



soccer Pages 15 & 16



Pages 15 & 16

Kuwait leadership condoles with Pakistan over suicide attacks



Injured victims of Friday's deadly bombing are treated at a hospital in Quetta, Pakistan, Saturday, Sept. 30, 2023. (AP)

Death toll 54

NewsWatch

RIYADH: Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) **Jasem Al-Budaiwi** congratulated Friday His Highness the Amir **Sheikh Nawaf Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah** on the third anniversary of assuming power. In a statement, Al-Budaiwi wished happy returns of this occasion, which has many achievements and development in all domains, thanks to Allah and the wise leadership. He also wished Kuwait further progress and His Highness the Amir everlasting well-being. (KUNA)

MANAMA: The General Command of the Bahrain Defense Force (BDF) announced Friday the death of the fourth serviceman after Monday's Houthi attacks on coalition forces on the Saudi southern borders. "The BDF mourns First-Lieutenant **Hamad Khalifa Al Kubaisi**, who valiantly sacrificed his life in the line of duty," the General Command said in a statement today. "Al Kubaisi succumbed to the injuries he had suffered as a result of the Houthi act of aggression last Monday, while performing his sacred patriotic duties defending the southern borders of Saudi Arabia," it added. (KUNA)

RIYADH: GCC Secretary General **Jassim Al-Bedaiwi** announced signing an initial agreement on free trade with Pakistan. According to a statement by the GCC General Secretariat on Friday, Al-Bedaiwi signed the agreement with Pakistan's Federal Minister for Industries and Production Division **Dr. Gohar Ejaz**. The agreement will play a big role in developing commercial ties between the GCC and Pakistan, said Al-Bedaiwi in a press statement. (KUNA)

BRUSSELS: The death toll in the Dutch port **Rotterdam** hospital shooting rose to three on Thursday evening when a 14-year-old girl died of her injuries. The girls mother died earlier in the afternoon, as did a lecturer at Rotterdam's Erasmus teaching hospital, Dutch News. nl portal reported Friday. Police have arrested a 32-year-old man, a student at the university, in connection with the shooting. (KUNA)

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia's authorities called on the international community to hold Israel accountable for its continued aggression against Palestinians, saying that the attack would aggravate situation, which is already tough, in the occupied Palestinian territories. In a statement, Malaysia's foreign ministry slammed the recent storming of Al-Aqsa Mosque that was carried out by some Israeli settlers. (KUNA)

RAMALLAH: Two young Palestinians were wounded Friday tonight after Israeli occupation forces opened gunfire at a vehicle near the Israeli settlement of **Pesagot**, to the east of **Al-Bireh** city in the occupied West Bank. The Palestinian news agency reported that Israeli troops set up an ambush for the vehicle at the entrance to the settlement, before they opened fire at two young men who were inside the vehicle and subsequently arrested them. Israeli occupation soldiers were seen carrying the injured young men on stretchers into the settlement for detention. (KUNA)

CAIRO: At least six people were killed and six others were wounded in a suicide bombing attack at a cafe in **Howlawaag** District in the Somali capital on Friday, according to Mogadishu Police. Police Spokesman **Sadiq Adam** told the Somali National News Agency that the attack was carried out by a member of the Al-Shabab terrorist group. (KUNA)

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 30, (Agencies): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has sent a cable to Pakistani President Dr. Arif Alvi on Friday expressing wholehearted condolences on the suicide attacks that took place in Baluchistan, southwestern the country and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province bordering Afghanistan, claiming scores of lives and injuring many people.

His Highness the Amir affirmed the State of Kuwait's robust condemnation of this abhorrent terrorist act, which contradicts all humane beliefs and values, praying to Almighty Allah to bestow mercy upon souls of the victims and wishing the wounded swift recovery.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent similar cables.

National Assembly Speaker Ahmad Al-Sadoun sent two cables of condolences Friday to Chairman of Pakistan's Senate Mohammad Sadiq Sanjrani and Speaker of National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf.

In the cables, Al-Sadoun expressed heartfelt condolences over victims of suicide blasts throughout Pakistan earlier today, condemning such terrorist acts.

The top lawmaker prayed to Almighty Allah to bestow mercy upon the souls of the victims, wishing speedy recovery to the wounded.

The Foreign Ministry expressed Friday Kuwait's condemnation and denunciation of the treacherous deadly attacks on religious gatherings in a number of provinces in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

In a statement, the Foreign Ministry re-affirmed Kuwait's unequivocal rejection of all forms of violence and harm to innocent people.

It expressed Kuwait's solidarity with the friendly Islamic Republic of Pakistan in the measures it takes to preserve its internal security.

The Ministry extended Kuwait's sincere condolences and sympathy to the Pakistan and to the families of the innocent victims. It also wished a speedy recovery for those injured.

Bombing

The death toll from a bombing in southwestern Pakistan as people celebrated the Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) birthday rose to 54 after two critically wounded patients died in hospitals overnight, officials said Saturday.

A suspected suicide bomber or bombers blew themselves up Friday among a crowd in the Mastung district. It was one of the deadliest attacks targeting civilians in Pakistan in months. Nearly 70 people were wounded, including five who remain in very critical condition, authorities said.

No one has claimed responsibility for the attack in Mastung, a district of Baluchistan province. But suspicion is likely to fall on the Islamic State group's regional affiliate, which has claimed previous deadly bombings around Pakistan.

IS carried out an attack days earlier in the same area after one of its commanders was killed there. Also Friday, a blast ripped through a mosque located on the premises of a police station in Hangu, a district in the northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, killing at least five people and wounding seven.

Officials said two suicide bombers approached the police station mosque. Guards shot and killed one, but the other managed to reach the mosque and set off explosives. The mud-brick building collapsed with about 40 people inside, officials said.

No arrests have been made in connection with Friday's bombing in Mastung, according to Jawed Lehri, the police chief for the area. It happened in an open area near a mosque where some 500 faithful were gathered after Friday prayers for a procession to celebrate the birth of the Prophet, an observance known as Milad-un-Nabi.

Most of the dead were buried in local graveyards and the remains of others were sent to hometowns, Lehri said. Body parts recovered from the site of bombing are undergoing DNA testing to determine if they belonged to the suspected perpetrator or perpetrators, he said.

Mir Ali Mardan Domki, the caretaker chief minister of Baluchistan province, told reporters that all indications from the investigation so far suggest the attack was a suicide bombing. Counter-terrorism investigators were working to reach conclusions that would be shared with the nation soon, he said.

"We will take stern action against these terrorists and will not let them play with innocent lives," Domki said. The government intends to transfer critically wounded patients to Karachi for better treatment, and everyone injured and the families of the people killed will receive financial compensation, he said.

DEPORTATION MAY EXTEND TO EXPAT'S DEPENDENTS

Assembly mulls overhauling residency law for foreigners

Amendments on domestic workers

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 30: Parliament's Committee for Interior and Defense Affairs will hold a meeting on Sunday to discuss the bill on amending the law related to foreigners' residency in Kuwait.

The bill, which consists of 37 articles split into seven chapters, allows Kuwaiti women to grant their non-Kuwaiti husbands and children permanent residency but under one condition, which is that she must not have obtained Kuwaiti citizenship as per article 8, i.e., acquiring citizenship because of getting married to a Kuwaiti

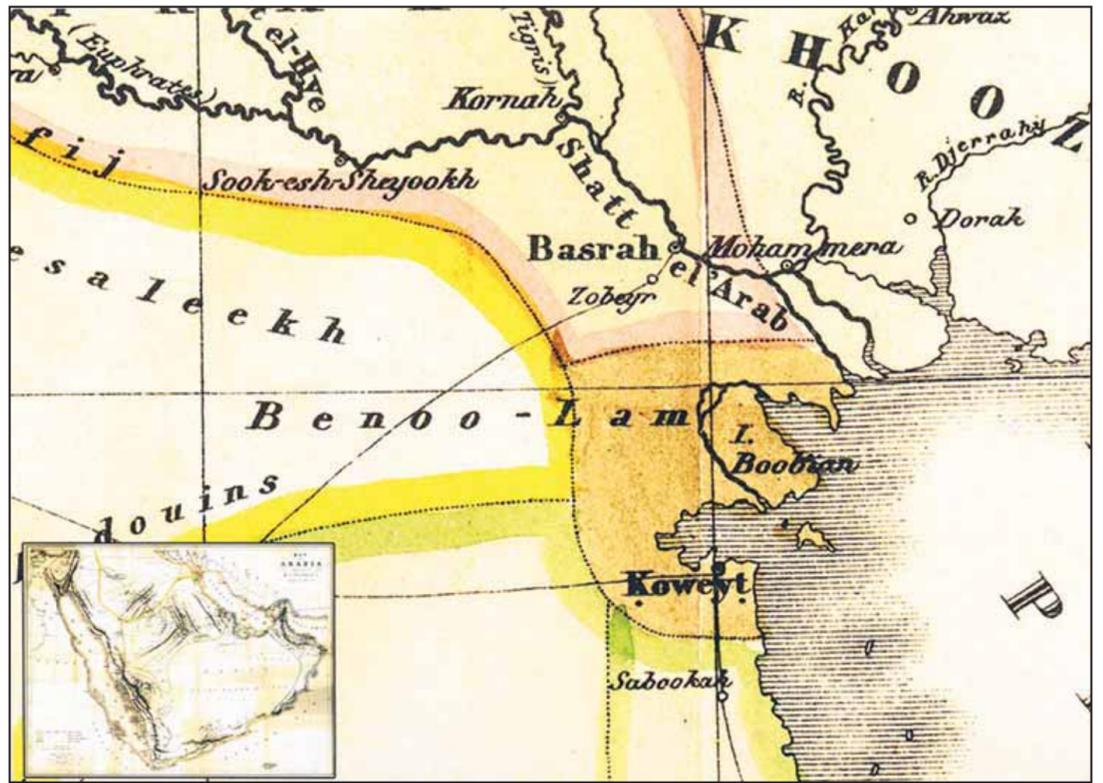
citizen. Former non-Kuwaiti wives or widows of Kuwaiti men are allowed to obtain permanent residency as long as they have children from that marriage.

According to the bill, hotels and furnished rental apartments must inform the relevant department at the Ministry of Interior about the names of their foreign clients and the dates of their check-in and check-out.

The fees for residency renewal and entry visa will be determined by a ministerial decision to be issued by the minister of Interior.

The bill imposes penalties of maximum three-year imprisonment and/or a fine ranging from KD 5,000 to KD 10,000 against individuals who are accused of human trafficking by bringing in expatriate workers after receiving money from them.

Continued on Page 5



Map of Arabia drawn by the Englishman William Palgrave and published in 1868.

KUNA photo

Recent declaration 'baseless'

Academics refute Iraqi court's Khor decision

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 30, (KUNA): Academics have refuted the historic and legal allegations in the recent baseless declaration made by Iraq's supreme federal court regarding the treaty for regulating navigation in Khor Abdullah - inked by Kuwait and Iraq in 2012.

The academic figures, in an interview by Kuwait News Agency and Kuwait Television organized by the Kuwaiti Research and Studies Center on Saturday, lauded United Nations Security Council Resolution 833 issued in 1993 on demarcating the international borders between the two countries and respecting the international law regarding the international navigation.

In this respect, Dr. Ali Al-Rashidi, a law professor at Kuwait University, said during the interview that the treaty had been worked out after consultations between the two countries, and that it was endorsed by the Iraqi parliament and published by the official Iraqi gazette. It had also been delivered to the UN by Iraq's permanent delegate at the international organization, while affirming that it was compulsory and that Iraq was determined to implement it.

Dr. Al-Rashidi added that the Iraqi federal court in 2014, following a challenge forwarded by a member of the Iraqi parliament, stated that the law issued by the parliament for endorsing

the treaty was sufficient from a legal perspective in line with the Iraqi Constitution, thus the tribunal explained that it did not contravene the constitution.

Clarifying further, Dr. Al-Rashidi noted that following the court decision in 2014, there was consensus on the agreement by the three authorities in Iraq, where the government approved it, the parliament endorsed the accord and the supreme court issued an irreversible rule, stipulating soundness of the treaty constitutional status.

Moreover, he affirmed that four factors challenge the latest court rule, noting that the recent appeal was presented by the same Iraqi MP who had filed the previous one; reasons of the new contestation are the same of the past ones. Additionally, the latest court decision contradicted the Vienna convention for treaties (1969) that affirmed that any treaty is compelling to the signatory parties.

Meanwhile, KU's history professor Dr. Abdullah Al-Najdi said it was not the first time that Iraq would make such allegations against Kuwait, would try to belittle the State of Kuwait and ransack its historic rights along the borders.

The controversial historic narration presented by the Iraqi tribunal should not have come from

a court that issues technical rules that take into consideration the constitution and its provisions, "unless there is an illicit desire that reminds us of the night ahead of the flagrant Iraqi aggression in 1990," and the previous breaches by the Iraqi governments that attempted to belittle Kuwait's role and abstain from demarcating the borders between the two countries.

Dr. Al-Najdi indicated that 1973 maps showed that Kuwait's borders stretched to Khor Abdullah. A map by a German scientist in 1818 showed the Arab Peninsula including Kuwait with its borders totally covering Khor Abdullah.

During era of Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah, a treaty was signed with Britain and Kuwait's borders were drawn before emergence of modern Iraq.

Dr. Rashed Al-Sanea, a professor of prime education, said the 1963 treaty stipulated the demarcation of the borders between Kuwait and Iraq and it was endorsed by Kuwaiti and Iraqi officials.

Refuting claims that Iraq has no access to the sea, he said that the country has six ports and a shore stretching from Ras Al-Bisheh to Khor Al-Zubair.

Continued on Page 5

'We embraced energy transition 20 years ago'

UAE's Al Jaber defends nation hosting climate talks

DUBAI, Sept 30, (AP): The Emirati president-designate for the upcoming United Nations COP28 climate conference offered a full-throated defense Saturday of his nation hosting the talks, dismissing those who "just go on the attack without knowing anything, without knowing who we are."

Climate activists roundly criticized Sultan Al Jaber's appointment as the president-designate of the talks because he serves as the CEO of the Abu Dhabi National Oil Co., which is seeking to boost its production of carbon-emitting crude oil and natural gas.

Back before a quiet, hometown crowd and an amenable moderator after attending the U.N. General Assembly, Al Jaber pointed to his 20 years of work on renewable energy as a sign that he and the Emirates represent the best chance to reach a consensus to address climate change worldwide.

"The world only, for whatever reason, views us as an oil-and-gas nation," he said. "We have moved beyond oil and gas 20 years ago. We embraced the energy transition 20 years ago."

He added: "We don't become passionate or ideological or so emotional. We're business-oriented. We're results-driven."

Al Jaber, a 50-year-old longtime climate envoy, is a trusted confidant of UAE leader Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. He's been behind tens of billions of dollars spent or pledged toward renewable energy in the federation of seven sheikhdoms on the Arabian Peninsula - but also leads an oil company that pumps some 4 million barrels of crude a day and hopes to expand to 5 million daily.

Addressing the world's reliance on crude oil, Al Jaber issued a challenge to the audience listening to him at Dubai's visually striking Museum of the Future: Tell him how to immediately stop the use of all fossil fuels.

"Some are promoting the fact that we can just unplug the world from the current energy system and with a flick of a switch, we can just initiate a new energy system," he said. "That doesn't work. It won't work. ... So we need to sober up and be more realistic and more practical."



Sultan Al Jaber, COP28 President-Designate and UAE's Special Envoy for Climate Change, talks during the Climate Future Week at Museum of the Future in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Saturday, Sept. 30, 2023. (AP)

Prayer Timings

Fajr 04:21 Asr 15:03
Sunrise... 05:40 Maghrib .. 17:36
Zohr 11:38 Isha 18:53

Local

BIOMETRIC/FINGERPRINT APPOINTMENT: <https://meta.e.gov.kw/En/>

Expected weather for the next 24 hours:
By Day: Hot with light variable wind to light to moderate north-westerly wind with speeds of 12-35 km/h.
By Night: Rather hot to mild

Weather

with light to moderate northwest-erly wind to light variable wind with speeds of 08-30 km/h.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	40	31
Kuwait Airport	41	26

Abdaly	42	25
Jahra	42	30
Salmiyah	39	32
Ahmadi	39	33
Nuwaisib	41	26
Wafra	42	24

Public benefit associations say event held without inviting them

Info expresses appreciation over symposium on 'New Media Law'

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 30: The Ministry of Information expressed appreciation for the public symposium that was organized to present its views on the proposed amendments to the laws on printing and publishing, audio-visual, and electronic crimes under the so-called "New Media Law", reports Al-Seyassah daily.

However, the public benefit associations expressed their dissatisfaction with the fact that the symposium was held without inviting them, despite their essential role in empowering society in order to promote it to the reality of citizenship and their participation in building and development.

In a statement issued on Friday by a total of 13 public benefit associations, it was said, "This marginalization, which has become a trait in the government agencies' dealings with civil society organizations, indicates a real defect in understanding roles and responsibilities, despite the gov-

ernment's inclusion in the provisions of the Kuwait Development Plan 2035, and its work program titled "The necessity of joint cooperation between the government, the private sector and civil society."

The associations denounced the Ministry of Information's neglect to issue an official invitation to them to attend the media symposium on the "New Media Law" and the accompanying media misinformation regarding civil society sector's approval of the proposed amendments.

They demanded empowerment as their inherent right to participate in proposing the required amendments, stressing that any real construction process requires the partnership of civil society organizations.

The associations appealed to the National Assembly to stand in solidarity with their principled position, calling for an end to the approach of marginalizing the role of civil society organizations and protecting their right to participate in building and development.

They stressed that it is the responsibility of the media to defend public freedoms, guarantee people's right to knowledge, manage free discussions, transmit them transparently to the public, defend the interests of society, respect its values, and respect society's right to administer justice, but this can only be achieved by adopting the principle of partnership and respect for all parties.

The statement was signed by Kuwait Transparency Society, Women's Cultural and Social Society, Kuwait Society of Graduates, Kuwait Society of Lawyers, Kuwait Association for Protecting Public Funds, Kuwait Society For National Fraternity, Kuwait Association for Information Security, Kuwait Society for Human Rights, Kuwait Society for Education Quality, the National Association of Familial Security "Rawasi", National Society for Child Protection, Developmental Entrepreneurship Association, and the National Fund for SME Development.

'Environmental crisis' expected due to lack of sewage stations in Mutlaa

'About 300 to 500 housing plots being established'



Photos by Rizk Tauffiq
The iron column that fell from the bridge. (Inset) the truck involved in the accident.

No human casualties ... huge traffic jam reported

Truck collides with bridge under construction

By Munaif Nayef and Muhammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 30: A truck collided with a bridge under construction on the Fifth Ring Road opposite Ardiya area yesterday afternoon, resulting in a massive traffic jam but no human casualties. Due to the traffic jam, vehicles had to be diverted to Mohammed bin Al-Qasim Street.

According to the Public Relations and Media Department of the Kuwait Fire Service Directorate, when the Operations Room received information about the accident, officers from the Ministry of Interior and firefighters from Ardiya Fire Station were dispatched to the location.

The team discovered upon arrival that the accident occurred as a result of the truck colliding with the bridge under construction, which led to one of the iron columns falling on a vehicle. Within two hours, they were able to reopen the road, after shifting one of the iron columns that fell from the bridge.

In this regard, the Public Authority for Road and Transportation (PART) issued a press statement to explain that

the truck was carrying bricks at a higher height than what is authorized. This caused the vehicle to hit the bridge and get stuck under one of the temporary metal beams of the bridge on the Fifth Ring Road (H T/266), which led to the metal bar falling and closing the road.

Coordination had been made with the General Traffic Department to secure the road to remove the metal bars and then reopen the road.

PART stressed that it reserves the right to take necessary legal measures against the vehicle.

Also, a member of the National Assembly Mubarak Al-Tasha said that the incident of parts of the bridge falling "shows us the extent of corruption and indifference to people's lives. It confirms to us the minister's inability to manage the ministry even though she had ample opportunity to do so."

He said he believes this dangerous indicator requires the Minister of Public Works to submit her resignation from her position out of respect for the nation and its will; otherwise, accountability will inevitably come if it continues.

Municipality answers questions on development of Kabd Road

By Enas Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 30: The executive branch of Kuwait Municipality issued a statement in response to the questions presented by the Deputy Chairman of the Municipal Council Khaled Al-Mutairi regarding the development of the Kabd Road, which extends from the Sulaibiya Bridge to the Kabd's livestock pens, and is considered one of the vital and important roads in Kuwait because it serves West Abdullah Al-Mubarak, the Sulaibiya Water Pump, the Sulaibiya Farms, the Farwaniya Stables, and the camel racing pens.

Kabd Road, despite experiencing high traffic density, is a neglected road consisting of only two lanes, in very poor condition, and has not been developed since its construction.

In response to Al-Mutairi's question about the existence of a plan to rehabilitate and develop the road, the municipality said part of the Kabd-Sulaibiya road falls within the advisory agreement for studying, designing and supervising the construction and maintenance of the development of the Kabd-Sulaibiya road, from which two contracts emerge.

When asked about the scheduled date for implementing the project and the expected time period for completing its development, the municipality reported that the Municipal Council approved the final design of the project, and documents are being prepared for the tender.

As for the expected date for tendering each of the two contracts for the project, one of them was included in the draft budget of the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation for the 2023/2024 fiscal year and has not been approved yet, while the other contract will be included in future budgets.

Police nab citizen on run with 15 years imprisonment for thefts

By Munaif Naif and Jaber Al-Hamoud
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 30: A Kuwaiti citizen, who was wanted by law after being sentenced to 15 years in prison in connection with a number of vehicle theft cases, was arrested by Jahra police officers. They also arrested six other individuals who were sentenced to imprisonment. The seven individuals were referred to the concerned authorities.

According to a security source, the detectives, after discovering the whereabouts of the car theft suspect, they managed to set a trap into which the suspect fell. Upon further inquiry, it was discovered that he was wanted by the law to serve a 15-year jail sentence for stealing cars. The officers also managed to arrest a Bedoun

resident who was wanted to serve a jail term of six years for similar crimes. Both were referred to the concerned authorities for necessary legal measures.

Imprisonment upheld: The Court of Cassation upheld the verdict issued by the Court of Appeals for the imprisonment of two Kuwaiti citizens for a period of three years and four months each after they were convicted of causing two individuals permanent disability by intentionally colliding with their car and damaging it.

The Public Prosecution had accused the two defendants of intentionally causing serious harm to the two victims, which led to the first victim suffering a permanent disability and the second suffering various injuries, by intention-

ally hitting the two victims with two cars.

In her complaint, the plaintiff counsel Lawyer Elaf Al-Saleh said the defendants, after a quarrel with the victim's family, planned to kill the two victims, and headed to their house to bring two cars. The first one collided with the first victim's car twice, back and forth, and the second car hit the second victim's car once, which led to the injuries reported in the forensic reports.

The Criminal Court ruled that the defendants be imprisoned for five years, and the Court of Appeals ruled to amend the ruling to imprison them for three years and four months. The Court of Cassation upheld the ruling of the Court of Appeals, and referred the civil case to the concerned court to determine the value of the compensation.

By Abdul Nasser Al-Aslami
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 30: Sabaa Al-Dousari, Head of the Voluntary Committee of the People of Mutlaa City, warned of an environmental catastrophe to be witnessed in the Mutlaa City due to lack of sewage stations in two areas, especially after establishing between 300 and 500 housing plots and operating some services, during the upcoming rainy season.

In a press statement, he explained that the concept of the tender No. H/208, which stipulates the establishment, operation, and maintenance of the Mutlaa purification station, was formulated more than six years ago. Unfortunately, its delay happened due to the companies' struggle over the tender. There is nothing new except "floating and canceling". Now, according to the latest information, the tender was floated on August 30, 2023 but without achieving anything significant.

Temporary

The current situation in Mutla City urgently requires finding a temporary sewage station, especially after delivering electricity to the people's plots, which exceed 300 in number. There is no way to dispose of the sewage except after the citizens connected the sewage connection to the main sewer.

The biggest problem is the lack of a water treatment plant, even if it is temporary, in Mutla city. The emergence of unpleasant odors due to the high level of sewage water there is expected.

Al-Dousari said, "We continue to send our message to His Highness the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Public Works to expedite the work of a temporary water treatment plant, award the tender, and follow up with the implementing contractor, as the duration of the implementation of the plant is not less than two years".

He stressed that the citizens received their plots according to the "paper" plan eight years ago, but they are not able to live there, and the rent allowance will be cut due to the connection of electricity, and the deduction of the Credit Bank installment.

Al-Dousari called on the government to postpone the deduction of the rent allowance and the Credit Bank installment until the establishment of all necessary services are completed.



KUNA photo

The new village for displaced people in Yemen.

