriate governance and oversight

covering data protection, cybersecurity, model validation and third-party risk management.

Broader Partnerships to Advance Responsible Innovation

Al-Sager noted that greater collaboration among banks, fintechs, technology providers, universities and regulators is essential to accelerating responsible innovation across the financial sector.

NBK’s strategy, he explained, follows a dual-track approach: continuously transforming its core business and operations while building digital-first business models that leverage AI, data and fintech ecosystems. This approach strengthens the customer experience and enhances institutional performance.

Across the organisation, the Bank focuses on integrating technology, data, talent and customer insight to support the customer experience, improve efficiency and deliver stronger business performance. Successful digital transformation, Al-Sager noted, depends not on technology alone, but on integrating these elements within a unified operating model capable of responding to change and capturing future opportunities.

Sustainability Becomes a Financial and Strategic Pillar

Turning to sustainability and sustainable finance, Al-Sager said that perceptions of sustainability have undergone a fundamental shift in recent years. It is increasingly being treated as an integrated financial and strategic discipline rather than simply a reporting and disclosure obligation.

Sustainability is now integral to credit assessment, risk management, capital allocation, product development and client engagement. The strongest opportunities for sustainable finance in Kuwait, he noted, are closely linked to national priorities, particularly energy efficiency, renewable energy, water security and low-emission transportation.

Financing Economic Transition and Advancing Development

Significant potential also exists to support the sustainable transition of key economic sectors, including oil and gas, petrochemicals, construction and real estate development, and manufacturing.

Banks play an important role in helping clients identify credible sustainable projects, structure appropriate financing and establish clear, measurable performance indicators to ensure the intended outcomes are achieved.

At NBK, sustainability is fully integrated into the decision-making process through an established governance framework that starts at the Board level. Sustainability considerations inform how the Bank assesses risk, finances clients and allocates capital. The Bank also works closely with clients to understand their needs and challenges and support their transition towards more sustainable and efficient business models.

\$6 Billion in Sustainable Assets

Al-Sager noted that NBK issued a \$500 million green bond in 2024 and fully allocated its proceeds to eligible projects. The Bank’s sustainable assets have reached approximately \$6 billion, representing 60% of its 2030 target.

These achievements have contributed to significant improvements in NBK’s environmental, social and governance ratings, strengthening its position among the region’s leading financial institutions. The Bank will continue supporting the sustainable transition and creating long-term value for the economy and society.

Seven EU nations lead global push to cap prices

Europe uses subsidies, taxes and policy pauses to offset pain of high fuel prices

BRUSSELS, Sept 26, (AP): Wars in the Middle East and Ukraine are driving governments across Europe to craft subsidies, taxes and policy revisions that might shield their economies, companies and increasingly aggrieved citizens from record gasoline and diesel prices.

Countries around the world have intervened to limit the economic impact of diminished energy supplies and soaring fuel prices since the start of the Iran war, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. Seven of the 10 nations working most actively to contain the economic damage are in the European Union, the OECD said in a report published Wednesday.

Lithuania cut train ticket prices in half. Greece is taxing gambling more to fund public relief efforts. Italy delayed the scheduled demolition of coal-fired power plants and slashed the required paperwork for oil and natural gas projects. The Netherlands increased funding for a program that provides free energy-saving services in homes. Poland has proposed heavily taxing the record profits of certain fuel producers and sellers.

Before the United States and Israel attacked Iran, Russia’s war in Ukraine disrupted global energy supplies and caused turmoil in Europe. The EU imports nearly all of the oil it uses and 85% of its natural gas. Overall, imports supply 57% of the bloc’s energy needs, with much of its domestically produced energy coming from renewable and nuclear sources, according to the EU’s statistical office.

Europeans are becoming more incensed as pump prices surpass the equivalent of \$12 a gallon in some countries. EU citizens are spending an extra 203 million euros (\$231 million) a day just for diesel fuel, according to the European advocacy organization Transport & Environment.

“It’s a cruel irony that the U.S. is the least vulnerable to a crisis of its own making, while Europe’s economy again takes the hit,” Antony Froggatt, an analyst at the organization, said.

Some European governments are spending billions to help their countries weather the current energy crisis.

EU leaders in Brussels gave member nations temporary discretion to provide state aid to households and energy-intensive industries like agriculture, transportation and fishing. They also offered limited leeway from EU spending rules for investments that strengthen energy security and reduce the bloc’s long-term reliance on imported oil and natural gas.

“The pressures from higher energy prices and borrowing costs are biting for people and for businesses,” European Commission

President Ursula von der Leyen said in her annual State of the European Union address last week. “We need to double down on our affordable, homegrown, clean energy, be it renewables and nuclear, or biomethane and others” to “give us independence and drive down energy prices.”

France has adopted an expanding array of targeted measures to cushion consumers and fuel-intensive businesses from higher prices.

The French government on Tuesday announced a 450 million-euro (\$512 million) package to expand its relief measures. It broadened means-tested aid for people who drive more than 30 kilometers (18 miles) round trip to work or more than 8,000 kilometers (4,900 miles) annually for professional purposes. The expansion makes 5.5 million workers eligible for 100-euro (\$113) payments to defray fuel costs through the end of the year, the government said.

The new package also extended fuel subsidies for farmers, fishermen and construction companies until the end of the year, and will make energy vouchers of 48 euros to 277 euros available three months early to help 5.8 million families pay their winter energy bills.

French President Emmanuel Macron has asked von der Leyen to promote a relaxation of EU fuel quality regulations on density, sulfur content and other criteria to help increase diesel and kerosene production in Europe. The EU took a similar step during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In a letter to the EU executive seen by The Associated Press, Macron warned that the global oil market would soon see “strong increases in prices” if the Strait of Hormuz off Iran’s coast did not reopen to tanker traffic and Saudi Arabia’s East-West pipeline to the Red Sea was not repaired.

He also called for raising the EU limit on conventional biodiesel content in standard diesel fuel from 7% to 10%.

On Thursday, Macron said in an interview with French broadcasters that he would deploy French troops, radars and defensive systems to Saudi Arabia to help protect energy infrastructure from attacks by Iran-backed Houthi rebels who have seized new territory near the Bab al-Mandab, a key chokepoint in the global economy. “We are putting ourselves in a position to protect this site because a few weeks ago more than 5 million barrels came out of this site every day,” he said, referring to an export terminal in Yanbu on the Red Sea for the Saudi East-West pipeline.

A two-month round of fuel tax cuts in Germany expired at the end of June. The government agreed last week to renew the tax cuts,

which will lower gasoline and diesel prices by 17 cents per liter, from Oct. 1 until the end of the year. The German government said the new reduction will cost 2.5 billion euros.

The government also said it would hold talks with the oil industry about introducing a fuel price cap by Jan. 1. Neighboring Belgium and Luxembourg have had similar price caps in place for decades.

Spain’s government also extended gasoline and diesel tax cuts it introduced in March as part of a 5 billion-euro (\$5.7 billion) package to counter the effects of the Iran war on local energy prices.

The tax break amounted to 5 cents per liter this month. An automatic mechanism would increase it to 20 cents per liter if fuel-price inflation exceeds 15% year-on-year.

The government also extended fuel subsidies for transportation companies, farmers, livestock producers and fishermen.

Alongside national relief programs, EU nations have tapped their strategic reserves as part of an agreement by the International Energy Agency’s 32 member countries to make 400 million barrels of oil from their emergency stockpiles available to the market. Macron has said Thursday he would rally G7 nations to release more fuel, too.

The EU has worked to reduce its reliance on energy imported from Russia through renewable energy production and converting systems and industries to run on electricity instead of fossil fuels.

Von der Leyen said greater electrification could reduce the EU’s annual bill for imported oil, gas and other fossil fuels by 260 billion euros (\$296.6 billion) by 2040.

As the EU tried to wean itself off Russian energy, it became more dependent on the United States. Von der Leyen personally struck a deal with President Donald Trump last year that included a commitment for the EU to buy \$750 billion worth of American energy over three years.

The Iran war has made the relationship both more vital and more complicated for the EU, which has increasingly turned to the U.S. for diesel. The support Trump expressed this week for banning diesel exports to drive down U.S. prices worries the bloc, which would have to find alternative sources of the fuel.

Brussels is lobbying Washington to drop the idea of suspending overseas diesel sales.

“We believe this is a bad idea,” European Commission spokesperson Olof Gill said Thursday. “EU-U.S. cooperation in the field of energy is strong, stable and mutually beneficial. Any disruption would risk negatively impacting both sides.”

US to spend \$1.9 bln to upgrade power grid

ALLENTOWN, Sept 26, (AP): The Energy Department said Thursday that it will spend almost \$2 billion to try to squeeze more electricity out of the nation’s aging and stressed power grid, as President Donald Trump’s administration steps up efforts to avoid blackouts amid skyrocketing energy demand spurred by artificial intelligence.

The money will go toward 31 projects across 26 states that are expected to produce more than 23 gigawatts of additional electricity capacity - enough to power 16 million homes. The projects will use new technologies such as sensors to measure real-time weather conditions to ensure safe transmission or direct power away from congested paths, the department said.

The upgrades could improve power reliability and lower electricity costs for about 100 million Americans, officials said.

“This is a quick way to lower electricity prices and increase reliability: using fibers that are already in the transmission lines to analyze what’s the temperature out, what’s the wind out, how can we use this transmission line to distribute more power, but safely and only in the right conditions,” Energy Secretary Chris Wright said in a news conference promoting the grants Thursday at a PPL Corp. facility in Allentown.

The eastern Pennsylvania electric utility says two data centers in its territory came online this year and six more are under construction, with enough other data centers in the advanced planning stages that its peak electric demand could quintuple by 2032.

PPL said it is receiving \$71.5 million to modernize an existing high-voltage transmission line across roughly 30 miles in northern Pennsylvania.

The announcement comes amid warnings that AI’s voracious demand for power is threatening to overwhelm U.S. power supplies, as massive new data centers come online faster than new power plants can be built. It also comes as electricity bills rise faster than inflation in many parts of the U.S., blamed in some areas on demand from data centers.

The snowballing opposition to data centers in communities across the country has thrown a wrench into the plans of the world’s richest companies and transformed the mid-term election landscape.

Trump continues to stick up for data centers, even as politicians from both major political parties criticize them and many communities try to block them. In the meantime, Congress and some states are trying to push utilities to expand their use of new technologies to make grids more efficient and to lessen the need to build new power plants.

Julia Selker, the executive director of the WATT Coalition, a trade association for grid-enhancing technologies, said both the projects and the scale of the investment are significant. Utilities in the U.S. are lagging places like Europe in adopting the technologies, despite federal investment in the past to develop and test them, Selker said.

