



Scan the QR code to access the Arab Times WhatsApp Channel



Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

YOUR Excellency Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, we acknowledge your dedication to uphold the law with rigor and compassion.

We also appreciate your commendable principles, particularly the belief that "no injustice befalls any-

one in Kuwait if he is innocent," and we trust that you handle matters with careful consideration to ensure that justice prevails.

In light of this, we wish to bring the following to your attention: Last Thursday, the first of the month, at 3:28 pm, we received a message stating, "Please report to the Criminal Investigation General Department, Department 13, Section B, on Thursday, Oct 1, 2026, at 5:00 pm sharp. This is an urgent matter in accordance with Ministerial Decree No. 39/2024. This message serves as an official summons, failure to comply will lead to all applicable legal actions being taken."

Your Excellency, we must admit that we were left feeling quite confused and anxious. The ambiguous nature of the message raised questions about what offense may have been committed.

The authority that issued the summons is not ordinary, it is the Criminal Investigation General Department, yet there was no clarification regarding the urgency of the request, which was made outside the regular working hours.

Had we, God forbid, disobeyed the leadership, breached the laws of the country or engaged in a serious crime?

We pondered these questions and many others

at length, particularly given the timing of the summons—issued after the official workday, preceding the weekend holiday.

We spent 50 minutes or more reviewing the issue, hoping to reach a convincing conclusion, yet we found no satisfactory answer.

Continued on Page 5

Follow me on:

@Ahmedaljarallah

Ahmed aljarallah

ahmed@aljarallah.com



Scan QR code to visit the website:

aljarallah.com

KUWAIT AIRPORT TRANSIT RESTART REMAINS OFF THE TABLE

Company delisted

Kuwait steps up GCC grid drive

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 3: The Advisory and Regulatory Committee at the Gulf Cooperation Council Interconnection Authority (GCCIA) held its 68th meeting in Kuwait.

The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy organized the meeting, which was chaired by acting Assistant Undersecretary for Electrical Transmission Networks Eng. Faisal Al-Sumait.

During the meeting, the committee discussed several items on its agenda, such as the performance and activities of the GCCIA, support provided to the electrical grids of GCC countries to guarantee the reliability and stability of the regional electrical system, integration of the grids of member states, operational incidents affecting the interconnection system, measures taken to ensure service continuity during summer and the exceptional circumstances in the region, and the technical and operational matters related to interconnection operations in GCC states.

This meeting is part of ongoing coordination among GCC nations in the electricity sector in order to raise the level of readiness and operational efficiency of the GCC electrical interconnection system to guarantee the security and sustainability of electricity supply in the member states.

Meanwhile, the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) approved the request of the ministry to remove a company from the list of eligible bidders and

Continued on Page 4

Kuwait-flagged tanker struck in Hormuz, 5 Indians rescued

Madinah hit slammed

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 3, (Agencies): The Public Authority for Civil Aviation said Friday that reports regarding the opening of transit operations at Kuwait International Airport are "inaccurate," confirming that the decision to suspend transit operations remains in effect until further notice.

In a statement to KUNA, the Authority's spokesperson Abdullah Al-Rajhi said that the authority has not coordinated with Jazeera Airways or any other airline regarding the resumption or opening of transit operations.

He explained that the decisions and directives suspending transit operations have remained in force since the onset of the heinous attacks in the region, to ensure the highest standards of security and safety for passengers, aircraft, and airports.

He further said that any change to the decision would be officially announced by the authority through approved channels.

In other news, five Indian nationals were rescued after a Kuwait-flagged tanker was struck by a projectile in the Strait of Hormuz, officials said Saturday.

"Earlier today, the Mission coordinated rescue of five Indian nationals on board the Kuwait-flagged tanker M T Kazimah III, struck by a projectile in the Strait of Hormuz," the Indian Embassy in Oman said in a statement posted on social media. "All five Indian nationals have been shifted ashore safely."

Continued on Page 4



People visit Al-Shaheed Park Phase III in Kuwait City on Oct. 1, 2026. The third phase of Al-Shaheed Park opened to the public in Kuwait City on Thursday. (Xinhua) – See Also Page 11

Project passes key tender stage

Kuwait clears four firms for nurses housing

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 3: The Board of Directors of the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) endorsed the technical evaluation outcomes for the tender to study, design and oversee the nurses housing in the health districts as per the request of Minis-

try of Health.

CAPT also approved the commencement of opening the bids of four consulting firms that passed the technical evaluation, while three other firms did not meet the qualifications.

Firms, whose bids were accepted, must login on the website of CAPT to obtain information about the

schedule of opening the bids.

Meanwhile, CAPT dismissed the complaint filed by a company about the tender for preparing and providing meals to public hospitals and health centers (groups one to four).

It also rejected the complaint submitted by a company about the modernization of the primary data center of the ministry.

UK Ambassador to Kuwait: Britain has

changed its policy, tone and actions on Israel

By John C. Fernandes

Online Media Manager, Arab Times

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 3: H.E. Qudsi Rasheed, British Ambassador to Kuwait said the UK government has significantly changed its approach to Israel, saying the policy shift was driven by the need to preserve the two-state solution and address developments in the West Bank and Gaza.

Explaining the changes during a press briefing in Kuwait, the ambassador said the UK government now officially considers the Israeli occupation of the West Bank to be unlawful under international law, going beyond its previous position that Israeli settlements in the territory were unlawful.

"The policy has changed, the tone has changed and the actions have changed as well," the ambassador said, outlining the government's new approach.

The ambassador said British Foreign Secretary Ed Miliband had also publicly described what the UK government considers ethnic cleansing of Palestinians in parts of the West Bank by settler groups, alleging that the Israeli government had at times ignored such actions. The Foreign Secretary has made similar statements in Parliament, saying the British government considers there to be ethnic cleansing of Palestinians in areas of the West Bank perpetrated by settler terrorists.

On Gaza, the ambassador said the Foreign Secretary had referred to credible evidence of war crimes and that Britain would support independent investigations, including those conducted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) or International Court of Justice (ICJ).

The ambassador also outlined practical measures announced by the British government, including restrictions targeting goods from illegal Israeli settlements and measures aimed at preventing British companies from providing services to such settlements. The UK government has confirmed that it intends to restrict trade in goods from settlements and has advised British businesses against economic and financial activity in illegal Israeli settlements.

The ambassador cited the example of property advertisements for homes in Israeli settlements, saying such advertising in Britain would no longer be permitted under the new measures.

The UK has also expanded restrictions on arms exports to Israel, according to the ambassador, saying the prohibition now covers arms that could be used to further what Britain considers the unlawful occupation of the West Bank.

The ambassador stressed, however, that the policy shift should not be interpreted as the UK turning against Israel or the Israeli people.



UK Ambassador to Kuwait H.E. Qudsi Rasheed

"The UK's position continues to be that the two-state solution is the right solution," the ambassador said, adding that this was in the interests of both Palestinians and Israelis.

He also reiterated Britain's condemnation of the October 7, 2023 attack by Hamas, saying the attack was unacceptable and that Hamas could have no future in Gaza. At the same time, he said Israel has a legitimate right to self-defense, but argued that this right did not justify all of the actions witnessed in Gaza.

The ambassador said Britain continued to recognize Israel as a legitimate state while supporting the establishment of a Palestinian state. He referred to the UK's recognition of Palestine in 2024 and said Britain had subsequently taken further measures in support of Palestinian statehood.

Asked how the UK could recognize Israel while describing its presence in the West Bank as an occupation, the ambassador said Britain's position was based on support for a two-state solution, with Israel having the right to exist and Palestine being allowed to exist as a state.

The UK government's current position is that Israeli settlements in the West Bank are illegal under international law and that the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory is unlawful. Prime Minister Andy Burnham reiterated that position in his September 22 UN General Assembly speech, saying Britain had acted by banning trade in goods with illegal settlements and recognizing the occupation as unlawful.

The ambassador also noted that Britain was not acting alone, pointing to France, Canada and other countries that have taken or are considering similar measures concerning Israeli settlements. A September 8 joint statement involving the UK and several other countries confirmed plans for national and/or European restrictions on trade in goods from settlements.

Continued on Page 5

8 KFH reiterates warning against cyber fraud & personal data theft



8 Warba Bank reinforces its presence in the foreign exchange market with 2026 Euromoney recognition



ALSAYER unveils the all-new Toyota Hilux

FlyDubai co-pilot flagged before cockpit 'axe attack'

CAIRO, Oct 3, (AP): The co-pilot accused of attacking the captain of an Israel-bound flight with an axe and trying to seize the controls was an Omani national who had been barred from flying on his country's airline because of concerns about extremist views, officials said Saturday.

The co-pilot has been identified as Hamam al-Hammami, according to three people with knowledge of the situation, including a Gulf and a Western diplomat, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to the media.

The United Arab Emirates, which is leading the investigation, said the co-pilot attacked with the cockpit's crash axe and tried to take control of the plummeting plane in a "terrorist attack" Wednesday. His actions nearly crashed the flight with 182 people on board before passengers and others rushed in and subdued him.

The new details raised questions about how thoroughly FlyDubai vets potential employees, and how the co-pilot's presence on a flight filled with Israeli passengers got past Israel's strict security protocols.

Continued on Page 4



In this image taken from video provided by a passenger, a man identified by the passenger as the co-pilot of FlyDubai Flight FZ1073, accused of attacking the captain during the flight, sits with blood on the back of his head after the aircraft made an emergency landing in Tabuk, Saudi Arabia, Wednesday, Sept. 30, 2026. (AP)

Prayer Timings			
Fajr	04:24	Asr	14:59
Sunrise ..	05:42	Maghrib ..	17:31
Zohr	11:37	Isha	18:47



HH the Amir



Frank-Walter Steinmeier

Amir congratulates German Pres. on German Unity Day

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 3, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a congratulatory cable to the President of the Federal Republic of Germany, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, on the occasion of German Unity Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished the German President good health and well-being, and more progress and prosperity for Germany and its people.

Crown Prince congratulates

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-

Sabah sent a congratulatory cable to the President of the Federal Republic of Germany, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, on the occasion of German Unity Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Crown Prince wished the German President good health and well-being.

PM congratulates

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent a congratulatory cable to the President of the Federal Republic of Germany, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, on the occasion of German Unity Day.

Kuwait: Gulf integration key to housing development

MANAMA, Oct 3, (KUNA): Acting Director General of Kuwait's Public Authority for Housing Welfare Eng. Rashed Al-Enezi said that Gulf integration and expertise exchange are key to developing the housing sector.

Speaking to KUNA on the sidelines of the fourth Gulf Housing Week in Manama, he said Kuwait's delegation is headed by Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Housing Eng. Abdulatif Al-Mishari.

Al-Enezi stressed the importance of strengthening Gulf integration, exchanging housing expertise and experiences, and developing policies and regulatory frameworks in line with economic, social and technological changes.

He said Kuwait's participation in Gulf Housing Week reflects its commitment to supporting joint Gulf housing efforts and enhancing cooperation and coordination among GCC states.

It also provides an opportunity to review the latest housing welfare practices and benefit from successful experiences, he added.

Al-Enezi praised the Bahraini Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning for organizing the events, including the Innovation Conference 2026 on social housing, specialized sessions and an exhibition showcasing housing projects and experiences across GCC states.

Al-Enezi said he participated in a panel on resilience, integration, and innovative frameworks for shaping the future of na-



KUNA photo

Discussions in progress at the gathering.

tional housing.

He said the panel addressed developing housing systems across GCC states, discussed strengthening Gulf integration, as well as developing supportive policies and regulatory and legislative frameworks, and promoting a more efficient and sustainable housing sector.

He said the session also examined innovative partnership and financing models,

as well as the role of modern technologies and artificial intelligence in planning, decision-making, and developing housing projects and policies.

The Public Authority for Housing Welfare also participated in its designated exhibition pavilion, showcasing major projects, housing welfare experiences, and solutions and programs addressing housing needs.



Representatives of GCC countries who took part in the meeting.

'Dignified life hinges on good housing, urban dev.'

MANAMA, Oct 3, (KUNA): GCC Secretary General Jasem Al-Budaiwi said recently that member countries' qualitative housing and urban development initiatives and programs show resolute commitment to ensuring a dignified life for their citizens and building sustainable communities.

He made the remarks at the 24th meeting of the Committee of the Ministers Responsible for Housing Affairs in GCC States, held on Wednesday in Manama, chaired by Bahraini Minister of Housing and Urban Planning Amna Al-Rumaihi, Chair of the current session, in the presence of the GCC Ministers of Housing.

He pointed out that the housing sector constitutes a cornerstone of joint Gulf action, enjoying the continuous patronage and support of the leaders of GCC member states.

At the outset of his address, the Secretary General expressed his utmost thanks, appreciation, and gratitude to King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa, King of the Kingdom of Bahrain, President of the current session of the GCC Supreme Council, for Bahrain's hosting of the 24th ministerial meeting, and

for the facilities and steadfast support extended to ensure the success of GCC initiatives.

He commended the profound care and support devoted to joint Gulf action by the leaders of the GCC member states across all fields.

"The high priority accorded to the housing sector is reflected in numerous national and joint initiatives and resolutions, which have significantly advanced the trajectory of joint Gulf housing cooperation and deepened co-ordination frameworks," he said.

"Foremost among these was the Supreme Councils adoption at its 46th session of the Unified Rules for Joint Property Owners in GCC States, marking a major milestone in modernising regulatory frameworks, fostering legislative convergence, and driving joint housing action toward greater integration and efficacy," he stated.

In the same context, the GCC chief underscored the importance of accelerating cooperation and integration among member states, advancing housing policies to meet the evolving needs and aspirations of Gulf citizens, and leveraging modern tech-

nologies and innovative solutions to provide more efficient and sustainable housing options.

He highlighted the distinct national strides across the GCC: the UAE accelerating housing support and developing integrated residential complexes in partnership with national banks, Bahrain expanding partnerships with real estate developers and delivering digital housing services; Saudi Arabia empowering families to achieve first-home ownership and activating the real estate balance track to bolster supply; Oman accelerating the development of smart cities, led by Sultan Haitham City; Qatar enhancing land-use efficiency, streamlining requirements, and securing infrastructure; and Kuwait engaging real estate developers, developing new city infrastructure, and embedding sustainability standards.

Concluding his statement, he emphasised that these combined endeavours serve as a fundamental pillar for achieving joint Gulf urban development targets and reinforcing the Council's capacity to build a more integrated, resilient, and sustainable housing ecosystem.



Farwaniya Governorate photo

Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah receives the officials.

Call to beautify governorate and curb stray dogs spread

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 3: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah had a meeting with acting Director General of the Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) Salem Al-Hai and Director of the Beautification Projects Department Abdullah Abdul Malik at his office in the headquarters of Farwaniya Governorate, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

They deliberated on ways to strengthen coordination between the governorate and PAAAFR, agricultural and beautification projects, improvement of the urban appearance and general environment in the

governorate, solving the stray dogs issue and curbing their spread to guarantee public safety.

They agreed on the need to intensify efforts and field coordination among the concerned authorities to reach practical and effective solutions.

Towards the conclusion of the meeting, Al-Hai expressed his gratitude and appreciation to the governor, praising his commitment to solidify cooperation with the authority and support its efforts in developing services and projects to better serve the residents of the governorate.

'Smart School' project to promote schools hi-tech

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 3: Minister of Education Eng. Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei launched the Smart School - Albus Project, in collaboration with Google for Education, at Jumana bint Abi Talib Girls' High School -- one of the schools implementing the educational tracks system, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Present at the event were Assistant Undersecretary for Educational Affairs Eng. Hamad Al-Hamad and other ministry officials.

During the inauguration, Al-Tabtabaei reiterated the commitment of the ministry to develop the educational system and comply with the directives of the political leadership.

He pointed out that this project is part of the strategy to promote innovation, expedite digital transformation, and for schools to use modern technologies to improve the educational experience.

He clarified that educational advancement is not limited to a single initiative or technological tool, as it depends on an ecosystem that includes contemporary curricula, educational tracks, teacher development, and school environment development to equip the students with the skills to face challenges.

He indicated how the project integrates the educational tracks system, a crucial component of secondary education reform, with the 'smart school' concept.

He said this creates a conducive digital learning atmosphere that provides students with a more adaptable and engaging experience, broadens avenues for research, exploration and independent learning, and develops their digital competencies.

He stressed the significance of collaboration among all those involved in the educational sector, reaffirming the commitment to of the ministry establish a future-ready educational framework to realize the aspirations of the country.

He also expressed gratitude for the support of the political leadership and their unwavering commitment to improve the quality of education.

'Treat parents with kindness'

Rights immense: Al-Shereeka

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 3: Dr. Abdullah Al-Shereeka, Director of the Center for Promoting Moderation and Secretary of the Supreme Committee for Promoting Moderation, affirmed that honoring one's parents is among the greatest rights emphasized by Islam.



Dr. Al-Shereeka

Al-Shereeka made the statement at a forum titled, "With You, Connecting with Them is Mercy", held Wednesday under the patronage of Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Dr. Mohammad Al-Wasmi and in collaboration with the Patients Helping Fund Society at the theater of the ministry.

He stressed the need to consider the feelings of parents and treat them with kindness, especially since their needs increase as they age. He pointed out that human rights are not limited to a single aspect, as they include the rights of parents, spouses, children, relatives, neighbors and all members of society. He said the Islamic Sharia affirmed

these rights and called for their preservation and fulfillment.

He pointed out that Islam accords a special status to the mother, citing the Hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him) when he was asked who among people was most deserving of good companionship, he replied, "Your mother," three times, and then said, "Your father." He asserted that this reflects the magnitude of parents' rights and the necessity of treating them with mercy and gentleness.

He explained that disobedience to parents is one of the gravest sins, urging children not to raise their voices at their parents or hurt their feelings, and that individuals must treat them kindly even under the most difficult circumstances.

He stated that mercy is a fundamental value in family and societal life, citing references from the Quran and Sunnah regarding God's mercy—specifically the portion of mercy He placed on earth through which people and all creatures show compassion to one another.

On the other hand, retired Major General Bader Al-Ghadouri, Head of the Community Security, Research and Studies Committee and a member of the Retired Officers Association, underscored the importance of viewing the family in a balanced manner rather than focusing on the negative aspects. He asserted that successful child-rearing is not based on punishment or verbal instruction alone, but on setting a good example and practical application.

He urged parents to maintain communication with their children, engage in their daily lives, and attend to their psychological and social needs, stressing that both the father and mother must serve as role models for their children.



KUNA photo

Kuwait's Ambassador to Austria Fawaz Boursli presents credentials to UNIDO Director-General Gerd Muller.

Kuwait and UNIDO to work for food security & digital change

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 3, (KUNA): Kuwait's Ambassador to Austria Fawaz Boursli presented his credentials as Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

A statement by Kuwait Embassy in Vienna on Friday said that Ambassador Boursli and UNIDO Director-General

Gerd Muller discussed strengthening cooperation in shared priority areas to support sustainable industrial development.

Ambassador Boursli stressed expanding cooperation and expertise exchange in food security, supply chains, innovation and digital transformation to support development and enhance capabilities.

Punishing the president through media outlets

“ANYONE familiar with the United States understands that its true power lies not in the dollar or weaponry, but in the media. The system operates on principles of freedom of expression and media democracy, making the media a true “fourth estate”,” columnist **Eng. Adel Al-Jarallah Al-Kharafi** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“Against this backdrop, when President Donald Trump barred certain media outlets from the White House, the response from American television networks was devastating - they effectively silenced him through “silent coverage.” This tactic dealt a severe blow to a political figure, particularly during a midterm election season critical for Trump, at a time when polls showed his approval rating had dropped below 35 percent.



Adel Al-Kharafi

“Consequently, Trump risked losing the media as a weapon. While a single social media post from him could once captivate the world, that alone no longer suffices. Although he had previously signaled his intention to bypass the mainstream media by launching “Trump TV,” he ultimately reversed course. In a post on his platform “Truth Social”, he announced that CNN and Politico could return to the White House, a decision prompted by the impact of the silent treatment he had endured, even from networks generally aligned with him, such as Fox News. Just one day later, three major media organizations - CNN, MSNBC, and Politico - filed a lawsuit against the president.

“They argued that he was violating their constitutional rights to cover presidential activities and news, asserting that he had no authority to bar them simply because he disliked what he described as their “negative” coverage or wished to restrict access solely to outlets that praised him. They maintained that the public has a right to receive “complete and timely information” about the performance of his administration.

“This dispute goes beyond a mere conflict between a government institution and a media outlet; it reveals the power of the media and the judiciary, as well as the workings of democracy. It demonstrates that the leader of the world’s most powerful nation cannot simply override the domestic media. When the courts rule in the media’s favor, the presidency must comply. Here, we must consider certain facts brought to light by the presidential decision.

“First, the move targeted what is arguably the most potent force in the United States - the media. The American citizen is inherently media-engaged, constantly following news outlets. We are all aware of how Hollywood shaped the American persona, transforming defeats in Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan into victories within the American collective memory. Consequently, when the president challenges a media outlet, he is effectively shooting himself in the foot.

“He relies heavily on the media, especially if he hopes for a Republican victory in the midterm elections, as media coverage often sways public opinion in favor of the Democratic Party. Regardless of the stance American media takes toward Muslims or Arab issues, it ultimately publishes reports criticizing the war and reveals secrets concerning the Arab region that trigger international investigations. While it is true that the media does not operate in a vacuum and serves its own interests, I nonetheless doubt that Trump will be able to bring it under his control.

“I believe Trump lacks the constitutional tools to subjugate the media. Consequently, his decision deals a crushing blow to the electoral campaign process, as most candidates rely on media campaigns, and its impact will be evident even in local political contests. President Trump’s recent decision has exposed the predicament facing the American media and the pressure exerted upon it by the White House. Yet, in the United States, the “Fourth Estate” ultimately prevails.”

Also:

“Celebrating Saudi National Day offers an annual opportunity to reflect on the progress and prosperity that Saudi Arabia is witnessing under its wise leadership.” Kuwaiti writer **Emad Khamees Al-Aqab** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“This day is not merely a commemoration of Saudi Arabia’s unification; it has become a symbol of ongoing achievements and remarkable development across various fields. Under the leadership of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz, and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Saudi Arabia has undergone a qualitative transformation in all sectors.

“A key highlight of this development is “Saudi Vision 2030,” a roadmap toward a bright future that aims

to reduce reliance on oil and diversify the economy through investments in sectors such as tourism, technology, and industry. Since the launch of Vision 2030 in 2016, numerous achievements have been realized, underscoring Saudi Arabia’s rapid progress. Significant improvements have been made to infrastructure, alongside the development of smart cities and mega-projects such as NEOM and Qiddiya, which aim to position Saudi Arabia among advanced nations across various fields.

