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Kuwait condemns terrorist attack

Suicide bomber detonates device in Turkish capital

ANKARA, Oct 1, (Agencies): A suicide bomber detonated an explosive device in the heart of the Turkish capital, Ankara, on Sunday, while a second assailant was killed in a shootout with police, the interior minister said.

The attack occurred hours before Parliament was set to reopen after its three-month summer recess with an address by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Two police officers were slightly injured during the attack near an entrance to the Ministry of Interior Affairs, minister Ali Yerlikaya said on X, the social media platform formerly known as Twitter. The attack was conducted by assailants who arrived at the scene inside a light commercial vehicle, he said.

"Our heroic police officers, through their intuition, resisted the terrorists as soon as they got out of the vehicle," Yerlikaya later told reporters. "One of them blew himself up while the other one was shot in the head before he had a chance to blow himself up."

"Our fight against terrorism, their collaborators, the (drug) dealers, gangs and organized crime organizations will continue with determination," he said.

The minister did not say who was behind the attack and there was no immediate

claim of responsibility. Kurdish and far-left militant groups as well as the Islamic State group have carried out deadly attacks throughout the country in the past.

In Kuwait, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Sunday expressing Kuwait's strong condemnation of the terrorists attack that took place in front of Turkey's Interior Ministry building in Ankara.

His Highness the Amir affirmed the State of Kuwait's support of all measures taken by Turkey to combat such terrorist actions to maintain its stability and safety.

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.

Kuwait on Sunday condemned "in the strongest terms" an attack perpetrated by a pair of suicide bombers in front of a government building in Turkey's capital Ankara, slamming the incident as an act of terrorism.

Kuwait denounces such "acts of violence and terrorism," that target innocent lives, according to a foreign ministry statement, underlining its solidarity with

Turkiye in the wake of the attack.

Meanwhile, Erdogan in his speech in parliament called the attack "the last stand of terrorism."

"The scoundrels who targeted the peace and security of the citizens could not achieve their goals and they never will," he said.

The president reiterated his government's aim to create a 30-kilometer (20 mile) safe zone along its border with Syria to secure its southern border from attacks.

Turkey has launched several incursions into northern Syria since 2016 to drive away the Islamic State group and a Kurdish militia group, known by the initials YPG, from the frontier, and controls swaths of territory in the area.

Turkey views the YPG as an extension of the banned Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, which is listed as a terror group by Turkey, the United States and the European Union. The PKK has waged an insurgency against Turkey since 1984. Tens of thousands of people have died in the conflict. Last year, a bomb blast in a bustling pedestrian street in Istanbul left six people dead, including two children. More than 80 others were wounded. Turkey blamed the attack on the PKK and the YPG.



A member of Turkish security forces stands guard near a cordoned off area after an explosion in Ankara, Sunday, Oct. 1, 2023. (AP)

Expatriate staff in public sector up 3.6% despite measures

Private sector grows 11%, adds 161,000 jobs

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 1: Despite the government's efforts to decrease the presence of foreign workers in the public sector, the recent Central Administration of Statistics data (Statistical Work Sector) shows a 3.6 percent increase in the number of expatriates working in govern-

ment sector during the first half of 2023 compared to the same period the previous year, reports Al-Qabas daily.

According to reports, the statistics indicate that the count of expatriates working in the government sector rose from 90.9 thousand at the end of June 2022 to 94.2 thousand by the end

of June this year.

Several years ago, the executive authority had issued multiple directives to establish committees to reduce the number of expatriate workers in the country. The most recent of these initiatives was the Council of Ministers' decision in May, forming a national committee to regulate demographics.

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Opinion

Mohammed bin Salman, decide and make it happen

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah
Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

O YOUR Highness the Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, decide on it and make it happen.

After the signing of the Oslo Accords between the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel about 30 years ago, the Palestinian issue is no longer just an Arab issue. Rather, it has become an Israeli-Palestinian affair. Therefore, it is necessary for everyone to look at their reality and their interests, instead of clinging to slogans, which are mere pipe dreams.

To put it bluntly, the people of the Gulf Cooperation Council no longer accept putting the interests of the Palestinians ahead of their own affairs.

This is due to the fact that it suffered from financial and political blackmail, and delayed development for the sake of the slogan "Palestine liberation" which the people behind the cause began to abandon. It no longer accepts false justifications for the necessity of a "state from the sea to the river" while there is security and political coordination between the authorities in Ramallah and Tel Aviv. In fact, they are today demanding a Jerusalem other than the historic Old City.

Yes, we are not at all concerned with what is happening in Gaza and the West Bank because it has become a source of political investment for the highest bidder, and an Iranian-Israeli game played by Palestinians.

This is why Gaza's leaders kiss the hands of the Iranian leader because he has become their benefactor. In return, they take advantage of the aid provided by the Arabian Gulf states to build and own palaces in Monaco and other European cities. They spend huge sums of money on gambling tables because they believe that their spending doesn't matter.

Your Highness, when the issue began in the 1940s, your late grandfather King Abdulaziz said to the Arabs, "Let the Palestinian people fight, and the Arab countries support them because they are the owners of that land."

However, in 1948, the Arab countries mobilized to resist the Jews instead of following what your grandfather said, and they were defeated. This defeat was imminent because they did not know the land, they didn't have weapons, and worst of all, each country was looking for their own gains.

Today, Israel has become a fait accompli, supported by European countries and the West with weapons and money. Its leaders had a clear plan, which was to recover the land of their ancestors, as they claimed, while the people of the land were abandoned when they were displaced to the diaspora, and slept for decades on promises to return within a month or two.

Today, the "promise" is 75 years old. Generations have been born in the diaspora and they only know Palestine through slogans and songs.

On the other hand, the rest of the organization's parents have become wealthy people who live like kings. Their children have become businesspersons, and have their own projects. Their weddings cost millions, all of which are the money of Arab donations, especially from the Gulf, while we received nothing but insults and threats.

Your Highness, Yasser Arafat used to work and live in Kuwait in the 1960s. It supported the organization with everything, and provided it with Arab political cover.

When the "September" event broke out in 1970, the late Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah traveled to Jordan, and accompanied Arafat on his private plane to Kuwait. However, this was a trick so that he would not be killed in Jordan.

The late Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad was also the first supporter of Arafat and the Palestinians. They were employed in Kuwaiti departments as if they were Kuwaitis. So what was Arafat's reaction when Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait? On that day, he demanded that the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad be arrested and forced to sign a confession to relinquish rule of Kuwait. He incited that, "The

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NewsWatch

MANAMA: Kuwait Ambassador to Bahrain Sheikh Thamer Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah met on Sunday with Bahraini Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullatif bin Rashed Al-Zayani.

This came in a statement by Bahraini Ministry of Foreign Affairs, saying that the meeting took place in the ministry's headquarters in which both sides discussed bilateral ties and ways of strengthening relations. (KUNA)

DOHA: Qatar affirms its permanent stance on the Yemeni crisis and continuous support for its people, said Qatari Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Mohammad Al-Thani during a meeting held on Sunday with his Yemeni counterpart Maen Abdulmalik.

According to a statement released by the Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Prime Minister Mohammad Al-Thani reiterated that the sole path to resolve the Yemeni crisis is through Yemeni negotiations, grounded in the results of the national dialogue, the Gulf Initiative, and pertinent Security Council resolutions, notably Resolution 2216. (KUNA)

RAMALLAH: Hundreds of Jewish settlers stormed on Sunday into Al-Aqsa Mosque heavily guarded by occupation police force who attacked several worshippers.

The Islamic Endowment directorate at Al-Quds said in a press release that about 600 settlers stormed Al-Aqsa Mosque during what is dubbed as "Sukkot" Jewish holiday.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian foreign ministry said in a statement that it is closely monitoring this serious Israeli "systematic and premeditated" escalation in the incursions of settlers into Al-Aqsa Mosque and "the ongoing escalation in performing Talmudic rituals, prayers and provocative marches." (KUNA)

ISLAMABAD: At least one policeman and two militants were killed during an attack on a police check post in Pakistan's eastern Punjab province on Sunday, said police.

According to a statement by the provincial police chief Usman Anwar, 12 to 15 "terrorists" attacked the Kundal patrolling post in Mianwali district of Punjab province.

A successful operation assisted by the Counter Terrorism Department Punjab thwarted the attack, said the official. He confirmed that a policeman was martyred while two terrorists were killed while multiple terrorists sustained injuries during the attack. (KUNA)

MADRID: A fire broke out in a nightclub in the south-eastern Spanish city of Murcia on Sunday, killing 13 people and injuring several others, authorities said.

The fire started around 6 a.m. in the popular Teatre nightclub and quickly tore through the venue, according to Spain's state news agency EFE. (AP)

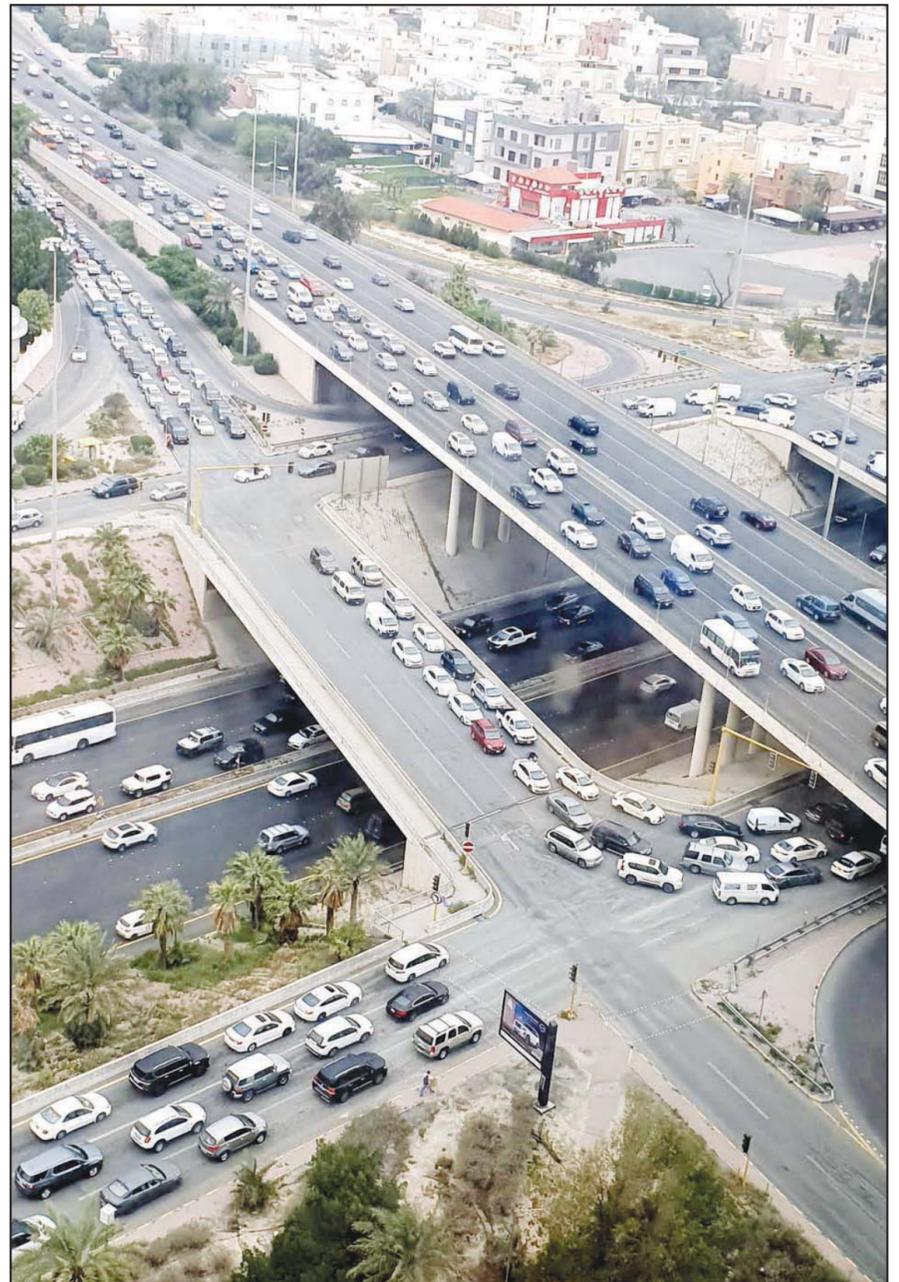


Photo by Mahmoud Jadedee

Traffic moves smoothly, maintaining the required distance at the Ghazali Bridge crossover. The General Traffic Department is eagerly anticipating the enactment of a law that would raise penalties for traffic infractions. This measure aims to discourage offenders and ultimately prevent the loss of lives on Kuwait roads.

Bid to streamline duties across member states

Arab customs committee meets to address fee harmonization

CAIRO, Oct 1, (KUNA): The 41st meeting of Arab Customs Union Committee kicked off Sunday at the Arab League headquarters in Cairo, with talks focusing on unifying Arab customs fees.

The meeting is headed by the Sultanate of Oman with the participation of members of the Unified Arab Customs Tariff Committee, including Kuwait.

The State of Kuwait is participating in the 41st meeting of the Arab Customs Union Committee with a delegation from the General Administration of Kuwaiti Customs.

Director of the Arab Economic Integration Department

at the League, Dr. Bahjat Abul Nasr, said in a press statement that the committee will discuss, over a period of three days, a number of issues, including unifying Arab customs fees, distribution of customs procedures, and compensatory mechanisms within the framework of the Arab Customs Union, in addition to any topics on the agenda.

Abul Nasr noted that "the Customs Tariff Committee is considered the committee concerned with unifying customs duties within the framework of the Arab Customs Union, and it is now negotiating this issue," noting that the committee completed, during the past meetings, unifying

the names of the unified Arab customs tariff table.

He added that, in the context of facilitating the negotiation phase on unifying Arab customs duties, the General Secretariat of the Arab League prepared a database containing the customs duties applied to each country in addition to the fees fixed for those countries within the framework of the World Trade Organization.

Abul Nasr pointed out that the database will be presented to the committee's work so that a clear picture is presented to member states during the negotiation process to unify customs duties regarding the current status of each customs item.

Prayer Timings

Fajr 04:22 Asr 15:02
Sunrise .. 05:41 Maghrib .. 17:34
Zohr 11:38 Isha 18:51

Local

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

Expected weather for the next 24 hours:

By Day: Hot with light to moderate northwesterly wind to light variable wind with speeds of 06-28 km/h.
By Night: Rather hot to mild

Weather

with light to moderate northwesterly wind to light variable wind with speeds of 06-26 km/h.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	41	30
Kuwait Airport	41	25

Abdaly	41	23
Jahra	41	25
Salmiyah	38	30
Ahmadi	39	30
Nuwaisib	39	24
Wafra	41	24



KUNA photo
Deputy Chief of the National Guard, Sheikh Faisal Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, poses for a picture with a number of leaders and officers of the National Guard.



KUNA photo
Deputy Chief of the National Guard Sheikh Faisal Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah during the inspection tour.

Al-Samoud camp 'Reinforcement Brigade' wins praise

Deputy Chief of the National Guard, Sheikh Faisal Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, expressed his satisfaction on Sunday with the preparations and efforts aimed at enhancing the efficiency and performance of the members of the Reinforcement Brigade at the Al-Samoud camp. The National Guard issued a press release following Sheikh Faisal Al-Nawaf's inspection of the Reinforcement Brigade, during which he assessed their workflow, tasks, personnel, machinery, weapons, and ammuni-

tion. These resources contribute significantly to the successful execution of security and military missions.

Sheikh Faisal Al-Nawaf emphasized the importance of continuous training to attain the highest levels of competence and readiness. He conveyed greetings from His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, Chief of the National Guard, expressing the leadership's pride in the crucial role played by the brigade within the National Guard system.

He also commended their unwavering readiness to make the ultimate sacrifice in safeguarding the nation's security under the guidance of wise leadership.

During the visit, Sheikh Faisal Al-Nawaf received detailed briefings on the weaponry and equipment utilized by the Reinforcement Brigade, as well as the support systems that enhance the proficiency of its personnel in carrying out their tasks with exceptional efficiency. (KUNA)



KUNA photo
Kuwait military delegation meets with the Chinese Armed Education Dept officials.

Kuwait military team visits China

The Kuwaiti Ministry of Defense announced that a delegation headed by the Chairman of the Kuwaiti Education Authority, Major General Fahad Al-Turajji, visited the People's Republic of China on Sunday.

The Ministry said in a press statement that the visit aimed to discuss military education affairs and exchange experi-

ences in the educational and academic fields between the two friendly countries.

The statement stated that the program included several visits to the College of Defense Studies affiliated with the National Defense University and the command and staff colleges of all types in the capital, Beijing, and the city of Nanjing. (KUNA)

Awqaf ministry details conditions

'Huge pressure stalls Hajj e-site'

By Abdul Nasser Al-Aslami

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 1: Following the announcement made by the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs regarding the launch of the registration process from October 1, 12:00 noon to November 10, 12:00 noon for those wishing to perform Hajj for the 1445/2024 AD season, via the electronic platform designated for this purpose, a number of citizens reported that the platform for receiving electronic applications has not yet been activated, that the link does not work, and no messages are received on the government's My ID application regarding the approval of the request.

The Arab Times contacted the Director of the Hajj Department at the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Sattam Al-Muzaini to clarify the matter.

He explained that there is heavy pressure on the site due to the large number of requests to register on the first day.

In addition, the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs has set general conditions for registration on the electronic platform for Hajj applications. They are :-

1- The person wishing to perform Hajj must be a Kuwaiti.

2- He has never performed Hajj in the past

3- The group should be among relatives. The first category - The group does not exceed five people and has not previously performed Hajj. The following conditions apply:

■ All registrants must be Kuwaitis.
■ Kuwaitis with one resident companion (wife, mother, husband, son).

The second category - The group does not exceed two people, including an "ac-

companying person" who has previously performed Hajj. The following conditions apply:

■ An elderly person aged 70 years or above who has not previously performed Hajj.

■ A disabled Kuwaiti who has never performed Hajj.

■ A Kuwaiti woman who has never performed Hajj.

This category is allocated five percent from the total number of pilgrims. The Awqaf for Campaigns has determined general policies, which are:

■ Each group must not exceed five people, except for the second group.

■ Applicants have the right to change and replace during the registration period.

The circular stated that, after the sorting procedure is carried out to ensure registration, 25 percent of the Hajj value must be paid. The minimum for campaign registration is 50 pilgrims and the maximum is 250 pilgrims, and 200 pilgrims for double, triple and quadruple licenses.

If the application of the oldest person in the group is canceled, the application will be canceled and the rest will return to the platform.

After the pilgrim is accepted and he completes his registration with the campaign, he has the right to change the campaign one time no later than January 31, 2024.

The campaign has only one program, and the sorting is according to the oldest. The candidate for admission is given five days to complete registration and is required to pay 25 percent of the Hajj value as a first payment.

In the event of cancellation before January 31, the pilgrim will recover the full amount he paid.

'Kuwait strives for food security'

DOHA, Oct 1, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait is keen on achieving food security, especially in light of the challenges facing some countries, said Chairman of the Board of Directors and Director General of the Food and Nutrition Public Authority, Dr. Reem Al-Fulaij Sunday.

In a statement to KUNA, Al-Fulaij added after the opening of the Second High-Level Forum on Food Security of the Islamic Organization for Food Security, hosted by Doha, that OIC's concerted efforts will enhance food security.

She also stated that integration between the countries of the OIC will achieve and

enhance food security, especially since many of these countries are considered food producers. Still, they face some challenges in marketing and exporting.

The OIC's second high-level forum on food security contributes to the search for sustainable solutions to the challenges facing the member states of the organization.

Meanwhile, the Chairman of the Arab Ministerial Council for Electricity, and Egyptian Minister of Electricity and Renewable Energy, Muhammad Shaker, announced on Sunday the approval of two joint Arab Market agreements and their institutional frameworks.

Delay in road repairs queried

Contracts not signed, further delay expected: MP

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh

Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 1: With the upcoming parliamentary term fast approaching, four parliamentary committees held a meeting on Sunday, October 1, 2023. However, the meeting of the parliament's Committee for Priorities was postponed due to the death of the mother of Deputy Prime Minister, State Minister of the Cabinet Affairs and Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs Essa Al Kandari.

During the meeting of the parliament's Committee for Interior and Defense Affairs, the bill for amending the Amiri Decree No. 17/1959 concerning foreigners residency was discussed.

In the presence of representatives of the Ministry of Interior, the committee discussed the bill regarding granting entry visas.

Meanwhile, the parliament's Committee for Financial and Economic Affairs held a meeting in the presence of Deputy National Assembly Speaker MP Mohammad Al-Mutair. During the meeting, they discussed two bills on the Kuwait Airways Corporation (KAC), and four bills on the Kuwait Chamber for Commerce and Industry (KCCI).

They also discussed the task assigned to the committee to conduct a study on the reasons and consequences of the increase in prices and the growing inflation rates.

The meeting was held in the presence of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Khalid Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahd, the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Oil and State Minister for Economic and Investment Affairs Saad Al-Barrak, the Minister of Finance Fahad Al-Jarallah, the Minister of Commerce and Industry and State Minister for Youth Affairs Muhammad Al Aiban, and representatives from KAC, KCCI, Kuwait Investment Authority, Secretariat General of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development.

Furthermore, the parliament's Committee for Education, Culture and Guidance Affairs held a meeting during which they discussed three bills on amending law No. 61/2006 concerning audiovisual media, and three bills on amending law No. 3/2006 concerning press and publishing.

The meeting was held in the presence of the Minister of Information and the Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi.

Also, the parliament's Committee for Legal and Legislative Affairs held a meeting to discuss the bills on the attorney law and court procedures.

Proposal

In another development, MP Abdullah Al-Anbaei submitted a proposal to establish health clubs and natural therapy centers that provide free services to retirees.

He also submitted another proposal to establish a consultative council to make use of the retirees' experiences, suggesting that the members of this consultative council be granted allowance for the meetings that are held.

MP Al-Tasha said he wondered about the delay in taking any steps to maintain the roads despite the fact that Dr. Buqamaz has been in office for almost one year.

He said, "Even the contracts have not been signed, which means the maintenance process is not going to start soon."

Meanwhile, in reaction to complaints submitted by many citizens regarding the high charges collected by delivery companies, which in some cases reach 30 percent of the delivered item, MP Osama Al-Shaheen submitted parliamentary questions to the Minister of Commerce and Industry and the State Minister for Youth Affairs Mohammad Al-Aiban.

He asked if the ministry issued any decisions concerning delivery companies and platforms to define a specific charge. If yes, he asked to be provided with copies of such decisions.

MP Al-Shaheen asked why the delivery platforms and applications are not included with food delivery companies like Talabat, Carriage, Deliveroo and Cravez Food in terms of commitment to a charge of 250 fils if delivering within the same area and 500 fils if delivering outside the area.

He submitted another proposal for the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to determine the maximum amount of annual subscription for delivery platforms and applications at 15 percent of the total amount of the receipt.

Al-Shaheen suggested that the Ministry of Commerce and Industry issue regulations to impose penalties on delivery platforms that violate the set regulations.

Furthermore, the National Assembly Speaker Ahmad Al-Sa'adoun sent a cable to the Speaker of Grand National Assembly of Turkey Numan Kurtulmus to condemn the terrorist attack that took place in Istanbul close to the headquarters of the Ministry of Interior, which resulted in injuries to two policemen. He also wished the victims a speedy recovery.

In addition, MP Mubarak Al-Tasha said the collision of a truck with the bridge on the Fifth Ring Road opposite to Grand Avenue reflects the growing corruption at the Ministry of Public Works.

He asked the Ministry of Public Works Dr. Amani Sulaiman Buqamaz to either submit her resignation or face parliamentary questioning.

Cancer cases on rise among Kuwaitis and expats – expert

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 1: Dr. Khaled Al-Saleh, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the National Cancer Awareness Campaign, has disclosed that the annual rates of cancer incidence in Kuwait and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) nations are on the rise, with an increase ranging from 1% to 5%. This increase can be attributed to various factors, including heightened community awareness regarding the significance of early cancer detection and the region's high population density.

In a special statement to Al-Seyassah marking the launch of the annual breast cancer awareness campaign, themed "Your

Health is Your Capital," Dr. Al-Saleh reported that Kuwait recorded 640 new cases of breast cancer. Among these cases, 41% were Kuwaiti citizens, while 59% were expatriates.

Furthermore, Dr. Al-Saleh highlighted the introduction of new initiatives this year, notably in the Mubarakiya area. Over a three-day period later this month, these initiatives will involve participation from a delegation representing GCC countries. Their objective is to raise awareness about the critical importance of early breast cancer screening. Dr. Al-Saleh encouraged women above the age of forty to get in touch with the campaign to receive guidance on conducting early self-examinations for breast cancer detection.

Finger points to MPW

Power abuse cited in bridge fall

By Saud Al-Farhan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 1: The recent incident related to the fall of one of the pillars of the Avenues Bridge on the Fifth Ring Road at the intersection of Ghazali Road and Mohammad bin Al-Qasim Road Streets after a truck collided with it constituted a new blow for the Ministry of Public Works in terms of its failure and exposure of what was hidden.

In this context, informed sources explained that the collapse revealed the abuse of power by some of the senior employees of the ministry and their negligence, in addition to collusion with the contractor in order not to implement the terms of the contract. The incident almost claimed the lives of many of the road users.

The sources went to explain that some documents confirm the ministry's negligence and laxity in implementing the contract, especially with regard to the contractor's submission of a plan to remove the defective works implemented in contract No. dmsec/pm/ra-266/1561, and recommending to completely expedite the submission and removal plan, which was scheduled for September 17, 2023, and within a maximum of three days. However, the contractor procrastinated and wasted time, and instead blamed the senior leadership in the ministry for this delay that resulted in the incident.

Structures

They said, "The consulting engineer sent several letters to remove all the structures from August 8.

The contractor, the ministry, and the Director General of the Public Authority for Road and Transportation (PART) were notified of the request to remove the bridge and the defective slab. A report was also submitted from Kuwait University in which the technical opinion concluded with the request to remove the slab, defective parts, and the

protrusions, and to withdraw the work from the contractor."

The letter No. 16/4-5844 from PART dated 8/8/2023 stated the need for the contract contractor to submit a well thought-out plan to remove what was implemented from the bridge.

In addition, a letter was sent to the contractor of contract No. 1522/266 - DMSEC/PM/RA on 17/8/2023 with a recommendation to "remove the defective precast slab and the side protrusions due to the inaccuracy of the submitted report."

Opinion

Also, a letter No. 007/280-APR 2023/DMSEC was sent to PART on 24/8/2023 with the technical opinion of the consultant as a result of reviewing what was stated in the Kuwait University report to evaluate the structural condition of the bridge, which concluded that it was necessary to remove what had been done in its implementation of the bridge work."

The sources referred to the letter No. 16/4-6396 of PART sent on September 3, 2023 with its request that the contractor remove the defective works from "U TURN RD10" through a well-thought-out work plan to be completed, which was approved by the contract consultant, provided that the removal plan is submitted within a week from its date.

In light of the above, and after the grace period of seven days passed, in accordance with the repeated recommendations of PART, the most recent of which is its letter dated 9/3/2023, and the letter No. 1561/266 - DMSEC/PM/RA dated 17/9/2023, the contractor to date has not submitted the required work plan to the consultant for study, despite all previous recommendations in this regard, and has displayed deliberate procrastination, non-response, and disruption of the work.

