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Seven oil tankers take hit in Strait of Hormuz

Kuwait furious over blatant Houthi attack on Saudi airport; two killed, many hurt

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 22, (Agencies): Kuwait on Thursday strongly condemned and denounced the blatant attack carried out by the Houthi militia on King Fahd International Airport in the Saudi city of Dammam, which killed two people and injured several others.

In a press statement, the Foreign Ministry termed the attack as a flagrant violation of the Kingdom's sovereignty and a clear breach of international law and international humanitarian law.

It underlined that the continued targeting of civilian airports and vital facilities constitutes a serious escalation and a direct threat to the lives of civilians and the safety of air navigation, which necessitates a firm international stance to halt these attacks and bring those responsible to accountability.

It reiterated Kuwait's total solidarity with Saudi Arabia and its full support for all measures the Kingdom is taking to protect its security and stability and to safeguard its sovereignty.

The ministry reaffirmed that the Kingdom's security is an integral part of the security of Kuwait and other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

It further also extended its sincere condolences and deepest sympathies to the Saudi government and people, as well as to the families of the victims, while wishing those injured a speedy recovery.

The death toll from a Wednesday attack on King Fahd International Airport in Dammam, eastern Saudi Arabia, has risen to two, the Saudi General Authority of Civil Aviation said on Thursday. The two fatalities were a Saudi citizen and an Indian resident, the authority said in a statement on social media X.

Eight others sustained injuries and are receiving medical treatment at several hospitals, it said.

Airport operations have resumed to normal, as the authority is coordinating with security authorities to assess the damage and take necessary measures to ensure the safety of passengers and the airport staff.

King Fahd International Airport was targeted amid a recent escalation in missile and drone attacks by Yemen's Houthi group across Saudi Arabia, including strikes on civilian infrastructure.

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FILES OF 10,000 COMPANIES SUSPENDED FOR WITHHOLDING EMPLOYEES PAY

1st Deputy PM: Pay workers' salaries

Residence transfer of Article 20 to Article 18 under study



First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef stressed the importance of companies fulfilling their obligations by paying employees' salaries and financial dues.



Photos by Rizk Taufiq

By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 22: First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef stressed the importance of companies fulfilling their obligations by paying employees' salaries and financial dues.

He said monitoring the wage payment system aims to protect workers, strengthen compliance in the labor market, and put an end to practices that harm employees and damage Kuwait's reputation.

The First Deputy Prime Minister said this during the second meeting between him and company owners, held under the title "The Wage Payment System: Protecting the Workforce and Ensuring a

More Compliant Market."

The meeting reviewed the system's performance indicators and assessed the extent to which companies comply with salary payment requirements.

Sheikh Fahad revealed that some company owners recruit workers but fail to pay their salaries, while some residents receive payments in exchange for being registered with companies for which they do not actually work.

He warned that such practices could be linked to money laundering offenses and negatively affect Kuwait's international standing.

The First Deputy Prime Minister said audits had identified 10,000 companies, each employing five or more workers, where some employees had gone four months without receiving their salaries. In other cases, salary delays had extended to a year and a half.

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Al-Jarallah: Some companies face hurdles, study vital before action

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 22: Dean of Kuwait Journalism and Editor-in-Chief of the Arab Times and Al-Seyassah newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah commended First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef for quickly responding to public grievances and requests, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Speaking at a forum titled, "The Wage Payment System: Protecting the Workforce and Ensuring a More Compliant Market," Al-Jarallah acknowledged that explicit infractions were found among some of the nearly 10,000 firms impacted by recent enforcement actions. He advocated for a compassionate approach in relations between employers and employees, provided it operates strictly within legal boundaries to safeguard the rights of all parties involved. He emphasized that numerous businesses face exceptional hurdles that merit careful case-by-case evaluation prior to imposing penalties. He said various enterprises contend with severe liquidity constraints, bank liabilities, and operational obstacles that impair their capacity to disburse wages on time. Accordingly, he called for classifying companies according to their operational realities and exercising leniency toward business owners facing legitimate financial distress.

He talked about labor subsidies, indicating that several businesses were surprised when funding for their staff was suspended following non-payment of salaries.



Photo by Rizk Taufiq
Editor-in-Chief of the Arab Times and Al-Seyassah newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah airs his views at the forum.

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KUNA photo
Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah is seen off at the Kuwait Airport.

Defense Minister leaves for US

Kuwaiti Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah and his accompanying delegation left for the U.S. capital of Washington on an official visit on Thursday, according to a Defense Ministry statement. (KUNA)



Kuwait Finance House
reinforces leadership
9 in national talent
acquisition with
participation in
'Watheefi 2026'



Samarkand summit
13 charts new path
for children's
well-being

Tackling impunity joint effort
'Justice systems must converge'

NEW YORK, Oct 22, (KUNA): Kuwait has stressed the importance of enhancing integration between international justice mechanisms and national judicial systems, noting that combating impunity is a shared responsibility that requires effective international cooperation, with full respect for the sovereignty of states and their judicial jurisdictions.

This came in Kuwait's speech delivered by Diplomatic Attaché Mansour Abohaimeid before the United Nations General Assembly early Thursday during the discussion of agenda item 130 on the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals.

Abohaimeid highlighted Kuwait's full support for the independence of the International Residual Mechanism, commending its efforts to cooperate with Member States and regional organizations in a way that enhances its efficiency, facilitates its judicial and administrative work, and strengthens the capacities of national judicial bodies.

He stressed that justice is essential to achieving sustainable peace

and that combating impunity helps ensure that atrocities and grave violations are not repeated, while reinforcing the rule of law and safeguarding international peace and security.

He lauded the Mechanisms efforts in fulfilling its mandate, stressing the importance of completing its remaining tasks efficiently and effectively, including overseeing the enforcement of sentences, protecting witnesses and victims, preserving judicial archives and making them accessible in accordance with established rules, and strengthening cooperation with the relevant national authorities.

Abohaimeid recalled the victims of grave crimes committed in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, noting that the establishment of the two tribunals under UN Security Council Resolutions 827 of 1993 and 955 of 1994 marked an important milestone in consolidating the principle of individual criminal responsibility.

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Ban on local agents in gov't contracts step in right way

By Najeh Bilal
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 22: Economic expert and former president of the Kuwaiti Contractors Union, Dr. Salah Boursli, said the government's new structural reforms aim to create new opportunities for the national economy.

He praised the reforms for removing bureaucratic obstacles that have hindered private sector growth and the inflow of investment, stressing that these measures would eliminate unjustified commissions previously paid by foreign investors and reduce the burden on the public treasury.

In a statement to the daily, Dr. Boursli commended the amendments to the Public Tenders and Procurement Law, enacted under Decree-Law No. 94/2026, describing them as a significant legislative breakthrough that would directly contribute to improving the overall economic environment.

Dr. Boursli also praised the new legislation for explicitly prohibiting the use of local agents in government contracting procedures, as the measure would allow international and multinational companies to participate directly in government tenders and submit their technical and financial bids without the need for local intermediaries.

He explained that this would eliminate unjustified commissions previously paid by foreign investors. Removing these commissions and brokerage requirements would also reduce the overall cost of projects and tenders, helping curb financial waste and protect public funds.

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PAM launches e-system to disburse pay on time

By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 22: As part of government efforts to monitor and address delayed salary payments, the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) launched an electronic linkage mechanism with the Central Bank of Kuwait's Wage Protection System (WPS).

Under this new framework, companies must transfer monthly salaries for at least 90 percent of their total registered workforce, in addition to ensuring the payment of salaries for all registered workers for the most recent month.

The authority stated that non-compliance with either requirement will restrict various services provided to the company. These restrictions include issuing work permits and authorizations (excluding renewals), registering government contracts, assessing labor requirements, issuing certificates for official approvals and tenders, and registering company-owned vehicles.

Regarding the electronic linkage mechanism, PAM explained that the process begins with the employer submitting their salary file to their bank.

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Memorial honors sacrifices of coalition, embodies gratitude

WASHINGTON, Oct 22, (KUNA): Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to the United States Sheikha Al-Zain Al-Sabah affirmed that the National Desert Shield and Desert Storm Memorial, to be unveiled Saturday in Washington, D.C., stands as a permanent tribute to the profound sacrifices made by American and international coalition forces, embodying the eternal gratitude of the Kuwaiti people.

In an opinion piece published Wednesday by Newsweek ahead of the October 24 dedication ceremony, Ambassador Sheikha Al-Zain emphasized that the monument preserves a defining chapter in international solidarity, ensuring that the courage of the troops who liberated Kuwait from the 1990 Iraqi invasion will never be forgotten.

Recalling her personal experience as a 15-year-old when the invasion began on August 2, 1990, Sheikha Al-Zain reflected on how the crisis threatened Kuwaiti identity, only for national resolve and international support to turn adversity into strength.

She paid tribute to the US leadership under former President George H.W. Bush and the military personnel from over 30 nations who crossed oceans to stand shoulder to shoulder with Kuwaiti armed forces in defense of freedom, sovereignty, and international law.



Al-Sabah

Continued on Page 5



KUNA photo
Kuwaiti Minister of Education Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei meets Ambassador of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to Kuwait Qudsi Rasheed.

Kuwait, UK discuss ways to boost ties in education field

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 22, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Minister of Education Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei met on Thursday with Ambassador of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to Kuwait Qudsi Rasheed to discuss ways to promote bilateral cooperation.

During the meeting, they underscored the significance of continued

coordination and communication between the two sides, reflecting the depth of their distinguished bilateral relations and their shared commitment to promoting ties across various sectors, mainly education, the Ministry of Education said in a press release.

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Fajr	04:35	Asr	14:45
Sunrise ..	05:54	Maghrib ..	17:10
Zohr	11:32	Isha	18:30

Kuwait PM patronizes, attends KFAS golden anniversary

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 22, (KUNA): Under the patronage and in the presence of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) hosted a dinner party at Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Cultural Centre on Thursday.

The event marked the KFAS' 50th-anniversary celebrations, honoring the foundation's long-standing commitment to promoting science, research, and innovation, bolstering national capabilities, spreading knowledge, and contributing to Kuwaiti development.

In a press statement issued on Thursday, the KFAS said that His Highness the Prime Minister's patronage of the event and his meeting with staff reflect his unwavering support for the Foundation and its



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah with KFAS officials.

scientific mission, as well as his appreciation for its personnel's efforts and contributions.

It added that His Highness the Prime Minister's visit strengthens communication with its staff, encour-

ages them to keep working hard and develop fruitful programs and initiatives that serve Kuwaiti society.

Mol enables passport loss reports via Sahel

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 22: The Ministry of Interior introduced a new electronic service through the unified government e-services application, 'Sahel', enabling residents to report lost passports and then obtain the loss passport certificate online, reports Al-Seyasah daily.

In a press statement, the ministry explained that this service allows residents to report a lost passport by clicking the 'security services' section of the application, which eases the submission of the report to the concerned authorities.

Kuwait Justice Min. stresses cooperation to uphold rights

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 22, (KUNA): Justice Minister Counselor Nasser Al-Sumait stressed the importance of enhancing cooperation with the Supreme Judicial Council to uphold justice and expedite the delivery of rights.

A statement by the Ministry of Justice on Thursday said Al-Sumait made the remarks during a visit to the Palace of Justice, where he met Supreme Judicial Council President and Court of Cassation President First Counselor Hani Al-Hamdan, Council Vice President and Court of Cassation Vice President, First Counselor Dherar Al-Wugayyan, and Court of Appeals President and Council member First

Counselor Tariq Al-Jaber.

Al-Sumait expressed confidence in the Council's role in serving the judiciary and litigants and implementing His Highness the Amir's directives to uphold justice and protect rights and freedoms.

He stressed that cooperation should facilitate procedures and expedite case rulings, underscoring their shared responsibility to serve the public and protect rights.

Al-Sumait was accompanied by Ministry of Justice Undersecretary Awatif Al-Sanad and Acting Assistant Undersecretary for Technical and Administrative Affairs Nouf Al-Qabandi.



Justice Minister Nasser Al-Sumait visits Supreme Council of the Judiciary.

Kuwait Teachers Association proposes 15 education reforms

Conference calls for AI regulation

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 22: The Kuwait Teachers Association presented 15 recommendations after its 46th Educational Conference, held on Oct 4-6, with the theme, "Innovative Visions for a Sustainable Educational Future in Kuwait."

This conference was held under the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, with the participation of academics, experts and educational leaders in Kuwait, other Gulf states and the Arab region.

President of the association Hamad Al-Houli revealed that the conference gathered professionals from the educational sector, along with academic leaders and experts, to promote dialogue and share experiences. He as-

serted that developing education is a shared responsibility, while affirming the crucial role that teachers play in shaping the future of the educational system.

He expressed the pride of the association in receiving such high-level patronage, while recognizing the attendance of Education Minister Eng. Sayed Jalal Sayed Abdulmohsen Al-Tabtabaei who represented the sponsor of the conference, and Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Jasem Mohamed Al-Budaiwi.

He said the conference included 26 scientific and educational events, such as panel discussions, lectures and workshops, achieving an impressive average satisfaction rating of 4.71 out of 5.

He confirmed that the association will

follow up the conference outcomes and strengthen collaboration with the Ministry of Education and other relevant entities to utilize these insights for the betterment of education.

On the other hand, General Rapporteur for the conference Prof. Fayeze Al-Dhafiri, former Director and Secretary General of Kuwait University, presented the recommendations, which were derived from an analysis of scientific papers, discussions, and insights provided by session chairs.

The recommendations are actionable proposals with the most significant impact on the educational field, such as developing teacher preparation programs to align with future skills and artificial intelligence (AI), establishing a national framework to regulate the use of AI in schools while safeguarding data privacy and academic integrity, linking plans and initiatives to indicators that measure their actual impact on learning outcomes and refining the evaluation of teacher training programs to focus on their effectiveness within the

classroom, strengthening the school's role in instilling values, expanding partnerships with civil society organizations and the private sector, and broadening the 'sustainable school' model, updating examinations and assessment methods to better measure critical thinking, analytical skills and creativity, training teachers and students in digital content creation, phased expansion of schools for gifted education and the knowledge economy, training school leadership to foster a safe and supportive environment, developing platforms for professional guidance, nurturing classroom-based innovations, scaling up successful technical initiatives like the 'Nabigh' (Gifted/Talented) project, upgrading the training programs offered by the association in accordance with international standards, implementing academic and social interventions to support students, and organizing workshops for Ministry of Education leadership to transform the conference proposals into concrete and actionable plans.



Al-Tabtabaei

Kuwaiti Society for Fine Arts conjures up maritime heritage



The inauguration of the event.



Kuwait Fine Arts Association evokes Kuwait's traditional maritime heritage.



Kuwait Fine Arts Association revives images of traditional maritime life in Kuwait.

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 22, (KUNA): In an exhibition held on Wednesday under the rubric "The Ancient Maritime Environment", the Kuwaiti Society for Fine Arts evoked aspects of Kuwait's ancient maritime life involving tales of pearl diving, the sea, and ancestors' lives.

The event showcased 60 artworks displayed by 50 male

and female artists, highlighting the intricacies of traditional maritime life, encompassing the associated professions, customs and traditions.

They also shed light on the values of patience, cooperation and struggle, serving as an integral part of Kuwaiti society's history and national identity.

Children with disabilities lead environmental drive

Kuwait Development Min. extols 'creative' people with disabilities

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 22. (KUNA): Kuwaiti Minister of State for Development and Sustainability Affairs Dr. Reem Al-Fulaij said the creative contributions of people with disabilities to environmental initiatives reflect their capacity to serve society and bolster sustainability.

The minister made this statement to KUNA on Thursday during a greening event co-organized by the Integrated Care Association for Special Needs (ICAN), the Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources and Ahmadi Governorate.

It was held under the patronage and in the presence of Governor of Ahmadi Sheikh Humoud Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, with various officials and individuals concerned attending.

Al-Fulaij said that the event is considered an excellent model of investing creative potential and showcasing the talents and skills of people with disabilities, demonstrating their ability to turn ideas into action and products that mirror determination and productivity.

The minister also spoke highly of the role of parents, teachers and supervisors in discovering and nurturing these talents.

For his part, Governor of Al-Ahmadi Sheikh Humoud Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah told KUNA that preserving the environment and expanding green spaces mark a significant investment in the quality of life.

He underlined that prioritizing public parks and cultivated areas serves as a core pillar for achieving sustainable development, adding that Al-Ahmadi Governorate is committed to backing initiatives aimed at promoting tree planting and consolidating public facilities.

The Greenery Day and "Made by My Hands 9" exhibition on Thursday brought together children and individuals with disabilities, combining their enthusiasm for planting seedlings with a passion for learning and discovery in



Top and above: Participants performing.

a vibrant atmosphere celebrating nature and hope.

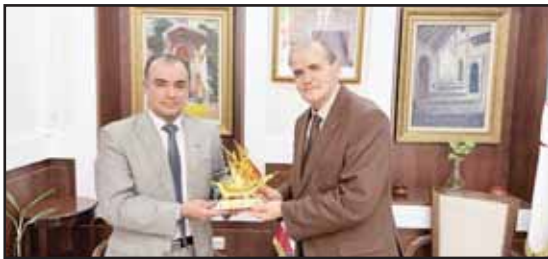
The event aimed to instill values of cooperation, social responsibility, and environmental stewardship among participants, encouraging active contributions toward a healthy and sustainable environment.

The active participation of individuals with disabilities in agricultural and handicraft activities also showcased their talents and determination, highlighting the importance of equal opportunities and empowering everyone to contribute to development and building a more inclusive and sustainable future.

Kuwait and Algeria explore new trade partnership opportunities

ALGIERS, Oct 22, (KUNA): Algerian Minister of Foreign Trade and Export Promotion Kamel Rezig met Thursday with Kuwait's Ambassador to Algeria Nawaf Dhaidan Boushaiba, to discuss expanding bilateral trade cooperation and exploring economic partnerships between business operators from both countries.

A statement issued by the Kuwaiti Embassy in Algiers noted that both sides lauded the deep-rooted historical ties and distinguished relations between the two brotherly nations



KUNA photo Algerian Minister of Foreign Trade and Export Promotion Kamel Rezig meets with Kuwait's Ambassador to Algeria Nawaf Dhaidan Boushaiba.

during the meeting held at the ministry's headquarters.

The discussions focused on prospects for developing Algerian-Kuwaiti trade exchange and activating anticipated outcomes from the upcoming Joint Committee meeting, the statement said.

Both officials reviewed mechanisms to foster partnerships between investors and business leaders to support overall trade.

They emphasized the importance of enhancing the presence of Algerian-made products in

the Kuwaiti market, exploring plans to hold an exhibition for these goods in Kuwait, and establishing a joint Business Council to elevate economic cooperation to match the strong political ties between both countries.

Following the meeting, the ambassador commended in a statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) the high quality and diversity of Algerian goods, particularly noting products he observed during his recent visit to the "Made in Algeria" agri-food products fair in Blida province, south of Algiers.



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Jahra Governorate photo
Jahra Governor Hamad Al-Habashi meets Kindergarten Education Supervisor at Jahra Educational District Hanan Ali Al-Murshad.

‘Teach kids sustainability, environment obligations’

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 22: Jahra Governor Hamad Al-Habashi met with Kindergarten Education Supervisor at Jahra Educational District Hanan Ali Al-Murshad in his office at the headquarters of Jahra Governorate, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The discussion focused on identifying collaborative opportunities to enhance environmental initiatives in educational settings.

Both parties assessed the environmental programs aimed to raise awareness, promote recycling and conservation, and teach children about sustainability

and environmental responsibility by encouraging them to participate in educational activities.

The governor reaffirmed the commitment of the governorate to implement environmental and educational projects, as well as strengthen its collaboration with Jahra Educational District.

He said these initiatives play a crucial role in cultivating environmental consciousness among youths and promoting positive environmental behaviors that benefit the community and align with the environmental sustainability goals of the country.