Kuwait opens new village for displaced people in Yemen

ADEN, Sept 30, (KUNA): The Kuwait-based Tanmeia Charitable Society opened Friday the Mansour Al-Khulaifi village to shelter displaced person in the Yemeni governorate of Ma'rib.

The village, which comprises of 60 houses, was built by donations from the Kuwaiti Mansour Al-Khulaifi Endowment and as part of "Kuwait By Your Side" campaign to aid the conflict-ravaged Yemenis.

In a press statement, Director of the Executive Unit for Displaced Persons in Ma'rib Governorate Saif Muthana expressed appreciations to Kuwait for its continued support for the displaced persons in the governorate.

He pointed out that residential vil-

lages are considered one of the most important projects for sheltering displaced people and have the greatest impact in alleviating their suffering because they provide protection and appropriate housing that preserves the dignity of displaced families.

Muthana thanked His Highness the Amir, government and people of the State of Kuwait for the non-stop aid for the Yemeni people and the displaced in particular.

He hailed this generous initiative from the Al-Khulaifi Endowment and the Tanmeia Charitable Society in the State of Kuwait and its local partner Al-Tawasul Foundation for Human Development executed the project.

MPW responds to SAB's observations

MPW affirms keenness to issue tenders for projects listed for implementation

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 30: The Ministry of Public Works affirmed its keenness to issue tenders for projects listed for implementation following the completion of the design, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In response to the State Audit Bureau's observations regarding the delay in completion of a number of projects, the ministry explained that the project to expand the main building of the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) will be implemented from the budget of the beneficiary entity. To date there is no approval for it from the authority itself, even though it had previously been addressed in this regard.

Regarding the establishment, completion, maintenance and furnishing of the back area coordination command building project, the ministry said a notification had previously been submitted by the Ministry of Interior to the Ministry of Public Works that the project comes after correctional institutions and information systems in priority, and it was contacted to include the project in the 2024/2025 budget.

With regard to the establishment, design and supervision of the implementation of the correctional institutions complex project, the ministry said the Ministry of Finance and the beneficiary party have been addressed in several correspondences to provide the necessary budget to put the project forward for implementation. Measures are being taken to include it in the 2024/2025 budget.

Licenses

Regarding the study, design and supervision of the project of the General Administration of Inspection buildings, the ministry explained that licenses are being renewed for the possibility of offering it for implementation. The Ministry of Interior requested that the project be given second priority after correctional institutions.

The Ministry of Interior changed the location of the project after completing the design. The change order for the office will be issued, as the Ministry of Finance approved it recently. It is expected to be issued in the next fiscal year.

Beneficiary

The ministry confirmed that it is currently coordinating with the beneficiary entities regarding the possibility of presenting projects for implementation.

In its latest report, the State Audit Bureau criticized what it described as "the Ministry of Public Works' shortcomings in studying and preparing, and its lack of good coordination with the relevant authorities," which resulted in eight contracts not being offered for the establishment and completion of construction projects in four tenders, despite the completion of the design work for some of them more than five years ago.

The completion of some other consulting agreements emanating from these contracts, amounting to a total of KD 7,315,969, was delayed, which exposes these contracts to the occurrence of amendments due to the passage of time between the design and implementation work, and leading to an increase in the total cost of the contracts and failure to benefit from the projects in the times specified for them.

'Fundamental structure of family breaks up with divorce rates rise'

"THE Kuwaiti woman led a serene and content life for a while, enveloped by the warmth of her family. She found happiness in fulfilling personal duties, pausing in prayer, displaying tenderness to her child, or engaging in comforting conversations with neighbors," columnist **Dr Abdul Rahman Al-Jeeran** wrote for **Al-Rai** daily.

"Every action carried honor for her, grounded in her obedience to her father, trust in her husband's guidance, and her willingness to compromise when necessary.

"She comprehended the essence of family love but remained unaware of romantic love's intricacies. The allure of romantic relationships eluded her. Her affection for her husband mirrored her love for her son - pure, familial, and uncomplicated. While society emphasized love as the foundation of marriage, she believed that marriage was the bedrock of love.

"However, modern influences deceived her by asserting that love should precede marriage. Consequently, she began to gaze at men, seeking love, which distracted her from the sanctity of marriage. She fell prey to this deception, seeking new companions to rekindle what previous relationships had extinguished, unable to hold onto the old or fully embrace the new.

"Yet another deception portrayed a woman's happiness as contingent on her husband being her lover. Unfamiliar with this perspective, she sought new partners, hoping for a fulfilling love life. Society's standards warped her self-image, urging her to pursue cosmetic enhancements to meet contemporary beauty ideals. She immersed herself in the digital world, striving to satisfy societal whims, but often faced rejection in an over-supplied market.

"Encouraged by the concept of coeducation, she learned a variety of skills but overlooked nurturing her child. The patriarchal society's influence loomed large, undermining her confidence in managing her affairs. Unjustified authorities arose within the family, contrary to the intended guardianship outlined by God. This led her to rebel against traditional authorities, disrupting the once warm and harmonious household.

"Further deception suggested that she should choose her own spouse to secure future happiness. However, the courtship path often led her to undesirable matches, diminishing the initial happiness of marriage and culminating in divorces, legal battles, and lingering misery.

"With the escalating divorce rates, the fundamental structure of the family disintegrated. Both genders fell short of fulfilling their roles, and family spaces turned somber. Homes transformed into isolated spaces, housing fearful men disenchanted with marriage and unmarried women."

Also:

"Observing the current state of public affairs in the country, one is struck by the deteriorating state of political work both in the executive and parliamentary domains. Both have descended into a realm of chaos and confusion in decision-making and directions," columnist **Dr. Muhammad Al-Maqati** wrote for **Al-Jarida** daily.

"Matters crucial to the nation's existence, sovereignty, and the protection of its citizenship and identity are disregarded. Deliberately orchestrated plans ensure these matters are concealed, delayed, and even neglected, becoming subjects for bargaining and electoral gain at the expense of the state's independence and sovereignty.

"A clear example of this neglect can be seen in the handling of nationality and citizenship issues across all aspects. Kuwaiti nationality and national identity have been subject to conspiracies and calamities, manipulated through political naturalization to establish loyalties and gain immediate favor.

"This tampering evolved into planned political strategies aimed at destabilizing the state's political fabric. Shockingly, we have seen individuals holding positions in the National Assembly who acquired citizenship through dubious naturalization practices.

"The catastrophic implications on national existence and identity are evident when legislators, responsible for legislation, face suspicions and questions regarding their citizenship acquisition. This is particularly concerning when citizenship is granted contrary to Article 1, which is only proven by Law No. 15 of 1959 for those from the generation of the founders or their children.

"Legislators infiltrated the Parliament, and many of them hastily proposed laws for naturalization that violated loyalty and belonging rules, undermining national identity. Laws were enacted to grant citizenship annually, deviating from established executive and sovereign authority.

"Furthermore, amendments wrongly changed the status of a naturalized person to an "originally" Kuwaiti, contradicting the constitutional text defining Kuwaiti status in 1962 in Article 82. The Constitution, based on Law No. 15 of 1959, defined this status, and attempts to alter it through legislative tampering disregard constitutional provisions.

"In this atmosphere of uncertainty and the composition of the nation's assemblies, the country witnessed numerous cases of nationality forgery, leading to court rulings and government decisions to withdraw hundreds of such cases.

"The issue of dual citizenship poses a substantial threat to state sovereignty, evident in the significant increase in voters over the years, highlighting the imbalance and risks associated with citizenship and national identity.

"Unfortunately, Parliament's priorities and actions don't align with safeguarding the nation's independence and identity. Those expected to protect national identity remain silent, while new citizens, due to naturalization tampering, openly push for further naturalization, obstructing the correction of citizenship conditions.



Dr Al-Jeeran

"The priorities of Council members reflect a misguided focus that does not serve the public interest and disregards the Constitution, undermining national identity.

"Regrettably, their attention is more drawn towards electoral gains and irrational populist demands, making parliamentary work lose its essence, focusing on superficial remedies rather than defending the homeland and its citizens. Equally concerning is a government that seems to have lost its direction, lacking the ability to implement, confront, or shoulder its responsibilities.

"The government's program reflects these misguided priorities, failing to address critical issues and instead emphasizing less significant concerns like establishing the Public Authority for Citizenship and the Central Policy Agency."



"The visit of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah to China, in response to the invitation extended to him by the Chinese President with the aim of strengthening bilateral relations and opening new horizons in areas of close cooperation between the two countries, has ended," columnist **Dr. Bahija Behbehani** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"Kuwait can not forget the support it received from China during the brutal Iraqi invasion in 1990, and its participation in extinguishing the burning oil wells.

"For your information, Kuwait was the first Gulf country to establish full diplomatic relations with China in 1971. It was also the first Arab country that was keen to strengthen cooperation with China in various fields, and enhance the bonds of common interests, especially with the presentation of its strategic development vision "New Kuwait 2035", which seeks to develop a diversified and sustainable economy.

"The former Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad had also made an official visit to China to strengthen the political and economic partnership between the two countries.

"Kuwait is considered the seventh largest exporter of crude oil imports to China. The number of Chinese companies currently operating in Kuwait is about 60 companies that contribute to more than 80 projects, and participate in building infrastructure and economic development in Kuwait.

"During the current visit, a joint statement was issued regarding the five-year plan for bilateral cooperation between the two countries for the years 2024 to 2028. About seven memorandums of understanding were signed between Kuwait and China, which include large construction projects to be carried out by Chinese companies in Kuwait, including renewable energy and the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port, in addition to cities, housing and sanitation, after the majority of officials failed to manage government institutions and were unable to achieve quality through productivity.

"We, the citizens, have almost given up on development and reform, after the efforts of the majority of officials failed to reduce corruption with the continued reliance on oil as the sole source of income, the deterioration in the fields of health and education and their lack of quality productivity, continuation of the housing issue, the tragic imbalance in the demographic composition, and the preoccupation of the representatives of the National Assembly with matters that are completely far from the content of sustainable development, in addition to other deviations from the correct path of development and from rising the country to the ranks of major countries."



"The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Oil, and Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment Dr. Saad Al-Barrak says the government of Kuwait seeks to update the New Kuwait 2035 vision and make it 2024-2040," columnist **Jassem Al-Homar** wrote for **Al-Anba** daily.

"The justification for this update of Kuwait's vision is to include the changes that occurred in the last three years in health, economic and political fields in order to make it better and reflect more clearly in the plan.

"We can say that the vision of the New Kuwait 2035 in its previous form was created during the era of His Highness the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad (May God have mercy on him) who visited China in 2018 and concluded many agreements in many fields. With his son Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad (May God have mercy on him) was the Minister of Defense and as the Head of the agency responsible for the Silk City and the development of the islands, it was completely different from the vision of Kuwait to be modernized.

"Therefore, the vision of Kuwait in its new form witnesses a different future outlook adopted by the political leadership. The recent visit of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad to China and the signing of seven important agreements in various fields are considered a rapid intervention to shorten the time and path to the advancement of Kuwait and focus on some topics that cannot tolerate further delay.

"The important thing is the existence of the rapid five-year plan, which is what we should note at the beginning of its implementation. It is considered the actual cornerstone for launching comprehensive development projects for the New Kuwait 2040 vision.

"There is no doubt that the consensus between the council and the government will have a positive impact on the implementation of Kuwait's vision and reduce the time period for implementing the development plan, and vice versa.

"In conclusion, the People's Republic of China is considered a role model in implementing development projects. It may shorten the duration and delays in project completion, but it does not have the magic wand to solve all dilemmas."

— Compiled by Mai Elsoukary

HH Crown Prince and PM send greetings

HH Amir congratulates Botswana on National Day

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 30, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations to Botswana's President Mokgweetsi Eric Masisi on his country's National Day.

His Highness the Amir wished President Masisi good health and wellbeing, and friendly Botswana progress and prosperity.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince

Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations to President Eric Masisi on his country's National Day.

His Highness the Crown Prince wished President Masisi good health and wellbeing.

Also, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations to President Eric Masisi on his country's National Day.

Eight people arrested in 'raid' on illegal eatery serving pork, liquor

Securitymen nab 343 law violators in several areas

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 30: As part of the efforts of the Criminal Security Sector to arrest violators and outlaws, the General Department of Criminal Investigation arrested eight individuals for transforming a private residence into an unlicensed restaurant in Mangaf area, and serving patrons imported and locally manufactured liquor and pork, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

The Criminal Investigation and Licensing Department, through daily activity and intensification of search and investigation operations, discovered that several people were operating an unlicensed restaurant, and serving customers pork and alcoholic beverages.

Permission

After obtaining the necessary legal permission, a team was formed by the Criminal Investigation and Licensing Department and all those responsible for managing the restaurant were arrested.

A total of 489 bottles of locally manufactured alcoholic beverages, 54 plastic containers of alcoholic materials, ten imported alcoholic bottles, and 218 kilograms of pork meat were confiscated by the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition. The sums of money generated from this illegal business were also seized.

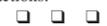
The suspects and the seized items were referred to the concerned authorities for necessary legal measures.



343 expats arrested: The Investigations Department of the General Administration of Residency Affairs reported the arrest of 343 individuals from different nationalities in a security operation targeting violations of residence and labor laws, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

These operations were carried out across several areas including the Shuwaikh Industrial Area, Farwaniya, Hawalli, Mubarak Al-Kabeer, Salmiya, and Al-Mirqab.

All offenders have been handed over to the appropriate authorities for requisite legal actions.



7 held for car racing: The security personnel from the General Traffic Department have arrested seven individuals for orchestrating unauthorized racing events in the Saad Al-Abdullah suburb on Friday, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

A security source informed the daily that this operation was conducted under the oversight and guidance of Major General Abdullah Al-Rajaib, the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior for Public Security Affairs, and Brigadier General Saleh Uqla Al-Azmi, the Acting Director General of Jahra Security.

In the course of the crackdown, the General Traffic Department personnel issued 16 traffic citations and seized seven sports cars and four-wheel drive vehicles, towing them to the GTD garage.



PoA to travel: The General Administration of Customs announced the launch of the service for issuing power-of-attorney to travel in a Kuwaiti vehicle through the "Services" menu in the Al-Sahel app, thus allowing citizens to travel by vehicle to the Gulf Cooperation Council countries using someone else's vehicle, reports **Al-Rai** daily.



Some of the violators of residence and labor laws.

Al-Anba photo

Withdrawal of licenses 'arbitrary'

Pharmaceutical Association criticizes ministry for its decisions over closure

By **Marwa Al-Bahrawi**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 30: A member of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Pharmaceutical Association Muhammad Nahis Al-Enezi affirmed that the manner in which more than 60 pharmacies were violated was marred by haste, selectivity, and discrimination in applying the law.

In a press statement, he stressed that the decisions to close pharmacies and withdraw licenses were arbitrary and unprecedented.

Al-Enezi praised the existence of an impartial judiciary that all resort to in the State of Kuwait, revealing that the decisions resulted in submitting more than 60 grievances to the Minister of Health and filing fast-track cases at the Administrative Court against the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to stop the harm and abuse inflicted on pharmacy owners.

He indicated that such decisions harm the reputation of pharmacists and license holders.

It is noteworthy that the Ministry of Health had issued a decision to close about 65 private pharmacies in mid-August, which led to the affected pharmacists resorting to the Administrative Court and filing a lawsuit to cancel the decision. A few days ago, the pharmacists succeeded in obtaining an urgent judicial ruling from the Administrative Court to cancel the decision of the Ministry of Health and reopen their pharmacies.

Meanwhile, Al-Enezi appealed to His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf to hold accountable any minister or under-secretary who issues wrong administrative decisions that result in the wastage of state funds (or the ministry concerned) in the form of financial compensation in the event that final judicial rulings are issued.

He stressed the importance of every state official bearing the consequences of his or her decisions.

Al-Enezi said, "The laws regulating the sector of pharmacy and distribution of medicines are still under review in the relevant ministerial committee. The Kuwait Pharmaceutical Association is represented in this committee, but it does not hold its meetings regularly, and is rather slow in reviewing the laws."

He also called for amending the laws and placing them in a sound legal framework to improve the work environment.

However, Al-Enezi said he wondered about the reasons for the "harsh campaign against pharmacy owners in the private sector despite their commitment to many new circulars regulating the sale of medicines" including electronic payment.

Furthermore, Kuwaiti pharmacist Shaima Abdul Hussein affirmed that the decision to withdraw licenses and close pharmacies was the result of simple administrative errors that do not amount to closure and do not affect the lives and health of patients. She praised the rulings of "the honest Kuwaiti judiciary" and congratulated her colleagues in the profession for the return of their rights and the opening of their pharmacies.

In addition, pharmacist Bashayer Al-Mahrous expressed her happiness with the Administrative Court's decision to cancel the decisions of the Ministry of Health.

She said, "We were completely confident about the fairness and integrity of the Kuwaiti judiciary in supporting private sector pharmacists and lifting injustice against them.

The decision to close pharmacies was made in an arbitrary manner, causing severe material and moral losses to pharmacists, patients, and the state." She praised the fairness of the Kuwaiti judiciary.



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Kuwait's southern coral islands at a crossroads

Environmentalists call for urgent action to protect fragile island ecosystems

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 30: Several environmental activists have emphasized the importance of conducting a thorough assessment of the condition of the islands and their capacity to accommodate visitors, reports Al-Rai daily.

They point out that the coral reefs on these islands are at risk due to human activities, necessitating a serious effort to preserve them. They argue that there is an urgent need to either regulate visits to these islands or consider complete closures. They also propose the conversion of these islands into natural reserves to ensure their environmental sustainability.

In contrast to these environmental concerns, others advocate for finding solutions that do not involve banning visits to these atolls.

They stress the importance of preserving the living organisms on the islands while permitting visits. One proposed solution is the deployment of police or environmental observers from the Environment Public Authority, tasked with preserving these islands.

Jinan Behzad, the Secretary-General of the Kuwaiti Society for Environmen-

tal Protection, calls for a comprehensive study of the southern Kuwait islands to evaluate their sensitivity and fragility to human activities and climate change, with a focus on biodiversity and ecosystem health. She acknowledges that these islands attract a significant number of visitors, potentially exceeding their carrying capacity.

Behzad highlights the significance of coral islands as Kuwait's natural resources and suggests that converting them into marine natural reserves can help reduce waste and protect marine life. She emphasizes the need for an integrated network of reserves at a national or regional scale to maintain and enhance coastal ecosystems and food chains.

Behzad also mentions the potential for developing natural and artificial sea islands, such as Jisr Jaber and Green Island, with existing infrastructure and proximity to tourists, making them suitable for innovative projects and advanced technology implementation.

Mahmoud Ashkanani, an environmental projects officer with the diving team,

shares the successful example of the Maldives, where the private sector invested in offshore islands, provided environmental monitoring offices on each island, and rehabilitated coral reefs. He identifies boat anchoring as a major source of island damage and suggests designating parts of the islands as reserves to prevent access by boats, cruisers, or people.

Walid Al-Fadil, the head of the Kuwaiti diving team, supports projects for the southern coral islands that protect the marine environment and its organisms while allowing people to enjoy these places. He suggests deploying special police or environmental observers to protect the islands.

Al-Fadil also recommends learning from foreign experiences, particularly the Australian model, where similar islands have been transformed into eco-resorts while maintaining conservation efforts. He emphasizes the need for stricter environmental control and severe punishment for violators, as well as considering sustainable development and tourism projects after conducting thorough studies and ensuring compliance with regulations.

Kuwait expedites govt digitalization

CAIT to drive digital transformation

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 30: The Council of Ministers has delegated the Central Agency for Information Technology (CAIT) with the task of establishing regular coordination with all government ministries, agencies, and institutions. The goal is to facilitate the seamless implementation of automatic connectivity among these entities, reports Al-Rai daily.

This initiative aims to achieve and advance digital transformation within the State of Kuwait, enhance government information security across all domains, and streamline and simplify government procedures for citizens. This, in turn, contributes to efficient oversight by state entities and expedites the collection of dues from various sources.

Secretary-General of the Council of Ministers, Saleh Al-Mulla, communicated this decision through a letter to the ministers, including Dr. Adel Al-Manea, the Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research. He noted that the Audit Bureau has put forth certain proposed findings and recommendations concerning the automatic linking of government agencies.

Commitment

In this context, he elaborated on the importance of the Bureau's role and its commitment to shedding light on the matter of automatic connectivity among government agencies. This significance lies in the development of a comprehensive system to enhance electronic transactions, tighten internal control systems, and target areas of fiscal waste within government spending. To achieve these goals, several critical steps and procedures are necessary:

1. Accelerating the development of strategic policies and plans for technological development at the state level, encompassing digital transformation and cybersecurity, with input from relevant authorities.
2. Automating work processes and fostering automated connectivity within government entities, especially for transactions directly related to providing services to citizens and other organizations.
3. Updating existing automated systems in certain government agencies to align with the latest advancements in information services.

4. Modernizing and enhancing the information technology infrastructure to keep pace with evolving transformations and developments.

5. Strengthening oversight to ensure allocated funds in the general budget are utilized for their intended purposes, controlling and optimizing expenditures, and diversifying revenue sources.

6. Empowering the Central Agency for Information Technology to exercise its designated powers in accordance with its establishment Decree No. 266 of 2006, amended by Decree No. 322 of 2006.

7. Promptly activating the powers of the Communications and Information Technology Authority by developing and updating plans and programs in alignment with the state's overarching policies.

8. Implementing the decisions issued by the Council of Ministers concerning automatic connectivity among government agencies.

9. Enabling the National Center for Cybersecurity to expeditiously fulfill its responsibilities as outlined in its establishment Decree No. 37 of 2022.

Additionally, the report highlighted two separate reports prepared by the Audit Bureau, which were based on assignments from the National Assembly. These reports addressed the reasons for government agencies' delays in digital and technical transformation and the topic of cybersecurity and information technology.

Four proposals from the Audit Bureau were presented to the Public Services Committee during its meeting on September 5th:

1. Assign the Central Agency for Information Technology to formulate an automated connection plan within three months, in collaboration with relevant entities such as the General Authority for Civil Information, Civil Service Bureau, Ministry of Health, Birth and Death Records, Ministry of Justice, Contract and Marriage Documentation, Public Authority for Manpower, Labor Support, Ministry of Social Affairs, Public Aid, Ministry of Interior, and other pertinent government bodies.
2. Establish a detailed timetable outlining specific procedures and delineating the responsibilities of each relevant party.
3. Grant the Central Agency for Information Technology the authority to invite any government agency that can assist in the process of automatic linking between government entities.
4. Mandate the Audit Bureau, in accordance with the Council of Ministers' directive, to present a follow-up report every three to six months to the Council of Ministers, assessing the adherence of relevant authorities to the approved plan.

Director-General issues ultimatum, imposes strict penalties

Municipality cracks down on unlawful camps



Spring camps face swift removal and legal consequences.

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 30: The Director-General of the Municipality, Engineer Saud Al-Dabbous, has instructed the Spring Camps Committee team to promptly mobilize and assemble field teams to remove all existing camps without any exceptions, reports Al-Rai daily.

They are also to issue violation reports and refer the matter to the appropriate administration for legal action against the owners of these tents.

Al-Dabbous emphasized that this action serves as a definitive warning, with subsequent accountability. Informed sources clarified that this decision was prompted by the monitoring of numerous unlawful camps, including those situated in sensitive security, military, and economic zones.

The sources disclosed that withholding licenses for setting up camps in the forthcoming season for foreigners is conceivable, especially since some individuals have exploited the system for internal trade. The municipality aims to promote public camping, but simultaneously, certain violations and transgressions cannot be tolerated.

Faisal Al-Otaibi, the head of the spring camps committee, told the daily that the committee will convene a meeting early next week with the sanitation departments and road works in the municipality. Additionally, relevant authorities will be involved to devise an action plan for the complete removal of camps, whether licensed in the previous spring camping season or existing without a license.

Al-Otaibi explained that following the committee meeting, violators will be granted a 48-hour grace period to dismantle their tents; otherwise, necessary actions will be taken. The municipality's bulldozers will be on standby, particularly since some camp locations pose significant dangers due to their proximity to gas and oil pipelines, high-voltage overhead power lines, and military and security installations.

Regarding penalties, Faisal Al-Otaibi, Chairman of the Spring Camps Committee, outlined that those with expired camp licenses will face the penalty of being deprived of camping in the upcoming season, in addition to the legal actions taken against them. As for unlicensed camps, the municipality and the Environment Public Authority will impose appropriate penalties and fines on their owners, along with the confiscation of tents.

MoE and MoH to curb academic dishonesty

Education Ministry to install jamming devices to combat cheating in exams



Kuwait University's position has witnessed fluctuations between rises and falls in this classification over the past years.