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

'Lack of public attention shows split in parliamentary priorities'

"WITH the approaching commencement of the second regular session of the current legislative term, scheduled to open on Oct 31, there appears to be a lack of notable public focus on a specific issue in Kuwaiti society – an unusual occurrence in our political experience," columnist **Fahd Amash Al-Jabri** wrote for **Al-Rai** daily.

"Typically, prior to any session, there's a palpable public interest triggered by a specific event that instigates a reaction, leading to the formation of strong public opinions.

"This lack of pronounced public attention suggests a dispersion in parliamentary priorities, resulting in less concentration than what is expected. Several factors identified by sociology specialists play a crucial role in shaping public opinion today.

"For instance, the issue of the Bedouin and the exploitation of their plight by certain 'extremists' in social media to sow seeds of discord and factionalism in society, impacting national unity and internal security, remains significant.

"Surprisingly, there has been no parliamentary representative stepping forward to denounce these actions or effectively utilize their constitutional tools to curb such divisive activities.

"On the economic and financial front, there are critical issues affecting citizens' livelihoods, including the strategic alternatives, debt cancellation for citizens, and pension increases. Each of these issues has the potential to galvanize public pressure.

"The educational system's administration is another pressing concern, failing to provide even the most basic rights to students, with some students forced to sit on classroom floors. Regrettably, representatives have made only sporadic condemnatory statements without taking tangible actions.

"While some political leaders seem hesitant to rouse public sentiment presently, the majority of representatives appear to be in a state of inaction, avoiding actions that might stir public dissatisfaction unless absolutely necessary. This has led to a stagnant and artificial parliamentary environment.

"At times, we witness groups of representatives presenting legislative roadmaps termed 'Legislation Map 2.' However, these efforts often result in minimal concrete outcomes, contributing to the perception of political maneuvering rather than focused action.

"What we are witnessing is not a state of parliamentary or governmental confusion; instead, it seems to be a strategic play on the factor of time. Each stakeholder operates based on their unique considerations and strategic assessments of the current scenario, placing significant emphasis on time as a critical variable."

Also:

"The Ministry of Education has established two councils, one for teachers and parents, and another for students, a commendable decision aimed at promoting participation in the educational process. In Kuwait, the incessant Iraqi allegations against the country have started to evoke more weariness and exasperation than fear, marking a shift from the past. The matter of 'Khor Abdullah' has become a recent focus in this regard, laden with legal complexities emanating from the Federal Court in Baghdad," columnist **Muzaffar Abdullah** wrote for **Al-Jarida** daily.

"We extend our appreciation to the Kuwaiti Research and Studies Center for their research efforts concerning the Khor Abdullah Agreement, as well as the symposium organized by the Center for Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies on the same topic. This leads to the question: Why does this continual harm from Iraq towards Kuwait persist? Or is it purely the result of actions from within Iraq itself?"

"It's evident to us and the majority of Iraqis, that Iraq is a nation plagued and held captive due to American and Iranian policies. It continues to grapple with the aftermath of military ventures that culminated in a destructive American invasion in 2003, shattering the nation's core institutions, government, armed forces, and the judiciary.

"Today, Iraq stands as a weak entity, grappling with a multitude of challenges, including a fragmented governance structure, armed militias, Iranian economic influence through smuggling and substantial exports, manipulated decision-making by Iran, flawed parliamentary elections, rampant poverty, soaring youth unemployment, a feeble economy, and inadequate resource management.

"The presence of such a neighboring state with these characteristics inevitably adds to the region's instability, as aptly expressed by Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah. He noted that Iraq, even after 30 years, continues to echo the same narrative, referring to maritime navigation agreements agreed upon by both parties at the United Nations years ago.

"We believe it's imperative for Kuwait and Iraq to explore alternative avenues for interaction through various initiatives, such as: environmental projects under UN sponsorship, akin to the joint project addressing dust storms between the two countries; reinstating the Iraqi-Kuwaiti Media Forum, which ceased in 2012; actively fostering cultural and artistic exchange; supporting sports activities, similar to Kuwait's involvement in hosting the Gulf Cup in Basra; encouraging the engagement of the Kuwaiti private sector in secure zones within Iraq and reinvigorating the Kuwaiti-Iraqi Friendship Association and the Joint Relations Council, along with revitalizing parliamentary ties.

"Certainly, the strain in our relationship with Iraq, a nation grappling with an identity crisis following the American invasion will not easily dissipate.

"Given the lack of influence on Iraqi national parties due to the hijacking of Iraq's decision-making process, Gulf support for stability within Iraq remains a crucial factor. While reforming Iraq's political situation is challenging, it is not insurmountable.

"The persistence of such disturbances will remain on the agenda until the Iraqis, particularly the youth, effect change that challenges the entrenched political class.

"In Kuwait, every challenge serves as a measure of the extent to which we have abandoned the 'culture of annexation', a mindset that seems to have persisted since the 1960s."



"Do you think that the Saudi initiative to appoint an ambassador in Ramallah will be followed by steps to complete the Arab peace project known as the Arab Initiative, which was approved by the Arab Summit held in Beirut? The Saudi delegation, headed by the late King

Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, were the owners of the Arab Initiative that calls for peace in exchange for land", columnist **Abdulmohsen Mohamad Al-Husseini** wrote for **Al-Anba** daily.

"Will it lead to the establishment of a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital, in addition to recognition of the State of Israel?"

"Will it take into account the fact that the Palestinian government and Palestinian organizations had remained silent about the Saudi initiative, despite their objection to other similar steps?"

"The Saudi ambassador who was appointed to the State of Palestine said in the letter presenting his credentials to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas that "We seek to accomplish the Arab peace project within the Arab initiative approved by the Arab Summit at its conference in Beirut."

"I believe that the Saudi endeavor to achieve peace between the Arabs and the Israelis, within the Arab initiative, will find full support from the Arab countries, because it comes within the framework of the Arab consensus and also the support of the United States of America.

"The American political circles highlighted the necessity of achieving peace between Israel and the Arabs in order to establish peace and security in the Middle East region, which is considered one of the most sensitive regions, as it is characterized by important sea corridors such as the Suez Canal, Bab al-Mandab, and the entrance to the Arabian Gulf. They are particularly important for exporting petroleum for industrialized countries.

"Let us wait and be optimistic about the Saudi endeavor, which is very keen, as Saudi Arabia is moving to revitalize economic relations with the countries of the world. We are optimistic about the wisdom of His Royal Highness the Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who is leading the process of progress and development.

"His Highness Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad said "You are aware of the developments the world is witnessing, and you have great challenges ahead of you"."



"I was and still get very angry by any behavior that aims to intentionally deceive others, regardless of the justifications. In fact, I call for tougher penalties on anyone proven guilty because I believe that the dimensions of fraud of all kinds would work towards undermining the structure of society", columnist **Dr. Adel Al-Meshaal** wrote for **Al-Rai** daily.

"One of the manifestations of civilized countries and cohesive societies with social justice is the absence or low rate of fraud in the political, social, media and cultural aspects, including the absence of commercial fraud.

"In Kuwait and other Arab and Islamic countries, fraud is widespread among some Muslims. Here I only mean some intruders in trade who practice commercial fraud, especially when it comes to products such as honey, incense, oud oil, olive oil, and "ladan" oil or "baladi ghee."

"I do not know a proper justification for this behavior, especially since the prices of these goods are not low, and adulterated products can affect human health.

"What is the justification for this fraud, when some people cheat by submitting a paper to prove that the honey is not adulterated, but they sell the adulterated honey using that paper and then swear strong oaths?"

"The matter does not stop at these items alone but also extends to fish, especially Zubaidi, which the people of Kuwait love, as Iranian Zubaidi is being sold as Kuwaiti Zubaidi.

"Commercial fraud extends to the sale of spoiled meat by claiming they are fit for human consumption, as well as some canned goods. Some expired food items are sold after a new sticker is fixed with a different expiry date. All of these matters negatively affect the health of people and wreak havoc in the country.

"The matter continues with the sale of spare parts for cars, as they are sold as original parts but are actually counterfeited. There is a store that sells sports clothes as international brands but it was later discovered that they are imitation clothes!"



"This is how the Kuwaiti leadership visits major countries, as a pioneer in achieving developmental goals. This is because Kuwait's leadership and people enjoy a high position among the leaders of the developed and developing world on the international scene. It is also because of Kuwait's active role and extended friendships with various countries of the world, which are characterized by a history of joint cooperation and effective and fruitful partnership since its independence," columnist **Tariq Boursli** wrote for **Al-Anba** daily.

"Yes, the visit of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad was aimed to realize several visions to be implemented by exchanging experiences and implementing huge projects with a major country such as the People's Republic of China, which has been linked with Kuwait since 1971 by bonds of friendship and cooperation at all levels.

"Recently, we have found an increase in the number of Chinese companies in Kuwait. There is cooperation in the field of industries and in the commercial and investment aspect. The Chinese are also distinguished by being people who have high morals and societal etiquette, as well as sharing beautiful friendship with other people. They also transmit their civilization in an enjoyable public folkloric way.

"In fact, I recommend making touristic visits to China due to the beauty of the different regions in that country and the diversity of their terrain and climate from one region to another. The unique limestone mountains have contributed to the classification of Guizhou province as one of the World Heritage Sites listed on the UNESCO list. Also, this region is home to a kingdom. In addition, huge underground caves and many rivers attract tourists who love adventure and excitement.

"As for the visit of His Highness the Crown Prince, it contributed to strengthening the relationship between the two countries from the economic aspect.

"Kuwait is the seventh largest supplier of oil to the State of China. Trade revenues between the two countries are developing steadily. The Chinese Minister of the Foreign Relations Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party revealed in February that, "The volume of trade exchange between the two countries reached more than \$30 billion at the end of 2022."

"What this visit achieved in terms of signing seven memorandums of understanding in many strategic areas is evidence of the fact that the political authority will overcome all obstacles in order to advance sustainable development.

"We are counting on the cooperation of the two authorities in the second session of the current legislative term, with the government activating all the signed agreements and running the wheel of huge investment projects in the country.

"Hence, the torch of Kuwait is His Highness the Crown Prince, representing His Highness the Amir in this historic visit to China, hand-in-hand with friendly countries and on the wheel of sustainable development."

— Compiled by **Mai Elsoukary**



KUNA photo

The tenth relief plane from the Kuwaiti Air Bridge takes off for Libya.

10th relief plane takes off from Kuwaiti air base to Libya

On Sunday, the tenth mission of the humanitarian air bridge, organized by Kuwait, saw a Kuwaiti Air Force plane depart from Abdullah Al-Mubarak Air Base to Libya. The purpose of this mission is to provide assistance to those affected by Hurricane Daniel in Libya. The aircraft carried 20 tons of diverse relief and medical supplies, including an ambulance.

Yousef Al-Maraj, the Director of the Emergency and Disaster Department at the Kuwait Red Crescent Society, informed Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) prior to the plane's departure that Kuwait remains committed to conducting relief flights to Libya as part of the ongoing humanitarian air bridge. This initiative was launched under the guidance of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Al-Maraj emphasized Kuwait's dedication to extending humanitarian support to those in need, reflecting

the nation's enduring role in relief efforts. He underlined Kuwait's resolve to intensify its relief activities to alleviate the challenging conditions faced by Libya following the devastation caused by Hurricane Daniel, which resulted in the loss of numerous lives, widespread destruction, and a multitude of people missing.

He noted that Kuwait responded promptly to its humanitarian duty and responsibility and did not hesitate to extend assistance. The relief flights were accompanied by volunteers who worked in collaboration with the Libyan Red Crescent to distribute humanitarian aid.

Al-Maraj expressed his hope that this assistance would significantly alleviate the suffering of the Libyan people. He also emphasized the Kuwaiti Red Crescent's commitment to increasing its efforts to provide aid and support to the affected population, working closely with the Libyan Red Crescent. (KUNA)

1 ton meat seized after 2nd raid on factory in less than 72 hours

Action eyed against truck driver in bridge accident

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 1: In less than 72 hours, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry raided yet another factory and caught workers red-handed for thawing frozen meat before distributing the same to various markets, cooperative societies and restaurants as fresh product, reports Al-Rai daily.

Reliable sources told the daily the confiscated meat weighed approximately one ton. The sources added that the "Commercial Control" inspectors, after receiving information conducted a field inspection tour and caught the workers removing the meat from original packaging, thawing the product and repackaging it to mislead consumers.

The Ministry of Commerce found an operations room inside the factory where the meat data was changed to read fresh instead of frozen complete with a new label to cheat consumers.

The sources pointed the same procedure was applied to cartons of frozen chicken, which were then placed in new containers, and labeled as fresh and refrigerated. This is in addition to minced meat coming from Asia that had been thawed and packaged in new containers and sold as fresh product.

The sources pointed the inspectors also discovered that the company in violation of the law was extending the expiry dates of products.

Truck driver to face legal action: The Ministry of Interior announced its intention to take necessary legal measures to deal with the driver of the truck that caused parts of the bridge on the Fifth Ring Road to fall on the road, which resulted in the disruption of traffic, reports **Aljarida** daily.

It revealed that the case on the incident has been filed at Rabya Police Station.

PP receives over 23K cases: The recent statistics issued by the Ministry of Justice show 23,613 cases were received by the Public Prosecution between January 1 and August 31, which means that the Public Prosecution re-



Al-Rai photo

Factory caught thawing frozen meat.

ceives more than 98 cases on a daily basis, reports **Al-Qabas** daily.

The statistics show there were 3,137 felony cases, 531 murder and self-assault, 256 cases of kidnapping and forceful detention, 1,715 cases of drugs and psychotropic substances, 236 cases of assault on honor and reputation, in addition to 1,168 cases of assault on the property of others, and 2,351 banking frauds.

The statistics showed that commercial misdemeanor cases amounted to 4,283, while juvenile misdemeanor accounted for 1,126 cases, in addition to 1,801 check misdemeanor cases.

According to statistics, the number of environmental misdemeanor cases reached 5,762 cases, while information technology cases reached 2,514 cases, and drug addiction reached 990 cases.

Moreover, a source revealed the government intends to decide on a number of projects in order to accelerate the pace of completion of litigation

procedures soon. The source said that a project will be adopted to reduce the burden on the prosecution and the courts, avoid the accumulation of transactions and reduce the documentary cycle.

The source added that there is a desire to increase the number of judges. There are two problems that lie in the shortage of prosecutors and judges in parallel with the volume of work in the courts and the prosecution, due to the increase in the population, which has led to a noticeable increase in the number of pending cases and those received by the prosecution and the courts.

The source revealed a trend to infuse new blood into prosecutors, as the number of those accepted will increase by up to 30% in each batch.

The source concluded by emphasizing the keenness of the senior leadership to provide all absolute support to the judiciary and the prosecution.

Kuwait, India talk on 'employment'

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 1: Marzouq Al-Otaibi, the Acting Director General of the Public Authority for Manpower, met with Dr. Adarsh Swaika, the Ambassador of the Republic of India to Kuwait, and his accompanying delegation. Discussions revolved around cooperation mechanisms concerning the recruitment and employment of Indian workers in Kuwait, reports **Al Seyassah** Daily.

During the meeting, Al-Otaibi elaborated on how the Kuwaiti labor market attracts workers with specialized skills that cater to its needs, emphasizing ongoing efforts to enhance the recruitment process for skilled workers that benefit both the labor market and the sending countries.

Various issues related to Indian workers were addressed, with a concerted effort to resolve challenges in collaboration with relevant stakeholders.

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HH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister send similar cables

HH Amir congratulates China and Cyprus on national days

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 1, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Sunday a cable to the President of China Xi Jinping, congratulating him on his country's National Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished the Chinese president everlasting health and wellness, and further progress and prosperity to his country and people.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable to President Xi Jinping, congratulating him on his country's National Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Crown Prince wished President Xi and his people everlasting health and further progress and prosperity.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Jaber Al-Sabah also sent a cable to President Xi Jinping, congratulating him on his

country's National Day.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad has addressed, Sunday, a cable of congratulations to the Cypriot President Nicos Anastasiades on his country's National Day.

His Highness the Amir expressed wishes of welfare to the Cypriot presi-

dent, and hoped for Cyprus more progress and prosperity.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad also addressed a cable of congratulations to President Anastasiades on his country's National Day.

His Highness the Crown Prince ex-

pressed good health and prosperity for the Cypriot president and progress to the people.

Also, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf addressed a cable of congratulations to President Anastasiades on his country's National Day.

'Kuwait adopts latest technologies for cancer diagnosis & treatment'

Regional training sessions on radioactive materials being held



A section of the male participants at the regional training session.

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 1, (KUNA): Kuwait's Health Ministry official underlined on Sunday the state's intent on adopting latest diagnostic and treatment methods for cancer patients as well as ensuring compatibility with safety and quality standards.

Dr. Abdulredha Abbas, head of nuclear medicine department at Kuwait Cancer Control Center, spoke to KUNA following regional training session on radioactive materials organized by the center in cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Dr. Abbas mentioned that this is the second session to handle topics of radioactive material production and quality manufacturing, adding that there are two centers producing such materials for clinical purposes in Kuwait.

He stated that these sessions are a testament to Kuwait's role in the field and all the technical projects it has achieved.

There are eight centers in Kuwait for PET scans (positron emission tomography), all requiring radioactive materials daily as the centers receive some 18-20 visitors while other centers are visited by 30-45 people.

Head of the radioactive materials unit at the center, Dr. Shatha Al-Khalaf, described the sessions as an extension of continuous research efforts aiming to improve quality of radioactive material.

Lecturing at the session, she added, are a number of highly skilled experts and specialists in the field.

Some 40 participants from Arab countries in Asia are taking part in the session set to span over the course of five days.



Dr Abdulredha Abbas



Dr Shatha Al-Khalaf



A section of the female participants at the regional training sessions.

Minister's nod vital for teacher's license

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 1: The oversight team tasked with examining the documents for the teacher's licensing initiative in Kuwait has announced the successful completion of the preliminary draft for the teacher's license, featuring two distinct tracks – administrative and technical, reports Al-Rai daily.

This draft was presented to Dr. Adel Al-Manea, the Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, on Sept 30. Following this, decisions regarding the implementation date and

the application process within schools will be finalized.

An educational insider disclosed to Al-Rai that the license will be applicable to educational staff members, school principals, assistant principals, and technical mentors. However, the application will vary based on the administrative and technical tracks.

Minister Al-Manea will play a crucial role in determining whether the license will exclusively apply to new teachers or extend to encompass all educational staff.

Tripodi set to visit Kuwait

1,000 Kuwaitis benefit from Cascade visa in 2 weeks: Italian ambassador

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 1: The Italian Ambassador to Kuwait, HE Carlo Balducci, said 1,000 Kuwaitis obtained a 5-year multi-entry tourist visa in the first two weeks following the approval of the "Cascade" visa procedures, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The Italian envoy expects the number of visas to increase after the adoption of the "Cascade" visa system, pointing out that this is what prompted the embassy to choose a larger place to accommodate the increasing number of visa applicants wishing to travel to Italy.

He pointed out that the time required to

obtain a visa for Kuwaitis does not exceed 48 hours, indicating that there is no change in the prices for issuing a "Cascade" visa, as it is only a system to facilitate procedures for Kuwaitis and not to raise prices.

Regarding the strategic dialogue meeting between Kuwait and Italy, Balducci said that the date has not been determined yet.

Meanwhile, Balducci revealed that Italian Foreign Ministry Undersecretary Maria Tripodi will arrive in Kuwait next Tuesday, October 3, for a two-day visit, and will depart on Thursday, October 5.

Mohammed bin

Continued from Page 1

road to Jerusalem passes through Kuwait". The organizations wreaked havoc on earth, including committing murder and heinous crimes against Kuwaitis.

Your Highness, the Palestinian organizations have devoted themselves since 1967 to terrorizing Arabs, killing many of them, hijacking planes, and practicing terrorism under the slogan of "reminding the world of the issue."

Some Arab leaders also exploited it for their own ends, starting with Egypt where some officers turned against the king, and 11 kings, namely the Revolutionary Command Council, replaced him. In Iraq, the young King Faisal and the leaders of the state were also branded with the same slogan.

Instead of pointing the gun at the Israelis, they turned to Jordan and Lebanon, and killed tens of thousands of people.

Your Highness, we beg to ask - What have we gotten from the "cause" other than the calamities? Iran has come to rule four Arab capitals, and was aided by those investing in Arab blood under the slogan of the "Palestinian cause". They shed blood in Yemen, Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria, and carried out terrorism against the Gulf states, starting with the assassination of the UAE Foreign Minister Saif Ghobash and ending with the Beirut Port explosion.

We have received nothing but bad news from the "cause". To this day there are those who invest in it for personal goals. Therefore, we must approach matters in the right way, and see how the inimitable Arab leader the late Anwar Sadat understood the dimensions of this file, and worked to liberate Sinai, the Suez Canal, and Sharm El-Sheikh and Taba without war and only through negotiations.

This is due to the fact that the whole world supports Israel because of the childish terrorist acts committed by the Palestinians themselves.

Your Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman, you do not have to do more than look at the Palestinian groups, to whom each of them sold the slogan "Liberate Palestine", and what benefits and advantages their leaders obtain, in order to know that these people have forgotten their country for decades and have other goals, as well as realize that the world will not wait for the weak.

The Palestinian factions, which number about 20, live on political blackmail. Those who do not submit to it are assassinated, their image is distorted, or they are insulted. Meanwhile, they live a comfortable life in Israeli cities, and have their own companies in Israel.

Your Highness, pardon me as I am one of the Gulf nationals who lived through all the problems caused by these organizations.

While we were chanting for Palestine, they were plotting to kill us. While we were cutting off money from ourselves to give to them, they were spend-

ing it on sabotaging our country. They declared "Allahu Akbar" every time Saddam Hussein fired a missile at Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

Your Highness, listen to the Friday preachers in Gaza and the West Bank, and the insults hurled at the House of Saud, your father, you, and all the people of the Gulf countries.

Israel did not commit ten percent of the crimes committed by the Palestinian organizations against us, which is why we say on behalf of most of the Arabian Gulf people, "Decide on it and make it happen."

Expat staff

Continued from Page 1

This committee, led by the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Talal Al-Khalid Al-Sabah, involving 10 government agencies, seemed to take a more proactive approach in making concrete executive decisions on the ground.

Regarding the growth of non-oil economic activities and the acceleration of large, small, and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the country, recent official data revealed that the Kuwaiti private sector labor market accounted for more than half of the workforce, estimated at 56.3%.

The total number of workers in the private sector (Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis) has reached 1.619 million at the end of June, compared to 1.458 million at the end of June 2022, reflecting an 11% increase and the creation of more than 161 thousand new jobs.

The statistics showed that out of 1.641 million expatriate workers, approximately 953 thousand individuals, constituting around 58%, held intermediate or lower educational qualifications.

These numbers do not include domestic workers.

In contrast, about 377.5 thousand individuals held secondary school certificates and above, while around 420 thousand had diploma and university degrees and above.

The statistics, the results of which were seen by Al-Qabas, indicated that 80 percent of foreign workers in Kuwait, excluding domestic workers, are concentrated in five economic activities, which are as follows:

- 41.6 percent work in restaurant, hotel and similar services activities.
- 14.3 percent in the construction sector.
- 10.2 percent work in the manufacturing industry.
- 7.2 percent are employed in administrative and support services
- 6.7 percent work in the wholesale and retail trade and vehicle repair sectors.

The statistics revealed that there is a decrease in the presence of foreign workers in some economic sectors, as a significant decrease is observed in the number of their jobs in financial activities, insurance, arts, entertainment and amusement, and the information and communications sector.



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Nurturing deep diplomatic roots and strengthening Kuwait-Egypt bond

Ambassador Osama Shaltout: Unveiling diplomatic odyssey

By Chaitali B. Roy
Special to the Arab Times

The Egyptian Ambassador to Kuwait, H.E. Osama Shaltout's association with diplomacy goes back a long way. Born into a diplomatic family, he spent his growing-up years learning about different cultures in different parts of the world. In 1989, he joined the Egyptian Foreign Service. His work with the foreign service took him to different parts of the world, including Kuwait, Indonesia, Sudan and Germany. He was also appointed Assistant Foreign Minister a few years back. This is his second posting in Kuwait. In this conversation with Arab Times, he speaks about Kuwait, his experience here, his journey as a diplomat and the old and deep ties between Kuwait and Egypt.

AT: When was the last time you were posted in Kuwait?

Ambassador Shaltout: The first time I was here was over twenty-five years ago. We were here from 1997 to 2001. I was Head of the Political section at the embassy at that time. We enjoyed our stay here very much.

AT: How different is Kuwait now from when you first served here?

Ambassador Shaltout: Kuwait has grown. The population has grown. Buildings are more modern; there is much more activity. Kuwait now has more museums, sporting avenues, and gaming activities like paddles.

AT: You lived in different countries as a boy. What was it like?

Ambassador Shaltout: I was born in Germany. My father was Head of the commercial office at that time. He served in Germany for more than six and a half years. We were in East Germany in Berlin, the capital of East Germany, but we could travel from the East to the West, as there were no conditions for diplomats. My parents returned to Egypt, after which my father was posted to Geneva for four years. After that, he was stationed in Sri Lanka, Colombo. It was different moving to Asia, which has a multi-diverse culture different from Europe. It was a privilege to live in Sri Lanka. We had good relations with some of the Egyptians who were exiled to Sri Lanka in the 19th and the 20th centuries. Later on, my father moved to Denmark and Hungary. By that time, I was in University.

AT: After graduating from the Faculty of Economics and Political Science, you joined the diplomatic corps. What inspired your career choice?

Ambassador Shaltout: Well, it was my dream to follow in the footsteps of my father, who was a role model to me. In addition, my grandfather, from my mother's side, was undersecretary of the State of Foreign Affairs, which inspired me even more. My family have been in Foreign Service across generations. Therefore, I was looking forward to it. Before joining the Foreign Service, I worked for a multinational company for a year, but I wanted to serve as a civil servant and pursue my dream of working in the Foreign Service.

AT: Egypt is home to one of the world's most ancient civilizations. The kind of history and heritage present in Cairo, Luxor, Aswan, Alexandria and many other places is fascinating. There is still so much that Egypt has to offer to the world.

Ambassador Shaltout: Egypt is the cradle of civilization. We have a lot of heritage because, throughout history, Egypt has been a part of different superpowers at different times. We had the pharaohs, the Romans, the Greeks, the Mamluks, the Ottoman Empire, and the French and the British. What is excellent about Egypt is that everyone who entered Egypt blended in and became Egyptian. When he comes to Egypt, a foreigner forgets about his origin, and then he advocates for Egypt. Throughout history, it has been like that. Everyone blends in, and it is a unique civilization. Therefore, there are many monuments in Egypt. We have about two-thirds of the world's monuments.

CBR: I also wanted to ask you about the Egyptian museum. Like thousands of others, I was fascinated by the National Museum of Cairo, which has been renovated recently. This recent function was where the mummies were taken in a fascinating procession.

Ambassador Shaltout: It was the Museum of Civilization. Mummies of twenty-two kings were transferred to this Museum. They are symbols of the kings who ruled Egypt through different dynasties.

CBR: It is a must-visit. When I visited Luxor, someone told us this is Upper Egypt. And that was actually towards the country's south, which we found confusing. But I think it's connected to the flow of the Nile.