“Social and cultural development has also played a major role in this transformation. Numerous initiatives have been launched to empower Saudi women, giving them a greater role in society and the labor market. Furthermore, the promotion of cultural and artistic events has helped boost domestic tourism and attract visitors from around the world. Progress in the education sector cannot be overlooked either. Various educational and training programs have been introduced to equip Saudi youth with the skills needed to compete in the global labor market.

“Advanced universities and research centers have been established, contributing to knowledge creation and fostering innovation. Saudi National Day has become an occasion to celebrate the successes and achievements realized under Saudi Arabia’s wise leadership. It is evident that Saudi Arabia is advancing steadily toward a bright future, aspiring to achieve greater progress and prosperity while reinforcing its standing on the international stage as an influential economic and cultural power.

“Saudi Arabia’s continued success stands as a testament to its prudent leadership and strategic vision - a vision aimed at ensuring the well-being of Saudi citizens and contributing to sustainable development. Thus, moving from one celebration to the next and from one stage of progress to another, Saudi Arabia remains an exemplary model of governance and development.”

□ □ □

“Arab and Saudi leaderships approach threats based on the principle of Arab national security, which seeks to preserve Arab state entities and protect their borders from encroachment. This approach prioritizes engagement with legitimate governments rather than militias,” Kuwaiti writer **Zaid Al-Jalawi** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“A primary concern is preventing the emergence of a “New Zionist Middle East” - a scenario involving the fragmentation of Arab states surrounding Israel, facilitated by direct and indirect cooperation with Tehran as it expands at the expense of Arab lands and peoples. Riyadh has embraced Yemen’s legitimate government, supporting the resilience of its people and their official national resistance.



Zaid Al-Jalawi

“While some Yemenis harbor aspirations for independence, now is not the time to pursue such moves. Any such steps must instead stem from a consensus among Yemenis themselves. Pursuing immediate and hasty ambitions could have unpredictable long-term repercussions for the unity of Yemen and its people. Those in Yemen aligned with Iran recognize no distinction between the North and South; their sole aim is to place Yemenis under Iranian influence and advance Tehran’s interests at the expense of Arab interests.

“This mirrors the actions of pro-Iranian factions in Iraq and elsewhere, who have curtailed their countries’ sovereignty through understandings with Tel Aviv while disregarding broader Arab interests. We are Arabs whose nationalism has been shaped by our Islamic faith, a nationalism rooted in specific territories and populations. Our faith remains steadfast, even when our governments differ from the Islamist movements of certain non-Arab nations, movements whose Islamic character is not compromised by defending their respective state entities.

“No matter how far the Houthis expand, they will not achieve what their handlers hope for. They lack broad popular and pan-Arab support because, ultimately, they are a non-state armed group. Even if they manage to attack specific locations, they cannot hold them for long. Evidence of this can be seen in Iran’s diminishing influence in Syria and Lebanon, as well as its reduced role in the Palestinian issue.

“War is a fluctuating struggle, and our governments are adept at managing fourth-generation and fifth-generation warfare. Anyone seeking to enter the Arab arena knows the proper gateways, as those who have attempted to enter through Asian or African channels have invariably been pushed out. The Arabs are a people renowned for their martial prowess and mutual solidarity.”

– Compiled by Simi K. Kutty

Prompt availability of animal fodder stressed

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 3: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah met with President of the Kuwaiti Federation of Feed Traders Saud Al-Hajraf, member of its Board of Directors Nada Al-Mutairi and member of the Kuwaiti Union of Livestock Breeders Matar Al-Bughili at his office in the headquarters of Farwaniya Governorate on Thursday, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

During the meeting, they talked about the ‘Future Kuwait - Food Security Border Project’, which aims to establish an integrated system for agricultural, livestock and food in order to support the efforts of the state to maintain food security, develop local production and achieve self-sufficiency.

They reviewed the objectives and aspects of the project, importance of unifying efforts among the concerned entities to develop the agricultural, animal and food production system, and ways to fully benefit from the available capabilities and resources.

Sheikh Athbi Nasser affirmed the commitment the governorate to support initiatives and ideas that better serve the community and increase local production. He praised the efforts exerted to maintain food security and develop the country.

Towards the end of the meeting, the guests



Farwaniya Governorate photo

Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah meets with livestock breeders.

expressed their sincere gratitude and appreciation to the governor for the warm reception, his interest in the project, and his sup-

port for the efforts and initiatives aimed at ensuring food security and developing local production.

8 expats jailed for 10 years, fined KD18m in money-laundering case

Egyptian held for selling fake residential addresses

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 3: The Criminal Court’s State Security Circuit, presided over by Judge Nasser Al-Bader, with Judges Omar Al-Mulaifi, Abdullah Al-Faleh, and Salem Al-Zayed, sentenced eight expatriates to 10 years in prison with hard labor and ordered the immediate enforcement of the sentences. The court also imposed a fine of KD 18 million in a money laundering case, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The court further ordered two commercial companies to pay a KD 9 million fine and permanently closed them in connection with the same money laundering case.

□ □ □

Fake residential address: Security authorities apprehended an Egyptian expatriate accused of forging lease agreements for expatriates seeking to register their residency at new addresses, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to security sources, the Forgery Investigation Department arrested the suspect in Farwaniya for forging residential lease agreements and selling them to expatriates to enable them to change their registered residential addresses.

Following reports about the suspect’s activities and verification of the information, authorities raided his residence and found several forged lease agreements in his possession.

His accomplices, whom he identified during questioning, were also arrested. The group carried out the forgeries in exchange for money.

A forgery case has been registered against the expatriate, and the matter has been referred to the competent authorities for further legal proceedings.

□ □ □

Drug runner nabbed: The Drug Control General Department apprehended a man in Ahmadi in possession of narcotics and psychotropic substances intended for trafficking and personal use, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In an official statement, the Ministry of Interior explained that the operation resulted in the seizure of 2.5 kilograms of hashish, 2 kilograms of marijuana, 200 grams of “Shabu” (crystal methamphetamine), 2,500 Lyrica capsules, and 300 methadone tablets, along with a quantity of A4 paper sheets infused with “Chemical” (synthetic cannabis). Two precision scales and empty bags used for packaging and sale were also confiscated.

The suspect and the seized items were referred to the competent authorities for the nec-

essary legal proceedings.

□ □ □

PAFN shuts down restaurant: The General Department of Criminal Investigation, represented by the Hawalli Investigation Department and the Salmiya Investigation Office, in cooperation with the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN), shut down a restaurant and a food storage facility in Salmiya for violating health regulations, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The action was part of ongoing security efforts to protect public health and combat unlawful activities.

In an official statement, the Ministry of Interior explained that the operation followed reports that food products were being stored under conditions that violated approved standards and subsequently served to customers.

After verifying the information, detectives and PAFN inspectors visited the site and discovered that the restaurant was operating despite having previously been ordered closed by PAFN.

Inspections revealed multiple violations, including operating the facility after its license had been revoked or expired, operating without a health license, using space beyond the licensed area, failing to comply with technical and health requirements, and handling adulterated food products of unknown origin.

Customs foils 2 bids to smuggle drugs at airport

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/ Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 3: Inspectors from the General Administration of Customs at Kuwait International Airport thwarted two attempts to smuggle narcotics through Terminals 4 (T4) and 5 (T5), seizing quantities of marijuana, heroin, and hashish from travelers.

In an official statement, GAC explained that inspectors at T4 terminal became suspicious of a female traveler arriving from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. A search revealed 564 bags of marijuana, packaged and ready for sale, with a total weight of 1.763 kilograms.

The traveler was identified as a Beninese national working as a domestic helper.

Meanwhile, at T5 terminal, inspectors ap-

prehended an Indian national carrying seven sachets containing a powder suspected to be heroin, with a total weight of two grams, along with a piece of hashish weighing eight grams.

GAC confirmed that the necessary legal procedures were followed and seizure reports were filed to refer the travelers and the confiscated items to the Drug Control General Department.

Buy-bust operation leads to arrest for ration sellers

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 3: The Criminal Security Sector, represented by Jahra Investigation Department’s Saad Al-Abdullah Investigation Office, apprehended three suspects - a Bedoun resident and two Egyptian nationals - for tampering with the weights of subsidized rationed goods and selling them in Waha, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The operation is part of ongoing security efforts to combat the illicit misappropriation and sale of subsidized supplies.

In an official statement, the Ministry of Interior explained that the arrests followed intelligence indicating that the first suspect was in possession of subsidized rationed goods and was selling them despite being ineligible for the subsidy program.

He was apprehended at his warehouse in Waha, where quantities of the subsidized goods were found.

Upon questioning, he admitted to purchasing the items for cash from the other two suspects, who worked at the local ration distribution branch. He also stated that he had been dealing with them for approximately two years.

A carefully planned ambush led to the arrest of the other two suspects - the manager of the ration distribution branch and the branch’s warehouse supervisor.

When confronted, the two suspects confessed to fraudulently reducing the actual weight of goods distributed to beneficiaries and selling the diverted quantities to the first suspect.

Surveillance camera footage from the ration distribution branch was reviewed and corroborated the first suspect’s statement.

Necessary legal measures have been taken against all three suspects.

160 tons garbage picked up in Jahra cleanup drive

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 3: Kuwait Municipality conducted an extensive cleanup campaign in Jahra Governorate, removing 160 tons of waste with the participation of 50 sanitation workers and 25 pieces of machinery, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In an official statement, the municipality explained that the campaign involved five bulldozers, 15 tipper trucks, and five heavy-duty trucks.

The initiative is part of ongoing efforts to enhance public cleanliness, remove debris, and improve the visual appearance of areas across the governorate through intensified field operations and continued cleanup campaigns to maintain public sites and facilities.

MUGHAL MAHAL

مغل محل

Since 1985

Elsewhere, rarity costs more.

Here, it costs less,

until the last voucher.

EXPERIENCE IT,

FEEL THE THRILL

DINE FOR
KD 10

PAY ONLY
KD 8.750

DINE FOR
KD 20

PAY ONLY
KD 16.950

DINE FOR
KD 30

PAY ONLY
KD 23.950

www.mughalmahal.com

1800 188

@mughalmahalkuwait

KNPC workforce peaks at 7,650 staff mid-2026

Project expansion pushes worker demand

By Najeh Bilal
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 3: By mid-2026, the Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) had witnessed an unprecedented increase in the size of its workforce and national staff, marking a major strategic shift in the local oil sector.

This significant transformation was driven by decisive decisions regarding internal reorganization and restructuring.

Documented data revealed that the company's total workforce exceeded 7,650 employees by the middle of the current year, reflecting the significant operational expansion the company is experiencing in its new phase and reinforcing its position as a major employer of national talent in Kuwait.

This record increase builds on the continuous growth documented in the company's annual report for the 2025–2026 fiscal year.

The report showed a notable increase in the employee count to 6,441, up by 36 workers from the end of the previous fiscal year, when the workforce stood at 6,405 as of March 31, 2025. The figure includes employees of the Kuwait Aviation Fuelling Company (KAFCO).

The company's firm commitment to the "Kuwaitization" policy was evident during the fiscal year ending March 31, 2026, with the hir-

ing of 171 new Kuwaiti employees alongside non-Kuwaiti staff across various disciplines. This brought the total number of national employees, including KAFCO staff, to 5,979, representing 92.82 percent of the total workforce.

In this context, an informed source attributed this rapid growth and notable expansion, which brought the total workforce of KNPC to 7,650 employees, to restructuring plans and comprehensive integration within the oil sector.

These initiatives aim to establish a unified operational system based on a shared vision and harmonized working mechanisms, enabling the company to address future challenges and meet the demands of global energy markets with flexibility and efficiency.

The significant increase in the workforce is a direct result of the extensive merger and integration operations carried out over the past and current years.

Key milestones in this process included the transfer of the Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company (KIPIC), along with the Shuaiba and Umm Al-Aish gas plants, to operate under the umbrella of KNPC.

The source emphasized that this merger and integration initiative was not merely a routine administrative or organizational step; rather, it was a carefully devised strategy aimed at maximizing the utilization of human resources and enhancing the operational efficiency of vital facilities.

This approach has successfully created an integrated work environment that eliminates

redundancy and duplication while boosting productivity in a sector that serves as the life-line and backbone of the Kuwaiti economy.

Furthermore, this unified system helps develop the skills of national talent and provides opportunities to lead major projects and modern refineries in accordance with the highest global standards, reaffirming that Kuwaiti personnel represent the true and sustainable asset of the future energy industry.

These figures reflect KNPC's strong commitment to the policy of "Kuwaitization" and citizen empowerment, underscoring its vital role in Kuwait's oil sector, a role that is pivotal to safeguarding both economic and national security.

Managing and developing oil resources through the national workforce helps ensure production continuity and stability, insulating operations from external volatility and thereby reinforcing Kuwait's economic sovereignty.

Regarding the role of the company's national engineering workforce, the source highlighted their direct contribution to technology transfer and localization, as well as to the operation of modern refineries and large-scale environmental projects. This process effectively domesticates complex technical knowledge and expertise; indeed, young Kuwaiti professionals possess the high-level skills necessary to drive sustainability, innovation, and the evolution of operational processes, ensuring the company's leadership at both regional and international levels.



The meeting in progress.

Jahra Governorate photo

Panel discusses demands of Jahra residents, infrastructure

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 3: The Public Services Committee at the Jahra Governorate Council held its regular meeting, presided over by Eng Yousef Al-Bithali, at the headquarters of the governorate, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Present at the meeting were the committee members and representatives of the Traffic Engineering Sector, Ministry of Public Works, Public Authority for Housing Welfare, Kuwait Municipality, General Traffic Department, and Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy.

They discussed items in the agenda, latest developments in service files and proj-

ects, previous procedures, recommendations, observations, and needs related to public services and infrastructure in the governorate.

The committee stressed the importance of continuing coordination among the concerned authorities, and accelerating the process of addressing observations and following up service files to better serve those residing in the governorate.

Towards the end of the meeting, the committee presented several recommendations and it was instructed to follow up the implementation of these recommendations, in coordination with the concerned government agencies.

Syrians, Egyptians caught for exploiting ‘charity donations’

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 3: The Criminal Security Sector, represented by the General Department of Criminal Investigation, uncovered a scheme involving the exploitation of a charity project by five suspects - three Syrian nationals and two Egyptian nationals, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The suspects were implicated in collecting in-kind donations, reselling them, and pocketing the proceeds for personal gain.

In an official statement, the Ministry of Interior explained that investigations by the Jahra Criminal Investigation Department, specifically the Sulaihiya Investigation Office, uncovered that a furniture moving company had leased a website and telephone line belonging to a charity project through one of its employees, without the charity's knowledge.

The website and telephone line were

used to solicit donations of clothing, electronics, furniture, and food under the false pretense that the items would support the charity project and its objectives.

The suspects collected the donations through various representatives and subsequently misappropriated and sold them in local markets or exported them abroad to profit from their financial value, rather than directing them toward their intended charitable purposes.

The activity was carried out repeatedly under the guise of the charity project, generating estimated monthly profits of KD 60,000 from the disposal of the donated items.

Authorities also located the company's warehouse in the Amghara area, took the necessary measures regarding the seized items, and completed the legal procedures related to the case.

PAFN destroys 146kg of ‘unfit’ food in Hawally raids

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 3: The Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN), represented by the Hawally inspection team and in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior, conducted an inspection campaign targeting various food establishments as part of its ongoing efforts to strengthen food

safety oversight, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In an official statement, PAFN explained that the campaign resulted in the issuance of 28 violation citations and the disposal of 146.142 kilograms of adulterated food products of unknown origin . The kitchen of one establish-

ment was also shut down.

The violations included failure to comply with health and technical requirements, operating without valid licenses or certified health certificates, and handling adulterated food products.



WEEKDAYS (Saturday-Wednesday)

One night stay in a **Queen Bed Cabana** for 2 persons with inclusive of Breakfast

One night stay in a **Two Bedroom Chalet** for 4 persons inclusive of Breakfast

WEEKENDS (Thursday-Friday)

One night stay in a **Queen Bed Cabana** for 2 persons with inclusive of Breakfast

One night stay in a **Two Bedroom Chalet** for 4 persons inclusive of Breakfast

Price

BD 38.115 / Net

BD 85.124 / Net

Price

BD 46 / Net

BD 102.148 / Net

Terms & conditions apply

Tel: +973 17701201 - Ext. 351 | 350 | Email: reservation@albander.com | www.albander.com | @albanderhotelandresort

Exams for ‘imams’, ‘muezzins’ to be held on Oct 6th and 7th

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 3: The Ministry of Islamic Affairs (MoIA) has announced the schedule for written examinations for religious positions in mosques, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The examination for Imams is scheduled for Tuesday, October 6, while the examination for Muezzins will take place on Wednesday, October 7. Both examinations will begin at 3:30 pm at the Sayyid Yaqoub Al-Rifai Mosque (the Ministry Mosque).

The ministry outlined several important guidelines for applicants, including the requirement to bring their civil ID cards.

Answers must be written in blue ink only, and applicants will not be permitted to enter the examination after 30 minutes from the scheduled start time. Applicants must switch off their mobile phones during the examination. Personal books and study notes are prohibited inside the examination hall.

Continued from Page 1

Kuwait steps

ban it from participating in tenders for two years, in accordance with Article 85 of Public Tenders Law No. 49/2016.

Moreover, CAPT approved the forfeiture of the initial bid bonds of two companies for failing to submit the final performance bonds for two separate tenders, in accordance with Article 66 of the Public Tenders Law.

These measures reflect the efforts of government bodies to enforce the law against companies that violate contractual obligations. This is significant given that the contracts in question are for development projects needed to maintain the electricity and water networks in a state of full readiness to meet operational challenges.

Also, the ministry is waiting for the State Audit Bureau (SAB) to approve five contracts for upgrading the electricity and water networks and enhancing their operational efficiency, with a total value of about KD11.851 million.

The ministry submitted these contracts to SAB at various times for pre-audit, review and approval, provided there are no observations requiring its response.

The contract for the maintenance and repair of 33/11 kV main substations is the largest in terms of value (KD 5.331 million). It covers the maintenance of main substations for transmitting electricity from the power generation plants to the secondary substations.

Kuwait-flagged

The Embassy thanked the Omani authorities for their continued support and assistance.

Separately, the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs strongly condemned the despicable attacks launched by the Houthi militia on a power facility feeding Al-Masjid El-Nabawi (the Prophet's Mosque) in Madinah, Saudi Arabia.

Such shameful attacks on civilian property constitutes a flagrant violation of the sovereignty of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the rules of the international laws and the international humanitarian law, a statement from the Ministry said on Thursday.

The cowardly attacks on the Muslims' second holiest site, also represent a provocation of the sentiments of Muslims worldwide and a serious transgression on the sanctity of Islamic shrines, the statement

stressed.

The Ministry reaffirmed Kuwait's full solidarity with, and support to, the sisterly Kingdom in whatever measures it might take to protect its sovereignty and security, and safety of the citizens and residents on its territories.

The security of the Kingdom is an integral part of that of Kuwait and the other members of the Gulf Cooperation Council, the statement stressed.

Major General Turki Al-Malki, official spokesperson for the Coalition to Restore Legitimacy in Yemen, said a terrorist attack last Tuesday targeted the Taibah electricity distribution station in Madinah.

He told reporters that investigations and evidence—including an after-action review and analysis of drone wreckage—confirmed the involvement of the "terrorist Houthi militia" in planning and executing the attack.

FlyDubai co-pilot

Israel has said it has agreements with foreign carriers to keep pilots of nations without diplomatic ties from flying there. Israel and Oman don't have formal diplomatic relations. The UAE government has earned a reputation for effective measures against extremist activities but has bristled in the past over criticism of security lapses.

The incident occurred at a sensitive time for Israel, a week before the anniversary of the Hamas-led attack on Oct. 7, 2023, that sparked the war in Gaza. It also came weeks before a highly contentious election in which security, and Oct. 7 security failures, have been central issues.

Separately, a regional official and a person familiar with the matter said the co-pilot had been barred from flying by Oman over concerns that he had adopted extremist views. The official said he was moved to an administrative job at Oman Air. Both spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the ongoing investigation. They gave no details about the alleged extremist views.

The co-pilot was later hired by UAE-based airline FlyDubai, the person said. It wasn't immediately clear to what extent the co-pilot was vetted. The Gulf diplomat said he had undergone standard security checks before being hired, but it appears that the checks focused on whether he had been convicted of criminal charges and didn't go deeper into examining his background for potential signs of radicalization.

Thus, we were confident that once the details were presented to you, you would address the issue with the highest level of seriousness. We trust that you will revise the language of public notifications, especially considering that, as noted

Your Excellency, consider this instance: a citizen was called to a police station. When he asked about the reason, he was informed, "You will find out upon arrival." Upon reaching the station and discovering the nature of the matter, he collapsed and passed away, having endured a period of excruciating uncertainty that overwhelmed his mind and body.

British Ambassador: The Foreign Secretary of the UK has announced the Government's intention to ban imports of goods from illegal Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories as part of a wider package of measures to protect the viability of a two-state solution. The detailed implementation and enforcement arrangements will be set out in the relevant legislation and guidance.

Following Iranian strikes in the region, the UK deployed the Rapidly Deployable Air Defence Sentry counter-drone air defence system to Kuwait, helping to protect British and Kuwaiti personnel and interests. Alongside this, the UK provided additional support through the ORCUS counter-uncrowded aerial systems capability and continued to share expertise, training and operational experience to strengthen Kuwait's preparedness and resilience.

British Ambassador: Education is one of the strongest pillars of the UK-Kuwait relationship. We estimate that around 14,000 Kuwaiti students are studying at British universities, making the UK one of the most popular higher education destinations for Kuwaiti nationals. These include both government-sponsored

British Ambassador: The UK remains firmly committed to working with Kuwait, GCC partners and the wider international community

The UK remains in close contact with Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and other Gulf partners on air defence, maritime security and the protection of critical national infrastructure, including through defence engagement, training, information sharing and coordination on shared regional threats. Following a request from the Saudi Government, the UK has agreed to provide one RAF Voyager air-to-air refuelling aircraft to support Saudi defensive activity in defence of Saudi Arabia and the legitimate Government of Yemen. This builds on UK ground-based air defence equipment and personnel already helping Saudi Arabia defend against missile and drone attacks.

Hala Industrial Co.

شركة هلا الصناعية

Decoration works, wood
products and
cupboards are available

You can
get all what you need
at Hala Industrial

Contact us now

Subhan Industrial - Block 10 - Street 5 - Plot 151 - Tel: 60660817 - 66448545 - 50446599

Hala_Industrial

hala@halakw.com

‘I think we’re going to win. Every place I’ve gone, we win’

US President Trump and Vance hit campaign trail in GOP’s deep-red areas

WASHINGTON, Oct 3, (AP): US President Donald Trump and Vice President JD Vance both hit the campaign trail, but headed to heavily Republican areas to shore up lagging enthusiasm in their party ahead of next month’s midterm elections.