Licenses of around 2,000 firms suspended over non-paid fees

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 22: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry has suspended the licenses of around 2,000 companies for failing to pay outstanding fees related to company amendment transactions, reports Al-Rai daily.

In suspension notices sent to single-

person companies, the ministry said the suspensions could be lifted once the outstanding fees are paid and all required company-related procedures are completed.

Most of the unpaid fees are linked to transactions involving the entry or withdrawal of a partner.

Need to work as team in Kuwait roads ‘servicing’

Minister lauds Kuwaiti engineers

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 22: Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan stressed the importance of continuing to work as one team and intensifying efforts to achieve the objectives of the ministry regarding infrastructure development and improving services provided to the public.

Al-Mashaan made this statement to the press on the sidelines of an event in honor of engineers from the Maintenance Engineering Sector in the governorates.

Director General of the Maintenance Engineering Sector for Roads and Networks Eng. Fawaz Al-Shammari attended the event, which recognized the engineers' efforts in overseeing road maintenance works.

Al-Mashaan highlighted the role of national engineering talent in executing maintenance plans and raising the efficiency of the road network.

She attributed the achievements in maintenance operations to the hard work of the engineering teams in the governorates, as well as their dedication to monitor progress and guarantee strict compliance with technical specifications and approved project timelines.

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PAMA top jobs available: The Public Authority for Minors' Affairs (PAMA) announced the opening of applications for available supervisory positions within PAMA, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

A specialized committee, headed by acting Director General Alia Fahad Al-Saqer, will oversee the selection process in accordance with established regulations and guidelines.



Dr. Al-Mashaan

Minister chairs climate change meeting

Kuwait prepares to take part in COP31 in Turkiye

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 22, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Minister of State for Development and Sustainability Affairs Dr. Reem Al-Fulaij chaired the third meeting of the Supreme Committee for Climate Change for 2026 on Wednesday.

The meeting is part of national preparations for Kuwait's participation in the 31st Conference of the Parties (COP31) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) due in Antalya, Turkiye, from November 9 to 20.

During the meeting, the supreme commit-



Dr. Al-Fulaij

tee looked into an overture regarding Kuwait's negotiating position on major issues, including those related to the UNFCCC, the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement.

This proposal aims to reflect national priorities and interests, while strengthening Kuwait's presence and active engagement in interna-

tional climate negotiations.

Speaking to KUNA on Thursday, the minister said that the State of Kuwait is developing an institutional and integrated climate approach, based on coordinating national efforts, clarifying priorities, and aligning climate commitments with the state's executive plans and projects.

She said that this is meant to ensure that Kuwait's participation in the 31st Conference of the Parties (COP31) signifies its national interests and backs its sustainable development pathways.





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Kuwait furious

Meanwhile, earlier, two residents were killed in an attempted drone attack on Saudi energy giant Aramco's field, the Saudi Press Agency reported on Wednesday, while Yemen's Houthi group denied launching any attacks against Saudi territory during the day.

Citing the Saudi Ministry of Energy, the agency said Saudi air defenses intercepted the drone targeting a facility at Aramco's Shaybah field in the Eastern Province, but the incident caused a fire in a contractor's vehicle outside the facility without affecting operations.

The incident killed two residents, one of Filipino and one of Nepali nationality, and injured two others, one of Pakistani and one of Indian nationality, the ministry added.

In a series of statements, the Saudi-led coalition announced it had intercepted and destroyed seven drones launched toward various parts of Saudi Arabia, including four over Medina and the Eastern Province.

In another, unrelated development, Iran's state television reported that seven oil tankers caught fire and were damaged overnight Thursday after being targeted or striking naval mines in the Strait of Hormuz.

If verified, it would be the largest single-day number of vessels damaged in the waterway since the start of the Iran war on Feb. 28 when the United States and Israel launched joint strikes against Iran.

Quoting a statement by the Revolutionary Guard's navy, the Iranian report said that four of the tankers were transferring oil when they were targeted and caught fire. Another three were damaged and immobilized when they hit naval mines.

The report didn't provide details about possible casualties or the flags of the tankers.

The report also warned that the Revolutionary Guard may target U.S. bases in the region if the U.S. tried to allow oil tankers to transit through other parts of the strait.

The Revolutionary Guard had routinely targeted U.S. bases in Gulf countries during the war.

Yemen's Defense Ministry said on Thursday that rallies and mobilization programs by the Iranian-backed Houthi rebels will be considered legitimate military targets and warned residents in Houthi-held areas against taking part.

The announcement was shared in a social media post and is considered a major escalation against the Houthis as well as civilians living in areas under their control. Pro-Houthi rallies are regularly staged on Fridays, the Muslim day of prayer.

Deliberate attacks on civilians could amount to a war crime.

Rallies and what Houthis call "cultural courses" are one of the Iranian-backed group's main tools for mobilization of supporters and fighters. The Defense Ministry statement said such gatherings are used by the Houthis to mobilize children for combat.

Saudi Arabia's Civil Aviation Authority said Thursday that the number of people killed in an attack the night before on the King Fahd International Airport has risen to two.

The dead are a Saudi citizen and an Indian national who was living in the king-

‘Justice systems

He explained that the International Residual Mechanism was established under Security Council Resolution 1966 of 2010 to implement the remaining functions of the two tribunals and preserve their judicial legacy.

Abohaime stressed that the principles underpinning international criminal justice must not be subject to selectivity or double standards, and that the gravity of violations committed against civilians requires that those responsible be held accountable in accordance with international law, without discrimination or exception.

In this context, the diplomatic attache stressed the importance for the international community to assume its responsibilities in addressing the war crimes committed by the Israeli occupation forces against the brotherly Palestinian people, including settler violence, repression, genocide, and ethnic cleansing.

He underscored the importance of ending the Israeli occupation of all Arab territories and establishing an independent Palestinian state within the borders of June 4, 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Abohaime re-affirmed Kuwait's strong condemnation of the heinous Iranian aggression that began on February 28, 2026, including the targeting of vital civilian facilities and infrastructure, in a flagrant violation of Kuwait's sovereignty and territorial integrity and a direct threat to the security of its citizens and residents.

He called on Iran to comply with the rules and principles of international law, including the UN Charter and the principles of good-neighborliness, and to refrain from using or threatening to use military force.

He underlined the need for full implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2817 and other international resolutions issued by the Human Rights Council and the International Maritime Organization that condemned the Iranian aggression and called for it to cease.

Concluding the speech, the Kuwaiti official highlighted the importance of protecting human rights, witnesses, and victims, indicating that Kuwait's election to the Human Rights Council for the 2027-2030 term represents an additional responsibility to continue its efforts to promote and protect human rights at both the national and international levels.

He stressed the need to recruit qualified workers who understand the nature of the job and have the ability to perform their duties effectively.

Sheikh Fahad instructed officials at PAM to designate one day each week, from 8:00 am to 1:00 pm, to receive members of the public, listen to their concerns, follow up on their cases, and work towards resolving their issues.

The system's performance indicators were reviewed during the meeting and the extent to which companies were meeting their obligations to pay employees' salaries was assessed.

Addressing Al-Jarallah, he said: "You are one of the most long-standing economic figures in the country, you ought to be more attuned to the situation and needs of the workforce."

Dr. Boursli stressed that CAPT's rigorous oversight standards help prevent potential manipulation and strengthen the confidence of multinational corporations seeking to enter the Kuwaiti

Dr. Boursli added that the decline in cases involving the misappropriation of public funds reflects the state's commitment to strictly enforcing the law without exception.

She concluded that the enduring friendship forged between Kuwait and the United States through shared sacrifice has evolved over 35 years into a comprehensive strategic partnership spanning diplomacy, defense, education, trade, and humanitarian endeavors.

The image is a promotional advertisement for Hala Industrial Co., featuring a collage of five interior design photographs. The top photo shows a modern living room with a grey sofa, a wooden coffee table, and a wall-mounted TV. The middle-left photo shows a kitchen area with white cabinetry and a wooden countertop. The bottom-left photo shows a hallway or entrance area with white walls and a wooden bench. The right-side photo shows a large window with a wooden frame. The bottom-right photo shows a decorative wooden door with intricate carvings.

Hala Industrial Co.

The logo consists of a stylized geometric shape made of interlocking triangles, forming a larger triangle.

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hala@halakw.com

America

Arizona storms bring possible tornado: Trees fell onto homes and utility poles were knocked down by a possible tornado in a central Arizona community during a series of violent storms that moved through the state overnight into Thursday.

Storms capable of causing hail and wind damage were traveling through central Arizona early Thursday, with some flood watches and the possibility of tornadoes, the National Weather Service said.

On Wednesday night, northern and central parts of the state saw hail the size of golf balls that pummeled people's roofs, shattered windows and dented cars, along with damaging wind gusts. The weather service had issued multiple warnings during the severe thunderstorms.

A tornado warning was in effect Wednesday night as a storm moved over Heber-Overgaard in Navajo County, about 140 miles (225 kilometers) northeast of Phoenix. People in the area posted photos and video online of uprooted trees and crumpled structures. Significant damage and minor injuries were reported, the county sheriff's office said in a statement. There are about 3,000 people in the community. (AP)

Fire forces evacuations in Mississippi: A fire broke out at a Mississippi facility that houses more than 100 older people on Wednesday evening, forcing residents to evacuate.

There were no immediate reports of injuries at Brookdale Clinton, but crews were still working to

account for all residents - many of whom have mobility issues - more than five hours after the fire, city officials said.

The "majority of the building is gone," said Marlee Price-Cook, director of communication for Clinton, which is about 10 miles (16 kilometers) northwest of Jackson.

Residents who had been evacuated were bused to a church, where a crowd of people who appeared to be residents' family members or loved ones waited outside. The fire was under control by Wednesday night. (AP)

Storm brings high winds to E.Seaboard: Sub-tropical Storm Josephine pushed north from the US Northeast coast early Thursday, bringing some coastal flooding and possible gale-force winds to the Eastern Seaboard.

The storm had maximum sustained winds of 65 mph (100 kph) and was centered about 265 miles (425 kilometers) south of Nantucket, Massachusetts, and about 585 miles (940 kilometers) southwest of Halifax, Nova Scotia.

The National Hurricane Center in Miami said Josephine was forecast to continue moving away from the United States and remain south of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland.

The National Weather Service posted a gale warning for parts of the Northeast and mid-Atlantic, meaning winds above 39 mph (63 kph) were possible through midmorning Friday. Small watercraft were also advised of hazardous conditions south to North Carolina's Outer Banks. (AP)



Smoke billows after a fire caused evacuations at Brookdale Senior Living in Clinton, Miss. on Oct 21. (AP)

In Michigan debate, El-Sayed and Rogers question each other's loyalties

Trump brings last-minute rally boost to Graham in S.Carolina's Senate race

PENDLETON, SC, Oct. 22, (AP): US President Donald Trump traveled to South Carolina on Wednesday to boost US Sen Darline Graham, whose stumbles in her first campaign since replacing her late brother have Democratic voters hopeful - but not necessarily optimistic - that their candidate can break Republicans' grip on the state.

Trump, who was repeatedly interrupted by protesters early in his speech, sought to reassure South Carolinians on Wednesday that the late Sen. Lindsey Graham held his sister in high esteem. "Everybody respects her. She's smart and incredible. She'll never let you down," Trump said as he made a case for her.

He said Graham's Democratic opponent, pediatrician Annie Andrews, would "be the most extreme and one of the most crazy people in the entire country. It would be a disaster."

The president initially focused his remarks along Republican attack lines that accuse Andrews of supporting surgeries for transgender minors, which she denies. But the president over an hour and a half drifted

from subject to subject, spending relatively little time on South Carolina.

Instead, he mused about renaming bodies of water, lamented that he should have won the Nobel Prize and the Pulitzer Prize, and did an imitation of a female bodybuilder. He ticked through some of the things he has done since returning to office, like his push to lower drug prices, and some goals for the rest of his term, such as expanding the death penalty.

Although South Carolina is not typically a midterm battleground, Trump has been deeply invested in Graham. He supported her appointment to replace Lindsey Graham after his death in July, and he backed her in a special primary when she faced several more experienced Republican opponents. But some distance emerged between the Republican president and the senator over the weekend over his decision to waive Ukraine war sanctions on Russia that were set to be imposed under a law named after Lindsey Graham.

Republicans want to make sure Andrews doesn't pull off an upset victory. More than \$34 million has



Sen Darline Graham speaks as President Donald Trump looks on at a campaign rally at the T. Ed Garrison Livestock Arena and Expo Center on Oct 21, in Pendleton, SC. (AP)

flowed into the race, and Republicans have hammered Andrews as a "radical liberal."

Trump this week is rallying every day for candidates across the country, even in conservative areas, and imploring voters to "pretend I'm on the ballot" in hopes of averting a lacklus-

try midterm turnout for Republicans.

"Darline Graham knows that our campaign's momentum is so strong she called Donald Trump to come campaign for her in South Carolina," Andrews said in a fundraising appeal email.

Lindsey Graham had been on a glide path to a fifth term when he died of an aortic tear. Darline Graham, former director of the state agency for the blind, received bipartisan support when she was appointed to serve out her brother's term. But her decision to run for the seat in the midterms prompted skepticism that the political neophyte was up for the job.

Darline Graham had the endorsement of Trump, who campaigned for her before the runoff with U.S. Rep. Ralph Norman. A stumble over a question related to U.S. policy in Taiwan, in which Graham admitted she was "not that informed on national security," prompted questions over her readiness.

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, who is from South Carolina and spoke ahead of Trump on Wednesday, said Graham was driven by the same kind of hope for America that her brother was.

"As long as Donald Trump is in the White House, and Darline Graham is in the Senate, we can all hope for a better country," he said.

Waiting for her at a weekend event in Mount Pleasant, Nanette Tum-

bleston said she felt strongly Graham should win, shuddering to think of what might happen if the seat fell to Democrats.

Also:

WASHINGTON: Democrat Abdul El-Sayed and Republican Mike Rogers clashed in their final Senate debate Wednesday, with El-Sayed trying to tie his opponent to President Donald Trump and Rogers saying his rival's progressive policies would be too extreme for Michigan.

The debate kicked off a breakneck final stretch in one of the nation's most closely watched and competitive Senate races. Former President Barack Obama will rally in Detroit on Saturday, followed by Trump on Sunday.

Wednesday's hourlong debate followed one on Oct. 8 that devolved into personal insults and attacks, with the candidates continuing to argue even during a commercial break. This time, the exchanges were slightly less contentious and focused on policy, though both candidates repeatedly returned to their central attacks.



Rescue workers put out a fire at a residential house destroyed in a Russian missile strike on Kyiv, Ukraine on Oct 21. (AP)

Russia pounds Kyiv with missiles, hours after agreeing to peace talks

KYIV, Ukraine, Oct 22, (AP): Russia bombarded Kyiv with ballistic missiles in an hourslong nighttime barrage, and the Russian military said Thursday that its air defenses intercepted 808 drones fired by Ukraine at Moscow and other cities, in attacks that dampened new hopes of progress in ending the war. At least two people were killed in Ukraine and dozens of others wounded, officials said.

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday agreed "in principle" to resume three-way negotiations involving officials from Russia, Ukraine and the United States, but no date was set for a meeting. Putin's consent came in talks in St. Petersburg with US President Donald Trump's envoy, Steve Witkoff, who the previous day had met with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Norway.

Representatives of those three countries held three rounds of negotiations early this year, meeting twice in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, in January and February, followed by further talks in Geneva in February.

However, little progress was reported beyond exchanges of prisoners of war, and deadly attacks continued. Russia and Ukraine remain far apart in their terms for stopping the fighting.

Zelenskyy, who says only a meeting of leaders can end the deadlock, commented on the prospect of "technical talks" between delegations: "We'll see what happens this time."

Russia's aerial attacks hit 12 regions of Ukraine overnight, killing at least two people and wounding 34 others, including five children, Zelenskyy said on social media Thursday.

The Ukrainian capital endured a noisy night as 21 ballistic missiles came in three waves, he said, smashing apartment buildings, energy facilities, a railway station and the Kyiv subway system, shopping malls and businesses. One person was killed in Kyiv.

Multiple attacks on the eastern city of Kharkiv and the surrounding area left one person dead and at least 13

wounded, the State Emergency Service said.

Ukrainians are bracing for the winter, as a recent escalation in Russian attacks targets the power grid to deny civilians heat, light and running water during the bitterly cold months. Ukraine says Russia is stockpiling ballistic missiles for an annual campaign that Ukrainians describe as "weaponizing winter."

The Russian bombardment showed "there has been no real change in (Moscow's) attitude toward everything that is happening," Zelenskyy said.

The Ukrainian leader has pleaded with Washington to supply more Patriot air defense ammunition that can stop ballistic missiles and to heap more sanctions on Russia that might make Moscow pursue peace.

But Trump has agreed to a deal with Putin to import diesel from Russia and waived heavy sanctions on Moscow, while U.S. officials say Patriot ammunition is in short supply.

Witkoff, the Trump envoy who met with Putin in St. Petersburg on Wednesday, was harshly criticized in Ukraine and in the U.S. for praising the Russian leader as a "humanitarian" for ordering the release of a retired American teacher imprisoned on charges of fighting as a mercenary in Ukraine.

The five-year anniversary of Russia's all-out invasion of its neighbor comes on Feb. 24. The fighting has resulted in hundreds of thousands of troop casualties on the battlefield and thousands of civilians killed in aerial strikes.

Also, assassination attempts against foes of Putin have been common during his more than two decades in power. Those close to the victims and the few survivors have blamed Russian authorities, but the Kremlin has routinely denied involvement.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha said the "brutal" Russian attacks demonstrated "what Russian 'humanism' truly sounds like."

'Tests show Pope Leo won't need further treatment for lung cancer'

VATICAN CITY, Oct 22, (AP): Pope Leo XIV will need no further treatment for lung cancer after tests confirmed the disease was localized, the Vatican said Wednesday.

Leo, 71, had part of one lung removed last week in the first major health event of his 17-month pontificate. The surgery confirmed he had adenocarcinoma, the most common type of lung cancer. Leo was discharged from Rome's Gemelli Polyclinic on Saturday, four days after surgery, and said he would gradually resume his activities.

The pope's personal physician, Dr. Luigi Carbone, and his surgeon, Dr. Stefano Margaritora, said the final tests on tissue removed during the surgery confirmed the diagnosis and that the cancer had not spread.

"A subsequent oncology assessment confirmed that no further treatment is necessary," the doctors said in a statement. The pope had the lower section, or lobe, of his right lung removed to try to ensure that all the cancer was removed.

Additional treatment is offered for patients whose cancer has spread, such as into the lymph nodes, or who have certain other signs that their cancer might be particularly aggressive. Surgery often can be enough when tumors are caught very early, such as when



Pope Leo XIV waves as he arrives for his weekly general audience in St. Peter's Square at The Vatican on Oct 21. (AP)

someone has an X-ray or other scan that shows a spot long before it's large or causing symptoms.

The pope appears to have had one of those "incidental findings," a nodule in his lung spotted during another exam.

In an interview with Vatican News on Saturday, Margaritora, the chief thoracic surgeon at Rome's Gemelli hospital, confirmed that the nodule was found by chance during routine abdominal examinations, and that the

pope had not been experiencing any symptoms.

"The statements suggest that this is a stage I lung cancer for which surgery is highly effective and expected to be curative," said Dr. Stephen Liu, a lung cancer expert at Georgetown's Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center. He said the lack of further treatment suggests a relatively small cancer, and that it had not spread to lymph nodes.

Europe

Macron vows to prevent riots: The French government has vowed to do everything within its power



Macron

to prevent violence at fresh social demonstrations announced for Saturday, after riots around the country caused widespread destruction and thousands of arrests on Oct 17.

French President **Emmanuel Macron** told media on Wednesday that the government will use all available legal tools to stop such violent scenes from reoccurring.

