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KUWAIT MEDICAL SECTOR, SCHOOLS IN SOLIDARITY WITH PALESTINE

Vicious ... Nowhere is safe

KUNA photo

Elementary school students in Kuwait show their support to the Palestinian people.

Opinion

To the Israeli government, Jewish people ... Come to common terms

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

WHEN the late Libyan freedom fighter Omar Al-Mukhtar was told, "Italy has planes that we do not have," he replied, "Do their planes fly above or below the throne?"

They replied, "Under it", and he replied, "He who is above the throne is with us, so let those who are below him not frighten us."

In this spirit, Al-Mukhtar's revolution was able to overcome the Italian invasion of Libya years later. Even though the occupation authority executed the man, it was not able to implement the idea of national liberation. This applies to what is happening in Palestine, particularly in Gaza today, especially after the horrific massacre committed by Israel in the National Baptist Hospital the day before yesterday.

The Jews are known to have no covenants; therefore everything they do these days is part of their arrogance.

When Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings Be Upon Him) migrated to Madinah, he made peace with them, but they broke it, which caused them to be expelled from it. Historically, Arabs and Muslims have always extended their hand to peace, but they are always met with Israeli intransigence. This is due to the fact that their basic idea is based on what Levi Eshkol said in 1967 when he was asked about what might happen to Israel after the war.

He said, "Every ten years we wage war with the Arabs and take some land from them, but they forget what we got and demand new lands. This is how we will remain until we establish the Jewish state over all of the so-called Palestine."

Also, they do not have any covenants even with the prophets. According to a verse in the Holy Quran, to Allah's Prophet Moses (Peace Be Upon Him), they said, "O Moses, as long as they are in the land, we shall never go there. Go with your Lord to fight them but we shall stay where we are." According to what they said, they have tyrannically strengthened people there.

Hence, we ask every Israeli, regardless of his background and whether he is extremist or centrist - Has Israel been able to secure stability for itself since 1948 until today? Did it really extend its hand for peace, or was it exploiting every incident to start a war with the Arabs and Palestinians?

When the Irgun and Stern Gang Zionist militias committed the Deir Yassin massacre, they relied on psychological warfare to intimidate the Palestinians and expel them from their land, and they succeeded in doing so.

The idea was hence entrenched in the military mentality, that the only solution is to carry out massacres to humiliate the Arabs and prevent them from thinking about returning to the occupied territories.

On the other hand, it worked to brainwash the Europeans. In 1967, after the atrocities it committed in Egypt, Syria, and the occupied Palestinian territories, it presented itself as the victim.

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Email: ahmed@aljarallah.com

Follow me on:

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ahmedaljarallah@gmail.com

Newswatch

KUWAIT CITY: Representative of His Highness the Amir **Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah**, His Highness the Crown Prince **Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah** will head to **Riyadh, Saudi Arabia,** on Friday to participate in the GCC-ASEAN summit. (KUNA)

❑ ❑ ❑

KUWAIT CITY: Kuwait's Embassy in the **United Kingdom** and **Northern Ireland** urged its nationals on Thursday to exercise caution, heed local authorities' instructions, and steer clear from arbitrary assemblies.

The embassy, in a statement received by KUNA asked Kuwaiti nationals to preserve their own safety and refrain from becoming involved in any controversy or topics not related to main objectives of tourism, healthcare, or education.

It also asked citizens to reach out in case of emergency on the following numbers:

Emergency number: (+442075903400)

Whatsapp text messages service: (+447988229622). (KUNA)

❑ ❑ ❑

IRBIL: The **US** army said they had intercepted two drone attacks west and north Iraq.

In a statement on Thursday, the US army said that the attacks were executed with three drones in the past 24 hours, near locations of the US army and the alliance soldiers.

The first attack was in west Iraq with two drones, where the alliance army was slightly injured, while the other in the north did not cause injuries or damage, the statement said. (KUNA)

❑ ❑ ❑

ISLAMABAD: A court in **Pakistan** on Thursday granted several days of protection from arrest to former Prime Minister **Nawaz Sharif** in graft cases, clearing the way for him to return home from self-imposed exile in **London**, where he went in 2019 for medical treatment.

The decision by the Islamabad High Court is a major boost for Sharif and his party and comes two days before he is to return to Pakistan ahead of parliamentary elections in January as the country faces deepening political and economic turmoil.

Sharif has been a fugitive from justice since failing to appear before a Pakistan court in 2019. He traveled from London to **Saudi Arabia** last week and is to return home on a special plane from Dubai on Saturday, according to his Pakistan Muslim League party.

Sharif stepped down as prime minister in 2017 after being convicted of corruption. Two years later, facing further graft charges, he complained of chest pains and was granted permission by his successor, **Imran Khan**, to travel to London for medical treatment following a court order.

Sharif prolonged his stay in London, saying his doctors were not allowing him to travel. (AP)

Palestinians evacuate wounded from a building destroyed in Israeli bombardment in Khan Younis, Gaza Strip, Thursday, Oct. 19, 2023. (AP)

Fury over brutal hospital attack spreads across Mideast

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and **Agencies**

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 19: The Ministry of Health organized a solidarity stand in support of the Palestinian people following the brutal Zionist attack on the health facilities in the Gaza Strip and the bombing of the National Baptist Hospital, the European Hospital and other hospitals, which were crowded with martyrs and wounded, including thousands of children, women, the elderly and defenseless civilians.

The solidarity stance comes as an affirmation of Kuwait's position of support and assistance to the Palestinian people who are being subjected to the Zionist aggression in the Gaza Strip, and a victory for the doctors, all the medical staff working in the hospital, and the patients and martyrs.

The Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi issued instructions yesterday to organize a solidarity stand in all health facilities and sectors, including general hospitals, specialized centers, primary health care centers, and medical emergencies, after the attack on the Baptist Hospital, which claimed the lives of hundreds of martyrs and wounded, including the displaced and patients, as a result of the brutal bombing of the Zionist aggression.

Hundreds of doctors, nurses, administrators and officials from all sectors of the Ministry of Health participated in the protest, each at his or her workplace. Based on the directives of Minister Al-Awadhi, the protest lasted for 15 minutes in a way that suits the workflow and does not affect the provision of health services to patients and visitors.

A number of doctors and officials expressed their strong condemnation and rejection of the brutal and deliberate practices of the Zionist entity to target and bomb health facilities, which is a clear violation of international laws and various war and human rights conventions.

The official spokesman of the Ministry of Health Dr. Abdullah Al-Sanad affirmed that targeting civilians and health personnel is a blatant violation of all agreements, regulations and laws regulating armed conflicts.

He said, "What took the United Nations about 50 years to enact these laws was undermined by the occupation in one week, and is being undermined every day. Today we in the Ministry of Health, through this stand, express our support for the Palestinian people in the clear violations they face. What hurts them hurts us and what they suffer from affects us too. Therefore, these crowds of health teams came to support the health teams and civilians who were targeted in the Gaza Strip, and to support the martyrs and all the defenseless and vulnerable people in the world who fall under the scourge of wars and the military machine that does not differentiate between a civilian and a warrior."

Dr. Al-Sanad expressed appreciation for the official position of the State of Kuwait, as well as the diplomatic role played by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs locally and in various international forums to send the voice of the people, humanity and justice to the whole world.

In this regard, the Director of Farwaniya Health Zone Dr. Muhammad Al-Rashidi presented the position of the Kuwaiti government and people in supporting the Palestinian cause and the people of Palestine against the Zionist entity.

Continued on Page 3

KUNA photo

Medical staff in Kuwait stood for 15 minutes on Thursday in a show of solidarity and support with the Palestinian people.

Kuwait and Iran tackle Khor Abdullah, maritime borders

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 19: Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah held a series of talks with his Iranian, Turkish, Pakistani and Indonesian counterparts, on the sidelines of the extraordinary meeting of the Executive Committee of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation member states, which was held in Jeddah, reports Al-Rai daily.

During the meeting with the Foreign Minister of the friendly Islamic Republic of Iran, Dr. Hossein Amir Abdullahian, developments in the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories and the Gaza Strip were discussed, as well as current developments in the region, especially the repercussions related to the incorrect historical facts in the decision of the Federal Supreme Court in the Republic of Iraq regarding the Khor Abdullah Agreement.

The issue of completing the demarcation of the Kuwaiti-Iraqi maritime borders beyond Mark No. 162, as well as the necessity of ending the demarcation of the maritime borders between the State of Kuwait and Iran were also touched upon.

ENVIRONMENT

OTHER VOICES

Ever wondered about sustainable architecture?

By Jude Bashar Al Huneidi

What exactly is sustainable architecture?

Sustainable architecture is the use of design strategies that reduce the negative environmental impact from the built environment. To put it more simply, it is to build homes, offices, hotels or any other structures without damaging the environment surrounding it. Now you might be thinking, is this it? Well, it might sound simple if we put it in this way, but sustainable architecture is much more complex in terms of bringing the idea to reality. Yes, it might sound easy to encourage engineers and people around the world to advocate for such an environment friendly solution, but there are many complications that can arise such as the financial and economic situations of the countries that people are advocating in.

However, in today's article, we are going to focus on one country that has almost everything to start with sustainable architecture. This country is nonother than Kuwait.

How can sustainable architecture be implemented in Kuwait?

To start off, Kuwait is one of the richest countries in the whole world, with high-income economy backed up by the world's sixth largest oil reserves. With, Kuwait has a high opportunity to implement the nature of sustainable architecture anytime soon. So, how exactly can people help with the execution of this idea? Here are some ways to improve sustainable architecture:

1. Use Low-Impact Building Materials 2. Add Cool Roofs 3. Install Renewable Energy Systems 4. Add a Rainwater Harvesting System 5. Engage in Modular Conduction Practices/Preserving green space /optimizing natural lighting,

For most people who aren't engineers or architects, these may seem hardly reachable to say the least. Suppose you are just a student or a regular worker who is not in the field of architecture, what can you do to help? One of the most effective ways that you can do to help is by spreading the word. Tell your coworkers, your fellow classmates and your family members about this. Educate them. Show them articles like these and help them understand the advantages and consequences of doing this for our environment. This is an extremely easy thing to do and can help the whole eco system plants, animals ,sea life and life resources one day. Not only that, but you can form support groups and open GoFundMe pages to support your idea and get the attention of government officials or just high authority figures who will hear you out.

Why do we need sustainable architecture?

The main question remains...why? Why is it so important to implement this idea into countries like Kuwait that are doing good economically? The reason is right in front of our eyes. Sustainability in any situation has never backfired on anyone. It is extremely energy efficient as well as create a cleaner environment around us without the usage of non-renewable resources. According to many research scientists, 50% of the greenhouse emissions in a country are due to construction. There are 195 countries today and imagine if all of them practiced sustainable architecture? The world would become a much cleaner place and the people can get healthier as well. We should start thinking about the future generations and what it would mean if we keep using up non-renewable resources as well as contributing to the destruction of the ozone layer and increased global warming. Countries like Kuwait have a lot of resources to start improving the world today and we should be encouraging this instead of turning a blind eye as if we are not affected by the situation.