Still, Drew Maloney, CEO of the Edison Electric Institute, a trade association of for-profit utilities, said America’s electric utilities are making a “significant investment” every year in new technologies to strengthen the grid and reduce outages.

Wright said that work on the projects should begin right away and that he hoped some efficiencies are in place before this winter to tamp down price spikes when extreme weather sends demand skyrocketing.

Wright said he didn’t know whether the projects would have gotten done without federal funding. Many, he said, had been under consideration before the grants were offered, but the grant recipients hadn’t “quite pulled the trigger” on them.

Projects being announced Thursday will involve component enhancements on more than 1,500 miles (2,400 kilometers) of transmission lines and technological enhancements across nearly 21,000 miles (34,000 kilometers), the department said.

Projects were prioritized based on those that can be put into operation quickly, officials said. Money for the grants comes from the bipartisan infrastructure law enacted by Congress under then-President Joe Biden, a Democrat. The government’s \$1.9 billion in funding will be matched by \$3.35 billion from the recipients, the department said.

Recipients include utilities, cooperatives and four state agencies. The state agencies - in Colorado, Indiana, Ohio and Oklahoma - were the biggest recipients, collectively drawing \$810 million, with the Colorado and Oklahoma projects promising improvements to regional grids.

Trump has vowed to “unleash” the nation’s energy sector in his second term, aiming to drive up record-setting domestic oil and gas production, strip away pollution restrictions on power plants and keep expensive coal-fired power plants operating past their retirement dates.

The administration also has pledged nearly \$4 billion to buy back offshore wind leases as Trump seeks to discourage the expansion of wind energy in favor of fossil fuels.

His administration meanwhile has pushed to help tech giants build and connect data centers to power plants and high-voltage power lines and convert Cold War-era uranium enrichment plants into data center and power plant complexes.

Strengthening SME support with new Al Tajer banking solutions

ABK introduces exclusive benefits through Al Tajer & Al Tajer Plus packages

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 26: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) has introduced a range of banking services and benefits under its Al Tajer and Al Tajer Plus packages, designed to support business growth and simplify day-to-day banking and financial transactions.

The offering reflects ABK’s continued commitment to providing banking solutions that meet the needs of small and medium-sized businesses in Kuwait.

Key benefits include the opportunity to earn interest of up to 1% per month, a dedicated relationship manager to oversee accounts and provide banking advice, and fast, convenient employee salary transfers at competitive fees. Businesses can also generate free daily payment links to collect payments from customers.

The packages also allow businesses to send and receive funds easily and securely through ABK Visa Commercial cards.

Commenting on the launch, Johair Marafi, General Manager of Retail Banking at ABK, said, “These packages build on our vision of delivering innovative, flexible banking solutions that meet the needs of businesses. We are committed to giving business owners the financial tools they need to manage liquidity and improve the efficiency of their daily operations with ease and confidence.”



Johair Marafi

She added, “Supporting entrepreneurs and providing them with a stable, advanced financial environment are among our core priorities. With this in mind, we have introduced exceptional, competitive benefits that enable us to respond promptly and effectively to their needs.”

Marafi noted that the packages provide businesses with banking benefits that can strengthen cash flow, accelerate operations and reduce costs as they grow in the local market.

She concluded, “At ABK, we remain committed to investing in the development of our banking products, reinforcing our position as a trusted financial partner that contributes to economic growth and meets the evolving needs of customers in Kuwait.”

Developing youth innovation & entrepreneurship skills

KIB successfully concludes fourth KIB Life Academy Summer Camp for employees’ children and relatives

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 26: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced the conclusion of the KIB Life Academy Summer Camp, held for the fourth consecutive year for the children and relatives of its employees.Organized this year in collaboration with CODED Academy, this initiative reflects the Bank’s ongoing commitment to education and development. It also provides a comprehensive educational and recreational environment for employees’ children, helping them enhance their skills and develop their creative and intellectual abilities for the future.

Held over two weeks at the CODED Academy, the program offered a comprehensive daily experience designed to engage young participants both physically and mentally. It combined three core elements: technical learning, physical and team-based activities, and innovative and creative experiences.

Participants strengthened their programming and problem-solving skills and developed essential technical capabilities through hands-on experiences with a range of robots, including Sphero and mBot. The program also encouraged innovation through creative and technology-focused activities, such as 3D pen design, virtual reality experiences, and introductory artificial intelligence activities.

The program concluded with a special closing event, during which participants presented their final projects to their families and peers, showcasing the skills and knowledge they had developed throughout the program.

Commenting on the conclusion of the summer camp, Siham AlKhorayef, Senior Manager – Learning and Development at KIB, said: “We are proud to

see this program continue for the fourth consecutive year, this time in close collaboration with CODED Academy, which provided the children and relatives of our employees with a rich and enjoyable learning experience. This year, we focused on keeping the young participants actively engaged through dynamic, hands-on activities while introducing them to technology in a practical and age-appropriate way.This camp reflects KIB’s ongoing commitment to equipping future generations with the practical and intellectual skills that prepare them for a promising future.”

AlKhorayef highlighted that KIB continues to invest in its employees through an integrated approach that also extends to their families, saying:“Through the distinguished KIB Life Academy Summer Camp program, we were keen to provide the children and relatives of our employees with a unique opportunity to develop their abilities and experiences, and to acquire essential practical and life skills in an engaging way.”

It is worth noting that, as part of its comprehensive social responsibility program and its commitment to an Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) approach, KIB continues to support educational initiatives and community activities. This stems from the Bank’s firm belief in the importance of supporting young national talents, enabling them to discover their potential and pursue a path of creativity and innovation, in line with the New Kuwait 2035 vision.



Siham AlKhorayef

Empowering Kuwait's next generation of tech leaders

talabat, CODED Academy organize ‘Next Tech Gen’ workshop at Abdullah Al-Salem University

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 26: Building on its commitment to advancing tech education in Kuwait, talabat, the leading everyday app in Middle East & North Africa (MENA), hosted the latest session of its “Next Tech Gen” (NTG) initiative in partnership with CODED Academy. The collaboration brought a specialized two-day knowledge-sharing workshop to students at Abdullah Al-Salem University.

As part of its education-focused corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts, talabat continues to organize educational events under the umbrella of NTG, an ongoing monthly program designed to bridge the gap between academia and the evolving needs of the labor market. The program gives students the opportunity to learn directly from talabat’s technology experts through practical sessions covering key technology areas, including artificial intelligence (AI), product development, data analytics, and digital platforms.

For this session of NTG, talabat partnered with CODED Academy—the region’s first academy specializing in coding education—to deliver a practical workshop designed to equip students with future-ready skills. Over the course of two intensive days, participants learned how to design, launch, and transform fully integrated websites into scalable digital projects that address real market needs, equipping them with the skills needed to turn their ideas into promising digital ventures. Reflecting the growing interest among Kuwait’s youth in technology, the workshop attracted more than 100 participants across both days.

Commenting on the occasion, Amal Bukhamseen, Manager of Corporate Affairs at talabat Kuwait, said:“At talabat, we believe that technology’s true impact begins with investing in people. Through Next Tech Gen, we continue to equip Kuwait’s youth with the practical skills they need to lead the future of technology and innovation. Our collaboration with CODED Academy reflects the combined expertise of two organizations that share a commitment to empowering the next generation of tech talent, while giving students practical experience in using AI-powered tools to turn their ideas into practical digital solutions.”

Hashim Behbehani, Co-founder and Chief Operations Officer of CODED Academy, added: “We are delighted to continue our collaboration with talabat through Next Tech Gen, providing students with valuable opportunities to develop practical technology skills. Through hands-on exercises, this workshop introduced participants to AI-powered website development, strengthening their confidence in their ability to transform their ideas into fully integrated websites while preparing them to meet the evolving demands of the digital economy.”

Among the 90 project ideas presented during the workshop, sev-



Amal Bukhamseen, Manager of Corporate Affairs at talabat Kuwait



CODED Academy representative delivering a lecture at the workshop.



Celebrating the completion of the Next Tech Gen session with CODED by distributing certificates to participating students.

- 100 Abdullah Al-Salem University students participated in talabat’s latest Next Tech Gen session
- The two-day workshop covered the latest tools and skills needed to build a complete digital project and develop practical websites designed to address real market needs
- Students developed 60 websites by the end of the workshop

eral innovative websites stood out, including a prediction platform created for a group of friends at adiwaniya to compete during the knockout stage of the FIFA World Cup 2026. The platform allows participants to predict the winner of each match from the quarter-finals through to the final, earning points for every correct prediction. A live leaderboard tracks participants’ rankings throughout the tournament, with the most accurate participant crowned champion at the final whistle of the final match on 19 July.

In line with talabat’s ongoing efforts to empower ambitious Ku-

waiti talent with practical, future-ready skills, the workshop introduced participants to the latest AI-powered website development tools and techniques. This included training on effective prompt engineering and the use of advanced platforms such as Replit to design, develop, and launch fully integrated websites.

Participants also gained practical experience in integrating external digital services, understanding modern web application architecture, and developing the commercial skills needed to transform digital solutions into scalable and sustainable ventures through effec-

tive business models. This equips them to apply their technical knowledge to launch market-ready digital projects with strong commercial potential.

talabat remains committed to investing in practical technology education through its Next Tech Gen program by strengthening students’ engagement with industry experts and expanding their exposure to the latest emerging technologies. This reflects the company’s long-term vision of preparing a future-ready generation capable of contributing to Kuwait’s digital economy and supporting the goals of Kuwait Vision 2035.

BANGKOK, Sept 26, (AP): China and the U.S. agreed to set up a channel for handling AI-related incidents and accelerate work on military crisis communications following a three-day summit between their leaders in Washington, both sides said in statements Saturday.

The two sides agreed to keep working together on a Board of Trade on selected bilateral trade issues, with the White House saying in a statement Saturday that the board went into operation this week.

The summit produced no major breakthroughs, but some experts say the steps toward greater cooperation were still considered important, allowing the two powers to set up working groups that could prevent problems from escalating.

Chinese President Xi Jinping landed back in Beijing on Saturday, according to Xinhua. During the visit, President Donald Trump was remarkably warm to Xi, despite having escalated a trade war with China the previous year that had global repercussions.

The two sides agreed to sign a memorandum of understanding on strengthening crisis communications and preventing crises between the two militaries, China’s Foreign Ministry said Saturday in its readout. The one-page statement from the Chinese side was light on details.

Both sides will set up a communication mechanism for artificial intelligence -related incidents, to discuss related risks and benefits, with an AI-specific dialogue scheduled for November.