Speaking to journalists during a visit to Qatar, Macron emphasized the government's resolve ahead of a new round of demonstrations scheduled for Oct. 24, French television channel BFM TV said.

Addressing calls from some politicians to declare a state of emergency, Macron said such a measure was not necessary at this stage, although it could be deployed later if required.

France imposed targeted curfews in several cities after the Oct. 17 riots, and Prime Minister Sebastian Lecornu said Tuesday that this had helped maintain calm overnight on Monday.

Meanwhile, French Interior Minister Laurent Nunez said Tuesday that the government would deploy soldiers from the army's Operation Sentinelle to

help prevent violence during the Oct. 24 demonstrations. (Xinhua)

Thousands protest across Greece: Students, teachers, civil servants and pensioners staged protests across Greece on Wednesday, calling for increased funding for public education and healthcare, higher wages and pensions, and measures to ease the rising cost of living.

In Athens, approximately 10,000 people marched to the parliament, according to national broadcaster ERT. Demonstrators carried banners and chanted slogans including "Bread, Education, Freedom." Students had set up tents in Syntagma Square, opposite the parliament on Tuesday ahead of Wednesday's main rally.

The mobilization was organized by university student and school pupil associations, along with unions representing teachers, university staff and civil servants. Pensioners also joined the demonstration. Similar protests were held in more than 50 cities across the country.

ADEDY, the umbrella federation representing Greek civil servants, called a strike for Wednesday and expressed solidarity with similar protests in France, according to a press statement.

School pupils also voiced support for the French protests, chanting "From Greece to France, we fight for public and free education" and pointing to challenges facing young people in both countries. The protesters in Syntagma Square also chanted "Give money to schools, not to wars." (Xinhua)

S.Korea urges DPRK to return to dialogue

North Korea to resume propaganda broadcasts across border into South

SEOUL, South Korea, Oct 22, (Agencies): North Korea plans to resume anti-Seoul propaganda broadcasts along the heavily armed border with South Korea, leader Kim Jong Un's sister said, reviving a psychological warfare campaign as tensions rise after land mine blasts injured three South Korean front-line soldiers.

Kim Yo Jong, her brother's top spokesperson on Washington and Seoul, made the announcement Wednesday after visiting front-line areas where North Korean troops are reinforcing the border. She renewed a threat to retaliate against any South Korean provocation aimed at the fortification work.

In a follow-up statement Thursday, she said the North would place "new counter means" on alert along the border and have its loudspeakers on "standby" within days.

North Korea has been adding mines, barbed wire fences, anti-tank barriers and other fortifications to what's already one of the world's most heavily armed borders as Kim Jong Un pushes a hard line toward Seoul.

Touring the area with Marshal Pak Jong Chon, one of her brother's top military officials, Kim Yo Jong called the fortification work a "sacred and great undertaking" supporting the leader's policy of permanently severing ties with South Korea, which he has declared his most hostile adversary amid a broader diplomatic stalemate with Washington.

"Our tactical hunting teams are taking new positions, and within October, the loudspeakers for psychological warfare against the ROK will be in operation along the whole border," Kim Yo Jong said, using the initials of South Korea's formal name, the Republic of Korea.

She warned that if South Korean warning shots - which Seoul says are meant to force North Korean soldiers doing fortification work back across the border - cause "actual harm to our territorial security and our service persons' safety," North Korean border guards "will show no mercy for the armed gangsters bereft of reason."

Asked about Kim Yo Jong's threat to resume the loudspeaker broad-



South Korean army soldiers walk near the border with North Korea, in Paju, South Korea on Oct 22. (AP)

casts, South Korean Defense Ministry spokesperson Chung Binna said Thursday that Seoul would need to take "proportionate measures" in response to the North's moves along the border, but did not elaborate on what steps are being considered.

North Korea's state-run Korean

border blasts and urged the North to apologize and clear its remaining mines. North Korea denied responsibility for the explosions and warned of strong retaliation if provoked.

"Our military leadership underlined the need to make those rogues aware that our new firepower units have taken their firing positions," Kim told soldiers during her visit Wednesday, reminding them of her brother's order to make the border with the "enemy ... eternally impregnable."

South Korea's military has said North Korean soldiers crossed the border's military demarcation line 50 times this year during fortification work, and that it responded with warning shots and broadcasts. Kim has said South Korea's claims of border crossings are a "false pretext," and that its provocations have increased "beyond the red line" since the mine blasts.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman, Jin Yong-Sung, called Kim's threats "intolerable" and ordered the military to "sternly respond" to potential provocations by the North.

During Tuesday's border inspection, Pak accused the South of making "deliberate, premeditated and absurd" claims to shift blame over the rising tensions and threatened an "overwhelming response" to South Korean provocations. He also denied that the North Korean soldiers were breaching the border during fortification work, saying "our army knows where our borderline is better than any others," KCNA said.

Meanwhile, South Korea's defense ministry on Thursday urged the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) to return to the dialogue table to prevent accidental border clashes.

"To bridge the gap in perception and prevent accidental military clashes, North Korea (DPRK) must step forward to the dialogue table, and these actions must come to a halt," Defense Ministry spokesperson Chung Binna told a press briefing.

Chung emphasized that the current reliance on public statements between the two Koreas indicated that all official inter-Korean military hotlines were completely severed.

Asia

2nd female politician in Australia targeted: A man has been charged with threatening an Australian lawmaker's staff with nunchucks, police said Thursday, days after another legislator was critically injured when a man repeatedly hit her with a car.

Nunchucks are a weapon used in martial arts consisting of two sticks or rods connected by a rope or chain.

The incidents are heightening concerns about female politicians' safety and raising concerns about security in a country where lawmakers are highly accessible to the public.

Police say that a 56-year-old man entered Western Australian state government minister Hannah Beazley's electorate office in suburban Perth on Wednesday, brandishing nunchucks and making verbal threats. Beazley wasn't in the office at the time. (AP)

Indonesia orders probe into ferry fire: Indonesia's transport minister on Wednesday ordered an investigation into a passenger ferry fire off Merak port in Banten province that left 11 people injured.

Transport Minister Dudy Purwagandhi said the National Transportation Safety Committee (KNKT) had been instructed to investigate both technical and non-technical factors, while police would assist in determining the cause of the fire.

The ferry, KMP Batumandi, caught fire Tuesday about 700 meters from Pier 6 at Merak port, said Banten Police Chief Hendra Kurniawan.

The vessel was carrying 420 passengers, including

393 traveling in vehicles and 27 on foot, as well as 89 vehicles, Kurniawan said.

All passengers and crew were evacuated, with no fatalities reported, he added.

Merak is a major ferry gateway connecting Java and Sumatra islands across the Sunda Strait, one of Indonesia's busiest ferry routes. (Xinhua)

2 village officials killed in Philippines: A village councilor and his brother, a staffer of the village government, were shot dead in Cotabato province, southern Philippines, on Wednesday, according to local police.

The two people died instantly from bullet wounds sustained in the attack. The incident also left an adolescent male seriously wounded.

The assailants immediately escaped. Investigations are underway. (Xinhua)

Flood warning issued for river in Japan: Flooding has been confirmed along the Koyoshi River in Akita Prefecture, northeastern Japan, prompting authorities to issue the highest-level flood emergency warning on Wednesday and urge residents to take immediate action to protect their lives.

The Japan Meteorological Agency issued the Level 5 special flood warning after floodwaters overtopped the river's left bank near Moriko in Yurihonjo City.

The warning, the highest of Japan's five-level disaster alert system, urged people to assess their immediate surroundings and take necessary steps, including moving to higher floors of buildings if traveling to designated evacuation sites is dangerous. (Xinhua)



Tugboats spray water to extinguish fire burning through the passenger ferry KMP Batumandi, near Merak, Banten province, Indonesia on Oct 20. (AP)

Meta tells Brazil electoral court it treats Lula and Bolsonaro equally ahead of Sunday vote

SAO PAULO, Oct 22, (AP): Tech giant Meta said it has complied with an order from Brazil's electoral court for it to give equal treatment in its platforms to President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and opposition candidate Flávio Bolsonaro before Sunday's presidential runoff.

The case is the latest example of courts intervening to fix platform imbalances impacting politics and elections.

The suit was triggered by Lula's campaign on Oct. 15, when it accused the tech company that owns Instagram, Facebook and WhatsApp of using biased algorithms and AI restrictions to favor Bolsonaro. On Monday, hundreds of people protested in front of the company's office in metropolis Sao Paulo.

Meta said it had "completed the implementation of measures to comply with the directive from the electoral court." It added the restrictions ordered by the court "do not affect organic posts."

Bolsonaro won the most votes in the first round of the elections on Oct. 4, with 47% to Lula's 45%,

with polls and analysts suggesting they will be in a tight race for victory until the last minute.

Meta said it has enforced comprehensive measures to enforce compliance with electoral advertisement regulations and safeguard the integrity of the nation's democratic process. It also said it implemented a dedicated human review system, under which any automatic blocks or limitations placed on presidential campaign ad accounts must undergo manual evaluation within two hours.

Meta insisted its recent operational incidents come from technical limitations rather than any partiality. It once again denied any allegations of political bias, manipulation or intentional interference in Brazil's elections.

Tatiana Cochlar, a spokesperson for Brazil's electoral court, confirmed Meta's response was received and added that later Tuesday representatives of the company and the two presidential campaigns are expected to meet with a judge in capital Brasilia to discuss the situation.

The case in Brazil mirrors precedents in Europe where the state apparatus also intervened. In Germany, a 2019 court ruling forced Facebook to restore a blocked political page to protect political equality. Five years later, Romania annulled its presidential election after hidden TikTok bot networks boosted a pro-Russia candidate. The European nation later passed legislation mandating tracking codes on political social media messaging.

Meanwhile, Indigenous communities in the Brazilian Amazon fear a lack of transportation will prevent them from voting in Sunday's election runoff. The Amazonas state electoral court on Tuesday rejected a petition for transportation assistance filed by Univaja, an association representing Indigenous peoples of the Javari Valley in northern Brazil.

Voters in Amazonas state will choose a governor and president in Sunday's runoff between President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and Sen. Flávio Bolsonaro, a far-right candidate and son of former President Jair Bolsonaro.

Recent polls suggest a tight race, with Bolsonaro ahead. In the first round, Bolsonaro won in Manaus, the state capital and largest city, while Lula prevailed in interior municipalities, including those in the Javari Valley. Deforestation surged by 60% under former President Bolsonaro while Lula's government announced the lowest Amazon deforestation rate on record last week.

Most people in the Amazon live in urban areas, but thousands reside in tiny villages several days from the nearest city by boat, including the Javari Valley, one of the Amazon's most remote regions and home to several Indigenous communities living in isolation. Its population is estimated at about 6,300, according to official data.

Brazilian electoral rules guarantee transportation for remote Indigenous communities. In the Javari Valley, some villages serve as voting hubs for surrounding communities. But some voters live as far as 895 kilometers (556 miles) from their polling places, requiring boat trips of three to five days.

Bukele launches army op to rescue Salvadorans held by gangs in Haiti

SAN SALVADOR, Oct 22, (AP): El Salvador's President Nayib Bukele said Wednesday he had launched a military operation to rescue four Salvadoran aviation technicians kidnapped by gangs in Haiti, warning of a more forceful response if they are not released alive and unharmed.

Gangs in Haiti had opened fire on an armored vehicle three days earlier the first major attack since an international gang suppression force began operating in the violence-wracked Caribbean country. The four Salvadoran soldiers have been missing since they fled the burning vehicle in the Santo area of Croix-des-Bouquets, Port-au-Prince.

Addressing Haitian gang leaders, Bukele demanded that they return the Salvadorans "alive, unharmed" and warned that, if they do so, "everything will go back to the way it was before the kidnapping." If not, the Salvadoran leader - who drew international attention for his contentious war on his own country's gangs - said it would result in a more powerful operation.

"Today's attack is nothing com-



Armored police vehicles that are part of the Gang Suppression Force (GSF) patrol the Tabarre neighborhood of Port-au-Prince, Haiti on Oct 20. (AP)

pared to what is coming if they do not release the four hostages alive. And do not take our words as empty threats," he wrote on the social media platform X.

It was not immediately clear if Bukele intended any further action to be carried out by Salvadoran, Haitian or international security forces in the area.

In his post, the Salvadoran leader shared video of armored vehicles with shattered windows driving through plumes of smoke.

Haiti's government issued a news release Wednesday evening saying the "abduction" of the aviation technicians was an "absolute priority."

Africa

12 killed in Niger bus attack: Twelve people, including a soldier, were killed and around 10 others injured in an armed attack on two passenger buses along the Arlit-Agadez road in northern Niger on Tuesday, local authorities said Wednesday.

"We deeply regret the tragic loss of life, including that of innocent women and children," said Ibra Boulama Issa, governor of the Agadez region. (Xinhua)

Algeria, Niger sign protocol: Algeria and Niger on Wednesday signed a military cooperation protocol during a working visit by Nigerien Defense Minister Salifou Mody to Algiers, Algeria's Ministry of National Defense said.

Aimed at strengthening bilateral military and security ties, the protocol was signed following talks between Mody and Said Chanegriha, chief of staff of the People's National Army of Algeria, according to a statement from the ministry. (Xinhua)

Thousands flee hostilities in DRC: Escalating violence in southeastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has forced thousands of people to flee their homes since August, UN humanitarian said Wednesday.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said its partners reported that nearly 12,000 people fled the Nambya area in Haut-Lomami province to the territory of Mitwaba in Haut-Katanga province on Monday, following attacks that reportedly killed two civilians, injured others, and led to abductions. (Xinhua)

Subcontinent

Restrictions imposed in India's Delhi: The Delhi government on Wednesday imposed restrictions on burning coal or firewood, and using diesel-based generators, in restaurants, hotels, etc., as the air quality deteriorated into the "Poor" category.

The Air Quality Index (AQI) jumped from nearly 180 to about 300 in and around the national capital city in the past 24 hours, said media reports. Though in some areas, like Gurugram city adjoining the national capital, the AQI was recorded at 313 on Wednesday evening. (Xinhua)

Afghan forces seize firearms: Afghan security forces have confiscated a substantial cache of firearms and ammunition in northern Baghlan province, the official Bakhtar News Agency reported on Wednesday evening.

Acting on intelligence and a tip-off, personnel launched a series of targeted operations on the outskirts of Bano, Dih Salah and Puli Hisar districts, recovering 10 AK-47 assault rifles, four machine guns, five pistols, hand grenades, a large quantity of ammunition and assorted military equipment, said the report. (Xinhua)

Sri Lanka arrests 303,017 suspects: Sri Lankan authorities have arrested 303,017 suspects during a year-long anti-narcotics campaign, "A Nation United", cabinet spokesperson and Health Minister Nalinda Jayatissa said on Tuesday.

The arrests were made between Oct. 30, 2025, when the campaign was launched, and Oct. 18, 2026, Jayatissa told the weekly cabinet media briefing. (Xinhua)

Kuwait oil price up 35 cents to \$108.04 pb

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 22, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti oil price rose by 35 cents to reach USD 108.04 per barrel (pb) in Wednesday’s trading, compared with USD 107.69 on Tuesday, the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said on

Thursday. In global markets, Brent crude went up by three cents to reach USD 108.82 pb, while the US West Texas Intermediate crude dropped by 67 cents to reach USD 97.15 pb.

Business

Bankee named among the top 40 global projects at the 2026 Seoul Design Award

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 22: In a distinction earned from among more than 1,200 projects representing 91 countries, National Bank of Kuwait’s Bankee program has achieved a significant international milestone by being selected as one of the top 40 global projects by the Seoul Design Award 2026 in South Korea. This prestigious international recognition is the culmination of four years of dedicated work and continuous development, underscoring the success of Bankee in introducing an innovative educational model that has gained global acclaim, having already demonstrated a tangible impact within the Kuwaiti educational landscape and distinguished itself among a select group of developmental and educational initiatives from around the world.

The Seoul Design Award is one of the most prominent awards globally, celebrating completed projects that offer innovative solutions to the challenges of daily life, improve the quality of life, and promote sustainability. This year’s edition was held under the theme, “Design for a Sustainable Life: Designs Aimed at Achieving Harmony Between Humans, Society, and the Environment.”

Bankee program was selected as one of the top 40 global projects following a rigorous evaluation process conducted by an international panel joining leading experts in design and innovation from around the world. The assessment was based on several key criteria, including the ability to address everyday challenges, the creation of sustainable solutions, the scale of social impact, and the potential for scalability and global application.

It is worth noting that Creative Confidence is responsible for the design, development, implementation, and execution of Bankee. Sumaya Al-Jassim, CEO of Creative Confidence, accepted the award on behalf of the program during a ceremony held in Seoul, South Korea, recognizing the program’s success in providing an innovative educational experience that fosters financial literacy and essential life skills among learners.

Bankee is the first program of its kind in Kuwait, offered to society by NBK in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Nazaha, and Creative Confidence, to promote financial literacy and inclusion among learners by introducing them to fundamental economic concepts and practices, such as earning, spending, saving, and financial obligations.

The program operates in a classroom economy model, which is a framework that simulates a real-world economic system by transforming the school into a miniature learning environment where learners can apply financial and economic concepts in a practical way. Additionally, Bankee has launched a digital platform and website available in both Arabic and English that enables learners and teachers to conduct various financial transactions using a virtual currency called “Bankoz”. This innovative digital approach fosters a deeper understanding of the value of work and money, as well as the importance of making well-considered financial decisions.

The program also focuses on instilling core values in learners, such as



Sumaya Al-Jassim receives the award.



Bankee reaches 50,000 learners across Kuwait.

This global achievement reflects the success of NBK’s vision to invest in education and financial literacy. NBK’s reception of the award is a prestigious international recognition crowning four years of dedicated work and collaboration with the Ministry of Education, the Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha), and Creative Confidence.

honesty, integrity, personal development, responsibility, cooperation, and teamwork, further helping to establish a generation of young nationals equipped with the financial skills and knowledge necessary to achieve financial stability and independence, while contributing to sustainable development and the economic well-being of both individuals and society.

This international recognition is based on the tangible impact of the program. During the 2025–2026 academic year, Bankee successfully reached over 50,000 learners across 104 schools throughout Kuwait, with the active participation of more than 12,000 teachers and an investment exceeding KD one million.

These figures reflect the program’s extensive reach and its capacity to

generate a sustainable impact within the educational environment by empowering teachers and equipping learners with essential financial knowledge and skills through modern methods.

This achievement marks a significant milestone for the Bankee, strengthening its international standing as an innovative educational model that integrates interactive learning, financial literacy, and the cultivation of positive values among the youth, while also underscoring the success of the partnership between the private sector and government entities in delivering high-quality initiatives that generate a sustainable social impact and earn global recognition.

The selection of Bankee as one of the top 40 global projects reaffirms the success of NBK’s vision to invest in

education and financial literacy, and it highlights the Bank’s support for initiatives that help prepare future generations by equipping them with greater awareness and the ability to navigate evolving economic and financial landscapes, which aligns with its unwavering commitment to creating a positive and sustainable impact on society.

NBK continues to solidify its local leadership in corporate social responsibility by launching diverse, innovative, and sustainable initiatives that cater to various segments of society, and it places a special emphasis on supporting the education sector and developing the capabilities of young people, driven by the belief that investing in education and youth development is the cornerstone for building Kuwait’s future.

New real estate financing law may reshape housing market

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 22: Real estate and commercial transactions expert Mansour Al-Nazhan says Kuwait’s new Real Estate Financing Law No. 114/2026 could significantly reshape the country’s residential property market by redirecting part of citizens’ purchasing power towards new cities and projects developed by approved real estate developers, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

He affirmed that this shift could influence housing demand and property prices in established residential areas.

In an exclusive statement to the daily, Al-Nazhan highlighted the importance of examining Article 2 of the law and its explanatory memorandum to understand the scope of financing, the purposes covered, and the potential impact on housing options available to citizens.