In the next years, climate change will undoubtedly affect Kuwait and other nations. Kuwait has poor air quality due to its oil sector and dust storms. Kuwait's coastline location in the Arabian Gulf makes it vulnerable to rising sea levels.

Rising water temperatures could drive fish away from Kuwait, hurting its fishing sector. Kuwait is already water-scarce. Climate change may increase droughts, which could hurt the nation.

Think about it. Your future kids, young nieces, nephews and even you yourself could be affected by a bad planet in the future just because you choose to ignore the problem today. If you really want a world where you won't have to think about the day it will collapse,

I strongly urge you to share this article with people around you as well as use your voice to change the way things are for a better future.

Jude Bashar Al Huneidi, an 11th-grade student, is a shining star in the academic and creative realms. Within the hallowed halls of the Al-Bayan Chapter of The National Honor Society at her high school, Jude has consistently achieved excellence, earning a coveted place on the high honor roll throughout her high school journey.

Yet, her dedication to knowledge and creativity transcends the confines of traditional classrooms. Jude has actively sought to expand her horizons in the realms of architecture, photography, and design through participation in esteemed summer camps. Her journey began in the summer of 2021 when she delved into the world of architecture at the Boston Architecture College. In 2022, she embarked on a captivating exploration of architecture at the University of Southern California. And in 2023, she honed her skills further with a focus on digital photography at The American School in Switzerland.

Jude's impressive academic achievements and unwavering passion for the arts not only make her a standout student but also a promising talent with a brilliant future ahead.

editor's choice

Prayer Timings

Fajr	04:32	Asr	14:48
Sunrise	05:51	Maghrib	17:14
Zohr	11:33	Isha	18:31

Local

Weather

Expected weather for the next 24 hours:

By Day: Hot and partly cloudy with light to moderate northwesterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 10-32 km/h.

By Night: Mild, relatively humid over coastal areas and partly cloudy with light variable wind to light to moderate northwesterly wind, with speeds of 08-28 km/h.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	38	28
Kuwait Airport	38	28
Abdaly	39	25
Jahra	39	27
Salmiyah	32	29
Ahmadi	32	30
Nuwaisib	36	23
Wafra	36	22

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

Cut oil supply to Israel supporters, says MP

Proposal to dismiss envoys to Arab countries

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 19: In response to the ongoing Israeli attacks on Gaza, MP Hamdan Al-Azmi revealed that he, along with several of his colleagues, intends to submit a proposal to the Arab Parliament to hold an exceptional session for discussing the procedures to be taken concerning the Israeli attacks.

Al-Azmi said the proposal will include suggestions for Arab countries to suspend supplying the USA and the West with oil, and to dismiss the American ambassadors to Arab countries due to their support towards Israel.

In a related context, the number of MPs who announced their support for the call of MP Abdul Kareem Al-Kandari to not receive the new US Ambassador to Kuwait Karen Sasahara has increased to seven so far, including Al-Kandari. These MPs are Abdul Kareem Al-Kandari, Jarrah Al-Fawzan, Abdul Hadi Al-Ajmi, Abdulaziz Al-Saqaabi, Hamad Al-Matar, Mubarak Al-Tasha and Bader Al-Nashmi.

Meanwhile, MPs Shuaib Shaaban, Muhalhel Al-Mudhaf, Hani Shams, Osama Al-Zaid and Hamad Al-Medlej submitted a bill to amend law No. 21/1964 for boycotting Israel. The bill adds two new articles to the aforementioned law. The first article bans individuals and legal bodies in Kuwait from showing sympathy towards Israel or its citizens. It also bans dealing with global brands that show sympathy towards Israel.

The bill amends article 6 of the above mentioned law to be as follows: "Whoever is convicted of violating articles 1, 1(bis), 2 and 3 of this law will punished by three to ten years of jail term with hard labor, and judge can impose a fine of maximum KD 5,000. In case the convicted is a legal body, the relevant official at that legal body will be subject to the punishment. In all cases, the seized equipment and vehicles used to commit the crimes, if any, will be confiscated".

Furthermore, parliament's Committee for Foreign Affairs invited MPs, civil society organizations and citizens to attend a meeting that is scheduled to be held on Sunday, October 22, 2023 to discuss the ongoing Israeli attack on Gaza.

The committee explained that, in order to ensure the meeting is not limited to statements of condemnation and for the meeting to result in practical procedures, the committee will discuss the bills and proposals for toughening the penalties against those convicted of violating law No. 21/1964 on boycotting Israel as well as providing ideas to expose the Zionist occupation crimes as a step to globally isolate Israel.

In another development, MP Mubarak Al-Tasha disclosed that he received a copy of the report prepared by the State Audit Bureau (SAB) addressing the Ministry of Public Works.

He explained that the report included the refusal of SAB to approve the tenders floated by the Ministry of Public Works for international contracting companies to execute road maintenance in Jahra and Hawally governorates.

According to the report, the reasons behind the disapproval are the discovery of major violations concerning the procedures for settling tenders in favor of specific companies, and the large gap between the offered prices and the estimated value determined by the ministry.

Al-Tasha went on to explain that the report exposes the great failure of the Minister of Public Works Dr. Amani Buqamaz to manage the file of road maintenance, as well as the way she manipulates citizens' feelings through her repetitive promises to complete the maintenance process soon in a perfect manner. After a period of one year, SAB issued this report, which is in support of his position regarding Dr. Buqamaz based on which he had earlier filed a grilling motion against her.

He stressed that Dr. Buqamaz must be held responsible, and she must face the grilling motion, insisting that she cannot escape questioning by submitting her resignation.

In addition, the National Assembly Speaker Ahmad Al-Saadoun sent a cable of congratulations to the Speaker of Saudi Consultative Council Dr. Abdullah Bin Muhammad Al-Shaikh on the ninth anniversary of his assumption of the office of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud.

Al-Saadoun praised the efforts exerted by King Salman Al-Saud in the interest of his nation as well as the interest of all Arab and Muslim nations.

He hailed the progress and advancement that Saudi Arabia is currently witnessing under the rule of King Salman and with the help of His Highness the Crown Prince and Prime Minister Prince Muhammad Bin Salman.

Al-Saadoun wished the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia further prosperity and advancement.

KUNA photo

Crowds chant slogans from 'Al-Irada Square' near the Parliament building in support of Palestine and in solidarity with the Gaza Strip.

Leaders congratulate Saudi King

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 19, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent Thursday a cable to Custodian of the two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud of Saudi Arabia, congratulating him on the 9th anniversary of assuming office.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir praised the brotherly relations that the two countries share and commended all the accomplishments the Kingdom have achieved, wishing the King good health and the kingdom further development and Prosperity under his reign.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Thursday, sent a cable to Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud of Saudi Arabia, congratulating him on the 9th anniversary of assuming office.

In the cable, His Highness the Crown Prince praised the brotherly relations that the two countries share and commended all the accomplishments the Kingdom have achieved.

His Highness the Crown Prince wished the Saudi King good health and the kingdom further development and prosperity.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, on Thursday, sent a cable to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud of Saudi Arabia congratulating him on the 9th anniversary of assuming office.

Kuwait categorically rejects coercive Palestinian ouster

BAGHDAD, Iraq, Oct 19, (KUNA): Kuwait National Assembly delegation participating at the 35th emergency conference of the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) asserted on Wednesday that it categorically rejects the coercive eviction of Palestinians in northern Gaza, and the destruction rained down on civilian cities.

The delegation reaffirmed Kuwait's steadfast stance by the just Palestinian cause saying that it allows no room for neutrality or attempts of normalizing ties with the Zionist entity.

Head of the Parliamentary Caucus, MP Dr. Mohammad Al-Mahan in speech at the conference called for urgent communication between world parliaments to rally support for the Palestinian case.

Al-Mahan indicated that the international community and the Security Council must take responsibility for civilian protection, putting an end to military escalation, and allowing urgent and medical humanitarian assistance to arrive immediately unblocked.

MP Fahad bin Jame', on his part, described the catastrophic situation in Palestine, saying that the Palestinians are subjected to atrocious air strikes, intensified raids, with no shelter, water, food or electricity, and an imminent land incursion looming ahead.

He stated that the Israeli occupation machine of destruction is supported by the west, military politically financially and the media, paying no heed to humanitarian values, principles of morality or legitimacy.

Vicious ... Nowhere

Continued from Page 1

He stressed the importance of the protest and solidarity stance to express the strength of the various people and institutions, and their support for their brothers in the Gaza Strip.

Dr. Al-Rashidi said the solidarity stance is the least the medical body can do to support doctors and defenseless civilians in the Gaza Strip, and denounce the injustice and violation inflicted on them, including extermination, isolation, and cutting off all aid and means of communication and life, such as electricity, water, and fuel.

He said, "What happened at the Baptist Hospital is contrary to all international, doctrinal, and religious covenants."

In addition, the Director of Farwaniya Hospital Dr. Ali Al-Mutairi strongly rejected and condemned the Zionist entity's continued massacres and the worst types of murder, genocide, severe bombing they carried out against innocent civilians, and targeting various health facilities such as the Baptist Hospital and the European Hospital.

He appreciated the position of the Kuwaiti political leadership in championing and supporting the Palestinian cause.

Meanwhile, schools all over the country stood in solidarity on Thursday with Palestine by raising flags and holding posters during the morning assembly.

Students also held up pictures and wore the traditional Palestinian Kufiya scarf in support of Palestine, denouncing the horrific actions of the Israeli occupation forces, which resulted in the death of 3,500 martyrs and 12,000 injured.

Acting Undersecretary of the Educational Development and Activities Sector in the Ministry of Education, Dr. Ghanim Al-Sulaimani said in a press release that the Ministry of Education issued a statement for schools to show support with Palestine during the morning assembly by organizing activities that educates the students regarding this cause.

In this regard, Mariya Al-Qutbia Girls High School held an exhibition that displayed the Palestinian map and Al-Aqsa holy mosque, as well as arts and pictures expressing the Palestinians right to defend their land.

On Wednesday evening, large numbers of Kuwaiti people and expatriate residents gathered at Al-Erada square, close to the National Assembly in Kuwait City, in solidarity with the Palestinian people who face a brutal attacks by the Israeli occupation forces.

The demonstrators, including MPs, politicians, public figures and representatives of non-profit societies, chanted slogans and carried banners in support of Palestine.

They vehemently condemned the atrocities being perpetrated by the war machine of the Israeli occupation in a blatant contravention of all international laws and norms.

Speakers at the gathering reaffirmed Kuwait's principled stance supportive of the Palestine question and the struggle of the Palestinian people for regaining their legitimate rights fully.