Trump’s traveled to Texas and Oklahoma and kicked off what the president said will be a 32-day campaign blitz leading up to Nov 3.

“I think we’re going to win. Every place I’ve gone, we win,” Trump said during a speech at a truck facility in Denton, northwest of Dallas. He said some have suggested his “heart isn’t in it. My heart is in it,” and if not, he’d promised he’d be “home right now.”

“My heart is in it like never before,” Trump said of the run-up to the midterms.

Later, during a rally in Durant, Oklahoma, the president acknowledged, “We are worried about Michigan, we are worried about Texas. We are worried about a few states” before adding, “It’s all about 35 different contests.”

Vance, meanwhile, stumped in Florida, putting the Republican Party’s highest-ranking officials in areas where GOP candidates once expected to have glide paths to victory but are now facing tougher races.

The vice president tried to cast the GOP as representing common sense in the face of a Democratic push to the left.

“I have the easiest job in the world,” the vice president said in Lakeland, Florida. “I get to talk about how crazy the Democrats are.”

Trump and Vance could have their work cut out for them, though.

A new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research finds that only 17% of US adults approve of Trump’s handling of the cost of living. Just 26% approve of his handling of the economy overall, marking a new low.

Republicans have expressed growing pessimism about their chances in the election, which will determine control of Congress, as the president has repeatedly dismissed concerns about high costs and gas prices as his unpopular war in Iran drags on.

According to Trump, his party has merely done a poor job of public relations in promoting his administration’s accomplishments.

“Maybe we’re doing a bad job selling it,” Trump said in Texas.

Still, the president spent far more time scoffing at his predecessor, President Joe Biden, reliving his 2024 presidential campaign and defending the war in Iran than he did talking about how he’ll help lower the cost of living.

Trump scoffed at questions about affordability, insisting that they’d been caused by Biden, who left office almost two years ago. He also insisted that



US President Donald Trump speaks at a campaign rally at The Mitchell Center in Mobile, Ala on Oct 2. (AP)

prices were actually on the decline.

“I think inflation is very real, but they’re the ones that caused the inflation,” he said. “I’m the one that’s bringing it down, and we have to be able to get that word out somehow because they’re using the word affordability.”

The Democratic National Committee said Trump and Vance are “desperately trying to rally their base as the midterm elections approach and Republicans face defeat.”

“Donald Trump and JD Vance started a deadly and costly war with Iran that sent the economy spiraling and pushed prices even higher, and now - in the final stretch to the midterms - they’re desperately pleading with voters to ‘give (them) another chance,’” said DNC deputy communications director Kendall Witmer.

Trump toured the truck facility and chatted with workers in Texas, where Republicans are spending heavily to try to bolster state Attorney General Ken Paxton in a Senate race that could be closer than long expected. Paxton is facing Democratic state Rep. James Talarico,

Paxton attended the event and Trump joked that he “could be a pain in the

ass sometimes” but also noted, “We need Ken so badly, and that’s why I’m here.”

Trump didn’t summon Paxton to the stage. He also shouted out, but didn’t invite to speak, an unlikely traveler accompanying him, former NBA star Dennis Rodman. Trump praised Rodman as his longtime friend and said Rodman had become close with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

After his Texas speech, the White House announced that bad weather conditions were forcing Trump to motorcade from his event in Denton to a subsequent rally in Durant, Oklahoma - about 85 miles away.

The motorcade’s vehicles made the trip at breakneck speed, occasionally approaching 100 mph, and Trump posted during the ride that his limo, “The Beast,” was going “faster than it has ever gone before.”

Trump was in Oklahoma for Republican Mike Mazzei, running against Democratic state House Minority Leader Cyndi Munson for governor.

That event was held on the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, making Trump one of the few U.S. presidents who have visited tribal nations while in office. Trump mentioned that the poverty rate among Native Americans had fallen during his presidency, as it declined for other segments of the population.

He also noted Democrats potentially controlling Congress after November, “If we don’t win, they’ll end up impeaching me.”

“I’ve become very good at beating them in impeachment,” Trump said.

The president will be campaigning in more politically competitive areas in the weeks ahead as he embarks on his travel sprint. But Republican officials will not send him to places where they think his presence could drag down their candidates, according to a person familiar with the party’s strategy who was not authorized to speak publicly and spoke on the condition of anonymity.

Trump’s Oklahoma visit, and likewise one on Friday to Alabama, aimed at hitting two targets with one stop, the person said.

Republican officials have noted that even his Oklahoma stop brought Trump close to the Dallas-Fort Worth media market, meaning the president’s message reached Texas voters who could back Paxton.

His Friday stop in Mobile, Alabama, is aimed not only at boosting Sen. Tommy Tuberville as he runs for Alabama governor but also at shoring up support in Florida’s adjacent panhandle for Republican Rep. Byron Donalds.

Donalds is running for Florida governor against David Jolly, the Republican-turned-independent who is now running as a Democrat. Donalds’ campaign in heavily GOP Florida comes as Republicans there have faced some turbulence and voter concerns about affordability and artificial intelligence data centers have become central issues.



This image made from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) body camera footage shows an ICE officer stopping Wilber Rafael Garces Perez on Sept 20. (AP)

ICE guidance bans high-speed car chases and sets tighter rules for traffic stops, memo shows

WASHINGTON, Oct 3, (AP): US Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers have been ordered not to engage in high-speed car chases and to make vehicle stops only if they have completed specific training, under new internal guidance issued after several drivers were shot in encounters with ICE.

A memo sent to officers in ICE’s Enforcement and Removal Operations division and obtained by The Associated Press warned they are not authorized to chase vehicles that fail to pull over under any circumstances. Instead, officers should take down the vehicles’ information for further investigation, according to the memo signed by ICE’s executive associate director Marcos D. Charles and dated Wednesday.

The new guidance comes after ICE-initiated vehicle stops have repeatedly escalated when drivers have refused to cooperate or tried to flee. ICE agents have fired their guns during more than a dozen such encounters since last year, killing at least four people and wounding several others.

President Donald Trump’s administration has faced internal tension over how to handle traffic stops, which are seen as particularly high-risk encounters.

After fatal shootings of drivers in Maine and Texas in July, ICE officers were directed to temporarily

pause most vehicle stops. But the next day, Trump went on social media to direct the agency to continue traffic stops, calling them “one of ICE’s most important and effective Crime Fighting tools.”

ICE has faced intense pressure from the White House to deport more people who are in the country illegally, and its arrests have reached record numbers. At the same time, the agency’s rapid hiring spree last year resulted in some poorly vetted and trained officers hitting the streets.

ICE and the Department of Homeland Security had no immediate comment on the policy guidance.

The new memo outlines steps intended to improve the safety of vehicle stops for ICE officers, drivers they are targeting, their passengers and the public.

The memo told ICE’s field office directors that they must ensure vehicles used for traffic stops have lights and sirens that let the public know they are law enforcement vehicles when activated. All officers on the scenes of vehicle stops must wear and activate their body cameras, under the guidance.

In addition, only officers who have completed one of five specific agency training courses can conduct vehicle stops. Officers who have not completed the training courses can only participate in vehicle stops “in a support capacity” as passengers

and cannot be the drivers of any of the vehicles involved.

The guidance says ICE officers can continue to use a controversial technique known as pinning, which is defined as “using a vehicle or physical barrier to trap or stop a car,” but only if they have received special training. Similarly, only trained officers can use spike strips that deflate tires to prevent drivers from fleeing.

The memo came the day that courtroom testimony highlighted ways in which two ICE officers involved in a vehicle stop, pursuit and shooting that wounded a delivery driver in Austin last month would not have complied with the new guidance.

During a bond hearing for Wilber Rafael Garces Perez, testimony showed that the officer who shot him wasn’t wearing a body-worn camera. The ICE officer who did have a camera was driving in a separate car and turned it off during the pursuit.

Prosecutors presented surveillance video that showed an ICE agent chasing Garces Perez at high speeds through residential streets after he fled an initial traffic stop.

Garces Perez faces federal assault charges after investigators say he struck an ICE officer with his driver’s side mirror. That officer then shot into Perez’s vehicle, lodging a bullet in his back, officials say.

Fears of Russian hybrid attacks loom

Latvians vote for new parliament

RIGA, Latvia, Oct 3, (AP): Latvians are electing a new parliament on Saturday as pro-Ukraine Prime Minister Andris Kulbergs seeks a full term. The vote comes as the small republic on NATO’s eastern flank contends with growing concern about potential Russian aggression.

A political crisis in May over the handling of stray drones suspected to be from Ukraine brought down the governing coalition that had been under strain due to multiple other issues. The parliament, or Saeima, then approved a four-party coalition led by Kulbergs of the centrist United List party, previously in opposition.

Latvia, like its Baltic neighbors Lithuania and Estonia, strongly supports Ukraine in its fight against Moscow’s invasion. It borders both Russia and Moscow-allied Belarus.

Kulbergs, 47, is now seeking his own mandate from voters.

“I hope we get a good result. This would give us an opportunity to make changes, put Latvia on the right track for defense and economy,” he said outside a polling station in Riga after casting his ballot.

“A strong economy can only bring strong defense, so that is the mission for the next four years if I’m given the right to lead the country,” he



A Latvian man with his daughter casts his ballot at the parliamentary election at a polling station in Riga, Latvia on Oct 3. (AP)

added. “Our party is ready to make changes.”

A multiparty coalition will almost certainly be needed to govern in a splintered political landscape. Parties must take at least 5% of the vote to win parliamentary seats.

“What I want to see is just democracy in action, just people actually going to vote and voicing their opinions on who they want to govern the country for the next term,” said Jānis Artis Briedis, who voted in Riga.

Nearly 1.56 million people in the nation of more than 1.8 million are entitled to choose the 100 members of the single-chamber Saeima for a four-year term.

“It’s obviously a very decisive election, and I expect that we’ll vote for parties that will be making nationally correct decisions for the defense and the economy, so I think the coalition will be maybe not ideal, but it will be still OK and we’ll be moving in the right direction,” Reinholds Pirags said after voting.

Concern about potential Russian hybrid attacks - a term used for non-conventional hostile acts such as sabotage, cyberattacks, disinformation and an array of other methods - has been mounting across parts of Europe in recent months; Latvia, among other nations on NATO’s eastern edge, is particularly exposed.

NATO has reinforced its protection of Latvian airspace for the election period, with Germany sending four Eurofighter jets to Latvia for about a week.

The Latvian State Security Service said last week that it hadn’t yet detected any significant or systematic efforts by Russia or others to influence the election in favor of any party or candidate, the LETA news agency reported.



Activists protest near the Spanish Parliament following the eviction of 87-year-old Maricarmen Abascal to demand stronger laws to protect renters in Madrid, Spain on Oct 2. (AP)

Spanish Congress rejects 2 govt housing decrees

Spain’s government suffered a setback on Friday as Congress rejected its two decrees aimed at easing the housing crisis and curbing property speculation.

The first decree was defeated by 178 votes to 172, with the People’s Party (PP), Vox and the Catalan separatist party Junts per Catalunya voting against it. The second was rejected by 184 votes to 166, with the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV) and Coalition Canaria also opposing it.

The first decree included re-

strictions on speculative property purchases and protections against eviction for vulnerable people without alternative accommodation until the end of 2030. The second sought to introduce automatic renewal of rental contracts to strengthen tenants’ security.

Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez’s government introduced the measures following the eviction of Maricarmen Abascal, an 87-year-old woman, from the Madrid apartment where she had lived for 70 years.

Her eviction sparked outrage

among tenants’ rights groups and protests across Spain, including an encampment in Madrid’s Puerta del Sol that began on Sept. 26.

During the debate, Sanchez urged lawmakers to “do the right thing,” warning that “history will judge you sooner than you think and much harder than you imagine.”

Following the votes, protesters who had gathered near Congress returned to Puerta del Sol, while some housing groups urged a general strike. (Xinhua)

Russia hits Kyiv’s northern bridge

KYIV, Ukraine, Oct 3, (AP): A Russian strike damaged Kyiv’s Northern Bridge early Saturday, suspending traffic and causing tailbacks for a third day, in Moscow’s latest effort to disrupt life in the Ukrainian capital.

The strike came a day after Russian assaults forced the full or partial closure of three of Kyiv’s six road bridges over the Dnipro River. Previously, Russia has hit apartment blocks, supermarket warehouses, gas stations and data centers, among other targets, in an escalation of attacks.

Russia invaded its neighbor more than 4 ½ years ago, and there are no concrete signs that a peace settlement might be possible.



Rescue workers clear the rubble of a residential house destroyed in a Russian air strike on Kharkiv, Ukraine on Oct 2. (AP)

Europe

Dual UK-Iranian nat’l released on bail: A dual UK-Iranian national arrested on suspicion of plotting a terror attack following a security incident at a US-run military air base in England has been released on bail, authorities said Saturday.

The 25-year-old man was arrested Thursday in London on suspicion of preparing terrorist acts close to the RAF Fairford air base, which has been used by American bombers to strike Iran. He was the sixth person taken into custody and then released on bail as detectives investigate the incident.

British authorities have linked the incident to Tehran.

The five other men were not named, but police said they are all British nationals in their 20s and from London.



Burnham

Scores of residents were evacuated from their homes near the base early Sunday as armed police officers and army bomb-disposal experts swooped on the rural area. Police later said they had found a quantity of an accelerant - gasoline - in three vans linked to the five suspects, but no explosives.

Prime Minister **Andy Burnham** has said the UK sees “strong indications” that Iran played a part in the incident. He did not provide details about what the suspects were planning or why the UK thinks Iran was involved. (AP)

□ □ □

Storms hit Greece’s Crete, killing one: Severe rainstorms and strong wind have battered Greece’s southern island of Crete, triggering floods, landslides and road disruptions, with at least one person killed, local authorities said Thursday.

An 80-year-old shepherd was found dead in the Rethymno area of central Crete after being reported missing while tending his livestock, Greek national broadcaster ERT reported. Police and firefighters launched a search after his family raised the alarm. (Xinhua)

Ten hospitalized after car hits crowd in Australia’s Newcastle

SYDNEY, Oct 3, (Xinhua): Ten people have been hospitalized after a car crashed into a crowd in the Australian city of Newcastle, 110 km north of Sydney, on Saturday morning.

The assistant commissioner of police in the Australian state of New South Wales, David Waddell, told reporters on Saturday afternoon that a car was driving erratically before the driver lost control and crashed into a crowd around 9:30 a.m. local time.

He said that the crowd had gathered along the side of the road as part of an official farewell event for local team the Newcastle Knights as they traveled to Sydney to play in the National Rugby League grand final on Sunday night.

Police said that 10 people were injured, including a five-year-old girl and a 67-year-old man who were hospitalized in critical condition.

The remaining eight people, including a second five-year-old girl and a two-year-old girl, were taken to hospital with non-life-threatening injuries. The ambulance service earlier reported that nine people were



In this image made from video, emergency workers and pedestrians gather near the site where a car drove into a large crowd standing on a road near Newcastle, Australia on Oct 3. (AP)

injured.

The driver of the vehicle, an 18-year-old man, was arrested at the scene and taken to hospital for mandatory drug and alcohol testing. Waddell said that he would likely be

charged by police on Saturday.

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said in a statement posted on social media that it should have been a weekend of excitement and pride in Newcastle.

Asia

Japan’s Komeito party selects new leader: Japan’s Komeito party, a former longtime ruling coalition junior partner, selected **Mitsunari Okamoto** as its new leader on Saturday as it prepares for an extraordinary Diet session starting next week, local media reported.

Following approval at the party convention, Okamoto, 61, a House of Representatives lawmaker, replaced Toshiko Takeya, a senator who had led the party since January after Komeito’s lower house lawmakers joined the opposition Centrist Reform Alliance, which later split in September, according to Kyodo News. (Xinhua)



Okamoto

Nasir appointed as Indonesia’s new FM: Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto appointed senior diplomat Armanatha Nasir as the country’s new minister of foreign affairs in a cabinet reshuffle.

Nasir, who previously served as the deputy foreign minister and held several senior diplomatic posts, including Indonesia’s permanent representative to the United Nations, replaces outgoing Foreign Minister Sugiono.

The appointment came after Prabowo submitted a letter to parliament on Sept. 30 proposing the change.

Following the reshuffle, Sugiono was appointed as coordinating minister for human development and culture.

The president also appointed Suyudi Ario Seto, formerly head of the National Narcotics Agency, as the new National Police chief on Thursday. (Xinhua)

□ □ □

7 found dead in Philippines mine tunnel: Seven men were retrieved from a mining tunnel and found dead on Thursday in Benguet Province, northern Philippines, police said.

The incident may have occurred on Wednesday and may have been caused by poisonous gas, according to police.

An investigation into the type and source of the gas, as well as the circumstances surrounding the deaths, is underway. (Xinhua)

□ □ □

3 family members found dead in NZ: An investigation has been launched after three family members were found dead at a home in Auckland, New Zealand’s largest city, police said on Friday.

Police were called to an address on Cambridge Terrace in Auckland’s Papatoetoe at about 6:40 p.m. local time on Thursday after receiving reports that a person had been found deceased, Detective Inspector Karen Bright of the Counties Manukau Criminal Investigation Branch said in a statement.

Police found the reported person, as well as two additional people inside the home, all of whom were pronounced dead at the scene. Police did not believe there was any risk to the wider public, according to the statement.

A scene examination was underway to establish the circumstances that led to the deaths, Bright said, adding that police were providing support to the family of the deceased and neighbors. (Xinhua)

Seoul proposes dialogue with Pyongyang to resolve MDL discrepancies

N.Korea test-fires ballistic missile as tensions grow over border mine blasts

SEOUL, South Korea, Oct 3, (Agencies): North Korea fired a ballistic missile toward the sea on Saturday, South Korea’s military said, extending a recent run of weapons tests during heightened tensions between the rivals over border land mine blasts that injured three South Korean soldiers.

South Korea’s Joint Chiefs of Staff said the missile launched from the North’s eastern coastal Wonsan area flew more than 700 kilometers (435 miles) and that South Korean and US militaries were analyzing the specifics. Japan’s Defense Ministry said the missile landed outside the country’s exclusive economic zone.

The South’s joint chiefs said the military stepped up surveillance and vigilance for possible further launches from the North and was closely sharing information with the United States and Japan.

Seoul’s presidential national security office called for North Korea to immediately halt its repeated ballistic launches, calling them a violation of UN Security Council sanctions

and a “serious act that does nothing to help manage the current situation.”

The US Pacific Command said the launch “does not pose an immediate threat to US personnel or territory, or to our allies.”

The launch came a day after the powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un ridiculed South Korean demands for the North to apologize over the Sept 21 land mine blasts, which occurred about 10 meters (11 yards) south of the countries’ military demarcation line.

South Korea said a joint inspection of the site with the US-led United Nations Command found that the blasts were caused by mines planted by North Korea. The command later determined that the North violated the armistice agreement that ended fighting in the 1950-53 Korean War.

South Korea has also called on the North to halt its recent border fortification efforts, including the installation of mines and anti-tank barriers, which have accelerated after



A TV screen shows a file image of a North Korean missile launch during a news program at Seoul Railway Station in Seoul, South Korea on Oct 3. (AP)

Kim Jong Un in 2024 abandoned his government’s long-standing goal of reconciliation with the South and declared Seoul a permanent adversary.

Kim Yo Jong, the leader’s sister and possibly the second-most

powerful figure in Pyongyang, dismissed Seoul’s demands over the mine blasts as “utterly pathetic” on Friday, saying the North intends to cut ties with the South forever. In a previous statement, she denied North

Korean responsibility for the blasts and threatened to retaliate if South Korea fires on North Korean troops fortifying the border.

Saturday’s launch was the latest in a series of North Korean military displays in recent weeks, including missile tests, live-fire exercises and the commissioning of a new warship, as Kim Jong Un continues to flaunt his growing nuclear program despite US calls to revive diplomacy. Wonsan was also the site where the North on Sept 20 tested what state media described as a hypersonic missile system, part of a broad range of weapons North Korea has developed in recent years that are designed to overwhelm missile defenses in the South. Kim has largely abandoned diplomacy with Washington and Seoul since his nuclear negotiations with US President Donald Trump collapsed in 2019, and he has made Moscow the new focus of his foreign policy, sending thousands of troops and large quantities of weapons to support President Vladimir Putin’s war in Ukraine.

Following years of intensified testing, Kim now has an extensive arsenal of nuclear-capable missiles, including long-range weapons potentially capable of reaching the US mainland and shorter-range systems that threaten South Korea and Japan.

Trump in August scaled back a major military exercise with South Korea in an apparent effort to restart diplomacy with Kim, who has condemned such drills as rehearsals for invasion.

Describing the DMZ mine blast as an “unfortunate incident,” Chung told domestic reporters that the core cause of the accident stemmed from different measurements of the MDL.

The minister stressed that the lines, measured by South Korea, the DPRK and the United Nations Command, are all different, cautioning that similar accidents could happen again at any time unless the issue is addressed.

Chung directly extended a formal dialogue proposal to Pyongyang, saying “it is time to meet and communicate.”



Afghans gather around a helicopter as bodies and wounded civilians are evacuated following what Afghanistan’s Taliban government said was an overnight Pakistani airstrike in Helmand province, southwestern Afghanistan on Oct 1. (AP)

Indian border guards kill 2 on border with Pakistan, raising tensions

LAHORE, Pakistan, Oct 3, (Agencies): Indian border guards shot and killed two Pakistani nationals near the border in Punjab province Friday, Pakistani and Indian media reported, raising tensions between the two neighbors a year and a half after they stepped back from the brink of war in disputed Kashmir.

Pakistan Television, citing Pakistani security sources, said three unarmed civilians, residents of Kasur district in eastern Pakistan, had walked a few steps beyond a border pillar when personnel from India’s Border Security Force opened fire. Two were killed and a third wounded, it said.

There was no immediate comment from New Delhi, but Indian media carried a conflicting account, reporting that the men were suspected of trying to enter India.

The shooting came a day after Pakistan’s military disputed India’s claim that its security forces had killed a senior commander from the Lashkar-e-Taiba extremist group in Indian-controlled Kashmir, presenting a man it said India had wrongly identified as the dead militant.

Pakistan and India have fought three wars since independence from British rule in 1947, two over Kashmir. The disputed Himalayan region

is divided between the nuclear-armed neighbors, both of which claim it in full.

In April 2025, gunmen in Indian-controlled Kashmir killed 26 tourists in an attack that New Delhi blamed on Islamabad. The violence triggered weeks of escalating clashes, including missile and drone strikes, bringing India and Pakistan to their most serious military confrontation in decades.

While India and Pakistan have frequently exchanged fire across disputed Kashmir in recent years, the international border in Punjab has remained largely peaceful.

Meanwhile, Pakistan on Saturday summoned the charge d’affaires of the High Commission of India in Islamabad to lodge a strong protest over the killing of two Pakistani civilians, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said.