The statement said both sides will continue to work together on the pledge to reduce reciprocal tariffs on roughly \$30 billion worth of goods. During the summit, the two leaders agreed to extend a trade truce by two months. The White House statement said China agreed to import at least 10 million metric tons of coal from the U.S. in 2027

and 2028.

Most of the reduction in tariffs is aimed at non-sensitive goods, such as agricultural products or holiday decorations.

The statement from the White House also said the two sides continued to work on American concerns about rare earths supply, “with the goal of ensuring shipment levels return to appropriate levels.” China put export controls on rare earths last year in response to the U.S. tariffs, cutting the supply sent to the U.S. and other countries.

Both sides agreed to meet at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Shenzhen, China, in November, and then later at the G20 at the Trump National Doral Miami golf club in Florida.

Both also said that Iran should honor its stated commitment to not develop nuclear weapons, and that no country should charge a toll on international waterways, in a reference to the Strait of Hormuz, which has seen significantly reduced traffic since the U.S. war with Iran began.

The U.S. statement also said it welcomed China’s move to add export controls for an additional two precursor chemicals for fentanyl, and both noted that law enforcement had been able to make arrests in fentanyl-related cases recently.

Although the visit produced no major breakthroughs on the countries’ fundamental differences, analysts said the incremental steps were noteworthy.

“Personal diplomacy between the two leaders is important, but the emphasis on working-level engagement, military-to-military dialogue and crisis-management mechanisms suggests an effort to make that stability more durable and institutionalized,” said Wang Zichen, deputy secretary-general of the Beijing-based think tank Center for China and Globalization.

Court backs Pentagon in Anthropic AI dispute

WASHINGTON, Sept 26, (AP): In the latest twist in Anthropic’s dispute with the Pentagon, a federal appeals court on Friday rejected the artificial intelligence lab’s challenge to the government’s labeling of it as a supply chain risk.

The decision allows the Pentagon to continue to remove Anthropic’s Claude models from its systems and bar the use of its products for Defense Department work. Judges from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit ruled 2-1 in the Pentagon’s favor.

“Today’s DC Circuit Court ruling completely validates the Department’s position,” the Pentagon’s top spokesman, Sean Parnell, wrote in a social media post.

The dispute between the AI company and the government broke out in February when President Donald Trump and Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth accused Anthropic of endangering national security and designated the company a supply chain risk. Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei refused to back down over concerns the company’s products could be used for mass surveillance or autonomous armed drones.

The ruling is separate from one this summer in California, where a federal judge found the Pentagon acted illegally by punishing the AI company for its criticism of the Pentagon’s views on AI use. This case, which was filed earlier this year in Washington, D.C., focused on a different rule the Pentagon was using to try to declare Anthropic a supply chain risk.

The majority opinion states the Pentagon had “ample support” for its actions. It notes that by Anthropic’s own admission, “the company encodes restrictions into Claude that prevent the model from performing tasks that Anthropic wishes to prevent.”

“The Department reasonably

feared that Anthropic might manipulate Claude’s design to prevent it from performing national-security functions that the Department deems contractually authorized and necessary,” Judge Gregory G. Katsas wrote in the majority opinion. Both Katsas and Judge Neomi Rao, who formed the majority, were nominated by Trump. The sole dissenter, Judge Karen LeCraft Henderson, was nominated by Republican President George H. W. Bush.

The judges said that they have “no reason to doubt” that Anthropic acts with “noble intentions” in restricting Claude, specifically with respect to its concerns around privacy and AI safety. But they said the definition of a supply chain risk in this context hinges “on what Anthropic does, not why Anthropic does it.”

An Anthropic spokesperson said in a written statement the company “respectfully disagrees” with the court’s decision. “Another federal court has already held the government’s parallel designation unlawful,” the statement continued. “We remain confident in our position and are considering all options, including further review.”

The judges who ruled against Anthropic said they had “no quarrel” with the conclusions of the the separate case that was filed in San Francisco, but they found that a “bad motive” on Anthropic’s part is not required to support a supply chain risk designation.

The Department of Defense began removing Claude from its workflows earlier this year, and the ruling upholds its ability to do so, including prohibiting contractors from using Anthropic products in their work for the department. Anthropic’s products are not barred from the federal government as a whole under this ruling.

The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment.



Moschino finds wit in restraint

Gucci gets luxe back

MILAN, Sept 26, (AP): Gucci creative director Demna moved beyond the strict archetypes of his debut collection and fixed his gaze on the fashion house's luxe heritage for his all-important second collection, previewed Friday during Milan Fashion Week.

The runway was transformed into a luxury Gucci boutique, where Cardi B, wrapped in white faux fur, and Donatella Versace, wearing a stole from Demna's first Gucci collection, sat on cushioned sofas. Brand ambassador Jannik Sinner took a seat beside Vogue's Anna Wintour.

Models broadcast nonchalance as they strolled through the boutique, casting their eyes over jewelry cases, shelves of handbags and racks of ready-to-wear.

At a moment when the luxury business is struggling, the setting made the commercial imperative unusually explicit: These were clothes intended not merely to project an image, but to move from rack to wardrobe. And the runway offered flexible propositions for eager consumers.

"Gucci is about luxury that wants to be seen," Demna wrote in show notes.

The collection's strongest looks had undoubted commercial appeal: A double-breasted navy peacoat paired with high-heeled equestrian boots - with spurs for a Demna flourish - and a rugby shirt with Gucci stripes for him layered under an Oxford shirt and Gucci logo jacket.

At Moschino, Loris Messina and Simone Rizzo brought the cult credibility they built at Sunnei to their debut as creative directors, taking up founder Franco Moschino's legacy of intellectual wit.

Their debut show was set on the top floor of a parking garage overlooking the 2026 Olympic ice hockey venue just as the setting sun created a pinkish sky in the background.

The runway was flanked by hundreds of people in their own clothes walking in the opposite direction throughout the show, creating a stream of personal styles that situated the collection among everyday wardrobes.

The house's irony remained, but it felt less dependent on quirk and gimmick than in recent iterations. Grass fringe punctured the preciousness of luxury, while cartoonish graphics functioned more as art than as characters or caricatures.

Still, humor came through the clothes themselves: exaggerated side bustles brought Marie Antoinette proportions to skirts worn like denim, while padding turned the enhanced backside to suggest a female ideal. It was still recognizably Moschino, but the joke didn't overwhelm the clothes.

Fans who look to Moschino for novelty bags shaped like milk cartons or cooking pots may be disappointed by the pared-down aesthetic. The bag of the season was a very practical, large bucket bag and the only nod to novelty was a bag shaped like a cat that perched on a model's shoulder.

The designers said they are forging a modern version of the fashion house that isn't stuck in previous decades.

"We want Moschino to become a cultural loudspeaker again," Rizzo said.



Kuwait Radio’s ‘Halfway’ & Kuwait TV’s ‘Secret of the Day’ earn honors

Ministry of Information wins two awards at 26th Arab Radio and TV Festival

TUNIS, Sept 26, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti Ministry of Information secured two awards at the conclusion of the 26th Arab Radio and Television Festival, organized by the Arab States Broadcasting Union (ASBU) in Tunis.

The festival wrapped up Thursday evening at the Opera House in the City of Culture with an artistic performance, featuring a lineup of Arab artists, including Kuwaiti singer Abdullah Tariq, alongside performers from Palestine, Oman, Sudan, Egypt, and Algeria.

The ASBU competition committee announced that Kuwait Radio won second prize in the documentary programs category for “Muntasaf al-Tariq” (Halfway), while Kuwait Television claimed second prize in the children and family programs category for “Sirr al-Yawm” (Secret of the Day).

Held under the theme “Pulse of the Image, Echo of the Future”, the four-day event included a media technology exhibition and program market in Hammamet, professional seminars on AI, podcasting, and tourism media, and honored several prominent Arab cultural figures, including Kuwaiti actor Mohammed Al-Mansour.

The festival’s conclusion coincided with the 115th meeting of the ASBU Executive Council, chaired by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which addressed expanding news and program exchanges, adopting cloud technology, and fostering joint production among member states.



Winners pose with their awards on stage at the closing ceremony of the 26th Arab Radio and Television Festival, held at the Opera House in the City of Culture with an artistic performance, organized by the Arab States Broadcasting Union (ASBU) in Tunis.

New tracks include ‘Cleveland!’

Swift releases four songs as she gears up for MTV VMAs

NEW YORK, Sept 26, (AP): Taylor Swift is back in action. Did you miss her?

On Friday, Swift released “The Life of a Showgirl: The Encore,” an extended version of her 2025 album with four new tracks: “Patient Zero,” “Cleveland!,” “Pink Clouding” and “Babylon.” It is her first new music since marrying Kansas City Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce at Madison Square Garden in July.

The music video for “Patient Zero” - directed by Swift and starring Colin Farrell and Dakota Johnson - will premiere during the 2026 MTV Video Music Awards Sunday night.

“About a year ago, you guys did a truly unfathomable thing. Something that completely blew my mind,” Swift wrote in an Instagram caption announcing the additional tracks.

“You gave The Life of a Showgirl the biggest first week for an album in history. I took a trip to Sweden to celebrate with Max (Martin) and Shellback, my two collaborators on this album,” she continued. “Really we just wanted to reflect and take in how grateful we were for the moment we were in, but there was a studio there and we did what we do when we feel anything at all: We wrote more songs. I hope you love them, because they were born out of pure gratitude for your exuberance for and celebration of the album we made.”

Here’s what else to know about the new music:

The single “Patient Zero” finds Swift giving advice to the new girlfriend of a toxic ex.

“When the toxins take their hold, you’d rather die than let it go / But if you’re sick of him, I got you, I was patient zero,” she sings over a violin intro. As drums build to fill out the track, Swift explains that she’s been in a similar position before - in fact, she’s experienced it with the same alluring-but-ultimately-toxic partner. She escaped, and she’s urging his next victim to do the same: “Take it from somebody who lost his games but won the race / Take it from someone who said all of this to his face / Someone who knows she’s more than just the chase / Someone who had him and walked away.”

“Cleveland” opens with a cheery piano melody layered with upbeat drums, a combination that recalls classic sitcom themes. And Swift is reveling here: An ode to her relationship with Kelce, who grew up in Cleveland Heights, Ohio, she describes the joy of finding a partner who could see past public rumors and hate. “The taste of me is acquired, but it’s his favorite dish,” she sings. It’s a theme Swift has written about before: She’s shaking it off, this time because she found her love story. “This is the love of my life, hey, hey, hey!” she shouts.