Ambassador Shaltout: Because, as you know, the Nile is the longest river, which goes against gravity, one of God's gifts.

CBR: We now go back to talking about your life and in the diplomatic service. You served in the Cairo as Assistant Foreign Minister. After that, you left the country. Would it have been more exciting for you to stay back because Egypt saw unprecedented changes during that time?

Ambassador Shaltout: Sure, but as you know, in our line of work, we have to work abroad. As you know, diplomacy is the front line defence of any country, and we have to work on the front line. But you are right. There has been a development leap in Egypt over the past few years, with the second revolution and under the Presidency of His Excellency President Fattah El Sisi.

We worked on two primary tracks. One track was to combat terrorism through security measures, controlling illegal financing, and combating illiteracy and development. Throughout the last few years, we were able to move forward in those five pillars simultaneously. We concentrated on developing Egypt in all sectors. We began with infrastructure and then went on to monetary changes. We restructured the whole system and are now more open to investment. We spent \$400 billion on infrastructure in different ports, energy, renewable energy, road construction, and bridges. Egypt is ready and very open to investment.

AT: There was a time when we were worried or disturbed by what was happening in Egypt. Then, a period of healing took place. It is nice to hear what you said.

Ambassador Osama Shaltout: The situation is very promising now. Throughout the challenges that hit the world, starting from COVID-19, we did not stop development. Throughout those couple of years, although we were affected, like everybody, by a slow pace of economic growth, we moved on. We didn't stop any of our mega projects. Now, we're facing the crisis of the Russia - Ukraine

War. It has affected food security and tourism. We have lost at least three million tourists from those two countries. But we were able to recover. Last year, we had 15 million visitors to Egypt, who contributed 10 billion USD to the budget. So we're moving quickly and steadily to develop the tourism sector.

AT: How old is Kuwait's relationship with Egypt? I have heard that there are ancient Egyptian artefacts found in Failaka.

Ambassador Shaltout: Surprisingly, there were artefacts found in Failaka that go back to 3000 BC. These include three stamps from the pharaohs that are on display at the National Museum of Kuwait. There was communication between the ancient dynasty and the dormant civilization here. There was a continuous connection throughout history, which continued more in modern times. Al Azhar in Egypt is one of the oldest institutions for learning. Kuwait sent four scholars to the Al Azhar University to study in 1870. Then, in 1939, another batch of scholars was sent to the Al Azhar in the name of the Kuwaiti government. In 1945, the Kuwaiti House was founded in Egypt as a cultural space for Kuwaitis. Later, in 1958, President Nasser integrated that House into the government. Subsequently, all the Kuwaiti scholars who studied in Cairo returned to Kuwait and established institutions like theatre, music, literature, and magazines. This helped Kuwait become one of the pillars of culture in the Gulf.

AT: When did Egypt establish a diplomatic relationship with Kuwait? And how has the relationship evolved?

Ambassador Shaltout: We had our embassy here in 1961. Strong bonds between the two countries are formed by the leadership, the government and the people. Before independence, there was a lot of movement between the two countries. There were many marriages and many joint families. Therefore, we have blood relations between the two people. Since independence, our diplomatic relations have been based on the two countries' strong-rooted relations.

AT: The relationship has developed commercially as well. I believe Kuwait ranks fourth among the countries with direct investment in Egypt.

Ambassador Shaltout: Kuwait is the fourth largest investor in Egypt. Kuwait has an investment of more than \$19 billion in Egypt. Those are accumulated assets throughout the years. Kuwaitis have real estate in Egypt. They own different companies. They have a direct investment of almost \$5 billion.

AT: What sectors do Kuwaitis invest in?

Ambassador Shaltout: They have invested in infrastructures, steel factories, medicine factories and telecommunications. So it's all different sectors.

AT: As you mentioned, Kuwait enjoys excellent bilateral relations with Egypt. Which area of this relationship have you focused on?

Ambassador Shaltout: I've been focusing on all tracks and promoting all channels. We are bound by 105 treaties outlining the relationship between the two countries. We have a joint committee headed by the two Foreign Ministers. We have a joint committee between the Ministries of Defense, and we have a joint committee between the Ministries of Labor. These committees work in different sectors and try to promote all tracks between Egypt and Kuwait. Both countries have many resources, and we're not in competition, but we complement each other. We are trying to increase our exports to Kuwait and increase investment.

AT: We know that education is essential to this relationship with Egypt. Many Kuwaiti students opt for higher education in Egypt, at least they used to. So, how strong is the cooperation in the field of education?

Ambassador Shaltout: About 30,000 to 35,000 Kuwaiti students are pursuing graduate and postgraduate studies in Egypt. They're studying in different fields and at other universities throughout Egypt. We continue to have a strong relationship in the field of education. Here in Kuwait, we have 6,000 Egyptian students studying in school. There are few in the university, but at least they have opened Kuwait University to expatriate students.

AT: While researching Kuwaiti women, I discovered that some of the most trailblazing women in Kuwait, who passed out in the 1960s, travelled to Cairo to get their education. Dr. Badria Al Awadhi is just one example. So Kuwait and Egypt have always had a solid relationship as far as education is concerned. The other thing I found out was that in the 1960s and 70s, Kuwait was considered the centre of the Renaissance in the Arabian Gulf. That was when lots of highly qualified teachers were coming from Palestine and Egypt, and they were moulding the minds of young people here and teaching in different institutions. Am I right?

Ambassador Shaltout: As you said, we were here before independence, and we are here after independence. The Egyptian community in Kuwait go a long way back, and they are very much welcomed. I want to take this opportunity to thank the leadership, the Government and the people of Kuwait for their openness to all communities here. These communities work in a free environment, and they collaborate in the development of Kuwait. As you know, we have been here in different sectors. We come second after India in terms of number. 467,000 Egyptian labourers work in the public and private sectors, but we are around 670,000 as a community.

AT: How do you see the contribution of Egyptians to Kuwait?

Ambassador Shaltout: As Egyptians, they have dual contributions. First, their partnership and contribution to development here in Kuwait and to the growth in Egypt through the money transfer sent from Kuwait to Egypt by the Egyptian citizens.

AT: I read that you retrieved a number of Egyptian artefacts from Kuwait. And I think these were antiquities that were smuggled out. How do you see the role of the Kuwaiti authorities in working with Egypt on this very important matter of antiquities?

Ambassador Shaltout: I would like to seize this opportunity to thank the Kuwaiti authorities because they are the ones who found those artefacts. There were five statues, and the Customs Department was able to seize them. Later, we had a delegation here to validate those artefacts, which were returned to the Egyptian government. And, of course, they are priceless.



H.E. Osama Shaltout, Egyptian Ambassador to Kuwait.

Kuwaiti students sweep top honors at Arab Code Week

MILSET Asia celebrates student achievements

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 1, (KUNA): Asia's Regional Office of the International Movement for Leisure Activities in Science and Technology (MILSET Asia) announced that the Kuwait Cooperative Center for Student Programs won three awards in the third edition of Arab Code Week (ACW), achieving first places in the student team competitions for the categories under age 12, age 12-15 and age 15-18.

Head of MILSET Asia Adnan Al-Meer said in a press statement Sunday that this victory reflects the practical and applied programs and systems prepared by MILSET Asia in cooperation with Kuwaiti scientific and educational bodies and institutions.

The Kuwait Cooperative Center for Student Programs organized activities for students during the ACW event, held online by the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO), Al-Meer explained.

The week included multiple activities and events, including holding workshops aimed at introducing students on how to register on the ACW platform, as this activity aims to explain the method of using the Arabic language to control the movement of robots by learning about voice recognition technology, he stated.

ALECSO, the Egyptian Ministry of Higher Education



KUNA photo
Adnan Al-Meer, Head of MILSET Asia.

and Scientific Research, the Egyptian National Commission for Education, Science and Culture, and the Tunisian Association for Educational Initiatives worked to organize this third edition entitled "Arabic Language and Digital Creativity," with the aim of helping students from age 6-18, people with disabilities, and all those interested, he mentioned.

This project seeks to provide an educational environment in a fun and easy way that helps teach the basics of programming to young people, he noted.



Lebanese Archaeologist Asad Saif lecturing at the workshop.

'Kuwait making tangible progress'

NCCAL holds workshop on antiquities' preservation via nuclear technology



Mohammad bin Redha, Head of the antiquities and museums department at NCCAL.

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 1, (KUNA): The National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature (NCCAL) commenced Sunday a workshop on the use of nuclear technology for the preservation of relics.

Taking part in the workshop are the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research.

NCCAL Acting Secretary-General Mohammad Al-Jassar commended the efforts of participants and organizers, stating that these workshops contribute significantly to honing skill-sets and abilities of those working in the fields of archeology and museums.

Head of the antiquities and museums department at NCCAL, Mohammad bin Redha, explained in his speech that the workshop handles both theoretical discussions and practical application.

IAEA communications officer Dr. Nader Al-Awadhi highlighted the agency's role over the past few years in augmenting benefits of nuclear technology.

He indicated that Kuwait, supported by IAEA, is making tangible progress in benefiting from nuclear technologies across various social, economic, health and environmental fields.

Al-Awadhi also explained that in addition to analyzing and preserving relics, nuclear tech is also used in archeological excavation.

Determining the age of a relic, understanding its composition, protecting it from decay, killing harmful bacteria and fungi as well as mending tears are all uses of nuclear technologies in archeology, Al-Awadhi added.

The workshop is set to extend for four days to facilitate the exchange of expertise, raise awareness, and identify national requirements while taking into account current capabilities.

Al-Awadhi expressed hope that useful recommendations and strategies would transpire from the workshop.

Lebanese Archeologist Asad Saif hailed the valuable content of the workshop saying he is quite glad he is able to attend.



KUNA photos
Mohammad Al-Jassar, NCCAL Acting Secretary-General.

Largest green roof in world

Expo Doha building enters Guinness Book of Records

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 1: Yesterday, the Qatar Public Works Authority made a significant announcement, confirming that the primary edifice of the Doha Horticultural Expo 2023 has secured a spot in the Guinness Book of World Records for boasting the largest green roof glob-

ally, spanning an impressive area of approximately 4,031 square meters, reports Al-Rai daily.

According to the Qatar News Agency (QNA), the authority proudly stated that this remarkable achievement marks the sixth Guinness World Record they have

accomplished in recent years. Prior feats include establishing the largest electric bus depot in Lusail and constructing the lengthiest outdoor air-conditioned track in an open park at Umm Al Seneem Park.

Additional feats recorded in the encyclopedia encompass providing the longest continuous bicycle path (Olympic track) and the lengthiest stretch of continuously paved asphalt on Al Khor Road. Also noted is the participation of the largest number of nationalities in simultaneous tree planting.

The authority emphasized that these monumental projects play a pivotal role in preparing Qatar for major global events, citing their contributions to hosting the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, the Expo 2023 Doha Horticultural Exhibition, and the upcoming Formula 1 races set to take place in Doha next month.

The Public Works Authority proudly announced the completion of the main

building and service structures for the exhibition, alongside the meticulous preparation of its outdoor and indoor gardens, in anticipation of welcoming participants to one of the Middle East's premier gardening exhibitions. The building's design was carefully crafted to showcase the highest gardening standards within a hot climate, epitomizing Qatar's dedication to greenery in a desert landscape.

The project was conceptualized to offer visitors an interactive experience melding nature, cultural urban construction, and a touch of Qatari heritage, with the main building's roof adorned with a variety of plants such as Panastum, Dahlia, and Green Grass.

Notably, the Expo 2023 Doha Horticultural Exhibition is set to commence on October 2nd under the banner of "Green Desert, Better Environment," and will run its activities until March 28th of the subsequent year.



Aerial view of the Doha Horticultural Expo.

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World News Roundup

Britain

Dash of populism

PM needs to rally his Conservatives

LONDON, Oct 1, (AP) — UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak heads to the governing Conservative Party's annual conference on Sunday facing a triple challenge: Cheer up a party that's trailing in opinion polls, sideline rivals who are eyeing his job and persuade the voting public that a party in power for 13 years deserves another term in office.

Sunak's arsenal includes a package of populist measures — such as slowing moves to phase out fossil fuels — designed to win back voters who have rejected the Conservatives over Britain's stagnating economy, cost-of-living crisis and waves of strikes that have intermittently shut down doctors' offices, schools and train services.



Sunak

"Public services are crumbling, the economy's not responding and (the Conservatives) haven't met some of the pledges they've made, so you'd expect them to be pretty downhearted," said Tim Bale, professor of politics at Queen Mary University of London.

He said that in response, the party is "doubling down on the populism. It's about pushing the Conservatives as standing up for ordinary people against some sort of elite."

Imposed

In recent weeks, Sunak has approved new North Sea oil and gas drilling, delayed a ban on selling new gas and diesel cars and watered down other green measures that he said imposed "unacceptable costs" on ordinary people. On the eve of the conference, he announced plans to curb supposed "anti-car measures," such as blanket 20 mph (32 kph) speed limits and traffic restrictions in residential areas.

Such moves have dismayed environmental campaigners, but are designed to appeal to the party members, officials and lawmakers gathering in the northwest England city of Manchester for a conference that culminates in a leader's speech by Sunak on Wednesday. The left-of-center opposition Labour Party will hold its own convention in nearby Liverpool a week later.

The autumn conferences — blends of pep rally, policy forum and boozy bash — play an important role in British political life. This year's may well be the last before a national election. Under the UK parliamentary system, an election must be called within five years of the previous one, held in December 2019.

Since the last national vote, the UK has left the European Union, endured a pandemic and ejected two prime ministers — scandal-tarnished Boris Johnson and ill-fated Liz Truss, who lasted just 49 days in office. Sunak took the reins in October 2022 with the aim of calming economic turmoil sparked by Truss' tax-cutting plans.

Bronwen Maddox, director and chief executive of the international affairs think tank Chatham House, said that conferences are a place where a political party "shows off to itself and looks at itself," while also trying to speak to the wider electorate.

Stuck

"This is a very stuck, difficult-feeling time in Britain, and has been in a way since Brexit," Maddox said. "And it's jarred the country's image of itself as being well run and good at things like government."

"So people will be looking for reassurance and for hope — and also looking for reasons to scorn. What we'll watch for ... is can (Sunak) really engender a sense of hope in his party and in a much wider audience of potential voters?"

That could be a struggle. After 13 years of Conservative government, opinion polls put the party 15 to 20 points behind Labour. They suggest support for the party is sagging across almost all demographics, including the "red wall" voters in post-industrial northern English areas. The Conservatives under Johnson won many of those seats from Labour in 2019 by promising that Brexit would bring economic renewal — a renewal that has largely failed to materialize.

Sunak is the fifth Conservative leader since 2016, and rivals have started positioning themselves for a party leadership contest that could follow election defeat. Home Secretary Suella Braverman and Business Secretary Kemi Badenoch are both bidding for the support of the party's populist wing, which wants tough curbs on irregular migration and a war on liberal social values derided as "woke."

Paul Goodman, a former lawmaker who edits the Conservative Home website, said that Sunak's strategy is to depict Labour leader Keir Starmer, a lawyer who was once the country's chief prosecutor, as an out-of-touch agent of the status quo.

"He knows that if the next election is framed as Labour versus the Conservatives, Labour will almost certainly win," Goodman said. "But I think he thinks that if it can be framed as Keir Starmer versus change, then maybe he'll make it back. So he has to personify himself as change and tell a story of how he is all about change."

Goodman said election victory for Sunak is "possible, but very unlikely."

"It is looking a bit better for him than it was when he became prime minister, although the odds are still daunting," he said.

Several people were injured after the Flying Scotsman, the historic steam locomotive, was involved in a low-speed crash with another heritage train in the Scottish Highlands on Friday, authorities said.

The National Railway Museum said the "shunting incident" took place at Aviemore Station in the Cairngorms National Park. The station is home to a heritage train line that takes visitors on steam train trips in northern Scotland.

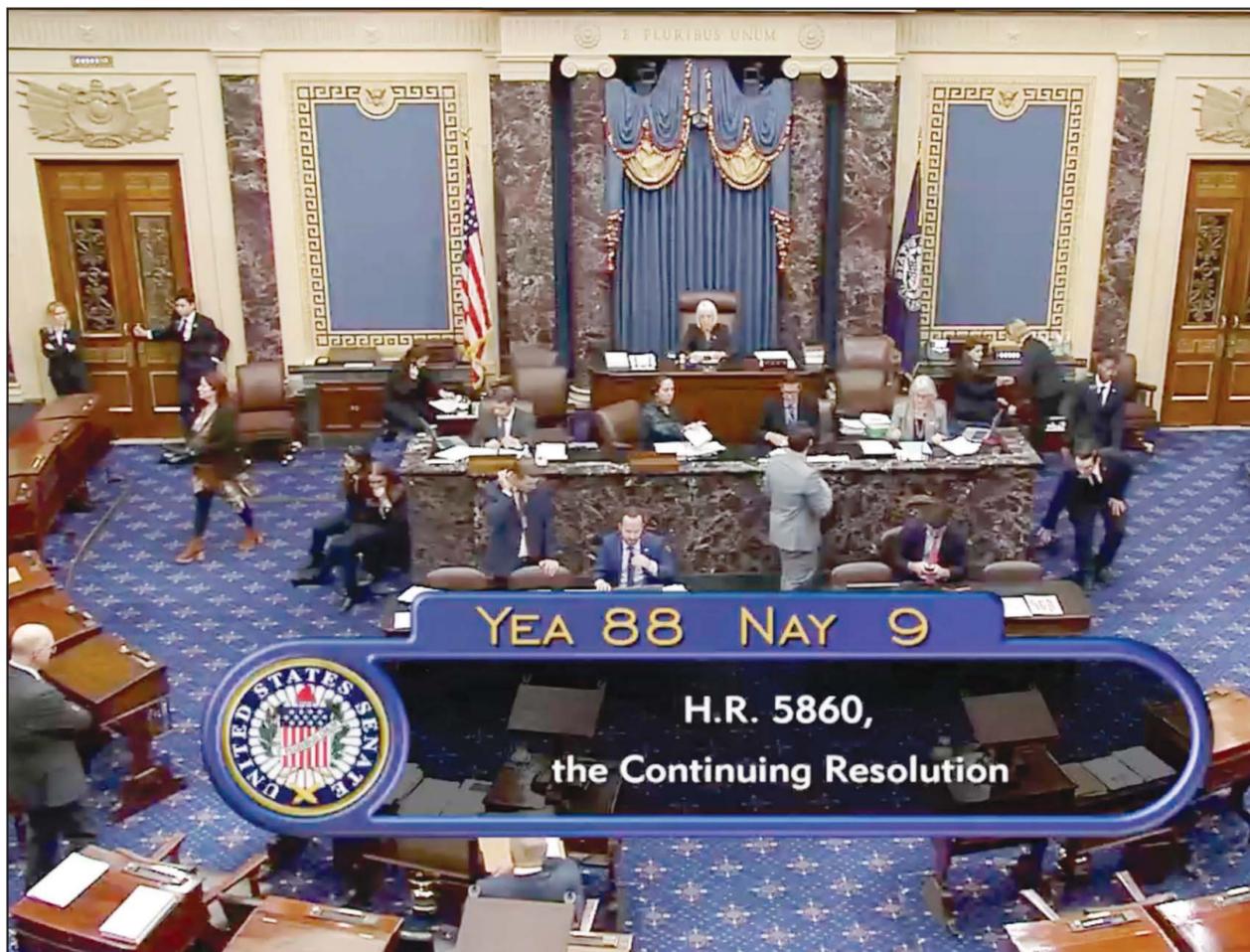
The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service said that emergency workers were alerted on Friday night "to reports of a collision" involving two trains at Aviemore. Police Scotland said the crash took place at "low speed."

Two people were hospitalized as a precaution, and their injuries weren't believed to be serious. Three others were treated at the scene and didn't require hospital treatment.

The Belmond and Strathspey Railway said the Flying Scotsman locomotive was being coupled with stationary Royal Scotsman train carriages when the collision took place.

Police said that an investigation was underway. The Flying Scotsman, which was restored last year as part of its centenary celebrations, was scheduled to be running trips this weekend.

The steam engine, officially given its famous name 100 years ago, was a service connecting passengers from London to Edinburgh. It rose to global fame when it recorded 100 mph (160 kph) on a test run, making it the first locomotive in the UK to reach that speed.



This image from US Senate video shows the vote total, 88-9, on a temporary funding bill in the Senate at the US Capitol in Washington on Sept 30. The threat of a federal government shutdown ended late Saturday, hours before a midnight deadline, as Congress approved a temporary funding bill to keep agencies open and sent the measure to President Joe Biden to sign. (AP)

Politics

Biden signs funding

US Congress averts govt shutdown

WASHINGTON, Oct 1, (AP) — The threat of a federal government shutdown suddenly lifted late Saturday as President Joe Biden signed a temporary funding bill to keep agencies open with little time to spare after Congress rushed to approve the bipartisan deal.

The package drops aid to Ukraine, a White House priority opposed by a growing number of GOP lawmakers, but increases federal disaster assistance by \$16 billion, meeting Biden's full request. The bill funds government until Nov. 17.

After chaotic days of turmoil in the House, Speaker Kevin McCarthy abruptly abandoned demands for steep spending cuts from his right flank and instead relied on Democrats to pass the bill, at risk to his own job. The Senate followed with final passage closing a whirlwind day at the Capitol.

"This is good news for the American people," Biden said in a statement.

He also said the United States "cannot under any circumstances allow American support for Ukraine to be interrupted" and expected McCarthy "will keep his commitment to the people of Ukraine and secure passage of the support needed to help Ukraine in this critical moment."

It's been a sudden head-spinning turn of events in Congress ahead of the midnight funding deadline after grueling days in the House pushed the government to the brink of a disruptive federal shutdown.

The outcome ends, for now, the threat of a shutdown, but the reprieve may be short-lived. Congress will again need to fund the government in coming weeks risking a crisis as views are hardening, particularly among the right-flank lawmakers whose demands were ultimately swept aside this time in favor of a more bipartisan approach.

"We're going to do our job," McCarthy, R-Calif., said before the House vote. "We're going to be adults in the room. And we're going to keep government open."

If no deal was in place before Sun-

day, federal workers would have faced furloughs, more than 2 million active-duty and reserve military troops would have had to work without pay and programs and services that Americans rely on from coast to coast would have begun to face shutdown disruptions.

"It has been a day full of twists and turns, but the American people can breathe a sigh of relief: There will be no government shutdown," said Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y.

The package funds government at current 2023 levels until mid-November, and also extends other provisions, including for the Federal Aviation Administration. The package was approved by the House 335-91, with most Republicans and almost all Democrats supporting. Senate passage came by an 88-9 vote.

Support

But the loss of Ukraine aid was devastating for lawmakers of both parties vowing to support President Volodymyr Zelenskyy after his recent Washington visit. The Senate bill included \$6 billion for Ukraine, and both chambers came to a standstill Saturday as lawmakers assessed their options.

"The American people deserve better," said House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries of New York, warning in a lengthy floor speech that "extreme" Republicans were risking a shutdown. For the House package to be approved, McCarthy was forced to rely on Democrats because the speaker's hard-right flank has said it will oppose any short-term funding measure, denying him the votes needed from his slim majority. It's a move that is sure to intensify calls for his ouster.

After leaving the conservative hold-outs behind, McCarthy is almost certain to be facing a motion to try to remove him from office, though it is not at all certain there would be enough votes to topple the speaker. Most Republicans voted for the package Saturday while 90 opposed.

"If somebody wants to remove me because I want to be the adult in the room, go ahead and try," McCarthy said of the threat to oust him. "But I think this country is too important."

The White House was tracking the developments on Capitol Hill and aides were briefing the president, who was spending the weekend in Washington.

Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell, who has championed Ukraine aid despite resistance from his own ranks, is expected to keep pursuing U.S. support for Kyiv in the fight against Russia.

"I have agreed to keep fighting for more economic and security aid for Ukraine," McConnell, R-Ky., said before the vote.

Late at night, the Senate stalled when Sen. Michael Bennet, D-Colo., held up the vote, seeking assurances Ukraine funds would be reconsidered.

"I know important moments are like this, for the United States, to lead the rest of the world," Bennet said, noting his mother was born in Poland in 1938 and survived the Holocaust. "We can't fail."

The House's quick pivot comes after the collapse Friday of McCarthy's earlier plan to pass a Republican-only bill with steep spending cuts up to 30% to most government agencies and strict border provisions that the White House and Democrats rejected as too extreme. A faction of 21 hard-right Republican holdouts opposed it.

"Our options are slipping away every minute," said one senior Republican, Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart of Florida.

The federal government had been heading straight into a shutdown that posed grave uncertainty for federal workers in states all across America and the people who depend on them — from troops to border control agents to office workers, scientists and others.

Families that rely on Head Start for children, food benefits and countless other programs large and small were confronting potential interruptions or outright closures.

Hundreds of migrants, from babies to the elderly, live inside a shuttle bus center at O'Hare International Airport's Terminal 1. They sleep on cardboard pads on the floor and share airport bathrooms. A private firm monitors their movements.

Like New York and other cities, Chicago has struggled to house asylum-

seekers, slowly moving people out of temporary spaces and into shelters and, in the near future, tents. But Chicago's use of airports is unusual, having been rejected elsewhere, and highlights the city's haphazard response to the crisis. (AP)

Illinois residents back home: Five people were killed and five were seriously injured after a truck overturned in central Illinois, causing a toxic substance to leak from its cargo and forcing the evacuation of hundreds of area residents, authorities said Saturday.

A semitruck carrying caustic anhydrous ammonia toppled about 9:25 pm Friday night in Teutopolis, spilling more than half its 7,500-gallon (28,390-liter) load, according to the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency.

Effingham County Coroner Kim Rhodes said the five dead included three from the same family: one adult and two children under 12. The other two were adult motorists from out of state, Rhodes said. Additionally, five people were airlifted to hospitals, their conditions unknown.

Names of the victims were not released, nor would authorities discuss causes of death. (AP)



A bus drives past a sign reading Welcome to Sandy Hook in Newtown, Conn., Dec 4, 2013. Connecticut's most wide-ranging gun control measure since the 2013 law enacted after the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting is taking effect on Oct 1. (AP)



Rosalynn



Lamont

America

Carter turns 99 at home: Jimmy Carter has always been a man of discipline and habit. But the former president will break routine Sunday, putting off his practice of quietly watching church services online to instead celebrate his 99th birthday with his wife, Rosalynn, and their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren in Plains.

The gathering will take place in the same one-story structure where the Carters lived before he was first elected to the Georgia Senate in 1962. It comes amid tributes from around the world. But for Carter's family, it's an opportunity to honor a personal legacy.

"The remarkable piece to me and I think to my family is that while my grandparents have accomplished so much, they have really remained the same sort of South Georgia couple that lives in a 600-person village where they were born," said grandson Jason Carter, who chairs the board at The Carter Center, which his grandparents founded in 1982 after leaving the White House a year earlier. (AP)

Conn enacts gun control law: Connecticut's most wide-ranging gun control measure since the 2013 law enacted after the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting takes effect Sunday, with proponents vowing to pursue more gun legislation despite legal challenges happening across the country.

The new law, signed by Democratic Gov. Ned Lamont in June, bans the open carrying of firearms and prohibits the sale of more than three handguns within 30 days to any one person, with some exceptions for instructors and others.