Kuwait University's rankings dip

The Kuwait University recorded a decline in the World University Rankings for the year 2024, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The university's position has witnessed fluctuations between rises and falls in this classification over the past years, as during the years 2023 and 2022, it ranked between 801 and 1000, while in 2021 its position was 1001+ and in 2020 it was ranked 801-1000.

The university obtained a score of 19.5 in the teaching standard, 9.9 in the research environment standard, 55.5 in the research quality standard, and 66.4 in the international reputation standard. This decline comes after the university achieved progress in the QS World University Rankings for the year 2024, issued last July.

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 30: In close collaboration with the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education is in the process of installing contemporary "jamming" devices that meet the necessary criteria. The goal is to implement an updated and comprehensive strategy aimed at curbing academic dishonesty on educational websites, particularly during examination seasons, reports Al-Anba daily.

Reliable sources said the education sector is taking steps to deploy modern "signal blocking" equipment within examination committees and halls. These devices are designed to disrupt electronic devices, mobile phones, and headphones.

The sources further explained that the Ministry of Education is currently liaising with the Ministry of Health to obtain approval on the specifications of these devices, ensuring they align with health standards and requirements.

This approval process is essential to validate their usage during the examination period from a health perspective and ascertain their impact on the well-being of students and everyone present in these halls.

The sources emphasized that education is working diligently to combat cheating during the examination period through a well-structured plan.

Authority expanding services for 59,000 Individuals

PADA allocates 226 mln dinars for FY 2024-2025

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 30: The Planning Committee of the Public Authority for the Disabilities Affairs, chaired by the acting director, Al-Humaidi Al-Mutairi, and attended by deputy directors overseeing various sectors including educational, rehabilitation, medical, psychological, social, human, and financial aspects, estimated a budget of 226 million dinars for the upcoming fiscal year 2024-2025.

This budget is earmarked to sustain a diverse array of services for 59,000 individuals with disabilities, reports Al-Rai daily.

Insider sources from the authority disclosed that each sector presented its financial requirements for the upcoming year, to ensure the provision of educational, rehabilitation, medical, psychological, and social services.

These financial allocations align with the stipulations in Law (8/2010) concerning the rights of persons with disabilities.

The budgetary increase to 226 million dinars is a result of the growing number of new individuals with disabilities and additional financial grants recently disbursed by the Authority.

The grants were sanctioned by the Financial Allocations Committee, comprising representatives from the Fatwa and Legislation Department and the Ministry of Finance.

Notably, the committee recently agreed to a 50-dinar per month increase in the basic pension for individuals with disabilities who are under 21 years old and receive their allowances from the Authority, as well as for adults aged 21 and above receiving a monthly pension from the Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS).



Airport passengers increase by 15 percent during summer season, according to the volume and flow of traffic in terminals T1, T4 and T5.

Airport passengers soar by 15 percent during summer season, DGCA reports

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 30: The Acting Director General of the Directorate General for Civil Aviation (DGCA) Emad Al-Jalawi affirmed that the airport witnessed an increase in the number of passengers this year compared to last year, indicating that an operational plan has been prepared based on the operational density of airlines and the increasing number of passengers, reports Al-Qabas daily.

He said, "Despite some of the negatives that occurred during the summer period such as delays in some flights and the expiry of some contracts concluded with companies implementing some logistical work, we were able to address many of these problems within a short period. We addressed some airline companies, and also the regulatory authorities to renew and offer some contracts for the airport."

Al-Jalawi explained that the number of passengers during the

months of June, July and August amounted to about 4.365 million onboard 37,487 flights.

The total number of passengers in June reached 1.341 million, including 573,000 arrivals and 768,000 departures on 12,200 flights.

The number of passengers in July reached 1.446 million, including 640,000 arrivals and 806,000 departures on 12,468 flights.

The number of passengers in August reached about 1.578 million passengers, including 774,000 arrivals and 804,000 departures, onboard 12,819 flights.

The increase in the rate of traffic this summer compared to last year amounted to 15 percent. The total number of passengers from June until the end of September is expected to reach about six million passengers. These numbers are similar to the levels in 2019, before the COVID-10 pandemic, which confirms the recovery of the air transport sector again.

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Joint Operations (Saudi Arabian Chevron Inc. / Kuwait Gulf Oil Company), announces the under-mentioned Public Tender for procurement of material.

Kuwaiti and Saudi Merchants, registered with either Company wishing to participate in any of the under-mentioned Tenders are invited to collect the Tender documents from Purchasing Section, Purchasing & Logistic Division, Administration Building, Ground Floor, Joint Operations, Wafra, during the official working hours from **1 October 2023** up to **16 October 2023** for a non-refundable fee mentioned against each tender. Tender Fees to be deposited in the National bank of Kuwait (NBK) Account No. 1001132057. Saudi Suppliers can collect the tender documents from Saudi Arabian Chevron office in Al-Khobar Telephone No.: (013) 8645104 - Fax No.: (013) 8985436

The closing date for the following Tender will be on **Monday, 23 October 2023 @ 09:00 AM.**

S.NO.	TENDER NO.	MATERIALS	CONTRACT PERIOD	FEES (IN KD)
1	BPT # 237 / 19-R1	Blanket Purchases Tender for Instrumentation Items - Emerson & Fisher	3 YRS	100

Notes: Gate Passes are required for Suppliers entering JO-Wafra Administrative Offices to collect the tender document and gate pass processing time is 48 hours. Please send request for gate pass along with legible copies of Authorization letter, Civil ID, Car Registration, Supplier Registration (KGO or SAC) to e-mail CBMS@chevron.com or MYDG@chevron.com at least 48 hours prior to arrival.

For additional information, you may contact:
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Other Voices

'Fault lies in pervasive acceptance of corruption within the societal culture'

By Ahmed alsarraf

During the era of Cray Mackenzie, non-Muslims used to receive a monthly allowance of liquor which some would then sell to others, be they citizens or non-citizens.

Today, citizens receive subsidized food from the Kuwait Supply Company and later sell it to expatriates at a significant profit. This has intensified the burden on security forces as the smuggling of subsidized food has witnessed a notable increase recently. Every month, attempts to smuggle tens of tons of subsidized food are thwarted at the borders.



alsarraf

The Kuwait Supply Company initially aimed to provide essential food items to citizens at cost price to assist them in managing their living expenses.

Over time, the company expanded its offerings to include unnecessary items. In the future, this list might encompass products like cigars and caviar, in addition to the already provided smoked salmon and Zubaidi fish. While the company has partially achieved its goal of assisting low-income citizens, it has inadvertently fostered corruption. Some citizens who do not require the assistance sell their share for smuggling.

The Kuwait Supply Company provides vital commodities such as rice, butter, sugar, chicken, ghee, and baby milk powder, along with non-essential items like shrimps, various teas, glass cheese, and more.

Regrettably, stories about smuggled subsidized food only highlight expatriates, without mentioning the citizens who sold these goods, despite the Ministry of Interior's clear stance on taking strong action against anyone manipulating the national economy.

Due to the escalating corruption at the Kuwait Supply Company, suspicion has fallen on its branch workers. They face accusations of selling subsidized food to smuggling gangs, supported by instances of lost or cancelled citizens' supply cards.

A cooperative union chairman proposed a corruption-fighting solution of replacing expatriate workers at Supply Company branches with nationals. However, it's crucial to recognize that corruption, leading to infrastructure damage and spreading in various sectors, is not exclusive to any nationality.

The issue lies in the pervasive acceptance of corruption within the societal culture. In a society where cheating in exams is tolerated, smuggling subsidized milk powder is unfortunately not considered a significant issue.

A potential solution could involve dissolving the Kuwait Supply Company and redirecting the allocated funds for subsidized food to pension schemes.

e-mail: a.alsarraf@alqabas.com.kw



KUNA photo

Third secretary of Kuwait's permanent delegation to the UN Wafiq Al-Mulla.

Kuwait affirms efforts to achieve dev for all categories of society

Kuwait delivers speech at 78th session UNGA

NEW YORK, Sept 30, (KUNA): Kuwait affirmed exerting more efforts to achieve development in different fields for all categories of society.

The remarks were made by the third secretary of Kuwait's permanent delegation to the UN Wafiq Al-Mulla, during her speech at the 78th session of the UN General Assembly, in front of the UN's Third Committee of Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Issues on Saturday.

Al-Mulla called for international cooperation to achieve the UN's sustainable development goals 2030. She also called for further efforts to help communities affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Meanwhile, she noted that Kuwait has a priority of easing the lives of the elderly, by providing social insurance services and healthcare for retired people. Kuwait also issued law number 18/2016, which includes providing shelter for the elderly and provide them with the priority to finish their governmental documents first.

Kuwait is committed to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and is working on enabling them to engage

Awqaf opens door for electronic registration for 2024 Hajj season

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 30: The Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs has made an announcement about the initiation of central online registration for the 2024 Hajj season, reports Al-Rai daily.

This registration period commences on Sunday, October 1, and extends until November 10, accessible through the Endowments Portal application.

Salman Murad Al-Kandari, the spokesperson for the ministry, said in a press release that registration will conclude after the mentioned timeframe, enabling the organization to sort and select applicants based on specific criteria.

Following this, an exhibition will be organized featuring approved Hajj campaigns sanctioned by the ministry. Al-Kandari emphasized that prospective pilgrims can select a campaign

that aligns with their requirements and preferences, determining the appropriate method of fee payment after an initial 25% payment to secure registration in the campaign.

The electronic registration system is designed to achieve several objectives, such as fostering a sense of competition among campaigns to offer optimal services to pilgrims, granting pilgrims the liberty to select a suitable Hajj program, and enabling individuals who have not undertaken Hajj previously to participate.

He outlined that registration is targeted towards citizens in a group of no more than five relatives (e.g., grandparents, parents, siblings, children, spouses) or citizens with one resident companion (e.g., wife, mother, husband, son, daughter).

in society, as part of the Kuwait vision 2035 and the UN sustainable development goals, she said.

As for the report of the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres on the implementation of the objectives of the International Year of the Family and its follow-up processes, Al-Mulla

affirmed that Kuwait's constitution ensures the protection of family structure as a main factor in building good society.

In 2011, Kuwait issued a general aid law for families in need, especially families of divorced women, widows, prisoners and housewives, she noted.

Registration for int'l robotics contest opens for Kuwaitis

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 30: The Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity, affiliated with the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences, has officially opened registrations for the upcoming International Robotics Competition scheduled to take place in Tallinn, Estonia, from November 17 to 18.

Nada Abdullah Al-Daihani, the center's director-general, said, "The Sabah Al-Ahmad Center is delighted to announce the commencement of registration for talented and innovative Kuwaitis who wish to participate in the

qualifying rounds of this prestigious international event. Registration is available for Kuwaitis aged between 14 and 15, of all genders, starting from Sept 25 until October 3, 2023. Interested individuals can register through the link provided on the center's Instagram page @SACGC_kw."

Al-Daihani further elaborated saying "Participation in such events aligns with the center's ongoing commitment to inspire and support students, refine their skills, expand their knowledge in the field of robotics, and nurture a culture of innovation and creativity. It also

seeks to leverage the advancement of robotic science and technology."

Al-Daihani said the center will conduct essential training courses to prepare and equip participating teams, providing guidance on designing, constructing, programming, and managing robots. This preparation will enable the teams to engage in challenges with counterparts from various countries.

The top 3 teams will be selected from the qualifying participants to represent Kuwait in this esteemed global competition.

Assembly mulls

Continued from Page 1

The Public Prosecution is authorized as the relevant authority to identify the crime in a lawsuit as human trafficking.

As per the bill, foreigners are allowed to stay in Kuwait for a maximum of three months after the expiry of their temporary residency, in case they are unable to renew or transfer residency.

Expatriates can obtain a maximum of five-year residency. The children of Kuwaiti women and the owners of real estate in Kuwait can obtain a maximum residency of ten years. Foreign investors can obtain a maximum of 15-year residency. The Council of Ministers will define the businesses included in this condition, and the required amount of investment.

Expatriate workers of a public sector institution cannot be granted a license to work in another public sector institution without the approval of the first institution.

Domestic workers are allowed to stay in Kuwait for the term period of their contract unless their residency is cancelled after leaving the work. In

such a case, they are to be granted a grace period, as defined by the relevant department at the Ministry of Interior, to leave unless they obtain a new residency from another sponsor.

Transfer of domestic labor residency will not be allowed without the approval of the employer. Domestic workers can stay outside Kuwait for a maximum of four continuous months unless they obtain a permit from the relevant department at the Ministry of Interior prior to the end of the four months.

The bill authorized the Minister of Interior to deport expatriate workers, even if they hold a valid residency, in case the minister deems deportation necessary to preserve public interest or based on moral and security reasons, or if they are not working to survive.

The decision to deport may include the expatriate's family members whom he sponsors. Deported expatriates can be subject to one-month arrest but will be able to renew residency before leaving Kuwait.

The Minister of Interior is authorized to exempt deported expatriates from paying the fines resulting from previous violations. Presidents of other countries, their family members, the members of diplomatic delegations and their family members, and

holders of special passports of political nature are exempted from this law. The Minister of Interior is authorized to exempt specific individuals from this law for courtesy/ complimentary reasons.

The report on the bill is expected to be completed before the end of parliamentary vacation in order to be scheduled during the upcoming sessions.

Academics refute

Continued from Page 1

Dr. Hailah Al-Mkaimi, political sciences professor at the KU, indicated that the court ruling came as a result of an "internal crisis" in Iraq.

She lauded the Kuwaiti Government firm stand on the issue.

Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah had strongly condemned the bid by the Iraqi court to practically annul the treaty that had been endorsed by the two countries authorities.

He also decried the allegations that came in the tribunal controversial narration and urged the Iraqi government to tackle the issue and affirm respect for the State of Kuwait sovereignty.

GRAND INAUGURATION

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حيث يأتي العالم للتسوق

JOINT OPERATIONS WAFRA

SAUDI ARABIAN CHEVRON INC. (SAC) - KUWAIT GULF OIL COMPANY

Joint Operations (Saudi Arabian Chevron Inc. / Kuwait Gulf Oil Company), announces the under-mentioned Public Tenders for procurement of materials.

Kuwaiti and Saudi Merchants, registered with either Company wishing to participate in any of the under-mentioned Tenders are invited to collect the Tender documents from Purchasing Section, Purchasing & Logistic Division, Administration Building, Ground Floor, Joint Operations, Wafra, during the official working hours from **1 OCT 2023** up to **15 OCT 2023** for a non-refundable fee mentioned against each tender.

Tender Fees to be deposited in the National bank of Kuwait (NBK) Account No. 1001132057. Saudi Suppliers can collect the tender documents from Saudi Arabian Chevron office in Al-Khobar Telephone No.: (013) 8645104 - Fax No.: (013) 8985436

The closing date for the following Tender will be on **Monday, 23 OCT 2023 @ 09:00 A.M.**

S.NO.	TENDER NO.	MATERIALS	FEES (IN KD)
1	2885607	GAS SCRUBBER	100
2	2885946	PIPES INTERNALLY COATED	5
3	2885950	CASING OCTG	25
4	2886652	VALVES (GATE - BALL - CHECK - GLOBE)	25
5	2886685	ANALYZER WATER IN OIL, PHASE DYNAMICS OR EQUIVALET	25
6	2886687	ANALYZER OIL IN WATER	35
7	2886906	EMERGENCY RELIEF VALVE, (PROTEGO - GROTH) OR EQUIVALENT	15

Notes:

Gate Passes are required for Suppliers entering JO-Wafra Administrative Offices to collect the tender document and gate pass processing time is 48 hours. Please fill request for gate pass along with legible copies of Authorization letter, Civil ID, Car Registration, Supplier Registration (KGO or SAC) to e-mail cbms@chevron.com and hbjh@chevron.com at least 48 hours prior to arrival.

For additional information, you may contact:

Telephone No.: **23983639** - Ext. : **2502 - 3477**

oil down

The price of Kuwaiti oil barrel went down 74 cents to USD 97.90 per barrel (pb) on Friday as opposed to USD 98.64 on Thursday, according to Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on Saturday.

In international markets, Brent crude oil decreased by seven cents to settle at USD 95.31 pb, while West Texas crude went down 92 cents to stand at USD 90.97 pb. (KUNA)

crude oil exports dip

Kuwait's crude oil exports to Japan fell 51.2 percent in August from a year earlier to 4.68 million barrels, or 151,000 barrels per day (bpd), for the first decline in nine months, government data showed Friday.

As Japan's third-biggest oil provider, Kuwait supplied 6.0 percent of the country's total crude imports, compared with 10.4 percent in the same month of last year, the Japanese Natural Resources and Energy Agency said in a preliminary report.

Japan's overall imports of crude oil in August shrank 16.2 percent year-on-year to 2.50 mil-

lion bpd, down for the second straight month. Shipments from the Middle East accounted for 94.6 percent of the total, up 0.1 percentage point from the year before.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) remained in the top spot, with imports from the country growing 9.5 percent from a year earlier to 1.15 million bpd, followed by Saudi Arabia with 899,000 bpd, down 24.5 percent. Qatar ranked fourth with 95,000 bpd and Ecuador fifth with 69,000 bpd, respectively. Japan is the world's third biggest oil consumer after China and the US. (KUNA)

Italy, Libya resume commercial flights

Italy and war-torn Libya on Saturday resumed commercial flights for the first time in a decade, authorities in the Libyan capital said.

Flight MT522, operated by the Libyan carrier Medsky Airways, departed Mitiga International Airport in Tripoli for Rome's Leonardo da Vinci-Fiumicino Airport, according to Libyan airport authorities.

A return flight was scheduled to land in Tripoli on Saturday af-

ternoon, according to Mitiga International Airport. Going forward, there will be one round-trip flight between the Libyan and Italian capitals on both Saturdays and Wednesdays, according to the Mitiga airport announcement.

The government of Prime Minister Abdul-Hamid Dbeibah in Tripoli lauded the resumed flights, posting photos on social media that showed passengers boarding the flight and officials celebrating. (AP)

Market Movements 29-09-2023

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts	
UK	-	+6.23	7,608.08	JAPAN	-14.90	31,857.62
Europe	-	+13.10	4,174.66	Philippines	-64.28	6,321.24
				Nikkei		
				Psi		

Business

'Economy should be a leverage for cultural, artistic and literary works'

Kuwait-France joint commission sets promising course for mutual cooperation

PARIS, Sept 30, (KUNA): The visiting President of Kuwait Chamber of Industry and Commerce Mohammad Al-Sagr on Friday affirmed significance of the Kuwaiti-French relations noting that it is a great state with membership in the United Nations.

Al-Sagr, also the head of the Kuwaiti side in the Kuwaiti-French Friendship Committee, was speaking to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) following the joint commission's first meeting in the French capital. He described it as important and fruitful, indicating that the two sides defined broad lines for mutual cooperation.

He also indicated that it was an opportunity for acquaintance among the commission members and a prelude to the second "and prime" session, due in Kuwait in April, during which the two parties would work out the common task document. The two sides, earlier this month, held a meeting in Kuwait to discuss blueprints for "finding solutions to challenges" facing development in the two countries.

Meanwhile, Mohammad Al-Jedai, lauded the "excellent bilateral relations" between the State of Kuwait and France in various sectors. Speaking during the session, the ambassador affirmed, "this opportunity depicts the strong bonds between the two countries not only at the official level but also at the popular level."

Ambassador Al-Jedai alluded to a visit to France by Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, three months ago, describing it as quite successful and focused on means of cementing the bilateral rela-

tions and cooperation at the regional level.

At the cultural level, the Kuwaiti writer, Taleb Al-Rifai, who was engaged in the talks, said in remarks KUNA that although the commission tasks are focused on the private sector, "the benefit will expand to all sectors in the State of Kuwait." "Economy should be a leverage for cultural, artistic and literary works," he said.

The Kuwaiti-French committee, comprising eminent personalities of diverse specialties, had been established to strengthen the mutual relations, conduct cooperation with France; a strategic ally of heavyweight on the international political, economic, cultural and technological arenas.



Members of the Kuwaiti-French Friendship Committee during the joint commission's first meeting. KUNA photo

Banks increase monthly financing to oil & gas sector by 1.36 percent

August statistics reach highest level

By Ahmad Fathi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 30: In the first eight months of 2023, local banks increased their monthly financing to the oil and gas sector by 1.36 percent, totaling 18.4 million dinars. This marked a rise from 1.351 billion dinars in the same period in 2022 to 1.369 billion dinars in the current year. According to the Central Bank of Kuwait's August statistics, financing for the oil and gas sector in August surged by 251.8 percent, reaching 298.7 million dinars from 84.9 million dinars in July, reaching its highest level in a year and a half since April 2022 when it stood at 350.1 million dinars. It had hit its lowest point in March at around 61.2 million dinars.

On an annual basis, financing grew by 310 percent, reaching 226 million dinars in August 2023 compared to 72.7 million dinars in August 2022. Throughout 2023, bank financing for the oil and gas sector experienced fluctuations. It decreased from 152.6 million dinars in December to 78.8 million dinars in January, spiked to 243.3 million dinars in February, dropped to 61.2 million dinars in March, rose again to 159.2 million in April, increased to 274.3 million in May, dipped in June to 169.1 million dinars, and finally reached 84.9 million dinars in July.

Accumulated Balance:

The accumulated balance of oil and gas financing provided by local banks decreased by 9.4 percent annually, amounting to 272.2 million dinars. This decline took it from 2.764 billion dinars in August 2022 to 2.492 billion dinars in August of the following year. From the beginning of 2023, this balance saw a 6 percent reduction of about 158.9 million dinars, down from 2.651 billion dinars at the end of December. On a monthly basis, it contracted by 2 percent, losing 4.9 million dinars, from 2.543 billion dinars at the end of December. In July, the oil financing balance reached its highest level in two years, reaching 2.804 billion dinars, since September 2022.

Oil Projects:

The oil and gas sector in Kuwait witnessed substantial growth in project awards during the first eight months of the year, with Kuwait Oil Company contracts totaling 985 million dinars (equivalent to 3.3 billion dollars) for approximately 91 tenders issued since the beginning of the year. "MEED" magazine, specializing in projects, noted that recent senior management appointments in the Kuwaiti oil and gas sector have generated optimism among contractors. They anticipate increased project activity in the industry, with pre-implementation values potentially reaching up to \$12 billion. The magazine previously classified Kuwait's oil and gas project market as the worst-performing in the Gulf due to political issues, citing a 65 percent decrease in the total value of active projects from \$67.1 billion to \$23.5 billion between 2020 and April of this year. The new appointments could positively impact several major stalled projects, including the \$10 billion Al-Zour petrochemical complex.

Price Growth:

At the outset of 2023, oil prices faced a decline due to various factors, including the American banking crisis and the ongoing Russian-Ukrainian conflict, which negatively impacted demand. However, prices rebounded as global demand for oil increased, with expectations of a crude supply shortage for the remainder of 2023, pushing prices up to \$97.73 per barrel this week. The International Energy Agency anticipates that the extension of oil production reductions by Saudi Arabia and Russia until the end of 2023 will result in a significant supply shortage in the fourth quarter. The agency has generally adhered to its estimates of demand growth for this year and the next.

The OPEC+ group of countries began reducing production in November 2022 to stabilize the market. Some members, led by Saudi Arabia, extended voluntary cuts until the end of 2023, with the latest announce-

Other Voices

Will pass on price hike to the final consumers

By Kamel Al-Harami

Independent Oil Analyst

OIL prices are heading towards the ultimate level of \$100 per barrel. When it does, everybody will feel it. There is no doubt about that.

In the meantime, it is the best ever legitimate excuse to blame oil producing countries at any time, not knowing that oil producers will feel the pain of higher prices for all goods and services, as most of them import between about 50 to 95 percent of their needs from outside.



Al-Harami

Therefore, an increase in oil prices is not a happy occasion, as it leads to inflation and increase in bank interest rates. Most likely, any increase in oil prices in the end should be a breakeven scenario for efficient oil producing countries, the ones that are strict about expenditures and budgets, but they are few in number.

Now it seems that a level of \$100 is closer than before. Some oil producing countries have surpassed the \$99 level depending on the type of their crude oil that yields better and high-rated petroleum products in the global markets, or they charge premium over OPEC basket of \$97.50 per barrel.

Again, the concern is the expected critics of OPEC+ and its decision to curb supply and production, as some will claim this as the reason. The oil producers are not allowed to move oil prices forward but are struggling with higher cost of living, especially food and grain mainly because of the Russian occupation of Ukraine.

The other factor that markets are beginning to realize is that China has woken up and increased its call for oil. This will push the prices further until it reaches its peak by the end of 2025 when electric vehicles will take over. It is also supported by coal and natural gas, which are abundantly available, instead of depending on imported oil and to go for in US currency.

Also, the Russian Urals crude is now traded in the range of \$100, despite the G7 boycott and restriction on it to have a selling price of \$60 a barrel. It seems nobody is paying attention to such a level, and is buying instead at the market price of \$100 with seemingly an open hand.