Israeli airstrikes pounded locations across the Gaza Strip early Thursday, including parts of the south that Israel had declared as safe zones, heightening fears among more than 2 million Palestinians trapped in the territory that nowhere was safe.

In the nearly two weeks since a devastating Hamas rampage in southern Israel, the Israeli military has relentlessly attacked Gaza in response. Even after Israel told Palestinians to evacuate the north and head to what it called "safe zones" in the south, strikes continued across the territory overnight and Palestinian militants continued firing rockets into Israel.

A residential building in Khan Younis, a city in southern Gaza where hundreds of thousands of Palestinians had sought shelter, was among the places hit. Medical personnel at Nasser Hospital said they received at least 12 dead and 40 wounded.

The bombardments came after Israel agreed Wednesday to allow Egypt to deliver limited humanitarian aid to Gaza, the first crack in a punishing 11-day siege. Many among Gaza's 2.3 million residents are down to one meal a day and drinking dirty water.

The announcement of a plan to bring water, food and other supplies into Gaza came as fury over a Tuesday night explosion at Gaza City's al-Ahli Hospital spread across the Middle East. There were conflicting claims of who was behind the blast, which health authorities in Hamas-run Gaza said had killed hundreds of Palestinians.

Hamas officials in Gaza blamed an Israeli airstrike. Israel denied it was involved and released a flurry of video, audio and other information that it said showed the blast was caused by a rocket misfire by Islamic Jihad, another militant group operating in Gaza. Islamic Jihad dismissed the Israeli claim.

The Associated Press has not independently verified any of the claims or evidence.

U.S. President Joe Biden, who visited Israel on Wednesday, said data from his Defense Department showed the explosion was not likely caused by an Israeli airstrike. The White House later said an analysis of "overhead imagery, intercepts and open-source information" showed Israel was not behind the attack. But the U.S. continues to collect evidence.

Video from the scene showed the hospital grounds strewn with torn bodies, many of them young children. Hundreds of wounded were rushed to Gaza City's main hospital, where doctors already facing critical supply shortages were sometimes forced to perform surgery on the floors, without anesthesia.

To the Israeli

Continued from Page 1

On that day, the Frenchman Salvatore Adamo sang his famous song, "God willing," in which he said, "The Israeli is a bird of peace, and the Arab is chasing him with a rifle to kill him."

The Israelis rejected all the opportunities they were given for peace. After the Camp David agreement in 1977, the Israeli army launched the first invasion of Lebanon in 1978. That is, after every agreement, Tel Aviv works to abort the treaties, which returns the situation back to square one.

I remember when US President Ronald Reagan met with King Fahad bin Abdulaziz, who was the Crown Prince at that time, he said the Arabs do not want peace, and they did not present an initiative in this regard.

When Israel extended its hand to them for peace, that day Saudi Arabia presented the first peace initiative at the Fez Conference in 1981. So what was the Israeli response? First rejection, and then it went on to invade Lebanon and occupy its capital. In 2002, Saudi Arabia presented the second initiative, but Israel rejected that as well.

The circumstances are now changing. Today, the Arabs are more numerous, more powerful, and have their own wealth. Therefore, Israel has no choice but to be convinced that the blood of innocents does not bring it peace.

Like what President Abdul-Fattah el-Sisi said recently, "Genocide will not be Israel's path to peace, as today's overwhelming popular anger cannot be predicted."

Returning to what Omar Al-Mukhtar said, and how the Italians were expelled from Libya, and in accordance with the words of Almighty Allah - "...Those who thought that they would meet Allah said, 'How often, with Allah's permission, have small groups defeated the large ones?' God is with those who exercise patience."

Throughout history, the Crusaders occupied Jerusalem for about two centuries, until the Muslims had a great leader Salah-ad-Din Yusuf ibn-Ayyub who, when he was victorious, bid farewell to the defeated Richard the Lionheart by saying, "We hope that you will come to us as a pilgrim and not an invader."

The government of Israel today must reflect on all of that history if it wants to enjoy peace and accept the establishment of a neighboring Palestinian state, so that the region can live in peace.

The countries of the region look forward to the long-awaited development, and for the Israeli people to be a partner in it.

The Middle East has room for everyone, it has lots of good in it, and its Arab people enjoy a high economic and industrial culture, as well as significant international relations and common interests.

Youths urged to search for private sector jobs

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 19, (KUNA): Minister of Education, and Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr. Adel Al-Manea encouraged Thursday youths to look for job opportunities in the private sector as they are varied.

This came in a remark to reporters on the sidelines of opening the sixth exhibition of job and study opportunities organized by the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET), in cooperation with "my job" fair, with the participation of 120 government agencies.

The minister, who is also the sponsor of the exhibition, said the event is a good chance to help fresh graduates be briefed on labor market.

The exhibition was opened with a panel discussion on "labor market and job opportunities" in which acting deputy head of manpower affairs Najat Yusuf, and acting undersecretary of Civil Service Commission Diaa Al-Qabandi.

The participants highlighted some problems facing fresh graduates at labor market topped with reluctance of private sector's jobs and being unware of the requirements of labor market.

They suggested some solutions including enacting some laws that will enable researchers to be acquainted with job opportunities in the public and private sectors, and duties and rights as well as attracting global companies and establishing production lines to recruit youths.

Meanwhile, Hassan Al-Fajjam, head of PAAET, told reporters that the authority is keen on holding this exhibition and seeking to create job opportunities for graduates mainly in the private sector.

He appealed to youths to be acquainted with job and study opportunities at the exhibition.

Al Khashti with Zain officials at the company's booth.

Zain showcased its leading experience in the local telecom sector.

Company keen on attracting national talents.

'27 MPW supervisors to retire'

By Mohammed Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 19: The Minister of Public Works Dr. Amani Bouqmaz issued a ministerial decision today to refer to retirement 27 supervisors who were eligible for a retirement pension and had completed their service period in the ministry.

Meanwhile, reliable sources called on the minister of public works to expedite the filling of 53 vacant supervisory positions in the various sectors of the ministry in order to infuse new blood into the work sectors and support decision-making that is in the interest of work. This is especially in consideration of the fact that the Ministry of Public Works is one of the important ministries that implements billion-dollar projects, and its supervisors and leaders need job stability in their positions.

The sources explained that 337 employees had applied for the aforementioned supervisory positions, of whom 164 employees had passed the test.

They stressed the necessity of completing the confirmation procedures for those who have passed the tests and personal interviews by the Employment Affairs Committee.

In a related context, the sources indicated that there are six leadership positions as well as the position of undersecretary who are still assigned and require Minister Bouqmaz to resolve their position by nominating and confirming them as principals so that they can carry out the tasks assigned to them, especially managing and following up on the projects that fall under each sector.

'Urgent need…'

Two mosques to open today

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

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 19: The Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs announced that it has received from the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) two new mosques in Block 1 and Block 4 of the city of Mutla. These mosques will be opened today, Friday, and the Friday prayers will be held, making it the first prayer held in the two mosques. It will be followed by receiving the rest of the mosques in the area successively.

The ministry's official spokesman Salman Al-Kandari said, "Based on the directives of the Minister of Information and Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Abdul Rahman Al-Mutairi, there is an urgent need to receive the mosques from the relevant authorities in the city of Mutla. They will be provided with all the necessary services for the comfort of worshipers, with follow-up from the Undersecretary of the ministry Dr. Bader Al-Mutairi out of keen concern for the houses of Allah the Almighty that the country abounds with".

He stressed the ministry's keenness to achieve its plan and vision of global leadership in Islamic work, adding that taking care of mosques and providing all services for the comfort of worshipers to perform their worship is considered one of the ministry's most important goals.

Company supports 2nd 'Watheefti'

Zain seeks to bolster national workforce in the private sector

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 19: Continuing to actively support and participate in career fairs to bolster the national workforce in the private sector, Zain today announces its main sponsorship of the second edition of Watheefti, Kuwait's biggest career gathering. The event is held at the Arena and features over 100 organizations from the local public and private sectors from all industries, and witnesses 60 workshops and panels for students, graduates, and job seekers.

The event's opening ceremony was attended by H.E. Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr. Adel Al Mana, Zain Kuwait Chief Corporate Affairs and Relations Officer Waleed Al Khashti, Zain's HR team, as well as top executives and officials from public and private sector organizations.

Zain joins this unique gathering for the second time running to affirm its active participation in the biggest career fairs that attract students, graduates, and job seekers. By being a part of this event, the company seeks to enrich the local job market, exchange experiences, and encourage local talents to join the private sector, which is one of the Kuwaiti economy's main pillars.

Through its dedicated booth at Watheefti, Zain showcases its HR policy and available vacancies, while introducing visitors to its wonderful workplace environment. Zain's HR team also provides a detailed explanation of the nature of work at various departments and divisions and answer any questions and inquiries visitors have.

In addition, Zain uses this unique platform to introduce students and graduates to its leading experience in the local telecom and ICT sector by sharing success stories of local talents that contributed to its success as one of the leaders of the Kuwaiti market.

Watheefti is considered Kuwait's biggest career gathering and features in its second edition over 100 organizations that represent the most vibrant industries in the market. The event also witnesses 60 interactive workshops, sessions, and panels that cover key topics related to personal and professional skills that are valuable to any new job seeker, presented by some of the best speakers and experts in their fields.

The sessions cover topics like AI's role in careers, work in the public sector vs. the private sector, leadership skills, creating a career path, preparing for job interviews, writing impactful CVs, the art of dialogue and debate, workplace cultures, building career relations, presentation and public speaking skills, and much more.

In its first edition, Watheefti achieved huge success by attracting over 20,000 passionate and dedicated young people who were looking to start their new career journeys. Over 65 employers from the public and private sectors joined the event, which created a unique space for them to conduct interviews at the venue.

'Problems conveyed to minister'

Awqaf labor union expresses gratitude over minister's quick action on work hrs

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

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 19: During a meeting yesterday, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Labor Union in the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Bandar Al-Nasafi announced that the union has conveyed to the Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Abdul Rahman Al-Mutairi the most important demands that it has adopted concerning various segments of employees in the ministry.

In a press statement issued to reporters, Al-Nasafi revealed that the union expressed gratitude for the minister's quick response and interaction in working with the union's proposal to solve the problem related to working hours through the possibility of working as per the old system of the Sector of Islamic Studies and Quran Affairs in an urgent manner.

He said, "The union conveyed to the Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs the problem of supervisors and agents, and the failure to approve their names in the office. However, the minister graciously informed us that there is continuous coordination with the Civil Service Council to end the problem of supervisors and agents in a way that preserves their full rights. The minister issued instructions on the need to find appropriate solutions in accordance with legal frameworks to remove injustice from those with financial, legal, accounting and technical specializations."

Al-Nasafi called for providing adequate support for the excellent work budget of the administrative and educational bodies and adopting a study subject department within the centers of the Quran, Al-Itrjah and Al-Siraj Al-Munir, as is the practice in the Ministry of Education.