He stressed that the success of the new financing framework would depend on the availability of housing units that meet appropriate quality standards while remaining affordable, particularly for middle-income households.

Al-Nazhan explained that Article 2 identifies two main purposes covered by the law. The first is purchasing a residential unit from a real estate developer in accordance with Law No. 118/2023 on real estate developers. The second is constructing homes on government residential plots allocated by the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW), whether already developed or currently under construction, as well as other plots designated by the Council of Ministers, subject to approved terms and conditions.

Financing under the law does not cover the purchase of an existing house from another citizen outside the framework of an approved real estate developer. It also excludes building a house on privately purchased land, financing home extensions such as additional floors or rooms, and covering renovation or maintenance costs.

The law focuses on supporting the purchase of residential units offered by approved developers and the construction of designated government housing plots. This scope differs from the needs of citizens seeking to purchase existing properties or renovate and expand homes they already own.

Demand shift could put pressure on existing home prices

Al-Nazhan went on to explain that directing subsidized financing toward properties covered by the law could shift some demand and liquidity from established residential neighborhoods to new cities and developments. This could reduce the pool of potential buyers in the traditional housing market, prompting some property owners to lower their asking prices to remain competitive.

Where conditions permit, housing applicants may prefer to purchase a modern unit from an approved developer using affordable, long-term financing rather than buy an older house costing hundreds of thousands of dinars and rely on a personal loan or more expensive commercial financing.

The shift could also affect real estate speculation, particularly the purchase of older houses for demolition, subdivision, and resale. A decline in demand for such properties could diminish their investment appeal.

The law’s impact on property prices would depend on several factors, including the supply and prices of new housing units, financing terms, and citizens’ ability to qualify for and benefit from the scheme.

Al-Nazhan cautioned that any decline in the prices of existing properties would depend on actual market developments, making it too early to determine the extent of any potential reduction.

Three housing options for citizens

Regarding concerns that prices charged by real estate developers could rise, increasing monthly instalments, particularly for middle-income citizens earning around KD 1,500 a month, Al-Nazhan stressed the importance of maintaining a range of housing options.

He explained that the first op-

tion is to purchase a completed house or residential unit from an approved developer. This would suit citizens seeking a ready-to-occupy home or wishing to avoid the responsibilities of overseeing construction and dealing with contractors.

The second option is traditional self-build construction, whereby citizens receive a government residential plot and use housing financing of KD 70,000 provided by the Kuwait Credit Bank under the existing system to build their homes according to their own preferences and under their direct supervision.

The third option is to wait for completed government housing units developed by PAHW and distributed to citizens in accordance with approved housing regulations and priorities.

Al-Nazhan stressed that maintaining all three options would enable citizens to choose the housing solution best suited to their family needs and financial circumstances, rather than effectively limiting their choices to units offered by real estate developers.

Land and building material support, profit controls

Al-Nazhan said the success of the real estate development model would depend on providing high-quality housing at affordable prices, cautioning that incentives offered to developers must not result in higher final prices at the expense of citizens.

He called for the executive regulations to establish clear mechanisms to reduce land and construction costs. These could include allocating land to developers at nominal prices or through appropriate support schemes, as well as providing subsidized building materials under conditions that ensure the resulting savings are reflected in the final sale price.

He proposed exploring the feasibility of offering residential units priced between KD 100,000 and KD 150,000 as a target range. The viability of these prices would depend on land and construction costs, housing specifications, and financing terms, with the aim of making monthly instalments more affordable for middle-income households.

He also called for fair limits on developers’ profit margins, suggesting that a margin of 10 to 15 percent could be considered as a regulatory measure. This, he said, would help balance investment sustainability with consumer protection and prevent citizens from bearing excessive costs.

Al-Nazhan further stressed the importance of offering flexible housing designs that can be expanded to meet the changing needs of Kuwaiti families, providing practical solutions for privacy and future family growth while complying with approved engineering standards and regulatory requirements.

Citizens’ ability to afford instalments is the true measure of success

Al-Nazhan concluded that the success of the Real Estate Financing Law should not be measured solely by the number of housing units developers build or the speed at which projects are completed. Rather, it should be judged by whether citizens can afford suitable homes without taking on monthly instalments that exceed their financial means.

Achieving the law’s housing objectives requires effective oversight of prices and construction quality, transparency in financing terms, and contractual terms, and a balance between encouraging real estate investment and protecting beneficiaries, while preserving alternative housing options.

Al-Nazhan stressed that the new financing framework could reshape Kuwait’s residential property market, but its positive impact would depend on the availability of competitively priced housing and ensuring that citizens benefit from the incentives the state provides to developers. This, he said, would help expand homeownership opportunities while maintaining a balance between the interests of citizens and the real estate sector.

MSCI upgrades National Bank of Kuwait’s ESG rating to AA, positioning the bank in the ‘Leader’ category



Amir Hanna

- **Hanna:** The rating reinforces NBK’s position as a leader in responsible banking
- Our integrated institutional approach has positioned NBK in MSCI’s “Leader” category for ESG performance
- MSCI’s rating recognizes the success of our strategy to embed sustainability at the core of our business
- Our sustainability achievements reflect a long-term vision that balances growth with responsibility
- We remain committed to advancing sustainable finance and creating long-term value for our customers and communities



KUWAIT CITY, Oct 22: In a further affirmation of its leadership in sustainability and responsible banking, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) has announced that MSCI has upgraded the Bank’s Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Rating from A to AA. The upgrade moves NBK from MSCI’s “Average” category to its “Leader” category, which encompasses institutions demonstrating advanced practices in managing sustainability-related issues and integrating them into their strategies and operations.

NBK is the first and currently the only Kuwaiti bank to hold an AA ESG Rating from MSCI. The achievement is particularly significant as NBK is one of only six GCC banks to hold this rating. This reflects the Bank’s strong position in managing sustainability and governance matters relative to its international peers and underscores its successful adoption of global best practices in ESG.

This rating represents the culmination of years of sustained and structured institutional efforts to embed sustainability considerations across the Bank’s business, financing, investment and risk management activities, in line with international best practices and standards. It also underscores the strength of the institutional framework NBK has developed to support responsible growth and create sustainable value for all stakeholders.

Recognition of Sustained Efforts

MSCI’s upgrade reflects growing recognition of NBK’s approach across several key areas, including sustainable and green financing, the integration of ESG criteria into financing activities, enhanced ESG due diligence and risk management, and climate-related risk analysis. It also recognizes the Bank’s focus on data privacy and information security, consumer financial protection, business ethics and corporate transparency.

The rating further underscores NBK’s success in developing an integrated sustainability framework that embeds ESG considerations across its business activities, strengthening the Bank’s resilience and its ability to create sustainable, long-term value for all stakeholders.

Measurable Progress

The positive assessment is underpinned by a series of sustainability achievements in recent years, reflecting continued progress towards NBK’s long-term objectives. The Bank’s sustainable assets and financing reached approximately USD 5.92 billion, advancing towards its target of USD 10 billion by 2030.

NBK also continued to reduce its environmental footprint, recording a 37.3% reduction in operational emissions compared with its 2021 baseline. In parallel, the Bank strengthened its climate risk management practices and enhanced disclosure and transparency in line with regulatory requirements and the evolving

expectations of investors and stakeholders.

At the Group level, sustainable loans reached USD 3.06 billion in 2025, an increase of 23% from USD 2.4.8 billion in 2024.

On the social front, NBK continued to invest in human capital and the development of national talent, delivering more than 83,000 training hours to its employees in Kuwait during 2025. This reflects the Bank’s commitment to fostering a workplace culture centered on continuous learning, skills development and leadership capabilities.

The Result of Collective Institutional Efforts

Commenting on the achievement, Amir Hanna, Group Chief Communications Officer, said: “MSCI’s upgrade of NBK’s ESG Rating to AA marks an important milestone in our journey to advance sustainability and firmly establish it as an integral part of the Bank’s strategy and operations. More importantly, it represents independent international recognition of the progress we have made in strengthening governance practices, risk management, responsible financing and transparency across the organization.”

“We are proud to be the first Kuwaiti bank to hold this rating, an achievement that reflects the collective efforts of teams and departments across the Bank. Our integrated institutional approach has helped foster a corporate culture in which sustainability is firmly embedded in decision-making,” Hanna added.

Building on this Achievement

Hanna affirmed that NBK will continue to build on this achievement by advancing sustainable finance initiatives, strengthening climate, environmental and social risk management, and enhancing transparency and disclosure. These efforts will further support the Bank’s role in advancing sustainable development and creating a lasting positive impact on the economy and society.

This achievement adds to NBK’s extensive record of international recognition, reflecting the success of its strategy to embed responsible banking practices and strengthen its position among financial institutions demonstrating a strong commitment to sustainability standards at both regional and international levels.

The MSCI upgrade also marks another significant addition to the numerous international awards and recognitions NBK has received for its sustainability efforts over the years. These include accolades from leading global institutions recognizing the Bank’s achievements in sustainable finance, corporate governance, risk management and social responsibility. This continued recognition reinforces NBK’s standing as a regional benchmark for responsible banking and its ability to balance financial growth with a positive and sustainable impact on the economy, society and the environment.

Held at The Arena-Grand Hyatt Kuwait

Kuwait Finance House reinforces leadership in national talent acquisition with participation in ‘Watheefti 2026’

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 22: Reaffirming its commitment to nurturing national talent and empowering Kuwaiti youth, Kuwait Finance House (KFH) participated in the 5th edition of the “Watheefti 2026” career fair. Held at The Arena-Grand Hyatt Kuwait, the event took place under the patronage and in the presence of the Minister of State for Youth and Sports Affairs, Dr. Tariq Al-Jalahma.

KFH’s participation underscores its pivotal role in supporting Kuwaiti youth by opening broader career horizons in banking and the wider financial market. The Bank actively seeks to recruit top-tier graduates and seasoned professionals, aligning with its strategy to invest in national human capital.

Meanwhile, this participation holds particular significance given KFH’s stellar 83% Kuwaitization rate across its workforce. This achievement reflects the Bank’s steadfast dedication to fostering an engaging, inspiring work environment that accelerates the professional growth and leadership potential of national talent.

During the three-day event, a specialized team from KFH’s Human Resources was on-site to connect directly with job seekers and graduates. HR team answered inquiries regarding available career pathways, introduced applicants to KFH’s corporate culture and competitive benefits, and highlighted tailored training programs designed to qualify local talent.



Minister of State for Youth and Sports Affairs, Dr. Tariq Al-Jalahma, at the Kuwait Finance House (KFH) pavilion, accompanied by the Acting Group Chief Human Resources Officer at KFH, Ahmad Alhammad.

Furthermore, the HR team guided candidates through the recruitment process and entry requirements, helping them identify banking roles that best match their qualifications and long-term career aspirations.

The career fair brought together a select group of Kuwait’s leading public and private entities to empower youth, foster professional growth, and highlight high-potential career opportunities.

The goals of Watheefti 2026 career fair align with KFH’s strategy to foster a private-sector career culture and inspire young talent to embrace the sector’s vital role in driving sustainable economic development, in step with national goals and future aspirations.

In collaboration with the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM), the career fair also aims to encourage young Kuwaitis to explore private-sector opportunities. By highlighting competitive advantages, career progression paths, and dispelling common misconceptions around job security, the initiative works to increase national participation across key economic sectors.

The event featured over 120 companies across 14 vital sectors, offering a comprehensive lineup of networking sessions, direct job interviews, and skill-building workshops, all aimed at equipping Kuwaiti youth with the practical and professional skills required to excel in today’s modern workplace.



Boursa Kuwait

General index down 39.19 pts

Boursa Kuwait closes lower

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 22, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait closed lower on Thursday, with its general index declining 39.19 points, or 0.47 percent, to 8,290.81 points.

A total of 229.8 million shares changed hands through 23,708 cash transactions, valued at KD 59.6 million, equivalent to approximately USD 183.5 million.

The main market index fell 34.30 points, or 0.41 percent, to 8,278.92 points. Trading in the market comprised 125.2 million shares across 10,800 transactions worth KD 18.7

million, or about USD 57.5 million.

The premier market index dropped 42.27 points, or 0.48 percent, to 8,723.60 points, with 104.5 million shares traded through 12,908 transactions valued at KD 40.9 million, approximately USD 125.9 million.

Meanwhile, the Main 50 Index declined 13.65 points, or 0.15 percent, to close at 9,086.19 points. It recorded trading in 105.2 million shares through 8,111 transactions worth KD 15.3 million, roughly USD 47.12 million.



A man talks on his mobile phone near an electronic board displaying Indonesia Composite Index at the Indonesia Stock Exchange in Jakarta, Friday, Oct. 16, 2026. (AP Photo/Tatan Syuflana)

Indonesia defends market status amid MSCI concerns

JAKARTA, Oct 22, (AP): Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto rejected a warning from Morgan Stanley Capital International that could lead to the country’s stock market being downgraded, saying his country would not be pressured by external parties.

Prabowo delivered a fiery speech at a gathering of his Cabinet on Wednesday, accusing the New York-based global index provider of attempting to pressure Indonesia after it said last week it was considering downgrading the country’s equity market as a “standalone” market.

“Our country continues to face all sorts of disturbances, including the MSCI. They are trying to intimidate us,” Prabowo told his Cabinet in a speech broadcast on the government’s official YouTube channel.

“I simply want to tell MSCI: the Indonesian nation fears no one and will never back down,” Prabowo said. “We have the strength, the courage and we are willing to make sacrifices, and we refuse to surrender.”

MSCI said on Oct. 15 it opened a consultation on a proposal to downgrade Indonesia’s market status. It said it was weighing ejecting Indonesia from “emerging” status and into the “standalone” status, which

could cause multi-billion-dollar capital outflows.

The index provider said its concerns center on coordinated trading practices in Indonesia’s stock market and whether authorities have taken sufficient steps to address them. It said its assessments are based on transparent and rules-based methodologies.

The warning has rattled investors and contributed to a sharp sell-off in Indonesian stocks over the past two trading sessions. A downgrade could reduce Indonesia’s attractiveness to international investors and potentially prompt capital outflows from funds that track emerging market indexes.

“MSCI will continue to monitor developments in the Indonesian market and engage with market participants and authorities,” the company said in a statement.

A government spokesperson, Syahganda Nainggolan, said Thursday that Prabowo’s remarks were not intended as a challenge to MSCI but as an invitation to dialogue, provided it takes place without pressure or coercion.

“The president highly values constructive engagement and dialogue with rating institutions such as MSCI,” Nainggolan said.

Tower platform begins with 4,000 towers

Zain & Ooredoo unite Kuwait, Qatar tower portfolios

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 22: Mobile Telecommunications Company K.S.P.C. (“Zain Group”; ticker: ZAIN) and Ooredoo Q.P.S.C. (“Ooredoo”; ticker: ORDS) today announced the first closing of their regional tower transaction, bringing together the initial tower portfolios within a regional tower platform jointly owned by Zain Group and Ooredoo Group, each holding a 50% stake.

The first closing combines the tower assets of Zain Kuwait (ITK) and Ooredoo Qatar (Al Abraj) within the platform. Together, these portfolios comprise approximately 4,000 towers.

The transaction is expected to create significant value through greater scale, capital efficiencies and a dedicated operating model focused on passive telecommunications infrastructure. As it expands, the tower platform will support the delivery of infrastructure-as-a-service, creating opportunities for operators to access infrastructure in a more capital-efficient manner while supporting the continued development of the region’s digital infrastructure.

Additional tower portfolios are expected to be integrated progressively into the platform, subject to applicable closing conditions and required regulatory and other approvals.

Bader Al-Kharafi, Zain Vice-Chairman & Group CEO, said:

“This first closing of the tower platform marks a defining step in the evolution of digital infrastructure for both Zain and Ooredoo. It reflects our shared strategy of creating focused, scalable and sustainable platforms that unlock greater value from our assets while supporting the reduction of the region’s carbon footprint.”

“We believe this tower platform will play an increasingly important role in strengthening our respective digital foundations and enabling the next wave of connectivity, innovation and economic growth for the communities we proudly serve. We thank the regulatory authorities in Kuwait for their visionary support in the approval process.”

Aziz Aluthman Fakhroo, Group Chief Executive Officer of Ooredoo Group, said: “Completing this first closing marks an important milestone in building a regional tower platform designed to create significant value, with a clear path to expansion through additional market contributions.”

“With this milestone, we are now executing across every digital infrastructure segment identified in our strategy as we continue building a leading regional portfolio.”

“We thank the State of Qatar’s Communications Regulatory Authority and the Ministry of Municipality for their support and for contributing to a conducive regulatory environment throughout the approval process.”



Zain and Ooredoo complete first tower deal.

- Zain Kuwait (ITK) and Ooredoo Qatar (Al Abraj) tower portfolios combined within the platform
- Zain and Ooredoo each hold a 50% stake in the regional platform
- Platform designed to improve capital efficiency and support regional digital infrastructure development and a lower carbon footprint

Ooredoo and Zain will retain their respective active telecommunications infrastructure, including the technology, software and intellectual property required to operate and manage their telecommunications networks.

About Zain Group

Zain is a leading telecommunications operator across eight markets in the Middle East and Africa providing mobile voice, data and enterprise services to 51.9 million active customers as of 30 June, 2026. With a commercial presence in Kuwait, Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and South Sudan; The Group’s one-stop digital and ICT solutions provider, ZainTECH, with regional headquarters in the UAE and KSA, is playing a key role in the transformation of enterprise and government clientele across the MENA region. UAE and Oman based, Zain Omantel International (ZOI) is revolutionizing the international telecommunications wholesale landscape as the premier wholesale powerhouse serving regional

operators, international carriers, and global hyperscalers. In Morocco, Zain has a 15.5% stake in ‘INWI’, through a joint venture. Zain is listed on the Boursa Kuwait (stock ticker: ZAIN). For more information please email info@zain.com or visit: www.zain.com

About Ooredoo

Ooredoo Group is a leading international communications company building the region’s most advanced digital infrastructure - spanning leading wireless and fiber networks, AI-ready data centres, cloud & AI compute platforms, subsea cable systems, and platform businesses like Fintech. Operating in nine markets across the Middle East, North Africa, and Southeast Asia, Ooredoo serves nearly 150 million customers, enabling digital transformation at scale. As of 31 December 2025, Ooredoo generated full-year Revenue of QAR 24.6 billion. Its shares are listed on the Qatar Stock Exchange and the Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange.

Sinking AI stocks undercut markets worldwide as oil climbs to its highest since May

NEW YORK, Oct 22, (AP): Drops for stocks in the artificial-intelligence industry are dragging markets down worldwide on Thursday, while oil prices hit their highest levels since May on worries about the war with Iran.

The S&P 500 sank 1% following even sharper losses in Asia, whose markets are full of AI and other technology stocks. The Nasdaq composite was down 2%, as of noon Eastern time, but stocks outside of tech did better, and the Dow Jones Industrial Average was down a modest 14 points, or less than 0.1%.

AI-related stocks have been shaky on worries that their boom may be under threat because of how expensive it’s become to borrow money to build data centers and buy more AI chips. Concerns also remain that stock prices simply shot too high in their yearslong frenzy, even though companies in the industry continue to report growth.

Lam Research, whose equipment and services help make semiconductors, reported gains in profit and revenue for the summer that were slightly stronger than analysts expected, for example. Usually, that helps boost a stock’s price, but Lam Research’s tumbled 10%.

It gave a range for its forecast for profit this quarter whose midpoint was slightly below analysts’ expect-



Options trader Anthony Spina works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange, Wednesday, Jan. 7, 2026. (AP Photo/Richard Drew, File)

tations. Its stock also came into the day with a 52.4% surge for the year so far, nearly quadruple the already healthy gain for the overall S&P 500, leaving plenty of room for potential disappointment.

Other big tech stocks were unsettled following their own quarterly reports that included at least some encouraging nuggets.