But that doesn’t mean she’s not still reflecting on relationships past. On “Pink Clouding,” Swift draws up “Lover”-era images of bright sunrises and hazy, loved-up decisions. Over a chorus of synths, she apologizes for leading someone on. “Years later, I still wonder how to tell you sorry / I didn’t want to let you down,” she sings.

She also reflects on “Babylon,” weaving together a story about a relationship that broke down because the subject was chasing the next thing, instead of embracing what they had. “You’re using nostalgia as a weapon to hurt yourself / But darling, you end up hurting everybody else,” she sings over mandolin, piano and programmed beats. “You never knew that it was Babylon / ‘Til it was gone.”

The announcement of “The Life of a Showgirl: The Encore” followed an exciting 24 hours for Swift’s audience.

After the pop powerhouse launched a cryptic countdown clock on her website, her dedicated fans, known as Swifties, got to work attempting to decode whatever news was forthcoming. They noted that her official Instagram bio was changed to read “And, baby, that’s sh0w business f0r y0u,” with each “o” replaced with a zero.

It now appears clear that the gesture was a reference to “Patient Zero.” Once the countdown timed out, her website updated to reveal three limited-edition CD variants of the new track for preorder: one with a double-sided cover as well as an acoustic and piano version, for \$3.99 each.

The original “The Life of a Showgirl” album 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 upcoming MTV VMAs, becoming the most awarded artist in VMA history.

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

The new award, which will bring Swift’s total to 31, aims to recognize artists “whose work behind the camera has expanded the possibilities of music video and advanced the art of visual storytelling.”

With that news - and the global premiere of the “Patient Zero” music video during the award show - it is shaping up to be a big night for Swift and her fans.

At the Emmys last week, Swift appeared in a pretaped 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.)



Taylor Swift performs during “The Eras Tour,” Monday, Aug. 7, 2023, at SoFi Stadium in Los Angeles. (AP)

Music

Rodrigo, Puth, Raye & others to perform across the country

Stars set for 2026 iHeartRadio Jingle Ball Tour

NEW YORK, Sept 26, (AP): iHeartRadio is loading its 2026 holiday tour with some starry acts, including performances by Olivia Rodrigo, Charlie Puth, Raye, Katseye, Jonas Brothers, Alex Warren, Hilary Duff, Sombr, OneRepublic, Ludacris, Teddy Swims and Sienna Spiro.

The nine-city iHeartRadio Jingle Ball Tour will visit: Dallas/Fort Worth; Los Angeles; Chicago; Detroit; New York; Boston; Washington, D.C.; Philadelphia; and, for the first time, Nashville, Tennessee. The lineup will change depending on the city.

The tour will kick off at the Dickies Arena in Fort Worth, Texas, on Dec. 1 with Katseye, Raye, Ludacris, Myles Smith, Tove Lo, Kylie Cantrall, The Beaches and JYT.

Los Angeles is next with Rodrigo’s only appearance on this tour Dec. 4; then Chicago led by Raye on Dec. 7; Detroit led by Warren on



Sombr performs during BottleRock Napa Valley in Napa, Calif., on May 24, 2026. (AP)

Dec. 8; Boston with Duff and Sombr on Dec. 13; Washington, D.C., with Jonas Brothers and Sombr on Dec. 14; Philadelphia with Puth and Sombr on Dec. 15; and Nashville with Duff and Warren on Dec. 17.

The Jingle Ball concert was first introduced in 1996 at Madison Square Garden by New York radio station Z100 and has since become a multicity tour and an annual tradition.

This year, the Dec. 11 Madison Square Garden concert will feature Duff, Sombr, Warren, Puth, Swims, Spiro, Tomorrow X Together & Yeonjun, Stella Lefty and Freya Skye with special guest performances from Bella Kay and The Beaches.

A presale for Capital One cardholders will begin Sept. 29 at 10 a.m. local time and end Oct. 1 or while supplies last. Tickets for the general public from Ticketmaster will go on sale Oct. 2.

The iHeartRadio Jingle Ball tour stops will be part of a nationwide television special as well, airing on ABC in December. It will be available on Hulu and Disney+ the next day.

Communities honor Parton

Dolly Day celebrates country icon’s music, style & legacy

LOS ANGELES, Sept 26, (AP): Pour yourself a cup of ambition. It’s Dolly Parton Day.

Across the world, communities are dedicating Friday to honoring the beloved country singer. The day is falling on Sept. 25, a wink at Parton’s hit song “9 to 5.”

Parton, who died of cancer last month at age 80, built an impressive legacy over the decades as a singer-songwriter, actor, philanthropist and entrepreneur - leaving big and small ways to honor the icon.

So whether it’s dusting off your rhinestones, donating a book or throwing back a pink-themed cocktail, here’s how you can celebrate Dolly Parton Day.

In the U.S., a growing number of state and local leaders are establishing Sept. 25 as an annual Dolly Parton Day from California to the borough of Manhattan in New York City. The proclamations highlight Parton’s successful career and stress her lifelong commitment to promoting literacy.

In Nashville - where Parton had lived since she was 18 - the city will honor the singer with pink lights and posters and give away stickers, buttons and bookmarks. Meanwhile, Southwest Airlines announced that it would hold a Parton-inspired karaoke Friday for travelers and em-



Members of the Krewe of Dolly lead a second line parade in commemoration of the life of Dolly Parton through the French Quarter Friday, Sept. 25, 2026, in New Orleans. (AP)

ployees. Tennessee state and local officials are currently in the process of renaming the airport after Parton.

“Dolly Parton’s impact on Nashville will be felt for generations, through the music she has given us, the people she has helped and the example she continues to set,” said Nashville Mayor Freddie O’Connell in a statement. “She has shown us that caring for a community means showing up for one another.”

Over in New Orleans, the marching group Krewe of Dolly will lead a parade through the city’s French Quarter to honor Parton.

And in San Francisco, organizers are planning a public event in the heart of the city, called “Dolly Day,” designed to be a celebration of life that will include “singing loud, dressing up, and being a little kinder than usual in her honor.”

For those chained to their actual 9 to

5 job on Friday, sneaking away for an event may be challenging. Instead, you can channel Parton’s giving spirit.

Parton made it her mission to improve literacy through her Imagination Library book giveaway program. The program has quickly expanded, resulting in more than a million books sent out each month to children in the U.S., Canada, the United Kingdom, Ireland and Australia.

The Imagination Library is encouraging the public to give directly to their local Imagination Library Partner on Dolly Parton Day, or help establish a new program in their community.

Don’t know where to start? The Dollywood Foundation is directing people to ImaginationLibrary.com, where a ZIP code search can find nearby programs.

“For Dolly, giving was always personal and from her heart,” said Jeff Conyers, president of The Dollywood Foundation, in a statement. “She believed deeply in helping people, especially children, and she always felt if you are in a position to help, you should help.”

The Queen of Country was known for her over-the-top style, proudly wearing sequins with big hair and plenty of fringe in her signature color pink.

Band marks 50 years at Mount Temple

U2 surprises Dublin students with school concert

LONDON, Sept 26, (AP): Irish band U2 returned to school Friday to put on a surprise class in rock and roll where they formed a half century ago.

The band ripped through a seven-song set including an encore of “With or Without You” for hundreds of students in the schoolyard of Mount Temple Comprehensive School in Dublin and a crowd of others who got word of the gig or - like a construction crew several floors up a nearby building - were lucky to be within earshot and have a bird’s eye view.

“We escaped the lab - how’s the experiment going for you?” Bono said as he pointed to the science classrooms.

The band got its start at the school 50 years ago when a 14-year-old Larry Mullen posted a note on a message board reading: “Drummer

seeks musicians to form band.”

Originally known as Feedback, the group consisted of singer Paul Hewson, now Bono, guitarist David Evans, known as The Edge, and Adam Clayton on bass.

The rest, as they say, is history, though it would be a couple of years before they settled on the name U2 and not until 1980 that their first album, “Boy,” dropped, featuring “I Will Follow,” the first tune they played for the enthusiastic children.

The 30-minute gig was not quite as secret as it may have seemed. A camera crew was rolling, international news media were gathered and a group of 32 students accompanied the band on stringed instruments for the hit, “One.”

It was part of a promotional push for their new album, “Carnaval De Luz,” which features a duet between Bono and Dolly Parton, who died of

cancer last month.

They later performed from a balcony to a crowd of fans on popular Grafton Street in central Dublin.

Students, some sticking their heads out of classroom windows, screamed and cheered. They captured the moment on their phones and sang along to the familiar tunes. Some yelled, “I love you Bono!”

Bono thanked his captive audience but noted they had “nowhere else to go.”

As he counted down the signature start of “Vertigo,” with “uno, dos, tres, catorce” (one, two, three, 14), he quipped: “If you’re taking Spanish lessons, don’t take them from me.”

In a tribute to teachers, he became philosophical about his time at the school, saying it was where the band began the “humblest and hardest lesson” of learning how much they needed to be taught.



U2 perform an impromptu concert from a balcony in central Dublin, Ireland, Friday, Sept. 25, 2026. (AP)

Saud Al-Babtain Center treats over 10,000 patients, performs 1,600 surgeries in a year



Dr. Mohammed Khalaf, Head of the Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery Department at the Saud Al-Babtain Center for Burns and Plastic Surgery with Bassam Al-Qassas.



Dr. Mohammed Khalaf, Head of the Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery Department at the Saud Al-Babtain Center for Burns and Plastic Surgery (right) with a colleague.



Dr. Mohammed Khalaf, Head of the Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery Department at the Saud Al-Babtain Center for Burns and Plastic Surgery.

By Bassam Al-Qassas
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 26: Dr. Mohammed Khalaf, Head of the Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery Department at the Saud Al-Babtain Center for Burns and Plastic Surgery, announced that the center is undergoing a significant and rapid transformation in the fields of plastic, reconstructive, and burn surgery.

This evolution is driven by a shift toward microsurgery and precision techniques, the recruitment of leading international specialists, and the introduction of cutting-edge scientific and surgical programs in Kuwait.

In a recent exclusive interview, Dr. Khalaf explained that the center treated more than 10,000 patients and performed over 1,600 surgeries during the past year. These efforts have coincided with visits from distinguished doctors and experts from around the world, in line with the Ministry of Health's initiative to enhance the healthcare system and improve the quality of medical services available to patients.

The most notable advancement at the center is the shift from conventional plastic surgery practices to precision microsurgery, facial reconstruction, and the management of complex cases, including lymphatic fluid transfer procedures carried out

in collaboration with Korean Professor Hong.

The center recently concluded an advanced workshop focused on complex facial plastic and reconstructive surgery, as well as microsurgical techniques.