The oil market will remain strong in the coming months with an increase in demand rate. It also seems other suppliers like USA producers will not be willing to invest more money into drilling and looking for new oils. It seems they are looking for better returns and dividends for the shareholders, and seeking to keep them happy and satisfied. This is possible as long as the price stays strong and the responsibility is passed on to OPEC+, and until the petroleum organization itself starts to leak or relax its rules on the voluntary cuts.

For the time being, we must wait for the \$100 level, and we will later hear about the global reactions, noises and the pointing of fingers. In the end, everybody will gain a little, but for sure not the entire \$100.



Email: naftikuwaiti@yahoo.com



October

Room Promotion





Weekdays (Saturday - Wednesday)	
Queen Cabana (2 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.	2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.
NOW	NOW
BHD 57.173/-net	BHD 128.000/-net
Weekends (Thursday & Friday)	
Queen Cabana (2 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.	2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.
NOW	NOW
BHD 65.000/-net	BHD 145.000/-net

Promo period from 1st - 31st October 2023

Terms & conditions apply*

ment made on September 5 of the current year. The Paris-based agency reported that the production restrictions imposed by OPEC+ members, totaling more than 2.5 million barrels per day since the start of the year, have been partly compensated by increased supplies from producers outside the alliance.

Germany's govt and Musk spar over rescue ships

Germany's government rebuked X owner Elon Musk after he criticized the recent work of migrant rescue ships that German humanitarian groups operate in the Mediterranean Sea. Musk late Friday shared a video that showed migrants and aid workers on a boat. The right-wing account that first put the content on X, formerly known as Twitter, praised the populist far-right Alternative

for Germany party, which has taken a hard line on migration issues. "Is the German public aware of this?" Musk wrote in his repost. The German Federal Foreign Office replied to Musk directly on X, writing: "Yes. And it's called saving lives." Musk responded that he doubted the German public supports the actions of non-govern-

mental organizations that take asylum-seekers from unseaworthy vessels in the Mediterranean. He also asserted it was "surely" a violation of Italy's sovereignty for German-operated ships to bring rescued migrants to Italian territory. "So you're actually proud of it. Interesting," he wrote to the Foreign Office, adding that he thinks such maritime operations have "invasion vibes." (AP)

Cyprus hails Moody's two-notch credit rating upgrade

Cyprus on Saturday hailed a two-notch upgrade by credit ratings agency Moody's to bring the east Mediterranean island nation back into investment-grade territory a decade after a financial crisis left the country on the brink of bankruptcy. President Nikos Christodoulides said he was "deeply satisfied" with the upgrade that he said was the culmination of years of fiscal discipline and will

translate into attracting quality foreign investment and creating new jobs. "We unwaveringly continue on this path as a government ... and so we will carry on with our governance," Christodoulides said in a written message. "We will carry on buttressing our economy and expanding its dynamic course." Moody's said in its statement the upgrade from Ba1 to Baa2 with a concurrent change in

outlook from positive to stable is due to previous and continuing economic, fiscal and banking reforms, as well as a significant drop in bad bank loans. The agency pointed to "sustained structural improvements" in the labor market, a rebound in public and private investments, a continuing drop in public debt and a jump in productivity that resulted in economic growth by more than 4% between 2014-2023. (AP)

Inflation drops to a two-year low in Europe

Drop offers hope, but higher oil prices loom

FRANKFURT, Germany, Sept 30, (AP): Inflation that has plagued Europeans declined sharply in September to the lowest level in two years, strengthening hopes that consumers will get relief from costlier groceries, vacations and haircuts - and that the European Central Bank won't have to further restrict the economy by raising interest rates from already-record highs.

The annual rate was 4.3% this month, a drop from 5.2% in August, and the lowest since October 2021, the European Union's statistics agency, Eurostat, said Friday. But recently higher oil prices are casting a shadow over prospects for quickly beating inflation down to the central bank's target of 2%.

Core inflation, which excludes volatile fuel and food prices, fell more than analysts expected - to 4.5% from 5.3%. The ECB closely watches this figure to assess how inflation is coming down.

The fall in core inflation "reinforces our view that the ECB has finished raising interest rates," said Jack Allen-Reynolds, deputy chief eurozone economist at Capital Economics. He predicted that the overall inflation rate would tumble to 3.5% by the end of the year.

While inflation is lower in the U.S., a measure closely tracked by the Federal Reserve accelerated in August to 3.5% compared with a year earlier, from 3.4% in July, boosted mainly by higher gasoline prices.

Meanwhile, eurozone energy prices dropped 4.7% in September, while food price inflation remained uncomfortably high at 8.8%.

Readings across the major economies that use the euro currency were a mixed bag. Germany's annual inflation fell to 4.3% in September from 6.4% a month earlier, while Spain's increased to 3.2% from 2.4%.

Economists warn, however, that the large drop in Germany, the 20-country eurozone's largest economy, was exaggerated by a statistical quirk - the end of a subsidized transportation ticket and a fuel subsidy in September 2022 that had raised consumer prices that month.

The latest inflation figures follow what may have been the final interest rate increase by the ECB in its swift series of hikes. It brought its benchmark deposit rate to a record high of 4% this month, up from minus 0.5% in July 2022.

ECB President Christine Lagarde said that if interest rate levels are maintained for a "sufficiently long duration," that would make a substantial contribution to returning inflation to 2%, a goal the bank does not expect to reach until 2025.

High prices have been holding back the European economy because people's paychecks don't go as far as they used to in covering their bills, forcing them to cut back on other spending.

Economic growth has stagnated to just above zero in the first six months of the year, with some indicators pointing to a downturn in the current July-to-September quarter.

This burst of inflation was set off as the global economy rebounded from the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to shortages of parts and raw materials. It got worse when Russian invaded Ukraine, sending energy prices soaring as Moscow cut off most natural gas to Europe.

Supply chain bottlenecks and energy prices have eased, but inflation has worked its way through the economy. Prices are higher for services such as haircuts and hotel stays, and workers have demanded pay raises to make up for their lost purchasing power.

The ECB has been trying to get a handle on inflation by raising interest rates, which make it more expensive to borrow for big purchases such as houses or new factory equipment to expand a business. That reduces demand for goods and, in turn, inflation.

But higher rates also can weigh on economic growth, leaving the central bank facing a balancing act over how far to go.

Many economists think the ECB has finished raising rates unless something drastic happens to keep inflation from falling further. That could be a further increase in oil prices, which have risen recently after major producers Saudi Arabia and Russia extended production cuts.



Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors, Sheikh Badr Humoud Al-Sabah, and Group CEO, Mr. Raed Turjman.

Timeless pioneer

Northern Gulf Trading Co – Hyundai launches the all-new Azera 2024 car

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 30: Northern Gulf Trading Company, the exclusive distributor of Hyundai vehicles in Kuwait, has announced the launch of the all-new Hyundai Azera - 2024, designed with bold lines and a range of new technologies and features to provide outstanding performance and amazing levels of comfort for passengers.

On this occasion, Mr. Raed Turjuman, CEO of Northern Gulf Trading Group, commented: "The all-new Azera 2024 has remained true to its heritage of delivering high levels of quality and luxury since its first generation was introduced in 1986. It is the most splendid expression of Hyundai's vision for the future of mobility. Our brand believes that driving is a sensory experience, and the all-new Azera accurately reflects this concept by combining captivating exterior beauty, ample luxury, and innovative features to offer a superior car in every detail, introducing a new definition of modern luxury."

As a large luxury sedan, the all-new Azera has been completely redesigned with a harmonious and visually striking design that seamlessly blends art and technology. The beautiful proportions of the exterior design and the smooth sculpting of the car's body reflect Hyundai's vision for future mobility.

The seventh generation of Azera comes with larger dimensions than the previous generation, measuring 5,035 mm in length, which is 45 mm longer than the previous generation. It features a longer wheelbase by 10 mm, a 50 mm longer rear overhang, along with a more spacious cabin, a more dynamic and agile body, and a more evolved appearance. The all-new Azera 2024 introduces smooth side structure panels and unique elegant characteristics displayed through frameless doors and hidden door handles. The front end is characterized by a large chrome-coated front grille that almost completely fills the front bumper and reflects the car's bold impression. The front also includes dual "LED" fog lamps. The car's rear enhances the feeling of size and strength through the extended stop lights and the integrated rear wing on the smart trunk.

The all-new Azera's cabin, which accommodates five passengers, is designed with a simple style that focuses on the work environment, responsive technologies, and user comfort to provide a distinctive sense of comfort and relaxation. The precision engineering is evident in the dashboard design. The all-new Azera places customer needs first, as evident in the decor and comfortable slim design, minimizing physical buttons to facilitate usage and creating a unique and quiet space with soundproof glass, removable carpets, and noise-reducing wheels.

The center console features three connected display screens measuring 12.3 inches for information, entertainment, navigation, and air conditioning, providing a high-tech appearance and feel. The all-new Azera 2024 draws inspiration for its entirely new interior decorations and colors from shapes and patterns found in nature and traditional Korean decor, using environmentally friendly and natural materials throughout.



The all-new Azera 2024

The all-new Azera 2024 seamlessly combines elegance and practical specifications. The car offers premium leather seats with front seats featuring memory function, and the rear seats are electrically reclining, a first in its class. It also features a dual panoramic sunroof, ambient lighting, wireless smartphone charging, a head-up display "HUD," and the exquisite design and ultimate luxury of the elegantly inspired first-generation steering wheel.

The enhanced transmission system and advanced safety features of the all-new Azera 2024 come with a 3.5-liter GDI engine producing 300 horsepower at a maximum torque of 6,400 Nm, connected to an 8-speed vertical shift automatic transmission "Shift By Wire."

In terms of safety, the new model offers the Hyundai "SmartSense" system, which includes many safety features and intelligent driving assistance systems, such as the Front Collision Avoidance System (FCA), Rear Collision Avoidance Assist (RCCA), Blind-Spot Detection System (BSD), and Safe Exit Assist (SEA). These systems help reduce driver stress and provide a more comfortable driving experience. The Smart Remote Parking Assistant helps the driver easily exit and enter parking spaces.

Paused during and after the pandemic

Borrowers reassessing budgets as student loan payments to resume

NEW YORK, Sept 30, (AP): Millions of Americans must start repaying their federal student loans again in October, with monthly payments averaging hundreds of dollars. To get ready, borrowers are cutting expenses, taking on additional work, and looking for options to reduce their monthly payments.

Megan McClelland, 38, said she has started asking for October shifts with a catering company and a winery to help supplement her income.

McClelland's main job is as a counselor at Petaluma High School in California. During the more than three years payments were suspended because of the pandemic, she paid off her car loan and was able to save for the first time. She'll put the \$235 she was spending on her car payment toward her student loan, but that still leaves another \$270 or so she'll have to reallocate or earn.

"It had been a huge relief the past few years to not have that financial burden," she said. "In the next months, I'm looking to see where I can scale back in my budget. Probably less going out to eat, and more picking up side gigs."

Justin Cole, 35, of Little Rock, Arkansas, said he doesn't know how he's going to come up with the \$166 a month he'll owe starting in October. That's the estimated payment on his roughly \$19,000 of loans from paying for college more than 10 years ago.

"I'm already in a mountain of debt, and while I just got a raise at work, it doesn't go into effect until we're full staffed at my family practice clinic," he said.

Cole works the front office at a medical practice, checking in patients, handling records and managing payment collection. Some of his other debt comes from medical expenses after a car accident early in the pandemic.

"If those loans were forgiven, I could finally work on getting my credit up and actually saving money for once," he said. "If they were forgiven out of the blue, I'd be ecstatic."

The Supreme Court in July rejected a plan by President Joe Biden's administration to wipe away \$400 billion in student loan debt.

For now, Cole has applied for adjustments to his payments based on both the new SAVE plan and prior income-driven repayment options, which are listed as processing and "in review" on his account. The SAVE, or "Saving on a Valuable Education," plan allows borrowers to make lower payments based on a percentage of their discretionary income.

His major household expenses are "rent, car payments, groceries, and utilities - the same as everybody else," he said.

Not yet clear is how millions of people suddenly having less discretionary income might affect the economy.

On an earnings call last month, the chief financial officer of Target said

that student loan payments restarting will "put additional pressure on the already-strained budgets of tens of millions of households," a sentiment echoed by the financial chiefs of Best Buy and other retailers.

In the Federal Reserve's latest survey of economic conditions, one restaurant-industry observer in Boston said workers are taking on more hours, and, for the first time, credit card debt has topped \$1 trillion. According to credit bureau TransUnion, more than half of student loan holders added credit card debt during the pandemic. Meanwhile, consumer savings, which peaked in 2021, are on the decline.

McClelland qualifies for Public Service Loan Forgiveness as a public school teacher who will have worked in the field for 10 years next March. She's putting her loans in order to hopefully receive that cancellation next year. The program erases remaining debts for federal student loan holders who work in public service while making 10 years of payments.

"I only have six payments to go, but it's still stressful," she said. "I have to find about \$500 a month starting next month towards this payment that I haven't had in so long."

The Public Service Loan Forgiveness program is one of several avenues for relief still available to many with student debt. After Biden's original plan for forgiveness was struck down by the Supreme Court in July, the White House has said it will use the Higher Education Act to bring cancellation to more borrowers. It's currently undergoing a process known as "negotiated rule-making" to determine the details of that plan.

Other sources for relief for borrowers include: false certification, borrower defense, closed school, total/permanent disability discharges, and alternate repayment programs like income-driven repayment.

McClelland, for her part, said she now spends a lot of time counseling high school students on how to avoid taking on burdensome loans.

"I had no financial guidance when I was younger, from my own parents or from school," she said. "I didn't ever understand the long term impact."

Despite working while in school and since - moonlighting at Starbucks, wineries and restaurants as well as counseling - McClelland still has a balance of about \$38,000 in debt, from original loans of \$10,000 towards her undergraduate studies and \$40,000 for her masters in counseling at Sonoma State.

"I knew I wanted to go to college, and my parents didn't have any money," McClelland said. "As tell kids all the time, openly, 'As someone who was once in your shoes, I highly recommend finding a way to avoid taking out loans.' When you're 17 or 18 years old, you think, 'Oh, sure, I'll figure this out.' Then it's frustrating to still be in this financial situation."

Biden calls for up to 3 oil and gas lease sales in the Gulf of Mexico

WASHINGTON, Sept 30, (AP): President Joe Biden's administration on Friday proposed up to three oil and gas lease sales in the Gulf of Mexico, but none in Alaska, as it tries to navigate between energy companies seeking greater oil and gas production and environmental activists who want Biden to shut down new offshore drilling in the fight against climate change.

The five-year plan includes proposed sales in the Gulf of Mexico - the nation's primary offshore source of oil and gas - in 2025, 2027 and 2029. The three lease sales are the minimum number the Democratic administration could legally offer if it wants to continue expanding offshore wind development.

Under the terms of a 2022 climate law, the government must offer at least 60 million acres of offshore oil and gas leases in any one-year period before it can offer offshore wind leases.

The provision tying offshore wind to oil and gas production was added by Democratic Sen. Joe Manchin of West Virginia, a top recipient of oil and gas donations and a key vote in favor of the climate law, which was approved with only Democratic votes in Congress. The landmark law, the Inflation Reduction Act, was signed by Biden as a key step to fight climate change but includes a number of provisions authored by Manchin, a centrist who represents an energy-producing state.

Higher gas prices lift Fed's preferred inflation gauge

WASHINGTON, Sept 30, (AP): An inflation gauge closely tracked by the Federal Reserve rose in August, boosted mainly by higher gas prices. But measures of underlying inflation slowed in the latest sign that overall price pressures are still moderating.

Friday's report from the Commerce Department showed that prices rose 0.4% from July to August, up from just 0.2% the previous month. A 10% monthly spike in prices at the gas pump drove the increase.

Excluding volatile food and energy prices, though, "core" inflation rose by the smallest amount

in nearly three years, evidence that inflation pressures continue to ease. Fed officials pay particular attention to core prices, which are considered a better gauge of where inflation might be headed. Last month's modest rise in core inflation could raise the likelihood that the Fed will leave interest rates unchanged at its next

meeting Oct. 31-Nov. 1.

Core prices edged up 0.1% from July to August, down from July's 0.2%. It was the smallest monthly increase since November 2020. Compared with a year ago, core prices were up 3.9%, below July's reading of 4.2%. That was the slowest such increase in two years.



Nawaf Al-Khrayef (right) and KIB's retail platform.



KIB offers customers exclusive discounts upon signing up on 'KIB Mobile' app

Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced a special offer to encourage its customers to download and sign up on 'KIB Mobile', a retail app dedicated to personal banking. In addition to offering rewards, the app provides a unique, advanced, convenient, and safe platform to access the Bank's services and products, all in one place. This initiative is rooted in KIB's continuous commitment to its digital transformation strategy.

The 'KIB Mobile' app has recently been completely revamped, with the Bank eye-

ing constant development and improvement to offer an enhanced banking experience. KIB strives to remain updated with the latest financial and banking technology requirements and trends to ensure customer satisfaction and meet their daily needs.

Commenting on the new offer, Nawaf Al-Khrayef, Assistant General Manager of the Retail Banking Department at KIB said: "The Bank aims to encourage its customers who have not signed up on 'KIB Mobile' to download it and make use of its spectacular features. Upon signing up and sending

a screenshot of the app's home page to the Bank's WhatsApp communication service, customers get an instant reward. The reward includes a package of exclusive discounts from various famous retail brands in Kuwait."

Al-Khrayef indicated that the exclusive package comprises discounts that range from 10% to 85% at a wide selection of stores and apps, including Dabdoob, ShopFlain, Floward, Drops, YogaClosest, Ghaseel, Mukhar, Kisra, PolarBox, Pastamania and Klass Burger.

Ooredoo Kuwait's iPhone 15 launch event sets the bar high



Top & above: Some photos of the event.

Unprecedented success recorded

Ooredoo Kuwait, a prominent leader in the tech industry, has celebrated a resounding success with the launch of the highly anticipated iPhone 15. The event, hosted last Thursday at Ooredoo Tower, witnessed an impressive gathering of approximately 700 attendees, all eager to be among the first to experience the latest iPhone models, while reveling in an evening brimming with captivating activities.



The newly-launched iPhone 15/

Renowned for consistently making waves in the tech world, Ooredoo's iPhone 15 launch event served as a resounding testament to the company's unwavering commitment to pushing the boundaries of technology. It underscored Ooredoo's dedication to delivering cutting-edge innovations to their valued customers.

In close collaboration with a diverse range of partners, including Talabat, NBK, Anker, and others, Ooredoo meticulously orchestrated and executed the event to ensure its extraordinary success.

Furthermore, the exclusive VIP experience, tailor-made for the Al Nokhba segment, added an additional layer of sophistication to the occasion.

This event transcended the usual boundaries of a typical product launch, offering an exceptional experience that appealed to a wide range of tastes, including tech enthusiasts, gamers, foodies, and music lovers. With its unique fusion of cutting-edge technology, gaming excitement, culinary delights, and live music, the event attracted a

substantial crowd, solidifying its status as one of Kuwait's most significant events this year.

The evening also featured a captivating performance by Kuwaiti singer Abdelaziz Louis, whose songs inspired everyone to sing along, particularly when he performed Ooredoo's anthem, "Kil Shubr wa Melli."

Abdelaziz expressed his delight at being part of this grand event and promised the audience more exciting collaborations and entertaining events with Ooredoo in the near future.

Responding to the high customer demand, Ooredoo has extended the special offers introduced during the event, ensuring that a larger number of customers can now take advantage of these exclusive deals and acquire the latest iPhone 15.

ABK-Egypt receives Fastest Growing Bank – Egypt Award from the International Business Magazine

Gulf Bank continues to educate and 'encourage' the community to save

'This award reflects our strategic vision, unwavering pursuit of excellence'

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 30: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait – Egypt (ABK-Egypt), a subsidiary of Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait, has been recognized as the Fastest Growing Bank in Egypt for 2023 by International Business Magazine. This accolade celebrates ABK-Egypt's noteworthy achievements and growth trajectory since the Group's acquisition of Piraeus Bank Egypt in 2015.



Ali Marafi, Chairman of ABK-Egypt

Commenting on the accomplishment, Mr. Ali Marafi, Chairman of ABK-Egypt, said, "Winning the Fastest Growing Bank - Egypt 2023 award is a tremendous achievement for ABK-Egypt which reflects our strategic vision, unwavering pursuit of excellence, and ability to adapt to customers' evolving needs. This recognition motivates us to continue to drive sustainable growth and deliver superior banking solutions to individuals and businesses across Egypt."

On his part, Mr. Khaled El Salawy, CEO and Managing Director of ABK-

Egypt, expressed his gratitude for winning this award, saying, "Being granted the 'Fastest Growing Bank' award is testament to our commitment to achieving sustainable growth. It demonstrates our constant dedication to implementing our ambitious, flexible, and innovative strategies. The Bank's success in establishing a thorough understanding of the economic landscape in its various sectors has enabled us to swiftly meet the needs of both individual and corporate customers alike.

ABK-Egypt's journey over the past years has been characterized by resilience and agility in a dynamic economic landscape. Through strategic investments in customer centricity, digitization, and human capital devel-



Khaled El Salawy – CEO and Managing Director ABK-Egypt

opment, the Bank has achieved a significant increase in its balance sheet, positioning itself as a leading player in the Egyptian banking sector.

One of the key factors contributing to ABK-Egypt's success is its commitment to customer satisfaction. By prioritizing customer needs and investing in digital banking solutions, the Bank has enhanced its overall banking experience, enabling remote management of banking needs.

Furthermore, ABK-Egypt's financial performance speaks volumes about its impressive growth. Despite starting with a loss of EGP 103 million in 2015, the Bank has steadily increased its net profit, reaching EGP 1.7 billion in the first half of 2023.

Furthermore, ABK-Egypt has expanded its customer base across corporate and retail banking segments, cementing its position as a trusted banking partner in the market.

Undergoing a comprehensive digital transformation, ABK-Egypt has optimized its branch network, ventured into new business lines, and conducted extensive brand-building campaigns to raise consumer awareness. The Bank's tailored products and services for corporate, SMEs, and retail customers, combined with an expanded presence in 18 Egyptian governorates through a network of 45 branches, have contributed to its rapid growth.

Beyond its financial achievements, ABK-Egypt remains dedicated to being a responsible corporate citizen. The Bank has actively supported the communities in which it operates through various social initiatives, including providing financial relief, shelter, educational and medical support, and food supplies to the underprivileged.

ABK-Egypt reaffirms its relentless dedication to delivering a unique banking experience by prioritizing customer satisfaction and exceeding expectations at every interaction. By providing innovative solutions, tailored banking products, and personalized service, the Bank ensures to remain customers' preferred banking partner.

For more information about ABK-Egypt, please visit abkegypt.com.

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 30: As part of its efforts to consolidate the principles of social sustainability, and spread financial literacy across society, Gulf Bank launched various events and activities in 2023, the Year of Savings, to encourage and educate the community about the importance of saving money.

Gulf Bank has launched a series of episodes on Gulf Bank's social media channels with the Finance and Business Specialist, Waleed Al-Salem, aiming to encourage followers to save and invest their money, and to increase their financial awareness.

The episodes covered important and diverse topics related to saving – such as its role in helping people achieve their dreams, resolve emergency crises, and increase the level of safety for the individuals and their families in the future.

Additionally, Gulf Bank continued to encourage customers to open an Al Danah Millionaire account – which is the oldest and most prestigious savings account in Kuwait – by simply using the bank's website or mobile application to open an account in just a few minutes.

The bank declared the year 2023 as the Year of Savings, to highlight its distinguished role in encouraging and motivating all segments of society to save, and in support of the 'Let's Be Aware' campaign, which falls under the supervision of the Central Bank of Kuwait, in cooperation with Kuwait Banking Association.

Moreover, Gulf Bank launched the 2023 calendar under the slogan "Always with you in the Year of Savings", where every month of the year was classified to carry important values related to money savings, such as perseverance, independence, hope, decision making and others.

Gulf Bank's Deputy General Manager of Consumer Banking, Najla Al-Eisa, said: "Saving is a choice and a decision, and it is a way to overcome our whims and achieve our dreams. It's not about questioning how to start saving or how much do we start with, what's important is to start saving for all the opportunities that lie ahead and the ambitions that may arise."

Al-Eisa added: "All things tend to start small and grow with perseverance, patience, hope and determina-



Najla Al-Eisa – Gulf Bank

tion, and when the time comes to harvest the fruits of our labor, we'll feel that our efforts have not been wasted. Saving is happiness, reassurance, and a peace of mind; and with it, we can prepare for the challenges that may arise in the future, which we might not realize their difficulty until we go through them."

She continued: "Together in 2023, the Year of Savings, we can cultivate hope, with strength and perseverance, to realize the strength that we hold within, and continue to move forward to achieve our dreams. After all, a millionaires' journey begins with just KD 1."