Two Pakistani civilians were killed and another was injured in firing by India’s Border Security Force near the border in Kasur district of Pakistan’s eastern Punjab province on Friday, Pakistani security sources said.

Also:

KABUL, Afghanistan: The governor of Afghanistan’s southern **Kan-**

dahar province on Friday denied a claim by **Pakistan** that he had hosted senior militant figures for talks on escalating attacks inside Pakistan.

The office of the governor, **Mohammad Shirin Akhund**, dismissed the claim made on Thursday by Pakistani army spokesman Lt. Gen. **Ahmad Sharif** as “propaganda.”

“Pakistani military circles are attempting, through these baseless claims, to justify the killing of civilians in Afghanistan and their own other crimes,” the governor’s office said.

Sharif alleged at a televised news conference on Thursday that members of several militant groups had met in Kandahar on Aug. 26.

He said the meeting was attended by members of the outlawed Baloch Liberation Army, or BLA, an ethnic separatist group fighting for an independent Balochistan; al-Qaida in the Indian Subcontinent, or AQIS, the global militant network’s South Asian affiliate; and the **Hafiz Gul Bahadur** group, an independent Pakistani Islamist militant network rooted in **North Waziristan**.

Sharif did not explain how Pakistani authorities learned of the alleged gathering or present evidence to support the claim.

US, Australia suspend consular services in Brazil ahead of poll

RIO DE JANEIRO, Oct 3, (AP): US consular services and the Australian embassy in Brazil closed Friday citing security concerns, two days before the country’s presidential election, authorities from both countries said.

Also on Friday, Brazil’s federal police said they executed search and seizure warrants in Sao Paulo and the Federal District as part of an investigation into suspected plans that could threaten US diplomatic facilities in Brazil.

Police described the operation as preventive and said it resulted from ongoing cooperation with foreign intelligence agencies. Investigators found no evidence to corroborate the initial reported risks, nor had they identified any suspects as being involved in criminal organizations.

An investigation is ongoing following the seizure of communication equipment, police said.

In a statement dated Thursday, the US Embassy issued a security alert saying it would be suspending consular services at the embassy and consulates starting Friday.

The alert advised US citizens seeking assistance not to visit the embassy, consulates or other diplomatic



Security personnel stand outside the US Embassy after consular services were suspended due to security concerns in Brasilia, Brazil on Oct 2. (AP)

facilities, and instead contact the appropriate duty officer.

The Australian Embassy in Brasilia also said it was closing on Friday, citing the US alert and advising Australians to avoid US diplomatic facilities.

Asked Friday by The Associated Press about the suspension of

consular services in Brazil, the US State Department said it was working closely with its Brazilian counterparts to address security concerns.

US embassies and consulates routinely issue alerts notifying US citizens of threats, events, and changes happening locally, the department said.

Africa

17 killed in Kenya road crash: Seventeen people, most of them pilgrims on the way to a prayer site, were killed in a road crash Saturday involving multiple vehicles on the highway to the Kenyan coastal city of Mombasa.

The incident in the Salama area happened after midnight when a truck driver tried and failed to overtake another truck. That caused a collision with vehicles including a van carrying pilgrims, according to local police.

The driver and 16 passengers, most of them women, in that van died at the scene, police said.

The pilgrims were going to a prayer site in Nakuru County, west of the Kenyan capital of Nairobi, said **Martin Kivuva**, Archbishop of the Catholic Archdiocese of Mombasa. (AP)



Kivuva

Suspected Boko Haram militants kill 15: Suspected Boko Haram militants killed at least 15 farmers and firewood gatherers in the Marte local government area of Nigeria’s northeastern Borno State, police and human rights officials said Friday.

The attack, apparently carried out by the prominent Islamic militant group, took place late Wednesday and early Thursday in the villages of Ala, Gumma

and Musune in Marte, located approximately 130 kilometers (80 miles) northeast of Maiduguri, the state capital.

Borno state police spokesperson Nahum Daso confirmed the violence and added that security forces are working to account for the whereabouts of three other residents who remain missing.

Community members retrieved the bodies from the surrounding bushland and buried the 15 victims Thursday evening in accordance with Islamic rites. Residents said the victims, who included young men and village elders, were ambushed, bound and executed at close range while gathering firewood and tending their crops. (Xinhua)

□ □ □

Somali forces capture 16 pirates: Maritime forces from Somalia’s Puntland State have rescued the Palau-flagged oil tanker MT Honor (Honor 25) off the coast of Bandarbeyla in northeastern Somalia.

In a statement released Tuesday evening, the Puntland Maritime Police Force (PMPF) confirmed that the vessel and its 17 crew members were safe.

Held since April 21, the ship was freed in an operation that resulted in the arrest of 16 Somali pirates, while five crew members were killed by the hijackers before the rescue operation.

“The vessel is now safe and under Puntland government control. During the operation, 16 suspected pirates were apprehended, while operations to locate the remaining members continue,” the security force said in a statement. (Xinhua)

Business

Recognition reflects growth in treasury, financial services

Warba Bank reinforces its presence in the foreign exchange market with 2026 Euromoney recognition

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 3: Warba Bank continued to strengthen its presence in the foreign exchange (FX) market, receiving new international recognition from Euromoney for 2026. The recognition reflects the continued development of the bank's Treasury Group and its ability to provide advanced financial solutions that meet client requirements and keep pace with evolving global market conditions.

The recognition builds on Warba Bank's efforts to develop its treasury operations and strengthen its foreign exchange capabilities through investment in specialized talent, financial tools and solutions, and modern technology, helping enhance the services provided to clients across different segments.

Al-Lanqawi: Recognition Reflects the International Financial Community's Confidence in Warba Bank's Capabilities

Abdullah Mahmoud Al-Lanqawi, Chief Treasury Officer at Warba Bank, expressed his pride in the international recognition, noting that continued global recognition reflects the efforts of the bank's Treasury team and the specialized foreign exchange solutions and services it provides.

Al-Lanqawi said the recognition reflects the development of Warba Bank's treasury capabilities over recent years, combining banking expertise, an in-depth understanding of market needs, and the use of technology to provide more efficient and flexible services.

He added that the bank remains focused on developing its financial products and solutions in line with client needs and market developments, noting that the foreign exchange market is evolving rapidly and requires high levels of readiness, flexibility, and responsiveness.

Al-Lanqawi said the recognition provides further incentive to continue developing the bank's treasury operations and strengthen Warba Bank's position in specialized financial services, while continuing to invest in technology and national and professional talent capable of supporting the bank's future plans.

Investment in Talent and Technology Strengthens FX Competitiveness

Al-Lanqawi said the international recognition reflects the continued efforts of Warba Bank's treasury, sales, and foreign exchange service teams. He noted that developing an integrated framework in this area requires a combination of technical expertise, an



Warba Bank earns Euromoney FX recognition.

understanding of client needs, and continued investment in technology.

He explained that Warba Bank has developed its foreign exchange capabilities by strengthening its operational and technical infrastructure, improving service delivery processes, and enhancing the capabilities of its specialized teams, enabling the bank to provide clients with more efficient and responsive financial solutions.

Al-Lanqawi added that developments in global markets and the growing need for currency risk management require more flexible and specialized solutions. He noted that the bank continues to develop an integrated range of services to meet the needs of corporate, institutional, and other client segments.

He added that the international recognition provides further motivation to continue improving performance and developing services, emphasizing the importance of teamwork and integration across the bank's different teams in achieving its strategic objectives.

Specialized Expertise and Advanced Financial Solutions

Warba Bank continues to place increasing importance on its Treasury

Group, reflecting the role of foreign exchange services in supporting client needs and helping them manage financial transactions across local and international markets.

The bank continues to develop its foreign exchange services, focusing on flexible and efficient solutions that help clients manage their currency requirements and make use of available financial instruments in line with their needs and the nature of their businesses.

Warba Bank also relies on a specialized team with diverse expertise across treasury and financial markets, strengthening its ability to monitor market developments and respond to client requirements quickly and effectively.

Technology and Digital Transformation at the Core of Treasury Development

The recognition comes as Warba Bank continues to invest in digital transformation and the development of its technology infrastructure, viewing technology as a key driver in the development of the banking sector and the enhancement of customer experience.

The bank continues to deploy digital solutions and modern tech-

nology across its operations, including treasury and financial markets services, with the aim of improving operational efficiency, accelerating transaction execution, and providing a more convenient and flexible banking experience.

These efforts align with the bank's strategy to strengthen its digital capabilities and provide innovative banking solutions that keep pace with developments in the financial sector and support client needs in an increasingly competitive and rapidly changing environment.

Building on a Track Record of International Recognition

The latest recognition builds on Warba Bank's record of receiving international recognition across different areas of banking, reflecting the breadth of its capabilities and the continued development of its products and services.

In 2024, Warba Bank was named "Best Bank for FX in Kuwait" by Euromoney. The award recognized the Treasury Group's efforts to build specialized foreign exchange capabilities and provide innovative financial solutions. At the time, the bank also highlighted the role of technology and product development in enhancing customer experience.

Continuing to Build the Future of Financial Services

Warba Bank said these achievements reflect its continued efforts to develop an integrated framework combining specialized banking expertise, modern technology, and an understanding of client needs, alongside a focus on innovation and the development of products and services.

The bank continues to strengthen its presence in financial markets and expand the range of solutions offered to clients, in line with its strategy to reinforce its position as a modern Islamic financial institution capable of responding to changes in the financial sector locally and regionally.

About Warba Bank

Warba Bank has achieved significant milestones over a relatively short period, establishing a leading position in Islamic digital banking. With one of the largest shareholder bases among local banks, Warba Bank maintains close ties with different segments of Kuwaiti society. This latest recognition further reinforces the bank's position as a trusted banking partner, combining innovation and social responsibility in the delivery of financial products and services.

Oil prices up \$1.32 to \$105.91 pb

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 3, (KUNA): The price of Kuwaiti oil went up USD 1.32 to reach USD 105.91 per barrel (pb) in Friday's trading, compared to USD 104.59 pb the previous day, according to the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on

Saturday.

In global markets, Brent crude went down by six cents to reach USD 102.25 pb, same as US West Texas Intermediate which decreased by USD 1.76 to reach USD 91.11 pb.

G7 oil release aims to lower fuel prices

WASHINGTON, Oct 3, (AP): The Group of Seven wealthy democracies said Friday that they plan to release 100 million barrels of oil and fuel products in the coming weeks, starting with "substantial" amounts of diesel after the fuel recently hit record high prices in the United States.

President Donald Trump said the diesel release would happen "immediately," echoing a G7 promise to start "immediately" with a "frontloaded substantial release" of diesel within the next 20 days and the rest over four months.

Trump and his Republican Party face pressure to address surging prices ahead of the Nov. 3 midterm elections, and Trump announced the action Friday on social media. The president's approval ratings on the economy hit a new low, according to an AP-NORC poll, as the Iran war and his trade battles have increased U.S. prices for oil and other goods.

Gas prices in the U.S. and abroad have soared during the eight-month-long war, a cost Trump has repeatedly said is worth it for making sure Iran does not obtain nuclear weapons. The national average for a gallon of diesel in the U.S. was \$6.37 on Friday, according to AAA, after hitting a record \$6.52 on Sept. 22. Diesel prices have hit records in Europe, too.

The release of diesel in Europe might mean less exports of diesel from the U.S., which could lower prices by 25-50 cents per gallon after a few weeks, said Michael Lynch, distinguished fellow at Energy Policy Research Foundation, a non-partisan research institution focused on energy and economics.

France holds the rotating presidency of the G7 group and made the announcement in a statement released after videoconference talks that Macron presided over. The G7 countries are Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the U.K. and the U.S., plus EU representation.

The release follows on from a March announcement that International Energy Agency member countries would release 426 million barrels of oil and products to stabilize the oil market. European Union countries committed about 92 million barrels, a promise weighted toward refined products made from crude such as diesel.

"This common decision and this unity should bring down prices," Macron said. "The volumes we're releasing should also add liquidity to the market and bring down prices."

In addition to the rise in the price of the crude oil from which diesel is made, other factors include the decision by Russia to ban exports due to Ukrainian drone strikes on its refineries. Europe does not import Russian diesel, but other buyers of Russian diesel such as Turkey and Latin American countries must now compete with Europe for available barrels.

Meanwhile refined product shipments from the Persian Gulf producers have fallen due to war damage and blocked export routes.

The statement pushed U.S. oil prices down 2% but "the impact was lessened by lack of clarity on an important question," said Pavel Molchanov, investment strategy analyst at Raymond James. Is the 100 million barrels in addition to the amount already agreed in March, or "is this the final portion of the existing pledge?" he said.

Some Republicans in the U.S. had called for Trump to ban U.S. exports of diesel to try to bring domestic prices down. But the G7 statement said the group agreed not to limit energy exports to each other. Oil market analysts warn a U.S. export ban could lower prices in the short term but eventually backfire by reducing supplies of gasoline since diesel output can't be lowered without also cutting overall refinery production.

Asked about a potential U.S. export ban on Friday, Trump said "we were never going to do it."

"We're not going to be doing the export ban," Trump told reporters at the White House. "We're going to be doing what we're supposed to do." He added that Europe is making "a major world contribution, and so are we."

The emergency release could also be a short-term fix with the potential to do long-term harm, said Jim Krane, energy research fellow at Rice University's Baker Institute.

"Draining stocks will reduce retail fuel prices for a while, at the cost of leaving Europe with less emergency cover," Krane said. "At some point in the future Europe and the rest of the G7 will have to refill their strategic reserves. Normally they try to do this when prices are low. Nobody knows when that will happen. It's a risk."

With two wars raging that involve attacks on refineries and exports, "it's not the best time to be frittering away your emergency stocks -- especially when there is no visibility on future prices or peace agreements," Krane said.

Trump had a conversation overnight with Macron about the need to address rising fuel prices and the availability of petroleum products, according to the French Embassy in the U.S. Macron on Friday then chaired the videoconference of G7 leaders to discuss the issue.

Besides his call with Macron, Trump on Friday called in to the meeting with the G7 leaders to negotiate the release of the European diesel stockpiles, according to a White House official who was not authorized to speak publicly and spoke on the condition of anonymity.

Trump on Thursday embarked on what he said would be a 32-day marathon of rallies to try to bolster his party's chances for keeping control of the U.S. House and Senate in the November elections. The president has grown increasingly frustrated with what he sees as a disconnect between his achievements and the public's view of his work. This week he gave himself an A-plus for his work on the economy but said "we're doing an extremely poor job of promotion."

As part of its continued support for 'Diraya' campaign

KFH reiterates warning against cyber fraud & personal data theft

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 3: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) warns customers to remain cautious when dealing with fraudulent online links, reaffirming its commitment to customer protection and secure banking practices. This warning comes as part of KFH's ongoing support for the Diraya campaign, launched in collaboration with the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) and the Kuwait Banking Association (KBA) to promote banking awareness.

In a press release, KFH stated that the new form of on-line scam involves sending a message with a suspicious link tricking victims to click the link to visit a particular website or participate in a survey. Once they click the link, their devices will be hacked, enabling the hacker to access and exploit their personal data for harmful purposes.



KFH urged customers to stay vigilant and refrain from disclosing their personal information to requests received through e-mails, text messages, or phone calls, as they are attempts to obtain customers' banking information to steal their funds or data.

KFH advised customers to be careful when receiving links as these links could lead to theft of sensitive banking information. The bank also recommended that customers protect their bank accounts by avoiding the storage of confidential information, such as card numbers or passwords, on their mobile phones.

Additionally, customers were urged not to share their OTP with anyone and to log out of the bank's application or website promptly after finishing a transaction.

Canada fast-tracks Pacific oil pipeline to reduce US dependence as Alberta separation vote nears

TORONTO, Oct 3, (AP): Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney on Thursday fast-tracked a proposed oil pipeline capable of carrying one million barrels a day to the Pacific coast, which could reduce the country's dependence on the United States and mend relations with oil-rich Alberta as separatists push for a referendum on leaving Canada.

Appearing with Alberta Premier Danielle Smith in Fort McMurray, at the heart of Canada's oil sands, Carney designated the Pacific Link pipeline as a project of national interest under legislation

his government enacted to accelerate major infrastructure projects.

Alberta is holding a public vote on Oct. 19 on whether to hold a referendum on leaving Canada. Smith has long complained that Carney's predecessor, Justin Trudeau, hindered Alberta's energy industry and fueled separatist sentiment.

Smith said she would vote to keep Alberta in Canada and described the roughly 22% support for separation recorded in a recent poll as "still too high for my liking."

"I don't like the fact that many of our fellow

citizens have given up on Canada," she said, calling the pipeline an example of how "cooperative federalism can work in action."

Asked what message Albertans considering separation should take, Carney said it demonstrated that "Canada is working" and showed what Canada could achieve together.

Ian Brodie, a University of Calgary political science professor and former chief of staff to Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper, said the announcement could still help separatists by underscoring Alberta's dependence on Ottawa.

US hiring slows & unemployment ticks higher with a month remaining before Americans head to polls

WASHINGTON, Oct 3, (AP): U.S. employers added a disappointing 29,000 jobs and the unemployment rate ticked up last month, the government reported Friday, a month before voters go to the polls in pivotal midterm elections at a time of discontent over the high cost of living and the state of the economy.

Hiring dropped from a revised 133,000 in August, the Labor Department said. The unemployment rate rose to a still-low 4.2% from 4.1% in August.

Economists had expected September payrolls to come in around 90,000.

Labor Department revisions also shaved 60,000 jobs off combined July and August payrolls.

The new hiring data could draw the Federal Reserve's attention back to hiring and jobs, given that one of the central bank's two mandates is to seek maximum employment. Many Fed officials have said in recent weeks that they are primarily focused on their other mission, which is combating inflation. With the job market looking a bit weaker, the Fed may be more inclined to keep its key rate unchanged when it meets next month, rather than raise it.

Average hourly wages were up just 3% last month from a year earlier, the smallest year-over-year gain since May 2021. "In this data, there is no sign that the labor market is stoking inflation," said Luke Tilley, chief economist at Wilmington Trust.

Still, the unemployment rate remains low and inflation has been above the central bank's 2% target for more than five years, so the Fed's concern about elevated prices is still front and center.

Federal, state and local governments cut 17,000 jobs last month. Professional and business services companies, which provide administrative and technical expertise, trimmed 9,000 jobs.

Healthcare companies created 17,000 jobs in September, but that was barely half the 33,000 they've added, on average, each month for the past year. Bradley Saunders, an economist at Capital Economics, wrote that the slowdown in healthcare hiring might reflect the Trump administration's revocation of work authorizations for 350,000 Haitians.

Construction companies added 11,000 jobs and manufacturers 9,000.

Unemployment rose partly because 485,000 people entered the workforce

and not all of them found jobs right away.

The U.S. job market has proven resilient in the face of a series of shocks - trade wars, persistent inflation, high interest rates and a conflict with Iran that has driven energy prices higher. Friday's jobs report is the last one that will come out before the Nov. 3 elections that will determine whether President Donald Trump's Republicans maintain full control of Congress.

Futures for the S&P 500 and Nasdaq composite added to their gains after the data was released on growing hopes that the Fed will hold off on a rate hike. Treasury yields moved lower.

Yet what makes Wall Street happy differs starkly with what brings joy on Main Street.

The U.S. job market has recovered from a dismal 2025, but most Americans are still unsettled about the state of the economy and the high cost of living.

A Thursday poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research finds that only 17% of U.S. adults approve of Trump's handling of the cost of living. Just 26% approve of his handling of the economy overall, marking a new low.

U.S. consumer confidence dropped this month to the lowest level in more than a decade, according to an index published by the Conference Board. One reason: More than 28% of respondents told the business think tank that they expect fewer jobs to be available in six months, double the 14% who expect more.

The online jobs site Glassdoor reports that its employee confidence index, based on how workers view prospects for their own companies, dropped last month to the lowest level in records going back to the beginning of 2016, a period that includes a global pandemic. It was the index's third record low this year.

"Employee confidence has been continuously grinding downward over the last year as workers grow increasingly anxious about everything from layoffs to AI," said Glassdoor chief economist Daniel Zhao.

The public's misgivings about jobs partly reflect an odd feature of the current labor market: Employers aren't laying off many workers, but they aren't

hiring many either. A Labor Department measure of gross hiring - before subtracting those who quit or lose their jobs - has been stuck in a rut for more than two years. So economists describe a "low-hire, low-fire" job market in which those who have jobs are mostly secure, but jobseekers struggle to find work.

"People know that being laid off is unusually costly right now," said Glassdoor's Zhao. "They hear from their friends how long they've been out of work and had such a difficult time finding a job. That does make layoffs even more scary than usual."

In that chilly environment, fewer workers are willing to quit their jobs. "They often feel stuck," Zhao said. "Workers aren't finding there's opportunity on the open market to find a better job - one that pays more or offers better work-life balance."

Employers - businesses, government agencies and nonprofits - have added an average 68,000 jobs a month so far this year. That's a big improvement on the 9,700 average new jobs created every month in 2025, the weakest hiring outside a recession since 2002.

Sky Castle Toys in Seattle is still hiring - even though higher transportation costs, driven by the rocketing price of diesel, has eaten into profit margins. Co-founder Joshua Loerzel said the company's staff has more than doubled to 50 from last year.

He says toys priced under \$10 are what retailers want as shoppers cut back on higher-priced playthings. Sky Castle's sales increased 60% between January and August, compared with the same period last year.

At one time, 68,000 jobs a month would have been mediocre at best. But the United States doesn't need as many jobs as it once did to keep unemployment from rising. Because of baby boomer retirements and Trump's immigration crackdown, there are fewer people competing for work, and the break-even point could now be as low as zero jobs a month, down from 150,000 a year or two ago.

"I think this is roughly where we're going to stay," said Tilley at Wilmington Trust. "I expect job growth to remain in this 25,000 to 75,000 band as we go along."

Economic activity recovers despite ongoing Gulf conflict-linked pressures

By National Bank of Kuwait

Despite the ongoing conflict and continued disruptions to regional trade and shipping routes, Kuwait's economy has shown clear signs of resilience. Several key economic indicators have rebounded from the lows reached earlier in the conflict, suggesting that the economy has largely absorbed the initial shock even though conditions have not yet fully normalized. Non-oil activity has improved despite lingering headwinds from trade disruptions, project delays and general uncertainty stemming from the conflict, supported by government measures, stable household incomes, and easing inflation. Meanwhile, oil production has risen to three-quarters of its pre-conflict level and with more shipments passing through the Strait, Kuwait is better positioned to benefit from higher oil prices than earlier in the conflict. The improved economic data reinforces our earlier view that the non-oil economy will avoid a steep downturn. While we have downgraded the growth outlook relative to June to reflect revised assumptions about the conflict, the recent rebound across most economic metrics provides greater confidence that growth will continue to recover as regional conditions stabilize, supply chain pressures ease, and investment and project execution gather pace.