Sondos Jaber Al Farsi

GITEX invites Al-Farsi to address 'AI' event

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 19: Programmer Sondos Jaber Al Farsi has thanked the organizing committee of the GITEX International Exhibition, held in Dubai for inviting her among the leading speakers in the field of artificial intelligence and technology and for a fruitful panel discussion in this field.

She said in a statement to Al-Rai: "I am proud to transfer Kuwaiti expertise in the field of technology and artificial intelligence in this global event."

She added, "My presence records the existence of the Kuwaiti technological footprint, a transfer of Kuwaiti youth achievements, and an embodiment of the role of women in technology and entrepreneurship in the field of artificial and software intelligence alike.

"On a personal level, I will work hard to put Kuwait's name in technology on the world map, God willing," she said.

DGCA to buy 12 ETDs for T4 terminal

By Mohammed Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 19: The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) intends to purchase 12 ETD (Explosive Device Detector) devices for T4 terminal of the Kuwait International Airport.

According to informed sources, DGCA recently obtained the approval of the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) to float a tender for the supply, installation, operation and maintenance of these devices to companies that are registered with the agency and specialized in this matter.

Issuing the tender comes within the framework of the management's plan to ensure the provision of all means of security, protection and safety for its facilities.

Through the tender, companies wishing to compete will submit their bids according to a date set by the agency to close the bids. They will then be referred to DGCA for study through a technical committee that will prepare its recommendations. Accordingly, a decision will be made by CAPT on the best bid financially and technically.

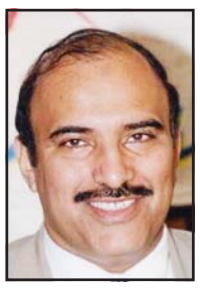
diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

'Need desperate call to break silence of neutral Arab intellectuals'

"TODAY, individuals with political opinions find themselves in a precarious position, akin to someone surrounded by influential and conflicting forces. Should they attempt to voice any opinion, they risk harm and often have no recourse but silence," columnist Dr **Khaled Ahmed Al-Saleh** wrote for **Al-Rai** daily.

"Many impartial thinkers today remain silent, witnessing the ongoing events in Gaza. In this complex conflict, established rules are frequently disregarded, an unjust occupation is sustained through excessive force, and an international environment with unignorable regulations is at play.



Dr Al-Saleh

"Reflecting on the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990, Saddam Hussein utilized various narratives to justify the occupation. He initially claimed Iraq was oppressed, portraying Kuwait as a thief of its rights. Subsequently, he propagated the notion of a Kuwaiti national revolution requesting his intervention, followed by the assertion that Kuwait was historically part of Iraq.

"Ultimately, he framed Kuwait's liberation as an extension of the struggle for Palestinian liberation. While these narratives resonated within Iraq and with certain factions, they held no weight within the free world or among informed populations. International norms and rules are in place and cannot be dismissed.

"Whether one agrees with them or not, all nations, especially weaker ones, are obligated to operate within these established frameworks.

"Today, the people of Gaza once again find themselves caught between the horrors of violence and displacement, a tragic situation that often goes overlooked, with more attention given to the suffering in the usurping state. The likely outcome is either a direct or indirect occupation of Gaza, resulting in the loss of many lives and substantial property. The world will eventually move on, while the scars will persist in the hearts of mothers and orphans, as previous bloody battles have been forgotten.

"The Palestinian people continue to endure suffering, while Israel garners support from the Western world. The Arab nation makes earnest efforts to assist the people of Gaza, but the pain outweighs the remedy. Managing the conflict in Gaza requires a conscientious approach that acknowledges the realities on the ground and carefully selects allies, out of compassion for a people who have endured so much.

"Today, we desperately need a call to break the silence of neutral Arab intellectuals. We ought to organize seminars under the auspices of the League of Arab States to raise awareness among our Arab masses, who are often mobilized to advance agendas that undermine our causes and lead to destruction.

"It is time to respect the Palestinian spirit and uphold their right to a dignified life. True dignity entails preserving life without the need for violence or fear, aligning with the core principles of Sharia that Islam promotes. When victory in war is elusive, there is no room for destruction; instead, one should consider withdrawal or negotiation to safeguard the lives of their people. This is the essence of wisdom. It's what earned Khaled bin Al-Walid the title of the Sword of God -- protecting lives rather than thrusting them into destruction.

"Our hearts ache, and tears flow from the depths of our children and women in Gaza. We continue to pray for the mercy of the martyrs and the healing of the wounded. Our prayers also include a plea to bless them with wise leaders who can guide them toward agreements that bring peace and a secure life. This peace is what Israel dreads, as it signifies a genuine victory in accordance with international norms."

Also:

"Horrifying scenes that are difficult to believe... but this time, in front of the eyes and ears of the entire civilized world, there is unprecedented Zionist arrogance and barbarism as it destroys hospitals, killing the women and children. Even hospitals are no longer safe for the Zionists, in the face of strange Arab and Islamic silence or condemnation. Unfortunately, have doctors and nurses become targets for murder? I have not read about that even in history books," columnist **Abdulaziz Al-Kandari** wrote for **Al-Rai** daily.

"The bombing of the Baptist Hospital is considered a war crime of complete genocide that reminds us of the historical massacres of the Zionist entity, as if the West's message to the Arab and Islamic world is that you are below the level of human beings, and they are defending the criminal and supplying him with all kinds of weapons and ammunition, and that you are all intended for this war, but the only difference between you is you are not in Palestine, meaning it is a matter of time.

"The tragedy is greater than human imagination, as the number of martyrs is increasing greatly and enormously because it is unreasonable and logical to target hospitals. The Gaza Civil Defense spokesman said: "We cannot meet the needs, the massacre is great," and he stated, "There is no safe place in the Strip from random bombing.

"The head of the government media office in Gaza stated that "the occupation is committing a new war crime by bombing the courtyard of Al-Ahli Hospital," as "the hospital contained hundreds of patients, wounded, and people forcibly displaced from their homes due to the raids."

"Let us speak honestly and transparently that the scales of justice and wisdom in this civilized world are heavy with aid to the Zionists, and they are committing all these massacres from everywhere without any limit and with all kinds of weapons, while the people of Gaza have not been living for 17 years as the civilized world lives, a sick duality when the Zionists' hand is filled with excuses and justifications.

"As for the people of Gaza and Palestine, they are not like that, but in the eyes of the West they are terrorists, who kill as if the civilized world does not see or hear what is happening.

"The events in Gaza have shown beyond any doubt that the Zionists have no covenants and the matter does not need much analysis. We see this Zionist military buildup, with the West behind it, carrying out these massacres without any mercy.

"This means that the Zionists have the green light to kill and they will continue and will not waste this opportunity. It is necessary to a serious stand against the barbarism of the Zionists and nothing will stop them except resistance.

"We must now work at all media, legal and legal levels and not underestimate any effort, and prepare all evidence for the Zionist government to submit to international courts with the support of countries that support the Palestinian cause and reject Israeli aggression.

"There is no room for randomness in such human rights issues."

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"The social media programs that we use on our mobile phones are useful and, at the same time, harmful. This depends on the user, his upbringing, moral values, and his age category", columnist **Khalid Al-Mutairi** wrote for **aljarida** daily.

"If the person who uses these programs is a rational, balanced person who fears God, he will be protected from everything that is forbidden, and everything he watches or participates in will be good and useful content for everyone.

"On the other hand, if the person who uses these programs does not fear God and does not have red lines in everything, then everything he follows or broadcasts in these programs will certainly not be suitable for viewing and publishing.

"It is necessary for every individual to monitor himself, distance himself from everything that is bad and harmful to society, and avoid promoting such matters and being partners with the owners of these bad contents.

"If we watch the content of the so-called celebrities and influencers on social media, we will find that the content of some of them reach the level of unjustified vulgarity that makes a person feel disgusted with him. We wonder how he can accept being used as a cheap tool in the market for promoting what is harmful and destructive to the society's values and customs.

"The question that will come to the mind of every rational person is - Where is the fear of God? Where is the role of the family and those around these celebrities in what they display or broadcast on their accounts, which offends them and their society?

"In short, you should not make social media an outlet for yourself, and expose all the details of your private daily life in the hope of gaining fame and collecting money. There is a big difference between the rights of expression and creativity on social media, and vulgarity and falling into the mire of error."

— Compiled by Mai Elsoukary

Dr Rushdi delivers lecture at university

'Quick medical attention vital for those having knee osteoarthritis'

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 19: Dr. Tariq Rushdi, a consulting orthopedic surgeon specializing in artificial joint procedures at Al-Razi Hospital, affirmed that knee and hip joint replacements stand as remarkably successful surgical interventions, emphasizing their notably high success rates, reports Al-Rai daily.

During a lecture at Sinmar Hall within Sabah Al-Salem University's administrative building in Al-Shadadiya, Dr. Rushdi, who conducted Kuwait's first total knee joint replacement utilizing robotic assistance, expounded on detrimental practices that contribute to knee osteoarthritis, a condition affecting many individuals.

Factors such as sports injuries and prolonged sitting on the floor were identified as potential causes. He stressed the importance of a gradual treatment approach before resorting to knee replacement surgery, urging those dealing with knee osteoarthritis to seek medical attention without delay.

He put at rest another misconception since many were of the opinion that the robot acts as a surgeon. He said the robot is not the operative entity; rather, it serves as a valuable aid to the surgeon, assisting in precise measurements and accurate placement of the artificial joint during the surgery.

This collaboration, he said, ensures an improved outcome for the patient, although the ultimate decision-making authority during the operation rests with the consultant surgeon, not the robot.

On another note, Fatima Bahman, the Director of the Community Service and Continuing Education Center at Kuwait University, affirmed that the informative lecture was a part of this year's academic agenda, focusing on enlightening students about the health aspects of various diseases, their symptoms, and preventive measures.

Dr Rushdi and Fatima Bahman

She mentioned that the agenda includes other informative sessions covering religious, social, sports, recreational, and legal topics, all aimed at equipping students with valuable knowledge to tackle life challenges and enhance their academic success.

Bahman noted the enthusiastic response from the audience during the lecture on knee osteoarthritis, underscoring the importance of Dr. Tariq's engaging delivery, which significantly impacted the students' engagement and understanding of the subject matter.

New juvenile care building equipped with new integrated services: official

By Fares Al-Abdan
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 19: The Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Children Affairs Sheikh Feras Al-Malik affirmed that the new juvenile care building is based on a new and advanced vision of the concept of juvenile care.

In a press statement issued on the sidelines of the inauguration of the new juvenile care building, Sheikh Feras revealed that the building provides educational, psychological, and counseling services to juveniles.

He said he looked at all the building's facilities, and noted its advanced capabilities to create a new generation and depart from the traditional framework of caring for juveniles.

Sheikh Feras thanked the Ministry of Public Works for their efforts in completing the construction of the building, as well as the sectors related to the Ministry of Social Affairs who worked with the Ministry of Public Works to complete the building.