The workshop included patient consultations and advanced surgical procedures conducted through collaboration between visiting experts and the Kuwaiti medical team, providing local doctors with hands-on exposure to the latest surgical techniques and advanced methodologies.

The organizing committee sought to unify the efforts of various specialties involved in plastic and reconstructive surgery, aiming to build an integrated system that fosters the exchange of expertise and elevates the standard of medical services.

He said, "We were keen to ensure that these events serve as a genuine platform for exchanging expertise, going beyond mere scientific gatherings, and to leverage the presence of global experts to train our physicians and perform advanced procedures here in Kuwait. This directly impacts the quality of care provided to our patients."

Dr. Khalaf unveiled a strategic project to establish the first skin bank in Kuwait and the region, emphasizing that the initiative addresses a critical medical need, particularly in the

management of severe and complex burn cases.

He explained that the skin bank would facilitate the preservation of skin donated by recently deceased individuals, in accordance with approved medical and legal standards, for use in treating and saving burn patients who require extensive skin coverage and reconstructive procedures. Upon completion, the project would serve as a hallmark of regional medical excellence, enabling more efficient management of critical and complex cases.

In another move reflecting the center's drive to expand its international scientific partnerships, Dr. Khalaf announced plans to launch a research program in collaboration with the Department of Plastic Surgery at Harvard University.

He explained that this collaboration culminated in a visit to Kuwait by Professor Kavita Raghunathan, Head of the Division of Head and Neck Reconstructive Surgery at Harvard University. During her visit, she participated in patient consultations and performed several complex reconstructive surgeries.

Work is currently underway to draft a broader memorandum of understanding for scientific and research cooperation, overseen by a national team that includes Dr. Mohammed Khalaf and a group of distinguished

physicians holding Kuwaiti Board certification.

Dr. Khalaf emphasized that hosting global experts is part of the center's strategy to transfer knowledge and medical technology to Kuwait, rather than merely providing advanced surgical procedures for patients.

He noted the hosting of a French team led by Professor Yves Saban, a prominent figure in rhinoplasty and facial reconstructive surgery, explaining that the team performed several delicate nasal and facial reconstruction procedures and expressed admiration for the Center's facilities and the competence of its Kuwaiti medical staff.

The center also hosted a Korean medical team led by Professor J.W. Choi, a specialist in microsurgery and facial reconstruction, who performed several advanced and successful surgeries.

He highlighted that the Korean school of surgery is distinguished by advanced techniques in eyelid, facial, and facelift surgeries, alongside significant advancements in microsurgery and reconstructive procedures.

In the same context, the center is preparing to host Professor Naem Momen from the UK to examine and treat patients with severe burns, as well as to organize an advanced anatomical workshop on facial reconstruction and cosmetic surgery in collaboration with the Faculty of Medi-

cine at Kuwait University.

Dr. Khalaf emphasized that the primary objective of these programs and visits is to localize advanced medical expertise within Kuwait, enhance the proficiency of national physicians and medical staff, and provide practical training opportunities, while also making specialized treatment available locally and reducing the need for patients to travel abroad for care.

On the other hand, Dr. Khalaf warned against the phenomenon of what he termed "cosmetic tourism practitioners" and the associated practices that fall outside professional medical standards and regulatory oversight.

He stated that the center frequently receives patients suffering from complications and adverse outcomes resulting from the injection of unlicensed cosmetic products or cosmetic procedures performed outside proper medical frameworks.

Dr. Khalaf said, "We see cases involving serious complications from unlicensed filler and Botox injections or unsuccessful cosmetic surgeries. Some of these cases are difficult to repair or correct, and in severe instances, the complications can even be life-threatening."

He urged patients to verify a doctor's license, qualifications, and specialization, ensuring that their professional title and license authorize them

to perform the specific procedure required.

Dr. Khalaf emphasized that licensing details should be clearly displayed at the practice location.

He affirmed that the Ministry of Health deals firmly with any violations or medical errors where a doctor is found liable due to negligence or failure to meet established standards, stressing the importance of patient awareness and advising against being swayed by advertisements or offers for cosmetic services that lack clear medical guarantees.

Dr. Khalaf concluded by emphasizing that the Saud Al-Babtain Center for Burns and Plastic Surgery is working to establish a medical model that integrates Kuwaiti expertise, modern technologies, and international partnerships.

He noted that attracting top global experts is part of a comprehensive plan to develop the capabilities of the national workforce.

Dr. Khalaf emphasized that the ultimate goal is not merely to perform advanced procedures at the Center, but to build Kuwaiti expertise capable of handling the most complex cases in the future and to provide specialized therapeutic services that rival global standards, thereby reinforcing Kuwait's position as a regional hub for reconstructive and aesthetic surgery and burn treatment.



Photo shows participants of the 'Incubating Ideas and Innovations in Food and Water Security 2026' program.

Five Kuwaiti innovative projects advance to int'l program in Spain

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 26, (KUNA): Kuwait's Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity (SACGC) of the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) announced on Friday the conclusion of the "Incubating Ideas and Innovations in Food and Water Security 2026" program.

Five projects by Kuwaiti innovators have qualified for the international phase in Spain during the program, which was held in collaboration with Spain's IE University.

In a statement to KUNA, the SACGC said that the program is meant to support individuals with innovative ideas and projects in Kuwait, enabling them to develop creative solutions that address challenges pertinent to food and water security. The program attracted significant interest as the center approved 112

out of 106 applications after fulfilling the eligibility criteria and requirements, thus qualifying them for a specialized training and development journey that ran from late June through September, it added.

The journey began with an in-person training week focused on providing participants with the essential knowledge and skills needed to develop their ideas and projects, the center noted.

Abdulrahman Al-Furaih (PAD-LOGIX) came first in the areas of food security and agriculture, Ahmad Al-Muhatab (MIRAGE) ranked second in water and energy, Abdulwahab Al-Mutawa (DATESHIELD) came third in food security, Maryam Jamali (LIFECUP) ranked fourth in water security, and finally Ahmad Al-Salem (KUWAIT BSF) ranked fifth in food security and the circular economy, it added.



Some of the attendees at the launch of the breast cancer awareness campaign.

Health Ministry launches breast cancer awareness campaign

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 26: The Health Promotion Department at the Ministry of Health launched the breast cancer awareness campaign on Thursday.

Dean of the College of Life Sciences at Kuwait University Dr. Ahmed Al-Lafi inaugurated

an exhibition, which is part of the campaign, with Director of the Health Promotion Department Dr. Abeer Al-Bahwa and a team from the department in attendance.

Al-Bahwa explained that the exhibition signals the beginning of campaign activities that will be held in different locations throughout October.

She said the campaign aims to educate women on the importance of early detection and self-examination, particularly when symptoms arise, such as breast lumps (especially painless ones), skin discoloration or lumps in the armpit, or the genetic risk factors like one whose mother had breast cancer. She stressed the need to

consult a doctor for early detection and guidance.

She recommended undergoing mammogram starting at the age of 30, indicating that if the result is normal, the test must be repeated after three years. She added that at the age of 40, an annual mammogram is advised, as well as continuous self-examination.

'Vaccines safe despite Trump efforts to overhaul childhood shots'

UN tries to build momentum on pandemic preparedness, but hits speed bump

NEW YORK, Sept 26, (AP): Six years after COVID-19 forced the UN General Assembly's annual meeting of world leaders to go virtual for the first time ever, pandemics no longer dominate the conversation at the global gathering. Wars, natural disasters, geopolitical polarization and this year's hot-button worry - artificial intelligence - have seized attention.

But the General Assembly's leader and health officials sought Friday to make sure that the lurking possibility of another worldwide disease emergency stays on the agenda.

COVID-19 sometimes "feels like a fever dream" of lockdowns, overwhelmed hospitals, shuttered schools, economic disruption, personal tragedies and Zoom calls, General Assembly President Khalilur Rahman said as he opened a day-long meeting on pandemic preparedness, prevention and response. He recalled his own sleepless nights when his daughter, a physician, treated coronavirus patients during the crisis.

"Sometimes it is easier to pretend that it never happened," Rahman said, but "we cannot erase CO-

VID-19 from our memories. Quite the opposite. We have to take a hard look at that period, at where we succeeded and where we failed."

It's all the more important at a time when history's fastest-growing Ebola outbreak is spreading in Congo, he noted.

Since the depths of the coronavirus pandemic, various new international funds, collaboratives, scientific programs and agreements have arisen to tackle pandemic threats better. But the international community is navigating divides about the issue - and they were clear Friday, when countries couldn't reach consensus on a declaration that was intended to cap the special pandemic meeting.

Rahman said General Assembly members would consider the document in future.

The draft declaration, obtained by The Associated Press, reiterates an intent to scale up preparedness and improve coordination within countries and among them.

The document calls for enhancing financing, boosting lab capacity and promoting increased medication and vaccine access. Other provisions of the wide-ranging draft endorse



Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of World Health Organization (WHO), briefs the media during a press conference by the Geneva Association of United Nations Correspondents (ACANU), at the World Health Organization (WHO) headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland on Sept 2. (AP)

trying to counter vaccine hesitancy and health-related misinformation, making all policies gender-equal and ensuring universal access to family planning and sexual health services by 2030.

Proponents said the proposed doc-

ument would improve much-needed collaboration, risk monitoring and preparedness for a threat that doesn't stop at any one country's borders.

"That declaration can help the world move forward," said former New Zealand Prime Minister Helen

Clark, co-chair of Independent Panel on Pandemic Preparedness and Response, a group created after COVID-19 emerged. World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said at a news conference that the document "includes important commitments to concrete, measurable and urgent action to address gaps."

Countries from South Korea to Cape Verde to Guatemala expressed support for the declaration, facilitated by Armenia and Rwanda.

It's "an expression of solidarity and international cooperation," said Burundian Foreign Minister Edouard Bizimana, speaking on behalf of a group of African nations. A Caribbean countries' association also backed the document.

But it fell flat with some other nations. In statements during Friday's multi-part meeting, the European Union said that the document didn't do enough to foster financing accountability and efficiency, among other complaints. Germany called for a stronger focus on prevention.

The U.S. objected to mentions of "divisive ideologies" and of a prospec-

tive separate arrangement for countries to share virus samples and in turn get tests, medicines and vaccines.

That potential deal is under negotiations as a follow-on to a pandemic agreement that WHO member countries approved last year. The United States has withdrawn from the World Health Organization and wasn't part of finalizing the pandemic treaty.

Also:

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump's pick to lead the Food and Drug Administration voiced support for the safety of long-established vaccines at a hearing, even as senators questioned her about the White House's efforts to upend childhood immunizations.