Latest developments

Oil prices push above \$100/bbl as regional conflict widens, oil flow disruptions persist. Following the breakdown of the US-Iran MoU in July, continued severe disruption to oil flows through the Strait of Hormuz and more recently attacks on Saudi energy infrastructure by the Houthis and Iran backed militias that have jeopardized crucial oil exports through the Red Sea helped push Brent futures above the symbolic \$100/bbl level to a high of \$108/bbl on the 15th September. Local crude marker KEC rose even more, topping \$126/bbl recently, widening its premium to Brent to reflect the shortage of medium-sour barrels in high demand by Asian refineries. However, regional oil production had continued to recover as of August (before the latest attacks on Saudi energy). OPEC's oil market report revealed that Kuwait (along with Iraq and non-OPEC UAE) had managed to recover the most output since March's post-conflict low (+1.4 mb/d to 2.0 mb/d), with production roughly topping 3/4 of preconflict levels, an impressive feat that should enable Kuwait to reach its higher OPEC+ production ceiling of 2.68 mb/d quickly once the Strait is fully open. On a related note, KPC signed a record \$16bn lease-and-leaseback deal for its crude oil export pipeline network, generating \$7.9bn in upfront proceeds. A new JV will be formed with KOC retaining a 51% stake, while KPC keeps full ownership and operational control of the 13 pipelines.

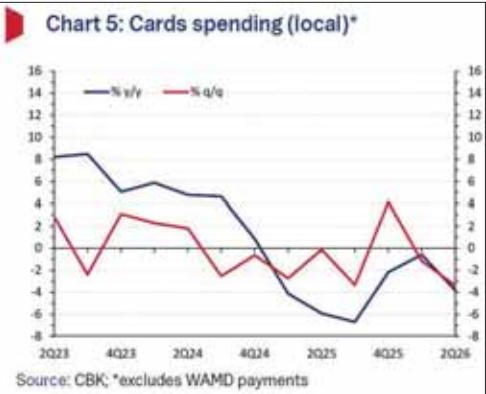
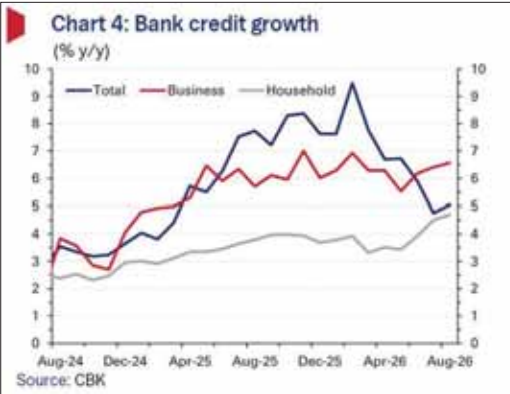
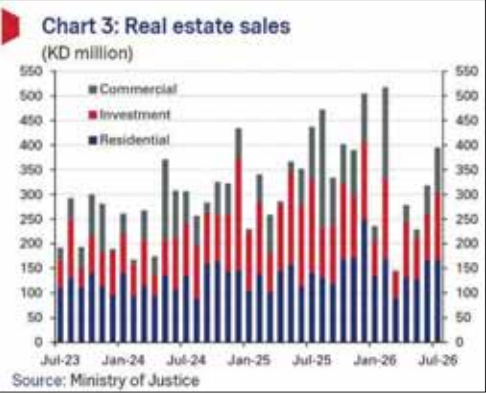
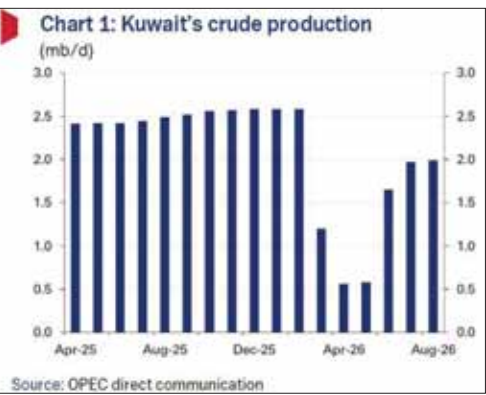
New law allows government borrowing from Future Generations Fund. New legislation permits the government to borrow from Kuwait's \$1 trillion-plus wealth fund to bolster liquidity buffers, though under strict safeguards. According to the law, borrowing in any fiscal year is capped at 100% of the FGF's average investment returns over the previous five years, while the total outstanding loan balance cannot exceed 10% of the reserve's net asset value – implying a loan balance cap in excess of KD30 billion. The law also requires that the state prioritizes the repayment of the loan from future budget surpluses. Following the approval of the financing and liquidity law in 2025, short-term financing needs mounted rapidly amid the significant decline in Kuwait's oil receipts due to the regional conflict. While borrowing from the FGF has unlocked a new avenue to raise funds, the government continued to tap domestic and international debt markets in Q3, raising KD600 million and KD1.8 billion equivalent from each, respectively. In total, KD4.3 billion was raised from debt capital markets so far in the current fiscal year (FY26/27).

The non-oil private-sector PMI expanded again in August, rising to 53.6 from 50.8 in July. The rebound was supported by a robust recovery in demand, with both output and new orders surging to their highest levels since February, thanks to competitive pricing and effective marketing. The improvement in business activity saw companies hire extra staff, with the employment subindex returning to growth last month. However, supply side pressures have continued to mount. Input costs rose to a six-month high due to higher wages and increased expenses for maintenance, marketing, and raw materials, prompting firms to pass some of these costs onto consumers. Looking ahead, optimism regarding the year-ahead outlook was the most since February.

Real estate activity continued to improve in July, with property sales rising to KD395 million, the highest level since February 2026 (-9.6% y/y). Sales increased (m/m) across all sectors, led by the investment sector (still -28% y/y), followed by the commercial sector (-14.1% y/y). The uptick in residential sales was modest, though the y/y gain was a solid 17.6%, likely supported by lower house prices that eased affordability constraints for homebuyers. Overall real estate sales activity remained below year-ago levels, marking a fifth consecutive month of annual declines.

CPI inflation eased to a three-month low of 2.2% y/y in June from 2.5% in May, reflecting softer price pressures across most major categories. Food inflation remained elevated at 5.6% y/y but continued to moderate, while housing inflation slowed to 0.2% y/y, its lowest level since August 2021, amid weaker rental pressures. Core inflation also edged down to 2.1% y/y, although transport inflation accelerated on higher airfares linked to regional tensions. Overall, the data suggests a broad-based easing in inflationary pressures as conflict-related supply disruptions continue to fade.

Kuwait's population continued to grow in mid-2026, surpassing 5.3 million residents, though at a slower 4.2% y/y than December 2025's reading (+5% y/y). Growth remained driven by expatriates, while the Kuwaiti population recorded a modest increase. Labor market trends were similar, with employment growth easing (+5.1% y/y from 6.1%) as expatriate hiring slowed, while Kuwaiti employment returned to growth on higher public sector recruitment (+1.1%). Private sector employment among Kuwaitis continued to decline (-1.2%



y/y), though, pushing the unemployment rate higher to 6.4%, while the number of retirees rose sharply, reflecting recent pension reforms.

Domestic credit growth rebounded in August, rising by 0.9% m/m (5.1% y/y) after contracting by 0.2% m/m in July, driven mainly by a recovery in lending to banks and financial institutions and stronger credit for securities purchases. However, underlying lending activity remained decent, with business credit expanding by 0.4% m/m and household credit rising by a solid 0.7% m/m, remaining above its average monthly pace over the past four years. On an annual basis, overall credit growth strengthened, with business and household credit growth edging up to 6.6% and 4.7% y/y, respectively. On the liabilities side, resident deposit growth slowed to 8.4% y/y, its weakest pace since April, reflecting softer private sector deposit growth despite continued strength in government deposits. Looking ahead, the August rise suggests that lending may be picking up after an earlier slowdown, although this is just one month and much depends on the conflict.

Central bank data showed local electronic payment transactions declining further in Q2 (-3.8% y/y), indicating softer consumer spending. The weakness was driven mainly by lower ATM withdrawals, alongside declines in electronic gateway and point-of-sale transactions. In contrast, WAMD transfers continued to grow strongly (+44% y/y), reflecting the ongoing shift toward digital payment methods. Overall, the data suggests that the regional conflict has slightly but not dramatically disturbed the modestly improving card spending trend that was observed beforehand.

Forecast

Prolonged conflict dampens outlook

The conflict has lasted longer than initially anticipated, and prospects for a near-term diplomatic resolution have faded amid the absence of meaningful dialogue and renewed tensions in both the Gulf and the Red Sea. We have revised our baseline outlook (versus June) to reflect this, anticipating a deeper contraction and a more gradual recovery in oil output than previously. Oil GDP is now forecast to contract by 32% in 2026, with a full recovery in oil output to pre-conflict levels delayed to H2 2027 due to ongoing export constraints at the Strait of Hormuz. Assuming shipping routes are fully normalized by mid-2027, oil output is projected to surpass preconflict levels by the end of next year, supported by a likely higher OPEC quota. Meanwhile, global oil prices are expected to remain elevated but relatively range-bound under the baseline scenario, avoiding the sharp spikes associated with a more severe regional escalation. We maintain our oil price forecast from April of Brent averaging \$90 in 2026 and \$80/bbl 2027, with the balance of risks skewed to the upside following the recent disruptions at the Bab-al-Mandab strait and damage to Saudi infrastructure, which have compounded supply shortages and global inventory drawdowns. The low global inventories imply a period of stock rebuilding once flows normalize, which should provide support to crude prices even as GCC supply returns to the market. The conflict and ongoing supply chain disruptions have weighed on business confidence, trade, and project implementation. Nevertheless, monthly economic indicators, including the PMI and bank lending, have improved since their lows in Q2, suggesting that the economy has mostly absorbed the initial shock of the conflict, helped by alternative trade routes, restored air travel, and policy support. Steady public sector employment has helped protect household incomes, while government subsidies and price controls have cushioned consumers from higher food and commodity prices. Policy measures have helped to support liquidity and maintain confidence in the banking sector. Following a weak 2026, conditions for businesses should improve as disruptions to trade and supply chains begin to ease. In addition, increased refined products output, a pick-up in project implementation and stronger investment should support a rebound in non-oil growth to 5.1% in 2027 from -2.0% in 2026. Consumer spending and household credit growth are also expected to pick up next year but remain relatively subdued due to limiting factors including slow employment and wage growth. Lending support to the medium-term

credit growth outlook is the recent approval of the long-awaited mortgage law which will unlock additional subsidized home financing, payable over a period of 25 years. This will also expectedly support residential construction activity and the growth of related sectors, although the supply of public housing and land remains the primary constraint and the new borrowing may not materialize for some time.

Inflation seen steady despite war pressures

Inflation is forecast to average just 2.5% in 2026 (2.4% in 2025) as conflict-induced inflationary pressures are countered by government food price controls and subsidies, low housing inflation and disinflationary trends in other consumer items. The CBK held the policy rate steady at 3.50% in September despite the US Fed's move to raise benchmark interest rates for the first time in three years. The futures market sees a good chance of a second 25-bps rate hike by the US Fed this year, though monetary tightening by the CBK will continue to depend partly on domestic economic and financial conditions.

New financing options ease pressure from deficits

A severe drop in oil revenues coupled with spending on conflict-related costs including subsidies and reconstruction capex, will result in a fiscal deficit of about 20% of GDP (KD9.6bn) in this fiscal year FY26/27, wider than the 15% of GDP posted in FY25/26. This would mark the 11th deficit in the past 12 years and the widest since the 32% of GDP recorded during Covid. The fiscal position is however expected to improve substantially in FY27/28, potentially to around balance assuming a recovery in oil production and exports alongside a reduction in conflict-related reconstruction and emergency spending. The government is also expected to refocus on its fiscal consolidation agenda after a period of heightened spending pressures. This includes continued efforts to mobilize non-oil revenues, mainly from the ongoing review of government service fees and introduction of new tax measures beginning with the excise tax potentially in 2027 before moving on to the VAT. On the expenditure side, measures under review include subsidy reforms and further targeted reductions in discretionary spending. Public debt rose sharply since March 2025 with the passing of the liquidity and financing law, but the pace of borrowing should moderate over the coming year given reduced funding needs (assuming an improved fiscal position) and the new law allowing borrowing from the FGF. A new Sukuk law further diversifies borrowing options. We forecast public debt to reach around 23% of GDP in FY26/27, with the pace of issuance likely to soften given access to FGF funding. Rating agency Fitch views this type of borrowing as government-to-government and will not be included in Kuwait's public debt figure. Overall fiscal space remains comfortable, with the debt burden still low by global standards and ample room for additional borrowing in excess of KD30 billion from the FGF, effectively raising the combined (public debt plus FGF loans) government debt ceiling to KD60 bn plus, versus KD11bn on issue now. The liquidity boost will enable a further ramp-up in diversification projects, driving progress towards long-term development goals and unlocking non-oil sector growth.

Extended or more severe conflict key downside risk

Risks to the outlook remain tied to geopolitics. Our baseline assumes Hormuz reopens and oil exports normalize by mid-2027, but further deterioration in regional security conditions could extend shipping disruptions and delay the recovery in oil production and growth. On the upside, a quicker resolution would likely trigger a faster rebound in exports, investment and private sector confidence. Beyond the conflict itself, the pace of capital spending and progress on key economic reforms will be critical in determining how quickly growth returns to a sustainably stronger footing. Kuwait has recently focused on modernizing its judicial system through digital courts and litigation reforms, while simultaneously reviewing key economic laws to strengthen governance, improve the business environment, and attract investment.

Other Voices

Oil prices are steady!

By Kamel Al-Harami
Independent Oil Analyst

BRENT and other price indicators are hovering around \$100, and prices appear likely to remain at these levels for the remainder of the year. There are currently no signs of significant weakening.

This is good news for oil-producing and exporting economies, which may see positive results in their year-end balance sheets.

For the first time in many years, some oil-producing countries could potentially reach budgetary breakeven, reducing the need to borrow from external sources such as international banks or to sell core assets in search of cash to balance their budgets.

Oil prices, meanwhile, remain strong at above \$100 a barrel, bringing relief to oil-producing countries for the time being.

The challenge, however, for oil-producing countries is to keep expenses under control year after year. But this is difficult with growing populations and ongoing infrastructure development. Most importantly, countries must seek to advance job creation and generate employment opportunities through international investments and domestic economic activity, despite the limited opportunities available.

The challenge for us in Kuwait, however, is finding and creating job opportunities for new college graduates, particularly with no major new industries coming on stream.

The only major industry currently available is oil. With our three domestic refineries and three refineries outside Kuwait, located in Oman, the Arab Gulf, Thailand, and Italy, employment

opportunities will remain limited due to advances in technology.

Refineries can no longer employ the same number of workers they once did. The smaller the workforce, the better the financial results, particularly when labor costs are reduced. Refineries should not be used primarily as a means of absorbing excess labor. Their workforces should remain lean, with the minimum number of employees needed to operate efficiently.

It is time to review these new trends and find ways to minimize labor costs. Unfortunately, this is difficult to implement in societies where there is strong resistance to reducing employment.

We realize that despite the recent increase in oil prices, it will most likely lead to higher spending and encourage the state to undertake more projects, hopefully. However, this will be difficult to sustain. Our concern is that higher revenues will lead to higher expenditures, as meeting the demands of our communities unfortunately results in increased spending.

Oil prices certainly will not remain strong for an extended period, making it necessary to seek new sources of income. This could include increasing oil exports or finding alternatives to oil as additional sources of revenue. Perhaps we also need to consider using our sovereign wealth fund more regularly, or allocating part of its investment income to help cover and supplement our annual revenues.

The time has come to think creatively and outside the box, unless we can ensure a regular and sustained increase in oil prices sufficient to cover the annual deficits of oil-producing countries.

We cannot continue depending on a single source of income. From now on, we should consider using part of the annual investment returns as an additional source of income.

Email: nafikuwaiti@yahoo.com

New updates, same commitment

NBK streamlines digital credit card applications

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 3: In a step that reflects its ongoing commitment to providing customers with seamless, convenient, and secure banking experience, National Bank of Kuwait continues to enhance its digital banking services with a new suite of updates designed to make everyday banking simpler, faster, and more accessible.

The latest enhancements span several key areas of the Bank's digital offering, including the first fully digital journey for applying for credit cards and sign digitally in a simple and seamless manner, anytime anywhere, without the need to visit the branch. The new service allows customers to apply for credit cards and manage the entire application process, including filling out the form, uploading required documents, undergoing credit checks, viewing eligible card options, and completing the final review and electronic signature all through the app, without the need to visit a branch or submit paper documents.

By digitizing the entire application and issuance process, NBK offers one of the fastest credit card acquisition experiences in Kuwait by streamlining procedures, accelerating application review and approval, as well as ensuring a smoother and more flexible experience for customers.

The launch of this service reflects the Bank's ongoing efforts to strengthen its digital capabilities and deliver innovative banking solutions centered around customers' needs, while meeting their expectations for faster, more flexible, and seamless banking.

The latest update also introduces a range of new and enhanced services and features, further reinforcing the Bank's commitment to delivering a seamless digital banking experience that meets customers' evolving needs and provides greater convenience, speed, and flexibility in managing their banking needs.

Multi-Beneficiary Transfers

NBK introduced the Multi-Beneficiary Transfers feature on the NBK Mobile Banking App, offering a more practical and efficient way to transfer money to several recipients in a single transaction simply by selecting recipients, entering the required amounts, reviewing the total transaction, authenticating, and finally completing the transfer. Customers are able to select up to ten beneficiaries at once, providing greater flexibility by reducing the number of steps required to conduct multiple transfers.

Digital Certificates and Statement

As part of the new enhancements, NBK expanded its digital certificate services, enabling customers to request a wider range of official certificates and statements digitally, without the need to visit a branch.

This way, customers can request their certificates conveniently through NBK's digital channels, with docu-



Mohammad Al-Dakhil



ments that incorporate a QR code and the verified signature, so they can be validated through an in-app QR reader. Moreover, this service is supported by advanced security measures in line with international standards, which provides customers with greater trust and ease of mind when accessing official banking documents. Additionally, a copy of the requested document is sent to the customer's registered email address, making it easier to retain a copy whenever needed.

Commenting on the launch of this new suite of benefits and enhancements, Mohammad Al-Dakhil, VP – Head of Digital Banking Channels at National Bank of Kuwait, said, "All these enhancements are part and parcel of NBK's broader vision to continuously develop a comprehensive banking system centered around customer needs."

"By combining convenience, flexibility, security, and accessibility, NBK maintains its unwavering commitment to simplifying daily banking for customers and providing them with bigger control to manage their finances," He added.

Through its ongoing commitment to investing in its digital infrastructure and innovative banking solutions, NBK continues to reinforce its leadership in digital transformation by giving its customers an experience that meets their evolving expectations, as per the highest standards of service, security, and reliability.

Egyptian envoy, diplomats join Silver Jubilee of Pastor Bigoul in Hawally

St. Mark's Cathedral marks Hegumen Bigoul's 25 years of pastoral service in Kuwait



Coptic community in Kuwait honours Hegumen Bigoul on 25th pastoral anniversary.

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

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 3: In a spiritual atmosphere filled with love and loyalty, St. Mark the Apostle Cathedral in Hawally celebrated the Silver Jubilee of Hegumen Bigoul Anba Bishoy, Pastor of the Coptic Orthodox Church in Kuwait, marking 25 years of his pastoral service in the country, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Coptic Orthodox Metropolitan of Jerusalem, Kuwait and the Near East His Eminence Anba Antonios attended the event, along with several priests, church servers and members of the community.

Upon his arrival, the honoree was welcomed by the scout band, a gesture reflecting the deep affection of the congregation for him.

The ceremony opened with moving remarks by the participating clergy. Father Markos Al-Antony stated, "What we are witnessing today is not just a celebration, it is the real revolution of love that reflects the place Father Bigoul holds in the heart of each one of us."

Reverend Emmanuel Gharib, Chairman of the National Evangelical Church of Kuwait (NECK), said, "Hegumen Bigoul is a virtuous man. I have witnessed his dedication and love in serving the church and in his pastoral work. He is a man distinguished by humility and a cheerful spirit, always optimistic even in the most difficult circumstances. He is a man of faith in every sense of the word."

In his keynote address, which conveyed deep appreciation, His Eminence Anba Antonios expressed his affection for Hegumen Bigoul. "Everything said today is not just crafted words or empty pleasantries. These are overflowing sentiments from the heart, expressing sincere love for Father Bigoul," he asserted.

Reflecting on a quarter-century of dedicated service, he pointed out, "Imagine, 25 years in Kuwait alone. How many liturgies did he celebrate? How many people did he administer communion to? How many confessions did he hear? How many sick people did he visit in hospitals? How

many pastoral visits did he make? Father Bigoul did not limit himself to liturgical duties. He established comprehensive ministries, attending to every detail—from training personnel and developing curricula to ensuring educational excellence. He also served the university community in Kuwait, Egypt, Russia, Ukraine and England, organizing conferences and follow up committees for them. On the day of the celebration alone, 22 children were baptized."

He indicated that the immense affection Father Bigoul enjoys in the church and among Kuwaiti officials is a divine reward for his faithfulness. He quoted the saying, "When God loves a person, He makes others love them too." He described Father Bigoul's ability to transform hearts as "charisma and a gift from God."

He concluded "25 years have passed and we look forward to the 25 years and another after that. As my father used to say, 'I baptized a man and married him off, then baptized his son and married him off, and finally baptized the third generation—we want you to do the same.' No words can truly repay your love, your hard work and your meticulous care, but we say to you: May the Lord reward you, bless your life and ministry, and fill you with joy over the fruits they bear."

Twenty-five years have passed since Bigoul first set foot in Kuwait. He arrived as a priest, but over the years, he became a father, a brother and a friend, not only to the members of the church but to everyone who knows him. From day one, he chose to forge a relationship with Kuwait rooted in genuine affection. He loves the country and its people and respects its unique character.

In return, Kuwaitis and expatriates reciprocated that love. He does not view the church as a just structure with walls separating it from society, but as a bridge connecting its congregation to the wider community.

Under his leadership, St. Mark's Cathedral evolved from a place of worship to a grand Egyptian home in Kuwait and a gathering place for diverse segments, while keeping its doors wide open to the Kuwaiti society.

During Christmas and Easter, the atmosphere transforms, as the cathedral's

corridors become a tapestry of floral tributes bearing the names of leaders and prominent public figures.

Leading the well-wishers were the Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt Mohammed Abu Al-Wafa, Egyptian military attaché, members of the Egyptian diplomatic mission, and ambassadors of other nations to Kuwait.

This scene reflects the cathedral's stature as a diplomatic and grassroots bridge for connection.