Meanwhile, the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs Abdulaziz Sari Al-Mutairi explained that the building is integrated for juvenile services using modern methods. With an area of 35,000 square meters, it is considered one of the largest service complexes in Kuwait. The building provides all services for juveniles and their care, and contains all their needs. It contains health and educational facilities and special places for psychological treatment in addition to providing social research services.

In addition, the Assistant Undersecretary for Social Welfare at the Ministry of Social Affairs Hamad Al-Khalidi affirmed that the new facility is special for juveniles, is built on an area of 35,000 square meters and can accommodate large numbers, as well as have space for training workshops, a school, a clinic, and a prayer hall.

In a press statement, he said, "We are seeking to evaluate the event and its behavior through activities and programs that will see the light soon. The building's capabilities are wide and large. It contains playgrounds, lecture halls, entertainment areas especially for guests, as well as a specialized place to receive families, and another for special cases".

Also, the Director of Events Department Dr. Jassim Al-Kandari said this building has eight main buildings including four for shelters, a special building for the mosque and training workshops, an integrated medical clinic, and a school.

He revealed that all training workshops will be transferred to the new building, indicating that the new building is designated for boys, and a gradual transfer plan has been prepared, through the formation of work teams, and after final receipt.

Several drug addicts in police net; firemen rescue 9 people

Two expatriates injured in Amghara fight

By Munaif Nayef
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and **Agencies**

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 19: Two expatriates sustained injuries in a quarrel that broke out yesterday between expatriates of different nationalities in Amghara.

According to security sources, when the Operations Room of the Ministry of Interior received information about the quarrel between expatriates of different nationalities in Amghara wood scrapyard, securitymen rushed to the location and discovered that the quarrel had resulted in injuries to two among the brawlers, one of whom sustained a head injury. The injured expatriates were referred to the nearest hospital for treatment, and necessary legal actions were taken.

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Drug addicts held: An Asian expatriate was arrested in Salmiya in possession of small sachets of Shabu (methamphetamine) and other drugs.

According to security sources, investigations conducted by Criminal Investigation officers led them to an Asian drug peddler in possession of hashish pieces and small sachets containing Shabu and Lyrica pills, and drug paraphernalia. The accused was selling these substances to drug users.

He was referred with the seized items to the concerned authorities for necessary legal action.

Meanwhile, the securitymen affiliated to the Jahra Security Directorate have arrested a Kuwait citizen who is believed to be in 20s and referred him to the Directorate-General of Drugs Control after he was caught in the Sulaibiya area in a state of drug use and in possession of hashish cigarettes and drug paraphernalia.

The person was arrested on suspicion while fast asleep inside his car in the parking lot of a school in the area, reports Al-Anba daily.

On the other hand, personnel from the Jahra Security Directorate have arrested two men at the Sa'ad Al-Abdullah checkpoint after discovering they were in a state of drug abuse.

Police have seized from them narcotic substances and drug paraphernalia. During interrogation they admitted that they were doing drugs in one of the camps.

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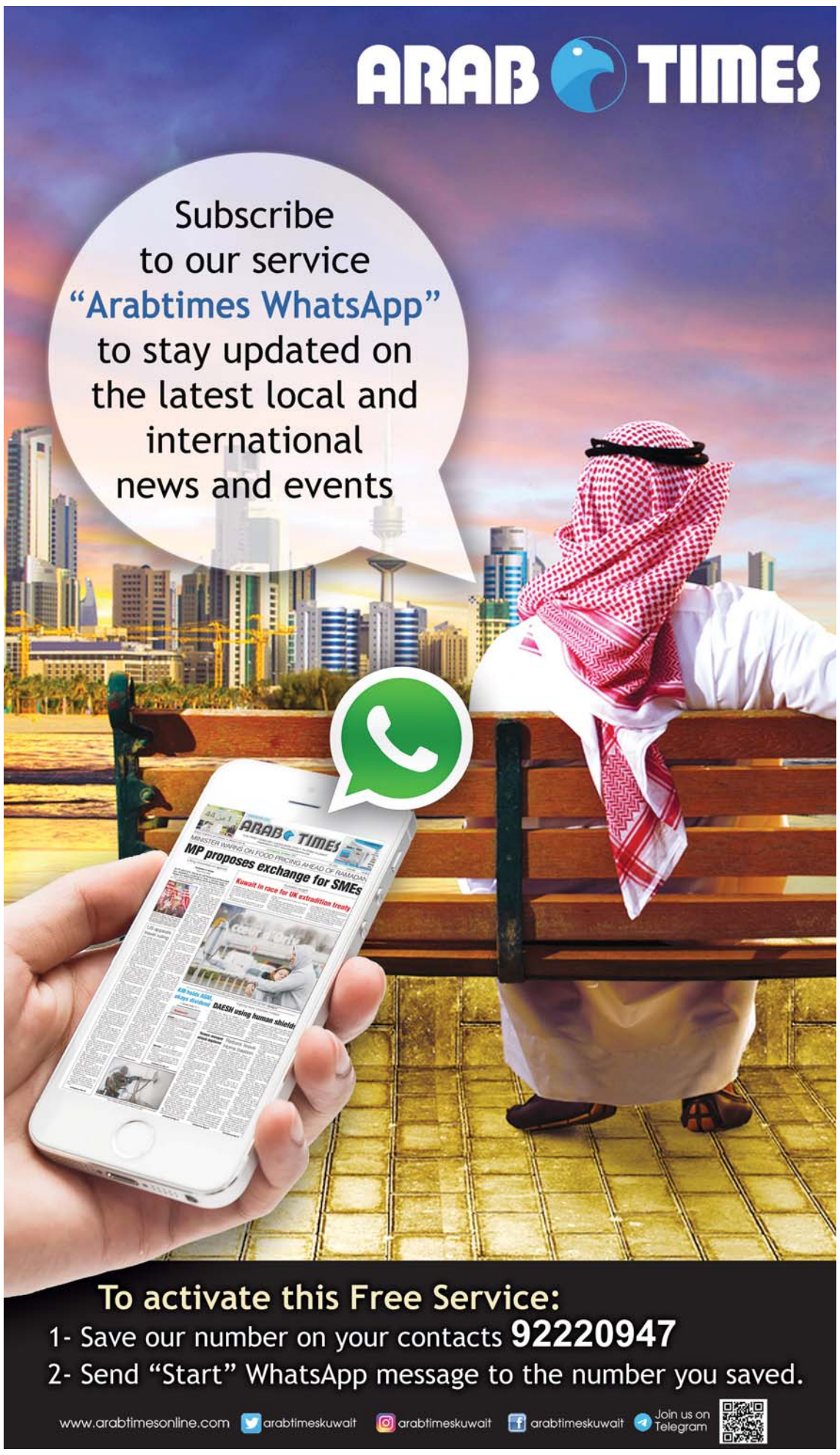
9 people rescued: Firefighting teams from the Sulaibikhat and Al-Ardhiya center rushed to a house in a suburb of Andalus and rescued 9 people who were trapped in a fire that broke out on the second floor, reports Al-Rai daily.

The Public Relations and Media Department of the Directorate-General of Fire Department (DGFD) added, the flames prevented the people from leaving the house and had to be rescued by firemen without causing any casualties.



World News Roundup

Europe

Journalist charged in Russia: A Russian-American journalist working for a US government-funded media company has been detained in Russia and charged with failing to register as a foreign agent, according to her employer.

Radio Free Europe-Radio Liberty editor **Alsu Kurmasheva** is the second US journalist to be detained in Russia this year. Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich was arrested for alleged spying in March.

Kurmasheva

Kurmasheva, an editor with RFE/RL's Tatar-Bashkir service, is being held in a temporary detention center, the Committee to Protect Journalists said, citing a Russian state news agency.

The Tatar-Inform agency posted video which showed Kurmasheva being marched into an administrative building accompanied by four men, two of whom held her arms and wore balaclavas.

Tatar-Inform said authorities accused Kurmasheva of collecting information about Russia's military activities "in order to transmit information to foreign sources," suggesting she received information about university teachers who were mobilized into the Russian army. (AP)

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'ATACMS supply reckless': A Russian missile attack killed two civilians in an apartment building in southern Ukraine on Wednesday, local authorities said, as President Vladimir Putin dismissed the importance of a new US supplied weapon that Kyiv used to execute one of the most damaging attacks on the Kremlin's air assets since the start of the war.

Putin told reporters that Russia "will be able to repel" further attacks by the US-made Army Tactical Missile System, known as ATACMS.

Ukraine claimed it used those missiles to destroy nine Russian helicopters, as well as ammunition, an air defense system and other assets at two airfields in Russia-occupied regions on Tuesday.

That development came as the two sides looked to gain battlefield advantages and consolidate their positions ahead of the winter when the weather would hamper operations. (AP)

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Spain mulls granting amnesty: Barcelona accountant Oriol Calvo ran afoul of the law when he was arrested in 2019 during a mass protest by supporters of Catalonia's independence from Spain that turned violent. A court found him guilty of public disorder and of aggressive behavior toward a police officer - offenses he denies.

The 25-year-old is among several thousand ordinary citizens who faced legal trouble for their often tiny part in Catalonia's illegal secession bid that brought Spain to the brink of rupture six years ago.

Now Calvo hopes his conviction and those of many others will be wiped clean if Spain's acting prime minister, Pedro Sánchez, follows through and issues a sweeping amnesty for the separatists in exchange for their movement's political parties helping him form a new government in Madrid. (AP)

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'Little jokers to be punished': France's government is threatening prison terms and heavy fines for callers who make fake bomb threats after a rash of false alarms forced the evacuation of 15 airports and cancellation of 130 flights and shut the doors of Versailles Palace three times in five days.

French officials suggested young people and children may be responsible. Justice Minister Eric Dupond-Moretti blamed "little jokers, little clowns" and vowed, "They will be found, they will be punished."

French law allows prank calls to be punished by up to 3 years' imprisonment and fines of 45,000 euros ($47,000), the minister said. He said minors' parents could be made to pay for damages. (AP)

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'More peacekeepers': Kosovo's prime minister on Wednesday asked NATO-led peacekeepers to increase their presence on the northern border with Serbia, saying the area was the entry point for illegal weapons and threats to stability.

"Such an increased presence should be focused in guarding the border between Kosovo and Serbia where all Serbia's weaponry has arrived from and the threat to Kosovo comes," Prime Minister Albin Kurti told Maj. Gen. Ozgan Ulutas, the new commander of the Kosovo Force mission, or KFOR.

Kurti has repeatedly said Kosovo police cannot fully guard the 350-kilometer (220 mile) long border with Serbia and its many illegal crossings used by criminals.

On Sept. 24, around 30 Serb gunmen crossed into northern Kosovo, killing a police officer and setting up barricades, before launching an hours-long gun battle with Kosovo police. Three gunmen were killed. (AP)

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Parties open talks on coalition: A coalition of three opposition parties who won Poland's general election against the right-wing party that controlled the country for eight years opened talks Wednesday on forming a new government, one of the party leaders said.