"We will not take a break and we cannot stop now, and we will continue to pass life-saving laws until we end gun violence in Connecticut. Our lives depend on it," said Jeremy Stein, executive director of Connecticut Against Gun Violence. (AP)

Migrants at Chicago airports: Hidden behind a heavy black curtain in one of the nation's busiest airports is Chicago's unsettling response to a growing population of asylum-seekers arriving by plane.



Visitors pass a portrait of former US president Jimmy Carter during a celebration of his 99th birthday held at The Carter Center in Atlanta on Sept. 30. (AP)

Asia

Jakarta to launch 'Whoosh'

Opposition candidate wins poll in Maldives

MALE, Maldives, Oct 1, (AP): Maldives opposition candidate Mohamed Muiz, who supports closer ties between the Indian Ocean archipelago and China, won the presidential runoff on Saturday with more than 53% of the vote, local media reported.

The election has turned into a virtual referendum on which regional power - India or China - will have the biggest influence in the small nation. Muiz promised he would remove Indian troops from the Maldives and balance the country's trade relations, which he said were heavily in India's favor.

Mihaaru News reported that incumbent President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, seen as pro-India, had received 46% of the vote and that Muiz had won by more than 18,000 votes. Official results were expected Sunday.



Muiz

"With today's result we have got the opportunity to build the country's future. The strength to ensure the freedom of Maldives," Muiz said in a statement after his victory. "It's time we put our differences aside and come together. We need to be a peaceful society."

Muiz also requested that Solih transfer former president Abdulla Yameen to house arrest from prison.

It was a surprise win for Muiz, who entered the fray as an underdog. He was named only as a fallback candidate closer to the nomination deadline after the Supreme Court prevented Yameen from running because he is serving a prison sentence for money laundering and corruption. Yameen's supporters say he's been jailed for political reasons.

Surprise

"Today's result is a reflection of the patriotism of our people. A call on all our neighbours and bilateral partners to fully respect our independence and sovereignty," said Mohamed Shareef, a top official of Muiz's party. He told The Associated Press that it was also a mandate for Muiz to resurrect the economy and for Yameen's release.

Neither Muiz nor Solih got more than 50% in the first round of voting earlier in September.

Solih, who was elected president in 2018, was battling allegations by Muiz that he had allowed India an unchecked presence in the country. Muiz's party, the People's National Congress, is viewed as heavily pro-China.

Solih has insisted that the Indian military's presence in the Maldives was only to build a dockyard under an agreement between the two governments and that his country's sovereignty won't be violated.

Ahmed Shaheed, a former foreign minister of Maldives, termed the election verdict as a public revolt against the government's failure to meet economic and governance expectations rather than concerns over Indian influence.

"I don't think India was at all in the people's minds," Saheed said.

An engineer, Muiz had served as the housing minister for seven years. He was mayor of Male, the capital, when he was chosen to run for president.

Solih suffered a setback closer to the election when Mohamed Nasheed, a charismatic former president, broke away from his Maldivian Democratic Party and fielded his own candidate in the first round. He decided to remain neutral in the second round.

Yameen, leader of the People's National Congress, made the Maldives a part of China's Belt and Road initiative during his presidency from 2013 to 2018. The initiative is meant to build railroads, ports and highways to expand trade - and China's influence - across Asia, Africa and Europe.

Despite the rhetoric, Muiz is unlikely to change the foreign policy of affording an important place to India, Shaheed said, adding Muiz is more likely to lessen opposition to Chinese projects on the islands.



Indonesia is launching Southeast Asia's first high-speed railway, a key project under China's Belt and Road infrastructure initiative that will cut travel time between the capital and another major city from the current three hours to about 40 minutes.

The project has been beset with delays and increasing costs, and some observers doubt its commercial benefit, but President **Joko Widodo** has championed it and will be inaugurating the 142.3-kilometer (88.4-mile) railway as it begins commercial operations Monday.

The Chinese-made bullet train, called "Whoosh," will connect Jakarta with Bandung, the heavily populated capital of West Java province. Widodo, along with other high-ranking officials, is expected to ride the Whoosh from its first station, Halim KCBJ in eastern Jakarta to Bandung's Tegalluar station, the last of the line's four stations.

Funded

The \$7.3 billion project, largely funded by China, was constructed by PT Kereta Cepat Indonesia-China, known as PT KCIC, a joint venture between an Indonesian consortium of four state-owned companies and China Railway International Co. Ltd. The joint venture said the trains will be the fastest in Southeast Asia, with speeds of up to 350 kph (217 mph).

Luhut Binsar Pandjaitan, the coordinating minister for maritime and investment, said China Railway has agreed to transfer its technology to Indonesia so that in the future the country's high-speed trains can be made domestically.

Chinese Premier **Li Qiang** took a test ride early last month while visiting Jakarta for three days of talks with leaders of the Association of Southeast Asia Nations and other countries.

Li rode the train from Halim KCBJ station to the next station in West Java's Karawang city, a 40-kilometer (25-mile) ride that took about 11 minutes. He then returned on the same train.

Widodo took a 25-minute test ride on the train a week later and told reporters that he felt comfortable sitting or walking inside the bullet train even at its top speeds. He urged people to switch from cars to mass transportation to reduce congestion and pollution, adding that congestion in Jakarta and Bandung is estimated to cost the economy more than \$6.5 billion a year.

PT KCIC has also been running a two-week, free-of-charge public trial prior to the inauguration.

Indonesia broke ground on the project in 2016. The line was originally expected to begin operations in 2019, but was delayed by disputes over land acquisition, environmental issues and the COVID-19 pandemic. It was planned to cost 66.7 trillion rupiah (\$4.3 billion), but the amount ballooned to 113 trillion rupiah (\$7.3 billion).



This undated photo provided on Sept 26, 2023 by Philippine coastguard shows a diver cutting rope tied to a floating barrier in the Scarborough Shoal. The Philippine coastguard said on Sept 25, it has complied with a presidential order to remove a floating barrier placed by China's coastguard to prevent Filipino fishing boats from entering a lagoon in a disputed shoal in the South China Sea. (AP)

Philippines

We're not looking for trouble: Marcos

'Manila will defend water against China'

MANILA, Philippines, Oct 1, (AP): The Philippine president said recently that his country does not want a confrontation but will staunchly defend its waters after its coast guard dismantled a floating barrier placed by China at a disputed shoal in the South China Sea.

It was the first time President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has spoken publicly against China's installation of the 300-meter (980-foot)-long barrier at the entrance to Scarborough Shoal which was dismantled at his order.

"We're not looking for trouble, but what we'll do is to continue defending the maritime territory of the Philippines and the rights of our fishermen, who have been fishing in those areas for hundreds of years," Marcos said in response to a question at a news briefing in southern Surigao del Norte province.

The latest flare-up between China and the Philippines in the South China Sea, one of the world's busiest trade routes, comes after Marcos decided earlier this year to allow an expansion of the US military presence in the Philippines under a 2014 defense pact.

The prospect of more American forces in local military camps in the northern Philippines across from Taiwan and southern China alarmed and infuriated Beijing.

After the Philippine coast guard dismantled the rope and net barrier at the mouth of Scarborough Shoal, Filipino fishing boats entered the shallow lagoon and caught about 164 tons of fish in one day, Marcos said.

"That's what our fishermen lose, so there should not be a barrier there, and it's clear the area is within the Philippines," he said. "Our fishermen have been fishing in those areas for hundreds of years so I can't understand why that has changed."

A Philippine surveillance aircraft deployed recently spotted two Chinese coast guard vessels closely guarding the shoal's entrance, making it still difficult for Filipino fishermen to gain en-

try into the fishing lagoon, Philippine coast guard spokesman Commodore Jay Tarrila said during a news conference.

Amid China's effort to play down the Philippine coast guard's disabling of the barrier, Tarrila showed journalists one of two metal anchors he said Filipino coast guard personnel removed recently from Scarborough's entrance to knock the barrier down.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said at a news briefing in Beijing recently that the shoal "is China's inherent territory."

"What the Philippines (has) done is nothing but a farce that entertains itself. China will continue to safeguard the territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests of Huangyan Island," he said, using the Chinese name for Scarborough.

Ties

Although Marcos has tried to nurture normal ties with China, the long-simmering territorial disputes have put the Asian neighbors on a potential collision course, with the Philippine leader vowing his country would not yield even "an inch" of territory in the strategic waterway.

Marcos's more confrontational stance contrasts with that of his predecessor, Rodrigo Duterte, who nurtured cozy ties with China and Russia while often criticizing U.S. and Western security policies.

Under Marcos, who took office last year, the Philippines has intensified its efforts to fight China's increasingly aggressive actions in one of the world's most hotly contested waters. The Philippine coast guard often invites journalists to join its patrols in an effort to expose what it calls Chinese bullying in the busy waterway.

In addition to China and the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan are also involved in the territorial conflicts in the South China Sea, which has long been regarded as a po-

tential Asian flashpoint and a delicate fault line in the US-China rivalry in the region.

Washington lays no claim to the sea passageway but US Navy ships and fighter jets have carried out patrols for decades to challenge China's expansive claims and promote freedom of navigation and overflight. It has warned that it's obligated to defend the Philippines under a 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty if Filipino forces, ships and aircraft come under attack, including in the South China Sea.

Aside from China and the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan are also involved in the long-simmering territorial conflicts in the South China Sea. They which have long been regarded as a potential Asian flashpoint and a delicate fault line in the US-China rivalry in the region.

Washington lays no claim to the sea passageway, a major global trade route, but US Navy ships and fighter jets have carried out patrols for decades to challenge China's expansive claims and promote freedom of navigation and overflight. China has told the US to stop meddling in what it says is a purely Asian dispute.

Carlos said the Philippine military would comply with Marcos's order to ensure that the marooned and crumbling navy ship, which Filipino forces use as a territorial outpost at Second Thomas Shoal "should remain there, strong enough to be able to fly the Philippine flag." China has asked the Philippines to tow away the ship from the shoal. But Marcos and the Philippine military have insisted the offshore region lies in their country's exclusive economic zone.

Chinese coast guard ships have repeatedly tried to block Philippine resupply vessels, resulting in near-collisions.

Washington has said it's obligated to defend the Philippines, its oldest treaty ally in Asia, if Filipino forces, ships and aircraft come under attack, including in the South China Sea.



A road is inundated with water from the swollen river Yamuna in New Delhi, India, July 15, 2023. The devastation of this year's monsoon season in India, which runs from June to September, has been significant. (AP)



Steiner



Prakash

Subcontinent

India monsoon season devastating: Sanjay Chauhan witnessed monsoon rains lash down over his home and farm in the Indian Himalayas this year with a magnitude and intensity he's never experienced before.

"Buildings have collapsed, roads are broken, there were so many landslides including one that has destroyed a large part of my orchard," said the 56-year-old farmer, who lives in the town of Shimla in Himachal Pradesh. "I have not seen anything like this."

The devastation of this year's monsoon season in India, which runs from June to September, has been significant: Local government estimates say that 428 people have died and Himachal Pradesh suffered over \$1.42 billion worth in property damage since June.

Human-caused climate change is making rain more extreme in the region and scientists warn Himalayan states should expect more unpredictable and heavy seasons like this one. But the damage is also exacerbated by developers paying little mind to environmental regulations and building codes when building on flood- and earthquake-prone land, local experts and environmentalists say.

Damages to property in Himachal Pradesh this year were more than the last five years combined. Other regions also suffered heavy losses in terms of lives, property and farmland - including the neighboring state of Uttarakhand, Delhi and most northern and western Indian states.

In the second week of July, 224.1 millimeters (8.82 inches) of rainfall descended on the state instead of the usual 42.2 millimeters (1.66 inches) for this time of the year - a 431% increase - according to the Indian Meteorological Department. Then for five days in August, 111.9 millimeters (4.41 inches) poured down on Himachal Pradesh, 168% more than the 41.7 millimeters (1.64 inches) it would typically receive in that timeframe.

The rainfall spurred hundreds of landslides, with overflowing rivers sweeping vehicles away and collapsing multiple buildings, many of them recently constructed hotels. Key highways were submerged or destroyed and all schools in the region were shut. Around 300 tourists stranded near the high altitude lake of Chandratal had to be airlifted to safety by the Indian Air Force.

Jakob Steiner, a climate scientist with the International Center for Integrated Mountain Development, said rising global temperatures from human-caused climate change means more water evaporates in the heat which is then dumped in heavy rainfall events. And when all the water pours in one place, it means other regions are starved of rain.



People walk near a high-speed train during a test ride at Halim station in Jakarta, Indonesia, on Sept. 18, 2023. Indonesia is launching Southeast Asia's first high-speed railway, a key project under China's Belt and Road infrastructure initiative that will cut travel time between the capital and another major city from the current three hours to about 40 minutes. (AP)

adapt or fix the damage in between. (AP)



Bus accident kills 8 in Tamil: At least eight people were killed and dozens of others were injured on Saturday after a bus fell into a gorge in South Indian state of Tamil Nadu.

The Press Trust of India said quoting local police that eight people were killed and around forty others were injured after the tourist bus they were travelling in fell into a 100-foot gorge in the hilly district of the Nilgiris.

Four women and a minor were among the killed. The victims were returning to

their home town in Kadayam of Tenkasi district after visiting the tourist town of Ooty when the incident happened.

The injured have been taken to a nearby hospital amid fears that the number of dead may rise as conditions of several injured are said to be critical. (KUNA)



Pak Taliban attack police post: Pakistani Taliban fighters attacked a police post in eastern Punjab province early Sunday, killing one officer and injuring three others, and triggering a shootout that killed two of the attackers, officials said.

The attack occurred in the Mianwali district of Punjab province and led to an intense exchange of fire as reinforcements arrived at the besieged police post, said Imran Nawaz, a spokesman for the counterterrorism police.

A group of 10 to 12 militants attacked the Kundal police post in the Easa Khel area of Mianwali, close to the northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, after midnight, Nawaz said. The exchange of gunfire continued for hours, during which two of the attackers were killed and a third was wounded but escaped with the others, Nawaz said. A search operation was underway in the area to find the attackers, he said.

Mohammad Khurasani, a spokesman for Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, or TTP, claimed responsibility for the attack.

The Pakistani Taliban are a separate group but are allied with the Afghan Taliban, who took over Afghanistan in August 2021 following the withdrawal of US and NATO forces from the country. The takeover emboldened the TTP, who often carry out attacks near the Afghan border and elsewhere in the country. (AP)



Aldanah – Winner Announcement

Gulf Bank announces the 10 Winners of Aldanah Monthly Draw

The last chance to deposit and qualify for the KD 2 million grand draw is November 30, 2023. As part of its ongoing commitment to reward its customers, Gulf Bank has announced the 10 monthly winners of the Aldanah account draw for the month of September 2023. The lucky winners who will be taking home a prize of KD 1,000 each, are:

- Amrou Mohamed El-Zoghby El-Gemizy
- Shahraban Abdulaziz Jassem Sadeq
- Fadelah Mubarak Al-Abdan
- Omar Ibrahim Omar Abdulla
- Ahmed Azeez Husine Athemi (Minor)

- Maryam Mohammed Ahmed Al-Kandari
- Rosmari De Valle Usta Rodriguez
- Amani Ramdhan Ali Mousa
- Shaikha Hamad Al-Jari
- Zainab Jaber Abbas Hasan Ali

The last opportunity to deposit and qualify for the grand draw prize of KD 2 million, is November 30, 2023, which is set to happen on January 18, 2024, in the presence of representatives from both the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Ernst & Young.

The Aldanah account is one of the most rewarding savings accounts in Kuwait, with its

periodic draws that award valuable prizes and multiple benefits for account holders. Gulf Bank's Aldanah account offers monthly opportunities to win KD 1,000 to ten lucky winners, in addition to two quarterly draws with KD 100,000 prizes each, a semi-annual draw prize of KD 1 million and a grand draw prize of KD 2 million.

Gulf Bank's Aldanah account is the only account in Kuwait, that rewards customers for their loyalty by providing loyalty chances, and transfers your chances of winning from the previous year to the next year, as part of a program that rewards customers for their loyalty to Gulf Bank.

Market Movements

01-10-2023

UAE	DFM	Change	Closing pts	JAPAN	Nikkei	Change	Closing pts
▲		+0.52	4,163.58	-	-0.05	-0.05	31,872.62
				▼	-0.34	-0.34	46,252.02
					-1.01	-1.01	6,321.24
					-0.14	-0.14	11,040.17

Business

Eurozone inflation falls to two-year low

Consumer confidence in the US falls again in September

By National Bank of Kuwait

United States

Consumer Confidence Falls
Consumer confidence in the United States fell again in September, with the Conference Board index coming in at 103.00 from 108.7 previously. The drop in consumer sentiment comes amid elevated energy prices as well as a crisis regarding governmental funding that was averted in the last second with a stopgap bill. Within the index, present situation actually improved despite higher energy costs coming in at 147.1 from 146.7 previously. However, there was a noticeable drop in the consumer expectations portion, which declined to 73.7 from 83.3, indicating the level of worry regarding the near-term future.

GDP Figure Matches Expectations

Gross Domestic Product in the United States grew at an annual rate of 2.1% in the second quarter meeting market expectations. Despite the final figure remaining the same, consumer spending was revised downwards while non-resident fixed investments, exports, and inventory investment were revised higher.

Unemployment Claims Near Year to Date Lows

Unemployment claims in the United States rose to 204,000 from 202,000 previously but came in better than expected and remains resilient against high interest rates. Last week's print was the lowest since January while current numbers also indicate that the labor market remains historically tight. The Fed have continuously lamented that the labor market was contributing to upwards pressure in inflation, and more readings like this are likely to reinforce expectations made the majority of Fed voting members that an additional rate hike is needed by year-end to combat inflation.

PCE Inflation Softer than Expected

Headline PCE inflation came in at 3.5% from 3.4% previously with the monthly figure rising to 0.4% versus 0.2% on the back of higher energy prices. Core PCE, which excludes energy and food, fell to 3.9% from 4.3% previously and to 0.1% versus 0.2% on a monthly basis. Furthermore, consumer spending drastically fell to 0.4% from 0.9% previously as student loan repayments resume in October. Core PCE has been the Fed's preferred gauge for inflation and monetary policy decisions, and the drop

- US CB consumer confidence falls to 103.00 from 108.7 previously.
- US GDP grows as expected at 2.1% for the second quarter.
- Unemployment claims in the US near YTD lows at 204,000.
- US headline PCE at 3.5% from 3.4% on rising energy, while core PCE declined to 3.9% from 4.3%.
- Eurozone inflation down at headline (4.3%) and core (4.5%) levels, lowest in two years.
- Inflation in Australia rises to 5.2% from 4.9% previously.
- Inflation in Japan's capital city falls to 2.8% on a headline basis and 2.5% on a core level.

in numbers is certainly a welcome sign. However, the recent rise in oil prices is expected to add upwards pressure on inflation and could trickle down to services and other measures included in the core report. Markets have dimmed down their bets for a rate hike unlike the majority of Fed committee voters, pricing in no hikes by year-end and anticipating a cut as early as July 2024.

Government Shutdown Averted

President Joe Biden signed a short-term funding bill passed by congress to avoid an imminent shutdown of the government, with the stopgap bill extending the deadline until November 17. The move comes after weeks of disagreement between House Republicans and their counterparts in congress. The bill includes natural disaster aid but no additional funding for Ukraine. Republican House Speaker Kevin McCarthy is facing increased scrutiny by conservatives after supporting the stopgap bill, indicating that the political turmoil in congress regarding a long-term solution is still a problem.

The greenback extended gains over the week, last trading at 106.22

Europe

Eurozone Inflation Falls to Two-Year Low

Annual inflation in the Euro area fell to lows last seen in October 2021, coming in at 4.3% from 5.2% previously, which represents a fall to 0.3% from 0.5% previously

Rates - October 1st, 2023

Currencies	Previous Week Levels				This Week's Expected Range		3-Month Forward
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	
EUR	1.0653	1.0486	1.0655	1.0570	1.0400	1.0700	1.0622
GBP	1.2242	1.2108	1.2271	1.2197	1.2100	1.2400	1.2210
JPY	148.36	148.24	149.72	149.35	146.90	150.00	147.09
CHF	0.9062	0.9058	0.9225	0.9149	0.8900	0.9200	0.9056

on a monthly basis. Furthermore, core inflation, which excludes energy and food, also fell to 4.5% from 5.3% in August. The print comes amid a series of disappointing data in the Eurozone, including contracting PMI figures in both the services and manufacturing sector, as well as a general weakness in consumer demand. The ECB decided to hike interest rates at the last meeting to take rates to 4%, however a weakness in consumer demand and business activities, as well as signals by multiple ECB speakers, have caused markets to price in no further rate hikes. The theme with several key central bank speakers in the Eurozone seems to be "higher for longer" with French central bank Governor Francois Villeroy de Galhau stating that it is still "premature" to talk about rate cuts.

The Euro ended the week in decline, with the EUR/USD currency pair closing at 1.0570.

Asia-Pacific

Inflation in Australia Accelerates

In Australia, the Bureau of Statistics released data showing that the consumer price index (CPI) rose to 5.2% in August 2023, compared to 4.9% the previous month. The rise in CPI was driven by the global spike in prices of oil, as well as a rise in the price of housing which rose by 6.6%. Although the rise was expected, the consumer price index shows an accelerated cost for consumers in various components such as rent which went up 7.8%

from the previous year, as well as rises in the price of transport (+7.4%), food (+4.4%), and insurance and financial services (+8.8%). This has led monetary policy makers to indicate that another rate hike this year could be necessary to combat the increased inflation levels.

The AUD/USD currency pair is up on the week, last seen at 0.6434.

Tokyo Inflation Slows

Inflation in Japan's capital fell to 2.8% versus 2.9% in the previous reading likely adding further support to the BOJ's ultra-loose policy. Furthermore, core inflation that excludes fresh food came in at 2.5% from 2.8% previously beating expectations. New governor Kazuo Ueda has continued the path of his predecessors in supporting and defending historically low interest rates, despite bets at certain points from market participants for a shift in policy. Lower inflation readings continue to vindicate the BOJ's decision to maintain policy even when 10-year JG bonds broke through the upper threshold of the central bank's ceiling forcing them to intervene.

The Japanese Yen continues its weakening trend, with the USD/JPY pair closing at 149.35.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti Dinar
USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30900.

Kuwait's financial 'derivatives' investments soar 13.1% per yr

Kuwait central bank releases data

By Ahmad Fathi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 1: Investments in financial derivatives by local banks in Kuwait experienced a notable trend over the past year. In December 2022, they stood at 10 billion dinars, but by August 2023, they had decreased by 2 percent to 9.928 billion dinars, according to data from the Central Bank of Kuwait.

Interestingly, these investments showed an annual increase of 13.1 percent, reaching 1.131 billion dinars in August 2023, compared to 9.344 billion dinars in the same month of the previous year. However, on a monthly basis, they declined by 2 percent, equivalent to approximately 210.9 million dinars, compared to the 10.3 billion dinars reported at the end of the preceding year in July.

Fluctuations

This trend has been subject to fluctuations throughout the previous year, with investments generally on the rise, but occasional dips. For instance, they climbed from 8.063 billion dinars in December 2021 to 10.934 billion dinars in February 2023, reaching their highest point. Subsequently, they decreased to 10 billion dinars in April, followed by further fluctuations in the subsequent months.

Financial derivatives encompass a range of investment instruments derived from the value of various financial assets, including stocks, bonds, real estate, currencies, and commodities. These instruments can be bought, sold, and traded and include futures contracts, options contracts, and more.

Futures contracts are binding agreements to buy or sell an asset

No checks to striking workers

California governor rejects bill

SACRAMENTO, Oct 1, Calif., (AP): California won't be giving unemployment checks to workers on strike, with Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom vetoing a bill Saturday that had been inspired by high-profile work stoppages in Hollywood and the hotel industry.

Newsom, a Democrat, says he supports workers and often benefits from campaign contributions from labor unions. But he said he vetoed this bill because the fund the state uses to pay unemployment benefits will be nearly \$20 billion in debt by the end of the year.

"Now is not the time to increase costs or incur this sizable debt," Newsom wrote in a veto message.

The fund the state uses to pay unemployment benefits is already more than \$18 billion in debt. That's because the fund ran out of money and had to borrow from the federal government during the pandemic, when Newsom ordered most businesses to close and caused a massive spike in unemployment. The fund was also beset by massive amounts of fraud that cost the state billions of dollars.

at a predetermined price and date. Similarly, options contracts grant the holder the right (but not the obligation) to buy or sell an asset at a specific price on a future date in exchange for a premium.

In recent years, Kuwaiti banks have established special purpose companies in the Cayman Islands to engage in financial derivatives contracts, with approval from the Bank of Kuwait. Regulatory au-

Plus, labor unions said unemployment benefits are good for the economy, allowing workers on strike to still spend money and support local businesses.

"That money is going to corner stores, to restaurants, to caterers, to nail salons, to the small businesses that are also struggling along with workers who are on strike," Sarah Flocks, legislative and strategic campaign director for the California Labor Federation, told lawmakers during a public hearing earlier this month.

The bill would have let workers who were on strike for at least two weeks receive unemployment checks from the state, which can be as much as \$450 per week. Normally, only workers who lost their job through no fault of their own are eligible for those benefits.

Labor unions had argued that the amount of workers on strike for more than two weeks is so small it would not have had a significant impact on the state's unemployment trust fund. Of the 56 strikes in California over the past decade, only two lasted longer than two weeks, according to Democratic state Sen. Anthony Portantino, the author of the bill.

thorities, including the Central Bank of Kuwait and the Capital Markets Authority, have worked together to establish a regulatory framework for derivatives trading, issuing important decisions to regulate the market.

Looking ahead, the Capital Markets Authority is actively pursuing an ambitious strategy to upgrade the Kuwaiti market to an "advanced emerging" status with the

The legislation was an attempt by Democratic state lawmakers to support Southern California hotel workers and Hollywood actors and writers who have been on strike for much of this year. The writers strike ended Sept. 26, but the other two are ongoing - meaning many workers have gone months without pay.

Beyond the debt, the Newsom administration has said the fund is not collecting enough money to pay all of the benefits owed. The money comes from a tax businesses must pay on each worker. But that tax only applies to the first \$7,000 of workers' wages, a figure that has not changed since 1984 and is the lowest amount allowed under federal law.

Meanwhile, unemployment benefits have increased. The Newsom administration has predicted benefit payments will exceed tax collections by \$1.1 billion this year. It's the first time this has happened during a period of job growth, according to the nonpartisan Legislative Analyst's Office.

Lawmakers could attempt to pass the law anyway, but it's been decades since a governor's veto was overruled in California.

FTSE Russell index. This strategy includes expanding the offering of financial products and services such as bonds, sukuk, exchange-traded funds, and financial derivatives. These initiatives aim to enhance the attractiveness of the local stock market to both foreign and domestic investors, positioning Kuwait as a competitive regional financial and commercial center in the Gulf region.

iPhone 15 too hot to handle

Apple says it will fix software 'problems'

CUPERTINO, Calif., Oct 1, (AP): Apple is blaming a software bug and other issues tied to popular apps such as Instagram and Uber for causing its recently released iPhone 15 models to heat up and spark complaints about becoming too hot to handle.