Al-Eisa further indicated that Gulf Bank provides its customers with various products and services that help them save and achieve great returns, whether through the annual draws or through reaping returns from deposits or other investment channels.

Gulf Bank's vision is to be the leading Kuwaiti Bank of the Future. The Bank is constantly engaging and empowering its employees as part of an inclusive and diversified workplace in recognition of every employee's role in delivering customer excellence and serving the community at large. With its extensive network of branches and innovative digital services, Gulf Bank is able to give its customers the choice of how and where to conduct their banking transactions, all while ensuring a simple and seamless banking experience.

Gulf Bank is committed to maintaining robust developments in sustainability at environmental, social and governance levels through diverse sustainability initiatives, strategically selected to benefit the Bank both internally and externally. Gulf Bank supports Kuwait Vision 2035 "New Kuwait" and works with various parties to achieve it.

Qatar Airways exec says invasive examinations of passengers won't be repeated

CANBERRA, Australia, Sept 30, (AP): A senior Qatar Airways executive told an Australian Senate inquiry on Wednesday there would be no repeat of an incident at Doha's international airport in 2020 in which female passengers were subjected to invasive gynecological examinations.

Australian Transport Minister Catherine King said three weeks ago that the examinations of 13 Australian women who had boarded a Qatar Air-

ways plane to Sydney were a factor in her decision in July to refuse the Qatar government-owned airline additional flights to Australia.

Qatar Airways Senior Vice President Matt Raos described the incident, which occurred when authorities were looking for the mother of a newborn baby found abandoned in a Hamad International Airport trash can, as "a one-off incident, a very extreme incident."

"We've had nothing like it previous-

ly in our history and we're completely committed to ensuring nothing like this ever happens again," Raos told the committee.

Raos was responding to government Sen. Tony Sheldon, who had asked for a guarantee on behalf of female passengers who feared they would be subjected to such treatment.

The Doha-based executive declined to detail the incident because five women are suing the airline in Austral-

ian Federal Court.

"The outcome of that Federal Court case is something that we will honor and abide," Raos said.

The five Australian women, whose names are suppressed by a court gag order, say they were taken off the flight to Sydney at Doha at gunpoint by guards and were searched without consent. Qatar Airways provided no response to their complaints and offered no apology, the women said.

BUSINESS

Dubai World Challenge for Self-Driving Transport winners honored

His Highness Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohamed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai, Chairman of the Executive Council, inaugurated the third edition of the Dubai World Congress for Self-Driving Transport and honored the winners of the Dubai World Challenge for Self-Driving Transport. The hosting of this congress is in line with RTA's efforts to transform 25% of mobility journeys in Dubai into smart and driverless journeys by 2030.

The challenge received 27 submissions globally. Five international firms qualified for the Industry Leaders category: Alexander

Dennis, Bright Drive, King Long, Quadrobot, and iAuto Technology. Five universities were selected for the finals in the Local Academia category: Heriot-Watt University, Dubai, Khalifa University - Abu Dhabi, University of Dubai, University of Bolton - Ras Al Khaimah, and the American University of Sharjah.

His Highness Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohamed bin Rashid Al Maktoum honoured King Long Company from China who clinched the first place in the Industry Leaders category and was awarded US\$1 million. They presented a self-driving bus, six metres in length,

capable of reaching maximum speeds of 69 kilometres per hour and can accommodate 12 passengers. The bus is equipped with 27 cameras and sensors, with a battery that can be fully charged in 120 minutes.

Bright Drive Company from Egypt secured second place, garnering US\$750,000, for presenting a self-driving bus that is six metres in length and has a top speed of 69 kilometres per hour. This bus can accommodate up to 15 passengers and is uniquely equipped with 16 cameras and sensors and can be fully charged in 180 minutes. (AP)



H.H. Sheikh Hamdan Bin Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai, Chairman of the Executive Council with sponsors of the Dubai World Congress for Self-Driving Transport.

Drive aims to encourage diverse travel choices

UNWTO launches 'Tourism Opens Minds' initiative in Riyadh

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia, Sept 30: UNWTO has launched a new global initiative designed to unite and encourage nations, tourism sector leaders and consumers to be more open-minded when choosing a travel destination.

Announced during the World Tourism Day celebrations in Riyadh, "Tourism Opens Minds" will showcase the powerful role that tourism plays in bridging cultures and promoting a more interconnected and harmonious world. To mark the launch, delegates gathered in Riyadh were presented with a special Pledge calling on them to actively work to promote new and under-appreciated destinations.

World Tourism Day 2023 was held as new data from UNWTO underscored the sector's recovery from the impacts of the pandemic. At the same time, however, research suggests that only a minority of tourists intend to seek out new or different destinations as they start travelling again.

The data shows the need for initiatives such as "Tourism Open Minds" to encourage consumers to diversify their travel habits, with UNWTO uniting the global sector behind this aim. The initiative also aims at allowing government officials, sector leaders and consumers help to mitigate the impacts of over-tourism, foster mutual understanding, conserve the environment and ensure equitable growth of the sector.

Prosperity

UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili says: "To ensure true global prosperity, we must work together to ensure that every country can harness the potential of a thriving tourism industry. The sector serves as a unifying force, fostering cultural understanding, strengthening bonds between societies, and championing environmental preservation.

"The 'Tourism Opens Minds' initiative extends a compelling invitation for travelers to broaden their horizons and explore the uncharted corners of our world. By doing so, it not only re-

Riyadh School of Tourism & Hospitality unveiled at WTD

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia, Sept 30: New details about the pioneering Riyadh School of Tourism and Hospitality have been unveiled at the World Tourism Day (WTD) event, hosted in Riyadh. First announced in 2021, the school is co-founded by the Ministry of Tourism of Saudi Arabia and Qiddiya in collaboration with UNWTO.

The Riyadh School of Tourism and Hospitality is envisioned to become the world's first student-centric academy to unite all facets of tourism training required to empower the next generation of tourism and hospitality leaders from around the world and bridge the global tourism skills gap.

The new developments were announced during a press conference hosted by the Minister of Tourism of Saudi Arabia, His Excellency Ahmed Al-Khateeb, and the UNWTO Secretary General, Zurab Pololikashvili on the sidelines of the World Tourism Day event.

To be located at the Kingdom's entertainment megaproject headquarters, Qiddiya, with an interim facility at Princess Nourah University, the Riyadh School of Tourism and Hospitality reaffirms Saudi Arabia's position as

a leader in advancing the global tourism sector and underscores its commitment to bridging the global skills shortage to accelerate the industry's future growth. The school will be accepting students from Q4 2024 and by 2030 will have a student intake of more than 25,000 per year.

Currently, the majority of international tourism institutes do not offer both academic and vocational education across the breadth and depth of the ecosystem within one institution. Through a pioneering hybrid curriculum, the student-centric institution will capitalise on this opportunity by bringing together the brightest minds, cutting-edge technologies and state-of-the-art facilities and top faculty to create a holistic, career-focused program.

The board of trustees for the school will include multi-disciplined leaders from diverse backgrounds from tourism and hospitality to investment and Ed-Tech. In addition to His Excellency Ahmed Al-Khateeb, Minister of Tourism of Saudi Arabia, are Qiddiya's Managing Director Abdullah AlDawood, Zurab Pololikashvili, Secretary-General of the UNWTO, CEO of Accor Hotels Sebastian Bazin,

Group Chief Executive Officer, Ad Diriyah Gate Development Authority Jerry Inzerillo, Morgan Parker, and CEO of Uadacity Kai Roemmel among others that will be announced in due course.

His Excellency Ahmed Al-Khateeb, Minister of Tourism of Saudi Arabia, said: "Success of the tourism sector extends far beyond economic growth, but hinges on the commitment of governments worldwide to equip future tourism leaders with the skills required to thrive in this fast-evolving industry.

"The Riyadh School of Tourism and Hospitality is Saudi's gift to the world. Through its pioneering curriculum, that will offer comprehensive higher education courses covering all aspects of the tourism and hospitality industry, the school represents Saudi's commitment to providing comprehensive, progressive education that empowers individuals, both domestically and internationally. As we invest in the next generation of tourism professionals, we are not only securing the industry's future but also fostering a legacy of excellence that will drive prosperity, stimulate individual growth of citizens and foster cultural exchange for years

to come."

Additionally, Zurab Pololikashvili, Secretary-General of the UNWTO, added: "The latest developments of the Riyadh School of Tourism and Hospitality mark an important milestone in our pursuit of a more sustainable and resilient tourism sector. Education is the bedrock of progress, and by investing in the skills and knowledge of future tourism leaders, we are strengthening the foundations upon which the industry's growth and development depend."

Empowers

As the tourism sector continues its economic growth trajectory - poised to reach \$9.5 trillion in GDP contribution in 2023 - the sector is predicted to employ 430 million people globally by 2033, with almost 12% of the working population employed in the sector. With the fastest growing travel and tourism sector in the Middle East according to the WTTC, Saudi Arabia had trained 80,000 citizens by 2022, and committed to investing over \$100 million in education and training.

The Riyadh School of Tourism and Hospitality is part of the Kingdom's

broader commitment to the development of the global tourism sector, demonstrated by their hosting of WTD 2023. Under the theme "Tourism and Green Investments", attendees are exploring the essential role of tourism and global collaboration in driving prosperity, bridging cultures and preserving the environment through a variety of activities.

About The Ministry of Tourism

Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Tourism was founded in 2020, following the opening of Saudi Arabia to international tourists in 2019. The Ministry spearheads the Kingdom's Vision to bring Saudi tourism to the forefront. Its endeavors align with the Kingdom's ambitious goals, aiming to create 1 million jobs for its citizens, enable accelerated and sustainable growth with future-focused policies, investments, and talent development guided by data, receive 100 million tourism visits by 2030, and amplify the sector's GDP contribution from 3% to 10%. In doing so, the Ministry of Tourism issues licenses and classifications for tourism activities and creates and approves tourist visa regulations.

veals the beauty of diverse destinations but also nurtures an appreciation for the cultures and people who call these places home."

His Excellency Ahmed Al-Khateeb, Minister of Tourism of Saudi Arabia, said: "Since embarking on our tourism journey, Saudi Arabia has been committed to enhancing the sector and generating an impact extends beyond borders. Our contributions including pivotal partnerships such as the estab-

lishment of the UNWTO Middle East office in Riyadh, the creation of the Riyadh School for Tourism and Hospitality and hosting record-breaking editions of the WTTC Global Forum and UNWTO World Tourism Day, underscore the immense potential of the sector when people from across the globe are united and connected.

"The UNWTO 'Tourism Opens Minds' Initiative is another important milestone for the tourism sector, and

its launch at World Tourism Day in Riyadh is a continuation of our many previous commitments to the global tourism sector."

In Riyadh, high-level guests at the World Tourism Day celebrations were invited to agree to a Pledge, representing their shared commitment to work together to:

A new symbol to represent the initiative was also unveiled. Inspired by the colors of the flags of every country in

the world, the symbol acts as a visual representation of working together to recognize the power of tourism in fostering cultural connections and sustainable growth for all.

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) is the United Nations specialized agency for fostering tourism as a vehicle for equal, inclusive and sustainable development. Working with its Member States, international organizations and the private sector,

UNWTO promotes safe and seamless travel for all. UNWTO also works to make tourism the foundation of trust and international cooperation and a central pillar of growth and opportunity. As part of the wider UN system, UNWTO is at the forefront of global efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including through its ability to create decent jobs, promote equality and preserve natural and cultural heritage.

AI: more friend than foe

US businesses see drop in cyberattacks, but risk high

STAMFORD, Conn., Sept 30: US businesses on the whole are gaining ground against cyber criminals after several years of increasingly severe threats, but the Las Vegas cyberattacks are a stark reminder of the cost of a breach.

GetApp's 5th Annual Data Security Report reveals that the ransomware rate remains alarmingly high at 37%, despite meaningful improvements over the last year. While there is still work to be done, increased investments and training are likely behind these impressive gains: the study shows that, since last year, phishing links clicked by workers decreased 25% while ransomware attacks dropped 30%. Alarmingly, however, the report finds that only one in three businesses (34%) are training staff on social engineering techniques.

Survey

This survey of 872 workers including IT professionals and IT security managers uncovers six key trends on the cyber threat landscape as US businesses turn a corner with data security:

Most security leaders view AI as more friend than foe.

A key question is whether AI is doing more to help prevent attacks - or to launch them. According to 59% of IT security leaders, AI is more likely

to help security teams enhance their defenses than it is to strengthen cyber criminals. However, IT leaders still voice security concerns about AI.

Phishing is down, but the overall threat remains high.

Phishing effectiveness has cooled from last year's critical high: 80% of businesses report receiving phishing emails this year (from 89% in 2022), and 61% say their employees clicked on a malicious link (from 81% in 2022). While this is promising news, IT security managers consider advanced phishing attacks as the top threat heading into 2024.

Ransomware attacks decline as decryption rate nearly doubles.

Ransomware attacks have dropped from 53% to 37% year over year, while the rate of victims paying the ransom has plummeted from 67% to 36%. This can be attributed to a sharp rise in businesses decrypting ransomware on their own, along with rising adoption of incident response plans.

Data access privileges are becoming more restricted.

In past years, the rate of companies restricting employee data access remained relatively steady, but this year's report indicates a shift toward more data restriction. Only 16% of businesses allow employees access to all company data, a drop of more than 50% from 2022.

and ultimately, the protection of our planet.

Professor Wan pointed out that Saharan silver ants manage to thrive in scorching temperatures of up to 70°C primarily because of their triangular prism-like hairs. These hairs reflect a significant portion of the sunlight that hits them. Most of the absorbed energy from visible light is converted to longer wavelength infrared light, which is then emitted through the hairs, leading to an efficient cooling effect.

Taking cues from the hairs of these desert-dwelling ants, the research team embarked on a comprehensive exploration of diverse materials, configurations, dimensions, and hues. Using advanced optical engineering techniques, they employed ceramic materials to create white fibers measuring just a few hundred nanometers in diameter. These fibers possess the ability to reflect 97% of sunlight, resulting in a substantial cooling effect.

HSINCHU, Taiwan, Sept 30: The summer of 2023 was by far the hottest in history. People were seeking solace in air-conditioned spaces or donning cooling attire. Here's some food for thought: Can buildings also be outfitted with similar cooling solutions?

Led by Professor Dehui Wan from the Institute of Biomedical Engineering at National Tsing Hua University (NTHU) in Taiwan, a research team drew inspiration from the silver ants inhabiting the Sahara Desert and created a biomimetic material called "super-cooling nanofiber."

Covering roofs with this thin, pliable, and durable fiber membrane, which is resistant to UV rays and acid rain, is like adorning buildings with cooling attire. This innovation can lead to a reduction of over 12°C in indoor temperatures, resulting in significant savings in electricity costs. Furthermore, it aligns with the broader goals of energy efficiency, carbon reduction,

The Conversation

Develop sound strategies to adapt to climate change

Experts probe global warming's role in extreme flooding events

By Mohammed Ombadi
University of Michigan

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



Torrential downpours sent muddy water racing through streets in Libya, Greece, Spain and Hong Kong and flood parts of New York City in September 2023. Thousands of people died in the city of Derna, Libya. Zagora, Greece, saw a record 30 inches of rain, the equivalent of a year and a half of rain falling in 24 hours.

A few weeks earlier, monsoon rains triggered deadly landslides and flooding in the Himalayas that killed dozens of people in India.

After severe flooding on almost every continent this year, including mudslides and flooding in California in early 2023 and devastating floods in Vermont in July, it can seem like extreme rainfall is becoming more common.

So, what role does global warming play in this? And importantly, what can we do to adapt to this new reality?

As a climate scientist with a background in civil engineering, I am interested in exploring the links between the science of climate change and extreme weather events on one hand and the impacts those events have on our daily lives on the other. Understanding the connections is crucial in order to develop sound strategies to adapt to climate change.

Intensity

As temperatures rise, the warmer atmosphere can hold more water vapor. Evaporation of water from land and oceans also increases. That water has to eventually come back to land and oceans.

Simply, as the atmosphere absorbs more moisture, it dumps more precipitation during storms. Scientists expect about a 7% increase in precipitation intensity during extreme storms for every 1 degree Celsius (1.8 degrees Fahrenheit) of warming.

This increase in the amount of moisture that air can hold is what scientists call the Clausius Clapeyron relationship. But other factors, such as changes in wind patterns, storm tracks and how saturated the air is, also play a

role in how intense the precipitation is.

One factor that determines the severity of floods is whether water falls as rain or snow. The almost instantaneous runoff from rain, as opposed to the slower release of water from melting snow, leads to more severe flooding, landslides and other hazards - particularly in mountain regions and areas downstream, where about a quarter of the global population lives.

A higher proportion of extreme rainfall rather than snow is believed to have been a key contributor to the devastating floods and landslides in the Himalayas in August 2023, though research is still underway to confirm that. Additionally, a 2019 examination of flood patterns across 410 watersheds in the Western U.S. found that the large-

est runoff peaks driven by rainfall were more than 2.5 times greater than those driven by snowmelt.

In a 2023 study in the journal Nature, my colleagues and I demonstrated that the intensity of extreme precipitation is increasing at a faster rate than the Clausius Clapeyron relationship would suggest - up to 15% per 1 C (1.8 F) of warming - in high-latitude and mountain regions such as the Himalayas, Alps and Rockies.

The reason for this amplified increase is that rising temperatures are shifting precipitation toward more rain and less snow in these regions. A larger proportion of this extreme precipitation is falling as rain.

In our study, we looked at the heaviest rains in the Northern Hemisphere

since the 1950s and found that the increase in the intensity of extreme rainfall varied with altitude. Mountains in the American West, parts of the Appalachian Mountains, the Alps in Europe and the Himalayas and Hindu Kush mountains in Asia also showed strong effects. Furthermore, climate models suggest that most of these regions are likely to see a sevenfold-to-eightfold increase in the occurrence of extreme rainfall events by the end of the 21st century.

Deaths and damage to homes and cities capture the lion's share of attention in the aftermath of floods, but increased flooding also has long-term effects on water supplies in reservoirs that are crucial for communities and agriculture in many regions. (AP)

While the smokestacks and factories of these relics may no longer be visible, much of their legacy pollution likely remains. (AP)

The Conversation

Some school administrators adopt 'green cleaning' approach

From pests to pollutants, keeping schools healthy is no simple task

By Janet Hurley
Texas A&M University

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

Parents send their children to school to learn, and they don't want to worry about whether the air is clean, whether there are insect problems or whether the school's cleaning supplies could cause an asthma attack.

But a research collaborative, of which I'm a member, has found that schools might not be ready to protect students from environmental contaminants.

I'm an extension specialist focused on pest management. I'm working with a cross-disciplinary team to improve compliance with environmental health standards, and we've found that schools across the nation need updates in order to meet minimum code requirements.

Everything from a school's air and water quality to the safety of the pesticides and cleaning chemicals used there determine the safety of the learning environment. Environmental health standards can help a school community ensure each potential hazard is accounted for.

Air, water & food quality

So, what aspects of the school environment and student health need attention? For one, the air students and teachers breathe every day.

Understanding and controlling common pollutants indoors can improve the indoor air quality and reduce the risk of health concerns. Even small things like dust and dander, dead insects and artificial scents used to cover up smells like mold and mildew can trigger asthma and allergies.

Improving ventilation, as well as a school's air flow and filtration, can help protect building occupants from respiratory infections and maintain a healthy indoor environment. Ventilation systems bring fresh, outdoor air into rooms, filter or disinfect the air in the room and improve how often air flows in and out of a room.

Upgrading ventilation in school buildings can improve air quality and reduce potential contaminants, including viral particles, in indoor spaces.

It may seem like maintaining proper food safety and drinking-water quality would be common practices. But many schools do have some level of lead contamination in their food and water.

In 1991, the US Environmental Protection Agency published a regulation, known as the lead and copper rule, to minimize lead and copper in drinking water. The EPA's 2021 revised lead and copper rule aims to reduce the risks of childhood lead exposure by focusing on schools and child care facilities and conducting outreach.

But in December 2022, a team of scientists published a report on lead and copper levels in drinking water, and they found evidence that lead is still showing up in drinking water in Massachusetts schools. No amount of lead is safe to have in the water.

To combat contamination and ensure safe food and water, the Food and Drug Administration overhauled the Food Safety Modernization Act in 2016. This act has transformed the nation's food safety system by shifting the focus from responding to foodborne illnesses to preventing them. It gives local health officials more authority to oversee and enforce supply chain safety.

Per these new regulations, every school cafeteria must be inspected by the local registered sanitarian at least twice a year to meet the minimum standards for their state and federal guidelines.

These inspections now include look-

ing for entry points that might allow mice or rats to come in, finding areas with moisture buildup where flies, roaches or other insects can breed, and determining whether storage rooms are properly sanitized.

Pest management

Even if a school has clean air, water and food, it still may not meet all the required health standards. Many schools have insect infestations, and many combat these pest problems with harsh chemicals when there's a simpler solution.

Integrated pest management is an environmentally sensitive approach to pest management. Known as IPM, it combines commonsense practices like keeping doors and windows closed and making sure no food is left in classrooms overnight with other ways to help prevent pests from coming in.

IPM programs consider the pests' life cycles and their larger environment, as well as all the available pest control methods, to manage pest infestations economically and scientifically.

Common pests in schools include ants, cockroaches and bedbugs. Ants enter looking for food, and cockroaches can travel in with backpacks or enter through small openings under doors or cracks in the seals around a window. Mice, cockroaches and ants can come into a kitchen or bathroom from plumbing pipes that aren't properly sealed.

In the fall, cockroaches reside in custodial closets, kitchens and other areas where floor drains might be. These bugs use the sewer drains to move about, so an IPM approach might include making sure the drains have plenty of water flooding through them and clearing out organic matter that the cockroaches might feed on.

Green cleaning

School administrators also determine what products to use for pest control and cleaning. With the intent to prioritize the safety of both the people inside the building and the environment, some schools have adopted a "green cleaning" approach.

Green cleaning uses safer - or less harsh - chemical and pesticide products, since studies have found that the repeated use of harsh chemicals indoors can lead to chronic health effects later in life for anyone directly exposed.

Products that contain ingredients like hydrogen peroxide, citric acid and isopropyl alcohol are generally safer than products that contain chlorine or ammonia.

But the school's job isn't done, even after the infestation has been dealt with. Schools need a plan to manage their pollutants long term - these pollutants might be cleaning chemicals and pesticides or chemicals used in science classes. Preserving the school's air quality requires a plan for storage and disposal of these materials. But finding the funds to correctly dispose of legacy chemicals can challenge already thin budgets.

Over the past decade, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has worked with a variety of groups to develop the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child initiative. This approach pulls together professionals, community leaders, parents and others to support evidence-based policies and practices.

The initiative has also led some states to develop school health advisory councils that work with state departments of education and health to assist their local school districts with managing the indoor environment and student health.

When the school building is safe, students and educators are more able to get down to the business of learning, undistracted. (AP)

Majority of Canadians want earlier screening for breast cancer: survey

More race-based data needed

TORONTO, Sept 30: Breast Cancer Canada (BCC), a national charity dedicated to saving lives through breast cancer research, has released new data that highlights Canadian perspectives on breast cancer screening and the need for diverse, lived experiences in research.

The survey, conducted among members of the Angus Reid Forum, found that there is a significant national demand for earlier routine breast cancer screening. Also identified is a need for more race-based data and a willingness among Canadians to share their experiences to improve patient outcomes.

Key findings

■ Lowering the age for routine breast cancer screening: 89 per cent of Canadians believe routine breast cancer screening should begin before the age of 50.

■ Gathering race-based data: Canada does not routinely track race-based data around breast cancer screening rates, however studies in the US have found black people have clear, poorer outcomes when it comes to breast cancer, especially young black women. BCC's study found that 79 per cent of Canadians believe that Canada should prioritize gathering race-based data on cancer screening rates to address a lack of information on racial disparities.

■ Canadians' desire to help future patients: Four-in-five Canadians (80 per cent) wish their experiences with health challenges could inform research on improving health outcomes for others.

Parminder Punia of Brampton has heard the words "you have breast cancer," and knows what it's like to have her life changed forever. In August 2021, at the age of 46, Parminder felt a lump in her right breast. After weeks of exploration and tests, she was diagnosed with breast cancer.

If routine screening was accessible to Parminder beginning at age 40, her breast cancer could have been caught earlier, before the disease had the opportunity to advance. Parminder is passionate about advocating for better breast cancer screening for women in Canada, especially those with a family history of the disease, like her daughter.

"Unfortunately my cancer was more developed and had spread to my lymph nodes. It was a diagnosis that I never expected. It turned my world upside down," said Parminder Punia. "I can't stress the importance of routine mammograms enough. Screening detects breast cancer in its very early stages, ahead of a lump or any other symptoms present."