Dr. Heidi Overton is currently serving as a White House adviser and has worked on a series of Trump health initiatives, including an executive order last month that called for splitting up and spacing out decades-old childhood vaccinations. Overton, a physician, stood beside Trump in the Oval Office when he falsely remarked that the combined measles, mumps and rubella vaccine could be "quite lethal."

Solberg and Edmondson lead GAZOO Racing 1-2 finish

GAZOO Racing secures record-equaling sixth consecutive WRC manufacturers’ title

SANTIAGO, Sept 26: GAZOO Racing World Rally Team (GR-WRT) secured its sixth consecutive FIA World Rally Championship (WRC) manufacturers’ title at Rally Chile, where Oliver Solberg and co-driver Elliott Edmondson claimed victory in the No. 99 Toyota GR YARIS Rally1. Teammates Sébastien Ogier and Vincent Landais finished second in the No. 1 Toyota GR YARIS Rally1 to complete a 1-2 finish for the team.

The team’s latest title success equals two long-standing WRC records, matching the six consecutive championships achieved by Italian automaker Lancia between 1987 and 1992 and bringing Toyota level with the with the marque on 10 manufacturers’ titles in total.

Akio Toyoda, GR-WRT Chairman, commented: “Oliver, Elliott, congratulations on your victory! I am genuinely delighted that they were finally able to secure their second win of the year here in Chile. And thanks to that victory, the manufacturers’ championship has now been secured for TOYOTA GAZOO Racing World Rally Team! I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to our fans who continue to support us, and to all of our partners who fight alongside us throughout the season. Thank you very much.”

Toyoda added: “However, there



GAZOO Racing World Rally Team celebrates on the podium.

is still plenty to look forward to this season. The battle for the drivers’ championship remains incredibly intense, and all five drivers in our team still have a chance of becoming champion. We are a team that believes in letting our drivers compete on equal terms and decide the outcome on the stages. For the final two rounds, good luck to Elfyn, Sami, Oliver, Seb, and Takamoto. Give it everything you’ve got!”

Held on the gravel roads of Chile’s Bio Bío region, Rally Chile began in

wet and muddy conditions, where Solberg and Edmondson excelled to establish an early lead. As the stages became drier and more abrasive, the pair gradually extended their advantage before securing victory by 16.6 seconds with the fastest time in the rally-ending Power Stage.

The victory is Solberg and Edmondson’s second of the 2026 season following their season-opening triumph at Rallye Monte-Carlo. It also marks the 11th win for the Toyota GR YARIS Rally1 from the

opening 12 rallies of the season and the team’s eighth 1-2 finish.

Ogier and Landais were sixth overall after the opening stage before fighting back to finish second. The pair also topped the Super Sunday classification, while Ogier equalled Sébastien Loeb’s record of 120 WRC podium finishes.

The victory sees Solberg maintain third place in the drivers’ championship, as GAZOO Racing crews continue to occupy the top four positions in the standings. With two rounds remain-

ing, Toyota has secured its sixth consecutive manufacturers’ championship.

Toyota’s motorsports history dates back over 60 years. Reflecting the concept that ‘the roads build the people, and the people build the cars,’ Toyota has competed in a wide range of motorsport disciplines worldwide. Its major successes, achieved under the most extreme conditions, together with the hard-won knowledge and technical insights they have yielded, continue to serve as the foundation for building ‘ever-better’ cars.

From 2026, TOYOTA GAZOO Racing has reverted to the name GAZOO Racing. The team competes in top-level motorsport categories such as the FIA World Rally Championship, as well as in customer motorsport activities using production vehicles.

Round thirteen of the 2026 FIA WRC is Rally Italia Sardegna (1-4 October), which moves to an autumn date for the first time since 2020. The demanding island event features fast but narrow gravel stages and rocky, abrasive surfaces.

Event spotlights emerging talent

Kuwait Boxing Federation launches new season with junior champ’ship

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 26: The Kuwait Boxing Federation launched its 2026-27 season with the opening of the first Junior Championship at its hall in Sabah Al-Salem. The tournament runs until Sept 30.

The event brings together young boxers from various age groups and represents the federation’s first competition of the new season.

The championship is aimed at identifying promising talent while providing young boxers with valuable opportunities to compete, gain experience and develop their skills early in their sporting careers.

Kuwait Boxing Federation President Abdullah Khaled Al-Otaibi said the board is working to broaden participation in boxing, with particular emphasis on youth categories as the foundation for developing future national teams.

He added that the federation is keen to provide young athletes with regular opportunities to compete in



Abdullah Khaled Al-Otaibi, President of the Kuwait Boxing Federation.

local tournaments.

“The championship is part of the federation’s plan for the new sports season. It will strengthen boxing’s presence across different age groups and help identify new talent that can be developed and prepared to represent Kuwait in upcoming competitions,” Al-Otaibi said.



Warriors star Stephen Curry reads from the book, “Eye on the Ball” with students in the library during an event for his Eat.Learn.Play. Foundation at Madison Park Academy Primary in Oakland, Calif. (AP)

Deal worth \$116 million

Curry and Warriors agree to new 2-yr contract extension

SAN FRANCISCO, Sept 26, (AP): Stephen Curry has agreed to a two-year contract extension worth \$116 million that would take him through the 2028-29 season, a person with direct knowledge of the deal told The Associated Press on Friday night.

The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the team had not announced the terms of Curry’s contract. Curry was eligible to command up to \$136 million, so he is giving his team a discount as he backs up his longstanding commitment to finish his career with the Warriors.

Golden State general manager Mike Dunleavy said last month he was optimistic of getting something done with the two-time MVP and NBA career leader in 3-pointers.

“We couldn’t be more excited about reaching an agreement with Stephen and extending his historic

career with the Warriors,” Dunleavy said in a statement. “There has never been a better face to a franchise in professional sports history, both on and off the court, than Stephen Curry with the Warriors. He embodies everything this organization strives to represent through his legendary play on the court, his unique leadership and sacrifice, and his unmatched impact in the community.”

The 38-year-old Curry will complete a \$62.6 million extension he signed for the 2026-27 season in August 2024 before the new contract takes him through 2029 - which would be his 20th season.

If he plays that 20th year, he would join Dirk Nowitzki of Dallas, the late Kobe Bryant of the Los Angeles Lakers and Udonis Haslem of Miami as the only players in NBA history to play 20 or more seasons with one franchise.

Russell fends off Verstappen to win Azerbaijan Grand Prix

Antonelli keeps F1 lead after fifth

BAKU, Azerbaijan, Sept 26, (AP): George Russell held off Max Verstappen for his first Formula 1 win in three months to cut into Mercedes teammate Kimi Antonelli’s standings lead at the Azerbaijan Grand Prix on Saturday.

Russell started on pole, built a big lead and defended on two safety-car restarts before facing a dramatic late challenge from Verstappen, who charged through the field from eighth to second and nearly chased down Russell on the last straight.

“Every race since the (mid-season) break I have gone from strength to strength and I feel more like myself again,” Russell said. He cut Antonelli’s 81-point lead to 66.

A last-lap crash by Cadillac’s Valtteri Bottas forced Russell and Verstappen to slow and the Dutch driver hunted down Russell right after that, closing fast as the finish line approached.

Verstappen ultimately was less than two-tenths of a second behind as he remains winless this year for the first time since his rookie 2015 season.

“I lost the boost. I had no power. Thought he was going to get us,” a relieved Russell said after securing his third win of the season.

Verstappen’s Red Bull teammate Isack Hadjar was third on his return from a wrist fracture which had been causing him pain earlier in the week. “I am completely satisfied even if it is a bit numb,” he said.

On a miserable day for McLaren, defending champion Lando Norris was taken out in a crash started by



Mercedes driver George Russell of Britain celebrates after winning the Azerbaijan F1 Grand Prix auto race, in Baku, Azerbaijan. (AP)

Franco Colapinto before Oscar Piastri went off-track defending third place and ended up 14th.

Antonelli started 16th after a qualifying crash but ended up fifth as he limited the damage to his title lead, swerving to avoid a three-car crash ahead of him and later overtaking Lewis Hamilton.

The Italian had a lucky day as he benefited from a string of mistakes from drivers ahead, without being swept up in their incidents.

Antonelli swerved to avoid a

three-car crash which took out Norris, caused by Alpine’s Colapinto plowing into his own teammate Pierre Gasly.

McLaren’s day got even worse when Piastri locked up his wheels while in third and defending from Hadjar. The Australian went off track and dropped all the way to 15th, helping out Antonelli in the process.

Ferrari lacked the pace to mount a serious challenge with Charles Leclerc fading to fourth from second

on the grid, and Hamilton sixth.

Arvid Lindblad was seventh for Racing Bulls after he tipped his teammate Liam Lawson into a spin while reacting to the crash caused by Colapinto.

“I love getting taken out by my teammate, that’s pretty sick,” Lawson said.

Esteban Ocon was eighth for Haas, which appears to set to drop him for 2027, with teammate Oliver Bearman ninth and Carlos Sainz, Jr. 10th for Williams.

Report leaves sanctions options open

Man City ready to fight Premier League after reports that club guilty of almost all charges

MANCHESTER, England, Sept 26, (AP): Manchester City plans to fight the Premier League for months if found guilty of alleged financial breaches in potentially the biggest scandal in English soccer history. Reports said an independent panel had upheld nearly all of the 100-plus financial charges against the club in a case that was initiated more than three years ago.

City did not confirm the decision, saying its case with the Premier League was “ongoing.”

City, however, would appeal a guilty decision and the process would take several months, a person with knowledge of the situation told The Associated Press.

The person spoke on condition of anonymity to respect confidentiality elements of the process.

The Athletic first reported that City has been found

guilty of all but one of more than 100 charges laid by the Premier League, which accused the club in February 2023 of providing misleading information about its finances over a nine-year period from 2009-18. The report said the sanctions have not been decided and all possibilities remain open.

The BBC also reported the story.

In response, City said in a statement: “The Premier League process remains ongoing, with significant elements to be completed, and subject to strict confidentiality.”

City added that its position “remains consistent” with previous comments about the case. The club has always denied the charges.

“The club has diligently respected due process for eight years,” City said, “on the basis that the Premier League board and executive would behave as an in-

dependent, impartial and fair-minded regulator, free from partisan influence.”

City’s punishment could be a huge points deduction, and as extreme as expulsion from the Premier League.

When contacted by The Associated Press on Friday, the Premier League said it couldn’t comment on the reports.