The Cupertino, California, company said Saturday that it is working on an update to the iOS17 system that powers the iPhone 15 lineup to prevent the devices from becoming uncomfortably hot and is working with apps that are running in ways "causing them to overload the system."

Instagram, owned by Meta Platforms, modified its social media app earlier this week to prevent it from heating up the device on the latest iPhone operating system.

Uber and other apps such as the video game Asphalt 9 are still in the process of rolling out their updates, Apple said. It didn't specify a timeline for when its own software fix would be issued but said no safety issues should prevent iPhone 15 owners from using their devices while awaiting the update.

"We have identified a few conditions which can cause iPhone to run warmer than expected," Apple in a short statement provided to The Associated Press after media reports detailed overheating complaints that are peppering online message boards.

The Wall Street Journal amplified the worries in a story citing the overheating problem in its own testing of the new iPhones, which went on sale a week ago.

It's not unusual for new iPhones to get uncomfortably warm during the first few days of use or when they are being restored with backup informa-

tion stored in the cloud - issues that Apple already flags for users. The devices also can get hot when using apps such as video games and augmented reality technology that require a lot of processing power, but the heating issues with the iPhone 15 models have gone beyond those typical situations.

In its acknowledgement, Apple stressed that the trouble isn't related to the sleek titanium casing that houses the high-end iPhone 15 Pro and iPhone 15 Pro Max instead of the stainless steel used on older smartphones.

Apple also dismissed speculation that the overheating problem in the new models might be tied to a shift from its proprietary Lightning charging cable to the more widely used USB-C port that allowed it to comply with a mandate issued by European regulators.

Although Apple expressed confidence that the overheating issue can be quickly fixed with the upcoming software updates, the problem still could dampen sales of its marquee product at time when the company has faced three consecutive quarters of year-over-year declines in overall sales.

The downturn has affected iPhone sales, which fell by a combined 4% in the nine months covered by Apple's past three fiscal quarters compared with a year earlier.

Apple is trying to pump up its sales in part by raising the starting price for its top-of-the-line iPhone 15 Pro Max to \$1,200, an increase of \$100, or 9%, from last year's comparable model.

Investor worries about Apple's uncharacteristic sales funk already have wiped out more than \$300 billion in shareholder wealth since the company's market value closed at \$3 trillion for the first time in late June.



The iPhone 15 phones are shown during an announcement of new products on the Apple campus in Cupertino, Calif., Tuesday, Sept. 12, 2023. Apple on Saturday, Sept. 30, blamed a software bug and some other issues tied to popular apps such as Instagram and Uber for causing its recently released iPhone 15 models to overheat and sparking complaints about being too hot to handle. (AP)

INVESTMENT STRATEGY & RESEARCH

KAMCO INVEST

GCC Markets Monthly Report September 2023

GCC markets slide once again on global cues; wipes YTD gains...

GCC equity markets declined for the second consecutive month in September-2023 taking cues from the decline in global equity markets. The global decline was led by investor fears that rates would remain higher for longer as inflation and the economy remain too strong for the central banks to cut rates. All key indices ie. the MSCI World Index, the S&P 500 and the MSCI GCC index were down during the month and during Q3-2023. Regional performance also showed declines in almost all key global markets during September-2023 barring the UK which clocked a gain of 2.3%.

The MSCI World index witnessed the biggest decline in 12 months while the US gauge witnessed the biggest decline this year led by a sharp fall in Technology stocks mainly due to higher interest rates. Meanwhile, crude oil witnessed a gain of almost 10% during the month mainly backed by production cuts. The MSCI GCC index witnessed a 2.7% decline this month, that wiped off gains since the start of the year. The YTD decline now stands at 3.0%. The decline in the GCC was broad-based with only Dubai and Qatari markets seeing gains this month while the rest of the markets declined. Saudi Arabia's TASI was the biggest monthly decliner with a fall of 3.8% followed by Oman and Kuwait with declines of 2.5% and 1.7%, respectively. However, in terms of YTD-2023 performance, Dubai continues to boast healthy gains of 24.8% followed by Saudi Arabia and Bahrain with gains of 5.5% and 2.3%, respectively. The rest of the markets in the GCC were in the red.

In terms of sector performance, most of the GCC indices were in the red during September -2023, including Banks that dropped by 3.8%. On the other hand, gainers were few but included Real Estate and Energy with gains of 2.4% and 1.6%, respectively.

Boursa Kuwait

Boursa Kuwait closed September-2023 with a monthly decline of 1.7% at 6,886.7 points led by consistent declines during the month. The decline was mainly led by large-cap stocks including Banks with the corresponding index reporting decline this month. In terms of market segments, the Premier Market Index witnessed the biggest monthly decline of 2.3% during September-2023 as the performance of most of the constituent stocks in the index declined. The Main 50 Index and the Main Market Index reported monthly gains of 1.3% and 0.4%, respectively. The monthly decline affected YTD-2023 performance of the market with the All-Share Index now showing the biggest decline in the GCC at -5.6% by the end of September-2023. The Premier Market index declined by 7.3% since the start of the year, whereas the Main 50 Index receded 0.2% vs. 2.2% gain for the Main Market Index.

The sector performance chart highlighted the negative trends in the market with all the sectors witnessing declines during the month. The Basic Materials Index dropped the most by 5.4% led by decline of most of the stocks in the sector. Shares of Boubyan Petrochemicals Co. dropped 6.4% while Al Kout for Industrial Projects Co. dropped by 4.9%. The Technology index was the second biggest decliner at -4.5% followed by Utilities with a decline of 4.1%. Large-cap indices like Banking and Telecom also witnessed declines during the month. The Telecom index declined by 2.9% reflecting decline in 2 out of 4 constituent stocks with Zain leading the decline with a drop of 4.5%.

In terms of monthly stock performance, IFA Hotels & Resorts Co. topped the chart with a gain of 80.1% followed by Sanam Real Estate Co. and Coast Investment & Development Co. with gains of 47.9% and 42.7%, respectively. On the decliners' side, Warba Capital Holding Co. topped with a fall of 57.7% followed by First Dubai for Real Estate Development and Wethaq Takaful Insurance Co. with declines of 27.7% and 24.1% respectively. Trading activity declined during the month with monthly volume declining by 7.9% to reach 3.4 Bn shares as compared to 3.7 Bn shares during the previous month, while monthly value traded declined by 3.0% to KWD 772.5 Mn as compared to KWD 796.8 Mn during August-2023.

In economic developments, the Central Bank of Kuwait announced that it would publish monthly PMI figures for the Kuwaiti economy that would highlight the real development of economic activities in Kuwait. In another news, the Kuwaiti Cabinet approved the Fourth Kuwait Master Plan 2040. The plan includes focusing on four regions in Kuwait that would accommodate a population of more than 7.25 million people. The plan embodies Kuwait's vision and development goals in urban, economic, social, and environmental policies, to meet the projected population growth.

Saudi Arabia (Tadawul)

Saudi Arabia's headline equity index TASI reported monthly decline during September-2023. The index peaked at a closing high of 11,491.20 points during the first week of the month but mostly trended downward during the rest of the month to close with a decline of 3.8% at 11,056.0 points. Despite the decline, Saudi Arabia ranks second in the GCC in terms of YTD-2023 performance with a gain of 5.5%. The month also saw the listing of the Lumi Rental in the Transportation sector.

The month also saw the Saudi exchange launching four new indices. The new benchmarks are based on company size and IPO performance. According to the exchange, the Size Indices, Tadawul Large, Tadawul Medium and Tadawul Small, reflect the market's composition. Currently large companies account for 70% of the free float market cap while medium and small-sized companies account for 20% and 10% respectively. The fourth index, Tadawul IPO, is designed to track the performance of companies listed on the exchange's main market within the last five years.

The monthly sector performance chart favored decliners during September-2023. The Software & Services sector witnessed the steepest decline of 9.0% followed by the Consumer Services and Transportation indices with declines of 8.7% and 7.0%, respectively. The gainers side was led by the Insurance index with a gain of 2.8% followed by Energy with a marginal gain of 0.4%. Gains for the Insurance sector was led by the double-digit gain of 40.1% in shares of Al Sagr Cooperative Insurance Co. and 25.9% gain in shares of Salama Cooperative Insurance Co. In the Energy sector, Shares of Aramco gained by 0.3% during the month. Meanwhile, large-cap sectors like Bank and Telecom reported monthly declines of 6.5% and 4.0%, respectively. In the Telecom sector, three out of four stocks declined with Saudi Telecom Co. leading with a decline of 5.5%, whereas, Etihad Atheeb Telecommunication Co. reported a gain of 12.5%.

The monthly gainer's chart was topped by Al Sagr Cooperative Insurance Co. with a gain of 40.1%. Filing and Packaging Materials Manufacturing Co. was next on the monthly gainers chart with a gain of 30.1% followed by the Salama Cooperative Insurance Co. with gain of 25.9%. On the decliner's side, National Company for Learning and Education topped with a decline of 17.2% followed by Dar Alarkan Real Estate Development Co. and Al Moammar Information Systems Co. with declines of 15.4% and 14.9%, respectively.

Trading activity on the exchange witnessed a m-o-m decline. Monthly volume of shares traded dropped by 23.2% m-o-m in September-2023 to reach 3.7 Bn shares as compared to 4.9 Bn shares during August-2023. Value of shares traded during the month declined by 13.3% to reach SAR 108.4 Mn during August -2023 as compared to SAR 125.0 Mn during August -2023. Saudi Arabian Oil Co. topped the monthly volume chart with 321.8 Mn shares followed by Al-

GCC Equity Markets	Index Closing	MTD Chg%	YTD Chg%	M-Cap (USD Bn)	Monthly Val Traded (USD M n)	P/E (x) TTM	P/B (x) TTM	Div. Yield
Kuwait - Premier Market Index	7,520.8	(2.3%)	(7.3%)	135.3	2,557.0	13.4	0.8	3.1%
Kuwait - Main 50 Index	5,710.1	1.3%	(0.2%)					
Kuwait - Main Market Index	5,717.4	0.4%	2.2%					
Kuwait - All Share Index	6,886.7	(1.7%)	(5.6%)					
Saudi Arabia	11,056.0	(3.8%)	5.5%	3,042.9	28,896.9	18.5	2.1	3.4%
Abu Dhabi	9,785.3	(0.3%)	(4.2%)	793.0	5,327.5	31.7	3.0	1.6%
Dubai	4,163.6	2.0%	24.8%	188.8	2,572.2	9.5	1.4	4.5%
Qatar	10,252.0	0.6%	(4.0%)	165.8	2,975.7	12.8	1.4	4.8%
Bahrain	1,939.1	(0.7%)	2.3%	83.8	27.7	7.3	0.7	8.6%
Oman	4,678.1	(2.5%)	(3.7%)	22.0	126.5	12.9	0.9	4.7%
Total GCC				4,431.7	42,483.6	18.2	2.0	3.3%

Monthly Indicators	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23
Premier Market Index	6,190.9	6,491.9	6,115.7	6,065.4	6,069.8	7,821.7	7,912.5	7,494.7	7,009.3	6,060.9	7,695.2	7,520.8
Monthly % Change	3.0%	-3.7%	(4.4%)	(0.4%)	(0.2%)	(3.1%)	1.2%	(5.3%)	4.2%	3.2%	(4.5%)	(2.3%)
Main 50 Index	5,648.8	5,829.7	5,719.0	5,725.5	5,703.1	5,593.1	5,644.1	5,365.8	5,375.0	5,574.1	5,634.2	5,710.1
Monthly % Change	2.5%	3.2%	(1.9%)	0.1%	(0.4%)	(1.9%)	0.9%	(4.9%)	0.2%	3.7%	1.1%	1.3%
Main Market Index	5,489.6	5,681.3	5,596.8	5,623.4	5,548.7	5,500.8	5,466.4	5,440.8	5,463.6	5,630.1	5,692.6	5,717.4
Monthly % Change	2.8%	3.5%	(1.5%)	0.5%	(1.3%)	(0.9%)	1.9%	(3.0%)	0.4%	3.0%	1.1%	0.4%
All Share Market Index	7,318.4	7,584.6	7,292.1	7,277.3	7,244.4	7,050.8	7,142.5	6,796.8	6,709.8	7,253.8	7,005.8	6,886.7
Monthly % Change	3.0%	3.6%	(3.9%)	(0.2%)	(0.5%)	(2.7%)	1.3%	(4.8%)	3.4%	3.2%	(3.4%)	(1.7%)
Market Cap (KWD Mn)	46,882	48,663	46,745	46,706	46,423	45,130	43,989	40,228	41,615	42,939	41,580	40,877
P/E (X) - TTM	16.34	20.39	19.66	17.99	17.94	16.72	14.10	13.10	13.41	13.85	13.30	13.40
P/BV (X) - TTM	1.66	1.74	1.67	1.67	1.66	1.09	0.80	0.79	0.82	0.85	0.80	0.80
Dividend Yield (%)	2.86%	2.71%	2.83%	3.45%	3.46%	3.59%	2.76%	2.97%	2.88%	3.01%	3.10%	3.10%
Volume (Mn Shares)	3,771.0	4,763.3	2,926.4	3,668.5	2,297.8	2,553.4	2,131.3	2,986.1	3,444.8	4,354.4	3,706.0	3,412.4
Value (KWD Mn)	1,291.8	1,176.1	764.5	1,052.2	699.7	889.3	643.9	941.2	815.9	904.8	796.8	772.5
Trades ('000)	237.6	232.6	159.1	211.6	153.1	181.3	151.3	209.3	169.7	218.3	228.0	204.8

Monthly Indicators	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23
Tadawul All Share Index	11,667.8	10,896.9	10,478.5	10,792.9	10,102.7	10,590.1	11,307.8	11,014.1	11,459.0	11,692.2	11,491.2	11,056.0
Monthly % Change	2.3%	(6.8%)	(3.8%)	3.0%	(6.4%)	4.8%	6.8%	(2.6%)	4.0%	2.0%	(1.7%)	(3.8%)
Market Cap (SAR Bn)	10,731.1	10,216.8	9,867.1	10,148.5	9,721.6	9,985.1	11,033.4	10,584.4	10,907.8	11,012.6	11,517.5	11,411.4
P/E (X) - TTM	18.63	16.89	16.24	17.26	16.14	16.55	17.73	17.24	17.25	18.10	19.24	18.49
P/BV (X) - TTM	2.39	2.20	2.11	2.22	2.08	2.18	2.25	2.14	2.14	2.25	2.21	2.11
Dividend Yield (%)	2.47%	2.64%	2.73%	2.68%	2.88%	3.12%	2.93%	3.01%	3.06%	2.89%	3.21%	3.40%
Volume (Mn Shares)	3,156.1	2,621.9	3,673.4	3,299.2	2,930.4	3,760.8	3,099.6	4,676.5	4,073.2	6,021.0	4,859.6	3,734.3
Value (SAR Mn)	116,297.7	103,896.0	82,813	89,620	73,814	106,090	88,907	136,000	100,090	141,125	125,035	108,368
Trades ('000)	6,782	6,585	6,628	6,771	5,809	7,514	5,856	8,977	6,725	9,125	8,457	7,869

Monthly Indicators	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23
ADX General Index	10,412.25	10,552.37	10,211.09	9,811.56	9,844.81	9,430.25	9,789.17	9,406.57	9,550.40	9,787.13	9,810.21	9,785.32
Monthly % Change	6.8%	1.3%	(3.2%)	(3.9%)	0.3%	(4.2%)	3.8%	(3.9%)	1.5%	2.5%	0.2%	(0.3%)
Market Cap (AED Bn)	2,379.1	2,615.3	2,580.3	2,493.5	2,448.9	2,685.9	2,678.3	2,624.4	2,638.7	2,776.8	2,832.9	2,912.7
P/E (X) - TTM	19.31	18.88	18.22	26.63	23.01	22.32	29.93	28.77	28.77	32.82	32.35	31.74
P/BV (X) - TTM	2.99	3.00	2.90	2.80	3.33	2.45	2.65	2.54	2.54	3.00	3.02	3.00
Dividend Yield (%)	1.99%	1.97%	2.01%	2.09%	2.08%	1.86%	1.82%	1.90%	1.90%	1.72%	1.72%	1.63%
Volume (Mn Shares)	4,780.1	6,865.8	5,680.1	3,990.1	3,934.7	4,062.4	3,269.2	5,621.0	3,312.7	5,212.1	5,424.5	3,510.7
Value (AED Mn)	24,906.3	35,546.9	53,204.2	29,876.6	27,889.6	35,303.9	18,004.7	26,064.4	16,766.5	20,204.5	23,330.3	19,568.5
Trades	229,906	337,251	242,687	255,722	221,695	245,883	178,525	281,925	221,814	261,173	323,303	248,338

Baha Investment and Development Co. and Tourism Enterprise Co. with 251.5 Mn shares and 153.8 Mn shares traded, respectively. On the monthly value traded chart, Saudi Arabian Oil Co. topped with SAR 11.0 Bn worth of shares traded during the month followed by Al Rajhi Bank and Etihad Atheeb Telecommunication Co. with trades worth SAR 5.04 Bn and SAR 4.97 Bn during the month, respectively.

Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange

The FTSE ADX index dipped 0.3% during September-2023, closing the month at 9,785.32 points and recording its first monthly decline after three consecutive months of gains. In terms of sectoral indices, six out of ten sectors recorded growth during the month while the remaining four recorded declines. On the gainers' side, the Real Estate index witnessed the biggest monthly gain registering 7.1% growth to close the month at 8,766.7 points mainly due to Sharjah Group Company's 67.8% share jump. The Healthcare index followed with a 5% index gain to close the month at 3,790.0 after two out of the three companies in the sector recorded monthly gains that included Gulf Medical Projects (7.34%) and Burjeel Holdings (6.4%). On the decliners' side, the Consumer Staples index led the way with a 6.8% slide during the month to close the month at 9,738.0 points followed by the Consumer Discretionary index which witnessed a 2.2% fall during September-2023. Agthia Group's 7.9% share price decline and Foodco Holding's 4.3% share price drop during September-2023 dragged the Consumer Staples index into the red during the month.

In terms of monthly stock performance, Aram Group formerly known as Sharjah Group topped the monthly gainers chart for September-2023 with a gain of 67.8% followed by Al Dar Properties Co and Abu Dhabi Islamic Bank which recorded gains of 9.5% and 8.1%, respectively. On the decliner's side, Umm Al Qaiwain General Investments Co lead the way registering 19.2% fall in its share price during September-2023 followed by Ooredoo and Hayah Insurance which saw share price declines of 13.0% and 12.5%, respectively.

Trading activity declined m-o-m during September-2023 after recording two consecutive monthly increases during August-2023 and July-2023. Total volume of shares traded dropped by 35.3% in September-2023 to reach 3.5 Bn as compared to 5.4 Bn in August-2023. Similarly, total value of traded declined by 16.1% to reach AED 19.6 Bn. Multiply Group topped the list of the most active stocks table during the month with 608.4 Mn traded shares followed by Dana Gas Co and Eshraq Investments which traded 280.3 Mn shares and 243.8 Mn shares, respectively. In terms of value traded, IHC topped the table for the eighth month in a row with AED 4.4 Bn worth of shares changing hands during the month followed by Multiply Group and Alpha Dhabi Holding at AED 2.4 Bn and AED 2.3 Bn, respectively.

In economic news, according to S&P, the UAE economy is expected to grow by 3% in 2023 followed by 4% growth in 2024 driven mainly by the Emirates' non-oil sector. The agency specifically underlined the importance of the UAE's travel and hospitality industries as one of the main drivers of the Emirates economic growth. Moreover, the report added that the UAE economy is expected to benefit from government programs as well as technological innovations. The Emirates government has already undertaken significant initiatives such as legislating 100% direct foreign ownership in over 1000 commercial and industrial activities as well as new travel and residency decrees to attract skilled professionals and tourists to the UAE such as the Golden Residence Visa and the Green Residence Visa. In terms of the Emirates financial industry, the S&P highlighted that rising interest rates are expected to maintain and improve the UAE's Banking sector's profitability to pre-pandemic levels during 2023 and 2024.

Dubai Financial Market

The DFM General Index witnessed a monthly gain of 2.0% during September-2023 to close at 4,163.58 points registering its sixth consecutive monthly gain. Monthly index performance was skewed to the gainers during the month after five out of eight indices witnessed gains during September-2023 while the remaining three indices saw declines that partially offset the overall growth during the month. The Real Estate Index recorded the biggest monthly gain registering 8.6% growth to close the month at 7,457.1 points mainly driven by Emaar Properties nearly 13.9% price gain during September-2023. The Financial index followed as the second largest gainer during the month with 2.4% growth after several of the sector's biggest weighted companies witnessed significant gains during the month. This included shares of Emirates NBD (8.9%), Dubai Islamic Bank (3.7%) and National General Insurance (8.9%). The Consumer Sta-

plex index witnessed the biggest monthly decline recording 9.9% drop to close the month at 138.1 points. Share price declines of Emirates Refreshment's (-9.9%) and Union Coop (-5%) were dragged down the index during September-2023. The Consumer Discretionary index followed with 4.8% drop to close the month at 1,503.8 points.

According to monthly stock performance from Bloomberg, Emaar Properties topped the monthly gainers table with 13.9% increase in share price followed by Emirates NBD and National General Insurance with gains of 8.9% each, respectively. On the decliner's side, Emirates Islamic Bank topped the table recording a share price decline of 18.9% during the month followed by Aramex and Dubai Islamic Insurance Co. with share price declines of 15.4% and 14.6%, respectively.

Trading activity in the DFM declined during September-2023. Total volume traded fell by 51.2% to reach 2.6 Bn shares as compared to 5.3 Bn shares during August-2023. The total value of shares traded during the month also witnessed a 4.3% dip to reach AED 9.4 Bn in September-2023 as compared to AED 9.9 Bn during August-2023. Union Properties topped the monthly volumes traded chart for the third month running recording 332 Mn shares which changed hands during the month followed by Emaar Properties and Ajman Bank which saw 318.1 Mn and 236.9 Mn of their shares change hands during the month, respectively. On the monthly value traded chart, Emirates NBD topped the list with AED 2.8 Bn worth of shares changing hands during the month, followed by Emaar Properties and Dubai Islamic Bank which saw AED 2.4 Bn and AED 692.6 Mn value of their shares traded, respectively.

In economic news, according to the Public Debt Management Office, Dubai's public debt is poised to be cut down by USD 7.9 Bn (AED 29 Bn) by the end of 2023. The Emirates' debt reduction includes AED 20 Bn loan that Dubai took from Abu Dhabi and the UAE Central Bank at the height of the financial crisis back in 2008. Furthermore, other significant loan settlements include bilateral and syndicated loans of AED 5.2 Bn and the redemption of AED 3.3 Bn of Islamic bonds. On the other hand, Dubai's Real Estate Sector continues to improve underpinning the Emirate's overall economic growth. Dubai's apartment values increased by the most in nearly a decade during August extending Dubai's property rally. According to CBRE, prices for apartments jumped an average of 20% year-to-date since August-2023 recording the best performance since November-2014.

Qatar Exchange

After reporting losses during the previous month, the Qatar Stock Exchange recorded a marginal gain during September -2023. The QE 20 index closed the month at 10,252.0 points witnessing a gain of 0.6%, in-line with gains in the Qatar All Share Index that reported at 0.6%. In terms of YTD performance, the QE 20 index was down 4.0%, the second biggest decline in the GCC while the All Share index clocked a gain of 0.2%.

The sector performance chart remained mixed during the month. The Insurance sector recorded the biggest monthly gain of 9.9% during September-2023 followed by Industrials and Transportation with gains of 6.2% and 3.1%, respectively. On the other hand, the Real Estate index was the biggest decliner with a decline of 2.6% followed by Banks & Financial Services and Telecom indices with declines of 2.4% and 1.4%, respectively. Gains for the Insurance index was mainly led by shares of Al Khaleej Takaful Group QSC and Qatar Insurance Company which were up by 26.6% and 13.6%, respectively, during the month, while shares of Qatar General Insurance & Reinsurance company declined by 4.8%. The decline of the Banking & Finance index was led by fall in the shares of large-cap banks in the sector including QNB (-1.3%) and Doha Bank (-5.5%). In the Banking sector, seven out of nine stocks reported a decline during the month, whereas Lesha Bank and Masraf Al Rayan reported gains of 3.7% and 0.4%, respectively.

The monthly stock performance chart was topped with Al Khaleej Takaful Group with a gain of 26.6% followed by the Qatar Insurance and Gulf International Services with gains of 13.6% and 11.4%, respectively. On the decliners side, Qatar German for Medical devices topped with a decline of 24.7% followed by Baladna and Dlala Brokerage with declines of 9.6% and 6.2%, respectively. In terms of the trading activity, total volume of shares



CBK Al Najma Account Winner.

Al Tijari names winners of Al Najma Account Weekly & Monthly Draws

Commercial Bank of Kuwait conducted the weekly and monthly draw on Al Najma Account on Sunday October 1, 2023. The draws were conducted in the presence of Ministry of Commerce and Industry representative Mr. Abdulaziz Ashkanani.

The results of the draws were as follows:

1. Najma monthly draw – the prize of 20,000/- Kuwaiti Dinars went to the winner Mr. Rady Girgis Danial Girgis
2. Al Najma weekly draw – the prize of 5,000/- Kuwaiti Dinars went to the winner Mr.

Mohamad Usama Adnan Mreish

The Bank stated that Al Najma Account prizes are distinguished by the highest cash prize and diversity of prizes throughout the year clarifying that the account offers weekly prize of KD 5,000/-, monthly prize of KD 20,000/- and a semi-annual prize of KD 500,000 in addition to the largest prize – linked bank account payout of KD 1,500,000.

Al-Najma Account can be opened by depositing KD 500, and customer should maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 to be eligible to

enter all draws on Al-Najma Account prizes. As for the chances of winning, the more balance a customer maintains in Al Najma Account, the more chances the account holder will get to win, the account also offers additional benefits like the ATM card, a credit card against customer's account and all CBK banking services that customer can enjoy. The Bank revealed that Al Najma account is available to everyone, and anyone can open Al Najma account through CBK mobile application in simple steps from anywhere and at any time.

Zain celebrates Team Kuwait's triumphant return from China



Zain Asian Games Champions Reception 2023.

Company proud of athletes' achievements

Zain, the proud Official Partner of Team Kuwait at the 19th Asian Games in collaboration with the Kuwait Olympic Committee, has joined in celebrating the triumphant return of the nation's champions from China at Kuwait International Airport. Most of the athletes have returned, bringing back home Kuwait's first three medals from Hangzhou.

Among the returning champions were H.E. Minister of Commerce and Industry & Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammed Al Aiban and Public Authority for Sports GM Yousef Al Baidan, who were welcomed by Kuwait

Olympic Committee Board Member and Head of the Sports Committees Committee Sheikh Mubarak Al Faisal Al Nawaf Al Sabah, Chief Corporate Affairs and Relations Officer of Zain Kuwait Waleed Al Khashti, along with Zain officials and guests from the local sports community.

Zain was among the first to welcome the returning champions back home in a joyful atmosphere that was full of national pride. Among the returning athletes was gold medalist Abdullah Al Rashidi (shooting –skeet's men), who was also a silver medalist with Eman Al Shamma (shooting –

skeet mixed team), as well as bronze medalist Yousef Al Shamlan (Fencing – men's sabre individual).