The 25-year journey includes a historic milestone -- the first ever papal visit to Kuwait by His Holiness Pope Tawadros II, Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of St. Mark on April 23-27, 2017, at the gracious invitation of HH the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. This visit was the first of its kind since His Holiness' enthronement in 2012, when he consecrated the new St. Mark's Cathedral in Hawally.

Hegumen Bigoul served as the general coordinator and key figure in the preparations and reception.

The visit included meetings with the political leadership and a tour of the Kuwait Opera House—the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Centre, embodying the deep ties between Egypt and Kuwait and the tolerant nature of the Kuwaiti society.

In a speech marked by profound humility, Hegumen Bigoul stated, "So much has been done—so much has been done for my sake... and my conscience bears witness to what I say: I do not deserve this. I learned about the ceremony only recently, and all the segments I witnessed are new to me, yet it is evident that this is a long, arduous, meticulous and massive undertaking. From the bottom of my heart, I thank everyone who contributed to this great endeavor. In all humility, I say that I do not deserve such appreciation."

His Grace Bishop Antonios then presented him with a commemorative plaque in the midst of thunderous applause and tears of joy among the audience, while the crowd echoed his famous and oft-repeated statement: "We in Kuwait are fortunate... we find what we seek before we even ask for it... It is a land of love, generosity and coexistence... It is Kuwait, ladies and gentlemen."

Al-Bseis proposes five pathways for donors to drive silver economy

Arab forum focuses on productive aging, silver economy

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

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 3: United Nations Ambassador for Community Partnership and Chairman of Al-Awazem Charitable Society Advisor Hamad Zaid Saud Al-Bseis presented a paper titled, "The Role of Donors in Supporting Older Adults' Participation in the Silver Economy," in the 12th Forum and Best Practices Award for Elderly Care in Arab Countries held Saturday at the Mövenpick Hotel in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

In the midst of a huge audience, the 12th Forum and Award for Best Practices in Elderly Care in Arab Countries (2026) and the accompanying Arab Strategic Forum for the Silver Economy (2026) was launched on Oct 3, 2026 in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

The Bahrain Parents Care Society, Ebrahim Khalil Kanoo Social Club for Parents, and Regional Network for Social Responsibility organized the event, with the participation of the representative of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) as guest of honor.

Minister of Social Development Osama bin Saleh Al-Alawi sponsored and attended the forum with the theme, "Towards Productive Aging and a Prosperous Economy". Experts and representatives of government and civil society entities in the Arab world participated in the forum.

Al-Bseis stated that his paper focused on the rapid global demographic shifts and the rising number of older adults, indicating these changes necessitate the evaluation



Amidst a large, specialized audience, the "12th Forum and Award for Best Practices in Elderly Care in Arab Countries (2026)" and the accompanying "Arab Strategic Forum for the Silver Economy (2026)" kicked off on October 3, 2026, in the Kingdom of Bahrain. The event was held under the patronage of H.E. Mr. Osama bin Saleh Al-Alawi, Minister of Social Development, and organized by the Bahrain Parents Care Society, the Ebrahim Khalil Kanoo Social Parents Club, and the Regional Network for Social Responsibility, with the participation of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) as a guest of honor.

of policies and programs concerning this demographic by viewing them through the lens of sustainable development rather than just social welfare.

He explained that the paper

examines the concept of the 'silver economy' as an economic and social system that meets the needs of older adults while utilizing their capabilities and expertise.

He emphasized that the role of donor entities must evolve from merely funding care services to supporting empowerment, active participation and productivity.

The paper proposed five practical pathways for donors to provide support -- promoting entrepreneurship among older adults and establishing incubators for their ventures, funding intergenerational knowledge and experience transfer programs, supporting innovation, assistive technology and digital empowerment, developing platforms for flexible work and remote consulting, and building the capacity of civil society organizations through long-term institutional grants.

It urged donors to shift from the role of traditional funders to that of strategic partners in creating impact by adopting modern financing mechanisms, such as incentives, results-based financing and co-financing, while stressing the necessity of involving older adults in program design and evaluation through advisory committees and focus groups.

It asserted that investing in older adults is an investment in experience, social cohesion and economic sustainability, as the goal is not just to add years to their lives, but to add quality, impact and engagement to those years.



KUNA photos

Visitors take part in a variety of sporting, creative, interactive and cultural activities during the Al-Shaheed Park Carnival - Phase 3, from skating at the Extreme Sports Arena and creative activities for children to educational experiences at KidZania and traditional performances celebrating Kuwait's national identity and heritage.

Al-Shaheed Park Carnival weaves color into Kuwait's identity

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 3, (KUNA): Al-Shaheed Park Carnival - Phase 3 embodied the values of peace, harmony and hope through an immersive experience of light and colors.

With creative use of the colors of the State of Kuwait's flag - green, white, red and black, the activities of the

event reflected Kuwait's national identity across various elements of the visual experience and artistic designs.

The two-day festivities culminated on Friday into ceremonial parade around the park, featuring costumed characters accompanied by music in a lively atmosphere.

The colorful activities were infused with the historical

heritage of the State of Kuwait, reinforcing pride in its national identity and cultural uniqueness through national and heritage performances reflecting Kuwait's authentic traditions.

The carnival's agenda featured a diverse range of activities catering to all age groups, including puppet and

bubble shows, as well as performances by Ashman Al-Ilmi, Qarqasha and Bardib, Vanzo, and KidZania.

It also featured physical and sporting activities in the Extreme Sports Arena, including skating performances, adding an interactive and dynamic dimension to the festivities.

'Once Upon a Time in the Middle East' serves up message of peace

Chinese film finds hope beyond the battlefield

MIAMI BEACH: Rapper Rick Ross was arrested in Miami Beach early Thursday and charged with battery after a woman he was living with told police he hit her, authorities said.

Ross, whose legal name is William Roberts II, surrendered at the Miami Beach Police Station, two days after the woman filed a report with police, officials said. Ross faces a felony charge of battery by strangulation, as well as a misdemeanor battery charge, according to online court records.

An attorney for Ross, 50, said in a statement that his client is being wrongfully accused by an ex-girlfriend whose true motivations are unclear. "The ex did not even file a police report until a month after the claimed incident allegedly took place," defense attorney Steve Sadow said in the statement. "Mr. Roberts is innocent and has pled not guilty to the charges. He respectfully requests that his friends, fans and the general public not prejudice the situation and allow the judicial process to run its course."

Ross was released from jail on a \$5,000 cash bond later Thursday, according to court records. An arraignment is scheduled for Oct. 22. According to an arrest report, a woman told Miami Beach detectives that she had been living with Ross on Aug. 28, when he accused her of cheating on him and struck her multiple times. (AP)



Ross

BEIJING, Oct 3, (Xinhua): In the closing scene of the hit Chinese film "Once Upon a Time in the Middle East," sunlight fills a post-war restaurant as a waiter introduces the house specialty, namely "Xu Fu Rice Stew," a humble dish born out of wartime hardship.

It begins as a simple pot of braised rice, made by a Chinese cook named Xu Fu for hungry children fleeing a regional fight. Yet the dish holds something deeper -- a shared hope for peace.

The waiter is played by Ameen Muneer Mohammed Al-Obaidi, an Iraqi who goes by the Chinese name Fang Haoming. He is a young reporter and a survivor of the Iraq War launched by the United States. In 2003, when American missiles lit up the night sky over his hometown Baghdad, Al-Obaidi was barely three years old.

"The only food we had then was raw potatoes and rock-hard flatbread. Even that wasn't guaranteed," he recalled. "My father would queue for hours to get two or three potatoes for the family."

"When I saw the rubble and graffiti on set, it brought everything back," said Al-Obaidi. He moved to Yinchuan, the capital city of northwest China's Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, in 2011 to reunite with his elder sister. She had married a Chinese man she met in the Middle East and later settled down in Yinchuan.

"Before I came to China, I didn't know what peace was," he said.

A few days after Al-Obaidi settled in the Chinese city, he encountered the Spring Festival, which is China's most important traditional



Spectators line up for ticket check next to a poster of the film "Once Upon a Time in the Middle East" at a cinema in Qingdao, east China's Shandong Province, Aug. 24, 2026. (Xinhua)

festival, when families gather for reunion and celebration.

At night, the sound of firecrackers and fireworks startled the Iraqi family. "Where I come from, when you hear that sound, everyone tenses up and wants to get into a bomb shelter," Al-Obaidi noted.

But what he saw outside was very different: children laughing and cheering, families holding each other as colorful fireworks lit up the sky. "That was the first time I realized such sounds can bring happiness, not necessarily fear," he added.

Ever since, the Spring Festival has been Al-Obaidi's favorite holiday, and he makes sure to have Chinese New Year's Eve dinner with family and friends every year.

"Being able to sit down to a peaceful meal is the greatest joy for us," the young man said.

This idea lies at the heart of the film. According to Wen Muye, the film's director, the decision to tell a war story through a restaurant came from a simple contrast: war brings destruction, while food is closely associated with warmth, reunion and everyday happiness.

The film follows Xu's journey to the Middle East to work in a Chinese restaurant after falling into debt at home. Alongside restaurant manager Ma Junsheng, he helps build a popular eatery that becomes a gathering place for people from diverse backgrounds. Then war breaks out, and the restaurant, once a place of ordinary life, gets caught up in the violence.

The film frequently returns to the theme of cooking, from dumplings made before Xu leaves home to a wedding banquet where Chinese

and Arab food traditions come together. Later, as Xu flees the fighting with a group of orphaned children, he prepares a simple pot of rice.

The meal is modest, Wen said, but for the frightened children, it offers something more important, providing a moment of security and a taste of normal life. The dish eventually becomes known as Xu Fu's braised rice at the restaurant.

Since its release in August, the film has generated strong box-office numbers and positive reviews, grossing over 2.3 billion yuan (about 343 million U.S. dollars).

Though set in the Middle East, the war drama's emotional center lies elsewhere. It can be found in the universal desire for an ordinary life, where a person can eat, work and sit together with family without fear.

"Don't forget to eat properly" is an everyday Chinese expression of care. In the film, it becomes something much larger, a reminder of the normal life war threatens to take away.

Though Al-Obaidi had never acted before this film, Wen was determined to cast the young Iraqi who had lived through war and embraced peace. Explaining his rationale, Wen said, "Just him standing there is the best performance."

Chinese restaurant in wartime Baghdad

The Loong Restaurant, where Xu works as a chef in the hit film, also draws on real-life stories. For decades, running restaurants has been one of the most common ways Chinese people make a living overseas, and some Chinese restaurants have become unexpected meeting places between cultures.

Chen Xianzhong, an Arabic-language graduate who first visited Iraq in 1984, left his stable job in a Chinese state-owned company years later and opened a Chinese restaurant named Yan Loong Wan in downtown Baghdad in 2003.

At the time, it was one of just a few Chinese restaurants in the city. As Iraq is a Muslim-majority country, Chen said, he made sure that all the ingredients used in the restaurant were in line with local customs and acceptable to Muslim diners.

Then the Iraq War broke out, and Chen nonetheless refused to give up his business. In a city where explosions shattered windows and fear emptied the streets, the restaurant became something rare: a taste of normal life. Diners could find authentic Chinese dishes, including dumplings, alongside local specialties such as samoon, a type of bread common in Iraq.

Local Iraqi families, international journalists and diplomats, and even American soldiers arriving in armored vehicles, all came to eat, Chen said, adding that the restaurant put him in touch with many walks of life. When car bombs eventually made the city too dangerous to live in, Chen closed the restaurant in 2005 and sent his Chinese staff home. But he chose to stay, continuing to run a hotel and a shopping mall.

"I had already got to know the country, and I could use the language I learned every day," he told Xinhua when explaining his decision to stay in Iraq despite the conflict. For Chen, opportunity and risk went hand in hand, and he was prepared to take that risk.

Trump, Carney and humanitarian groups also in the running

A galactic Nobel? Experts float ISS as Peace Prize contender

STAVANGER, Norway, Oct 3, (AP): Not-so-outlandish, prognosticators say: The Nobel Peace Prize this year could go galactic, with an award to the International Space Station. But terrestrial contenders loom too, including U.S. President Donald Trump, Prime Minister Mark Carney of Canada, emergency teams in Sudan, children’s advocates in Ukraine and two top international courts, experts say.

The annual guessing game about who will win the prize, often called the most prestigious award on the planet, is revving up ahead of the Norwegian Nobel Committee’s Oct. 9 announcement of the winner in Oslo.

Predicting the outcome is inherently speculative. Some surprising and controversial choices have appeared over the years. The committee received 287 candidates for this year’s prize, and just over a quarter of them are organizations.

Experts say the committee, in its process of awarding the prize, typically focuses on the durability of peace, the promotion of international fraternity and the quiet work of institutions that strengthen those goals.

Haakon Gjerløw, director of the Peace Research Institute Oslo, is considered a top forecaster. He says the ISS - well, the organization behind it - is a rare symbol of global cooperation in a quest toward the heavens at a time when multilateralism is crumbling and many countries have retreated into narrower national interests on Earth.

The institute’s annual watch list is one of the sources that most informs pundits and punters about the top contenders.

Trump has made no secret of his desire to win the prize, and has been nominated again, but could be viewed as a controversial choice after the U.S., along with Israel, launched an ongoing war on Iran in February.

Canada’s Carney has made a mark internationally this year, in large part by standing up to Trump on issues like U.S. tariffs.

Gjerløw’s list this year also features Ukrainian children’s advocate Mykola Kuleba and Save the Children; Sudan’s Emergency Response Rooms, a grassroots relief network;



A close-up view of a Nobel Prize medal at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Bethesda, Md., Dec. 8, 2020. (AP)

and the Committee to Protect Journalists after the deadliest two years for reporters since record-keeping began nearly 45 years ago.

The International Court of Justice and International Criminal Court, jointly, also got a nod. The ICC has faced criticism and controversy

“dismantle the threat ... posed by the International Criminal Court to U.S. sovereignty.” Later that month, the ICC’s chief prosecutor was removed from office over sexual misconduct allegations.

Gjerløw said the committee’s choice is complicated by recent turmoil after 2025 laureate María Corina Machado of Venezuela, in a symbolic gesture, presented her prize to Trump days after U.S. forces removed Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro from power.

This year’s peace prize comes in an era marked by the most war and conflict in decades, including in Sudan, Ukraine, Yemen, Iran and the Middle East.

Shawn Davies, a senior analyst at the Uppsala Conflict Data Program, which monitors conflicts, cited “increased international tensions and changes in the global security order” that he linked to an erosion of U.S. willingness to enforce international rules. Washington has gone from guarantor of the postwar order to a violator of it in some cases, he said.

“I don’t even think his own base would believe” Trump could win the prize now, “given how he’s stuck in what looks like a forever war in Iran,” Davies said.

Jody Williams, who won the 1997 Peace Prize jointly with the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, says she hopes for a continued trend toward awarding the prize to women. Only 20 of the prize’s 112 individual laureates have been women in its 125-year history.

In the past 15 years, eight women have won the prize individually, compared to just six men.

Among names of the women circulating in prediction markets this year are Gaza surgeon Sara al-Saqqah and Yulia Navalnaya, the Russian opposition figure and widow of Alexei Navalny.

Nobel week kicks off Monday with the announcement of the medicine prize, followed by the physics prize on Tuesday, chemistry on Wednesday and literature on Thursday. After Friday’s peace prize is awarded, the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences will be announced on Oct. 12.

Music

Tracks filled with joy

Lambert’s new album ‘Crisco’ blends country & disco vibes

NEW YORK, Oct 3, (AP): Dig out your roller skates. Pair them with a cowboy hat. Miranda Lambert has officially entered her disco chapter.

“Crisco,” the country star’s 11th studio album, is a collection of boogie-forward tracks, buoyed by sweeping strings and what sounds like a wink from the dance floor. It’s out Friday.

“I’ve spent a lot of my career with fiery songs and heartbreak songs and this record just has a lot of joy on it, and I think that’s just where I am right now in life, too,” Miranda says.

The title track is almost a mission statement: “Baby, we’ve been cookin’ with Crisco/Ain’t we mixin’ country and disco/Stir it around, give it a spin/And it’s a rhinestone world we’re livin’ in.”

“I’ve just never explored that before. I really am a Merle Haggard girl, you know what I mean? I just love three chords and the truth,” says Lambert. “I just felt like I, maybe at this point, earned the creative freedom to try something fun and try something different.”

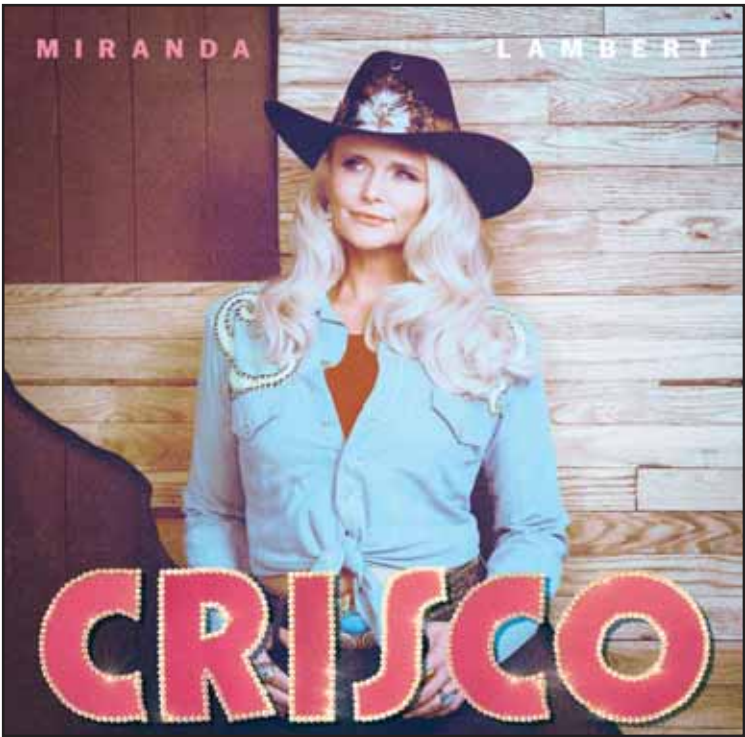
The album release caps a special few months that include getting seven Country Music Association Awards nominations, a disco ball-filled performance at the Academy of Country Music Awards that got attendees up and boogying, and making history as co-writer of the crossover-smash “Choosin’ Texas.”

That tune sung by Ella Langley has gone six times platinum, been crowned Billboard’s official 2026 Song of the Summer and helped her become the only woman to simultaneously hit No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100, Hot Country Songs and Country Airplay charts. It was just named the longest-running No. 1 hit in the U.S.

“We never would have thought just sitting there, on a back porch with a couple of beers and guitars, writing a country song, that it would take over like it has,” Lambert says.

“I’m thrilled that ‘Choosin’ Texas’ is a country song and the world is loving it. Like that makes me happy. I’ve dedicated my entire adult life to country music so that alone is like so much happiness for me.”

Lambert and Langley wrote



This album cover image released by MCA shows “Crisco” by Miranda Lambert. (AP)

“Choosin’ Texas” with Luke Dick and Joybeth Taylor. It’s a song exploring what it feels like when someone is falling out of love with you and Lambert can only guess why America has fallen so in love with it.

“It kind of feels like something fresh, but something you’ve also heard before. When you hear it, you’re like, ‘I kind of want to sing along to this, even though it’s the first time you heard it.’ You know what I mean?”

Lambert co-produced Langley’s album “Dandelion,” the first time she’s produced another artist, something she says she enjoyed. Langley returns the favor by being featured on the swaggering opening “Crisco” song “Snakeskin Boots.”

“I think the reason that we are drawn to each other is because I see a lot of my young self in her,” Lambert says of Langley. “She’s definitely a pistol. She’s fiery. She knows exactly what she wants. She’s a true artist and songwriter and she’s an inspiring person to be around.”

Lambert also has good news about another fellow country artist, squashing any lingering beef she had with Kacey Musgraves. The two collaborated on “Horses and Divorces” - “Maybe we’re more alike than we think,” they sing - on Musgraves’ new “Middle of Nowhere” album.

Miranda points to the “crazy grind of this business” for prompting ebbs and flows in their relationship and the stress during “early stages of your career, trying to really plant your feet in the ground, plant your stake in the ground, and say, ‘This is my spot.’”

“Sometimes it gets tricky when you’re navigating that with other female artists and it was really cool to just come together and talk about it and it’s, as we say, whiskey under the bridge now.”

“Crisco” came to life after she and Chris Stapleton wrote and recorded the lovely “A Song To Sing,” their version of “Islands in the Stream,” which earned two Grammy Award nominations.

Unearthing forgotten lives with technology

Smithsonian uses AI to connect artifacts

WASHINGTON, Oct 3, (AP): The distance in the march from the American Revolution to the age of artificial intelligence is almost beyond comprehension. But leaders of the Smithsonian Institution are using AI to bridge the divide.

As the United States celebrates its 250th anniversary of independence, Smithsonian leaders are turning to AI to better understand items in its collection tied to the fight that led to the country’s founding.

The goal is to allow the public and scholars to both search the institution’s collection and draw connections across the Smithsonian and other organizations, such as the Library of Congress, to gain a deeper sense of how communities formed and functioned at the nation’s birth.

Since researchers on the project, known as Revolution Crossroads, began applying AI models in the spring, they have quickly drawn links that would have previously required extensive manual searches across multiple catalogs. They located, for instance, a silversmith who was running newspaper advertisements for a creamer around 1774, similar to one held at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History.

The ultimate ambition is to scour records and surface new stories about people whose lives have faded away over the centuries.

“An ideal scenario is that we get to a place where we’re actually adding to the public record,” said Becky Kobberod, the chief digital and innovation officer at the Smithsonian. “Maybe they’re not Thomas Jefferson or George Washington, but they did live in a community and build that community, and that name is now known.”

Since its founding in 1846, the Smithsonian has curated the nation’s history and culture across an operation that now spans 21 museums and galleries, including the National Zoo. It’s a role that’s taken on new significance as Republican President Donald Trump has questioned some of the institution’s portrayals.

Kobberod’s team has identified about 10,000 objects centered on people who lived during the 40-year period from 1770 to 1810. They have had to digitize - and in some cases redigitize - the objects to make them more accessible to AI. The public can search the records online.

For Natalie Buda Smith, the director of digital strategy at the Library of Congress, the project is a reminder that these institutions are deeply engaged in rapidly evolving technology. This work, she said, can help



Smithsonian Institution’s Chief Digital and Innovation Officer Becky Kobberod, from left, and her team Sara Snyder, director of Digital Experience and Data Scientist Mike Trizna, gather in Trizna’s office Sept. 29, 2026, in Washington. (AP)



Smithsonian data scientist Mike Trizna, shows a copy on a computer screen of the first printed publication of the Declaration of Independence, Tuesday, Sept. 29, 2026, in Washington. (AP)

people researching materials who don’t know whether to begin at the Smithsonian, the Library of Congress or somewhere else.