In 8 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetime. Treatments for breast cancer are more effective and are better tolerated when started early.

Amidst this new report highlighting the need for more patient data, BCC announced the launch of PROgress Tracker Breast Cancer Registry (PROgress Tracker), a national, first-of-its-kind knowledge registry that will collect experiences over the next 10 years from people with breast cancer. The intention is to use the data to inform policy and future breast cancer management. BCC is now ac-

Mevion to showcase Proton Therapy System

SamanTree announces clinical data at ECP in lung & brain op

LAUSANNE, Switzerland, Sept 30: SamanTree Medical, a medical technology company specializing in innovative solutions to improve cancer treatment, has announced new clinical data presented at recent medical congresses, where it showcased new results in four distinct medical indications. Separately, Professor Alex Mottrie, from Aalst, Belgium, performed a live bilateral nerve-sparing robot-assisted radical prostatectomy (RARP) with the Histolog to assess the margins of the resected prostate.

The clinical results were presented at the European Society of Pathology congress (ECP) in four different indications, confirming the company's position as a frontrunner in RARP, lung biopsy, breast conserving surgery, and brain cancer surgery. The system was shown for each indication to enable the physician to perform real-time assessment during surgery, providing the surgeon a high level of confidence in distinguishing healthy vs. tumorous tissue.

Clinical results highlights:

■ RARP: Observational study (50 patients) with blind assessment that showed high performances comparable to NeuroSAFE (sensitivity 88% and specificity 98%) but with drastic time reduction (procedure time 50 minutes).

■ Breast: Presentation of a breast atlas that was developed to train clinicians utilizing the company's proprietary AI algorithm. The images were obtained rapidly and relevant histopathological criteria, such as tissue architecture and cell features, were clearly observable to identify healthy or cancerous tissue.

■ Lung biopsy: Feasibility study showing impressive synergy with Next Generation Sequencing to ensure rapid identification of high cellularity tumor regions, complementing molecular profiling seamlessly. In the case presented, the cancer diagnosis timeframe was reduced from 5-7 days to 2-6 hours.

■ Brain surgery: In this exploratory study, out of 50 diverse cases, the Histolog Scanner consistently allowed to identify abnormal versus normal tissue, often being the sole diagnostic tool required.

"As a newcomer to SamanTree Medical, I have been truly impressed by the traction around the Histolog technology and the impact we have achieved in such a short time. Our success at these congresses highlights our commitment to innovation and patient-centered care, in perfect alignment with the latest published data," said Olivier Delporte, SamanTree's recently appointed CEO.

At the ERUS23 congress, the Histolog Scanner was used by Professor Alex Mottrie during a live surgery from Florence. This demonstrated the easy integration of the technology in the surgical workflow, with rapid preparation and imaging.

Mevion Medical Systems, the leading provider of compact single-room proton therapy systems, will showcase products and solutions to re-imagine proton therapy by breaking down access barriers at the upcoming American Society of Radiation Oncology 65th Annual Meeting (ASTRO 2023).

Key highlights:

■ Breaking site and cost barriers: Mission Complete - FIT Proton Therapy in your LINAC Vault

The MEVION S250-FIT Proton Therapy System™ is the world's first proton therapy system designed to FIT in a conventional LINAC vault.

The FIT proton therapy system is a collaborative effort with Leo Cancer Care, a medical device company based in Middleton, Wisconsin, and the leading provider of upright radiation therapy solutions. The collaboration aims to accelerate proton therapy developments for clinical use, making

it more accessible to patients who need it most. Healthcare communities will have more opportunities to upgrade existing radiation oncology service lines or build new cancer centers with the latest FIT proton therapy technology.

■ Breaking technological and clinical barriers: re-imagine Innovations

Mevion re-imagines the clinical and research possibilities across the Mevion portfolio of products and solutions, bringing scalable technologies for MEVION S250i and MEVION S250-FIT platforms. Innovations that will be highlighted at ASTRO 2023 include HYPERSCAN pencil beam scanning IMPT with pMLC, ARC therapy IMPT, and FLASH proton therapy for research applications. These innovations are designed to improve treatment efficiency and quality, enhance patient experience, and ultimately impact outcomes.

■ Breaking service line barriers: Path-to-success solutions

Mevion is committed to removing the entry barriers to proton therapy and will showcase new solutions and services for healthcare communities that could not consider proton therapy due to staggering financial costs and complex siting and utility requirements.

"We are thrilled to announce that 'Mission Impossible' is now a 'Mission Complete' at this year's meeting," said Tina Yu, Ph.D., CEO and President of Mevion Medical Systems. "The Mevion team with our valued partner, Leo Cancer Care, has installed the first proton therapy system in a single conventional LINAC-sized space at Mevion headquarters. We are breaking down barriers this year and are excited to bring new proton solutions and services to improve access to all healthcare systems. Today, our collaborative innovations and plethora of solutions are transforming the industry, and Mevion is proud to lead the way."

cepting participants who have or have had any stage of breast cancer, at any time during their journey, to register in PROgress Tracker and share their experiences by completing surveys that will provide missing data needed to advance progress in breast cancer management.

PROgress Tracker empowers people with breast cancer to self-report diagnosis, treatment and long-term impacts. This information is segmented based on their breast cancer type, age, ethnicity and geographic location. By tracking those diagnosed with breast cancer before the standard screening age, the data will show the complexity of treat-

ment and long-term effects as a result of later diagnosis. Researchers can then use this data to identify gaps with the goal of improving breast cancer care.

"Canadians are asking for more breast cancer data, and there is a clear need to address the lack of information available. Through a patient-centered approach, PROgress Tracker will guide the development of new interventions that will directly impact breast cancer care, whether it is starting routine mammograms at an earlier age or potentially shortening the number of radiation treatments in one's journey," said Kimberly Carson, Breast Cancer Canada CEO. "Through our mission

to Know More, Breast Cancer Canada is proud to introduce Canada's largest cancer PROs research initiative, and we are excited to have Canadians participate from any postal code."

PROgress Tracker aims to uncover the breast cancer experience directly from the best source - the patient. Nationally and locally, PROgress Tracker can alert researchers and cancer programs to lived-experienced insights in an accessible way. Groups such as researchers, oncologists, cancer programs and corporations will be able to request anonymous data from the registry for analysis of clinical symptoms and side effects over time.

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Japan's Murakami hosts ghost story reading ahead of Nobels

TOKYO, Sept. 30, (AP) — Japanese novelist Haruki Murakami hosted a ghost story reading event in Tokyo amid growing attention before the announcement of this year's Nobel Prize in literature, an award he is a perennial favorite to win.

Murakami said at Thursday's reading that he enjoys scary stories and wanted to write more of them. The event featured one from the 18-century collection "Tales of Moonlight and Rain," which intrigued Murakami since his childhood and is known to have inspired his work.

The classic collection written by Akinari Ueda and called "Ugetsu Monogatari" in Japanese explores a blurry borderline between the real and surreal, which Murakami said in a guide he contributed to a 2021 magazine made him wonder which side he was on.

Borders and walls are important motifs in Murakami's writing. Protagonists in his stories often travel through walls or between two worlds and encounter mysterious, exotic characters. While Murakami has said he grew up mostly reading Western novels, some experts have also noted the influence of Ueda's stories in some of Murakami's work.

Murakami has been a candidate for the Nobel Prize in literature for more than a decade, and the winner of the 2023 prize is scheduled to be announced on Oct. 5. If he wins, he would be the first Japanese writer since Kenzaburo Oe in 1994 to be named a Nobel laureate.

Japanese media also have mentioned novelists Yoko Ogawa and Yoko Tawada as possible contenders in recent years, and international media also have put Chinese fiction writer Can Xue and American novelist Thomas Pynchon on the list of this year's potential winners.

The pending Nobel Prize did not come up at Thursday's ghost story event. Kayoko Shiraiishi, a veteran actress known for ghost tale monologues, performed Ugetsu's "The Kibitsu Cauldron," a story of an im-

prudent man who marries a priest's good daughter despite a cauldron's fortunetelling revealing a bad omen. The protagonist meets a horrendous end after betraying his wife, who becomes a vengeful spirit.

Murakami said he enjoyed Shiraiishi's "scary" performance of multiple roles and said he would like her to try "The Mirror," one of the short horror stories he wrote in 1983.

Murakami wrote his first published novel, 1979's "Hear the Wind Sing," after being inspired to write fiction while watching a baseball game at Meiji Jingu Stadium, which is now part of a controversial redevelopment of Tokyo's historic Jingu Gaian park area, to which opposition is growing.

Murakami, who voiced opposition to the project in his radio show last month, repeated his concern at the story reading event, noting the plan involves removing about 1,000 trees. An avid runner, Murakami also noted that the area is part of his running course, and that the stadium is home to his favorite team, the Yakult Swallows.

"Jingu Gaian is a very important place for me," Murakami said. "I will continue to raise my voice of opposition to this redevelopment, and any of you who agree with me, please support." The audience applauded his statement.

Also:

NEW YORK: A former aide in Donald Trump's White House says chief of staff Mark Meadows burned papers so often after the 2020 election that it left his office smoky and even prompted his wife to complain that his suits smelled "like a bonfire."

Cassidy Hutchinson, who was a prominent congressional witness against former President Trump before the House Jan. 6 committee,

described the burning papers in a new book set to be released Tuesday. The Associated Press obtained a copy of the book, "Enough."

Hutchinson was a White House staffer in her 20s who worked for Meadows and testified for two hours on national television about the White House's inner workings leading up to and including the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection at the U.S. Capitol.

Trump and Meadows tried to challenge the former president's election loss in several states. Both are under indictment in Georgia for what prosecutors have called an illegal conspiracy to overturn the results.

In her book, Hutchinson writes that starting in mid-December, Meadows wanted a fire burning in his office every morning. She says that when she would enter his office to take him lunch or a package, she "would sometimes find him leaning over the fire, feeding papers into it, watching to make sure they burned."

Hutchinson had previously testified to the House Jan. 6 committee that she had seen Meadows burning documents in his office about a dozen times.

Hutchinson said she did not know what papers he was burning but said it raised alarms because federal law regarding presidential records requires staff to keep original documents and send them to the National Archives.

She said one day when Republican Rep. Devin Nunes of California went to meet with Meadows, the congressman asked Hutchinson to open the windows in Meadows' office because it was smoky. She said she warned Meadows he would set off a smoke alarm.

Later, in the days after the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol, when the Republican president's staffers began packing to move out of the White House, Hutchinson said Meadows' wife arrived to help and asked the aide to stop lighting the fireplace for Meadows because "all of his suits smell like a bonfire" and she could not keep up with the dry cleaning.

Books

Variety



This image released by Neon shows Adam Driver in a scene from 'Ferrari.' (AP)

Film

At NYFF, a sluggish fall movie season seeks a higher gear

Turkey film fest canceled over docu dispute

TURKEY, Sept. 30, (AP) — Turkey's oldest film festival has been canceled amid controversy surrounding a politically sensitive documentary about the aftermath of a 2016 coup attempt.

Antalya Mayor Muhittin Bocek announced the cancellation of the city's Golden Orange Film Festival on Friday night, a day after the Turkish Culture and Tourism Ministry withdrew its support for the event.

The ministry objected to the film "Kanun Hukmu" or "Decree," a documentary which focuses on the hardships of a teacher and doctor who were dismissed from their jobs following an attempted coup in Turkey on July 15, 2016.

"It is extremely sad that in such an important festival, the power of art is used to make propaganda for the FETO terrorist organization through the perception of victimhood," the Culture Ministry said in a statement.

FETO is an acronym the Turkish government uses for a movement led by US-based cleric Fethullah Gulen, whom the government blames for the failed coup. Gulen denies any involvement. More than 130,000 alleged supporters in Turkey were fired from their jobs under emergency decrees declared after the military uprising.

The ministry added that it would "not be part of the effort to discredit the epic struggle of our beloved nation on July 15 and to use art as an element of provocation."

In a video posted on X, the platform formerly known as Twitter, Bocek, a member of Turkey's opposition party, blamed the festival's administrators and artistic team for mishandling the controversy and not engaging in crisis management.

"Due to the mess created by their own hand," the festival administration, artistic director and the entire artistic team were fired, he said.

"Nobody should doubt that I will not allow our festival to be used for anyone's political agenda," the mayor said.

Critics have alleged the post-coup terminations and arrests represented a general crackdown against anyone viewed as its opponents.

Organizers had said they would remove "The Decree" from the film festival program. Festival director Ahmet Boyacioglu initially announced the film was removed

from the national documentary category due to ongoing legal proceedings against one of the people featured.

But the documentary's director, Nejla Demirci, said that was an "excuse" and "outright censorship." Twenty members of the festival jury quit in protest of the film getting pulled. On Wednesday the producers and directors of 27 festival entries said they were withdrawing from the event.

The film was later reinstated to the program after it was discovered that the trial of the featured person had ended.

The festival, which has run since 1963 in the Mediterranean city of Antalya, is a highlight of the Turkish cultural calendar. This year it is due to run Oct. 7-14.

Momentum has lately been hard to come by at the movies. The big trio of fall film festivals — Venice, Telluride, Toronto — came and went without the usual amount of buzz. With actors on strike, red carpets have been mostly bare. It's almost like since the heady highs of "Barbenheimer," the movies have been sleeping off a hangover.

As the 61st New York Film Festival opened Friday night, things may finally be stirring once again. There is movement on the labor stoppage. Screenwriters are poised to ratify a new contract after nearly five months of striking. The actors union, SAG-AFTRA, is to recommence talks with the studios next week.

At the same time, the New York Film Festival will play host to easily the best assemblage of movies this year. Each major festival has had their highlights, but for the next two weeks, a large share of the fall's best films will screen at Lincoln Center.

"The unsettled state of the industry is an unavoidable talking point these days, but my hope is that our festival, as it has done through its 61-year history, will serve as a reminder that the art of cinema is in robust health," Dennis Lim, artistic director of the festival, said when unveiling the lineup.

Under heavy rains, the New York Film Festival was to kick off Friday with Todd Haynes' "May December," a playful, tonally sharp comedy starring Natalie Portman as an actress preparing for a docudrama by spending time with a couple (Julianne Moore,

Charles Melton) whose relationship years earlier caused a tabloid scandal.

If Hollywood's awards season has gotten off to a slow start, "May December" is just one of the jolts at the festival looking to pick up the pace at New York.

There's Yorgos Lanthimos' Venice smash "Poor Things," with Emma Stone; Sofia Coppola's "Priscilla," starring Cailee Spaeny as Priscilla Presley; and Bradley Cooper's already much-debated "Maestro," in which he stars as Leonard Bernstein, will make an especially fitting North American premiere. The film won't play at the festival's main stage, Alice Tully Hall, but across the street at the new David Geffen Hall, home to the philharmonic Bernstein once led.

But many of the films at the festival are themselves preoccupied with velocity — none perhaps more so than Michael Mann's masterful "Ferrari," which will close the festival.

"Ferrari," which Neon is releasing in theaters Dec. 25, stars Adam Driver as the Italian auto maker Enzo Ferrari. It's pumped through with a dreadful intensity. We follow Ferrari over three months in 1957 when his company is under immense financial pressure while preparing for the all-important Mille Miglia road race. There is a relentless drive to be fast, to win, laced with the specter of death. "Ferrari," much like some of Mann's finest work ("Heat," "The Insider"), is obsessed with supreme dedication, and the high price you pay for it.

Work and speed mean something dramatically different in Chinese director Wang Bing's "Youth (Spring)." The film is one of several lengthy, monumental documentaries playing at the festival, alongside Steve McQueen's "Occupied City" and Frederic Wiseman's "Menus-Plaisirs Les Troisgros" — all which exceed 200 minutes.

"Youth" captures the lives of young migrant workers — most in their 20s — working at a furious pace in textile factories outside of Shanghai. Their speed and dexterity — their hands are a blur — is a necessity of their low-paying employment. Wang, though, is most interested in the marginal but passionate personal lives of the workers whose youth is spent between sewing machines and dingy dormitories.

Features

ARABIC TIMES

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2023

MEMPHIS, Tenn: A man has been arrested in a shooting that wounded one person at a Memphis concert headlined by rapper Lil Baby, police said.

Kevin Young, 22, was arrested Wednesday on charges including reckless endangerment and unlawful possession of weapons and drugs at a home in Memphis, police said on social media.

Police responded to the Sept. 7 shooting at the FedExForum, located just steps from the popular Beale Street tourist destination in downtown Memphis. The 19,000-seat arena is home to the NBA's Memphis Grizzlies and the University of Memphis men's basketball team. The arena is also used as a concert venue.

Lil Baby was rushed off the stage when shots were fired. A man was wounded and taken to a hospital. No other injuries were reported.

The concert was canceled and the building was evacuated. Police have not said how the suspect was able to bring a gun into the arena, which contracts with a private security company to screen people for weapons. The arena has since instituted a clear bag policy for patrons.

Officers found guns, ammunition and drugs in the home where Young was arrested. Two other men who were in the home were also arrested on drug charges.

Online court records do not list a lawyer for Young.

After the shooting, Lil Baby posted a message on X, formerly known as Twitter: (AP)

BUCHAREST, Romania: The award-winning US guitarist Al Di Meola suffered a heart attack during a performance in Romania's capital but is currently in a stable condition and receiving treatment, a hospital spokesperson said.

Di Meola, 69, began playing a concert at a venue in Bucharest at 9 p.m. on Wednesday night.

Dragos Cristescu, a photographer who attended the concert, told The Associated Press that he saw Di Meola clasp his chest during the performance and that the guitarist struggled to walk off stage. The other two members of Di Meola's trio continued to play for several minutes until they announced the show would be cut short.

In a statement, the Bagdasar-

Arseni emergency hospital said Di Meola was admitted to a cardiology ward where he is being treated for a segment elevation myocardial infarction, or STEMI.

According to the health care website Cleveland Clinic, a STEMI mainly affects the heart's lower chambers and "tend(s) to be more severe and dangerous compared to



Di Meola



Lil Baby

other types of heart attack."

Di Meola's decades-long career has earned him widespread critical acclaim and awards including a Grammy. One of Di Meola's most popular tracks is "Mediterranean Sundance," which was part of his 1977 album "Elegant Gypsy." According to his official website, he has sold more than 6 million

records worldwide. (AP)

PORT CLYDE, Maine: A fire destroyed several waterfront buildings in Maine, including an art gallery with several paintings by Jamie Wyeth and an illustration by his grandfather, N.C. Wyeth., the building's owner said Friday.

The original paintings and illustration, along with several signed prints, books and photographs, were lost when the fire started late Wednesday and spread to several buildings including the Maine Wyeth Art Gallery, said Linda Bean, who owned both the art gallery and the Port Clyde General Store, which also burned down. (AP)

People & Places

People

Davis indicted

Breakthrough arrest in Shakur's murder case

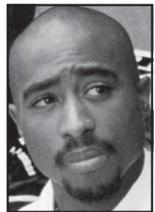
LOS ANGELES, Sept. 30, (AP) — An arrest has been made in Tupac Shakur's killing, the latest twist in one of the biggest unsolved cases in hip-hop history.

Duane "Keffe D" Davis was arrested on suspicion of murder early Friday morning and has been indicted on a murder charge in Las Vegas.

The case returned to the spotlight in July when Nevada authorities served a search warrant in connection with the rap star's shooting death.

Here's what to know about one of the most infamous fatal shootings in hip-hop history:

Authorities on Friday arrested Davis, who's name has long been linked with Shakur's death. He is the relative of a man who emerged as a suspect shortly after the rapper's killing.



Shakur

Shakur was gunned down while riding in a car on the Las Vegas strip on Sept. 7, 1996.

In July, authorities executed a warrant in the nearby city of Henderson at Davis' house. He's the uncle of Orlando Anderson, one of Shakur's known rivals who authorities long suspected shot the rapper. Anderson denied involvement in Shakur's killing at the time, and died two years later in an unrelated gang shooting in Compton, California.

Details from the warrant obtained by The Associated Press shows detectives collected multiple computers, a cellular telephone, "documentary documents," a Vibe magazine that featured Shakur, several .40-caliber bullets, two "tubs containing photographs" and a copy of Davis' 2019 memoir, "Compton Street Legend."

The 25-year-old rapper was traveling in a black BMW driven by Death Row Records founder Marion "Suge" Knight in a convoy of about 10 cars, apparently headed to a nightclub, after watching Mike Tyson knock out Bruce Seldon in a championship fight at the MGM Grand.

After the bout, Shakur, Knight and associates were involved in a fight at the hotel.

Bullets

While driving down the Las Vegas Strip, a white Cadillac with four men inside pulled alongside the BMW while it was stopped at a red light. One person opened fire, riddling the passenger side of Knight's car with bullets, police said. Sitting in the passenger seat, Shakur was shot four times, at least twice in the chest. Knight was grazed by a bullet fragment or shrapnel from the car.

Shakur was rushed to a hospital, where he died six days later.

Shakur is one of the most prolific figures in hip-hop, also known by his stage names 2Pac and Makaveli. His professional music career only lasted five years, but he sold more than 75 million records worldwide, including the diamond-certified album "All Eyez on Me," which was packed with hits including "California Love (Remix)," "I Ain't Mad at Cha" and "How Do U Want It."

Shakur had five No. 1 albums including "Me Against the World" in 1995 and "All Eyez on Me" in 1996, along with three posthumous releases: 1996's "The Don Killuminati: The 7 Day Theory," 2001's "Until the End of Time" and 2004's "Loyal to the Game."

The six-time Grammy-nominated artist was inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame by Snoop Dogg in 2017.

As a rising actor, Shakur starred in several popular films such as John Singleton's "Poetic Justice" with Janet Jackson and Ernest Dickerson's "Juice." He also played major roles in "Gang Related" and "Above the Rim."

In April, a five-part FX docuseries called "Dear Mama: The Saga of Afeni and Tupac Shakur" delved into the past of the rapper's mother, Afeni Shakur, as a female leader in the Black Panther Party, while exploring Tupac's journey as a political visionary and becoming one of the greatest rap artists of all time.

Earlier this year, Shakur received a posthumous star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

"He defied the distinction between art and activism," said radio personality Big Boy, who emceed the ceremony.

Shakur has been remembered with museum exhibits, including "Tupac Shakur. Wake Me When I'm Free" in 2021 and "All Eyez on Me" at the Grammy Museum in 2015. Oakland officials have said a stretch of an Oakland street will be renamed after him.

Shakur's death came amid his feud with rap rival the Notorious B.I.G., who was fatally shot six months later. At the time, both rappers were in the middle of the infamous East Coast-West Coast rivalry, which primarily defined the hip-hop scene during the mid-1990s.

Shooting

The feud was ignited after Shakur was seriously wounded in another shooting during a robbery in the lobby of a midtown Manhattan hotel in 1994. He was shot several times and lost \$40,000.

Shakur openly accused B.I.G. and Sean "Diddy" Combs of having prior knowledge of the shooting, which both vehemently denied. The shooting sparked enough of a feud that created a serious divide within the hip-hop community and fans.

The New York-born Shakur represented the West Coast after he signed with the Los Angeles-based Death Row Records. He often traded verbal jabs with New York-natives B.I.G. and Combs, who hailed from the East Coast while representing New York City-based Bad Boy Records.

Diss tracks were delivered to drive home their ferocious points across. Shakur released the aggressive single "Hit 'Em Up," which took aim at B.I.G., who on the other hand returned with "Who Shot Ya?," a record that was received as a taunt. However, B.I.G. claimed the song was not directed toward Shakur.

Shakur was born June 16, 1971, in New York City. He later moved to Baltimore and attended the Baltimore School for the Arts, where he began writing raps. He eventually made his way to Marin City, California, near San Francisco, and continued to write and record.

As a member of the Grammy-nominated group Digital Underground, Shakur appeared on the 1991 track "Same Song" from "This Is an EP Release" and on the album "Sons of the P."

That same year, Shakur achieved individual recognition with the album "2Pacalypse Now," which spawned the successful singles "Trapped" and "Brenda's Got a Baby."



Models wear creations for the Issey Miyake (left) and Givenchy (right) Spring/Summer 2024 womenswear fashion collections presented Friday, Sept. 29, in Paris. (AP)



Models present creations for Givenchy and Chloe (right) Spring/Summer 2024 womenswear fashion collections presented Sept. 28, in Paris. (AP)



Eva Longoria arrives for the Victoria Beckham Spring/Summer 2024 womenswear fashion collection presented Sept. 29, in Paris. (AP)

Fashion

Last samba in Paris

Hearst exits Chloé on a joyful note

PARIS, Sept. 30, (AP) — In a bold departure from the somber farewells often seen in fashion, designer Gabriela Hearst literally danced her way out of Chloé at her final show Thursday, radiating pure, unapologetic joy. Rather than poignant goodbyes, Hearst opted for lively samba beats, prompting tears of endearment from onlookers as she lightly pirouetted past guests carefree alongside one of Brazil's most reputed Samba schools. It wasn't just about an exit; it was a celebration. And as the curtains drew on her Chloé chapter, Hearst's pioneering green legacy remained in sharp focus.