In addition, Kuwait champions Khalid Al Mudaf, Abdulrahman Al Faihan, and Talal Al Rashidi attained the silver medal in shooting (trap team men), to bring up the total tally of medals for Team Kuwait so far to 4 medals (one Gold, two Silvers, and one Bronze). The team still has upcoming competitions in several other sports, and Zain wishes the athletes all the best of luck to bring even more medals back home.

GCC and global markets fall as Fed sees higher rates for longer

S&P GCC composite index down by 2.5% in September

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 1: Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz" released its Monthly Market Review report for the month of September 2023. Kuwait's All Share Total Returns Index witnessed a decline in September, posting a monthly fall of 1.6%. The fall was broad based, with all sectors ending the month in negative territory. The banking sector was relatively resilient, losing 1.1% for the month. Among banking stocks, NBK and KFH fell by 1.5% and 1.6% respectively during the month. Arzan Financial Group for Financing and Investment and Gulf Bank gained the most among Premier market stocks, rising by 13.1% and 4.4% respectively. National Industries Group Holding and Jazeera Airways fell by 11.9% and 11.7% respectively during the month.



GMC CEO Behbehani Adel Behbehani with the bank's team

ABK participates in Auto World Show

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 1: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) successfully participated in the highly anticipated Auto World Show, one of the largest car exhibitions in Kuwait, held from September 26th to October 1st at Kuwait International Fairground. The Bank's participation in the event offered attendees a unique opportunity to explore exclusive banking benefits and offers while indulging in their passion for automobiles.

Car enthusiasts gathered from all over Kuwait to witness the latest trends in the automotive industry and to feast their eyes on a wide range of exceptional vehicles. ABK was keen on capitalizing on this immense gathering of potential customers by providing them with a compelling proposition to avail the Bank's products and services.

Expressing her enthusiasm for participating in the Auto World Show, Johair Marafi, Acting General Manager of Retail Banking at ABK, said, "The Kuwaiti market has recently experienced a significant surge in the demand for new cars, and it was only fitting for ABK to be present at an event that attracts car enthusiasts from all over the country. The event not only allowed us to stay updated with the most recent developments in the sector but also created an exceptional opportunity to connect with our valued customers and cater to their specific financial needs."

Stationed at an eye-catching booth, ABK representatives were readily available to discuss the Bank's latest solutions, ensuring that customers were well-informed about the Bank's innovative offerings tailored to meet their

unique requirements. Marafi further emphasized ABK's unwavering commitment to enhancing its competitive stance within the banking sector and its dedication to providing customers with a seamless and rewarding banking experience. She stated, "At ABK, we consistently strive to introduce worthwhile products and solutions, ensuring that our esteemed customers feel empowered and valued. Participating in high-profile events, such as Auto World Show, allows us to directly engage with our customers, understand their specific needs, and fulfill them in the most effective manner possible."

ABK's presence at Auto World Show is a testament to the Bank's customer-centric approach and unwavering commitment to continuously provide a unique banking experience. As the event concluded, ABK reaffirmed its plan to participate in upcoming activities across various sectors, aiming to further build relationships with cus-



Ms. Johair Marafi

tomers and fulfill their evolving banking requirements. Marafi ended with an invitation to follow the Bank's social media accounts to remain up to date with the latest marketing initiatives and to benefit from the current promotional campaigns and offers throughout the year.

Since its establishment in 1967, ABK has progressed to become one of the leading Kuwaiti banks in the region that offers a wide array of personal, corporate, and private banking products and services. ABK also provides a broad range of local, regional, and global investment solutions and services through its subsidiary, ABK Capital.

Across the region, the Bank offers individuals and corporates the convenience of comprehensive banking and financial services in the Egyptian market through ABK-Egypt's network of 44 branches.

This is in addition to ABK's three branches located in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) in the United Arab Emirates, servicing both Kuwaiti and Emirati individual and corporate clients.

ABK is a strong supporter of Central Bank of Kuwait and Kuwait Banking Association's "Let's Be Aware" awareness campaign. Through its various initiatives, the Bank aims to promote financial inclusion by educating Kuwaiti society about customer rights, responsibilities, and the different types of banking and special needs services. Additionally, ABK consistently provides strategic information on how to avoid banking and financial fraud, loan application requirements, digital services, and more.

equity index posted a marginal gain of 0.6% as relatively attractive valuations drew interest from foreign institutions. Dubai CPI grew by 1.0% y/y in July 2023 compared to 2.05% y/y rise in the previous month, the slowest pace of growth in 17 consecutive months. According to Zawya, Lulu Group International expects to launch its IPO in the first half of 2024, however the size of the IPO is yet to be disclosed. Saudi Arabia's inflation eased to 2% y/y in August, from 2.3% y/y rise in the previous month. The main driver of inflation remained increasing housing rents which rose 10.8% y/y. Saudi Arabia's tourism surplus soared to USD 6.08 billion in Q1 2023, 225% higher than the revenues recorded in Q1 2022.

Developed markets' performance was negative in September with the MSCI World index and S&P 500 indices falling 4.4% and 4.9% respectively. Global markets trended downwards despite the pause in interest rate hikes by the U.S Fed owing to indications of maintaining restrictive monetary policy for a longer period.

KPMG sets up global ESG Academy in collaboration with Microsoft and others

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 1: KPMG has launched the KPMG ESG Academy in collaboration with Microsoft and some of the world's leading universities and institutions. The scalable, turnkey academy leverages the KPMG Learning Enablement and Analytics Platform – a preconfigured platform enabled by Microsoft 365, Azure, Teams and Microsoft Viva Learning that helps to deliver learning directly in the flow of work. It can be offered as a stand-alone virtual learning tool or can be integrated into clients' in-house learning platforms, helping organizations support their ESG initiatives by delivering foundational and advanced learning on a wide range of ESG topics and disciplines.

The Academy course material is structured around the latest business thought leadership in environmental, social and governance (ESG) topics, with content developed by globally recognized ESG specialists from leading universities and institutions, in collaboration with KPMG subject matter professionals in sustainability.

The course content is fully customizable and scalable. Executive-level leadership, mid-management and/or non-management learners can be engaged in the business client's choice of basic-level ESG training, comprehensive ESG training, and/or advanced ESG-focused training in specific topics of interest, such as circularity, reporting and risk. With a powerful combination of business and academic learning, the KPMG ESG Academy delivers both foundational and advanced learning on a range of ESG topics, with the option to focus on specific business sectors and functions.

The KPMG ESG Academy builds on the expanded global alliance between KPMG and Microsoft and investment to accelerate global digital solutions for ESG issues.

Majid Makki, Partner and Head of Technology advisory, KPMG in Kuwait said:

"As business leaders seek to enhance their knowledge of ESG and its changing regulatory landscape for future-proof decision-making, the collaboration between KPMG and Microsoft comes at an ideal time. By combining the technology from Microsoft with the knowledge ecosystem of KPMG, we intend to bring together all the information and insights around ESG onto a single platform.

KPMG and Microsoft share a commitment to innovation and sustainability that drives us to deliver new products and initiatives. I believe the KPMG ESG Academy will empower decision-makers to create positive change."

The KPMG ESG Academy is part of a range of innovative new digital solutions KPMG and Microsoft have launched to support businesses on their ESG journey. Earlier this year, the longstanding global alliance was further strengthened with the release of the KPMG Circularity Tracker – a solution designed to provide even greater depth of ESG understanding for clients – including automated data collection and model-based data calculations using standards, regulatory reporting metrics and universally accepted measurement frameworks for circularity performance.



Ali Abbas



Majid

Ali Abbas, Director and Head of Risk Consulting, added: "While Kuwait is in the initial maturity stages of the ESG landscape, we believe it is the right time for the decision-makers to understand the potential impact of ESG on their businesses. To meet their ESG commitments, companies must gain insights, act, and ultimately transform their businesses. The KPMG ESG Academy, powered by the Microsoft Cloud, provides the knowledge and tools that corporate leaders and their teams need to build more sustainable businesses and tackle the climate change issues of today and tomorrow and support them along their ESG Transformation Journey from Strategy to Implementation."

For more information, visit: www.kpmgesgacademy.com

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'Music brings people together ... it's healing'

Country star Lynch, at an impasse, decides to 'Kill the Cowboy'

LOS ANGELES, Oct 1, (AP): Ahead of his sixth studio album, "Killed the Cowboy," Dustin Lynch sensed some inner conflict.

The 38-year-old country star had achieved many of his goals: He spent the last decade securing country radio hits, raking in billions of streams and touring with the likes of Luke Bryan, Florida Georgia Line, Brad Paisley and Kane Brown. He was inducted into the Grand Ole Opry by Reba McEntire. After all that, the question became, what next?

"I'm single, you know, at this point in my life, I've chased down a lot of dreams. But what's the next level to unlock? You know, in my life, where do I want to be in five, 10, 20, 30 years?" he told The Associated Press. "Is that with somebody? Is it still being free and enjoying the adventure? So, there's this ongoing battle that I have with myself daily (of) what's the best version of me."

The album's title, and the title track, stemmed from that idea. Does he kill the cowboy, or let him ride?

If there is a narrative thread throughout "Killed the Cowboy," it is a conversation about a life of domesticity and vulnerabilities that directly challenges any "bro country" labels that might plague a single guy in country music. There's drinking and dancing and

lighthearted fun on the album, but he's also letting his fans into his sense of interiority, exactly where he's at, and sometimes, that's wondering about settling down.

That also means his performances transform into opportunities to "lift the single guys and girls up that come out to shows and are putting themselves out there, you know, taking a chance," he smiles, thinking of the audience members at similar stages of life. "I'm sure we have a lot of first dates."

Resonance

But he's quick to add, "We have a lot of first dates that have now become married and have kids together that come through meet and greets. So, music brings people together. It's healing."

The album maintains that energy, keeping it open-ended. Regardless of the listener's relationship status or existential questioning, there's something to find resonance in.

"Killed the Cowboy" manages that universality in surprising ways. There's the sole collaboration, with 2023 breakout star Jelly Roll, "Chevrolet," a reimagining of Dobie Gray's 1973 hit "Drift Away". The pair harmonize in the chorus: "She said, 'Give me a six-pack, some Brooks & Dunn / If you want a country girl, you just found one, let's slip away' / Yeah, 'In your

Chevrolet."

There are songs co-penned by Lynch created solely to bottle the energy of a weekend night on Broadway in Nashville (the up-tempo, cowbell-heavy "Honky Tonk Heartbreaker") and there are songs to fall in love with a Texas girl (the romantic slow burn of "George Strait Jr.," full of delightful '90s country easter eggs). And there are songs that mourn the path not traveled ("If I Stop Drinkin'" and "Blue Lights").

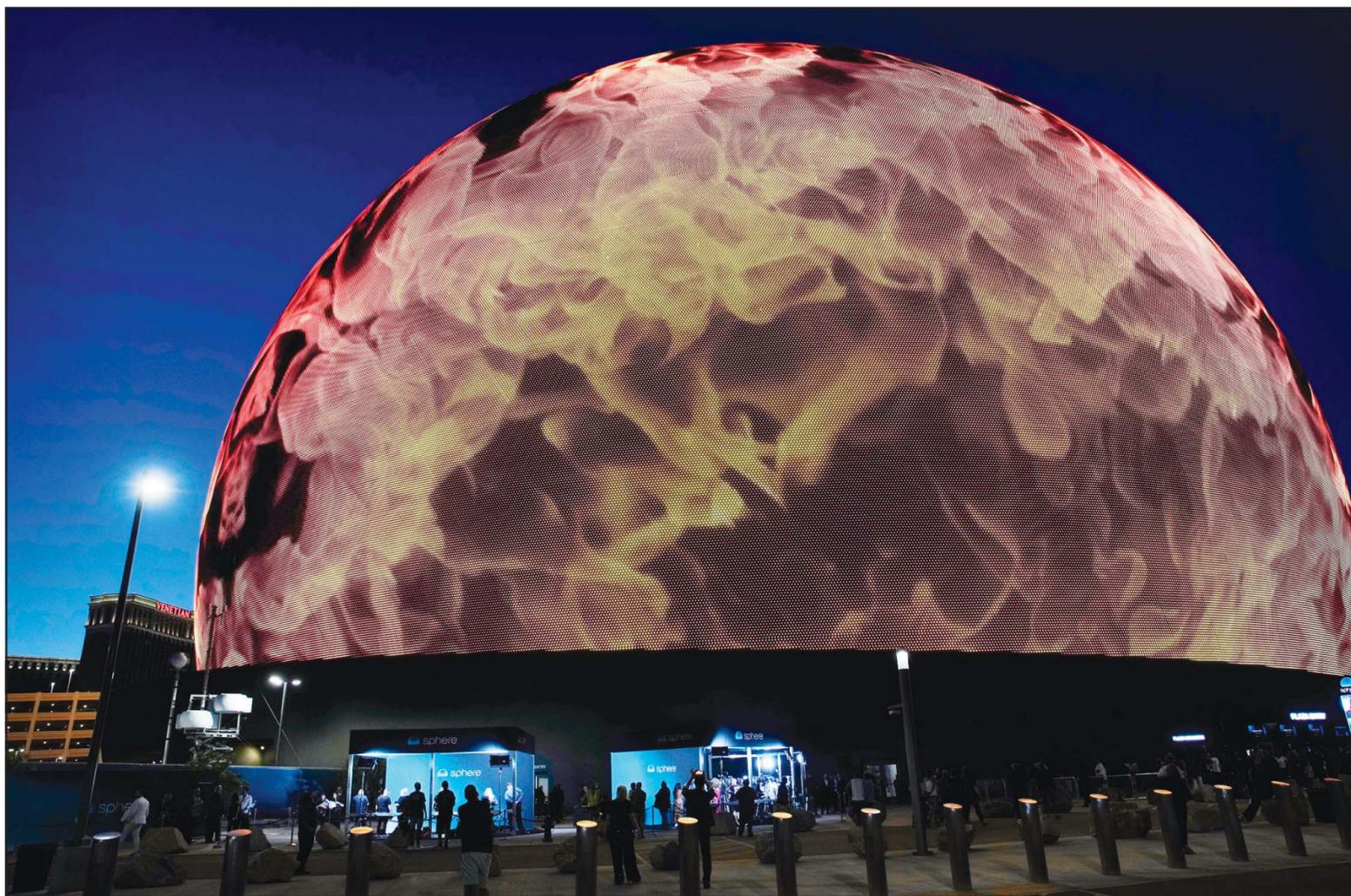
"This is the most open and honest I've been with an album because it really is me discovering what's next for me, my life, and honestly, a little bit of therapy," Lynch says. "I'm still figuring out what the right move is for me, you know, am I being intentional enough and trying to find someone to do life with? Am I too guarded?"

Those questions aren't exactly answered on "Killed the Cowboy," and frankly, if they were, Lynch wouldn't be honest to his audience. Life is a journey, and he sees value in spilling his guts on record - and having a good time while doing so.

"I think right now I'm comfortable just being in my own skin and knowing that I'm okay," he says. "There's a lot of the guys and girls out there like me and accepting that for what it is."

Music

Variety



Members of the media wait for celebrities to arrive during the opening night of the Sphere, Friday, Sept. 29, 2023, in Las Vegas. (AP)

Music

Features

ARABIC TIMES

MONDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2023

NEW YORK: A New York judge sentenced a woman who pleaded guilty to fatally shoving an 87-year-old Broadway singing coach onto a Manhattan sidewalk to six months more in prison than the eight years that had been previously reached in a plea deal.

During Friday's sentencing of **Lauren Pazienza** for manslaughter, Manhattan state Supreme Court Judge **Felicia Mennin** said she was unconvinced that the 28-year-old **Long Island** woman took responsibility for her actions on March 10, 2022, when she pushed the vocal teacher, **Barbara Maier Gustern**, to the ground.

Gustern, whose students included "Blondie" singer **Debbie Harry**, lay bleeding on a sidewalk. She died five days later.

Pazienza pleaded guilty on Aug. 23. She could have been sentenced to 25 years had she been convicted during a trial.

Pazienza, a former event planner originally from Long Island, has been locked up at the city's notorious **Rikers Island** jail complex since a judge revoked her bail in May 2022.

According to prosecutors, Pazienza attacked Gustern after storming out of a nearby park, where she and her fiancé had been eating meals from a food cart.

Gustern had just left her apartment to catch a student's performance after hosting a rehearsal for a cabaret show, friends told The New York Times.

Gustern's grandson, **A.J. Gustern of Colorado**, called Pazienza's apology "contrived." "I curse you, Lauren Pazienza," he said as he read from a statement in court, **Newsday** reported. "For the rest of your days, may you be miserable." (AP)

LONDON: British police on Friday made their second arrest over the cutting down of a 300-year-old tree near the Roman landmark of Hadrian's Wall in the northeast of England.

Hours after a 16-year-old was freed on bail, **Northumbria Police** said a man in his 60s was arrested and is being questioned in custody.

"The senseless destruction of what is undoubtedly a world-renowned landmark, and a local treasure, has quite rightly resulted in an outpouring of shock, horror and anger throughout the North East and further afield," Detective Chief Inspector **Rebecca Fenney-Menzies** said. "I hope this second arrest

James Dolan's sketch of the Sphere becomes reality

U2's stunning visuals dazzle 'Sphere'

LAS VEGAS, Oct 1, (AP): It looked like a typical U2 outdoor concert: Two helicopters zoomed through the starlit sky before producing spotlights over a Las Vegas desert and frontman Bono, who knelt to the ground while singing the band's 2004 hit "Vertigo."

This scene may seem customary, but the visuals were created by floor-to-ceiling graphics inside the immersive Sphere. It was one of the several impressive moments during U2's "UV Achtung Baby" residency launch show at the high-tech, globe-shaped venue, which opened for the first time Friday night.

The legendary rock band, which has won 22 Grammys, performed for two hours inside the massive, state-of-the-art spherical venue with crystal-clear audio. Throughout the night, there were a plethora of attractive visuals - including kaleidoscope images, a burning flag and Las Vegas' skyline, taking the more than 18,000 attendees on U2's epic musical journey.

"What a fancy pad," said Bono, who was accompanied onstage with guitarists The Edge and Adam Clayton along with drummer Bram van den Berg. He then stared at the high-resolution LED screen that projected a larger version of himself along with a few praying hands and bells.

Bono then paid homage to the late Elvis Presley, who was a Las Vegas entertainment staple. The band has rocked in the city as far back as 1987 when they filmed the music video for "I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For" on the Strip during a tour in 1987.

"Look at all this stuff. ... Elvis has definitely not left this building," he continued. "It's an Elvis chapel. It's an Elvis cathedral. Tonight, the entry into this cathedral is a password: flirtation."

U2 made their presence felt at the \$2.3 billion Sphere, which stands 366-feet (111 meters) high and 516-feet (157 meters) wide. With superb visual effects, the band's 25-show residency opened with a splash performing a slew of hits including "Mysterious Ways," "Zoo Station," "All I Want is You," "Desire" and new single "Atomic City."

On many occasions, the U2 band members were so large on screen that it felt like Bono intimately sang to the audience on one side while The Edge strummed his guitar to others on a different side.

The crowd included many entertainers and athletes: Oprah, LeBron James, Matt Damon, Andre Agassi, Ava DuVernay, Josh Duhamel, Jason Bateman, Jon

Hamm, Bryan Cranston, Aaron Paul, Oscar de la Hoya, Henrik Lundqvist, Flava Flav, Diplo, Dakota Fanning, Orlando Bloom and Mario Lopez.

After wrapping up The Beatles' jam "Love Me Do," Bono recognized Paul McCartney, who was in attendance, saying "Macca is in the house tonight." He acknowledged Sphere owner James Dolan's efforts for spearheading a venue that's pushing forward the live concert audio landscape with 160,000 high-quality speakers and 260 million video pixels.

The Sphere is the brainchild of Dolan, the executive chair of Madison Square Garden and owner of the New York Knicks and Rangers. He sketched the first drawing of the venue on notebook paper.

"I'm thinking that the Sphere may have come into existence because of Jim Dolan trying to solve the problem that The Beatles started when they played Shea Stadium," Bono said. "Nobody could hear you. You couldn't hear yourselves. Well, the Sphere's here. ... Can you hear us?"

The U2 frontman pointed into the crowd and shouted out Dr. Dre, Snoop Dogg and Jimmy Iovine. At one point he became emotional when he dedicated a song to the late Jimmy Buffett's family, who were also in attendance.

Performance

Afterward Bono spoke about performing onstage for the first time without drummer Larry Mullen Jr., who is recovering from back surgery. He acknowledged Dutch drummer Bram van den Berg's birthday and him filling in for Mullen.

"I would like to introduce you to the only man who could stand, well, sit in his shoes," said Bono, who walked toward Berg as some in the crowd began to sing "Happy Birthday." He handed the microphone to Berg, who offered a few words.

"Let there be no mistake, there is only one Larry Mullen Jr.," Berg said.

As U2 wrapped up the show, a bright light shined from the ceiling and the massive screen began to fill up with images of birds, insects and reptiles above a lake. The band closed its first Sphere concert with "Beautiful Day," which won three Grammys in 2001.

It started as a crude sketch - a circle with a stick person inside. Seven years later, that drawing has been made real: A \$2.3 billion massive spherical venue,

standing 366 feet (111 meters) high and lighting up the Las Vegas skyline.

The drawing was initially made by James Dolan, the executive chair of Madison Square Garden and owner of the New York Knicks and Rangers. He and MSG Ventures CEO David Dibble were trying to create a plan to give the entertainment venue industry a facelift in Las Vegas.

Both experimented with different shapes for the structure - such as a muffin, a box and even a pyramid - until Dolan drew the circle and stick person on a notebook. At that moment, the Sphere was born.

Now, Dolan's vision will come to fruition when U2's "UV Achtung Baby" residency kicks off the opening of his high-tech, globe-shaped venue Friday night.

"It really is a new medium," said Dolan, speaking to the media during a walkthrough Thursday. "When you're in the Sphere, you don't get told what to look at. The audience decides what they want to focus on."

Inside the 516-foot-wide (157-meter-wide) Sphere, a high-resolution LED screen wraps halfway around the 17,500-seat audience. The venue is equipped with thousands of speakers that will deliver a "crystal-clear," multi-layered experience.

The venue features an array of technology attractions, including five interactive humanoid robots named Aura.

"Necessity is the mother of invention," said Dibble, who framed Dolan's original drawing after carrying the picture in his backpack. "Everything from our audio and networking system, visual displays, camera systems stored - it's all required to deliver an effective Sphere experience."

The state-of-the-art venue has become a traffic stopper - especially at night. It drew immediate attention on the Fourth of July with a digital fireworks display, an eyeball that appeared to scan the horizon with the words "Hello World."

Along with U2's 25-show residency, the venue will next week offer a custom production titled "Postcard from Earth" by film director Darren Aronofsky.

Tourists and air travelers have also seen the orb light up with the likeness of the Earth or Moon, bouncing basketballs and art designs. The characters from the upcoming animated film "Trolls Band Together" have appeared on its LED exterior and it trumpeted the release of NSYNC's new single "Better Place," a song on the movie's soundtrack.

demonstrates just how seriously we're taking this situation, and our ongoing commitment to find those responsible and bring them to justice," she added.

The 16-year-old boy was arrested on Thursday on suspicion of criminal damage after the tree was destroyed overnight.

Why anyone would want to



Pazienza



Costner

cut down one of England's most iconic trees has left people across the UK baffled and angry.

Robert Macfarlane, a renowned nature writer, said he was "sick to the core" to hear the news about the tree, which was "known and loved by millions."

Macfarlane said he was buoyed by the widespread disgust that

followed news of the tree's felling and suggested that a new forest be planted in its honor.

Following centuries of industrialization and urbanization, **Britain** is considered to be one of the most deforested countries in Europe.

The tree was one of the main landmarks along Hadrian's Wall, a UNESCO World Heritage Site built

nearly 2,000 years ago when Britain was part of the Roman Empire to guard its northwestern frontier.

For generations, walkers have paused to admire and photograph the tree at Sycamore Gap, which was made famous when it appeared in **Kevin Costner's** 1991 film "Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves." (AP)

People & Places

Music

Elusive Paul shines

Sheeran 'explores' adult despondency

LOS ANGELES, Oct 1, (AP): "I've been up all night, thinking about dying," Ed Sheeran opens "When Will I Be Alright", one of his new album's final tracks. "I've just been wasting time," he continues. "God is not on my side."

Somehow, that's not even the most devastating moment.

That arrives later in the track, when mournful strings carry the song to its coda like a country dirge. Sheeran has never been one to shy away from explicit emotionality, but something's different on "Autumn Variations," his sixth studio album and the first since his series of releases named after mathematical symbols. (The first was his 2011 debut, "+.") His last, released in May of this year, was titled "-", or "Subtract.") Is this the end of an era, or the beginning of something novel?



Sheeran

Inspiration came from an unusual place: composer Edward Elgar's "Enigma Variations," in which every composition was about a different friend. Sheeran's "Autumn Variations," instead, centers on his relationships. "Last autumn, I found that my friends and I were going through so many life changes. After the heat of the summer, everything either calmed, settled, fell apart, came to a head, or imploded," he said in a statement. "When I went through a difficult time at the start of last year, writing songs helped me understand my feelings and come to terms with what was going on."

Chalk it up to fatherhood, marriage, or simply residual effects of a global health crisis that has altered the psychology of humanity in increasingly complex and unearthed ways, but it makes for some of the best songs of Sheeran's career, from the lo-fi "Midnight", the lamenting reverberated riff of "Punchline," to the Billy Joel - channeling "The Day I Was Born."

"Autumn Variations" was produced solely by The National's Aaron Dessner (Taylor Swift, Gracie Abrams), who Sheeran worked with on "-."

Challenges

And sure, perhaps that can account for some of the big existential queries here, met with production of a similar depth. Dessner's National-isms appear in surprising corners, like in the closing minute of "Amazing," an otherwise uptempo track about the challenges of mood regulation.

Sheeran and Dessner have proven to be a marvelous partnership. In the past, Sheeran has spent time demonstrating a masterful understanding of taking pop architecture and marrying it with EDM, reggaeton, Afropop, however you'd describe the sonic idiosyncrasies of Jai Paul. But here, with Dessner, he's returned home to his folk-y pop craft, the world he knows best. And with obvious evolution. And a bit of depression.

If there is a cultural schmalz associated with Sheeran's biggest radio hits, they do not apply here. (Well, with few exceptions - like the "Friends" reference in "American Town.") Surely that's enough reason to dig in.



He emerged in front of piercing, sunset-colored LED screens that flashed like strobe lights, percussion pulsing from the stage to the audience floor. In the crowd, it was felt first in our chests, then throughout our bodies. He opened with "Higher Res.," a malleable Big Boi cover, before launching into his few familiar hits. For an artist well known for over a decade, Jai Paul made this tour opener feel like the first time.

Because, in some ways, it was.

Before Jai Paul hit the stage at Los Angeles' Mayan Theater recently, he'd only performed a handful of times, and never before this year. He's been celebrated for being the rare elusive musician, a trait that rarely translates to an energetic performance. Dressed in an oversized parka and sunglasses like an alternative universe Gallagher brother, Paul showed no restraint.

He was comfortable, stopping to either clap for his band or for the audience - or possibly for himself - after most tracks. His crowd, enraptured, rarely pulled out their phones to record. It was as if they'd all signed a secret social contract: This was a special evening, years in the works, and they should fully enjoy it. No distractions.