The creamer example “illustrates that there’s a richness out there and you might find part of the story at the Smithsonian and part of the story at the library,” she said. “Open up those doors to people so they can understand, because they found it in the Smithsonian doesn’t mean it’s the end of the story.”

The work is unfolding at a sensitive time in the debate over how to properly harness AI. Some of the industry’s top leaders have issued increasingly dire warnings about the technology’s potential harm. Many were in Washington this week, where they met with Trump and signed a voluntary accord for reviews. Democrats and some Republicans are calling for a more robust response, including stronger regulation of AI.

Kobberod, the first person to hold her role at the Smithsonian, acknowledged a “healthy fear” of AI. She said the Smithsonian is not using any of the current frontier models that have received much of the scrutiny in recent weeks. She also emphasized the importance of human oversight in the research, noting that trained historians review the data and can recognize nuance that would be lost on an AI agent.

Still, she said it is important to embrace the possibilities that surround AI.

“It’s not going away,” she said. “We do believe we need to lean in and figure out the part that this technology plays in our work.”

Works by Van Gogh & Cézanne up for sale in Sotheby’s \$450 million auction

LONDON, Oct 3, (AP): A dozen Impressionist and post-Impressionist artworks collectively valued at almost half a billion dollars are going up for auction after sitting unseen for decades in a fabled private collection in South America.

Sotheby’s auction house said Wednesday that works by Vincent van Gogh and Paul Cézanne are expected to smash records for the artists in the Nov. 18 sale in New York. If so, it would be the latest sign that, in uncertain times, ultrawealthy art collectors are seeking security in masterpieces.

The paintings come from a collection amassed by the late Argentine art collector Nelly Arrieta de Blaquier and her sugar magnate husband, Carlos Pedro Blaquier, and are being sold by their children.

They include van Gogh’s landscape “Châtagniers en fleurs,” (Chestnut Trees in Flower) estimated at \$180 million, and Cézanne’s portrait “Arlequin,” which carries an estimate of \$120 million. Neither has been seen in public for half a century.

Helena Newman, Sotheby’s head of Impressionist and modern art, said the collection was like a “mini- Musée D’Orsay,” the Paris museum that holds one of the world’s greatest collections of Impressionist and post-Impressionist artworks.

“In my 30-plus years at Sotheby’s, I’ve never had the privilege of handling a collection of quite this content and caliber,” she said.

Newman said van Gogh’s painting of flowering chestnut trees captures the “explosion of energy and vitality” the artist felt after his release from a psychiatric asylum in May 1890. He took his own life two months later.



Claude Monet’s ‘Le Jardin des Tuileries’ is displayed during a preview of the Blaquier-Arrieta Collection, a group of twelve Impressionist and Modern works which have been largely unseen for half a century, at Sotheby’s in London. Wednesday Sept. 30, 2026. (AP)

The Cézanne portrait is one of four paintings of the artist’s son dressed as the Harlequin figure from clowning. The other three are in major museums.

Also in the collection are Parisian cityscapes by Claude Monet and Camille Pissarro, a horse-racing image by Edgar Degas and a boating scene by Pierre-Auguste Renoir, all valued in the tens of millions of dollars.

Art expert Philip Hook, a former Sotheby’s auctioneer, said the collection “really is the stuff of legend,”



Paul Cezanne’s ‘Harlequin’ is displayed during a preview of the Blaquier-Arrieta Collection, a group of twelve Impressionist and Modern works which have been largely unseen for half a century, at Sotheby’s in London. Wednesday Sept. 30, 2026. (AP)

because the collectors did not loan out the works for exhibitions.

“No one knew really what was in it. So now, for this to be revealed, is tremendously exciting,” Hook said.

“They came out with a collection that, rather cleverly, is focused on getting one representative work by each of the major names (of Impressionist and post-Impressionist art), and that is incredibly difficult to do,” he added.

“They succeeded with huge, huge style and success.”



Pierre-Auguste Renoir’s ‘En Canon (Jeune fille a la barque)’ is displayed during a preview of the Blaquier-Arrieta Collection, a group of twelve Impressionist and Modern works which have been largely unseen for half a century, at Sotheby’s in London. Wednesday Sept. 30, 2026. (AP)

Newman said sale is likely to attract global attention, with potential buyers ranging from American tech billionaires to well-endowed Middle Eastern institutions and rich collectors from North America, Europe, the Middle East and Asia.

“In times where there’s a lot of global macro geopolitical uncertainty, it’s almost like there’s a return to really established, tried and tested” works that are “unquestionably great,” Newman said.



A SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket carrying the company's Dragon spacecraft is launched on NASA's SpaceX Crew-13 mission to the International Space Station with NASA astronauts Jessica Watkins and Luke Delaney, CSA (Canadian Space Agency) astronaut Joshua Kutryk, and Roscosmos cosmonaut Sergey Tetyatyatnikov onboard, on Oct 1 from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in Florida. (AP)

Astronauts arrive at ISS on quickest US express flight yet

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla, Oct 3, (AP): Four astronauts pulled up at the International Space Station recently after launching on an eight-hour express that set a US speed record.

The fresh arrivals include a Canadian whose wife will give birth while he's away.

SpaceX launched commander Jessica Watkins and her crew for NASA after a three-week delay to fix their Dragon capsule's leaking fuel system. Thick clouds threatened all morning to halt the countdown but in the end, the skies cleared enough to allow for a safe liftoff.

Although their stay at the International Space Station will last a long six months, the flight there was the quickest yet not only for Elon Musk's company, but any American entity, including NASA. The space station's convenient location when the astronauts launched enabled the fast transit.

With the late morning liftoff from



Astronauts, (from left front), pilot Luke Delaney, commander Jessica Watkins and, back left, Joshua Kutryk, of Canada and Cosmonaut Sergey Tetyatyatnikov, of Russia leave the Operations and Checkout Building at the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Fla on Oct 1. (AP)

Cape Canaveral Space Force Station, Watkins became the first Black woman to lead a crew to orbit. A geologist who worked with NASA's Mars rover Curiosity a decade ago, Watkins is making her second trip to the space station following a lengthy stay in 2022.

"Thanks for an amazing ride," Watkins radioed following liftoff.

The others are newcomers to space: NASA's Luke Delaney, a retired Marine; Canada's Joshua Kutryk, a colonel in the Royal Canadian Air Force; and Russia's Sergey Tetyatyatnikov, a former submariner. They will replace four astronauts who have been living at the orbiting laboratory since February.

This was the 13th crew launched by SpaceX for NASA, not counting 2020's test flight. All four embrace their Crew-13 designation that pays homage in their mission patch to Apollo 13. The harrowing 1970 moonshot ended with the astronauts' safe return.

Uganda launches 5-day nationwide free measles vaccination campaign

Florida's dengue outbreak now largest in continental US in decades

NEW YORK, Oct 3, (Agencies): Florida's current dengue outbreak appears to be the largest in several decades in the continental United States.

State health officials reported this week that more than 250 locally acquired cases of the mosquito-borne disease have been tallied so far this year. The vast majority of them were in Hillsborough County, home to Tampa.

Federal health officials say their data on dengue outbreaks is limited. But available information from state health departments and medical journals suggests the Florida outbreak marks the most cases in a calendar year for any state since at least the 1940s.

Puerto Rico is consistently hit hard by dengue, with numbers much higher than what's seen in any of the 50 states. But in the continental US, Florida usually gets the most locally transmitted cases. The state's previous worst year was 2023, when just under 200 locally spread cases were reported.

Officials in Hillsborough and surrounding counties have declared local emergencies, and workers in the Tampa area are spraying day and night to tamp down the population of disease-transmitting mosquitoes.

Dengue (pronounced DEHN'-gay) is caused by a virus spread by a type of mosquito.

Many infected people don't get sick, but some experience fever, flu-like symptoms and - notoriously - aches. It's been nicknamed "break-

bone fever" for the excruciating pain some people experience. Severe cases can cause bleeding, shock and death.

There has been one dengue death in Florida this year - an elderly Tampa woman on Sept. 4.

There are four types of dengue virus, simply known as 1, 2, 3 and 4. When someone is first infected, their body builds antibodies against that type for life. If they get infected with another type of dengue, the antibodies from the first infection may fail to neutralize the second type - and actually can help the virus enter immune cells and replicate. That's made it difficult to develop an effective vaccine.

Most people in the Tampa area don't have prior immunity to any form of dengue, said Dawn Wesson, a Tulane University expert on dengue and other diseases spread by mosquitoes.

The warm-weather mosquitoes that spread dengue live in Florida and some other hotter U.S. locales, but experts say they have been expanding their geographic reach because of climate change.

For decades, most continental US infections were found among people who caught the virus while traveling internationally, along with locally acquired cases in Puerto Rico.

But in 2009-2010, Key West, Florida, reported the first dengue cases acquired in the continental U.S. outside of the Texas-Mexico border since 1945.

The largest outbreak of dengue in



This 2006 photo provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows a female Aedes aegypti mosquito in the process of acquiring a blood meal from a human host. (AP)

any US state since then occurred in Hawaii, where 264 locally acquired cases were reported over a six-month span in 2015-2016. The Tampa-area outbreak, which first came to light in July, is already on the verge of surpassing that.

Across the world, more than 2.2 million infections and nearly 1,200 deaths have been reported this year, according to the World Health Organization.

There have been nearly 1,900 locally acquired US cases this year, most of them in Puerto Rico, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Florida tends to get a lot of dengue

highly visible in a situation like this, but it hasn't been this time, Wesson noted.

The US public health agency has to be invited in by state officials, however, and Florida officials have not asked for CDC disease investigators to come in, CDC spokesman Jason McDonald said. The agency has provided \$800,000 in assistance to the state health department, he added.

The current outbreak is centered just north of Tampa, and workers have been spraying to kill mosquitoes. They also have been checking properties for pooled water, including in tires, where mosquitoes might breed.

People in an outbreak area can take their own steps for protection, experts say.

The virus-carrying mosquitoes can bite any time of day, so it's important for people in an outbreak area to apply EPA-registered insect repellents containing active ingredients like DEET, experts say.

Wear loose-fitting, long-sleeved shirts and long pants to cover the skin and make it harder for mosquitoes to bite. Staying indoors, behind screens or in rooms with air conditioning will also lessen the chances for a bite.

Those steps are especially important just after sunrise and around sunset, when mosquitoes tend to be most active, researchers say.

People should also check their property and get rid of any pooled water where mosquitoes might breed.

Climate conditions and persistent mosquito populations will likely make local dengue outbreaks a more frequent problem, Wesson said.

"There's a good chance that this is the new normal," she said.

□ □ □

Measles: Uganda launched a five-day nationwide free measles vaccination campaign targeting all children aged nine months to five years.

In a statement issued ahead of the campaign, Minister of Health Chris Baryomunsi said the exercise aims to reach all eligible children, regardless of whether they have previously received a measles vaccine.

"The objective of this campaign is to close the existing immunity gaps. Our longer-term priority is to strengthen routine immunization so that children receive their vaccines at the right time and sustain the level of population immunity required to prevent future outbreaks," Baryomunsi said.

Since January, measles outbreaks have been confirmed in 20 districts, resulting in 12 deaths.

In 2025, confirmed measles outbreaks were reported in 66 districts, with more than 10,163 cases and 60 deaths, according to the statement.

Investigations by technical teams found that the outbreaks were being driven by a combination of factors, including gaps in immunization coverage caused by children missing vaccinations altogether or receiving only one of the two recommended doses.

Ebola outbreak eases in some areas, death toll in DR Congo passes 4,000

KINSHASA, Oct. 3, (Agencies): Health authorities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) said Friday that the Ebola outbreak has eased in some areas with no new cases reported in more health zones for weeks despite that the total death toll has surpassed 4,000.

"We are no longer talking about outbreaks at the provincial level, but outbreaks concentrated in individual health zones," Health Minister Roger Kamba told a press briefing in Kinshasa.

Data released Friday showed that the outbreak has claimed 4,018 lives among 8,300 confirmed cases across seven provinces, with an overall case fatality rate of 48.4 percent. A total of 2,162 patients have recovered.

Of the 63 health zones affected across seven provinces since the outbreak began, 12 have reported no new cases for 42 days, Kamba said.

"The situation remains highly variable, but we can see that the number of health zones reporting cases has decreased," he said.

Despite signs of localized improvement in the DRC's Ebola outbreak situation, international medical charity Medecins Sans Frontieres warned Thursday that the actual toll was likely higher than officially reported due to gaps in disease surveillance and case detection.

The Ebola outbreak declared in May has become the largest and deadliest ever recorded in the DRC and the second largest Ebola outbreak worldwide, after the 2014-2016 one in West Africa.

Meanwhile, a senior U.N. official said an Ebola-hit displacement camp housing a transit center for infected patients was burned by soldiers earlier this week as they were looking for weapons in Kigonze, on the outskirts of Bunia, forcing 19,000 people in the camp to flee.

Creating such transit and treatment centers has been a struggle, requiring money and staff, all of which are in short supply, said Julien Harnais, the UN senior Ebola coordinator. "When we lose a center, that means we lose capacity, we lose investment, and we have to start again. And above all, it means that people do not get access to the care that they really need," Harnais said.

An aid worker with MSF was infected with Ebola while working in Congo, the group said in a statement.

The worker arrived in the Netherlands late Thursday on a special medical flight and was transferred to a high-level isolation unit, the Leiden University Medical Center said in a statement.

"The human cost of this crisis is unprecedented in the DRC, with communities facing the largest Ebola disease outbreak ever recorded in the country," MSF said.

At least 50 health workers have died after contracting the virus.

One way local authorities have tried to contain the outbreak is through mobile laboratories. In Butembo, an Associated Press journalist watched a medical team operating one such lab near an Ebola treatment center on Thursday.

Test results that used to take 72 hours can now be obtained in six hours with the mobile labs, said Lota Kalubi, a doctor at the treatment center.

The labs have also made it easier to get to locations usually difficult to reach, said Michel Ngimba with the National Institute of Biomedical Research in Butembo. "So we can go, if today we have an emergency, for example, in Katwa, we can start up the vehicle, and we can move the lab to Katwa," said Ngimba.

The World Health Organization

has recently raised the alarm about the virus' rapid spread into new health zones, stretching limited resources. The current outbreak is on track to exceed the deadliest on record, West Africa's regional outbreak between 2014 and 2016, which killed 11,000 people, WHO has said.

The number of newly confirmed cases is falling, but that could be attributed to insecurity and challenges in getting communities to cooperate in some of the hot spots, Africa CDC said on Thursday. While the spread of the disease has slowed in some areas, it has accelerated in others.

Confirmed cases fell from around 850 cases and 470 deaths a week in mid-July to an average of 490 cases and 230 deaths in September.

Mourners gathered recently to bury a Congolese politician who was beaten to death after publicly defending the government's response to Ebola, a killing that highlights the mistrust health workers say is hampering efforts to slow the fastest-growing Ebola outbreak in history.

Marie-Célestin Karondwa, a local official with Congo's ruling Union for Democracy and Social Progress party, was attacked Sunday at his home in Butembo, an Ebola hotspot in the eastern North Kivu province, after defending the government's response efforts during a radio program, the party said.



Health workers clean equipment inside a Ebola treatment camp in Butembo, Congo on Sept 30. (AP)



Permafrost melts on the coast in Newtok, Alaska on Aug 16, 2024. (AP)

Heat-trapping gas once frozen in Arctic ground slowly leaking, warming planet

FAIRBANKS, Alaska, Oct 3, (AP): As Ted Schuur stepped along the edges of Smith Lake, a bubble surfaced from the muck underfoot. And then another.

They're bubbles of methane, a potent heat-trapping gas made from decomposing plants and animals that had once been stuck in Alaska's frigid permafrost. But that frozen ground is thawing because the Arctic is warming four times faster than the rest of the globe. For thousands of years that frozen ground stored dead plants and animals, but the accelerating thaw is allowing them to decay into methane and carbon dioxide.

"Once you start leaking this carbon out, there's so much in the ground that it's not going to shut off," said Schuur, an ecologist at Northern Arizona University, calling it one of climate change's scary tipping points. "Essentially every year is setting a permafrost record."

There's three times as much carbon still frozen in permafrost than what's now in the air, but all over the Arctic those heat-trapping gases are escaping into the atmosphere. Their release adds to what's already in the

air from humanity's burning coal, oil and natural gas, changing the delicate balance of how a warming world deals with the buildup of heat-trapping carbon, Schuur said.

Permafrost is ground that stays frozen - below 32 degrees Fahrenheit (zero degrees Celsius) - for at least two years and often for centuries and even millennia. That frozen ground - found in Alaska, Canada, Siberia, Antarctica and high mountain elevations elsewhere - has special advantages, trapping decaying matter, keeping it from turning into greenhouse gases and just being firm enough for communities and industries to build their lives upon.

But warming is undercutting that.

Two different studies project that by the end of this century, those previously trapped gases in permafrost will add nearly half a degree of warming (about a quarter degree Celsius) in addition to warming from the burning of fossil fuels. Over that time period, that'll warm the Earth about as much as a major industrialized country like the United States or the whole of Europe, scientists said.

"The permafrost system is really like a sleeping giant," said Gustaf Hugelius, a permafrost expert at Stockholm University.

For thousands of years, when the climate was somewhat stable, the Arctic helped Earth's delicate carbon cycle by acting as a sink. That means plants in the cold areas used to pull some heat-trapping gas out of the air and capture it in the frozen ground, with the Arctic essentially withdrawing more carbon from the air than it added, benefiting the entire globe. A few years ago, warming caused that balance to shift so that once-frozen ground is venting more heat-trapping gases than it takes in. Instead of reducing climate change, the Arctic is now adding to the problem, said Columbia University ecologist Duncan Mene.

Permafrost thaw, along with other "warming-induced emissions" from fires and changes to wetlands and lakes, are likely to increase warming by 20% by the end of the century, according to a September study co-authored by Arctic ecologist Sue Natali of the Woodwell Climate Research Center.

Engineered for industry-leading off-road performance

ALSAYER unveils the all-new Toyota Hilux



Alsayer Group officially unveils the all-new Toyota Hilux 2027 in the presence of company executives.



Officials pose with the all-new Toyota Hilux.



Exterior of the all-new Toyota Hilux.



Interior view of the all-new Toyota Hilux with leather seats.



The back view.



The front view.



The Interior.

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 3: Mohamed Naser Al Sayer & Sons Est. Co. W.L.L and Toyota announced the launch of the all-new Hilux, introducing the ninth generation of a pickup that has earned the trust of customers around the world through its renowned Quality, Durability, and Reliability. Building on a heritage that began in 1968, the new Hilux evolves its legendary toughness with enhanced comfort, responsive handling, advanced safety technologies, and a bold new design, reinforcing its position as a trusted lifetime partner across every stage of a customer's life.

The public unveil held at the Grand Avenue at Avenues Mall was a remarkable event witnessed by hundreds of visitors, in the presence of top social media influencers in Kuwait and attended by Mr. Martin Aherne Senior Business Director Toyota Group Sales, Mr. Ian Tuttiett General Manager Toyota Retail, Mr. Hamad Al-Fouzan Deputy General Manager Product Planning and Sales Administration along with Senior Management team from ALSAYER.

The Hilux name combines the words "high" and "luxury," reflecting the ambition behind the original model to deliver a pickup of exceptional quality and capability. Across successive generations, the Hilux has developed a strong reputation among commercial, mixed-use, and private customers for its ability to perform reliably in demanding conditions while offering an optimum cost of ownership. Its proven "Can-go-anywhere" character has helped make it a dependable companion for customers across a broad range of professions, communities, lifestyles, and environments.

With the new generation, Toyota has remained true to what it describes as the Hilux's "Original Spirit": earning customers' trust through continuous improvement while preserving the identity and core qualities that have defined the vehicle for more than five decades. At the same time, the model introduces a "New Evolution" through greater sophistication, ease of use, and advanced features developed to meet the increasingly diverse expectations of modern pickup customers.

Commenting on the all-new Hilux, Satoki Oya, Chief Engineer, Toyota Motor Corporation, said: "Built on a legacy of trust, Hilux continues to evolve while staying true to its core DNA: Quality, Durability, and Reliability. Designed to meet the diverse needs of today's customers, it combines legendary toughness with greater comfort, convenience, and peace of mind for everyday life."

Oya added: "Developed to conquer the world's toughest environments, the latest Hilux enhances both on- and off-road drivability and daily usability without compromising the powerful performance it is known for. Engineers have also further advanced its safety technologies, delivering greater confidence behind the wheel. More than just a vehicle, Hilux is designed to support lifestyles, connect with communities, and accompany customers throughout their journeys. This commitment to continuously pushing boundaries and shaping the future is the driving force behind the latest Hilux."

Anyarat Sutthibenjakul, Regional Chief Engineer, Toyota Motor Asia, commented: "The Innovative International Multi-purpose Vehicle

(IMV) story proves that global success comes from respecting each region's tastes. This new Hilux represents years of listening, learning, and developing vehicles that truly serve real-world needs."

Both the diesel and petrol models continue to offer customers options aligned with the demanding commercial, mixed-use, private, and recreational applications for which the Hilux is widely trusted. The availability of both powertrains enables customers to select the solution most appropriate to their operating requirements, driving patterns, and local conditions.

The all-new Hilux delivers a more stable and composed ride across everyday urban journeys and off-road adventures. Enhanced body rigidity provides a stronger foundation for the vehicle, while refinements to the engine and cabin mounts help reduce unwanted movement and further improve ride comfort during both everyday urban journeys as well as off-road adventures.

Drivers also benefit from more responsive handling, confident control, and reduced steering effort through the adoption of Electric Power Steering. Working together with the strengthened body and refined mounts, the system contributes to improved straight-line stability and a smoother, more natural driving feel.

The exterior and interior have been developed under the "Tough and Agile" design concept, evolving the Hilux while preserving the rugged character that has defined the model across generations. The exterior combines this traditional toughness with a more agile and striking look, expressed through a powerful horizon-

tal stance, boldly sculpted surfaces, and dynamic proportions that reinforce its commanding road presence.

The distinctive new front design provides a modern interpretation of the Hilux's traditional rugged character. Its horizontal composition emphasizes width and stability, while boldly sculpted surfaces give the pickup an agile and more contemporary presence without losing the strength expected of a Hilux. Eighteen-inch alloy wheels further enhance the Hilux's confident appearance, complementing its strong proportions and updated exterior character. Customers can also choose from an expanded color range that includes two new finishes, Ash and Sulfur Metallic, offering additional opportunities to personalize the vehicle according to individual preferences and lifestyles.

For customers seeking a more adventurous and rugged expression, Toyota is also offering an Overland Package. The package provides a distinctive design option that broadens the choices available to customers who want their pickup to reflect a more active approach to leisure and exploration.