City has always protested its innocence after supposed leaked emails and documents, likely hacked, were published starting in 2018 by German magazine Der Spiegel. The documents allegedly showed City tried to mask the source of revenue from deals tied to Abu Dhabi, whose ruling family bought the club in 2008 and has overseen the spending of hundreds of millions of dollars on some of the world’s best players over the following two decades.

When contacted by The Associated Press on Friday, the Premier League said it couldn’t comment on the reports.

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Australia faces new-look Springboks in one-off Perth test

PERTH, Australia, Sept 26, (AP): After a huge 3-1 rugby series win over New Zealand in the so-called “Greatest Rivalry,” South Africa plays Australia on Sunday in what should be the friendly confines of Perth stadium in Western Australia.

Expatriate South Africans in the Western Australia state capital have always showed up in droves at previous matches by their national team, and Sunday will likely be no different.

What will be different is the Springboks starting side from their win over New Zealand in the final match of the series -- 13 changes. 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 the 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 scrum-half Herschel Jantjies. Centre Andre Esterhuizen has been named skipper, making him South Africa’s 68th captain.

For Australia, Joseph-Aukuso Sua’alii has a new wing role as the Wallabies

brace for an aerial barrage in Sunday’s match. Sua’alii has spent the bulk of his 24 tests at outside center, but will slot in at left wing against South Africa, with Tom Wright to continue at fullback and Max Jorgensen on the right wing.

The world No. 1 Springboks dominated the aerial game during their win over New Zealand, and Sua’alii’s shift out wide is a significant strategy to cope with the high ball.

Kuwait volleyball team faces Petrojet in third Cairo friendly

By Khaled Al-Enezi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 26: Kuwait's national volleyball team will play its third friendly of its training camp in Cairo today, facing Petrojet as part of its preparations for the Arab Men's Volleyball Championship in Amman, Jordan, from Oct 5 to 15.

Kuwait began its camp with a 2-2 draw against Egyptian Army after four sets, before recording a 4-0 victory over Arab Contractors in its second friendly.

The warm-up matches are allowing the coaching staff to assess the players' fitness and readiness while working on tactical and technical aspects ahead of the tournament.

Kuwait will face Egyptian Army again next Tuesday in its fourth friendly, while the team is also considering a fifth and final warm-up against a national team before leaving for Jordan on Oct 4.

The squad is continuing its intensive preparations in Cairo, with the coaching staff looking to raise the players' technical and physical levels before the start of the competition.

Argentine head coach Julian Alvarez, assisted by national coach Zaid Al-Kadhmi, is also working to build greater cohesion between the experienced players and younger members of the squad while fine-tuning the tactical approach that will be used in the Arab Championship.



Kuwait volleyball team delegation in Cairo.

Zidane's first win soured by Mbappé's knee injury

Italy crisis continues with home loss to Belgium

ISTANBUL, Sept 26, (AP): Zinedine Zidane's first game in charge of France ended on a sour note as Kylian Mbappé injured his left knee moments after scoring in a 1-0 win in Turkey.

The 2026 World Cup's best passer Michael Olise threaded a fine pass and the World Cup's all-time leading scorer Mbappé rifled in a low shot in the 54th minute.

Mbappé then sat on the ground claspng his left leg and within minutes Zidane had to take him off.

The France camp said he suffered a knee tendon injury and would return to Madrid for treatment. A replacement was not immediately named.

"No, it's not good. It's not good, unfortunately," Zidane told French television about Mbappé's injury. "We will not take risks."

After failing to qualify for three straight World Cups, Italy's rebuild under returning coach Roberto Mancini began badly with a 2-0 loss to Belgium in Rome.

Elsewhere, the Charles brothers combined to help Northern Ireland beat Georgia 1-0 in Tbilisi for a first-ever victory in League B.

Mbappé was on the left flank and fellow Ballon d'Or contender Ousmane Dembélé through the middle, with Olise on the right wing and Manchester City's Rayan Cherki in midfield.

A scrappy opening saw lots of



Turkey's Abdülkerim Bardakcı clears the ball in front of France's Ousmane Dembele during the UEFA Nations League soccer match between Turkey and France in Izmit, Turkey. (AP)

botched passes from both sides, although the bumpy playing surface at Kocaeli Stadium stadium in İzmit was a factor.

Near the end of the first half, Olise's dipping shot forced a fine save from Uğurcan Çakır and midfielder Adrien Rabiot scooped the

ball over following fine work from Cherki and Dembélé.

France goalkeeper Mike Maignan matched Çakır's save with a stunning one-handed stop from İsmail Yüksek's downward header. Çakır was then sent off in the 87th for blocking Bradley Barcola's shot with his arm when he was outside the area.

Only 47,155 spectators showed up in the 70,000-seat Stadio Olimpico as winger Mika Godts, signed by Paris Saint-Germain from Ajax in the offseason, scored for Belgium after 20 minutes with a low finish past goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma.

A brilliant effort from Dodi Lukébakio following a run from the halfway line made it 2-0 midway through the second half.

Shea Charles scored deep into stoppage-time for Northern Ireland after younger brother Pierce Charles had saved Khvicha Kvaratskhelia's penalty midway through the second half.

PSG star Kvaratskhelia has failed to score in the French league this season.

In League B, Ukraine won 1-0 at Hungary thanks to forward Danylo Sikan's goal, while Sweden beat Romania 2-1 on goals from Liverpool striker Alexander Isak and Arsenal's Viktor Gyökeres. Robert Lewandowski's Poland drew 0-0 at home to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Georgii Arutunian and Artur Garibyan scored in Armenia's 2-0 win against Latvia and Montenegro beat Cyprus 2-1 in League C games.

Qatar eyes semifinal boost; Madibo cleared to play

UAE, Bahrain clash in key Gulf Cup encounter

JEDDAH, Sept 26: Bahrain will seek to recover from its opening defeat, while the UAE will aim to maintain its winning start when the two sides meet at 9 p.m. today at King Faisal City Stadium in the second round of Group B at the 27th Arabian Gulf Cup in Jeddah.

Defending champion Bahrain, under Croatian coach Dragan Talajic, suffered a 2-0 defeat to Qatar in the opening game. The UAE, meanwhile, made a flying start by beating Yemen 4-0.

The match also features an intriguing Croatian coaching duel, with Talajic facing compatriot Zlatko Dalic, who took charge of the UAE this summer after a lengthy spell at the helm of Croatia.

Dalic led Croatia to the 2018 World Cup final and oversaw a successful period in which the team competed strongly at major international tournaments.

The UAE appointed the 59-year-old Dalic to succeed Romanian coach Cosmin Olariu, with the team hoping to strengthen its standing in Gulf football, compete for honors at the Asian Cup and end a long wait for another World Cup appearance. The UAE's only previous appearance at the global finals came in Italy in 1990.

Qatar will take a major step toward the semifinals of the 27th Arabian Gulf Cup when it faces Yemen today at 6:55 p.m. at Al-Inma Stadium in King Abdullah Sports City in the second round of



Qatar and Bahrain players fight for the ball.



UAE players celebrate after beating Yemen in the opener.



Assim Madibo

Group B.

The Qataris, led by Spanish coach Julen Lopetegui, made a strong start to their campaign with a 2-0 victory over defending champions Bahrain.

Another win would put Qatar in a commanding position to reach the last four before its final group match against the UAE. Yemen, on the other hand, must avoid defeat and ideally secure a win to

keep its hopes alive. However, its qualification would still depend on the final-round results against Bahrain.

Yemen's hopes suffered an early blow after it was beaten 4-0 by the UAE in their opening match. Algerian coach Noureddine Ould Ali now faces a difficult challenge as he seeks to keep the team's historic ambitions alive.

Yemen is aiming to reach the knockout stage for the first time, but it faces a formidable Qatar side that combines international experience with tactical stability under Lopetegui.

Meanwhile, the Gulf Cup Disciplinary Committee has rejected Bahrain's protest against the participation of Qatar midfielder Assim Madibo in their Gulf Cup 27 clash, confirming that he was eligible to play.

Bahrain had claimed Madibo was ineligible because he was serving a five-match suspension imposed following an incident involving Qatar during the 2026 World Cup.

The committee ruled that the suspension does not apply to Gulf Cup 27, which is organized and governed by the Arabian Gulf Cup Football Federation and is separate from FIFA competitions.

Madibo will instead serve the five-match ban during Qatar's matches in the 2030 World Cup qualifiers.

Qatar defeated Bahrain 2-0 to open its Gulf Cup campaign with three points.

FA Cup tie set for replay after error

LONDON, Sept 26, (AP): Manchester United only got a mea culpa for a refereeing error in a 1-0 loss to Manchester City earlier this month.

Woodford Town is getting a full game replay.

An FA Cup qualifying match will be replayed because of a refereeing mistake made in Mulbarton Wanderers' 2-1 win over Woodford last weekend, both lower-division clubs announced Friday.

The original result has been voided and the teams are set to square off again Tuesday.

Woodford had filed a protest with the English Football Association based on the referee's ruling following a penalty in the first half.

Woodford scored from the spot but the referee disallowed it because of encroachment by its own players.

The match official then awarded an indirect free kick for Mulbarton. But Woodford argued to an FA panel that was a mistake.

"The sub-committee concluded that a technical error had been made by the referee, determining that the correct outcome under Law 14 should have been either the awarding of the goal or the ordering of a penalty retake," Woodford said in a statement.

As a result, it said, the FA determined that "the original fixture was not completed in accordance with the 2026-27 FA Cup Rules," and must be "replayed in its entirety."

Prozorova fumes after concussion call ends semifinal run

SINGAPORE, Sept 26, (AP): Russian tennis player Tatiana Prozorova said she was unfairly withdrawn from her semifinal at the Singapore Open because of a physician's concerns about a concussion.

Prozorova's withdrawal sent Australia's Talia Gibson - her scheduled opponent in Saturday's match - to the final by walkover and ended the No. 180-ranked player's chances of a first singles title on the WTA Tour.

The decision, she said, "really upset me" because she thought she performed well on a clinical assessment by the WTA's on-site medical team and the tournament physician.

"My dream week came to an end," the 22-year-old Prozorova posted on Instagram, urging the WTA to reconsider its rules. "A system that renders players absolutely helpless."

Prozorova had been struck in the face by a ball during her doubles quarterfinal match Friday, which prompted the assessment.

"The test wasn't easy. Given that I'd spent over three hours on court each of the last three days," Prozorova said. "I was fatigued, and I struggled with some of the exercises like standing on one leg with my eyes closed."

Prozorova, who retired from the doubles match alongside partner Sofya Lansere, said

this was the only test she did not pass.

"My team and I had a long discussion with the organizers," she continued, saying the physio told her she needed at least six days of rest.