In certain circles, Paul's mythology is renewed. He is, in some ways, the last truly mysterious pop phenomenon of the pre-algorithmic streaming era.

Attention

It began with "BTSTU," a track the British musician of Indian descent uploaded to MySpace sometime between 2007 and 2009 that took the digital blogosphere by storm. His sweet falsetto earned him a deal with the major indie label XL Records, and the nonsensical genre description of "psychedelic funk." A bright snare, a sharp kick drum, a weird pop sensibility introduces the song - Paul had managed to make the music world pay attention with just one track, a feat nearly impossible to replicate in the modern digital era.

Drake and Beyoncé sampled it. The New York Times compared him to Prince. A moment was happening. Then came "Jasmine," soon to be sampled by Ed Sheeran, and the D'Angelo comparisons. DJs and producers everywhere were transfixed. He combined sounds with a sort of masterful idiosyncrasy.

Then the magic ran out, or so it seemed. A decade ago, in 2013, demos for what listeners assumed to be Paul's debut record leaked and he withdrew further, repudiating the collection of songs.

A decade later, he made his live debut at Coachella 2023, then performed two nights in London and New York. On Tuesday night in Los Angeles, he kicked off a new tour leg.

So, can an artist born of the internet come alive on stage? What could there be to bear witness to?

It turns out, quite a lot. His prescient electronic pop-R&B hybrid sound, with its sticky and innovative synths now familiar to anyone who has listened to a producer in the last 14 years, sounded every bit as formative as it did in the 2010 era. His melodies were liquid. And his falsetto did recall Prince, as the critics once said, particularly on the tracks "All Night" and "So Long."

The set started an hour late and only lasted about that long (and some change), a dozen-plus tracks concluding with the one that started it all "BTSTU," and the one that confirmed his greatness, "Str8 Outta Mumbai."

Jai Paul was incubating in his time spent hidden behind computer screens, emerging fully formed - waiting for the right moment to share his talent with his fans in this particular live medium. And it was worth it.



A model wears a creation for the Elie Saab Spring/Summer 2024 womenswear fashion collection presented Saturday, Sept. 30, 2023 in Paris. (AP)

Fashion

Kronthaler's carnival

Westwood's legacy finds its heir

PARIS, Oct 1, (AP): An afternoon of stardom, surprise and style reverberated in the heart of Paris Fashion Week on Saturday. As Andreas Kronthaler for Vivienne Westwood unfolded, it became clear: Fashion's wild heart is alive and beating stronger than ever.

Here are some highlights of spring-summer 2024 shows.

Pantomime ponchos, tribal silk head-dresses and melted cake-like hats? Only Kronthaler could blend such disparate elements with such flair. The eccentric behind this show is no stranger to the spotlight, and it's clear he's carving his niche within the Westwood legacy.

With celebrities like Pamela Anderson and Christina Hendricks in the front row and unmistakable cheers from Place Vendome, the brand's meteoric rise in recent years was evident. Inside, anticipation built, amplified by gleaming percussion instruments.

Delving into Kronthaler's history with Westwood, one can trace his growth. While inspired by Westwood's punk roots, he's not afraid to introduce his own distinct flavor. This season solidified that transformation.

The toggle mask, a daring take on traditional religious veils, and a gold devore tunic that could have been a costume piece for Shakespeare's magical character Ariel, showcased his blend of humor and fashion finesse. But it wasn't all quirkiness. A medieval looking gray jacket, boasting sharply sculpted lapels, cinched waist, statement sleeves and intricate stitching details, underscored Kronthaler's mastery in crafting elegance. Kronthaler's tribute to Westwood was touching: "She truly traveled in her mind. I owe her so much."

This wasn't just another fashion show; it was a declaration of a brand evolving yet honoring its roots.

At Vivienne Westwood, former Baywatch star Pamela Anderson, a fervent environmental activist herself, donned a striking Westwood hat and passionately spoke about her admiration for the late fashion designer's commitment to environmental causes. Anderson hailed Westwood as a "climate revolutionary," expressing her deep respect for the designer's proac-

tive stance on climate change.

Anderson remarked on how Westwood was ahead of her time in recognizing the urgency of climate change and how she often faced frustration when trying to convey her message. "She always was trying to get her point across," Anderson said in an interview with The Associated Press, noting that many are now realizing that Westwood was right all along.

The luxury sector's responsibility was also highlighted, with Anderson candidly stating, "The fashion industry should be doing more." She lauded the efforts of designers like Stella McCartney and Chloe for moving in a more sustainable direction, but remained insistent on the fashion to further its environmental endeavors.

Echoing Westwood's philosophy, Anderson emphasized the value of quality over quantity in consumer choices: "Vivienne always said buy one great thing a year. Don't buy a lot of crap."

As the fall sun unveiled Carven's fresh designs on Saturday morning, it wasn't just about the latest collection but an homage to its storied 78-year journey.

Rejuvenation

Taking center stage, new designer Louise Trotter introduced the collection, masterfully weaving iconic elements of the brand's heritage with a forward-looking aesthetic. From its inception in 1945 by trailblazer Marie-Louise Carven, the house was hailed for its luxury merged with the accessibility, bringing haute couture down to the streets. Carven's revolutionary "Ma Griffe" fragrance and petite sizes for French women further cemented its iconic status in the annals of fashion.

Fast forward to today's runway: about 40 meticulously crafted silhouettes radiated both reverence and rejuvenation. Signature high-waisted trousers, cinched blouses, and sleek A-line dresses reminded long-time aficionados of Carven's penchant for emphasizing the waist and hips. The new-age touch came through modern monochrome suits, airy tiered skirts, and pastel trenches. A particularly striking look paired a draped satin

blouse with a structured leather skirt, epitomizing the fusion of the brand's enduring elegance and contemporary fierceness.

Echos of the '70s are resonating on the Parisian catwalks this season, intertwined with modern fashion cues. While elongated silhouettes and intentional mismatched styles at Dries Van Noten highlighted a retro influence, the futuristic, space-age designs of Courreges offered a counterbalance, making the past meet the future.

Here are some highlights of spring-summer 2024 collections in Paris that have captivated with diverse inspirations, as observers looked to Wednesday night's Balmain show - days after designer Olivier Rousteing was left reeling when thieves made off with his collection pieces.

In a season where the '70s reigns supreme, Belgian maestro Dries Van Noten took a dive into the era with elongated silhouettes and a deliberate art of mismatch. Banking on his forte in men's designs, the runway boasted models flaunting androgynous cuts and gelled dos, blurring the lines between yesterday and today's sartorial zeitgeist.

Entitled the "unfamiliar familiar," it drew from retro sporting vibes, with rugby stripes adorning asymmetric dresses, and tennis scarves cleverly reimagined as tops. The essence was unmistakably Van Noten - honoring tradition with a spontaneous, fresh pulse.

Standouts included a historic flared trench, cheekily paired with a bikini top - Van Noten's playful take on fusing the then and now. Layering made a statement too. Picture an open striped shirt, layered with a bikini, all under a muted beige jacket.

Paris has been parading cargo and khaki, and Van Noten didn't miss the memo. His rendition? A commanding oversized beige trench, jazzed up with utilitarian flair and a surprise peek of red stripes from a hidden zippered jacket.

Dipping into his scholarly fashion roots, a cetacean blue gown waltzed down, with 18th-century ripples and bows, jazzed up by a split in the leg that led all the way down to classic menswear brogues.



Beatrice Granno arrives for the Elie Saab Spring/Summer 2024 womenswear fashion collection presented Saturday, Sept. 30, 2023 in Paris. (AP)



DeSantis



Boey

Variety

ORLANDO, Fla.: The legal fights between Disney and Gov. Ron DeSantis ratcheted up this week.

The Florida governor asked that the company's First Amendment lawsuit against him be tossed from federal court, and Disney demanded emails, texts and other communications from the governor's office in a separate state court lawsuit originally brought by DeSantis appointees of Walt Disney World's governing district.

The legal filings marked an escalation in the battle between the entertainment giant and DeSantis, a candidate for the 2024 GOP presidential nomination. The confrontation started last year when Disney publicly opposed a state law banning classroom lessons on sexual orientation and gender identity in early grades, and DeSantis retaliated by taking over the governing district that provides municipal services for the 25,000-acre (10,117-hectare) Disney World theme park resort in Florida.

Disney has sued DeSantis in federal court, claiming the governor violated its free speech rights by punishing it for expressing opposition to the law.

On Thursday, DeSantis and the Central Florida Tourism Oversight District, the governing district made up of DeSantis appointees, asked a federal judge to throw out Disney's First Amendment lawsuit, calling it meritless and "a last-ditch effort to reinstate its corporate kingdom."

"Although Disney has grabbed headlines by suing the Governor, Disney - like many litigants before it who have challenged Florida's laws - has no basis for doing so," DeSantis' motion said.

Meanwhile, the governing district now controlled by DeSantis appointees has sued Disney in state court. The suit is an attempt to void prior agreements, made before the DeSantis appointees took over, that shifted control over design and construction to Disney from the district and prohibited the district from using the likeness of Disney characters or other intellectual property without Disney's permission. Disney filed counterclaims that include asking a state court to declare the agreements valid and enforceable. The company amended those counterclaims on Thursday, saying the DeSantis-controlled district was in violation of the US Constitution stipulations on contracts and due process.

Disney also sent a notice to DeSantis' office demanding internal communications, including text messages and emails, and documents regarding the district's comprehensive plan, the development agreements

and the legislation that shifted control of the district to DeSantis. The notice said a subpoena would be issued requiring the governor's office to turn over the materials to Disney's attorneys by Oct. 27. (AP)

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia: Malaysia's government has banned a book following protests over what was perceived as an insulting depiction of an Indonesian maid, and the book's author on Thursday apologized for the offensive material and said it

was misunderstood. Boey Chee Ming, a Malaysian artist now based in the United States, said he was shocked to learn that his book "When I was a Kid 3" was banned by the government almost a decade after it was released in 2014. It was his third book in a series of graphic novels about his childhood in Malaysia.

The Home Ministry has said the book contained material that was "likely to be prejudicial to morality" and issued the ban on Sept. 15, local media reported. Indonesian non-governmental organization Corong Rakyat staged a rally outside the Malaysian Embassy in Jakarta in June to protest the book, which it said belittled Indonesian maids, Malaysia's national Bernama news agency reported. Home Ministry officials couldn't be immediately reached for comment.

Boey said he believed the ban was triggered by a chapter in which his father likened their Indonesian domestic helper to a monkey because she could climb a tree swiftly to pluck coconuts. He described it as "unfortunate."

"My intention wasn't to denigrate but to praise the impressive speed at which our helper had scaled the coconut tree - like a monkey. I returned to the tree on my own later that evening because I too, wanted to see if I could scale the tree at that speed," he wrote on Instagram. (AP)



Jai Paul performs at the Mayan Theatre, Tuesday, Sept. 26, 2023, in Los Angeles. (AP)

Environment

Diving for a cause

Scuba divers 'wage' war on undersea litter

NEW YORK, Oct 1, (AP): On a recent Sunday afternoon, the divers arrived on a thin strip of sand at the furthest, watery edge of New York City. Oxygen tanks strapped to their backs, they waded into the sea and descended into an environment far different from their usual terrestrial surroundings of concrete, traffic and trash-strewn sidewalks.

Horseshoe crabs and other crustaceans crawl on a seabed encrusted with barnacles and colonies of coral. Spiny-finned sea robin, blackfish and wayward angelfish swim in the murky ocean tinted green by sheets of algae.

Not all is pretty. Plastic bottles, candy wrappers and miles and miles of fishing line drift with the tides, endangering sea life.

The undersea litter isn't always visible from the shore. But it has long been a concern of **Nicole Zelek**, a diving instructor who four years ago launched monthly cleanups at this small cove in the community of Far Rockaway, where New York City meets the Atlantic Ocean, about 4 miles (6.4 kilometers) south of John F. Kennedy International Airport in Queens.

A throwaway culture of single-use plastics and other hard-to-degrade material has sullied the world's waters over the decades, posing a danger to marine life such as seals and seabirds. By 2025, some 250 million tons (226.7 million metric tons) of plastic will have found its way into the oceans, according to the PADI AWARE Foundation, a conservation group sponsoring a global project called Dive Against Debris.

Dive by dive, small groups like Zelek's have been trying to undo some of the damage.

"Every month we have a prize for the weirdest find," she said. They have included the occasional goat skull, perhaps used as part of some ritual, Zelek surmises.

"The best find of all time was an actual ATM machine. Unfortunately, it was empty," she said.

The divers' haul one late-summer Sunday wasn't much, but there were clumps and clumps of fishing line untangled from underwater objects. What the divers can't pull away by hand is cut with scissors.

"Unfortunately, tons of crabs and horseshoe crabs - which are under threat - get tangled in the fishing line and then they die," Zelek said.

Accumulations
While more ambitious projects are underway to scoop up huge accumulations of floating debris in deeper waters, small-scale coastal cleanups like Zelek's are an important part of the battle against ocean pollution, said Nick Mallos, vice president of conservation for Ocean Conservancy.

"The science is very clear and that's to tackle our global plastic pollution crisis," he said. "We have to do it all."

Every September, the conservancy holds monthlong international coastal cleanups. Since its inception nearly four decades ago, the cleanups have retrieved about 400 million pounds (181.4 million kilograms) of trash from coastal areas around the world.

The best way to combat plastics going into the oceans, Mallos said, is to reduce the globe's dependence on them, particularly in packaging consumer products. But human-powered cleanup is the least costly of all cleanup options.

The Dive Against Debris project invites what organizers call "citizen scientists" to survey their diving sites to help catalog the myriad items that don't belong in oceans, lakes and other bodies of water. By the group's count, more than 90,000 participants have conducted more than 21,000 such surveys and removed 2.2 million pieces of junk, big and small.

Zelek and her fellow divers have contributed their finds to the project.

Surface trash might be easy enough to clear with a rake, but the task is more challenging beneath the water. Over the years, the layers of monofilament fishing line have accumulated. And until a few years ago, no one was scooping out the line, hooks and lead weights.

Untangled, a pound of medium-weight fishing filament would stretch to a bit more than 4 miles (6.4 kilometers). It's anybody's guess how many miles of fishing line remain on the channel's bottom.

"Those small things are really what start to accumulate and become a much larger and bigger problem," said Tanasia Swift, who has been with the group for a year and works for an environmental nonprofit focused on restoring the health of New York City's waters.

"If there's anything that we see that doesn't belong in the water, we take it out," she said.

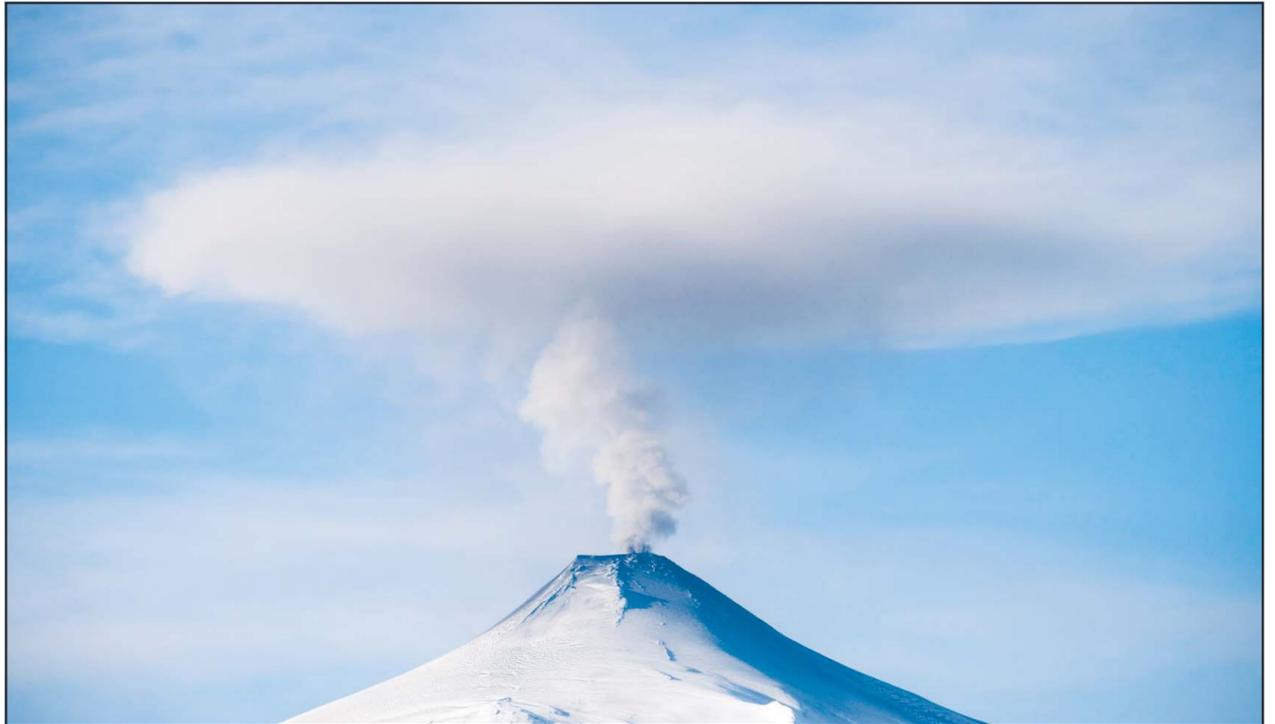
While the drivers work, fishermen cast their lines from a ledge where the city's concrete stops. The beach is frequented mostly by residents who live nearby.

Raquel Gonzalez is one such resident, and she's been coming to the beach for years. She and a neighbor brought a rake with them on the same Sunday the divers were there.

"Needs a lot of cleanup here. There's nobody that does any cleanup around here. We have to clean it up ourselves," she said.



Zelek



Villarrica volcano spews ash and steam near Pucon, Chile, Saturday, Sept. 30, 2023. (AP)



A smashed spotted lanternfly sits on the ground in New York, Wednesday, Aug. 24, 2022. The Illinois Department of Agriculture said a sighting of one of the winged adult insects was reported on Sept. 16, 2023, at an undisclosed location in the state. (AP)

Discovery

Lanternflies threaten crops: Illinois is the latest state to find invasive spotted lanternflies, an winged insect that's spreading across the eastern US and is subject to squish-on-sight requests in New York and elsewhere. **Jay Robert Pritzker** is the governor of Illinois.

First detected in the US nearly a decade ago, the hitchhiking pest and its eggs have been getting rides on vehicles and trains as they expand from southeast Pennsylvania across the country.

Although the inch-long planthopper looks pretty with its distinctive black spots and bright red wing markings, the sap-sucking bug likes to mass and feed on plants. It then excretes a sticky, sugary waste called honeydew that attracts insects and a form of sooty mold that can finish off the already weakened plants, posing a danger to crops and native trees. The gunk can also collect houses, decks and outdoor furniture.

In Illinois, they're not expected to cause "widespread plant or tree death" but will likely become a nuisance pest that "may have some impact on the agritourism industry, including orchards, pumpkin patches, and vineyards," said Scott Schirmer, Illinois Department of Agriculture's Nursery and Northern Field Office Section Manager.

Anyone who sees the insects is encouraged to smash them or scrape the egg masses into a container with hand sanitizer or rubbing alcohol to kill them.

"Spotted lanternfly has been inching closer to the Midwest and Illinois for close to a decade," said **Jerry Costello II**, director of the Illinois Department of Agriculture, in a statement. (AP)

The Conversation

Over 1.8mn people die of heart disease in EU

Combo exercise, an elixir for brain health

By Brian Ho and Ronald Cohen
University of Florida

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

People in the oldest stage of life who regularly engage in aerobic activities and strength training exercises perform better on cognitive tests than those who are either sedentary or participate only in aerobic exercise. That is the key finding of our new study, published in the journal *GeroScience*.

We assessed 184 cognitively healthy people ranging in age from 85 to 99. Each participant reported their exercise habits and underwent a comprehensive battery of neuropsychological tests that were designed to evaluate various dimensions of cognitive function.

We found that those who incorporated both aerobic exercises, such as swimming and cycling, and strength exercises like weightlifting into their routines - regardless of intensity and duration - had better mental agility, quicker thinking and greater ability to shift or adapt their thinking.

Using a well-known cognitive screening tool called the Montreal Cognitive Assessment that provides a balanced view of many aspects of cognition, we found that people who didn't engage in any physical exercise scored lower than those who did both cardio and strength training. This difference was slight but significant even when controlling for other factors like

education and how much people exercised. In addition, the group that did both types of exercises did better in specific cognitive activities, like symbol coding, beyond just the screening results.

It's important to note that while our study establishes a correlation between a mix of aerobic and strength training exercises and higher cognitive test scores, the design of the study did not enable us to determine a causal relationship.

Abilities

Nonetheless, the results suggest that a varied exercise routine is associated with improved cognitive functioning in people who are in their late 80s and beyond. We conducted the study as part of a large, multisite collaboration with the McKnight Brain Research Foundation, which has institutes at the University of Florida, the University of Miami, the University of Arizona and the University of Alabama-Birmingham.

The aging of the global population makes cognitive health a pressing issue. The number of people diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease in the US is projected to reach almost 14 million by 2060, up from just over 6 million as of 2020. Our findings not only offer hope for healthier aging but also present a practical approach to maintaining or even enhancing cognitive health in the last decades of life.

These results are not just numbers;

they represent real-world thinking abilities that can affect the quality of life for those entering their golden years.

The fact that nearly 70% of our study participants were already engaging in some physical exercise prior to signing up for our study challenges the stereotype that old age and physical inactivity must go hand in hand.

Our findings provide an evidence base for health care providers to consider recommending a mixed regimen of aerobic and strength exercises as part of their patients' wellness plans. Studies show that when cognitive decline is slowed, people spend less on medical care and experience a higher quality of life.

Also:

BRUSSELS: Cardiovascular disease continues to severely affect health, societies and economies around the world, EU Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, **Stella Kyriakides** said Thursday.

In a statement to mark World Heart Day on 29 September, she said, "Each year in the EU, more than 6 million people suffer from heart conditions and more than 1.8 million people die from heart disease."

Cardiovascular disease and non-communicable diseases more generally, not only severely reduce life expectancy, but also are responsible for 77 percent of the disease burden in Europe, she said. (Agencies)



Pritzker



Costello

Epic tale of coffee: By the time of the American Revolution in the 18th century, coffee had replaced tea as the preferred patriotic drink in the United States.

A group of nationalists famously boarded English tea ships in Boston Harbor in 1773, tossing the tea overboard in protest of English tea taxes.

In the mid-19th century, coffee became a crucial player in international trade, with its presence felt in stock markets in New York and

London. Green coffee became one of the most traded agricultural commodities globally.

In 1962, coffee-producing and consuming countries came together under the "International Coffee Agreement" to ensure fair trade for this vital commodity. Today, the International Coffee Organization represents 42 coffee-producing countries and 7 importers, including the European Union, accounting for 98 percent of global production and 67 percent of consumption. (KUNA)

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Pulisic helps Milan beat Lazio

Martínez comes off bench to score 4 as Inter rout Salernitana

MILAN, Oct 1, (AP): Lautaro Martínez came off the bench to score four goals in 27 minutes and help Inter Milan win 4-0 at Salernitana in Serie A.

Martínez has now scored nine goals in the league this season and tops the goalscoring charts just as his side tops Serie A.

SOCCER

Inter are level on points with AC Milan, which beat Lazio 2-0 following a goal from United States standout Christian Pulisic. Napoli are third, four points behind, after winning 4-0 at Lecce.

Inter saw their perfect start to the season ended midweek with a 2-1 loss at home to Sassuolo but Inzaghi opted against starting Martínez ahead of Tuesday's Champions League match against Benfica.

With Inter struggling to turn their domination into goals, however, Martínez



Lautaro Martínez of FC Inter celebrates after scoring during the Serie A soccer match between Salernitana and Inter Milan, at the Arechi stadium in Salerno, Italy. (AP)

was brought on in the 55th minute and broke the deadlock just seven minutes later.

Marcus Thuram got down the left and picked out Martínez with a perfect pass for the Argentine World Cup winner to dink the ball over Guillermo Ochoa and into the bottom left corner.

Mateusz Legowski thought he had leveled for Salernitana almost immediately but it was ruled out for offside.

Inter doubled their tally in the 77th minute. Denzel Dumfries did well to rob his defender and pass to Martínez. He immediately spread the ball for Nicolò Barella, who crossed it back in for the forward to volley home.

Martínez completed his hat trick five minutes from time with a penalty after Thuram had been brought down by Matteo Lovato.

Messi 'misses' another match

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla., Oct 1, (AP): Here's how it goes for Inter Miami right now when it comes to the injured Lionel Messi: The team keeps saying he might play, and then he doesn't play.

That pattern held true again Saturday, when the seven-time Ballon d'Or winner was scratched from the lineup for a matchup against New York City FC - a game with significant Major League Soccer playoff implications for both clubs. Messi has a leg injury, the severity of which has not been revealed by Inter Miami.

The team announced that Messi would not play about 45 minutes before Saturday's game time. Without Messi, Miami still had some magic - Tomás Avilés scored off a header in stoppage time to salvage what became a 1-1 tie. NYFC had the lead on a goal by Santiago Rodríguez in the 77th minute.

The 36-year-old Messi has now missed four of Inter Miami's last five matches, plus another for Argentina in that span because of what was first called fatigue - by both his club and country - and has evolved from there. The only game he didn't miss during that stretch was a 37-minute appearance against Toronto on Sept. 20, and he had to leave that match before halftime because of what is believed to be a hamstring issue.

"He's doing better and better," Inter Miami coach Gerardo "Tata" Martino said after Saturday's match.

However, Martínez wasn't done as he fired in Carlos Augusto's cross four minutes later.

Pulisic netted his third goal for Milan but his first in more than a month.

Milan's pressure had been building and the hosts finally made the breakthrough on the hour mark. Tijjani Reijnders



AC Milan's Noah Okafor (left) and Lazio's Daichi Kamada vie for the ball during a Serie A soccer match between AC Milan and Lazio, at the San Siro stadium in Milan, Italy, Saturday. (AP)

slipped the ball through to Rafael Leão and he crossed for Pulisic to fire in on the half-volley with the inside of his left boot.

Pulisic was given another standing ovation by the San Siro crowd when he was substituted late on.

Fellow American Yunus Musah almost doubled Milan's lead in the 73rd but he was denied by a superb save by Ivan Provedel.

The Lazio goalkeeper had pulled off an equally impressive stop at the end of the first half to prevent Olivier Giroud from marking his 37th birthday with a goal. Reijnders back-heeled the rebound onto the post.

Noah Okafor sealed the match two minutes from time with a simple tap-in after some great work by Leão.

Mbappé fails to score, PSG draw at Clermont

Monaco overcome Marseille

PARIS, Oct 1, (AP): Star striker Kylian Mbappé was kept quiet and Paris Saint-Germain could not find a way to score in a 0-0 draw at struggling Clermont in the French league.

Monaco took advantage of PSG's slip to go top after beating Marseille 3-2, with midfielder Maghnes Akliouche scoring twice and setting up the other goal.

Mbappé shook off a minor injury to his left ankle sustained in last Sunday's 4-0 home win against Marseille and started. He received a yellow card for diving in an attempt to win a penalty in the 80th minute, but could not add to his league-leading seven goals.