Delving into the Spring-Summer 2024 ready-to-wear collections, here are Thursday's highlights, including when AP caught up with Cher at Givenchy:

Hearst bid adieu to Chloé in spectacular style. On Thursday, her final bow with the house celebrated nature-infused sportiness, weaving in her unmistakable touch of minimalism.

Kicking off with a bright white, one-shouldered gown, ruffled in tight tiers, Hearst channeled the spirit of a tennis playing mermaid. The look was an ode to her mastery in blending freshness with restraint.

Hearst's play on femininity took us on a journey of texture and form in refined botanical-inspired silhouettes. Employing geometric ruching on exaggerated shoulders, she showcased surreal tubular shapes reminiscent of the enveloping flowers of the calla lily. The drama heightened with pants, cinched at the waist by a stark black rope.

The shimmering silver dress, poised for the disco, with its round historical sleeves and a stiff skirt, whispered of her affinity for pared-back elegance and the beauty found in the details of plants and flowers.

For colors, Hearst leaned into an on-trend monochrome palette, infiltrating the Chloé aesthetic with bursts of marigold, coral, and silver. From ethereal white lace boho dresses to a stark black and white Pierrot bustier creation, each piece was a culmination of her vision of timeless femininity, echoing the radiant essence of nature in every stitch.

Femininity

In her brief yet monumental stint, Hearst infused Chloé with a duality of her Uruguayan-American heritage, delving deep into what femininity truly signifies in this age. But it wasn't just about designs. Under her helm, Chloé transformed into a beacon of sustainability. Earning the first B Corp certification among European luxury brands, Hearst introduced forward-thinking solutions: eco-responsible materials, a revolutionary resale strategy, and climate-conscious collections.

From her keen understanding of femininity, as seen in her juxtaposition of softness and protectiveness, to her tribute to feminist icons like Artemisia Gentileschi, Hearst's Chloé creative journey was memorable, despite sometimes receiving lukewarm critical receptions. Yet it was her commitment to sustainability that truly set her apart. A tale of joy, resilience, and responsibility, Hearst's legacy at Chloé will be remembered not just for its aesthetic appeal but for its dedication to the planet.

The cobbles of the historic École

Militaire echoed with the buzz of admiration, as Cher, 77, made her way into the Givenchy show. The sight of the music legend, accompanied by her boyfriend AE Edwards, 37, incited a commotion of screams and cheers from fans, an ode to her enduring influence.

"I love Paris! I met my boyfriend here last year, so it's our anniversary," she said from the front row smiling with a youthful allure, before chatting with fellow guest Sigourney Weaver. After attending Balmain's show Wednesday night, Cher expressed surprise about the show of affection in Paris: "Of course I'm happy, but I wasn't expecting it."

Discussing her music, Cher shared a touch of sincerity - and deadpan humor. She said she was "excited" about the upcoming release of a Christmas album, despite the fact that "I'm not a Cher fan!" adding "It is not your mother's Christmas album."

Another season, another change in aesthetic at Givenchy. In a marked departure from previous displays, Matthew Williams' latest show - a skillful display - delved into the intimate. It invited the viewer closer, with every fabric, cut, and color choice. Skirts and dresses, asymmetrical in their design, fluttered diaphanously, balancing between revelation and concealment.

Flowers played a subtle role amid delicate patterns and motifs. "When you look at the common denominators of elegance, the flower is inescapable," Williams told AP. "I thought it was interesting to develop a floral language in a way that reflected both the Maison's archives and myself ... It's no wonder that painters have historically been drawn to the colors and formations of nature. It epitomizes the idea of timeless, universal elegance."

Variety

LOS ANGELES: iHeartRadio has unveiled its star-studded 2023 Jingle Ball lineup, including performances by Olivia Rodrigo, Usher, Nicki Minaj, SZA, Niall Horan, and Jelly Roll.

The 11-city tour will hit New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Detroit, Boston, Washington, Philadelphia, Atlanta, the Dallas-Fort Worth area and, in Florida, Tampa and the Fort Lauderdale-Miami area.

"Our annual iHeartRadio Jingle Ball lineup is one of our most anticipated of the year, and we're excited to finally share who will be joining us on the road this season," said Tom Poleman, chief programming officer for iHeartMedia, in a statement.

The tour will kick off in Tampa, Florida, at the Amalie Arena on Sunday, Nov. 26, with Niall Horan, Teddy Swims, Zara Larsson, Doechii, Paul Russell, Kali Uchis and Lawrence.

The Jingle Ball concert was first introduced in 1996 at Madison Square Garden by New York radio station Z100 and has since become a multi-city tour and an annual tradition. This year, the Madison Square Garden concert on Dec. 8 will feature Olivia Rodrigo, SZA, OneRepublic, Sabrina Carpenter, Jelly Roll, Big Time Rush, Doechii, Pentatonix, David Kushner and Melanie Martinez.

The Los Angeles concert on Dec. 1 at the Kia Forum will feature a somewhat similar lineup: Olivia Rodrigo, Niall Horan, AJR, Sabrina Carpenter, Miguel, Doechii, Flo Rida, (G)I-DLE and P!nk. Harmony will perform. (AP)

NEW YORK: Elton John, Brandi Carlile, Dave Matthews, H.E.R., Chris Stapleton, St. Vincent and New Edition will perform at this fall's Rock & Roll Hall of Fame induction ceremony, which will be broadcast live for the first time.

The ceremony will be live on Disney+

on Nov. 3 and streamable afterward. ABC will air a special featuring performance highlights and standout moments on Jan. 1.

"The Rock & Roll Hall of Fame induction ceremony has been the home to some of the most memorable moments in music history and celebrates the immeasurable impact these artists have had on the industry and culture," said Rob Mills, an executive vice president for Walt Disney Television, in a statement.



John



Rodrigo

"We are so excited to offer audiences a front-row seat."

The inductees this year include Missy Elliott, Willie Nelson, Sheryl Crow, Chaka Khan, "Soul Train" creator Don Cornelius, Kate Bush and the late George Michael.

The Cleveland-based institution also included The Spinners, Rage Against the Machine, DJ Kool Herc, Link Wray, Al Kooper and Elton John's longtime co-songwriter Bernie Taupin. (AP)

Health

Patients' safety priority

FDA seeks oversight for 'unregulated' lab tests

WASHINGTON, Sept. 30, (AP) — The Food and Drug Administration on Friday laid out a proposal to begin regulating laboratory medical tests, a multibillion-dollar industry that the agency says poses a growing risk to patients because of potentially inaccurate results.

The proposed rule would end decades of regulatory ambiguity and formally bring thousands of tests performed in large laboratories under FDA oversight. FDA Commissioner **Robert Califf** said the change will help ensure tests used to diagnose cancer, heart disease and many other conditions are safe, accurate and reliable.

"A growing number of clinical diagnostic tests are being offered as laboratory-developed tests without assurance that they work," Califf said in a statement. He added that the agency has long worried that many tests offered by laboratories are not as accurate or reliable as those that undergo FDA review.

Here's a look at the history and background of the testing issue:

Most Americans are familiar with medical tests like those used to screen for COVID-19, strep throat and other health conditions. Those tests are developed by a handful of large manufacturers that undergo FDA review before selling their test kits to hospitals, doctors offices or pharmacies.

The tests targeted by the FDA's latest action are developed and used by high-tech laboratories, including those at academic medical centers and companies such as Quest Diagnostics. They include tests for complex diseases like cancer, as well as simpler conditions like high cholesterol and sexually transmitted infections.

In the 1970s and '80s, most lab-based tests were "lower risk, small volume" products used mostly for local patients, the FDA noted Friday.

Over time, laboratory-developed tests have grown into a multibillion-dollar nationwide business, with labs processing thousands of blood, urine and other samples per week from hospitals and clinics. Others advertise directly to consumers - including some claiming to measure the risk of developing ailments like Alzheimer's and autism.

Concerns

Laboratory-developed tests have long skirted FDA oversight, though the agency has always maintained that it has the authority to step in. Debate over regulating the space stretches back to the 1990s, with several government advisory groups recommending greater FDA oversight.

Many lab-developed tests are staples of medical care, used to make important decisions about pregnancy, nutrition and many other health issues.

FDA officials have long voiced concerns about the accuracy of some tests, pointing to patients who have received inaccurate results for heart disease, Lyme disease, cancer and other conditions. Inaccurate tests can lead to patients getting an incorrect diagnosis, skipping treatments or receiving unnecessary medication or surgery.

More than a decade ago, the agency drafted tougher guidelines for the industry, but they were never finalized.

The tests attracted new scrutiny with the downfall of Theranos CEO and founder Elizabeth Holmes, who was sentenced to prison last year for misleading investors about the potential of her company's blood testing technology.

During the pandemic, the FDA also flagged accuracy problems with dozens of COVID-19 tests that were rushed out by U.S. laboratories without federal oversight.

Recent scrutiny has focused on pregnancy tests that purport to screen for mutations that can lead to Down syndrome, cystic fibrosis and genetic defects. Several studies and reports have identified tests that misstate or exaggerate the risks of those problems.

The laboratory industry has long argued that FDA regulation would stifle their ability to quickly innovate and develop new tests. They also say that additional federal regulation is unnecessary because it would duplicate existing requirements.

Under a quirk of federal law, testing laboratories are currently overseen by the same agency that runs Medicare and Medicaid, the government health plans for seniors, the disabled and the poor. Inspectors evaluate the general conditions and procedures at labs, but not specific tests or the claims used to market them.

Lawmakers in Congress drafted a bill last year - backed by FDA officials - that would have given the FDA explicit authority to regulate high-risk tests. But the measure failed to pass the House or the Senate amid opposition by testing industry lobbyists.

Under the new proposal, FDA would gradually phase in tighter regulation of lab tests over five years. The agency is considering exempting some existing tests already on the market from review but is seeking public input on its approach. At the end of the process, most new tests would be subject to FDA standards and regulatory review before launching.

The new regulations should reduce health care costs due to fewer "unsafe or ineffective tests, including tests promoted with false or misleading claims," the agency says.

The agency will take comments on its proposal for 60 days before beginning to draft a final rule. There is no deadline for completion and the process can typically take months or years.

Also:

CLEVELAND: Medical device and technology company Lazurite has announced that it has added Benchmark Medical as a distributor for its ArthroFree Wireless Camera System. Benchmark is an Ohio-based distributor with more than 80 representatives covering four states. Benchmark specializes in sales to hospitals, surgeons and ambulatory surgery centers (ASCs) with a focus on orthopedics.

The ArthroFree system is designed to help surgeons stay focused under pressure when it is most critical. With no cords to distract a surgeon's attention, we expect that they can fully concentrate on the patient's procedure. ArthroFree has been used in centers of excellence around the country with outstanding results.

"We are excited about joining Lazurite as their distributor in Ohio," Benchmark Medical President **Matt Elliott** said. "We have a lot of veterans on our team who've been in the medical products business a long time. We've built our success around relationships."

Elliott has more than 20 years of experience with major orthopedic products manufacturers in both sales and management roles and as a distributor principal. He played college football and spent eight years in the NFL.

Chris Apsega, Benchmark's Vice President of Sales, has 13 years of experience in orthopedic product sales with industry-leading companies. He played college baseball and has a military background.

"We've already spoken to a number of orthopedic surgeons around Ohio and are scheduling evaluations. There is a lot of interest," Apsega said.

"Lazurite is pleased to have Benchmark Medical on board as a distributor of the ArthroFree system, supplementing our in-house sales team," said Lazurite President **Leah Brownlee**. "Benchmark is a great fit for us. Matt, Chris and their team have longstanding relationships with surgeons across Ohio and deep connections to our initial target market of orthopedics and sports medicine."



Califf



People watching the preview of the new digital exhibition 'Destination Cosmos' at the former gas plant Phoenix in Dortmund, Germany, Thursday, Sept. 28. The multimedia presentation of Phoenix des Lumieres art center shows the history of man's desire to explore space from the earliest stargazers to the International Space Station and the exploration of Mars. (AP)

The Conversation

Experts find gene behind body's medical devices rejection

Hope for safer, longer-lasting implants

By Kellen Chen
University of Arizona

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

Biomedical implants - such as pacemakers, breast implants and orthopedic hardware like screws and plates to replace broken bones - have improved patient outcomes across a wide range of diseases. However, many implants fail because the body rejects them, and they need to be removed because they no longer function and can cause pain or discomfort.

An immune reaction called the foreign body response - where the body encapsulates the implant in sometimes painful scar tissue - is a key driver of implant rejection. Developing treatments that target the mechanisms driving foreign body responses could improve the design and safety of biomedical implants.

I am a biomedical engineer who studies why the body forms scar tissue around medical devices. Along with my colleagues Dharshan Sivaraj, Jag-an Padmanabhan and Geoffrey Gurtner, we wanted to learn more about what causes foreign body responses. In our research, recently published in the journal Nature Biomedical Engineering, we identified a gene that appears to drive this reaction because of the increased stress implants put on the tissues surrounding them.

Researchers hypothesize that foreign body responses are triggered by the chemical and material composition of the implant. Just as a person can tell the difference between touching something soft like a pillow versus something hard like a table, cells can tell when there are changes to the softness or stiffness of the tissues surrounding them as a result of an implant.

The increased mechanical stress on those cells sends a signal to the immune system that there is a foreign body present. Immune cells activated by mechanical pressure respond by building a capsule made of scar tissue around the implant in an attempt to shield it off. The more severe the immune reaction, the thicker the capsule. This protects the body from getting an infection from injuries like a splinter in your finger.

All biomedical implants cause some level of foreign body response and are surrounded by at least a small capsule. Some people have very strong reactions that result in a large, thick capsule that constricts around the implant,

impeding its function and causing pain. Between 10% to 30% of implants need to be removed because of this scar tissue. For example, a neurostimulator could trigger the formation of a dense capsule of scar tissue that inhibits electrical stimulation from properly reaching the nervous system.

To understand why the immune systems of some people build thick capsules around implants while others do not, we gathered capsule samples from 20 patients whose breast implants were removed - 10 who had severe reactions, and 10 who had mild reactions. By genetically analyzing the samples, we found that a gene called RAC2 was highly expressed in samples taken from patients with severe reactions but not in those with mild reactions. This gene is found only in immune cells, and it codes for a member of a family of proteins involved in cell growth and structure.

Because this protein seemed to be linked to a lot of the downstream reactions that lead to foreign body responses, we decided to explore how RAC2 affects the formation of capsules. We found that immune cells activate RAC2 along with other proteins in response to mechanical stress from implants. These proteins summon additional immune cells to the area that combine into a massive clump to attack a large invader. These combined cells spit out fibrous proteins like collagen that form scar tissue.

Immune

To confirm RAC2's role in foreign body responses, we artificially stimulated the mechanical signaling proteins surrounding silicone implants surgically placed in mice. This stimulation produced a severe and humanlike foreign body response in the mice. In contrast, blocking RAC2 resulted in an up to threefold reduction in foreign body responses.

These findings suggest that activating mechanical stress pathways triggers immune cells with RAC2 to generate severe foreign body responses. Blocking RAC2 in immune cells may significantly reduce this reaction.

Implant failure is conventionally treated by using biocompatible materials that the body can better tolerate, such as certain polymers. These don't completely remove the risk of foreign body reactions, however.

My colleagues and I believe that treatments that target the pathways associated with RAC2 could poten-

tially mitigate or prevent free body responses. Heading off this reaction would help improve the effectiveness and safety of medical implants.

Because only immune cells express RAC2, a drug designed to block only that gene would theoretically target only immune cells without affecting other cells in the body. Such a drug could also be administered via injection or even coated onto an implant to minimize side effects.

A complete understanding of the molecular mechanisms driving foreign body responses would be the final frontier in developing truly bio-integrative medical devices that could integrate with the body with no problems for the recipient's entire life span.

Also:

TOLEDO, Ohio: A former director of an Ohio memory-loss clinic accused by dozens of patients of falsely diagnosing them with Alzheimer's disease has been sentenced on federal fraud charges, along with her physician husband.

Sherry-Ann Jenkins received nearly six years in prison on Tuesday, while **Oliver Jenkins** got a 41-month sentence. The couple was convicted in March on conspiracy, mail fraud, wire fraud and health-care fraud charges after being indicted in May 2020.

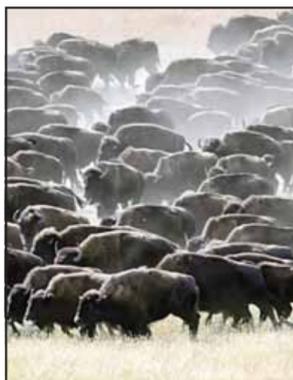
The US Justice Department has said Sherry-Ann Jenkins was not trained or licensed to provide any medical care but presented herself as a doctor and billed patients for unneeded treatments.

The indictment did not directly accuse the couple of falsely diagnosing her patients, but more than 60 people filed lawsuits beginning in 2017 that said Sherry-Ann Jenkins lied and told them they had Alzheimer's or another form of dementia.

The patients said they spent months undergoing treatment while planning out their final years, thinking they would die soon. Some quit their jobs or took one last special trip. One killed himself; others said they considered suicide.

The patients who sued the couple and the clinic resolved the cases out of court. Nearly all of those diagnosed by Sherry-Ann Jenkins began seeing her after suffering traumatic brain injuries or worsening cognitive issues.

Sherry-Ann Jenkins operated the Toledo Clinic Cognitive Center through the Toledo Clinic, a multi-specialty medical center, for slightly more than two years, according to court records. (AP)



The herd crosses the field during the 58th annual Custer Buffalo Roundup on Friday, Sept. 29, at Custer State Park in Custer, S.D. Cowboys and cowgirls in South Dakota are rounding up a herd of more than 1,500 bison, sometimes called buffalos in the US as part of an annual effort to maintain the health of the once-threatened species. (AP)



Robling



Noem

Ecology

Law strengthens animal rights: A new animal welfare law that took effect Friday in Spain outlaws the use of animals for recreational activities that cause them pain and suffering but allows bullfights and hunting with dogs.

Spain's first specific animal rights legislation is intended to crack down on abuses. The law particularly targets the mistreatment of domestic animals, introducing fines of up to 200,000 euros (\$212,000).

It bans the buying of pets in stores or online, but gives stores a grace period to find homes for their animals. In the future, it only will be legal to purchase pets from registered breeders. The new rules allow pets into most establishments, including restaurants and bars.

The law bans the use of wild animals at circuses and gives owners six months to comply. It allows zoos to keep using the marine mammals in their dolphin shows until the animals die.

Bullfights are regarded as part of Spain's cultural heritage. A proposal to include hunting dogs in the law prompted an outcry in some rural communities, and the government backed down.

Government statistics estimate some 29 million animals are kept as pets in Spain, most of them dogs. But around 300,000 are abandoned each year, and about one-third of those are put down. (AP)

Bison roundup draws crowd: South Dakota cowboys and cowgirls rounded up a herd of more than 1,500 bison Friday as part of an annual effort to maintain the health of the species, which has rebounded from near-extinction.

Visitors from across the world cheered from behind wire fencing as whooping horseback riders chased the thundering, woolly giants across hills and grasslands in Custer State Park. Bison and their calves stopped occasionally to graze on blond grass and roll on the ground, their sharp hooves stirring up dust clouds.

"How many times can you get this close to a buffalo herd?" said South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Secretary **Kevin Robling**, who was among 50 riders herding the animals. "You hear the grunts and the moans and (see) the calves coming and running alongside mamas."

Custer State Park holds the nation's only Buffalo Roundup once a year to check the health of the bison and vaccinate calves, park Superintendent Matt Snyder said.

As many as 60 million bison, sometimes called buffalo in the US, once roamed North America, moving in vast herds that were central to the culture and survival of numerous Native American groups.

They were driven to the brink of extinction more than a century ago when hunters, US troops and tourists shot them by the thousands to feed a growing commercial

market that used bison parts in machinery, fertilizer and clothing. By 1889, only a few hundred remained.

"Now, after more than a century of conservation efforts, there are more than 500,000 bison in the United States," said

South Dakota Gov **Kristi Noem**, a horseback rider who took part in the roundup. "The Custer State Park bison herd has contributed greatly to those efforts."

The park's herd began with 36 animals bought in 1914. A state ecologist estimated



The moon rises next to the television tower in Frankfurt, Germany, Thursday, Sept. 28. (AP)

the park can currently sustain about 1,000 bison based on how snow and rain conditions affected the grasslands this past year, according to Snyder. (AP)

Vultures released into wild: Wildlife authorities and conservationists in Cyprus on Friday released seven imported griffon vultures to the wild after implanting tracking devices in hopes of ensuring the survival of the birds that are threatened with extinction on the island nation.

A further seven vultures will be released in a week's time. All 14 birds arrived last March and have spent several months acclimating. They were gifted to Cyprus by the autonomous community of Extremadura in Spain which hosts 90-95% of all vultures in Europe.

Cyprus Game and Fauna Service spokesman Nicos Kasinis told The Associated Press the tracking devices are necessary to observe whether the young birds are integrating well in the first, crucial weeks with the island's 29 other griffon vultures. Officials will monitor whether they're frequenting the same feeding and watering areas.

Griffon vultures are a resident species in Cyprus but their population has dwindled to dangerously low numbers. The local population has not been naturally replenished because the vultures, like other large bird species, avoid traveling long distances over water, Kasinis said. (AP)



Kuwait junior ice hockey team pose for a group photo.

Kuwait ice hockey team conduct training camp in Dubai

Fahid Al-Ajmi, President of the Kuwaiti Winter Games Club, announced that the Kuwaiti junior ice hockey team (comprising players under 12 years of age) re-

cently conducted a training camp in Dubai, a bustling Emirati city. During this camp, they engaged in two friendly matches against the Emirati Galaxy Academy

team. Al-Ajmi elaborated on the primary objective behind this initiative, which is to nurture a generation of promising players who will eventu-

ally form the backbone of Kuwaiti ice hockey. He emphasized how both sets of players benefited immensely from these encounters, particularly in terms of exposure

to the competitive match environment.

Furthermore, Al-Ajmi commended the warm welcome extended to the Kuwaiti delegation in the

Emirates, a gesture that came as no surprise. He reiterated the club's unwavering commitment to advancing all aspects of its winter sports program.

Arab Club Basketball Champ'ship kicks off

Al-Qadsiya launch campaign against Al-Fateh

By Khaled Al-Nezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

DOHA, Sept 30: The 35th edition of the Arab Club Basketball Championship commences in the vibrant city of Doha, Qatar. The tournament is scheduled to run until October 12th, and the Al-Qadsiya is set to kick-start its championship campaign by squaring off against Al-Fateh from Saudi Arabia at six in the evening at Al-Rayyan Hall.

The action-packed schedule also features Al-Ahly of Egypt going head-to-head against Jadla of Iraq at one in the afternoon. Following that, Al-Ittihad of Algeria will take on Al-Seeb of Oman at two in the afternoon. In a matchup at three-

thirty in the afternoon, Tangier of Morocco and Beirut of Lebanon will lock horns. Later in the day, at four-thirty in the evening, Al-Ahly of Qatar will clash with Dynamo of Lebanon.

The first day of the Arab Basketball Championship for clubs will culminate with a game between Qatar and the Palestinian club Al Buriq.

BASKETBALL

As for the second representative of the Kuwaiti basketball team in the tournament, the defending champion Kuwaiti team will enjoy a day of rest today.

Tournament matches for the Ku-

waiti team will commence tomorrow with a challenging match against Bahrain's Muharraq.

The tournament's recent draw saw the participating clubs divided into four groups. Group one includes Qatari clubs Qatar, Muharraq of Bahrain, Palestinian Al-Bureij, and Al-Kuwait. In group two, you'll find Egyptian clubs Al-Ittihad of Alexandria, Al-Seeb of Oman, Al-Ahly of Qatar, Lebanese Dynamo, and Al-Ittihad of Algeria. Group three features clubs from Al-Qadsiya, Yemen's Sanaa, Morocco's Salé, and Saudi Arabia's Al-Fateh. Finally, group four encompasses clubs from Al-Ittihad Al-Libyan, Iraqi Tigris, Moroccan Tangier, Lebanese Beirut, and Egyptian Al-Ahly.

Al-Hilal blank Al-Shabab to secure top spot in SFL

Al-Nasr hold off Al-Ta'ee

RIYADH, Sept 30: In a commanding performance, Al-Hilal emerged victorious over Al-Shabab with a 2-0 scoreline during the eighth round of the Saudi Football League. This triumph propelled Al-Hilal to the league's summit with a total of 20 points. They sit just one point behind the reigning champions, Al-Ittihad, and third-placed Al-Taawoun, while trailing fourth-placed Al-Nasr by two points.