Meta Platforms, which is pushing its Muse AI agent, lost 5.4% after reporting stronger revenue for the

latest quarter than analysts expected, though its profit fell short. The company behind Facebook and Instagram also said it’s creating a new class of stock to raise money to pay for AI investments and other expenses.

Tesla slipped 0.8% after flipping between gains and losses in the morning. It reported a stronger profit for the summer than analysts expected, though its revenue was weaker than forecast.

The global tide against AI stocks

knocked Nvidia down 3.7%. Because it’s the largest stock on Wall Street by total value, the chip giant was the heaviest weight on the S&P 500.

CoreWeave, which has borrowed money to buy Nvidia’s AI chips that it rents out to customers over the cloud, has been particularly shaky in recent weeks because of worries about its debt. It dropped 7.8%, though it’s swung between wide gains and losses of roughly 4% within each of the last two days.

The weakness for AI and other tech stocks began in Asia, where South Korea’s Kospi tumbled 3.5%, Hong Kong’s Hang Seng dropped 3% and Japan’s Nikkei 225 sank 2.7%.

Also weighing on global stock markets was a jump in oil prices.

The price for a barrel of Brent crude oil rose 2.2% to \$111.19 after touching its highest level in five months. It’s at the high end of the \$97 to \$112 range it’s been yo-yoing through in October on uncertainty about when the war with Iran will allow the global energy industry to return to normal.

In Europe, France’s CAC 40 stock index fell to one of the continent’s sharpest losses with a drop of 1.4%. It has fewer tech stocks than Asian or U.S. indexes, but it was hurt by another jump in yields for French government bonds.

Experts cast doubt on Venezuela’s longtime claim of 300 billion barrels of oil reserves

CARACAS, Oct 22, (AP): A single figure sets Venezuela apart from the rest of the world: 303 billion barrels of so-called proven oil reserves. But experts say the country’s estimate is inherently problematic and far from proven - rooted in exaggerated, aging data from a corrupt government.

The number has long been touted by politicians and investors as an important measure of untapped energy potential, most recently by President Donald Trump’s administration in detailing a sweeping deal for the U.S. to take control of some Venezuelan reserves.

But a more realistic estimate of the country’s proven reserves - a gold standard metric, representing the amount of oil that can reasonably be extracted under current conditions - is about one-third of what it has reported, half a dozen experts told The Associated Press. They put the likely figure at 60 to 120 billion barrels, a vast amount but not enough for Venezuela to remain the world’s largest holder of reserves.

The distinction is an important one as Venezuela and the U.S. attempt to attract new investment into the country’s dilapidated oil industry, and it suggests that the deal Trump announced in August claiming the U.S. would ultimately control more than 65 billion barrels of Venezuela’s proven oil reserves is much less profitable than he asserted.

“That’s a funny, funny proposal,” Evanan Romero, a former Venezuela energy official now based in Houston, said of the deal, adding that he believes the Trump administration didn’t fully research the South American country’s claims before wading in. “If the U.S. government called them and asked them to testify to how they did the procedure - well, the whole world will know that that’s a funny number, an absolute lie.”

Venezuela’s government didn’t respond to a request for comment from AP.

Trump has said that under the deal, the U.S. will control 65 billion barrels of proven reserves - a figure exceeding the entirety of U.S. crude reserves. He’s repeatedly cited the 65 billion barrels number and called the oil deal the biggest in history, a way to refill U.S. strategic reserves and lower gas prices that surged during the Iran war.

But experts say the U.S. is gaining access to a mix of sites that are nearly depleted or totally undeveloped, with an expected output a fraction of what Trump claimed. Some of the oil fields are deep within the Orinoco Belt, a virtual wilderness in central-eastern Venezuela posing major technical challenges.

“We cannot believe the 65 billion. It’s impossible,” Romero said, adding that some firms have abandoned these fields because of the difficulties.

The White House hasn’t publicly disclosed how it arrived at the 65 billion figure and didn’t answer questions



President Donald Trump, flanked by Vice President JD Vance, left, and Secretary of State Marco Rubio, speaks during a meeting with oil executives in the East Room of the White House, Jan. 9, 2026, in Washington. (AP Photo/ Evan Vucci, File)

from AP. A statement from White House spokesperson Taylor Rogers defended the deal and Trump’s assertions.

“This historic deal marks a major step toward stabilizing Venezuela’s economy after years of hyperinflation and almost no new investment, while more than doubling the United States’ oil reserves,” Rogers said.

Luisa Palacios, a former Citgo chair, said she suspects the figure announced by the administration represents oil stored underground, not proven reserves. Under that scenario, she said, the proven reserves would probably be about 10% to 12% of 65 billion, or around 6.5 billion.

“Is that 65 billion barrels assuming a 20% recovery rate?” said Palacios, now an energy researcher at Columbia University. “That’s the thing that I cannot say. And so that’s why there are questions around it.”

Francisco Monaldi, a Venezuelan oil expert at Rice University, estimated that 10 billion to 15 billion barrels would be classified as proven reserves in the short term - far short of Trump’s estimate.

The oil the U.S. would control, according to officials in both countries, is in 17 fields under the control of a joint venture between the U.S. and Venezuela-based North American Blue Energy Partners, or NABEP.

Publicly traded oil companies are required to report estimates of proven reserves in annual reports using strict definitions provided by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. NABEP isn’t publicly traded.

The calculations behind Venezuela’s claim of more than 303 billion reserve barrels began over a decade ago.

In the mid-2000s, then-President Hugo Chávez set out to tally reserves in the Orinoco Belt, amid increasing global oil prices and virtually unrestricted government spending. It became a multiyear effort, with state-owned companies from Brazil, Iran, China, Spain and other countries invited to help calculate the reserves, and a U.S.-based firm hired to study them.

But the government never provided detailed explanations for the conclusions. Some experts and observers have questioned them since.

“Those were funny numbers that were cooked by Hugo Chávez and his minister of energy at that time,” Romero said.

Monaldi agreed: “They are inflated by a factor of nearly three.”

The U.S.-based firm hired by Chávez estimated Venezuela had more than 1 trillion barrels of oil under the

Orinoco Belt’s surface but never calculated its proven reserves, or the amount with a 90% chance of being extracted. Chávez’s government made that calculation itself. The firm, Ryder Scott, refused to sign off on the figure, ultimately abandoning its work, and didn’t provide comment to AP.

In its 2011 annual report, Venezuela’s state-owned oil company said its proven reserves jumped by a stunning 82 billion barrels, to nearly 300 billion. The company - Petróleos de Venezuela S.A., or PDVSA - attributed it to “adjustments due to the revision of recovery” rates. PDVSA didn’t provide additional details; its operations, statistics and finances have been shrouded in secrecy for years.

With that extraordinary jump, Venezuela surpassed Saudi Arabia as the world’s largest holder of proven reserves in OPEC’s annual reporting.

Experts believe an accurate recovery rate for Venezuela’s oil reserves today is about 10% overall and even lower - 5% to 8% - in the Orinoco Belt, which has become an investment priority for acting President Delcy Rodríguez and the White House.

The oil there is thicker than most conventional crude; it doesn’t easily flow into wells. Producers could use advanced technology to increase the recovery rate, but that requires major investments, which companies are hesitant to make in a country led by a government with a history of breaking contracts and current instability. Rodríguez’s term expired in July, and no elections are scheduled.

OPEC has accepted the country’s proven reserves calculations and placed it atop the list of proven reserves every year since 2011.

OPEC - comprising a dozen countries, with Venezuela as a founding member - didn’t respond to a request for comment.

OPEC’s 2026 report sets Venezuela’s proven reserves at 303.7 billion barrels, which includes reserves in the Orinoco Belt and other oil-producing regions. Saudi Arabia ranked No. 2, with 267 billion barrels, followed by Iran, with 208 billion.

Despite widespread skepticism, the 300 billion figure has stuck. Both Chávez’s successors - the now-deposed Nicolás Maduro and Rodríguez - have cited it repeatedly. So has the political opposition, including Nobel laureate María Corina Machado. The ruling party for 27 years also used the figure to secure multibillion-dollar loans from China and Russia.

Experts said private investors considering Venezuela options will want to see accurate data from Rodríguez’s government. The lack of transparency, they said, only adds to investors’ hesitation.

“Any country that reports a reserve figure that never changes over time - that smells extremely fishy,” Monaldi said.

Canada unveils \$6.2 billion plan

Carney says Trump tariffs raised costs, upended Canada-US trade

TORONTO, Oct 22, (AP): Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney said Wednesday that U.S. President Donald Trump’s tariffs have driven up costs for American families and upended a decades-old trade relationship as he unveiled a multibillion-dollar plan to shield Canada’s manufacturing heartland from the trade war.

Carney also said he spoke with Trump for “quite some time” about issues including trade, as the U.S. Embassy in Canada accused Canadian politicians of seeking to influence American politics ahead of next month’s midterm elections. Carney and Ontario Premier Doug Ford rejected suggestions of improper interference.

Trump has openly said he wants automakers to move production from Canada to the United States, threatening an industry deeply integrated across the border for decades.

“U.S. tariffs have upended a trade bargain that’s existed for decades,” Carney said. “They’ve raised costs for American families while putting Ontario workers and businesses at a disadvantage and under a cloud of uncertainty.”

Carney said an integrated North American auto industry would benefit both countries but acknowledged that it may no longer be a priority for Washington. “Their approach has changed,” he said. “So must ours.”

Carney said the conversation covered Iran, the Middle East and some trade issues. They discussed Ukraine days earlier. He gave no indication of a breakthrough but said Canada remains ready to negotiate.

Trade negotiations collapsed in August after the countries appeared close to a deal. Trump subsequently imposed 50% tariffs on about \$20 billion in Canadian goods, prompting Canadian retaliation.

“It’s clear that Canada’s relationship with the United States has changed permanently,” Ford said. “No matter what happens in the midterms, no matter who sits in the White House, we’re not going back to the way things were.”

Trump’s trade war and repeated threats to make Canada the 51st U.S. state have fueled a surge in Canadian nationalism. Carney has made reducing Canada’s dependence on the United States a priority, setting



Canada Prime Minister Mark Carney and Ontario Premier Doug Ford, not shown, participate in a joint news conference on Parliament Hill in Ottawa, on Wednesday, Oct. 21, 2026. (Justin Tang/The Canadian Press via AP)

a goal of doubling exports to other markets over the next decade.

Carney and Ford announced the 8.7 billion Canadian dollar (\$6.2 billion) plan to support steelmakers, automakers and critical mineral development in Ontario, Canada’s manufacturing heartland.

The plan includes CA\$5.2 billion (\$3.7 billion) over five years for steelmakers and CA\$2.5 billion (\$1.8 billion) for automakers, including CA\$1.5 billion (\$1.1 billion) from Ottawa.

The announcement comes as U.S.-owned steelmaker Cleveland-Cliffs announced layoffs at its Hamilton, Ontario, plant, highlighting the toll of Trump’s tariffs on Canadian manufacturing.

Also Wednesday, the U.S. Embassy issued a fact sheet accusing Canadian politicians of seeking to interfere in American elections.

The statement singled out Industry Minister Mélanie Joly for discussing retaliatory tariffs targeting Republican states and Ford for airing a U.S. advertisement featuring former President Ronald Reagan criticizing tariffs. Trump abruptly canceled trade talks with Canada after the ad aired during the World Series in October 2025.

The embassy also cited 11 Canadians charged with illegally voting in U.S. elections between 2012 and 2026, without linking the cases to Canada’s government.

The administration has launched a whole-of-government effort to investigate and prosecute noncitizen voting, something election experts and administrators characterize as a comparatively small issue. The Department of Justice says that since the start of 2026 it has arrested more than 200 people for illegally voting as noncitizens in past elections, a vanishingly small number compared to the country’s tens of millions of regular voters.

“The items featured in the U.S. embassy’s ‘fact sheet’ are not genuine examples of foreign interference and the implicit assumption that Canada could significantly alter the outcome of the midterms is absurd,” said Daniel Béland, a political science professor at McGill University in Montreal.

“Accusing Canada of foreign interference ahead of the midterms could pave the way to ‘Blame Canada’ rhetoric after the electoral results are in.”

Carney said Canada was responding to U.S. tariffs, while Ford denied any interest in interfering in American elections.

Carney said Canadian auto exports to the U.S. have fallen more than 10%, while U.S. exports to Canada have dropped more than 20%.

“Tariffs make both our industries weaker and reduce choice for our families,” Carney said.

Energy, defense cooperation in discussion

Mark Carney lands in Turkey to forge a new partnership as Canada looks beyond the US

ANKARA, Oct 22, (AP): Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney arrived in Turkey on Thursday for a two-day visit seeking to forge a new partnership as Canada looks to reduce its dependence on the United States.

Carney is making the first bilateral visit by a Canadian prime minister to Turkey, although he traveled to Ankara in July to attend the NATO summit. He is scheduled to meet with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and other officials before traveling to Istanbul for talks with Turkish business groups as the two countries seek to deepen trade ties.

The Canadian prime minister has sought to diversify partnerships and reduce reliance on the United States amid an escalating trade war with U.S. President Donald Trump, marked by U.S.

tariffs on Canadian goods, retaliatory measures by Canada and statements questioning Canadian sovereignty.

In an interview with Turkey’s state-run Anadolu Agency, Canada’s Ambassador to Turkey, Marcel Lebleu, said this week that the visit’s main purpose was to “launch a strategic partnership through a joint declaration by the two leaders.”

Talks would focus on cooperation in energy, nuclear plants, sustainable mining and the defense industry.

The two countries would also hold negotiations on a free trade agreement, he said.

Turkey is looking to build a second nuclear power plant on the Black Sea coast, in addition to one currently being built by Russia’s Rusatom on the

Mediterranean coast.

In a sign of improving ties, Canada lifted its ban on the export of weapons to Turkey in 2024. It had imposed the restrictions following Turkey’s military incursions into Syria and over Turkey’s support to Azerbaijan in its conflict against Armenia, including providing equipment that used Canadian-made parts.

A statement from Carney’s office said two-way trade between Turkey and Canada increased by 50% in the past five years.

It said that during the visit, Carney will emphasize opportunities “to expand that growing trade relationship in priority sectors, including energy, aerospace, advanced technologies, and mining and critical minerals.”

Trump administration seeks review of Massachusetts offshore wind permit

WASHINGTON, Oct 22, (AP): The Trump administration is asking a federal judge to let it reconsider a major federal permit granted for a large offshore wind farm, making it the fourth project the Republican leadership has targeted in recent months.

The Interior Department wants to reconsider its own approval for the “construction and operations plan” for the New England Wind project off of Massachusetts. The plan was approved in 2024 during the Biden administration. The Justice Department said in a filing Tuesday that the court should send the permit back to Interior, because the plan was approved despite major adverse impacts.

Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse, a Rhode Island Democrat, warned that the administration now risks derailing a legislative effort to speed up permitting reviews for new energy and infrastructure projects. The Senate reached a bipartisan deal in September on a permitting bill, which has not yet been voted on.

“This is how you blow up a permitting deal,” he said in a statement Wednesday.

The Trump administration is using executive orders, agency actions and the courts to try to stop the development of offshore wind, a technology that President Donald Trump has attacked as “ugly” and unreliable compared to fossil fuels such as coal and natural gas. Officials started buying back offshore wind leases after federal judges blocked its efforts to stop construction on five major East Coast

projects.

The Interior Department also wants to reconsider its prior approval of the construction and operations plan for Revolution Wind, a wind farm for Rhode Island and Connecticut that has finished construction, and for the Maryland Offshore Wind Project, which has not yet begun construction.

In August, a judge granted the administration’s request to reconsider the permit for the stalled New Jersey project Atlantic Shores. That project had been halted soon after Trump returned to office because co-owner Shell walked away from it.

Last year, a federal judge said the Trump administration could reconsider the permit granted to the Massachusetts project SouthCoast Wind days before the president’s inauguration to a second term.

Pasha Feinberg, an offshore wind strategist at the Natural Resources Defense Council, said the Trump administration’s attacks on offshore wind are escalating at a time when Americans are struggling with surging utility bills.

“It’s long past time for the Trump administration to realize its war on clean energy is backfiring,” Feinberg said.

The National Ocean Industries Association, which represents offshore industries including oil and wind, said it’s concerned about the uncertainty that comes with reopening federal approvals for offshore energy projects, particularly those already under construction or in operation.

“The Senate has made meaningful progress on deep reforms that would provide greater certainty for energy projects across the board,” said the association’s president, Erik Milito. The administration’s actions “underscore why Congress needs to get this done,” he said.

The plans for New England Wind call for up to 129 wind turbines that could supply as much as 2,600 megawatts of clean energy to power more than 900,000 homes each year. The developer, Avangrid, declined to comment Wednesday. Construction has not begun.

The project’s federal approval was challenged in court by ACK for Whales, a group of Nantucket, Massachusetts, residents who say they are concerned about the negative impacts of offshore wind development. The lawsuit in District Court for the District of Columbia contends that the federal government failed to comply with numerous statutes.

The federal defendants in the case filed a motion Tuesday stating that remand of the permit is warranted, so Interior could make a new decision. The government also told the court in 2025 it wanted to reconsider New England Wind’s approval.

Interior said in a statement Wednesday that the latest filing complied with a briefing schedule and was not announcing a policy change. Its position on offshore wind has remained consistent throughout this administration, the statement said.

Lowest level in three months

US jobless claims fell to 194,000 last week

WASHINGTON, Oct 22, (AP): U.S. unemployment claims fell to 194,000 last week, the fewest in three months and another sign that layoffs remain low and most Americans enjoy extraordinary job security.

The Labor Department reported that claims were down from 200,000 the week before.

Applications for jobless benefits are a proxy for layoffs, and economists watch them closely because they can provide signs of where the job market is headed. So far this year, claims have remained at historically low levels, never topping 230,000 in a single week.

The four-week average of claims, which strips out week-to-week ups and downs, dipped to 197,750.

The American job market has remained sturdy despite higher energy prices that have squeezed businesses and consumers since the fighting with Iran began Feb. 28. Most companies are confident enough in the economy and their sales to hold onto workers. At the same time, hiring has been sluggish, resulting in a “low-hire, low-fire” job market. Last month, the unemployment rate ticked up to a still-low 4.2%.

So far this year, employers - companies, government agencies and nonprofits - have been adding an average of 68,000 jobs a month. That is an improvement on a lackluster 2025 when monthly job creation averaged 9,700 as high interest rates and President Donald Trump’s unpredictable trade policies discouraged hiring.

Hiring remains well below the 166,000 monthly jobs created, on average, in 2023 and 2024, and the 491,000 a month recorded during the 2021-2022 hiring boom that followed COVID-19 lockdowns.



A hiring sign is displayed in Northbrook, Ill., Tuesday, Oct. 20, 2026. (AP Photo/Nam Y. Huh)

Monica Gunnella on MonRoi Roma’s handmade path to the Gulf

Putting the soul in sole

MONROI
ROMA



Bolivia Boots: calfskin leather boots with scratch-resistant treatment.



Cleopatra Sandals: sandals inspired by the Queen of Egypt, hand-assembled.



Licorice Stick and Licorice Swirl: lambskin leather bags with hand-woven details.



Alaska Boots: calfskin leather boots with hand-dyed colour finish.



Licorice Stick bag and Cleopatra Sandals

I Love at first step

By Marlon Aquino Malinao
Managing Editor, Arab Times

At a time when luxury is often measured by logos and volume, MonRoi Roma is choosing a quieter and more personal route. The Roman footwear house builds each pair around family memory, travel and a deep respect for hand-made craft.

In an exclusive interview with Arab Times, founder Monica Gunnella explains why she believes Kuwait and the wider Gulf are ready for luxury built on substance rather than spectacle.

A name born from love

MonRoi Roma did not begin in a corporate office. It began at home, with a family whose affection is written into the brand itself.

The name and rose emblem are inspired by Gunnella’s parents. Her father calls her mother “Ma Reine,” French for “my queen,” while her mother calls him “Mon Roi,” meaning “my king.” The rose in the logo recalls the family garden from which her father has always picked roses for her mother.