Inside, the all-new Hilux combines durability and everyday functionality with advanced technologies intended to improve convenience, visibility, and driver awareness. Also based on the "Tough and Agile" concept, the cabin has been significantly redesigned to combine advanced information displays and controls with an environment that remains intuitive to operate even in demanding conditions. The result enhances both comfort and usability while re-

taining the robust, functional character expected of the Hilux.

Key driving and multimedia information is presented clearly and within easy reach through a new 12.3-inch Display Audio system and 12.3-inch Multi-Information Display. The large central interface provides accessible multimedia functions, while the driver display communicates relevant vehicle and driving information within the natural field of vision, helping reduce unnecessary distraction.

Greater visibility in challenging conditions is supported by the Multi-Terrain Monitor, which provides additional views of the vehicle's surroundings to help the driver better understand the terrain around the Hilux. Everyday convenience is further enhanced by the Electric Parking Brake, simplifying operation during frequent stops and parking situations.

Greater driver confidence and peace of mind are supported by an upgraded Toyota Safety Sense (TSS), bringing enhanced safety and driver-assistance technologies to the all-new Hilux. The suite includes the Pre-Collision System (PCS) and Adaptive Cruise Control, helping support the driver across a broad range of everyday driving situations.

Additional technologies further enhance awareness around the vehicle. The Panoramic View Monitor provides a broader view of the vehicle's surroundings when maneuvering, while Blind Spot Monitor (BSM) supports awareness of vehicles in areas that may be difficult for the driver to see directly. Parking Support Brake (PKSB) provides additional support during low-speed parking maneuvers, further enhancing confi-

dence in confined spaces.

Simon Humphries, Chief Branding Officer, Toyota Motor Corporation, said: "Hilux has always been made by the people, for the people. It's a vehicle shaped by real voices, cultures, and communities, and one that truly represents Toyota's belief in Mobility for All."

This relationship with people and communities has remained at the center of the Hilux story since the model was first introduced. Through farms, construction sites, cities, highways, and family journeys, it has connected customers with work, opportunity, and each other. Its evolution has been shaped by the voices of those who rely on it, including professionals who need durability, families who value safety and comfort, and customers looking for design and technology suited to their lifestyles.

With every generation, the Hilux has evolved in response to changing customer expectations, yet its fundamental promise remains unchanged. It continues to be designed as a partner for life: tough enough to meet demanding professional requirements, comfortable enough for everyday journeys, and versatile enough to support leisure and adventure.

The launch of the all-new Hilux marks the next chapter in that enduring story. By building on its proven Quality, Durability, and Reliability with greater ride comfort, responsive handling, advanced technologies, enhanced safety, and an agile new design, Toyota has ensured that the Hilux remains a trusted lifetime partner, ready to support customers through work, family life, leisure, and every adventure

Highlights

- Enhanced ride comfort, responsive handling, and greater stability deliver a more confident driving experience on- and off-road
- While retaining its traditional rugged character, the exterior design evolves into a more agile and striking expression
- Based on the "Tough and Agile" concept, the significantly redesigned interior combines intuitive controls and advanced displays with enhanced comfort and usability
- Upgraded Toyota Safety Sense, including Pre-Collision System and Adaptive Cruise Control, together with Panoramic View Monitor and other advanced technologies, enhances driver confidence and peace of mind
- Multi-Terrain Monitor, 12.3-inch Multi-Information Display, and Electric Parking Brake further enhance visibility, information access, and everyday convenience
- New Overland Package offers a distinctive option for customers seeking a more adventurous and rugged appearance



Participants take photo of the all-new Toyota Hilux.



The media coverage was well represented during the unveiling.

1,600+ strong! Indian community makes Viksit Bharat Run a grand success in Kuwait



Indian Ambassador to Kuwait H.E. Paramita Tripathi addressing Indian community.



Participants patiently wait for proceedings to begin.

By John C. Fernandes
Online Media Manager, Arab Times

KUWAIT CITY: More than 1,600 people participated in the Viksit Bharat Run 2.0, organised by the Embassy of India in Kuwait at Boulevard Park, Salmiya, on Friday as part of SevaPakhwada 2026.

Indian Ambassador to Kuwait HE Mrs Paramita Tripathi flagged off the run, which brought together members of the Indian community and friends of India from different age groups and walks of life. The event promoted fitness, community participation and the vision of Viksit Bharat @2047.

The run also contributed to the wider Fit India Freedom Run 7.0, being held from October 2 to 31. Ambassador Tripathi encouraged participants to adopt an active lifestyle and make physical activity part of their daily routine, with the campaign encouraging at least 30 minutes of physical activity each day.

The event carried the message “Run for Fitness, Run for Unity, Run for Viksit Bharat!”, linking physical fitness and a healthy society with the broader objectives of Swachh Bharat and Viksit Bharat.

Cleanliness was also given prominence during the event. Following the run, participants took part in waste collection and cleanliness activities under the “Leave No Trace” principle, reflecting the



Participants wait for their turn.



Kids among participants at the event.

spirit of Swachhata Hi Seva 2026. Addressing participants, Ambassador Tripathi said the event was particularly significant as SevaPakhwada, the fortnight of service, culminated on October 2, the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

Referring to Gandhi’s emphasis on cleanliness, she urged participants to ensure that no waste was left behind at the venue.

“If you can run, run. If you cannot run, walk. Get your steps in, enjoy the morning, and most importantly, have fun and enjoy the outdoors,” she said.

The Ambassador also called on participants to celebrate Seva, Swachhata and Fitness together in



Race jerseys distributed ahead of the event.

the spirit of Gandhi and as part of efforts to promote a healthy, ac-



Cleanliness also given prominence during the event.

all participants and supporters for their enthusiastic participation in the successful organisation of the Viksit Bharat Run 2026.

Al-Shuraieh set to become Kuwait Handball Federation president

By Khaled Al-Enezi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 3: The Kuwait Handball Federation’s Ordinary General Assembly will convene at 7 pm today at its headquarters in Daiya to hold supplementary elections for the federation’s board of directors.

The elections are being held to fill the vacant positions of president and assistant secretary-general following the resignation of former president Engineer Fouad Al-Bloushi



Ahmed Al-Shuraieh and assistant secretary-general Abdullah Al-Dhayab.

Former Al-Qurain Club president Engineer Ahmed Al-Shuraieh is the sole candidate for the presidency and is expected to be elected by acclamation.

The assistant secretary-general position will see a contest between Shabab Club representative Falah Menahi Al-Azmi and Kazma representative Mohammed Al-Khamis.

The General Assembly will begin after the required quorum is reached, with members expected to review the election

procedures, vote on the candidates, and then announce and approve the results.

The supplementary elections come as Kuwaiti handball prepares for a busy period, including the start of the new domestic season and upcoming international commitments.

Completing the federation’s board is expected to provide a fuller administrative structure to oversee the development of the sport, national teams and domestic competitions in the coming period.

Officials invited to attend event in Kuwait

Kuwait congratulates new IIHF president

MADRID, Oct 3: Kuwait has congratulated Franz Reindl on his election as president of the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) for a four-year term at the conclusion of the federation’s 2026 Annual Congress in Spain.

Mishal Al-Ajmi, head of Kuwait’s delegation and Development Director at the Kuwait Winter Sports Club, congratulated Reindl and wished him success in leading global ice hockey and further developing the sport’s international presence.

Al-Ajmi also invited Reindl and other leading international hockey officials to attend the IIHF World Championship Division IV, which Kuwait will host next March, to witness the progress made by ice hockey in Kuwait.

Kuwait’s delegation to the congress also included Winter Sports Club Development Board member Rashid Al-



Franz Reindl and Mishal Al-Ajmi

Failakawi. The congress discussed strategies for developing the sport, regulations and the organization of upcoming men’s and women’s world championships across various divisions and categories.

30 administrators complete Level One volleyball course



Dr. Ahmed Al-Anizan delivers a lecture.

By Khaled Al-Enezi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY Oct 3: The Kuwait Volleyball Association has concluded its Level One Sports Administrator course, with 30 administrators from clubs participating in the association’s activities completing the program.

Held from September 27 to October 1, the course combined theoretical sessions with practical training under the supervision of international referee Ahmed Al-Anizan and Dr. Mohammed Salah.

The program covered key aspects of sports administration and was designed to strengthen participants’ administrative skills and improve their ability to manage the various responsibilities associated with club teams.

The course forms part of the association’s efforts to develop and qualify administrative cadres in line with the growing demands of sports management.

Participants took part in lectures, discussions and practical exercises covering a range of topics related to sports administration.

All 30 participants successfully completed the required assessments at the end of the course and received accredited certificates from Kuwait Volleyball Association Secretary-General Talal Al-Nimash.

‘An incredible result’

Max takes first pole of year at Bahrain GP in Malaysia

SEPANG, Malaysia, Oct 3, (AP): Max Verstappen qualified on pole position for the first time this year at the Bahrain Grand Prix in Malaysia on a rare off day for Mercedes and Formula 1 standings leader Kimi Antonelli.

Verstappen went fastest by 0.298 of a second from Ferrari’s Lewis Hamilton, with Verstappen’s Red Bull teammate Isack Hadjar .130 further back in third.

That’s a big step toward Verstappen achieving his target of avoiding a first winless season since his 2015 rookie year.

It was an “incredible result for us looking at the season,” Verstappen said. “I felt good, felt confident and I hope we can show that again tomorrow.”

Verstappen won the last time F1 raced at the Sepang circuit back in 2017. His pole position is the first this year for a car powered by a non-Mercedes engine after Mercedes, McLaren and Alpine - all with



Red Bull driver Max Verstappen of the Netherlands steers his car in the pitlane after getting the pole position for the Bahrain Grand Prix in Sepang, Malaysia. (AP)

Mercedes power - topped every qualifying session until now.

Antonelli qualified only fourth, with his Mercedes teammate and closest title challenger George Russell only eighth. Both are set to move up a place on the grid for Sunday’s race because Hadjar has a five-place grid penalty for changing his engine over the allocation for the season.

Hamilton’s second place came as a relief to the seven-time champion amid a slump in results at Ferrari, which has denied speculation over team principal Fred Vasseur’s future.

“Let’s go guys, let’s go. Finally,” Hamilton said over the radio.

Qualifying so low is another blow to Russell’s chances of cutting into Antonelli’s 66-point lead, and tire troubles played a role. The Sepang circuit has an abrasive surface that chews up tires and causes them to overheat. That made it even more challenging than usual to pick the right setup to get the best out of the car in qualifying without compromising pace for Sunday’s race.

“It’s a very demanding circuit on the tires, the tarmac is all broke up, it’s extremely rough, it’s so hot out there and the tires are going through hell,” Russell told broadcaster Sky Sports. “For whatever reason, it seems to be affecting us far more than others.”

Once again, the weather in Malaysia stayed dry for Saturday’s sessions despite predictions of heavy rain earlier in the week.

F1 is racing at Malaysia’s Sepang circuit for the first time since 2017. It’s a replacement event after the races in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia were called off earlier this year due to the Iran war. The race keeps Bahrain Grand Prix branding and Bahraini staff are organizing it on site.

ARAB TIMES

Kuwait's No.1 English Newspaper

For Subscriptions and Complaints

Please Call

51508991

51526559

NEWS



Golden State Valkyries guard-forward Kaila Charles (6) reaches for the ball against Dallas Wings guard Odyssey Sims (1) during the second half of Game 3 of a WNBA basketball first-round playoff series, Friday, Oct. 2, 2026, in San Francisco. Gabby Williams scored 19 as Valkyries rally from 16 down to beat Wings 77-73, reach WNBA semifinals. (AP)

Sports

KFA releases schedule for rounds 4 to 8

Qadsia, Salmiya step up preparations for league return

By Hassan Mosa
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 3: Qadsia and Salmiya will meet in a friendly at 6:15 pm Sunday at Thamer Stadium as both sides prepare for the Zain Premier League.

Qadsia faces Tadamon on Saturday in the fourth round, while Salmiya takes on Shabab on the same day.

Qadsia is third on six points, one behind joint leaders Kuwait Club and Kazma. Salmiya is fifth, also with six points.

The Yellow team warmed up for its upcoming AFC Challenge League campaign with a 3-2 victory over English club Salisbury at Mohammed Al-Hamad Stadium last week.

Qadsia will host Group C of the AFC Challenge League from October 17 to 23, with India's Goa, Bangladesh's Fortis and Tajikistan's Regar-TadAZ completing the group.



Bader Mutawa dribbles the ball as an opponent defends.

Al-Arabi returned after a 10-day training camp in the UAE, where it played several friendlies.

The team will resume its league campaign against Kazma at Thamer Stadium next Friday before travel-

ling to Tajikistan for the AFC Challenge League group stage.

The group also features Al-Najma of Lebanon, Syria's Homs Al-Fida and host Istiklol of Tajikistan, with

the matches scheduled to begin on October 17.

Meanwhile, Kazma defeated Al-Jazeera 5-1 in a friendly as the Orange prepares for its meeting with Al-Arabi. Al-Jazeera used the game to prepare for the start of the Zain First Division League next Thursday.

Al-Sahel also returned after completing a training camp in Cairo, where it played three friendlies.

Seventh-placed Al-Sahel, who has four points, will face Al-Fahaheel next Sunday in the fifth round.

The Kuwait Football Association has meanwhile released the schedule for rounds four through eight. The league will then take a break from November 8 to 18 for the FIFA international window.

The fifth-round matches between Qadsia and Al-Sahel and between Al-Arabi and Salmiya will be postponed because Qadsia and Al-Arabi will be involved in the AFC Challenge League.

24th Arab Volleyball Championship draw set, Kuwait heads to Amman



Kuwait players gear up for the championship.

By Khaled Al-Enezi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 3: The draw for the 24th Arab Men's Volleyball Championship will take place today in Amman as the participating teams step up preparations for the tournament, which runs from October 4 to 14 at the Arena Hall in Al Hussein Youth City.

The championship will be played in a single round-robin format. Kuwait, Jordan, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Oman and Algeria are among the teams confirmed to participate, while reports have emerged that Egypt, Tunisia and Palestine have withdrawn. The final list is expected to be confirmed by the organizers ahead of the technical meeting.

Kuwait's national team will be aiming for a strong campaign after completing a productive training camp in Cairo.

The Blues left Cairo for Amman after playing five friendly matches during the camp as part of their preparations for the Arab championship.

Argentine coach Julian Alvarez and national assistant Zaid Al-Kadhmi used the camp to raise the players' fitness levels and work on their tactical and technical preparations. They also focused on developing understanding between the experienced players and younger members of the squad.

Kuwait will be looking to build on that preparation and make the most of the strong Arab competition in Amman.

No handshakes yet again as India edges Pakistan to win cricket gold



Gold medalists, Indian team members pose on the podium after the medal ceremony for cricket at the Asian Games in Nagoya, Japan. (AP)

South Korean golfer Tom Kim receives a military exemption with title

NAGOYA, Japan, Oct 3, (AP): Defending champion India continued its T20 dominance over archrival Pakistan with a 19-run victory to win the gold medal at the Asian Games men's cricket event with players again avoiding customary handshakes Saturday.

Half-centuries from Abhishek Sharma (61) and Tilak Varma (51 not out) propelled India to its highest-ever total of 211-6 against its traditional rival in the T20 format.

Pakistan's batting cracked against disciplined Indian bowling and got restricted to 192-6.

Hasan Nawaz, who was dropped early in his innings, showed plenty of flare with a knock of 96 off 51 balls before getting caught behind of the final ball as India retained its gold.

It was India's seventh straight win over Pakistan in T20s and fifth consecutive men's game between the two bitter rivals where players didn't shake hands - both before and after the game.

Left-handed Sharma struck a 20-ball half-century despite 15-year-old Vaibhav Sooryavanshi getting out for 15 as Saim Ayub mocked the youngster with a "baby in the cradle" gesture after the dismissal.

Sooryavanshi tried to reverse sweep Ayub but was caught by wicketkeeper Usman Khan, who bobbled twice before completing the catch.

Pakistan, which went with five specialized bowlers plus Ayub's offspin, surprisingly went with the option of part-timer Saad Masood in the second

over that allowed Sharma to break free by smacking three sixes and a boundary in the 24-run over.

Pakistan was untidy in the field too with Sharma getting dropped twice and he should have been run-out before completing his half-century, while captain Shreyas Iyer also got a life when Ayub missed out his second catch.

Sharma, who hit seven sixes and three fours, was stumped after a 28-ball knock. Pakistan came back strongly in the middle overs through spinner Arafat Minhas (2-25) and Abrar Ahmed (1-29).

But Varma and Shivam Dube (27) upped the ante in the final three overs by smacking 57 runs against Sufyan Moqim, Ayub and Ahmed Daniyal. Varma holed out in the outfield in Ahmed's final over, but Varma motored to his 21-ball half-century by clubbing 15 runs of the fast bowler's final four balls.

Pakistan fell behind in the powerplay against Jasprit Bumrah's yorkers. And when Maaz Sadaqat was brilliantly caught by a juggling Washington Sundar at deep fine leg, it slipped to 39-3 in the seventh over.

But Nawaz kept Pakistan in the hunt with his fluent strikes that featured seven sixes and five fours as spinners Axar Patel (2-29) and Sundar (2-29) shared four wickets and Dube grabbed 2-33 that included the wicket of Nawaz of the final ball.

ICC chairman Jay Shah was in attendance for Saturday's final as Iyer didn't shake hands with Pakistan skipper Sahibzada Farhan at the toss. The teams also didn't shake hands after the game.

In other Asian Games events like hockey, players from both countries did embrace each other and shook hands with each other after India beat Paki-

stan in the semifinal.

South Korean golfer Tom Kim got what he came for by winning the men's singles on Saturday at the Asian Games: a gold medal and an exemption from military service back home.

He shot a 6-under 64 in Saturday's final round for a four-day total of 18-under 262. Three golfers were three back and faced a playoff with Kazuki Higa of Japan taking silver and Thailand's Sadom Kaewkanjana earning bronze.

Tom Kim made a special effort to win in Japan, flying across the Pacific when the Presidents Cup competition ended last weekend.

Asked about the exemption, he took the gold-medal approach.

Most able-bodied men in South Korea must serve about 18 months in uniform, but a medal of any color at the Olympics - or gold in the Asian Games - provides an out.

However, South Korea failed to win the team competition. That means that S.H. Kim, who played on the team with Tom Kim, did not get the exemption. He closed with a 73 and the third team member, 35-year-old Mun Do-yeob, shot 70. Mun had already served and did not need the exemption.

Kim Joo-hyung goes by Tom Kim when he plays on the PGA Tour, and Kim Seong-hyeon goes by S.H. Kim when he plays abroad.

China won the team event with silver for South Korea and bronze for Japan.

The military exemption in South Korea also applies to classical and traditional musicians, dancers and other artists who are viewed as enhancing national pride.

Al-Houti to receive Gulf 27 honor as Yacoub praises KFA

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 3: Former Kuwait star Jassem Yacoub has thanked the Kuwait Football Association for selecting former national team captain Saad Al-Houti to receive an honor on the sidelines of Gulf 27 in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

Yacoub, famously known as "The Scary One," praised the decision, saying Al-Houti deserved the recognition for his dedication, loyalty, and

achievements alongside his teammates, sportsmanship, and respectful treatment of others.

He also wished the Kuwait national team players success in their upcoming tournaments.

Al-Houti was captain of the Kuwait side that won the 1980 AFC Asian Cup and also led the national team at the 1982 FIFA World Cup in Spain.



Saad Al-Houti and Jassem Yacoub

Johannesburg to host 2027 Cricket WC final and India-Pakistan clash

DUBAI, Oct 3, (AP): Johannesburg will host the final of next year's Cricket World Cup as well as a marquee game between archrivals Pakistan and India.

The International Cricket Council on Thursday announced the schedule of the 2027 edition of the tournament. A total of 12 venues will host matches across three countries: South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe.

The India-Pakistan match is scheduled for Oct. 10 in Johannesburg, which also will host the Nov. 21 final.

The 12 nations are split into two groups with defending champion Australia, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Zimbabwe and a qualifier in Group A. New Zealand, South Africa, Sri Lanka, England, Bangladesh

and another qualifier are placed in Group B.

The two qualifiers will be confirmed after a 10-team tournament early next year. The winner will advance to the group stage of the mega event. The losing finalist and the two losing semifinalists will play the Super Series at Namibia ahead of the World Cup with the winner advancing as the second qualifier.

The group stage of the tournament begins at Cape Town on Oct. 7 when Australia takes on India in a repeat of 2023 World Cup final. Newlands in Capetown, which has an iconic mountain backdrop, will also host a semifinal on Nov. 17. The second semifinal on Nov. 18 will be played at Centurion's SuperSport Park.

France held by Italy in Zidane's home debut; Lewandowski and De Bruyne shine in NL

PARIS, Oct 3, (AP): Veteran stars took center stage in the Nations League on Friday with Robert Lewandowski and Kevin de Bruyne leading Poland and Belgium to victories thanks to multi-goal performances.

Italy also kept Zinedine Zidane from winning in his home debut as France coach, while Edin Dzeko made his last international appearance.

De Bruyne showed he can still dominate a match at age 35 when he scored Belgium's first two goals in a 3-0 win over Turkey in League A.

De Bruyne opened the scoring 10 minutes into the game in Liege when he played a one-two with Dodi

Lukébakio and struck from near the edge of the area.

The Napoli playmaker curled home another goal with half an hour to play. Substitute Romelu Lukaku sealed the win over the Turks. Lukébakio hit the post twice.

When Zidane's name was read out by the stadium announcer after the teams were announced, a roar filled Stade de France.

Things looked good for the home side when Michael Olise put France ahead in the 55th minute with a curling shot from 20 meters which went in off the crossbar.

But poor defending midway through the second half allowed Italy central defender Alessandro Bastoni to run

through and clip a low shot inside the right post to secure a 1-1 draw.

France leads Group 1 with seven points, followed by Belgium with six, Italy with four and Turkey with zero.

Lewandowski scored a hat trick to lead a 6-0 demolition of 10-man Romania in League B.

The 38-year-old Chicago Fire striker earned and converted a 24-minute penalty when Romania defender Radu Dragusin was sent off for fouling him in the box.

Lewandowski made it 2-0 in the 47th from a pass by Nicola Zalewski and then rounded off the lopsided victory late with his third goal.

Edin Dzeko finished his nearly 20-year-international career for Bosnia-Herzegovina in a 1-1 draw with Sweden also in League B.

Dzeko, 40, debuted for his nation in June 2007. He finished with 152 appearances and 73 goals, making him the record holder in both categories for the tiny Balkan nation after helping it reach two World Cups.

Dzeko was given an honor guard when he was subbed off in the 63rd, shortly after Viktor Gyokeres scored for Sweden. Kerim Alajbegović equalized in the 80th for the hosts.

Also in League B, Northern Ireland beat Ukraine 3-0 in Slovakia with Ciaron Brown scoring twice.