SOCCER

Kalidou Koulibaly opened the scoring for Al-Hilal in the 68th minute, followed by Aleksandar Mitrovic adding the second goal in the 76th minute. Meanwhile, Al-Nasr handed Romanian coach Lorent Re-



Aleksandar Mitrovic (center) celebrates with Neymar (right) after scoring a goal.

gekamp his third consecutive defeat with his latest team. They secured a 2-1 victory over Al-Ta'ee, the club now under Rijekamp's guidance in his debut match after Krešimer Rezić's departure.

In other league action, Al-It-

tihad played to a goalless draw against Al-Fayhaa, and Al-Taawoun emerged victorious with a 3-1 win over Al-Hazm. The league standings remain closely contested, with Ittihad and Al-Taawoun tied at 19 points and Al-Nasr trailing slightly behind at 18 points.

Fury to fight Usyk in Saudi Arabia

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia, Sept 30, (AP): Tyson Fury and Oleksandr Usyk have agreed to fight in Saudi Arabia in the first bout this century to unify all of the major heavyweight boxing titles.

Fury holds the WBC version of the heavyweight title and Usyk has the IBF, WBA and WBO belts. Fury's British promoter Frank Warren announced the fight in a statement which did not give a date for the bout but said it will be held in the Saudi Arabian capital city of Riyadh.

BOXING

Both fighters posted an image to social media Friday saying a deal for the fight between them was "SIGNED".

"This is the biggest fight that could possibly be made in our sport. The heavyweights always spark the imagination of the fans, and I have no doubt this will be the biggest boxing event of the century," Warren said in a statement.

The last fight to crown an undisputed heavyweight champion was in 1999, when Lennox Lewis beat Evander Holyfield. Lewis had to relinquish his WBA title the following year in a dispute over his next title defense.

Usyk (21-0) is coming off a defense against Daniel Dubois in Poland last month. The Ukrainian has beaten British opponents in all of his last four fights, including when he won his heavyweight titles off Anthony Joshua in 2021 and defended them in a rematch in Saudi Arabia the following year.

Usyk was previously the undisputed champion at cruiserweight in 2018 and 2019, the first to achieve that distinc-



Al-Dihani honors Gashi.

Board crafts strategic plan

Mubarak Al-Deehani, a prominent member of the Handball Federation, revealed that the Board of Directors of the Federation has meticulously crafted a strategic plan aimed at el-

evating the standards of the national teams and the sport as a whole. This comprehensive plan embodies our unwavering commitment to achieving substantial development.

in more than a decade.

Earlier talks for a Fury-Usyk fight fell apart in March, with Warren blaming a disagreement over terms for a rematch.

Usyk had accepted Fury's demand for a 70-30 split of earnings in the British fighter's favor but his promoter Alex Krassnyuk accused Fury

of putting further obstacles in the way of a deal.

Instead, Fury arranged to fight ex- UFC champion Francis Ngannou in a non-title match in Saudi Arabia on Oct. 28. For Fury (33-0-1), that will be his first bout since beating fellow British fighter Derek Chisora in December.

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Barca lose Brazil forward Raphinha to apparent leg injury

Ramos scores own goal to gift Barcelona 1-0 win over Sevilla

BARCELONA, Spain, Sept 30, (AP) — So long the scourge of Barcelona, Sergio Ramos unwittingly came to its aid on Friday.

The former Real Madrid defender scored an own goal that handed Barcelona a 1-0 win over Sevilla in the Spanish league.

The veteran center back inadvertently turned in a headed pass by Lamine Yamal into Sevilla's goal in the 76th minute.

The 37-year-old Ramos returned to Sevilla, his boyhood club, this month after leaving Paris Saint-Germain. Barcelona's fans jeered Ramos early in the game because of his past stint with Madrid, where he played 45 "clasico" games against the Catalan club between 2005-21.

After an evenly matched first half, Barcelona was pressing Sevilla into its box when the 16-year-old Lamal helped produce the breakthrough. Yamal was trying to head a lobbed pass by substitute Ferran Torres to teammate Fermin López when it hit Ramos and deflected into the net.

During the game, a video clip was played on Spanish news web-

sites from a Barcelona vs. Madrid game in 2016 when Ramos was accompanied onto the field by Yamal when he was a young boy.

"Circumstance of life," Barcelona coach Xavi Hernández said about Yamal and Ramos now playing against one another.

SOCCER

"Who would have predicted that Yamal would be playing him at age 16, and it is to Sergio's credit that he is still playing at this level," said Xavi, who was Ramos' rival at Barcelona and his teammate on the Spain team that won the 2010 World Cup. "Sergio is a great player and he had a played a great game, but he was just unlucky."

This month, Yamal became the youngest player to score in a European Championship qualifier and also became the youngest player to appear for Spain.

Sevilla midfielder Ivan Rakitic drew a leaping save from Marc-Andre ter Stegen in the 16th min-

ute. The visitors went closer to scoring in the 30th, but Gavi Páez blocked the goal-bound shot by Lucas Ocampos.

"This Barcelona has lots of talented players, and we just weren't able to defend them until the very end," said Rakitic, whose Sevilla was left in 12th place. "We have lots of little things to improve so that these details that decide matches can go our way."

Barcelona's best chance in the first half came in the 20th when João Félix hit the woodwork after being set up by João Cancelo.

Barcelona lost Brazil forward Raphinha to an apparent leg injury in the first half. Fermin replaced him and impressed once again after he scored his first goal against Mallorca in a 2-2 draw midweek.

Prior to the match, the executives of the two clubs clashed over the most recent developments in the legal investigation into the payment of millions of dollars by Barcelona to a former vice president of Spain's refereeing committee between 2001-18.



Barcelona's Andreas Christensen, (right), duels for the ball with Sevilla's Ivan Rakitic during a Spanish La Liga soccer match between Barcelona and Sevilla, at the Olympic Stadium of Montjuic in Barcelona, Spain. (AP)

Taiwanese sisters take gold in women's doubles tennis

Takahashi edges Xinyu for triathlon title

HANGZHOU, China, Sept 30, (AP) — Taiwanese sisters Chan Yung-jan and Chan Hao-ching took gold Saturday in women's doubles tennis at the Asian Games and are now looking ahead to next year's Olympics in Paris.

Chan Yung-jan told reporters after beating Lee Ya-hsuan and Liang En-shuo, also Taiwanese, in the final that even though she's the older one at 34, 30-year-old Chan Hao-ching is "like the big sister."

"But I need to make her calm down a little bit," she added.

She said their different personalities complement each other on the court.

"We're so different - she is very brave and goes in with her instincts a lot," she said. "And me, I need to watch her back and make sure that she can do whatever she wants and that makes us a very good combination."

The sisters won 6-4, 6-3.

ASIAN GAMES

With five Asian Games gold medals now under her belt, Chan Yung-jan said she was hopeful she would be able to add an Olympic gold to her collection next year.

"I want to enjoy this gold first," she said. "But if I decide to play the Olympics, that will be the goal, obviously, I mean, that's every athlete's hope and goal."

In other tennis action on Day 7 of the Asian Games, China's Zhang Zhizhen took the gold in men's singles, beating Japan's Yosuke Watanuki in two sets.

In mixed doubles, India took the gold, beating Taiwan.



Saudi Arabia's Yousef Ahmed M. Masrahi, (right), crosses the finish line to win the men's 400-meter final at the 19th Asian Games in Hangzhou, China. (AP)

The Asian Games feature 12,500 participants from 45 nations and territories - more than the 10,500 from about 200 delegations expected at next year's Paris Olympics.

Host China has been dominating the games, with more than 200 medals overall won by Day 7 of the two-week competition, about as many

as the combined total of second and third place Japan and South Korea.

It seems likely China will easily surpass the 300 medals - 132 gold - it won five years ago at the Asian Games in Indonesia.

Japan's Yuko Takahashi won gold in women's triathlon, going start-to-finish in first place in the swimming,

cycling and running challenge.

The 32-year-old finished in 2:01:04, 26 seconds ahead of China's Lin Xinyu, and 1 minute 27 seconds ahead of bronze medalist, China's Yang Yifan.

"Throughout the race, I knew I was being chased by my competitors, but I stuck to the end," she told

reporters. "The first part was tough, but in the second half I felt a positive trend in the running."

She said her strategy had been to break away from the pack, especially during the running.

"I was reminded by my coach to keep up the advantage in the running and I did it."

'Defending' champs Aces return to finals

ARLINGTON, Texas, Sept 30, (AP) — A'ja Wilson had 13 points and 13 rebounds, including a tying layup late, and the defending WNBA champion Las Vegas Aces advanced to the finals for the third time in four years, scoring the game's final 11 points to beat the Dallas Wings 64-61 on Friday night.

Alysha Clark made a tie-breaking free throw with 1:45 left. Jackie Young added two more free throws with 2 seconds remaining - after the Wings had missed two potential go-ahead shots - and Las Vegas completed a three-game sweep.

The Wings, hosting a semifinal game for the first time since the franchise moved from Tulsa to North Texas in 2016, had a 61-53 lead when Arike Ogunbowale made a running layup with 4:59 left. They didn't score again.

Ogunbowale, who finished with a game-high 18 points, came up short on a 3-pointer as time expired.

Chelsea Gray finished with 15 points while Young and Kelsey Plum each had 11 for the Aces.

Natasha Howard added 14 points for the Wings, while Teaira McCowan had 10 points and 15 rebounds.

Organizational issues aside

India ready to welcome back WC

NEW DELHI, Sept 30, (AP) — When 2019 finalists England and New Zealand meet again to open the Cricket World Cup next week, it will mark the tournament's return to India after 12 years.

But preparations for this year's tournament - in which the home side will start among the favorites and won the event when it was last played in India

in 2011 - haven't gone smoothly.

The event experienced numerous organizational and planning issues which the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), the host body, often had difficulties dealing with them.

The 13th edition of the tournament was first scheduled for February-March 2023, but it was delayed to its current Oct. 5-Nov. 19 schedule after the COVID-19 pandemic caused a ripple effect for the hosting of 2021 and 2022 Twenty20 World Cups.

In the meantime, the BCCI delayed formalizing tax agreements with the Indian government - an issue that had plagued the 2011 ODI and the 2016 T20 World Cups, both hosted in India.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) usually receives a tax exemption benefit for its events, but that is in contravention of Indian laws. In March, the BCCI told the ICC that it would cover about \$116 million in taxes out of its own pocket in lieu of the tax exemption from the Indian government.

It was, however, only the first of several stumbling blocks.

Most ICC event schedules are announced a year in advance. The BCCI only announced the World Cup scheduling on June 27. A month later, the original scheduling ran into problems when Ahmedabad police said they were unable to provide ample security for the high-profile India-Pakistan match on Oct. 15 because of already-planned festivities in the western India city.

CRICKET

The BCCI had to rework the schedule and a final version was released on Aug. 9 with the big India-Pakistan match now scheduled a day earlier on Oct. 14.

That caused further issues for ticketing and travel arrangements for fans across the world. Even before the final scheduling had been announced, hotel prices and airfares in major host cities shot up to exorbitant rates.

Ticketing has been another major issue in the build-up to this World Cup. After the scheduling was finally announced, tickets first went on sale as late as Aug. 30. Despite the staggered sale of tickets, Indian fans complained, and the BCCI released another 400,000 tickets to the general public on Sept. 6 in the second phase of ticketing.

BCCI secretary Jay Shah defended his group's actions over the past few months.

"The scale and diversity of India require meticulous planning, coordination, and execution to ensure the tournament's success and seamless experience for players, fans, and stakeholders," Shah said in a statement.

With less than a week to go before the opening match, the tempo has gradually built up as fervent cricket loyalists in India - and there are millions - get ready to welcome the 10 teams.

All eyes will be on Rohit Sharma's India as they look to emulate M.S. Dhoni's team's feat of winning the World Cup at home. India hasn't won an ICC event since the 2013 Champions Trophy, and the 2011 triumph remains its last World Cup trophy.

Defending champion England and record five-time winners Australia, who play India in its first match on Oct. 8 in Chennai, are the other top contenders for the title.



New Zealand's Will Jordan reacts after scoring a try during the Rugby World Cup Pool A match between New Zealand and Italy at the OL Stadium in Lyon, France. (AP)

BYU rallies past Cincinnati for first Big 12 win

Louisville uses defense to stay unbeaten

RALEIGH, N.C., Sept 30, (AP) — Louisville didn't have to be perfect but the Cardinals turned out to be good enough Friday night.

Brock Travelstead drilled a 53-yard field goal with 5:32 remaining and Louisville remained undefeated by holding North Carolina State scoreless in the second half for a 13-10 victory.

The Cardinals (5-0, 3-0 Atlantic Coast Conference), who overcame a 10-point deficit, continued their strong start as Jack Plummer threw for 286 yards on 21-for-35 passing with a touchdown and two interceptions.

BYU 35, Cincinnati 27

In Provo, Kedon Slovis threw for 223 yards and two touchdowns to lead BYU to victory over Cincinnati.

Chase Roberts piled up a career-high 131 yards on six catches for the Cougars (4-1, 1-1 Big 12) to help them earn their first Big 12 victory. BYU's offense had four touchdown drives covering five or fewer plays.

Emory Jones threw for 256 yards and three touchdowns and added 94 yards on the ground to lead the Bearcats. Cincinnati (2-3, 0-2 Big 12) suffered its third straight loss despite rushing for 242 yards and totaling 498 yards.

Oregon State 21, Utah 7

In Corvallis, with a bold fourth-and-1 play for a touchdown, No. 19 Oregon State showed it wasn't going to let one loss define the season.



The two captains prior to the match.

Kuwait cricket team win again

The Kuwait cricket team notched up their second consecutive win, prevailing over the Maldives national team with a final score of 103 runs to 100 in the inaugural stage of the Asian qualifiers, hosted in Doha. These qualifiers serve as the pathway to securing a spot in the 2024 Cricket World Cup in the United States. Following the match, team manager Captain Mahmud Abdullah conveyed his contentment to

Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), underlining the team's consistent and positive performance.

This victory comes on the heels of their recent triumph against the Qatari team, marking an encouraging upward trajectory in the players' skill sets. Abdullah stressed the importance of the team maintaining their top-notch performance to amass the highest possible point total.

Out of a tightly-bunched formation, Beavers quarterback DJ Uiagalelei faked a quarterback sneak and pitched

to Silas Bolden, who ran 45 yards for the score that all but sealed the Beavers' 21-7 victory over No. 10 Utah.

FOOTBALL

Louisiana Tech went 65 yards in five plays to open the game, going up 7-0 as Tyre Shelton scored on a one-yard run. An 85-yard catch-and-run by Cyrus Allen set up the score.

Harris was in the end zone 1:19 later, bursting up the left hashmark before veering to the right sideline and racing to a 14-0 lead.

It was 17-7 at halftime and 17-10 in the third quarter when the Bulldogs started a drive on their 35. They were promptly stopped on third down but a facemask penalty kept the drive alive. A 37-yard run by Shelton helped La Tech get in the red zone but again they were stymied only to have a Miners player get a personal foul for taking his helmet off after a tackle for a loss. With renewed downs, on the next play Tru Edwards made a nice catch of a Jack Turner pass for a touchdown.



Kuwait's Zankawi Ali competes during the men's hammer throw final at the 19th Asian Games in Hangzhou, China. (AP)

Sports

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Kuwait handball team advance to semis



Some Kuwaiti delegation, including government representatives and athletes, returned home from Hangzhou, China.

Bahrain qualify

HANGZHOU, China, Sept 30: Kuwait national handball team achieved a remarkable victory, securing their place in the semifinals of the 19th Asian Games, held in Hangzhou, China. They defeated the South Korean team with a close score of 25-24, marking their second win in the main round of handball in the competition's first group. This victory ensures their spot in the semifinals, regardless of the outcome of their final group match, which will be played against Bahrain this afternoon. In the same group, Bahrain also cruised into the semi-finals; along with Qatar and Japan from Group B.

This victory against South Korea was a morale boost for our national team, given that the odds were in favor of Korea securing the second qualifying card for the semifinals. It also signifies a significant achievement for the sport, elevating Kuwait to the upper echelons of Asian handball, particularly with many young players participating in an international tournament for the first time.

ASIAN GAMES

Qayed Al-Adwani, Secretary of the Kuwaiti Handball Federation, expressed his immense joy at this victory and the team's semifinal qualification. He commended the players for their outstanding performance, which he believes honors Kuwait. Al-Adwani acknowledged that most of the players were participating in the Asian Games for the first time.

Al-Adwani extended his gratitude to the various entities that supported the team, including the Minister of Trade and Industry, the Minister of State for Youth Affairs, Muhammad Al-Aiban, and the Olympic Committee led by Sheikh Fahd Al-Nasser, among others.

Faisal Siwan, the Director of the National Teams at the Handball Federation, highlighted the exceptional performance of the players despite the challenging group, which included teams like Iran, South Korea, and Bahrain, all of whom were contenders for qualification. He praised the champions of the "Blue Hand" for their dedication and determination, leading to their qualification for the semifinals.

The official Kuwaiti delegation, including government representatives and athletes, returned home from Hangzhou, China, after completing

Osimhen scores as Napoli 'roul' Lecce

MILAN, Sept 30, (AP): Victor Osimhen came off the bench to help Napoli win 4-0 at Lecce in Serie A on Saturday as the defending champions notched four goals for the second straight match.

Osimhen, who had been angered by the club following a social media post this week, doubled Napoli's lead early in the second half. Leo Østigård, Gianluca Gaetano and

It was a second straight defeat for Lecce, which was unbeaten before Tuesday's 1-0 loss at Juventus and had won its previous four home matches.

Napoli had ended a three-match winless run with a 4-1 win over Udinese midweek but coach Rudi Garcia opted to rest Osimhen on Saturday ahead of Wednesday's Champions League match against Real Madrid.

Napoli took the lead in the 16th minute when Piotr Zielinski floated a free kick from the left to the back post and Østigård headed it into the top corner for his first Serie A goal.

Garcia brought on Osimhen at halftime and the forward had an instant impact as he found the back of the net just six minutes later.

their participation in the Asian Games.

In sporting events, the Kuwaiti shooting team demonstrated strong results in the Trap competition, with top scorers including Talal Al-Rashidi, Khaled Al-Mudhar, and Abdul Rahman Al-Faihan. Meanwhile, in triathlon, Abdulaziz Al-Duajj and Hoda Al-Saleh participated.



Kuwaiti player attempts to score during Asian Games match against South Korea.

Fans jeer as Manchester United lose to Palace

Man City winning start to Premier League season ends

WOLVERHAMPTON, England, Sept 30, (AP): Manchester City's winning start to the Premier League season ended in a 2-1 loss at Wolverhampton on Saturday.

An own goal from Ruben Dias and a goal from Wolves' Hwang Heechan snapped City's run of winning its opening six Premier League games of the season, despite a free-kick goal from Julian Alvarez.

Three days after City's first loss of the season to Newcastle in the League Cup, the defeat to Wolves meant back-to-back losses for City for the first time since January.

Mateo Kovacic started for City in the absence of the suspended Rodri. Josko Gvardiol was replaced by Nathan Ake in the City defense with Jack Grealish and Kalvin Phillips on the bench.

Wolves took the lead in the 13th minute when City gave away the ball, with Pedro Neto picking up possession and advancing from his own half to the visitors' box, where his cross was diverted by Dias past Ederson and into his own goal.

City conceded the opening goal for the fourth time in its last five games in all competitions.

City drew level in the 58th minute when Alvarez curled a fine free-kick into the top corner of the net.

Eight minutes later, Hwang restored Wolves' lead. The South Korea international saw his first shot blocked but teammate Matheus Cunha reacted quickly to pass the rebound back to Hwang to score with his second attempt.

After back-to-back wins, it's back to the drawing board for Manchester United.

Erik ten Hag's struggling team

suffered a fifth defeat in nine games as Joachim Andersen fired Crystal Palace to a 1-0 win at Old Trafford.

Boos rang around the stadium after the final whistle as a solemn-faced Ten Hag made his way to the locker room in the Manchester rain.

So much for the optimistic words from the Dutch coach in his pre-game program notes when he spoke of his team taking "another step forward" following the midweek win against Palace in the English League Cup.

That victory came after United had also beaten Burnley in the league. But Anderson's first-half strike, when lashed

SOCCER

ing Eberechi Eze's free kick past Andre Onana, put a halt to United's recent revival and raised fresh questions its prospects this season.

Ten Hag is struggling to find consistency after leading the club back into the Champions League last season and delivering a first piece of silverware in six years when winning the League Cup.

Luton earned its first Premier League win after scoring two first-half goals and hanging on for a 2-1 victory at Everton.

Tom Lockyer and Carlton Morris scored seven minutes apart at Goodison Park before Dominic Calvert-Lewin cut the lead in half shortly before the break.

Beto missed two chances to equalize for Everton by sending headers over the crossbar - first in the 75th and again in the 86th.

A week ago, Luton secured its first point in a 1-1 draw with Wolverhampton



Sheffield United's Jayden Bogle (right) and West Ham United's Emerson Palmieri battle for the ball during the English Premier League soccer match between West Ham United and Sheffield United at London Stadium, London. (AP)

ton after having lost its first four games of the season - its first-ever in the Premier League.

Luton last played in England's top division in 1991-92 - the season before it was rebranded as the Premier League.

The visitors outthrusted Toffee defenders on both goals. Lockyer was first to a rebound off the crossbar to poke home in the 24th. Morris then got clear of a defender and volleyed in Alfie Doughty's free kick in the 31st.

Calvert-Lewin netted from close range in the 41st. He's now scored in three straight games.

Ollie Watkins scored a hat trick as Aston Villa routed Brighton 6-1.

It was Watkins' second hat trick of the season, having also netted three against Hibernian in the Europa Con-

ference League in August.

An own goal by Pervis Estupinan and strikes from Jacob Ramsey and Douglas Luiz completed Villa's win, while on-loan Barcelona forward Ansu Fati scored a consolation goal for Brighton.

Both teams had enjoyed impressive starts to the season, with Brighton going into the game at Villa Park third in the standings. But Villa, which started the game in sixth, came out on top to inflict a third loss in four games in all competitions for Brighton.

Watkins scored his first in the 14th minute and added a second in the 21st. Estupinan's own goal in the 26th gave Villa 3-0 lead going in at half-time.

Fati pulled one back for Brighton five minutes after the break, but it didn't spark a comeback.

Watkins completed his hat trick in the 65th, with Ramsey making it 5-1 in the 85th.

Luiz piled on the misery for Brighton with a goal in the seventh minute of stoppage time.

Kai Havertz scored his first goal for Arsenal as his new club cruised to a 4-0 win over Bournemouth.

As title rival Manchester City struggled in a 2-1 loss at Wolverhampton, Arsenal eased to victory with goals from Bukayo Saka, Martin Odegaard, Havertz and Ben White. The Germany forward had not scored since joining Arsenal from Chelsea this summer.

Arsenal made just one change from the team that drew 2-2 with Tottenham last weekend as several players overcame injury doubts. Saka, William Saliba, and Declan Rice all retained their places despite unspecified knocks. Havertz came in for Fabio Vieira in Mikel Arteta's only alteration.

Neymar 'looks' for 1st goal with Al-Nassr, CL campaign resumes

TEHRAN, Iran, Sept 30, (AP): Cristiano Ronaldo and Neymar are leading their Saudi Arabian clubs into the second matchday of the Asian Champions League in starkly different form.

Ronaldo is the Saudi Pro League's top scorer with 10 goals for Al-Nassr. Neymar has yet to find the net for Al-Hilal.

Hilal coach Jorge Jesus dismissed concerns about the Brazilian, who missed a penalty in a 2-0 win over Al-Shabab on Friday. Neymar has played in four games since joining from Paris Saint-Germain.

"He has made the team stronger and has contributed a lot and in the future he will become even better," Jesus said. "We are now looking forward to the next game."

That comes in the Asian Champions League on Monday.

Hilal, a four-time continental champion, can't afford many more dropped points after a surprise 1-1 draw with Navbahor of Uzbekistan in the opening

Group D game in September.

Neymar narrowly missed a red card in that game and now heads to Iran to take on Nassaji Mazandaran at the Azadi Stadium in Tehran. That's where Al-Nassr defeated Persepolis 2-0 earlier this month.

The top team in each of the 10 groups and the six best-performing runners-up will advance.

SOCCER

Al-Nassr, still seeking a first Asian championship, hosts Tajikistan powerhouse Istiklol.

Saudi Arabia champion Al-Ittihad also travels to Iran to meet Sepahan but likely will be without striker Karim Benzema.

The French forward, who has scored three goals since signing from Real Madrid this summer, has missed the last four games.