“That rose represents her and holds all the love that binds them together,” Gunnella says. “In our logo, the masculine and the feminine live side by side.”

That personal history has become the heart of the brand. From her father, she says, she learned the value of artisanship, ethics and true quality. From her mother, she inherited an eye for elegance, strength, determination and vision.

Rome as a creative compass

For Gunnella, Rome is more than the place where MonRoi Roma was founded. It is part of the brand’s identity.

She describes the Italian capital as a cradle of luxury leather goods, where artisan knowledge has been passed down through generations. In her view, craftsmanship in Rome is not simply a skill. It is a living inheritance.

“Here, craftsmanship is not a technique but a legacy lived through generations,” she says.

That sense of place shapes every collection. MonRoi Roma presents itself as an Italian artisanal house, creating refined footwear that reflects the elegance, detail and heritage associated with Italian making. Its pieces, including the signature Bolivia boot, are described by the brand as Italian made, with leather interiors, ultralight rubber soles and careful fitting.

Handmade, not manufactured

Every MonRoi Roma shoe begins with an idea and a careful choice of materials. From the upper to the sole and the final finishing, Gunnella insists that the work remains handmade.

The result, she believes, feels closer to a one of a kind object than to a mass produced product. Small natural variations are not imperfections to hide. They are proof that a human being made the shoe.

“Each shoe carries the soul of the artisan who devoted themselves to it,” she says. “These small, natural imperfections make it authentic and unrepeatable.”

This approach places MonRoi Roma firmly within the world of slow luxury. Gunnella sees fast fashion as a system that prioritizes quantity over quality, durability and ethics. Slow luxury, for her, is the opposite: a product made to last and to be valued over time.

“Those who buy MonRoi Roma are not buying something to throw away, but something that stays,” she says.

Travel, color and the latest collection

Travel is where every MonRoi Roma collection begins. Gunnella designs only after a journey has had time to settle within her, becoming something emotional and transformative.

The latest collection draws inspiration from Africa: its architecture, landscapes, spices, food and vivid colors. The

heels, materials and palette are meant to carry the memory of that journey into Roman craftsmanship.

“Every pair carries a memory of Africa, translated into Roman craftsmanship,” she says.

Two pieces best capture the collection for her. The Cleopatra sandal, inspired by Egypt, has clean lines, versatile laces and a conical heel created exclusively for the brand. Its design references the mastaba. The Bolivia, Hawaii and Amazonia boots, meanwhile, represent the house’s signature style: clean design, ultralight soles and carefully selected leather.

Designed for the Gulf woman

MonRoi Roma sees real potential in Kuwait and the wider GCC. Gunnella believes regional clients combine longstanding sophistication with a genuine appreciation for quality, beauty and a meaningful story.

“Kuwait and the wider Gulf are a truly captivating market for us,” she says. “Clients have a deep connection to quality luxury and an openness to brands that tell a genuine story.”

She also sees a clear change in how luxury is consumed across the region. Purchasing, she believes, is moving away from status and towards meaning. Today’s clients are well travelled, informed and increasingly drawn to pieces that reflect both their own identity and international refinement.

Comfort matters too. The brand uses breathable leathers and finishes designed with warmer climates in mind, while its lightweight soles are made to remain comfortable throughout the day.

A strategic Middle East

The Middle East is not simply another market for MonRoi Roma. Gunnella calls it a pillar of the brand’s long term international strategy.

Over the next five years, she hopes to make MonRoi Roma a recognised name in the region through carefully chosen boutiques in key markets such as Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates, a loyal community of clients, and capsule collections created specifically for women in the region.

She is especially interested in the idea of a capsule that brings Gulf culture and Roman craftsmanship together, or a collaboration with local talents who share the brand’s values.

“Whatever we create will stay true to who we are: handmade in Rome, with the same care for materials, detail and heritage,” she says.

Growth without compromise

For Gunnella, international growth must come through careful choices rather than rapid expansion. MonRoi Roma intends to keep production limited, materials faithful to its identity, and partners aligned with its values.

“Expanding does not mean stretching the supply chain or diluting the craft,” she says. “It means bringing Rome to the Gulf without ever changing what Rome is.”

Her goal is not simply to sell more shoes. It is to build lasting relationships with women who value craftsmanship, discretion and longevity. The greatest reward, she says, is seeing clients understand that they are buying more than footwear.

“There is history, passion and soul in what we make, and our clients can feel it,” she says.

Three words, one vision

Asked to describe MonRoi Roma in three words, Gunnella chooses quality, craftsmanship and elegance.

Her advice to young designers is equally clear: begin with the craft, not the market. Build strong roots, treat every detail as though it were the last, choose partners with care, and grow slowly.

“True luxury cannot be rushed,” she says. “Never compromise.”

For Kuwaiti and GCC readers, her message is simple. Behind every MonRoi Roma pair lies a family story, a Roman workshop and a belief that true luxury should be felt in every step.



Amazonia: knee-high suede boots, entirely handmade.



Afrodite and Bolivia: black Afroditte blazer in virgin wool, off-white Bolivia boots and Licorice Stick bag in lambskin leather.

Cello sings of more than survival

Gaza’s cellist plays on, finding music amid ruins of war

GAZA, Oct. 22, (Xinhua): On Gaza’s shore, I draw my bow across a cello that survived the bombing of our home. Its wooden body bears the scars of war, but it still makes music.

I do not want my identity to be reduced to a number in a death toll or to the image of a musician playing among ruins. I am a cellist, a visual designer, a young woman born and raised in Gaza who has spent years learning, creating, and building a life around art.

My name is Haifa Bassam Abu Shamla. I am 22 years old, a graduate of Al-Azhar University in Gaza, where I studied information technology and computer science, and one of the few cellists still playing in the enclave.

Perhaps in most people’s minds, the sound of Gaza is the weeping of loved ones, the cries of children, and the drone of unmanned aircraft and artillery fire. But beyond those sounds, I can still hear the whisper of the Mediterranean breeze, the song of the waves, and the melody of my beloved cello woven together.

I began my musical journey at the age of 11, when I joined the Edward Said National Conservatory of Music in Gaza in 2015. Over the years, the cello became much more than an instrument; it became a way to express emotions that I could not always put into words.

Growing up in Gaza meant living through repeated wars, uncertainty, and loss. But music existed alongside all of that. It gave me a space where I could remain connected to something that was mine.

When the war began in October 2023, that connection was suddenly taken away from me. My family was forced to flee. There was barely enough space in the car for clothes, bedding, and other necessities. There was no room for my cello. I had to leave it behind.

Forty-nine days after we fled, our home was bombed. The destruction of our home was not simply the loss of a building; we had spent more than 10 years building and renovating it into the home we wanted.

We had lived there for less than two years when the war took it from us in a matter of moments.

My father, a mechanical engineer, returned to see what he could repair. He was devastated by what he found.

“I am sitting here removing the rubble of the house I spent years building,” he told me, tears running down his face. “Ten years of hard work are gone. All that effort, all that exhaustion, all those years of trying to build something for us -- gone.”

About a year later, I finally returned to our home. It was a painful moment. The house was still standing, but it no longer felt like home -- its walls were burned and scarred



Palestinian artist Haifa Bassam Abu Shamla composes music at her residency in Gaza City, on Oct. 4, 2026. (Xinhua)

by helicopter fire, its rooms that once held our memories now empty and exposed.

But my cello was there, though badly damaged. The glue holding its wooden body together had melted; its soundboard was broken. Yet I decided to repair it without hesitation, though it cost around 200 U.S. dollars -- a small fortune in Gaza.

When I held it again, repaired and ready to play, it felt like recovering a part of myself.

My cello had become a mirror of Gaza itself -- scarred, damaged, but still here. According to a recent UN satellite assessment, approximately 82 percent of Gaza’s structures -- about 200,000 buildings -- have been damaged, with two-thirds of them destroyed.

A few months after I returned home, my family was forced to leave again. Once again, I had to leave my cello behind. This cycle continued through displacement after displacement.

During our most recent displacement, for the first time, there was enough room to take the one thing

that had accompanied me through so much of my life. So I took my cello with me, a reminder that my life was more than displacement, destruction, and survival.

As Gaza’s shoreline became crowded with displaced families, I began taking my cello to the beach and playing there. Along that shore, I played pieces that carried emotions of grief, fear, loss, and hope. Among them was John Williams’ theme from “Schindler’s List,” a piece associated with another historical tragedy. Playing it in Gaza connected different experiences of human suffering and reminded me why music can sometimes speak where words fail.

Even after the so-called “second phase” of the ceasefire was announced, little has changed in my daily life. The bombings are fewer, but they have not stopped. The crossings remain largely closed to many of the things people need -- not just food and medicine, but also the strings, rosin, and spare parts that keep my cello alive.

We have learned not to trust promises written on paper. We trust only what we can hold in our hands. For me, that is this battered wooden instrument that still, somehow, sings.

One moment has stayed with me. One day a child living in a displacement camp saw my cello. He had never seen an instrument like it before. When he learned that the cello was made of wood, he asked me whether I could give it to him because his family could use it as fuel for cooking or heating water.

That moment often reminds me of the enormous distance between the world of music and the reality of survival in Gaza. For me, the cello represents expression, memory, and identity. For someone struggling to find fuel, its wooden body becomes something as basic as warmth.

And yet, I still believe that art matters precisely because of this reality. War does not only destroy buildings. It also threatens people’s ability to imagine a future. That is why I continue to play.

I am the founder of “Beyond Gaza”, a multidisciplinary collective of young women artists from Gaza. Through our work -- blending music, visual art, and performance -- we aim to show that our identity is not defined solely by war and loss. We create because we are still alive, still dreaming, still capable of imagining something beyond survival.

I do not know when I will next stand on a proper stage before an audience gathered simply to celebrate music and life. But I know that I will keep playing.

If the world hears my cello, I hope it hears more than a story of struggle and survival. I hope it hears us -- still here, still imagining, still making music.

Music

‘Baby Beluga’ singer champions children

Raffi returns with new album ‘Love is Everywhere’

LOS ANGELES, Oct 22, (AP): Fifty years ago, Raffi was a struggling folk singer driving across Toronto, lugging boxes containing his debut children’s album, “Singable Songs for the Very Young,” hoping to convince stores to sell the record.

The album was a word-of-mouth hit and, coupled with 1980’s “Baby Beluga,” transformed the Egypt-born singer of Armenian descent into one of North America’s most famous children’s musicians. Raffi’s fun and heartwarming songs, including “Down By the Bay” and “Shake My Sillies Out,” remain a mainstay for parents and teachers of young children, even as the way kids consume music has changed significantly.

“Well, the technology changes; children don’t,” Raffi told The Associated Press in a recent interview via Zoom from his home in western Canada.

And the 78-year-old isn’t done yet. His latest album, “Love is Everywhere,” comes out Friday and features songs that celebrate individuality (“No One Like You”), as well as “ABC Democracy” — a pro-voting anthem that reflects his longstanding willingness to wade into politics and activism. He’s also marking the 50th anniversary of “Singable Songs” with a special reissue Nov. 13.

Raffi spoke to the AP about the enduring appeal of his music, why he once turned down a deal from the producers of “Shrek,” and his kinship with Ms. Rachel, the children’s entertainer who has been an outspoken advocate for kids in Gaza and those detained by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Remarks have been edited for clarity and brevity.

AP: What’s the process of writing a Raffi song in 2026? And how is it different from when you were working in the ‘70s?

RAFFI: What’s the same is that I’m considering my audience and what songs would appeal directly to them, and what songs would stretch the imagination of a child. And what’s different is that I’ve got 50 years of songwriting behind me right now, so I certainly feel confident, more so than ever, in what I’m doing.

It’s a good feeling to know that when I write and record a song now, it’ll have a long shelf life. My fans still tell me that “Baby Beluga” is the one song that will calm their child when needed, and I think, “Wow, that song came out, what, 46 years ago?”

AP: The new album is called “Love is Everywhere.” At a time when so much of what’s happening in the world is so frightening, is it harder to write such hopeful songs?

RAFFI: The theme of the album is the power of love. This album is a response to these times that, for so many of us, feel anxious and worrisome. And the fact is that love is everywhere. You can say, “How is that so?” And I would say to you, “Are there children everywhere? Yes. Is there love everywhere? Yes.”

It’s so wonderful that there are others echoing this call of love, and Ms. Rachel is doing this brilliantly. I’m such a champion of this kind of effusive expression of love and caring for every child.

AP: What’s your relationship with Ms. Rachel? I know you’ve defended her against some blowback she’s gotten, particularly regarding her comments about the crisis in Gaza.

RAFFI: Well, Ms. Rachel is a “Beluga grad” (Raffi’s term for children who grew up listening to his music). We had a wonderful video meeting about a year ago. I told her how happy I am with what she’s done on her YouTube offerings.

And then I saw her very brave stance on the rights of Palestinian children, like the right of any child, to live and thrive. When we say ev-



Raffi poses for a portrait on Thursday, Oct. 1, 2026, in Toronto. (AP)

ery child, we mean it. How would anyone deny the children of any region or any people the right to self-determination, to love and respect? I’m right there with Ms. Rachel. Her heart and my heart resonate well.

AP: When “Singable Songs” was released 50 years ago, kids were listening on record players or cassettes. Nowadays, they’re listening via Spotify or YouTube. Has that changed how kids listen to music?

RAFFI: Well, the technology changes; children don’t. It’s up to us adults, though, to make sure that the technology that children are surrounded by doesn’t interfere with the healthy development of their brains, hearts and imagination.

AP: One track that stood out to me from the new album was “ABC Democracy.” What was the inspiration for that song?

RAFFI: I wrote “ABC Democracy” a year ago and released it as a single. And then I found out that children loved that song. It must be because I wrote the best first line of a song ever: “A, B, C, Dee-mocracy!” They hear that, and they’re hooked because they love the ABCs. And then there can be this conversation with mom or dad as to, “Hey, what is this about?” Learning about our civic duties from a young age — who could ask for more than that?

AP: What do adults tend to sometimes forget or get wrong about kids?

RAFFI: You don’t need to talk down to a child. Children are very intelligent. They ask great questions. You should respect the intelligence of the young learner — keep in mind that young children are learning the most sophisticated tasks of language acquisition, syntax, grammar and conversational skills all without being in university.

AP: You’ve been clear about never wanting to exploit kids for cash through advertising, toys, etc. What offers have you left on the table?

RAFFI: You wouldn’t exploit those who you respect, right? Why would you exploit the innocence of a young child who isn’t able to appraise the sales pitch if you’re directly advertising or even indirectly to children through fast food joints?

It’s not fair to young children to have someone they look up to selling them things that they’re not old enough to understand.

So I’ve consistently left on the table all these offers, including one from the producers of “Shrek” who wanted to make a “Baby Beluga” film. We asked the question, “Will this movie be directly advertised through fast food joints?” “Oh yes,” they said. So we said, “No thank you. We don’t do that.”

Actor recognized for four decades in film

Tom Cruise to receive AFI life achievement award

LOS ANGELES, Oct 22, (AP): Tom Cruise is being celebrated with a life achievement award from the American Film Institute, AFI’s board of trustees said Wednesday. The award will be handed out at a gala tribute in Los Angeles at the Dolby Theatre on April 24 next year.

“Tom Cruise is a global icon,” said Kathleen Kennedy, chair of AFI’s board of trustees, in a statement. She praised Cruise’s commitment as an actor and producer and his belief in movies’ ability to bring people together.

Cruise, 64, has worked in film for more than four decades, starring in movies including “Risky Business,” “A Few Good Men,” “Jerry Maguire,” “Minority Report” and the “Mission: Impossible” series. He has received three Academy Award nominations for acting: best actor in



Tom Cruise arrives at the premiere of “Digger” on Monday, Sept. 28, 2026, in Los Angeles. (AP)

“Born on the Fourth of July” and “Jerry Maguire” and supporting actor for “Magnolia.”

As a producer, Cruise was nominated when “Top Gun: Maverick” received a best picture nomination.

Last year, he received an honorary Oscar at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences’ Governors Awards.

The AFI Life Achievement Award, established in 1973, recognizes a person whose work has advanced film and stood the test of time. Cruise will join a roster that includes John Ford, Bette Davis, Sidney Poitier, Steven Spielberg, Denzel Washington, Nicole Kidman and Eddie Murphy, who received the honor earlier this year.

Proceeds from the tribute gala support AFI’s education and arts initiatives.

Technology

Avoid the beach

Foldable phone care: Dos and don’ts for Apple’s new iPhone

NEW YORK, Oct 22, (AP): Apple’s first folding phone arrives in stores on Friday, bringing the advantages of a flexible display to iPhone loyalists. Such devices also have their own unique care and protection considerations.

Folding screen phones have their upsides. Owners can have a pocket-size device that expands into a bigger seamless screen and can also act as its own stand or tripod. But the technology also requires a bit more attention than a traditional smartphone.

Many users have reported shipping dates for preorders of the Duo are slipping into January, so buyers could face delays.

Apple hasn’t posted any online information yet on how to take care of the Duo, and the company didn’t respond to a request on whether it plans to. But rival phone makers like Samsung and Google that have been making folding devices for years have put out guidance on caring for the devices.

Here’s a look at what they advise:

Owners of traditional smartphones know it’s wise to get a screen protector to minimize damage to the glass.

For folding phones, it’s a little more complicated. The Duo, like many other folding phones, has both a rigid outer screen that doesn’t fold and a main folding inner screen. Protectors for the Duo’s outer screen are already available from Amazon and other retailers.

But it’s different for the main display. Samsung already adds a protective layer to the inner screen on its Galaxy Fold phones and Google does the same for its folding Pixel devices.

Google warns against removing or peeling back the pre-installed screen protector or adding your own. “Do not apply a third-party screen protector,” it says. Samsung advises taking its devices to a service center if the layer needs replacing.

Apple appears to be taking a similar tack with the Duo.

A company executive told an Italian influencer that the Duo will have a replaceable cover layer on the folding screen. “It’s actually replaceable, which is a really nice thing for the customer, that you can peel off that layer and get a new one,” Kate Bergeron, Apple’s vice president of hardware engineering, said in a video interview with the influencer.

In apparent confirmation, a tech YouTuber found that AppleCare’s service price list for the Duo phone lists a “cover layer” for \$19.

Apple’s press office didn’t respond to a request to confirm these details.

But do remember to get a protective case. They’re available from Apple and aftermarket manufacturers.

The main weak point of a folding phone is the hinge.

Hardware makers have come



The iPhone Duo is displayed during an announcement of new products on Sept. 9, 2026, on the Apple campus in Cupertino, Calif. (AP)

up with sophisticated mechanisms that allow phones to open and close, but these hinges still have tiny gaps that are vulnerable to debris.

“Don’t take it to the beach - they don’t like sand,” said Ben Wood, a tech analyst at FDM CCS Insight.

Chinese phone brand Honor says in online guidance that the rotating hinge on its folding phones “has small gaps that can allow sand and dust to enter.”

“These particles can cause damage to the screen and the hinge mechanism, leading to abnormal noises and potential malfunctions,” it says, and recommends not using the phone when it’s windy or dusty.

If a phone starts making unusual noises when folding, it’s best not to open or close it anymore because it could be a sign that grit has gotten into the mechanism.

Folding screens are softer and more flexible than standard smartphone screens. That also makes them more vulnerable.

Google recommends avoiding contact with “crumbs, fingernails and sharp objects.”

Samsung advises making sure there’s nothing between the screens like a card, a coin or a key that could “scratch or puncture the main screen.”

Folding phones typically have strong magnets on their edges to keep the screen closed, which will also attract anything metallic that can damage the screen.

You might even consider - as some device makers recommend - not keeping the phone in the same pocket or bag as your keys or coins.

Don’t bend the phone backward or use too much force when opening or closing it.