Third Way co-leader Szymon Holownia also urged President President Andrzej Duda to move swiftly in giving the bloc an opportunity to rule. The three groups - also including the Civic Coalition of Donald Tusk, the former prime minister and former European Council president - collectively gained about 54% of the vote, "Today the president has a chance to present himself as a true statesman who really has Poland's best interests in his heart," Holownia said. (AP)

Britain's King Charles III and Queen Camilla attend a reception at Mansion House in London on Oct 18. The King and Queen attended a dinner at Mansion House, to recognise the work of the City of London civic institutions and Livery Companies - the city's ancient and modern trade guilds. The King upheld the traditions of a new Monarch's first visit to the City of London in their Coronation year. (AP)

Beth Holloway speaks to media after the appearance of Joran van den Sloot outside the Hugo L. Black Federal Courthouse on Oct 18 in Birmingham, Ala. (AP)

Holloway

Van der Sloot

America

Van der Sloot admits crime: The chief suspect in the disappearance of **Natalee Holloway** has admitted he beat the young Alabama woman to death on a beach in Aruba after she refused his advances, then dumped her body into the sea. New details in the killing emerged Wednesday as **Joran van der Sloot** pleaded guilty to extorting Holloway's mother, resolving a case that has captivated the public's attention for nearly 20 years.

Although he isn't charged in Holloway's death, van der Sloot's attempt to squeeze a quarter million dollars from the slain teen's mom in exchange for information about where to find Holloway's body gave investigators a crucial link to the 2005 killing. And after finally seeing him in a US courtroom, the family said they're moving on from years of doubt and uncertainty.

"As far as I'm concerned, it's over," Beth Holloway, Natalee's mother, told reporters outside the federal courthouse in Alabama. "Joran van der Sloot is no longer the suspect in my daughter's murder. He is the killer."

Natalee Holloway went missing during a high school graduation trip with classmates. She was last seen May 30, 2005, leaving a bar with van der Sloot, a Dutch citizen and student at an international school on the Caribbean island where he grew up. He was questioned in the disappearance but never prosecuted. A judge declared Holloway dead, but her body was never found. (AP)

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Marine killed in homicide: A Marine was killed in a homicide at Camp Lejeune on Wednesday night and a second Marine was held on suspicion of being involved, the base said.

Base authorities took the Marine into custody at about 10:15 pm after an incident that occurred in a barracks room on the North Carolina base earlier in the evening, a statement from the base said.

The statement called the death a homicide and described the other Marine as a suspect but didn't provide any other details, including how the Marine died. (AP)

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Tech CEO gets 8 years: A Silicon Valley executive who lied to investors about inventing technology that tested for allergies and COVID-19 using only a few drops of blood was sentenced Wednesday to eight years in prison and ordered to pay $24 million in restitution, federal prosecutors said.

Mark Schena, 60, was convicted last year of paying bribes to doctors and defrauding the government after his company billed Medicare $77 million for fraudulent COVID-19 and allergy tests, the US Department of Justice said in a statement.

Schena claimed his Sunnyvale, California-based company, Arrayit Corporation, had the only laboratory in the world that offered "revolutionary microarray technology" that allowed it to test for allergies and COVID-19 with the same finger-stick test kit, prosecutors said.

In meetings with investors, Schena claimed he was on the shortlist for the Nobel Prize and falsely represented that Arrayit could be valued at $4.5 billion, prosecutors said. (AP)

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Driver arrested: A 22-year-old driver was arrested on suspicion of manslaughter after a crash in Malibu killed four college students and injured two other people, officials said Wednesday.

The six pedestrians were struck around 8:30 p.m. Tuesday along Pacific Coast Highway about 4 miles (6.4 km) east of Pepperdine University, according to the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

Four women were pronounced dead at the scene and two others were taken to a hospital but there was no word Wednesday on their conditions.

Pepperdine initially said on X, formerly Twitter, that officials believed those killed attended the university's Seaver College of Liberal Arts. Pepperdine's president, Jim Gash, later confirmed that the four killed were students. (AP)

"Earlier today, we learned that four precious lives who brought joy and light to our campus were taken from us suddenly, tragically, and incomprehensibly," Gash wrote in a message to the university community.

The school later identified the victims as Niamh Rolston, Peyton Stewart, Asha Weir and Deslyn Williams, all seniors. (AP)

Politics

Mucarsel-Powell gets clearer path to challenge Scott

Trump's campaign cash overwhelms GOP rivals

WASHINGTON, Oct 19, (AP): Donald Trump is crushing his Republican presidential rivals in the contest to raise campaign cash, putting the other White House hopefuls in an unenviable position before the first votes are cast in January.

Those who have amassed a nest egg will have the resources to last for the foreseeable future, while those without will face hard choices in the coming days, weeks and months.

Here are some takeaways from the recently released campaign finance disclosures that cover the third quarter:

Trump's political operation has splurged at least $20 million this year on legal expenses arising from a sprawling set of court cases and lawsuits faced by the former president and his allies. It's an enormous outlay of cash, big enough to sink even a generously financed campaign.

Yet as the GOP presidential primary enters a crucial make-or-break phase before voting begins early next year, the latest campaign finance disclosures show Trump still has more money socked away than his top rivals - combined.

The amount of cash a candidate has in reserve offers a window into the health of their campaign. Those with an ample sum will have the money needed to hold events, run TV ads and communicate with voters. Those who lack it are all but certain to struggle.

But the stark disparity between Trump, whose presidential campaign had $37.5 million at the end of September, and the balances held by his rivals like former U.N. ambassador Nikki Haley, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis and South Carolina Sen. Tim Scott speaks to a broader reality in the race: It's Trump's to lose and his rivals have both limited time and limited means to change that.

The drop-off from Trump is steep. That's led some candidates to send repeated and at times desperate-sounding pleas.

"Did you know that every new member who donates to Team DeSantis gets their own bumper sticker as a welcome present? Chip in $5 or more today," read one text message solicitation sent last month.

Tim Scott was in an enviable position when he entered the Republican presidential contest, boasting of a $21.9 million war chest amassed over the years from his prominent perch in the Senate.

Things were less rosy for Haley, his home state rival. The one-time accountant raised $8.3 million last April, but relied on accounting gimmicks to inaccurately inflate her fundraising success by several million dollars in a press release.

Now the tables have turned.

Haley entered October with somewhat of a fundraising tailwind after doubling the money in her campaign account to $11.5 million over the past three months, thanks in part to strong debate performances that led to a flood of contributions.

Also:

TALLAHASSEE, Fla: Former US rep **Debbie Mucarsel-Powell**'s path to the Democratic nomination to challenge Republican US Sen **Rick Scott** of Florida became clearer Wednesday when her main primary opponent dropped out of the race to seek a US House seat.

Phil Ehr, a retired Navy commander who left the Republican Party in 2017, appeared with Mucarsel-Powell in Miami to announce he will drop out of the Senate primary and instead challenge Republican U.S. Rep. **Carlos Gimenez**, a move embraced by the state Democratic Party.

Mucarsel-Powell served one term in Congress before losing to Gimenez in 2020.

So far, the Senate race has been overshadowed by the attention focused on Republican Gov. **Ron DeSantis**' campaign for president, similar to 2022, when Democratic U.S. Rep. **Val Demings** failed bid to unseat Republican Sen. **Marco Rubio** took a backseat to DeSantis' reelection.

Ehr has twice tried to unseat Republican US Rep Matt Gaetz in one of the state's most conservative districts, an area includes Pensacola and much of the state's Panhandle. He lost the 2018 Democratic primary. Ehr earned the nomination in 2020 and then lost to Gaetz by more than 30 points.

Gimenez' Miami-area district is more evenly divided politically and has switched back and forth between parties several times in recent elections. Ehr said he is looking for a new home in the district.

"I'm running in the 28th district because that's where the need is," Ehr said in a phone interview with the The Associated Press. "Our country is in trouble, there's chaos in the House and the incumbent is part of it."

❑ ❑ ❑

RALEIGH, NC: A veteran North Carolina trial lawyer has entered the Republican primary campaign for governor, pledging to spend millions in personal funds toward a race that's already full of fellow Republicans who got in months ago.

Bill Graham of Salisbury, who competed unsuccessfully for governor in 2008, said Wednesday he's trying again because he considers himself the candidate best able to break a dominant stretch of Democrats in a state where Republicans often have an advantage in statewide races.

Democrats have served in the Executive Mansion uninterrupted since 1993 save for a four-year stretch in the 2010s. Democratic Gov **Roy Cooper**, who is term-limited and can't run in 2024, has endorsed Attorney General **Josh Stein**, who entered the race in January and has been the race's top fundraiser so far.

"We need a nominee who will have the resources, discipline and character needed to defeat the far-left **Josh Stein** in November," Graham said while releasing a campaign kickoff video. "I am that candidate, and my campaign will prove it."

Graham, a personal injury and wrongful death lawyer who's been involved in other business ventures and philanthropy, said he's investing "at least $5 million of his own resources" in the campaign, with advertising on statewide television to begin next week. Official candidate filing begins in early December for primary elections March 5.

A Catalan pro-independence protestor throws a stone during clashes with police in Barcelona, Spain on Oct 18. Thousands of ordinary citizens got into legal trouble for their parts in Catalonia's illegal independence bid that brought Spain to the brink of rupture six years ago. Now they are hoping to be saved. (AP)

Presidential candidate Anies Baswedan (right), and his running mate Muhaimin Iskandar give a thumb up sign upon arrival to register themselves to run in next year's election, at the General Election Commission building in Jakarta, Indonesia on Oct 19. The world's third-largest democracy is set to vote in simultaneously legislative and presidential elections on Feb 14, 2024. The country has had free and largely peaceful elections since the fall of dictator Suharto in 1998. (AP)

Lat/Am

Leaders to attend summit

'Bolsonaro should face coup charges'

RIO DE JANEIRO, Oct 19, (AP): A Brazilian congressional panel on Wednesday accused former President **Jair Bolsonaro** of instigating the country's Jan 8 riots and recommended that he be charged with attempting to stage a coup.

An inquiry panel of senators and representatives mostly allied with the current leftist President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva - who narrowly defeated Bolsonaro in last fall's election - voted 20-11 to adopt the damning report drafted by Sen. Eliziane Gama.

The move was largely symbolic for Bolsonaro because it amounts to a recommendation for police and prosecutors to investigate, and federal law enforcement officials separately have already been investigating his possible role in inciting the Jan 8 uprising.

Bolsonaro

Bolsonaro has denied involvement in the rioting, which took place more than a week after the right-wing leader had quietly left the country to stay in Florida while refusing to attend Lula's inauguration.

"It's completely biased," Bolsonaro said Wednesday of the inquiry, in comments to reporters. "It's an absurdity."