"Throughout the process, the physio pressured everyone present and even claimed I wasn't capable of taking responsibility for my own life," Prozorova said.

Under the tour's concussion protocol, "a player who is diagnosed with a concussion is not permitted to compete and will be ruled physically unable to do so," the WTA said in a statement sent the The Associated Press on Saturday.

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The Kuwaiti officiating crew for UAE-Bahrain clash at the 27th Arabian Gulf Cup.

Sports

Late Iraq strike shatters Kuwait hopes

Nasser double in vain

By Hassan Mosa
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

JEDDAH, Sept 26: Kuwait was knocked out of the 27th Arabian Gulf Cup after a dramatic 3-2 defeat to Iraq in their Group A clash at King Faisal Sports City Stadium in Jeddah.

The loss left the Blues without a point from their first two matches, following their 1-0 defeat by Saudi Arabia in the opening round. Iraq moved to four points.

Hélio Sousa made several changes to the side that started against Saudi Arabia, with Athbi Shihab, Yousif Nasser, Mubarak Al-Feneini and Mohsen Falah coming into the lineup.

Kuwait showed good defensive organization early on and looked to attack through Al-Feneini, Mohammed Daham and Nasser. Iraq, meanwhile, targeted the middle and Kuwait's right flank.

Neither side could break the deadlock before halftime, although both goalkeepers were tested. Al-Houshan produced an excellent save to deny Mohammed Qasim, while Ahmed Basra kept out a powerful effort from Daham.

Iraq finally took the lead in the 54th

minute when Zaid Iqbal fired home after Ali Jassim set him up inside the area.

Sousa responded with three substitutions, bringing on Ahmed Al-Dhafiri, Muath Al-Dhafiri and Yousif Majid.

Kuwait drew level in the 74th minute when Yousif Nasser converted from the penalty spot after Majid was brought down by Haider Abdul Karim.

Iraq regained the advantage in the 83rd minute as substitute Ahmed Yahya finished with a backheel from Saif Rashid's cross.

Kuwait refused to give up and equalized again in the final minute of normal time, with Nasser turning home Daham's free-kick delivery.

However, Iraq snatched victory in the seventh minute of stoppage time. Substitute Karrar Nabil collected a loose ball inside the area and smashed a left-footed shot into the net to seal a 3-2 win and end Kuwait's Gulf Cup campaign.

Meanwhile, Kuwaiti referee Abdullah Jamali will lead the officiating team for today's UAE-Bahrain clash at the 27th Arabian Gulf Cup, the Gulf Football Federation Referees Committee announced.

Jemali will be assisted by Saud Al-Shamali and Ali Jragh, with Abdullah Arab assigned as the VAR official.

Portugal's Joao Pinheiro will serve as the fourth official, while Saudi Arabia's Abdullah Al-Shahri will work as



Kuwaiti controls the ball as an opponent looks on during Kuwait-Iraq match.

the VAR referee. Oman's Ibrahim Al-Hosni has been appointed referee assessor.

Jordan's Adham Makhadmeh will officiate the Yemen-Qatar match, assisted by compatriots Mohammed Al-

Khalaf and Ahmed Al-Ruwaili. Iraq's Zaid Thamer will be the fourth official. Saudi Arabia's Sultan Al-Harbi and

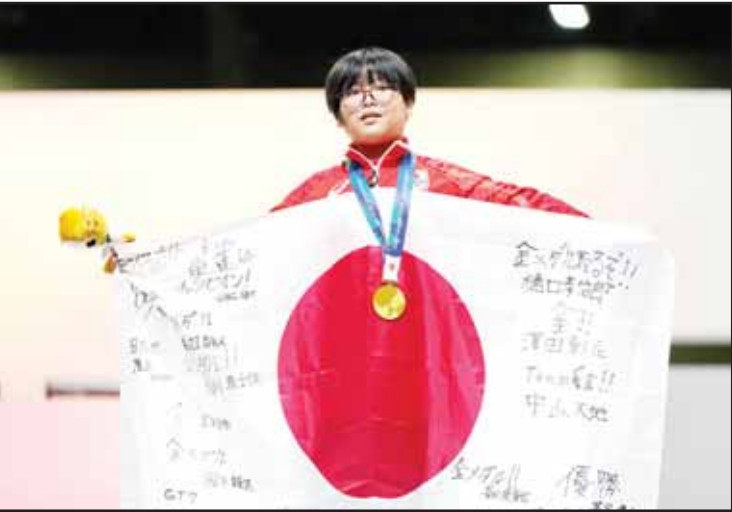
China's Fu Ming will serve as VAR officials, while the UAE's Hamad Al-Mazrouei will be the referee assessor.

Kuwait's karate delegation returns home

Al-Youha bows out of Asian Games as 11-year-old Japanese wins esports gold



Yaqoub Al-Youha clears a hurdle during the 110m hurdles qualifying round at the Asian Games Right: Japan's Yuki Kurihara celebrates with his gold medal after winning the Puyo Puyo Champions esports final. (Agencies)



NAGOYA, Japan, Sept 26, (Agencies): Kuwait athletics star Yaqoub Al-Youha ended his Asian Games campaign after failing to qualify for the 110m hurdles final at the Aichi-Nagoya Games in Japan.

Al-Youha clocked 13.88 seconds, missing out on the time required to advance to the final.

Kuwait athlete Ibrahim Al-Dhafiri will compete in the 800m heats today, aiming to secure a place in the final and challenge for a top finish.

Kuwait also exited the team sabre event after losing 45-35 to host Japan in the round of 16.

In shooting, Talal Al-Rashidi, Abdulrahman Al-Feihan and Khaled Al-Mudhaf begin their campaign today in the individual and team trap events. The experienced trio will be looking to deliver strong performances and challenge for podium places.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's national karate delegation returned home after competing at the Asian Games, with sports officials and federation representatives welcoming the athletes.

Acting Director General of the Public Authority for Youth and Sports Bashar Abdullah Al-Salem

received the delegation alongside Kuwait Karate Federation President Ahmed Mohammed bin Yousuf and Secretary-General Abdulaziz Sultan Al-Thaidi.

Kuwait's karate team secured team kata gold through Sayed Mohammed Al-Mousawi, Sayed Salman Al-Mousawi and Mohammed Ahmed Badr. Sayed Mohammed Al-Mousawi also claimed bronze in the individual kata.

Eel is his favorite training food, he's only 11 years old, and he found his niche in his sport when he was in kindergarten.

His thing is esports.

Meet Yuki Kurihara, the Japanese elementary school student who defeated Kang Dongshin of South Korea 10-2 on Saturday in the final of the Puyo Puyo Champions puzzle game at the Asian Games.

He defeated Tanarak Wongkitikun of Thailand in the semifinals, 10-1. The Thai player is a relative old-timer at 28.

"I'm really happy," Kurihara said. "The gold medal is really beautiful, shiny and heavy."

He said he also liked the little mascot doll he

was given for winning.

"The plush toy is super cute, and it's cool that it is gold-colored too."

Kang, the loser in the final, praised Kurihara, "It's obvious that my opponent was skilled and above my level," Kang said. "His technical ability and accuracy are incredible."

Kurihara is believed to be youngest-ever gold medalist in the Asian Games, which date from 1951 in New Delhi, India. And he's certainly the youngest in these Asian Games.

Japanese media has reported he trains eight hours daily and still keeps up his grades in school.

Esports was held in the Asian Games for the first time three years ago in Hangzhou, China. It was so popular that tickets were sold by lottery. It's also an audience favorite in Japan.

Youth is being served at the Asian Games. Kamus Wong is a 12-year-old competing for Hong Kong in skateboarding, and 13-year-old Yu Zidi of China won three gold medals in swimming.

A relative senior citizen, 17-year-old Japanese swimmer Shin Ohashi set a world record on Thursday in the 200-meter breaststroke.

Kuwait's Al-Fahad makes weightlifting history with gold

ATHENS, Greece, Sept 26: Kuwait's Abrar Al-Fahad has made history by winning the gold medal at the World Masters Weightlifting Championships in Athens, Greece.

Representing Al-Nasr Sports Club and the Kuwait national team, Al-Fahad dominated the snatch and clean and jerk events to finish first in the overall standings and claim the world title.

The victory makes Al-Fahad the first Kuwaiti female weightlifter to win gold at the World Masters Championships, marking a landmark achievement for Kuwaiti weightlifting.

Her success highlights the growing presence of Kuwaiti women in international sport and adds another major achievement to the country's weightlifting record.

The result also reflects the progress of Kuwaiti weightlifting and its athletes' ability to compete successfully on the international stage.



Kuwait's Abrar Al-Fahad

Japan knocks Kuwait out of Asiad handball medal race

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

NAGOYA, Japan, Sept 26: Kuwait's national handball team suffered a 37-32 defeat to Japan in the Asian Games quarterfinals in Nagoya, ending its hopes of competing for a medal.

Kuwait will now play China in the classification round for fifth to eighth place. Qatar defeated Iran 31-25, while South Korea beat China 32-26 in the other quarterfinal matches.

Kuwait struggled from the start, committing several attacking errors that Japan quickly punished on the counter-attack. The host raced into a 9-3 lead after 15 minutes and maintained their advantage for most of the game.

Japan also exposed Kuwait's slow transition from attack to defense, scoring 11 fast-break goals compared with four for Kuwait. The Japanese defense effectively neutralized Kuwait's wings



An injured Kuwait player receives assistance from officials during the match against Japan.

by adopting a 6-0 formation and closing down the spaces around the team's main attacking outlets.

Kuwait mounted a late comeback and cut the deficit to three goals at 35-32, but Japan held firm in the closing stages to secure the five-goal victory.

Al-Sharieh sole candidate for handball presidency

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 26: The nomination period for the supplementary elections of the Kuwait Handball Federation closed last Thursday, with the vote scheduled for Oct. 4 to elect a president and assistant secretary-general after the two positions became vacant following the resignations of President Eng. Fouad Al-Balushi and Assistant Secretary-General Abdullah Al-Thayab.



Ahmed Al-Sharieh

Ahmed Al-Sharieh, former president

of Al-Qurain Sports Club, is the sole candidate for the presidency after no other candidate entered the race before nominations closed.

The assistant secretary-general position, meanwhile, will be contested by Al-Shabab representative Falah Mena-hi Al-Azmi and Kazma Club representative Mohammed Al-Khamis. Both are seeking the support of the federation's General Assembly members.

The candidates and member clubs are expected to hold meetings and consultations in the days leading up to the Oct 4 vote, which comes as the federation faces several important commitments and files in the coming period.

The supplementary elections are being held while the federation continues to organize its domestic competitions and prepare the national teams for upcoming international commitments.