Honor, which sells phones everywhere but North America, recommends not opening or closing its phones when it’s very cold, because the screen can become brittle and crack more easily. And the company advises not leaving it closed for a long time, which can put stress on the screen and hinge.

And, of course, you should still follow general smartphone cleaning and maintenance practices to help your device last as long as possible.

Uzbekistan takes lead in global childhood cancer initiative

Samarkand summit charts new path for children’s well-being

By Marlon Aquino Malinao
Managing Editor, Arab Times

SAMARKAND, Uzbekistan, Oct 22: World leaders, first ladies, senior government officials and representatives of international organizations gathered in the historic Uzbek city of Samarkand on Wednesday for the opening of the World Summit on Investing in Children’s Well-being and the Second International Congress on Pediatric Oncology, calling for stronger global cooperation to protect children’s rights and ensure equal opportunities for every child.

Held under the theme “Investing in Children’s Well-being: A Pathway to Sustainable and Equitable Development for Future Generations,” the summit brings together representatives from more than 100 countries to advance practical solutions in social protection, healthcare, education and child safeguarding.

The gathering is advancing a central message: children’s well-being is not merely a social concern but a strategic investment in human capital, long-term economic growth and the sustainable development of societies.

The opening ceremony featured a greeting from Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, delivered by his press secretary, Asadov Sherzod Ikromovich. An address by United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres was delivered by UN Resident Coordinator in Uzbekistan Sabine Machl, highlighting the international significance of the gathering.

Speakers included Uzbekistan’s First Lady, Ziroat Mirziyoyeva; Najat Maalla M’jid, the UN Secretary-General’s Special Representative on Violence Against Children; and Shakhnoza Mirziyoyeva, First Deputy Director of Uzbekistan’s National Agency for Social Protection. First Ladies and representatives of participating countries also addressed the importance of protecting children’s rights and improving their well-being.

A video message from UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed further underscored the need for international cooperation.

Global initiative for children with cancer

One of the most significant developments emerging from the parallel International Congress on Pediatric Oncology was the announcement of a new Global Network bringing together First Ladies and spouses of heads of state to strengthen international cooperation in support of children with serious and life-threatening illnesses, including cancer.

Carlos Rodriguez-Galindo, vice-president of St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital and director of St. Jude Global in the United States, announced the initiative, which aims to facilitate the exchange of expertise, promote collaboration and improve support for affected children and their families.

Ziroat Mirziyoyeva was appointed chair of the Global Network for a two-year term. The ceremony marking her assumption of the position took place during the International Congress on Childhood Cancer.

The appointment recognizes Uzbekistan’s efforts to develop pediatric oncology services and Mirziyoyeva’s role in supporting children with cancer, improving access to quality medical care and promoting conditions that allow every child to grow and develop, regardless of personal circumstances.

The initiative adds a practical dimension to the summit’s discussions by seeking to connect international leadership with coordinated action for children facing some of the most serious health challenges.

The congress is also focusing on early detection, effective treatment and improved experiences in the diagnosis and management of childhood cancer, with international medical partnerships expected to play a central role.

Recognition of Uzbekistan’s child welfare efforts

Another notable moment at the opening ceremony was the presentation of a World Health Organization certificate to Ziroat Mirziyoyeva, who chairs the Board of Trustees of the Zamin International Public Foundation. The certificate was presented by WHO representative Dr. Natasha Azzopardi-Muscat.

The recognition drew attention to Uzbekistan’s efforts to advance children’s health and strengthen cooperation with international partners.

Uzbekistan is hosting the summit through its National Agency for Social Protection under the President, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Preschool and School Education, and the Zamin International Public Foundation. A global advisory committee comprising the UN special representative on violence against children, UNICEF, WHO and the World Bank supports the initiative.

From policy commitments to practical solutions

The summit’s plenary sessions are examining how governments can better integrate social protection, healthcare, education and



Group photo



Ziroat Mirziyoyeva, First Lady of the Republic of Uzbekistan



Emine Erdoğan, First Lady of the Republic of Türkiye



Nehmat Amoun, First Lady of the Lebanese Republic



Aigul Japarova, First Lady of the Kyrgyz Republic



Auxillia Mnangagwa, First Lady of the Republic of Zimbabwe



Tamara Vucić, former First Lady of Serbia



Shakhnoza Mirziyoyeva, First Deputy Director, National Agency for Social Protection under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan



Khalilur Rahman, President of the eighty-first session of the United Nations General Assembly



Najat Maalla M’jid, United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children



Carlos Rodriguez-Galindo, Executive Vice President, St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital

tion, healthcare, education and child protection systems to ensure

that support reaches children and families when it is needed most.

Discussions are focusing on five interconnected priorities: investing

in children as a driver of long-term development; identifying the needs

of vulnerable children and families early; strengthening mechanisms to prevent violence and other risks; improving the effectiveness of healthcare services; and expanding access to quality, inclusive early childhood development and education.

Participants are also addressing poverty reduction, comprehensive child protection services and greater opportunities for children with special needs to participate fully in education and society.

The emphasis on early intervention reflects the importance of identifying risks before they escalate and providing coordinated assistance to children and families. By linking health, education and social services, countries can work toward more effective support systems rather than relying on isolated interventions.

The broader objective is to translate investment into tangible improvements in children’s everyday lives, from access to medical treatment and quality education to protection from violence and the opportunity to develop their abilities.

In her remarks, Shakhnoza Mirziyoyeva urged delegates to view children’s well-being as an immediate responsibility rather than a promise for the future. Drawing on her experience as a mother, she emphasized that every child deserves to feel safe, loved and protected, particularly when no adult is there to help. She also warned that digital risks and global instability are creating new challenges for children and families, stressing that governments, businesses, civil society and international organizations must work together to build a culture of zero tolerance for violence and unconditional respect for every child.

Children’s voices and international cooperation

A particularly poignant contribution came from children of the Mehrli Maktab State School, whose participation underscored the importance of including young people in discussions about policies that directly affect them.

Their presence reinforced the principle that children should not be regarded solely as beneficiaries of public programs but also as participants whose experiences and perspectives can help shape better decisions.

The summit also provides a platform for governments, international organizations, experts and civil society representatives to exchange best practices and identify approaches that can be adapted across different national contexts.

Participants are scheduled to visit social facilities in Uzbekistan to learn from local experiences in supporting children and families, connecting the international discussions with practical examples of service delivery.

The participation of First Ladies, including Emine Erdoğan of Türkiye and representatives from Kyrgyzstan, Serbia, Lebanon and Zimbabwe, further highlights the role of international solidarity in advancing children’s rights.

In her remarks, Emine Erdoğan emphasized that children must remain at the center of the global agenda and reaffirmed Türkiye’s commitment to supporting all children without discrimination. She drew particular attention to children affected by armed conflict, especially in Gaza, stressing that a world in which no one is left behind requires an end to the suffering caused by war.

Her remarks highlighted the vulnerability of children in conflict zones and the need for sustained international efforts to protect their lives, health and future prospects.

Samarkand Declaration to set the course

The two-day summit is expected to conclude with the adoption of the Samarkand Declaration on Investing in Children’s Well-being, intended to provide a practical roadmap for sustainable policies and coordinated action to safeguard children’s rights.

The declaration is expected to reinforce the importance of turning international commitments into measurable improvements through stronger public services, targeted social protection, inclusive education and accessible healthcare.

As discussions continue in Samarkand, the summit’s central challenge is to ensure that international cooperation produces lasting results beyond the conference itself.

The message emerging from the gathering is that investing in children must be treated as a long-term development priority, requiring sustained political commitment, effective institutions and partnerships that reach every child.

Ultimately, the success of the Samarkand Summit will depend not only on the commitments adopted but also on how effectively they are translated into healthier, safer and more equitable futures for children around the world.

Another strong game for Reese

Atlanta dominates Valkyries to take 2-1 lead in WNBA Finals

ATLANTA, Oct 22, (AP): Angel Reese and the Atlanta Dream are half-way toward their ultimate goal of winning the franchise's first WNBA championship.

They know there is still work to do. But with a huge Atlanta crowd behind them and Reese dominating the last two games, there's reason to believe in a team that never even had a WNBA Finals win until this series.

Reese had 21 points and 12 rebounds to help the Dream beat the Golden State Valkyries 97-71 and take a 2-1 lead. It was the second straight strong game for Reese, who had 30 points and 16 rebounds in Game 2, which the Dream also won for their first victory ever in the championship round. She has a double-double in each game of the finals.

That game will also be played at State Farm Arena. Both games in Atlanta were originally set for the Gateway Center Arena, where the Dream play most of their home games. The league was able to work with the Atlanta Hawks to play Games 3 and 4 there so that they could have a much bigger crowd. Gateway only seats 3,500. State Farm Arena can seat more than 17,000 fans.



Golden State Valkyries guard Kaitlyn Chen (2) moves the ball while defended by Atlanta Dream guard Isobel Borlase (20) during the second half of Game 3 of the WNBA basketball finals in Atlanta. (AP)

And they made a difference.

With the game tied at 49 in the third quarter, Atlanta scored eight straight, including four by Reese. Golden State got within 59-55 on Tiffany Hayes' layup, but could get no closer as Atlanta closed the quarter scoring 12 of the final 14 points.

Atlanta has dominated the third quarter so far in the series, outscoring Golden State 63-35 combined in the three games.

With Atlanta up 17 in the fourth quarter, Jordin Canada overthrew Reese on the break, but she saved the ball by throwing it over her head underneath the basket to Howard, who got fouled.

Golden State could never recover. Gabby Williams scored 15 points and Hayes added 14 for the Valkyries.

"Disappointed in our fight. This game they wanted it more than us," Hayes said. "That's not who we are, who we've been and how we got here." Wednesday night's game was sold out, as is Game 4 on Saturday. The crowd included many music stars, including Ludacris. Former NBA player Enes Kanter Freedom said he was going to be at the game. The Atlanta Dream and State Farm

Arena offered him a private suite for his protection. He refused to sit in it and left the arena.

The game got off to a slow start as Atlanta led 9-1 after the first five minutes. Golden State missed its first eight shots before Aminata Gu-eye scored the first basket for the Valkyries with 4:39 left. They got within 13-10 before Naz Hillmon hit consecutive 3-pointers and then Reese hit one. The Dream led 23-15 after the opening quarter.

The hot 3-point shooting continued in the second quarter as Atlanta built its lead to 37-26 midway through the period. Golden State was able to hang around and only trailed 46-40 at the break as the teams combined to shoot 15-for-31 (48%) from behind the arc. That was more made 3-pointers in the first 20 minutes than in either Game 1 or Game 2.

Reese had 15 points and WNBA Sixth Woman of the Year Janelle Salaun had 11 for the Valkyries.

Game 1 and 2 had huge ratings with the opener on NBC averaging 2.1 million, the most ever to watch a first game of the Finals. Game 2, which was broadcast on USA Network, averaged 1.33 million viewers.

Historic F1 title beckons

Antonelli finds value in restraint

BEIJING, Oct. 22, (Xinhua): At Monza, Kimi Antonelli charged from 19th on the grid to claim an extraordinary home victory. Two races later in Baku, the Italian deliberately eased off the pace and settled for fifth.

The contrasting performances revealed two sides of a driver whose growing maturity has helped put him on the brink of becoming Formula 1's youngest-ever world champion.

Now, after successive podium finishes in Malaysia and Singapore, the 20-year-old Mercedes driver heads into this weekend's United States Grand Prix with his first mathematical chance of securing the title.

"I was aware I was probably at 85% of what I could have achieved in terms of performance," Antonelli told Xinhua and one other outlet ahead of the Bahrain Grand Prix in Malaysia earlier this month, reflecting on his cautious approach in Baku.

"But I wasn't mentally prepared to drive 100% in the race, to be fully on the limit." While Antonelli has continued accumulating points, teammate and nearest championship rival George Russell has endured a miserable run of results.

The Briton retired with engine failure in Malaysia, crashed out while leading the Singapore sprint, and finished only ninth in the main race after starting from the back of the grid following an engine change.

Antonelli, meanwhile, finished second in Malaysia and third in Singapore, having also taken fourth in the sprint.

The results have further strengthened his championship advantage and underlined the importance of consistency in a title fight, particularly for a driver whose natural instinct is to attack.

cedes to promote him, Antonelli endured a difficult mid-season spell and was comprehensively outscored by Russell over the season.

Questions were raised about whether Mercedes had promoted him too early, and the pressure was particularly evident at Monza, where Antonelli spun into the gravel during practice before finishing a scrappy race in ninth place.

Even Mercedes team principal Toto Wolff, one of his staunchest supporters, described the performance as "underwhelming," although he maintained his confidence in the youngster's long-term potential.

Antonelli's response in 2026 has been emphatic. He claimed his maiden Formula 1 victory at round two in China Grand Prix, before winning the next four races to establish a commanding lead in the standings.

By the time he triumphed at August's Spanish Grand Prix, the Italian had taken his victory tally to eight, transforming himself from a promising but inconsistent rookie into the driver everyone else was chasing.

His transformation was perhaps most vividly illustrated at Monza. Twelve months after struggling so publicly at his home circuit, Antonelli charged through the field to claim one of the season's most remarkable victories.

"Monza so far is the most special win that I've ever had," Antonelli recalled. "I would have never thought to win the race from where I was starting." The podium celebrations were almost as memorable as the drive itself.

"Hearing everyone singing the Italian anthem was very special and very emotional," he said.

"I actually didn't want to leave the podium in the moment."

But if Monza demonstrated the rewards of relentless attacking, Baku offered a lesson in the value of restraint.

A disrupted practice program and a qualifying crash had left Antonelli towards the rear of the grid and shorn of confidence. Despite knowing that both he and his car were capable of more, he made a conscious decision not to push to the limit.

Antonelli acknowledged that he would have taken a "much more attacking" approach had the Azerbaijan Grand Prix occurred earlier in the season, when the championship picture was less clearly defined.

Instead, with an 81-point advantage at the time, he opted to bring the car home and secure valuable points, even as Russell stormed to victory.

"It was a decision that I took after the race start to say, 'I'm just going to try to bring it home, stay out of trouble, and then we'll see what the result is going to be.'"

It was the first time this season that Antonelli said he had deliberately chosen to drive within himself.

That decision did not come easily. He admitted feeling frustrated by his performance, particularly after the confidence-sapping mistake in qualifying.

But he also recognised that championships are not won solely through spectacular victories.

"Baku was one of those weekends where you have to be happy with fifth or this kind of result because obviously it's not the result you want, but still valuable points that can make a big impact at the end of the season."

China edges US for maiden women's team world gymnastics title in 20 yrs



China athletes pose on the podium after winning the gold medal in the women's team final at the Artistic Gymnastics World Championships in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. (AP)

Japan ends 60-year wait for podium finish

ROTTERDAM, Netherlands, Oct 22, (AP): The U.S. women's gymnastics team's long run of dominance at the world championships is over.

China used a spectacular performance on balance beam in the third rotation to surge to the lead and then held on late to claim gold during a tense team final on Wednesday.

The five-woman Chinese team's total of 165.764 was just enough to edge the Americans at 165.531, ending the Americans' run of seven straight world championship titles that began in 2011.

The gold was the first for China at a major international competition since the 2008 Olympics and first at the world championships since 2006.

Japan captured the bronze, its first podium finish at worlds in 60 years. France was fourth.

Russia, which finished third behind China and the U.S. in qualifying and is competing at a major international team competition for the first time since winning gold at the 2020 Olympics, struggled from the outset in the finals.

Taking the floor without a handful of their most experienced competitors - including 2020 Olympic gold medalist and 2021 world all-around champion Angelina Melnikova - after they were denied visas by the Netherlands, their competition began with a fall on uneven bars, and they never threatened to catch up on

their way to a sixth-place finish.

The Americans led by nearly two points through two rotations after excellent turns on vault and uneven bars, but it vanished quickly on balance beam.

The Chinese, by far the best in the world on an event that requires gymnasts to navigate a 4-inch-wide piece of wood 4 feet off the floor, wasted little time erasing the deficit. Spectacular routines by Qinqin Ke and Zhang Qingying powered China to the front, with Zhang's 15.066 the highest score by any athlete on any event.

A fall by Dulcy Caylor on her dismount opened the door for China to move ahead by over two points heading into floor exercise.

Caylor was competing in place of 2024 Olympic gold medalist and two-time national champion Hezly Rivera, who withdrew from the

competition over the weekend due to a lingering ankle injury.

Solid routines by Caylor, Claire Pease and Reese Esponda on an event the Americans routinely dominate put pressure on China, but it wasn't enough.

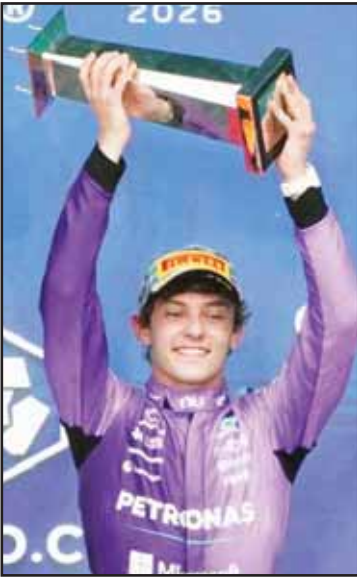
While China's routines lack the difficulty of the U.S.'s on floor, it avoided any major misuses that would have allowed the Americans to maintain their spot atop the sport. When Qiu Qiyuan's score of 12.833 flashed and China's flag moved to the top of the leaderboard, she was mobbed by her teammates.

China's victory over an American team comprised largely of athletes making their debut on the sport's biggest stage outside of the Olympics ramps up the stakes ahead of the 2028 Games in Los Angeles.

Several of the U.S. stars who helped guide the Americans to gold at the 2024 Paris Olympics, including 2020 Olympic all-around champion Suni Lee and two-time Olympic gold medalist Jade Carey, are pointing toward Los Angeles.

The biggest question is whether superstar Simone Biles - the 2016 and 2024 all-around champion and the most decorated women's gymnast of all time - will join them.

Biles told The Associated Press in September she's getting close to making a decision. The U.S.'s respectable if slightly nervy performance on Wednesday will do little to dampen speculation that the Americans might need Biles at her best to emerge from an increasingly crowded group at the top of the sport.



Kimi Antonelli

Change Name

I, SEKH MINAZUL, S/O SEKH JALIL, Resident Of Village-Niranjanpur Musalmannara, P. O-Nazirpur, P. S-Manikchak, DIST-Malda, PIN-732203, WEST BENGAL, Have Changed My Name In PASSPORT (V2256264) From Given Name-SEKH MINAZUL TO MINAZUL, Surname SKS/o-SK JALIL. Henceforth SK MINAZUL And SEKH MINAZUL Are One And Same Person.

Asian soccer chief gives no hint about support or opposition to Infantino

TOKYO, Oct 22, (AP): The president of the Asian Football Confederation gave no hint Thursday about the body's support - or opposition - to the re-election of Gianni Infantino as FIFA president.

The votes of the AFC's 47 members could be critical when Infantino seeks his fourth term in an election in March. Infantino faces strong opposition in Europe, has staunch support in Africa - and Asia could provide the swing votes.

Opposition candidates have until Nov. 18 to file. So far, none has. "For people who try to divide us this is not going to happen," AFC President Sheikh Salman bin Ibrahim Al Khalifa said in a brief address to close a

two-day session in Tokyo.

He gave no indication that the AFC as a body would take a position on Infantino.

That was different from just over two months ago when the AFC joined the soccer governing bodies in North and Central America and Europe saying Infantino committed a "fundamental breach of trust."

Recent reports and his short talk on Thursday indicate Sheikh Salman may have moderated his views. Asia appears split. Qatar, the host of the 2022 World Cup, has come out in support of Infantino while Jordan has declared its opposition.

"We're not against anyone and we're not in favor of anyone," Sheikh Salman said.

"We're always going to express our feelings and try to do what's best and what's right for football. Not just in Asia."

The meetings in a five-star hotel in Tokyo were closed to the media. The conference was shown on the AFC's YouTube channel, orchestrated presentations without reporters present.