One week after Lula took office, thousands of Bolsonaro supporters stormed Congress, the Supreme Court and presidential palace, refusing to accept his election defeat. They bypassed security barricades, climbed on roofs, smashed windows and invaded the public buildings.

Many observers at the time speculated that the riot was a coordinated effort to oust Lula from office, and could not have occurred without the complicity of some of the military and police. Gama's report jibed with those claims, and went a step further in saying they were orchestrated by Bolsonaro.

The report recommends that Bolsonaro be charged on a total of four counts, including attempting to overthrow a legitimately constituted government and attempting to overthrow democratic rule. It also includes a slew of other charges against dozens of Bolsonaro allies, including former ministers, top military brass and police officers.

Served

Those include Gen Braga Netto, who served as Bolsonaro's defense minister and then was his running mate; Anderson Torres, ex-justice minister and secretary of public security in Brasilia; former institutional security minister Gen Augusto Heleno; former Chief of Staff Gen. Luiz Eduardo Ramos; and the head of Brazil's defense, navy and armed forces.

Military and police forces are blamed for not getting rid of illegal encampments in several Brazilian cities, where protesters spent several weeks demanding a military intervention, and for their leniency toward protesters on Jan 8.

"I don't remember in Brazilian history a (congressional inquiry) that included such a large number of high-ranking officers," said Eduardo Heleno, who teaches civil-military relations at the Federal Fluminense University. Heleno said the report's efforts to highlight the military's alleged role in the riots, even if passive, marked a stark contrast with the 1979 Amnesty Law, which turned a blind eye to human rights violations during the dictatorship.

"Without fear. This is how we end this (inquiry), because courage is the raw material of civilization. No amnesty, so that it never happens again and so that we never forget what happened," Sen. Randolfe Rodrigues said Wednesday before casting his vote backing the report.

Nara Pavão, who teaches political science at the Federal University of Pernambuco, said that Wednesday's vote by lawmakers was an important move toward accountability "even though it is symbolic."

"It is very important to have been able to take action against what happened," Pavão said.

The 1,300 page report is the fruit of months of investigation by a panel that interrogated nearly two dozen people and gathered hundreds of documents, including bank statements, phone records and text messages.

Also:

MEXICO CITY: Mexico's president says the leaders of **Cuba, Venezuela, Haiti** and **Honduras** will attend a summit on migration that Mexico will host Sunday.

The four countries are among the biggest sources of migrants currently showing up at the US border.

President **Andrés Manuel López Obrador** said that President **Nicolas Maduro** of Venezuela, President Miguel Díaz-Canel Cuba and Prime Minister **Ariel Henry** of Haiti will attend the meeting in the southern city of Palenque, along with Honduran President **Xiomara Castro.**

López Obrador said the leaders of Ecuador and **Guatemala** also will attend, and that other countries are expected to send officials to the meeting.

López Obrador said the meeting will address migration and the root causes that lead people to leave their home countries.

López Obrador recently acknowledged that migration has spiked and that as many as 10,000 migrants are crossing Mexico daily to reach the U.S. border.

Many are coming through the jungle-clad Darien Gap. Panama estimates that 420,700 migrants have crossed the Gap from Colombia to Panama so far this year, making it likely the full-year number will top a half million.

❑ ❑ ❑

MEXICO CITY: Nicaragua has released 12 Roman Catholic priests jailed on a variety of charges and sent them to Rome following an agreement reached with the Vatican, the Nicaraguan government said in a statement late Wednesday.

The government of President **Daniel Ortega** said that the priests were flown to Rome Wednesday afternoon following productive talks with the Vatican. **Cardinal Leopoldo Brenes,** the church's top figure in Nicaragua, did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The Nicaraguan government said the deal showed "the permanent will and commitment to find solutions."

Bishop Rolando Álvarez was not among the names of the priests listed. Álvarez was convicted of conspiracy and sentenced in February to 26 years in prison shortly after Ortega's government sent 222 prisoners to the United States in a deal brokered by the US government.

Álvarez had refused to get on that flight. Nicaragua's government later stripped those prisoners of their citizenship. Ortega's government has aggressively pursued the Catholic church in recent years. Ortega has maintained that the church aided popular protests against his administration in April 2018 that he considered an attempted coup.

The body of Bruno Plácido, a well-known leader of a civilian 'self-defense' group, lies on the ground after being shot to death, as forensics team investigates the crime scene, in Chilpancingo, Mexico on Oct 17. No suspects or motive was immediately announced. Chilpancingo has been the scene of turf battles among warring drug gangs. (AP)

Weah

Mokom

Africa

Mokom 'charges' dropped: The International Criminal Court announced Thursday it was dropping some 20 charges including murder, extermination, deportation, torture, and persecution against a former government minister from the Central African Republic, citing a lack of evidence and available witnesses.

Karim Khan, the chief prosecutor at the court based in The Hague in the Netherlands, issued a statement saying he was withdrawing all charges against **Maxime Jeoffroy Eli Mokom Gawaka** because there were "no longer any reasonable prospects of conviction at trial."

During a pretrial hearing in August, Mokom's defense team told judges that prosecutors had already uncovered evidence that could exonerate Mokom, even before his arrest in neighboring Chad in 2022.

Mokom and his attorneys were unaware the prosecutor was considering dropping the charges. "This took us completely by surprise," lawyer Philippe Larochelle told the Associated Press.

Khan said he was aware that survivors and their families would likely be disappointed by the news. "I hope many will understand my legal and ethical responsibilities to be guided by the law and the evidence," he said in his statement.

Mokom is the fourth suspect from the long-running conflict in the mineral-rich but impoverished nation to appear before judges at the global court.

It is the third time an ICC prosecutor has dropped a case in the court's 25-year history. Ten years ago, an investigation into post-election violence in Kenya fell apart amid allegations of witness interference. Khan's predecessor, Fatou Bensouda, withdrew charges against the country's former President Uhuru Kenyatta in 2015 and another top official in 2013 after accusing Kenya of obstructing the investigation. (AP)

❑ ❑ ❑

Presidential poll goes to runoff: Liberia's presidential election Wednesday appeared headed for a run-off, with the top candidates neck and neck and the votes nearly fully counted.

President **George Weah,** who is seeking a second term, had 43.8% of the vote with his main challenger Joseph Boakai at 43.4%, according to the National Elections Commission. A candidate needs more than 50% of the vote to win.

Once the votes from this round are finalized, the run-off will take place within 15 days.

The Oct. 10 election is the tightest in the nearly two decades since the end of the country's civil war that killed some 250,000 people.

The final tally will have to wait until the end of the week, when re-voting is expected in two places in Nimba county because ballot boxes were stolen, said the commission. Nimba is an opposition stronghold but the outcome will not significantly alter the results or push anyone across the finish line, analysts said. Weah, 57, a former international soccer star, came to power six years ago in the first democratic transfer of power in the West African nation since the end of the country's back-to-back civil wars between 1989 and 2003.

Weah won that election amid high hopes brought about by his promise to fight poverty and generate infrastructure development in Africa's oldest republic. His goal, he had said in 2017, was to push Liberia from a low-income country to a middle-income one. (AP)

❑ ❑ ❑

Journo's widow sues police: The widow of a prominent Pakistani journalist who was killed a year ago in Kenya filed a lawsuit on Wednesday against an elite Kenyan police unit she accuses of the wrongful death of her husband.

Javeria Siddique said she filed the lawsuit in Nairobi to get justice for her husband Arshad Sharif, a well-known journalist in his home country Pakistan. Sharif was shot dead on October 23, 2022 by officers from Kenya's General Service Unit, according to Pakistani authorities. The officers involved in the incident later claimed it was a case of mistaken identity.

In court papers seen by The Associated Press, Siddique wants Kenya's Attorney General, the National Police Service and the Director of Public Prosecutions "to punish and prosecute the police officers who killed Arshad Sharif."

The lawsuit also wants the court to direct the Attorney General "to issue a public apology, including an acknowledgement of the facts, and acceptance of responsibility to the family of Arshad Sharif within seven days of this court's order."

"I am suing the GSU because they committed the crime openly, then admitted that it was a case of mistaken identity. (AP)

Asia

Russia FM offers security talks with NKorea, China

Indonesia ex-govs register for presidential race

JAKARTA, Indonesia, Oct 19, (AP): Thousands of noisy, flag-waving political supporters created a celebratory atmosphere outside Indonesia's election commission Thursday as candidates started registering for next year's elections in the world's third-largest democracy.

More than 2,400 police were deployed around the General Election Commission compound and roads were blocked around the building in Jakarta where traffic was snarled as the presidential and vice presidential candidates arrived.

Anies Baswedan, an opposition candidate and former Jakarta governor, was the first to register for the presidential race, alongside his running mate, Muhaimin Iskandar, the chairman of the National Awakening Party or PKB.

Registered

Ganjar Pranowo, the ruling party's candidate and former Central Java governor, registered with his running mate, Muhammad Mahfud, the current top security minister.

The election to succeed President Joko Widodo, who is serving his second and final term, is shaping up as a three-way race. Defense Minister Prabowo Subianto, who lost to Widodo in the last two presidential elections, is expected to run but it's not clear when he will register as he hasn't announced his running mate.

The deadline for candidates to register for the legislative and presidential elections on Feb 14, 2024, is next Wednesday.

Opinion polls forecast a close race between Subianto and Pranowo while Baswedan is consistently in third place.

Baswedan, 54, was education and culture minister before Widodo removed him from the cabinet in 2016.

He was known as a progressive Muslim intellectual but the religious identity politics in the 2017 election for Jakarta governor were seen as distancing him from moderate Muslims. His choice of Iskandar is seen as an attempt to rebuild that support.

Iskandar's PKB party has strong ties with Indonesia's largest Islamic organization, Nahdlatul Ulama, which boasts over 45 million members.

"We bring the idea of change to be felt by families in Indonesia. We want basic needs to be affordable. Farmers will have a more prosperous life, fishermen will have a more prosperous life. We want there to be equality of opportunity. ... The basic idea is that change brings equality and justice," Baswedan said at a news conference at the General Election Commission on Thursday.

Some of Baswedan's supporters who gathered at the election commission building were from the groups that held mass protests in 2016 against Jakarta's ethnic Chinese Christian governor, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, who was imprisoned for blasphemy after quoting the Quran in a speech. Anies galvanized street protests of hundreds of thousands and capitalized on the controversy in his successful run for governor.

The nationalist party Nasdem has endorsed him in the upcoming presidential election and praised his achievements in promoting religious and ethnic tolerance during his term as governor.

Pranowo, 54, was a national legislator for the ruling Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle or PDIP for 10 years before elected in 2013 for the first of his two terms as Central Java governor.

Widodo praised Pranowo as a leader who is close to the people and "always goes down to the grassroots and is very ideological."