Third-place PSG have won only three of their seven league games under new coach Luis Enrique, drawing three and losing one.

PSG are two points behind Monaco. PSG winger Bradley Barcola said his team fell well short. "Drawing here is a below-par performance. We came here with the ambition to win," he said. "These draws are not helping us to advance. Are we falling behind? I don't know."

The draw moved Clermont off the bottom and into 17th place with two points.

SOCCER

Goalkeeper Mory Diaw thwarted PSG with a couple of saves in the first half from right winger Ousmane Dembélé.

Clermont defender Cheick Konaté forced a save from PSG goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma in the 53rd minute and, one minute later, Mbappé hit the post from Dembélé's cross.

Diaw, who played for PSG's reserves from 2012-15, produced a fine save from substitute Goncalo Ramos in the 81st and another from midfielder Danilo in stoppage



Girona's Aleix Garcia (left) duels for the ball with Real Madrid's Joselu during a Spanish La Liga soccer match between Girona and Real Madrid, at the Montilivi stadium in Girona, Spain. Jude Bellingham impresses again as Real Madrid deals Girona their 1st defeat of season to go top of league. (AP)

time.

PSG face a difficult-looking trip to play Newcastle in the Champions League on Wednesday. Barcola refused to use that as an excuse, saying the players had not even spoken about Newcastle before facing Clermont.

Meanwhile, Marseille's new coach Gennaro Gattuso took charge of his first game. He enjoyed a dream start when attacking midfielder Iliman Ndiaye scored in the first minute from striker Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang's cross.

Akliouche equalized in the ninth from striker Wissam Ben Yedder's pass, only for central defender Samuel Gigot to volley home Ndiaye's cross in the 18th. Five minutes later, Akliouche set up striker Folarin Balogun for a neat finish to make it 2-2 in a frenetic opening.

De Kock bows out

Bavuma confident SA can make WC history

NEW DELHI, Oct 1, (AP): Quinton de Kock will make a last hurrah at the Cricket World Cup in India starting next week as part of an in-form South Africa team which will lean on his experience and a pace-heavy bowling attack as they attempt to win the tournament for the first time.

At 30, the wicketkeeper-batsman has already retired from test cricket and this will be his one-day international swansong.

It could also be a crowning moment in his career if South Africa can maintain the form that took them from 2-0 down to beat Australia 3-2 in a recent ODI series.

South Africa's best result at the 50-over World Cup has been three semifinal appearances.

Temba Bavuma will again captain South Africa and can rely on the counsel of players such as de Kock, who has captained the Proteas in all three formats. Bavuma leads a powerful team diminished only slightly by the absence of fast bowlers Anrich Nortje and Sisanda Magala, who failed fitness tests before the squad left for India.

Both played in the series against Australia but Nortje has been forced out with a back issue, having also missed the 2019 World Cup with a thumb injury, while Magala has a knee problem.

Paceman Lizaad Williams and allrounder Andile Phehlukwayo have been called up in their place in a squad which also includes fast bowlers Kagiso Rabada, Marco Jansen, Lungi Ngidi and Gerald Coetzee.

"It's great having a mix of ex-

perienced players and players who will be competing in their first 50-over World Cup," Proteas coach Rob Walter said. "You get that sort of exuberance or excitement to be doing something for the first time."

"We have endeavored to curate a well-balanced group of players and skill that will allow us to effectively adapt to the conditions in India. Our strength has been fast bowling and we want to be able to have four high-quality fast bowlers in the park in most situations."

South Africa's history in limited overs World Cups has not always been a happy one. They have had no success in the 50-over World Cup - which they hosted in 2003 - and while they staged the first

T20 World Cup in 2007, they also have never won it. In its last edition, they were beaten by the Netherlands.

Bavuma remembers that defeat and its fallout, and uses it to harden his determination to succeed in India this time.

"The emotion that was attached to that day and everything that happened around it, I think that's subsided from my side," Bavuma said. "I used that emotion as motivation, and really tried to forge a new way for myself within my cricketing career."

"If I look back now, since that day things have been going well for myself but also for the team. I was laughing about it. There's no negative emotions or trauma coming back here."

CRICKET

Bavuma sees a new South Africa team: stronger, better-balanced and more focused. He says players have more belief in each other and that will be critical over the six weeks of the World Cup when, inevitably, all teams will be tested.

"The way we've been going about our business this year, it has been in contrast to what people have known us as a team," he said. "We spoke a lot about being bold, being fearless, being positive and always looking for moments to move the game in our favor."

South Africa play their first match at the World Cup on Oct. 7 against Sri Lanka, followed by an Australia rematch on Oct. 12.



New Zealand's captain Kane Williamson bats during the ICC Cricket World Cup warmup match between New Zealand and Pakistan in Hyderabad, India. (AP)

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Minister emphasizes government's commitment to continually support athletes

Al-Aiban, Al-Baidan commend Kuwait's accomplishments at Asiad

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 1: Mohammed Al-Aiban, the Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, expressed his admiration for the remarkable achievements of Kuwaiti athletes at the ongoing 19th Asian Games in Hangzhou, China. He praised their outstanding performance, which has already resulted in the acquisition of three medals of different kinds, a source of great joy for the entire nation.

Minister Al-Aiban made these remarks during a statement to reporters upon his return to Kuwait from China, where he accompanied the medal-winning athletes. Among them were Abdullah Al-Tarqi, who secured the gold medal in the individual (skeet) event, Iman Al-Shamaa, who claimed silver in shooting (skeet) for the mixed doubles category alongside her teammate Al-Tarqi, and Youssef Al-Shamlan, who earned the bronze medal in the individual saber fencing competition.

Al-Aiban credited the motivation provided by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad, who met with the athletes before the tournament's commencement, as a driving force behind their exceptional performances. He expressed confidence in Kuwaiti athletes winning additional medals as the tournament continues until October 8th.

The minister emphasized the government's commitment to continually

support athletes in their pursuit of more victories on the international stage. He also recognized the pivotal role played by Fatima Hayat, the Director of the

ASIAN GAMES

Kuwaiti delegation, in supporting all Kuwaiti participants across various competitions.

Yousef Al-Baidan, Director General



KUNA photo
The Board of Directors of the Kuwait Olympic Committee, Sheikh Mubarak Faisal Al-Sabah, honors Al-Shamlan.

of the Public Authority for Sports, echoed similar sentiments, attributing the impressive achievements in the Asian competition to the diligent preparation of Kuwait's national team players. He underlined the Authority's commitment, backed by the political leadership and the support of the Minister of Youth, to bolster Kuwaiti athletes in their quest for further accomplishments and the advancement of Kuwaiti sports.

Sheikh Mubarak Faisal Nawaf Al-Sabah, a member of the Board of Direc-

tors of the Kuwait Olympic Committee, also extended his congratulations to the medal-winning champions who have proudly represented their country on the continental stage. He expressed gratitude for Minister Al-Aiban's and the General Sports Authority's unwavering support, which played a pivotal role in achieving this success.

Olympic champion Abdullah Al-Tarqi hailed the victory as his third in the history of his participation in Asian tournaments and the fifth for Kuwaiti shooting sports. He considered the establishment of world records in both competitions a significant achievement, affirming Kuwait's dominance in Asian shooting.

Iman Al-Shamaa, the shooter, expressed her immense pride in securing Kuwait's first women's medal in shooting sports in the history of the Asian Olympic Games. She credited the continuous support provided by the Kuwaiti Shooting Club to male and female shooters as a direct contributing factor to the ongoing success of Kuwaiti shooting.

Yousef Al-Shamlan, a member of the Kuwaiti fencing team, celebrated the historic achievement of winning Kuwait's first medal in the history of fencing at the Asian Games. He expressed great pride and regarded this victory as a motivating force for himself and his fellow fencers to strive for more triumphs in upcoming major tournaments.



A file photo of Al Arabi celebrating a victory.

Al-Najma loom

Al-Arabi seek to boost qualification chances

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 1: Al-Arabi are seeking to enhance their chances of advancing to the next round of the AFC Cup when it hosts the Lebanese team Al-Najma at 7:00 PM at Al-Kuwait Club Stadium in the second round of Group C competitions. In the first round, Al-Arabi defeated

like Suleiman Abdul Ghafour, Sultan Al-Anzi, Salman Al-Awadhi, Hussein Ashkanani, and Khaled Al-Murshid due to suspensions and injuries, Al-Arabi has a strong squad capable of achieving their second victory in the tournament. Key players to watch include Ali Khalaf, Bandar Al Salama, Hassan Hamdan, Jumaa Abboud, Nayef Hamid, Abdel Rahman Al Dhafiri, Sofiane Bouchard from Algeria, Mamadou Thiam from Senegal, and Moroccan Walid Sebbar and Hamza Khaba.

However, the match won't be easy for Al-Arabi, as they are up against Al-Najma, the current leaders of the Lebanese League, who have not lost in their last six matches, winning five and drawing one. Al-Najma boasts a strong attacking lineup, having scored 16 goals while conceding only three.

Al-Najma's coach, Paulo Meneses, has announced his final squad for the match, with the return of goalkeeper Ali Al-Sabaa and striker Mohamed Sadiq after their absence in the first match against Al-Riffa due to injury. Key players for Nejmeh include Portuguese top scorer Jose Ambalo, international striker Qasim El-Zein, Mohamed Sadiq, Hassan Kourani, and Ukrainian midfielder Dimitro Belluno.

SOCCER

Iraq's Al-Zawraa 2-1, while Bahrain's Al-Riffa beat Al-Najma 2-0. Al-Riffa and Al-Zawraa will also face each other in Manama.

Al-Arabi are determined to secure a victory to strengthen their position in the group and move closer to securing the first qualification spot. They are motivated by their recent 4-0 victory over Khaitan in the Zain Premier League, which propelled them to second place in the standings.

Al-Arabi also rely on the support of their fans, which has been a key factor in their success in both local and international competitions. In this edition of the tournament, they aim to go far, qualify for the final rounds, and improve upon their past results.

Despite missing some key players

Al-Arabi conclude their participation

Kuwait begin quest to defend title

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

DOHA, Oct 1: The Kuwait Club's premier basketball team kick off their quest to defend its title as the Arab champions as they face their counterparts from Muharraq, Bahrain. The much-anticipated match is scheduled for 7:00 PM today at the Al-Gharafa Club hall, marking the beginning of the second round in the first group of the preliminary stage of the 35th edition of the Arab Club Championship. "White Basket," as they are affectionately known, clinched the championship in the previous edition, which took place in Kuwait. With high hopes and aspirations, the team aim for a strong start that showcases their development.

The "Sons of Kaifan" meticulously prepared for the Arab Championship, undergoing a rigorous training regimen during the initial phase, which included local training sessions and a friendly match against Bahrain's Manama. Subsequently, they embarked on an international training camp in the Serbian capital, Belgrade, lasting two weeks. During this camp, the team engaged in several friendly matches to boost their technical and physical readiness, all under the guidance of their coach, the German Peter Schumers.

"White Basket" boast a roster of exceptional local talent and professionals, featuring the Adnan brothers, Muhammad and Hamad, as well as Alex Al-Ghais, Turki Al-Shammari, and Fahd Al-Dhafiri. Additionally,

they have three international professionals in their ranks: the American Anthony Marcus Hunt, the Haitian Cadi LaLanne, and the Algerian Muhammad Maharath.

In today's Arab Club Championship action, the second group will see Al-Seeb from Oman taking on Al-Ahly of Qatar at 2:00 PM in the Qatari Al-Gharafa Club hall. Following this, the Egyptian club Al-Itihad of Alexandria will face off against Itihad Algeria at 4:30 PM, also within the same group. Meanwhile, in the

BASKETBALL

Qatari Al-Rayyan Club hall, three matches are scheduled. First up, the Iraqi League's Tigris will meet Morocco's Majd Tangier at 2:00 PM. This will be followed by a clash between Libyan Al-Itihad and Al-Ahly of Egypt at 4:30 PM, as part of the Dazzling Group competitions. Later in the evening at 7:00 PM, the Yemeni Sanaan Union will go head-to-head with their Moroccan counterparts, Salé, in the third group.

On another note, the Al-Arabi Basketball team concluded their participation in the Doha International Championship, securing an eighth-place finish after a defeat to the Filipino Miracle team with a score of 78-50. Among the standout performers for the "green" team were Hussein Al-Khabaz, who contributed 14 points along with 6 rebounds, and Abdullah Al-Ajmi, who added 12 points to the scoreboard.



Al Arabi player goes for a basket as his opponents look on.

South Korean women 'take' down China for coveted badminton gold



Qatar's Mohamad Algarni (left), approaches the finish line to win the men's 1500-meter final at the 19th Asian Games in Hangzhou, China. (AP)

South Korea, Japan advance to soccer semifinals

HANGZHOU, China, Oct 1, (AP): South Korea won the women's team singles in badminton on Sunday at the Asian Games, defeating China 3-0. An Seyoung and Kim Gaeun won their singles matches and Lee So-hee and Baek Hana teamed up in doubles to beat the sport's No. 1-ranked female pair, Chen Qingchen and Jia Yifan of China.

Lee said the team surprised itself.

"Playing in China against the Chinese pair who are also the world No. 1, I didn't expect to win," Lee said. "I thought it would

ASIAN GAMES

be a very tough match. This game was a battle of physical fitness. I didn't want to lose out in the physical energy part."

South Korea coach Kim Hak-kyun emphasized the team is much more than simply a top player like An.

"We were able to win the precious gold. This is thanks to the determination, mindset, mentality and unity of our players," Kim said.

"The biggest meaning is that we can show everyone - our athletes as a whole team - and not just An Seyoung."

South Korea and Japan advanced to the semifinals of men's soccer on Sunday. South Korea defeated China 2-0 on an 18th-minute goal by Hong Hyun-seok and another in the 35th from Song Min-kyu.

Japan won over North Korea 2-1. Kotaro Uchino scored in the 50th for Japan and Yuta Matsumura got the winner in the 80th. Kim Kuk-jin scored in the 74th for North Korea. In two other quarterfinals, Hong Kong defeated Iran 1-0, and Uzbekistan beat Saudi Arabia 2-1.

LPGA player Arpichaya Yubol of

Alvarez wins by unanimous decision

LAS VEGAS, Oct 1, (AP): There had been more than whispers that Saul "Canelo" Alvarez was well past his prime.

He put such talk to rest - for now at least - on Saturday night.

"Nobody can beat this Canelo," Alvarez said after he thoroughly dominated Jermell Charlo to retain his unified super middleweight championship.

Alvarez (60-2-2) won by scores of 119-108, 118-109 and 118-109. The statistics were just as one-sided. Alvarez landed 42 punches to Charlo's 11, almost all power punches for both boxers.

Charlo, the unified junior middleweight champ, moved up two weight classes to take on Alvarez.

"I just felt like I wasn't me in there," Charlo said. "I don't make excuses for myself, so it is what it is. I take my punches and roll with it."

Even though Charlo (35-2-1) was the one moving up, he is 4 inches taller than the 5-foot-8 Alvarez and with a 2 1/2-inch reach advantage. That didn't matter as Alvarez promised before the fight, saying his ex-



Canelo Alvarez of Mexico (right), fights Jermell Charlo in a super middleweight title boxing match in Las Vegas. (AP)

perience would prevail in the battle of 33-year-olds.

Now Charlo is ready to step back, saying he would love to take on 40-0 Terence Crawford, the reigning welterweight and super welterweight champion.

"I'll move back to 154

(pounds)," Charlo said. "This morning, I weighed like 172 or 173 pounds. I'll grandfather myself into this. I'm proud of myself. He didn't knock me out. He knocked all the other guys out. He hit me with some hard shots. I thought I got mine off."

Entering this fight, Alvarez lost by unanimous decision to Dmitry

BOXING

Bivol in May 2022, won by unanimous decision a year ago over past-his-prime Gennady Golovkin and then easily beat John Ryder in May on the scorecards.

His performance against Charlo figured to be a measuring stick on whether Alvarez could recreate some of his previous magic. There's no doubt now that he can, but the question is whether the Mexican-born fighter can sustain it.

Who he fights next is uncertain. WBC president Mauricio Sulaiman has declared David Benavidez will be his mandatory challenger for the super middleweight belt.

and the more efforts are needed from us," said Zhu Qinan, the spokesperson for the Asian Games sports operations.

China has won about four times more gold medals than its nearest competitors from Japan and South Korea, and about twice as many overall medals as each of those two teams.

Indonesia's Amellya Nur Sifa won the women's gold with silver for Gu Quanquan of China and bronze for Indonesia's Jasmine Azzahra Setyobudi. Japan took the men's final with the gold going to Asuma Nakai. Thailand's Komet Sukprasert was the silver medalist with bronze for Patrick Bren Coo of the Philippines.

It's the only medal of the games in the sport.

Thailand took the gold medal in women's golf. She shot a 19-under 269 with rounds of 67, 65, 69 and 68.

Aditi Ashof of India picked up silver, two shots back. South Korea's Yoo Hyunjo was the bronze medalist, another shot behind. Thailand also took the team gold with silver for South Korea and bronze for China.

Eila Galitsky was the only amateur on Thailand's team.

"It's an awesome experience to get to play with professional players," Galitsky said. "Being the only amateur to help them win. I'm pretty proud of that. I couldn't ask for a better team. I'm just really happy that I could be dancing every day."

Kho Taichi of Hong Kong took gold



Udinese's Martin Payero (left), vies for the ball with Genoa's Junior Messias during a Serie A soccer match between Udinese and Genoa, in Udinese's Friuli stadium, northern Italy. (AP)

Sports

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Kuwait shooting team continue to excel

Two silver medals won in trap shooting as Kuwait suffer 1st loss in handball

HANGZHOU, China, Oct 1: Kuwait's national shooting team continues to excel at the 19th Asian Games in Hangzhou, China, adding two more silver medals to their impressive tally. With these new additions, Kuwait's medal count now stands at five, consisting of one gold, three silvers, and a bronze.

Talal Al-Rashidi, a champion in his own right, secured the silver medal in the individual trap competition. His remarkable performance saw him hitting an impressive 45 out of 50 plates during the final stage. Unfortunately, his teammate Khaled Al-Mudhaf finished in sixth place, hitting 21 out of 25 plates, while Abdul Rahman Al-Faihan was unable to advance to the final due to the tournament's rule that restricts participation to a maximum of two players from the same country.

SHOOTING

Kuwait's national shooting team, represented by Khaled Al-Mudhaf, Talal Al-Rashidi and Abdul-Rahman Al-Faihan, also clinched the silver medal in the team trap competition, amassing a total score of 359 out of 375.

In the women's shooting competition, Shahad Al-Hawal competed valiantly but ultimately finished in fifth place in the final, ranking 21st out of 30 overall. Her fellow shooters, Sarah Al-Hawal and Hajar Abdul-Malik, were eliminated during the qualifying stage.

Talal Al-Rashidi, expressing his joy over the achievement of winning silver medals in both the individual and team trap competitions, dedicated his victories to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad,



The shooting champions display their silver medals as they pose with Duaj Al-Otaibi.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Meshaal Al-Ahmad, the Prime Minister, and the people of Kuwait.

Meanwhile, the national handball team faced their first loss in the tournament against the Bahraini team, with a score of 25-34. Despite this setback, they secured a spot in the semi-finals, where they will face the

top-ranked Qatar team.

On the track, Yaqoub Al-Youha advanced to the final of the 110-meter hurdles race by securing first place in the qualifiers with a time of 13.69 seconds. Madawi Al-Shammari, competing in the 200-meter race qualifiers, finished fourth, setting a new season record with a time of 23.83 seconds.

In individual squash competitions, Abdullah Al-Muzain and Ammar Al-Tamimi advanced to the round of 16 by defeating their opponents, while in archery, the national team concluded their participation in the Olympic bow qualifiers.

Fatima Hayat, a member of the Kuwait Olympic Committee and

the delegation director at the Asian Games, expressed her satisfaction with the technical prowess demonstrated by the national handball team, highlighting their remarkable journey to the semi-finals. She commended the team's performance against formidable opponents and recognized the potential of young talents within the Blue

Hand team, emphasizing their promising future. Hayat affirmed the team's continued support and special preparations for the upcoming crucial stages of the competition. She also applauded the achievements of Kuwait's national shooting team, who have added to Kuwait's medal count with their exceptional performances.

Impressive haul of 19 medals for Kuwait in gymnastics

BUDAPEST, Oct 1: Kuwait junior rhythmic gymnastics team showcased their talent and dedication at the Hungarian International Championship, securing an impressive total of 19 medals. Their exceptional performance included 6 gold, 6 silver, and 7 bronze medals, earned through fierce competition with athletes representing elite nations in the sport, including Estonia, Slovakia, Lithuania, Austria, Venezuela, Egypt, and the host nation, Hungary.

GYMNASTICS

Under the guidance of Ukrainian coach Irina Kovalchuk, the team's medals were a testament to the skill and determination of young athletes Sarah Al-Bannai, Raya Al-Qassar, Nabila Al-Kharafi, Layan Behbehani, and Talia Behbehani, all of whom participated in the first-level competitions.

The achievements were as follows:

■ Sarah Al-Bannai (born in 2012) clinched two gold medals in the hoop and ribbon events, as well as two silver medals in the general individual and the ball competition.

■ Raya Al-Qassar (born in 2013) displayed her prowess with two gold medals in the freestyle and ball routines, along with a silver in the general individual and a bronze in the ball event.

■ Nabila Al-Kharafi (born in 2013) demonstrated her skill by securing two silver medals in the mace and freestyle disciplines, in addition to a bronze in the hoop category.

■ Layan Behbehani (born in 2011) claimed a gold medal in the ribbon routine, a silver in the ball event, and two bronze medals in the mace and general individual performances.

■ Talia Behbehani (born in 2014) showcased her talent with a gold medal in the freestyle routine, as well as three bronze medals in the ball, hoop, and overall individual categories.

The exceptional achievements of these young gymnasts are a source of pride and inspiration, reflecting their dedication to the sport and their promising futures in rhythmic gymnastics.



Rhythmic gymnastics champions pose with their coach.

Scotland rout Romania to set up Ireland showdown at World Cup

LILLE, France, Oct 1, (AP): Scotland confirmed the showdown it craves with Ireland for a place in the Rugby World Cup quarterfinals after routing hapless Romania 84-0 on Saturday.

Top-ranked Ireland leads Pool B but it could possibly fail to reach the quarterfinals if it loses to Scotland next Saturday at Stade de France.

How many of the Scots who ran rings around the Romanians will face Ireland is debatable, though. Scotland rested 13 front-liners, who watched in comfort at Stade Pierre-Mauroy as their squad mates racked up 12 converted tries, 11 of them converted by Ben Healy, who added a try for a 27-point haul in his Rugby World Cup debut.

Ireland had its bye this weekend

and will have had two weeks rest by the time it lines up against Scotland to determine both their fates.

Coach Gregor Townsend praised his players for "a professional job," and relished having Ireland next.

"This gives us really good momentum ahead of our biggest game of the World Cup," he said. "It's a real credit to the 23 tonight and sets up whoever plays against Ireland with a lot of positivity. We've got to produce probably our best performance of the year, one of our best-ever performances. It'll be a cracking game, Stade de France full of Scotland and Ireland fans."

Slippery wing Darcy Graham beat 14 defenders to become the second Scot to score four tries in a Rugby World Cup match, after Gavin Hastings in 1995 against Ivory Coast.

Dominguez's debut goal earns point for 10-man Forest

Referees' governing body admits significant human error after Liverpool defeat at Spurs

LONDON, Oct 1, (AP): The referees' governing body in England admitted a "significant human error" after Luis Diaz had a goal ruled offside in Liverpool's 2-1 loss at Tottenham in the Premier League.

Diaz struck what he thought was a 34th-minute goal in the match at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium, only for it to be ruled out.

The Professional Game Match Officials Limited (PGMOL) later admitted the mistake.

"The goal by Luiz Diaz was disallowed for offside by the on-field team of match officials," it said in a statement. "This was a clear and obvious factual error and should have resulted in the goal being awarded through VAR intervention, however, the VAR failed to intervene."

The PGMOL said it would conduct a full review into the matter.

That does not help Liverpool after it missed the chance to move to the top of the table following Manchester City's surprising 2-1 loss to Wolverhampton earlier.

"We will not get points for it so it doesn't help. Nobody expects 100% right decisions on field but we all thought when VAR comes in that it might make things easier," Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp said.

Joel Matip's own-goal deep into stoppage time handed Tottenham the win in a game that also saw Liverpool reduced to nine men.

Liverpool looked set to hold on for a draw before Matip turned Pedro Porro's low cross into his own net in the sixth minute of added-on time.

The visitors had Curtis Jones sent off in the 26th minute for a reckless challenge on Yves Bissouma and had to play the last 20 minutes, plus stoppage time, with nine men after substitute Diogo Jota picked up two yellow cards in quick succession.

Liverpool would have gone top of the standings with a win. Tottenham moves up to second, overtaking the Merseyside club.

Jones was shown a red card after a VAR review. He was initially given a

yellow card by referee Simon Hooper after he caught Bissouma late in a tackle but it was upgraded after the official consulted the pitchside monitor.

Replays showed Jones had gone over the ball and connected with his studs into Bissouma's shin, which resulted in VAR calling for a review.

Tottenham opened the scoring in the 36th minute through Son Heung-min. Maddison played through Richarlison on the left and he squared for Son to tap home for his sixth goal of the season.

Two minutes earlier, the offside flag denied Liverpool when Diaz rifled into the bottom corner, but was ruled to be marginally offside.

Liverpool hit back in the fourth minute of first-half stoppage time when Virgil van Dijk's header across goal was controlled by Cody Gakpo, who turned and fired past Guglielmo Vicario.

Gakpo had been down moments earlier after he was caught by Des-

tiny Udogie and appeared in pain following the goal, but was eventually fine to carry on.

Liverpool was dealt another blow when Jota was sent off. He was cautioned by Hooper for a late tackle on Udogie in the 68th minute and within 120 seconds had received another yellow card for catching Udogie again.

Despite Liverpool being down to nine, Tottenham initially made little impact against a compact defense - Richarlison headed straight at goalkeeper Alisson early in added time - and Liverpool had chances to find a winning goal on the counter before Matip's own-goal decided the game.

Nicolas Dominguez scored his first goal for 10-man Nottingham Forest

SOCCER

as the hosts held on for a 1-1 draw against Brentford.

Things looked bleak for Forest when it went down to 10 men just before the hour at the City Ground with Moussa Niakhate picking up a second yellow card, and the immediately conceding to Christian Norgaard from the resulting free kick.

But Forest rallied and Argentina international Dominguez leveled seven minutes later in the 65th with a looping header that Bees goalkeeper Mark Flekken appeared to misjudge.

Forest was able to see out the remaining 35 minutes with relative comfort to maintain its unbeaten start to the season at home.

The draw means Brentford has now gone five games without a win as its tricky start to the campaign continues.

There was a change to the match officials' lineup after Darren England was dropped as fourth official following his mistake on Saturday night when, as VAR in Tottenham's game against Liverpool, he failed to act properly in overturning the decision to rule out Luis Diaz's goal for offside.



Tottenham's Cristian Romero controls the ball challenged by Liverpool's Luis Diaz during the English Premier League soccer match between Tottenham Hotspur and Liverpool at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium, in London, England. (AP)