Infantino seldom speaks with the media and has been been traveling and electioneering in Asia but did not appear publicly at the seminars in Tokyo. FIFA's media office during the week promoted his presence in Bhutan and Bangladesh, small federations that each have one vote - the same as powerful soccer nations such as Spain and France.

Man City takes perfect record to Villa Park

US coach and little-known players make Brighton EPL sensation

LONDON, Oct 22, (AP): The coach is an inexperienced American who is younger than some in his squad. The players are typically little known, cheap pick-ups plucked from all corners of the world.

The owner is no sheikh from the Middle East or the lead man for some American venture capitalists, but an Englishman who made his money in sports betting.

Brighton has, for some time, been one of the most fascinating teams in English soccer.

Now, it is one of the best.

The club from the south coast is the story of the Premier League so far, scoring more goals than anyone else - 23 in seven games - and putting up the biggest victory margins - two 5-0s - to rapidly become the most watchable team in England's top division.

Brighton is in third place on 16 points, behind only Arsenal (18 points) and Manchester City (a maximum 21). With City's future shrouded in uncertainty after it was found guilty of large-scale financial rule-breaking, Brighton is well placed to deliver the best ever season in its 125-year history.

The Seagulls, as they are nicknamed, are flying high. But can they keep it up?

The next couple of weeks might give us an answer.

On Sunday, Brighton visits Anfield to play Liverpool. That's before another daunting away game, at Man City, a week later.

Those games might tell us whether Brighton, which has already steamrolled defending champion Arsenal 3-0, is the real deal.

For now, let's just enjoy their mesmeric play under Fabian Hurler, a 33-year-old born in Texas but raised in Germany and who became the youngest manager in Premier League history upon joining two years ago, shortly after getting German hipster club St. Pauli promoted to the Bundesliga.

Only Barcelona has more goals than Hurler's Brighton in Europe's five top leagues, in the wake of last weekend's 5-0 thrashing of fierce rival Crystal Palace that included a David Beckham-style goal from the halfway line by



Brighton and Hove Albion's Matt O'Riley, second right, celebrates with teammates after scoring their side's fourth goal during the Conference League opening phase soccer match between Brighton and Kauno Zalgiris, in Brighton, England. (AP)

Diego Gómez - a midfielder from Paraguay who joined as a 21-year-old with little fanfare in January 2024.

Another scorer was Charalampos Kostoulas, a 19-year-old striker who arrived in May 2025 after just one season at Olympiakos and started only two

league games last season.

And another was Yasin Ayari, a Swede signed three years ago for 3.5 million pounds (now \$4.7 million).

There are so many examples in Brighton's squad of signings that have been identified by data-modelling, using analytics from firms linked to the club's owner, Tony Bloom.

Undervalued, unheralded players join, often get sent out on loan to build up experience, then get integrated into Brighton's first team before becoming stars who move to top teams for big fees - sometimes more than \$100 million.

The latest is midfielder Carlos Baleba, who recently moved to Manchester United for \$95 million having joined Brighton as a backup for Moisés Caicedo, who transferred to Chelsea for \$146 million in 2023 after being signed for 4 million pounds from the Ecuadorian league two years earlier.

Brighton's star player this season is Pascal Gross, a 35-year-old fans' favorite in his second stint at the club after inexpensive moves from the German league.

The list of shrewd acquisitions goes on.

So, too, do Brighton's wins early in a season in which the team also is playing in the Conference League. That might ultimately bring fatigue to a group of talented players not used to balancing the demands of domestic and European soccer.

Whatever happens, it'll be exciting to watch.

Man City takes its 100% record to Aston Villa on Saturday, when Arsenal hosts Everton and Tottenham visits Chelsea for a London derby.

Manchester United manager Michael Carrick is under severe pressure heading into the home match against Bournemouth on Sunday, with post-match outbursts from senior players leaving his position in real danger.

Erling Haaland has scored in each of his last eight games for Man City, including his last six in the Premier League, and is the competition's top scorer on eight goals as he looks to win the Golden Boot for the fourth time in five seasons. He was rested from City's midweek win in the Champions League.

Edwards scores 45 as T-wolves rout Heat, spoil Antetokounmpo opener

Kessler has perfect Lakers debut with 12-for-12 shooting in win over Warriors



Los Angeles Lakers guard Austin Reaves, left, tries to drive past Golden State Warriors guard Stephen Curry during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Los Angeles. (AP)

MIAMI, Oct 22, (AP): Anthony Edwards hit nine 3-pointers and scored 45 points to join an elite club, LaMelo Ball scored 21 in his Minnesota debut and the Timberwolves spoiled Giannis Antetokounmpo's first game with Miami by beating the Heat 131-106.

Edwards, who scored 41 in last season's opener at Portland, joined only Wilt Chamberlain and Michael Jordan as players with at least 40 points in multiple openers. Chamberlain did it four times - consecutively from 1959 through 1962 - and Jordan did it in 1986, 1989 and 1995.

Jaden McDaniels scored 17, Ayo Dosunmu had 16 and Jonathan Kuminga added 12 for the Timberwolves, who won for the sixth time in their last eight season openers. Rudy Gobert grabbed 15 rebounds and Edwards had 10 for Minnesota, which outscored Miami 63-24 on 3-pointers and out-rebounded the Heat 52-34.

Antetokounmpo scored 35 before fouling out of his Heat debut, 21 of those points coming in the first half. Bam Adebayo scored 15 for Miami, which has dropped three consecutive season-openers - the third time in franchise history that's happened.

Antetokounmpo was 13 for

19 from the floor and had six rebounds. It still wasn't anywhere near enough to keep the Heat close in the opener.

Lakers 127, Warriors 105

In Los Angeles Walker Kessler scored 26 points on 12-for-12 shooting and grabbed nine rebounds during his auspicious debut for the Los Angeles Lakers in victory over the Golden State Warriors.

Luka Doncic scored 28 points in three quarters and Austin Reaves added 23 as the Lakers began life after LeBron James with a thrashing of the Warriors, who got 23 points from Stephen Curry to begin his 18th season.

The 7-foot-2 Kessler was an immediate force around both rims



Portland Trail Blazers guard Damian Lillard (0) reaches for a loose ball against the Phoenix Suns during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Portland, Ore. (AP)

for the Lakers, who traded a bounty of draft capital to Utah to fill Doncic's desire for a top center. Kessler's 12 shots without a miss were the second-most in Lakers history, trailing only a 14-for-14 performance by Wilt Chamberlain in March 1969.

Clippers 121, Kings 96

In Inglewood, Darius Garland scored 30 points and the Clippers routed the Sacramento Kings in Los Angeles' first season opener without Kawhi Leonard since 2019.

Brook Lopez added 17 points and 11 rebounds off the bench. Rookie guard Keaton Wagner had 15 points, five rebounds and five assists, and Rui Hachimura had 10 points and eight rebounds in

his debut after coming over from the Lakers. The Clippers never trailed and their bench outscored the Kings' reserves 53-34.

Zach LaVine led the Kings with 28 points and Domantas Sabonis added 14 points and 18 rebounds.

Trail Blazers 124, Suns 83

In Portland, Damian Lillard scored 25 points in his first regular-season game since rejoining the Trail Blazers, leading Portland to rout of the Phoenix Suns.

Offseason addition Ja Morant had 14 points and eight assists for the Blazers, who jumped out to a 21-0 lead and led by as many as 52 points. Toumani Camara added 18 points.

Devin Booker, embarking on his 12th NBA season with the Suns, had 23 points.

Lillard spent his first 11 NBA seasons with the Blazers before playing two seasons with the Milwaukee Bucks. He rejoined the Blazers in the summer of 2025, but spent last season rehabbing from a torn Achilles tendon.

Pacers 123, Pelicans 120

In New Orleans, Tyrese Haliburton needed the towel draped around his neck to dry the tears streaming down his cheeks.

More than 16 months after rupturing his right Achilles tendon, the Indiana Pacers two-time All-Star guard had come back Wednesday night and controlled his team's season opener, removing any doubts he might have had about his physical and emotional stamina.

Kuwait Club looks to extend lead

Burgan seeks to strengthen grip on 2nd spot against Arabi

By Khaled Al-Enezi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 22: Burgan and Arabi face off tonight in a crucial clash for second place in the 2025-2026 Premier Handball League, with the two sides meeting at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex at 6:30 pm in the highlight of the 19th round. The action begins at 5 pm when league leaders Kuwait Club take on Sulai-bikhat.

Kuwait Club atop the standings with 21 points, followed by Burgan on 17 and Arabi on 16. Kazma is fourth with 14 points, Sulaibikhat have six, while Nasr sits bottom with two.

Kuwait Club will be confident of extending its lead against Sulaibikhat, given its superior squad depth and technical strength.

The Whites have a strong bench and a balanced lineup of local and professional players, putting them in a favorable position to claim both

points and maintain their grip on top spot.

The spotlight, however, will be on Burgan and Arabi, with just one point separating the teams in the race for the runner-up position.

Burgan will look to capitalize on its advantage by securing victory and moving to 19 points, which would leave it three clear of Arabi.

The Green, meanwhile, is determined to take both points, climb to 18 and overtake its rival in the standings.

The narrow gap between the sides has heightened the stakes following their recent battle for second place.

Both teams have players capable of influencing the outcome, setting up a closely fought contest in which tactical discipline and individual performances could prove decisive.

With the league entering its decisive stages, tonight's encounter could have a significant bearing on the final standings.



Burgan player takes aim at goal as the opposition rushes to block the shot.

Atletico Mineiro advances to Copa final

Palmeiras beats Fluminense to reach final

RIO DE JANEIRO, Oct. 22, (Xinhua): Marlon Freitas converted the decisive spot kick as Palmeiras reached the Copa Libertadores final on Wednesday by beating Fluminense 5-3 on penalties.

Midfielder Hercules scored in the 82nd minute at Allianz Parque to give Fluminense a 1-0 lead and level the tie on aggregate.

Nonato missed with Fluminense's fourth attempt of the shootout before Freitas held his nerve to send Palmeiras into the final of South America's premier club competition for the fourth time in seven years.

"I've said before that we might be living through the best moment in the club's history," Palmeiras manager Abel Ferreira told a post-match news conference. "I am no greater than anyone else. I am just one of many that makes this club what it is and it brings me joy to see others winning."

The Brazilian side will play either Flamengo or Estudiantes in the final at Montevideo's Centenario Stadium on November 28.

Meanwhile, Atletico Mineiro reached the Copa Sudamericana final on Wednesday despite a 2-0 away defeat to Montevideo City Torque.

Atletico took a 3-0 lead into the second leg and looked to be cruising until Ecuadorian midfielder Alan Franco was sent off in the 75th minute.

Torque's Kevin Silva and Gary Kagelmacher scored late, but the visitors held on to prevail 3-2 on aggregate and clinch a berth in the final against Boca Juniors on Nov. 21.

Boca is aiming for its first continental trophy since its Recopa Sudamericana triumph in 2008, while Atletico Mineiro is vying for its first continental title since 2014.

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NEWS



Real Madrid's Arda Guler, left, challenges for the ball with Leipzig's Neil El Aynaoui during the Champions League opening phase soccer match between Real Madrid and Leipzig in Madrid. (AP)

Sports

Arabi seeks consolation win

Qadsia needs draw against Goa to reach Challenge League quarters

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY , Oct 22: Qadsia need just a draw against India's Goa to secure top spot in Group C and advance to the quarterfinals of the AFC Challenge League when the sides meet at 8:30 pm on Friday at Mohammed Al-Hamad Stadium.

In the group's other final-round match, Tajikistan's Regar-TadAZ faces Bangladesh's Fortis at 4:25 pm at the same venue.

Qadsia leads the standings with six points, followed by Goa and Regar-TadAZ on three points each. Fortis has been eliminated after losing its first two matches.

The three West Asia group winners and the best runner-up will qualify for the quarterfinals. A win or draw would guarantee Qadsia first place, while a defeat could complicate its qualification hopes.



Al-Rawahi, scorer of the winning goal against Regar-TadAZ.

Coach Mohammed Ibrahim will expect his players to maintain the form they showed in its opening

two matches. Despite having the advantage of needing only a draw, Qadsia must avoid complacency

and approach the match with the determination to win.

Arabi will seek its first victory of the season when it faces Lebanon's Nejmeh at 2:00 pm in its final Group B match at Hisor Central Stadium in Tajikistan.

The Green has already been eliminated after defeats to Syria's Homs Al-Fida (1-0) and Tajikistan's Istiklol (2-0).

Coach Mohamed Abdelnabi will be eager to see his side finish the campaign with a win after a difficult start to the season. Arabi lost 4-1 to India's East Bengal in the AFC Champions League Two qualifying playoff, drew three matches in the Zain Premier League and suffered a 2-1 defeat to Jahra.

A victory would provide a timely morale boost ahead of the team's return to Kuwait and Tuesday's Zain Premier League match against Fahaheel.

KFA President sponsors parents' trip to support Kuwait U-15 team



Kuwait Football Association President, Sheikh Ahmad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 22: Kuwait Football Association (KFA) President Sheikh Ahmad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah will cover the cost of a trip to Azerbaijan for the parents of Kuwait's U-15 national team players to support the squad at the World Cup.

Dyain Al-Dyain, KFA vice-president for financial and administrative affairs and head of the Kuwaiti delegation, thanked Sheikh Ahmad for the initiative, describing it as an unprecedented gesture that reflects his commitment to the national teams.

Al-Dyain said the move reflects Al-Yousef's keenness to provide the team with the necessary support and facilities while boosting the players' morale ahead of the tournament.

Kuwait opens its campaign against Barbados on Friday.

Bayern, Arsenal draw as United troubles deepen

Villa moves into second, Real back to form ahead of Clasico

ROME, Oct 22, (AP): A goal and an assist from Harry Kane wasn't enough for Bayern Munich to beat Arsenal.

Kane's England teammate Declan Rice scored a second-half equalizer for last season's runner-up to secure a 2-2 draw at six-time winner Bayern in a matchup of two European heavyweights in the Champions League on Wednesday.

Rice traded passes with Viktor Gyokeres before finding the target eight minutes from time.

Kane converted a penalty earlier in the second half to increase his total to 16 goals in 23 career matches against Arsenal, having scored every season against the London club from 2014-15 to 2023-24 - mostly with Tottenham.

Kane also sent Alphonso Davies in on goal when Bayern responded to Eberechi Eze's opener for Arsenal.

It was Kane's 10th straight Champions League match with a goal - moving within one of Cristiano Ronaldo's record of scoring in 11 consecutive games (set in 2017 and 2018).

"We had some good moments, just not enough over the full 90 (minutes)," Kane said.

Elsewhere, Real Madrid had a more straightforward 4-1 victory over Leipzig after needing three goals in the final 10 minutes of a victory over Roma last week.

Madrid faces Barcelona in the "clasico" on Sunday.

Earlier, Manchester's crisis deepened after a 4-1 debacle at competition newcomer Como, leaving coach Michael Carrick at risk.

Also, Aston Villa moved second in the league-phase standings with a 3-1 win over Norwegian club Viking. Unai Emery's team has won all three of its matches, scored 12 and conceded three to trail only two-time defending champion Paris



Bayern's Luis Diaz, left, and Arsenal's Declan Rice jump for the ball during the UEFA Champions League soccer match between Bayern and Arsenal in Munich Germany. (AP)

Saint-Germain on goals scored. In other results, it was: Inter Milan 1, Shakhtar Donetsk 0; Sporting Lisbon 2, LASK 3; Lille 2, Galatasaray 4; Club Brugge 3, Lens 0; and Real Betis 1, Feyenoord 0.

Madrid and Betis - which scored through a penalty kick from Isco - have also won all three of their matches.

Austrian champion LASK earned its first Champions League victory.

Real Madrid is involved in an ongoing battle with the Spanish league over alleged refereeing controversies but José Mourinho's team should have little to complain about after a complete performance against Leipzig.

Bernardo Silva's first goal for Real Madrid came just before halftime as the former Manchester City midfielder prodded in from close range after goalkeeper Maarten

Vandevoordt couldn't quite gather a shot from Arda Guler.

Guler added the second after the break.

Kylian Mbappé made it 3-0 with his 73rd career Champions League goal before Tidiom Gomis pulled one back for Leipzig, then Yan Dione restored Madrid's three-goal advantage.

United has now been outscored 6-1 in its last two European match-

es.

Nico Paz scored twice and also set up another score for Cesc Fàbregas' Como, which was playing in the fourth division of Italian soccer just seven years ago.

"We got outplayed for most of the game so it was a very disappointing night," United midfielder Youri Tielemans said. "It's everything. You can be good tactically but if the effort is not good (then it won't

work) and vice versa. You need to be good at everything and tonight we were poor. It comes down to that."

United was already in turmoil, with defender Lisandro Martinez last week calling out the club's hierarchy over its offseason recruitment, with director of football Jason Wilcox the apparent target of his criticism.

In January, Ruben Amorim had a fallout with Wilcox which swiftly led to the manager being fired after just 14 months in the job.

Now Carrick could be on the way out.

In the other early game, Galatasaray won at Lille with Victor Osimhen scoring against one of his former clubs.

Paz has been auditioning to take over Lionel Messi's playmaker spot with Argentina and his performance against United was a case in point.

At the tiny 10,000-seat Giuseppe Sinigaglia stadium, Paz put Como ahead two minutes in with a curling shot from the edge of the area when Harry Maguire allowed him some space.

United became the first English team to concede in the opening two minutes of consecutive major European matches after Pablo Barrios scored in the opening minute of Atletico Madrid's 2-0 win last week.

Tasos Douvikas then took a pass from Paz before lobbing in over goalkeeper Senne Lammens for his third goal in three Champions League matches.

For Como's third, Paz went in virtually uncontested before shooting around Lammens. Center back Jacobo Ramon scored Como's fourth.

Joshua Zirkzee pulled one back for United in the stoppage time.

United has won only one of its last 11 Champions League away matches.

Como moved up to ninth in the standings, while United dropped to 20th.



A file photo of players fighting for the ball.

Zain Premier League enters sixth round

Kuwait Club looks to strengthen league lead

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 22: The sixth round of the Zain Premier League begins today with two matches, as Kazma hosts Sulaibikhat at Al-Sadaqa Wal-Salam Stadium at 5:35 pm, followed by Kuwait Club's away clash against Tadamon at 7:50 pm.

The round continues on Saturday with Salmiya taking on Jahra at Thamer Stadium at 5:35 pm, before Sahel meets Nasr at Nayef Al-Dabbous Stadium at 7:50 pm.

The Football Association's Competitions Committee has postponed the matches between Qadsia and Shabab, and Arabi and Fahaheel, until Tues-

day due to the Yellow and Green teams' commitments in the AFC Challenge League.

Second-placed Kazma, on 11 points, will aim to secure another victory and keep the pressure on leader Kuwait Club as it pursues a league title that has eluded it for many years.

Sulaibikhat, who has three points and sit 11th, will look to recover from its 7-1 defeat to Kuwait Club in the previous round and spring a surprise by claiming its first victory of the season.

League leader Kuwait Club, with 13 points, will seek to extend its winning run and strengthen their defence when it visits Tadamon. Victory would also provide a timely morale boost ahead of its trip to Uzbekistan to face Nasaf Qarshi in the AFC Champions League Two.

Tadamon, meanwhile, will hope to end its losing streak and get their campaign back on track. The Farwaniya-based side has lost all five matches and remains bottom of the standings without a point, but even a draw against the defending champion could provide a much-needed boost.

Salmiya will seek to return to winning ways and strengthen its position among the contenders on Saturday. The six-point side face Jahra, who has four points and will be eager to bounce back from its 1-0 loss to Kazma.

In the other fixture, Nasr will target its fourth victory of the campaign as it looks to build on its nine-point tally. Sahel, also on four points, will be determined to produce a positive result and maintain a safe position in the standings.