Also:

BEIJING: **Russia's** foreign minister proposed regular security talks with **North Korea** and **China** to deal with what he described as increasing **US**-led regional military threats, as he met North Korean leader **Kim Jong Un** and his top diplomat on Thursday during a visit to **Pyongyang.**

Russian Foreign Minister **Sergey Lavrov** arrived in North Korea's capital on Wednesday on a two-day trip expected to focus on how to boost the two countries' defense ties following a September summit between Kim and Russian President **Vladimir Putin.**

Last week, the United States said North Korea had transferred munitions to Russia to boost its fighting capabilities in **Ukraine** in violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions that ban any weapons trading involving North Korea.

On Thursday, Lavrov met Kim for talks that lasted about an hour, Russia's state-run Tass news agency reported, without elaborating. Lavrov met his North Korean counterpart, **Choe Son Hui,** earlier Thursday and lauded deepening bilateral cooperation.

The Lavrov-Kim meeting "means that the recent fleet of containers likely caring munitions from North Korea to Russia was not the last Kim-Putin transaction the world has to worry about," said Leif-Eric Easley, a professor of international studies at Ewha University in Seoul.

"After accepting Pyongyang's help to resupply the illegal invasion of Ukraine, Moscow is set to commit further violations of U.N. Security Council resolutions by providing North Korea with weapons technology that could threaten stability in East Asia," Easley said.

More details of Lavrov's meetings with Kim and Choe weren't immediately available. But Tass quoted Lavrov as telling reporters that he supports holding regular talks on security issues on the Korean Peninsula with North Korea and **China.**

❑ ❑ ❑

CANBERRA, Australia: Australia's failed referendum on the Indigenous Voice has set back the government's plans to cut the nation's constitutional ties to Britain's **King Charles III,** a minister said Thursday.

Australians last week overwhelmingly rejected the referendum that would have enshrined in the constitution an Indigenous advisory body to Parliament.

The loss reduced the chances of another referendum soon to make the country a republic with an Australian president as head of state instead of the British monarch, Assistant Minister for the Republic **Matt Thistlethwaite** said.

"In my view, it's not off, but it does certainly make it a lot harder," Thistlethwaite told Sky News Australia.

"Australians are reluctant to look at further referendums in the short term," he added.

Prime Minister **Anthony Albanese** made the Voice referendum a top priority for his center-left Labor Party government's first three-year term when it was elected last year.

Albanese placed Thistlethwaite in charge of paving the way toward a republic and left open the prospect of a referendum being held in a second term if Labor wins the 2025 election.

In this photo released by Russian Foreign Ministry Press Service via their telegram channel, Korean leader Kim Jong Un (left), and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov greet each other during a meeting in Pyongyang, North Korea, on Oct 19. (AP)

KTS new committee members

Chief guest Gopinath being honored.

KTS elects new committee for 2023-24

Kuwait Tamil Sangam organizes 18th year inaugural event

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 19: The 18th Annual Inaugural Ceremony of Kuwait Tamil Sangam (KTS) took place at Smart Indian School in Abbasiya on Oct 6, 2023. The event commenced with the traditional lighting of the "Kuthuvilakku" by KTS members, followed by the Tamil Thai Vazhthu.

KTS President, S. Ramadoss, extended a warm welcome to the guests and members, providing an overview of KTS activities. Dr. Sami P. Venkat, General Secretary of KTS, introduced the KTS committee members for the year 2023-24 and discussed the upcoming events scheduled for the same year.

The election officials of KTS, namely A.N. Natarajan, G. Raja, and S. Chelladurai, declared the uncontested selection of the new committee.

The new committee for KTS, led by S. Ramadoss as President, Dr. Sami P. Venkat as General Secretary, and Rajnarayanan Desigan as Treasurer, was announced. Other members of the committee include A. Mariappan as Vice President, Murali Srinivasan as Joint Secretary, Mrs. Pradhama Maniyarasu as Joint Treasurer, and committee members Mrs. Sudha Jayamani, Mrs. Revathi Sivakumar, Mrs. Rajeevi Raja, Mrs. Rajalakshmi Balaji, Mrs. Indira Gandhi Nadanasekar, G. Pattabi Raman, R. Vinayaga Murhty, Thimmarayan Gopal, Baskar Sayee, and Jeyakumar Sakthivel.

The celebration featured a special guest, Gopinath, known for his association with Vijay Television's "Neeya Naana" show. Gopinath conducted a debate titled "Are people in foreign countries living happily or out of compulsion?" Participants from various backgrounds expressed their viewpoints, and finally Gopinath provided his perspective in an engaging manner, earning applause from the audience.

The success of the event was made possible through the support of sponsors, whom KTS honored with shawls and mementos. KTS expressed gratitude to the sponsors and its members for their unwavering cooperation and encouragement.

The event concluded with a delightful meal served by Anjappar Restaurant.

Kuwait Tamil Sangam, established in 2005, serves as a social platform for the Tamil community in Kuwait and is registered as a socio-cultural association with the Indian Embassy in Kuwait.

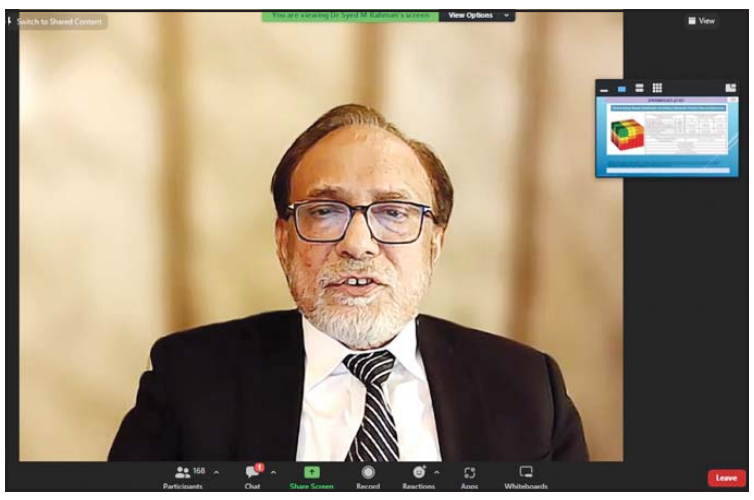
Forum welcomes new member Dr Gupta

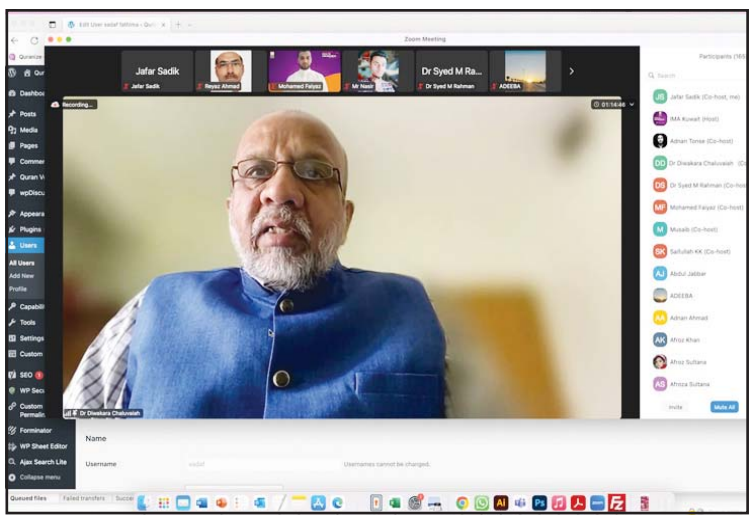
Writers' Forum Kuwait holds monthly meeting

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 19: Poetry and creative writing is all about being positive and spreading hope whilst accepting the realities of life. This was well proven during the emotional conclave of members of the Writers' Forum Kuwait where the poets met each other on 29th September at the residence of the General Secretary of the Forum, Ms. Nazneen Ali.

The meeting started on a usual high note with Ms. Nazneen Ali, welcoming everybody and rejoicing the escalation of the Forum with joining of yet another new member Dr. Rajesh Gupta. Ms. Nazneen Ali expressed her satisfaction that joining of new members is a sign that the forum is on the path of growth and progress.

As a usual norm, renowned Urdu poet Ibrahim Qasid was requested to preside over the meeting while the guest member Dr Rajesh Gupta was invited to be the chief guest.





Screen shots of the webinar

A group photo of Writers' Forum Kuwait members.

Session

The formal session of the meeting started with a keynote by the President of the Forum Mrs. Maimuna Chougle who welcomed the new member and wished him good luck for his activities on the forum's platform and otherwise. Like her usual attempts to bring something new and commendable to the knowledge of the members while also attempting to introduce the members of the Forum to the larger literary world, Mrs Maimuna read an article on the poetry skills of Ms. Madhulika, an ex-member of the Forum.

The poetry session started with Ms. Nazneen Ali presenting a beautiful Urdu Ghazal and an Urdu poem showcasing her art of writing on different subjects. Sabir Omer followed the suit with his equally impressive Urdu ghazal and poem. The beauty of Urdu language and the exceptional crafting and drafting art was further showcased by Sayeed Nazar Kadpawi. Shabih Ahmed also mesmerized the members by his creativity.

This was followed by an array of Hindi poems on contemporary subjects each of which contained a message that was unique in itself. While Aamir Diwan recited a poem on reservation, Vinod Kaushik chose relationships as his topic for the day. Ms. Kalpana Shah was in her usual form and recited a patriotic poem.

The multilingual status of the Forum was maintained with Biswa Ranjan's outstanding poem in Oriya recited along with a Hindi translation by him.

After the members' presentations, the Chief Guest of the evening Dr Rajesh expressed his happiness on being a part of the Forum. Further he expressed his gratitude to everyone for honoring him to be the Chief Guest of the evening and appreciated each poet in person. His ghazal was well received by the members who thoroughly enjoyed his fresh ideas.

The President of the evening Ibrahim Qasid recited heart touching ghazals that captivated the audience because of its content as well as his melodious voice. To conclude, he congratulated all the members on their continued excel and prompted them adhere to the rules of poetry to make their creations more impressive and outstanding.

Ms. Sabiha Bilgrami, another dedicated member was also present in the meeting. Before winding up the day's proceedings Ms. Nazneen Ali thanked everyone for their presence while the members reciprocated their gratitude to her for the savory dishes and delicacies.

Prophetic medicine and CKD

IMA and IDF conduct webinar on health awareness & well-being

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 19: Indian Muslim Association (IMA) in coordination with Indian Doctor's Forum conducted a highly informative and engaging online webinar focused on Health Awareness and Well-being on Friday, Oct 13. The event featured two distinguished speakers who addressed crucial topics related to health care.

Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) presentation by Dr. Syed Mahmood: (bold)

Dr Syed Mahmood, a Community Service Secretory (IDF) & Consultant in Farwaniya Hospital delivered a comprehensive presentation on Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD). He discussed in detail the causes, symptoms, prevention, and management of CKD. His remarkable expertise and knowledge on the subject and ability to communicate complex medical information in clear and accessible manner was highly appreciated by all attendees.

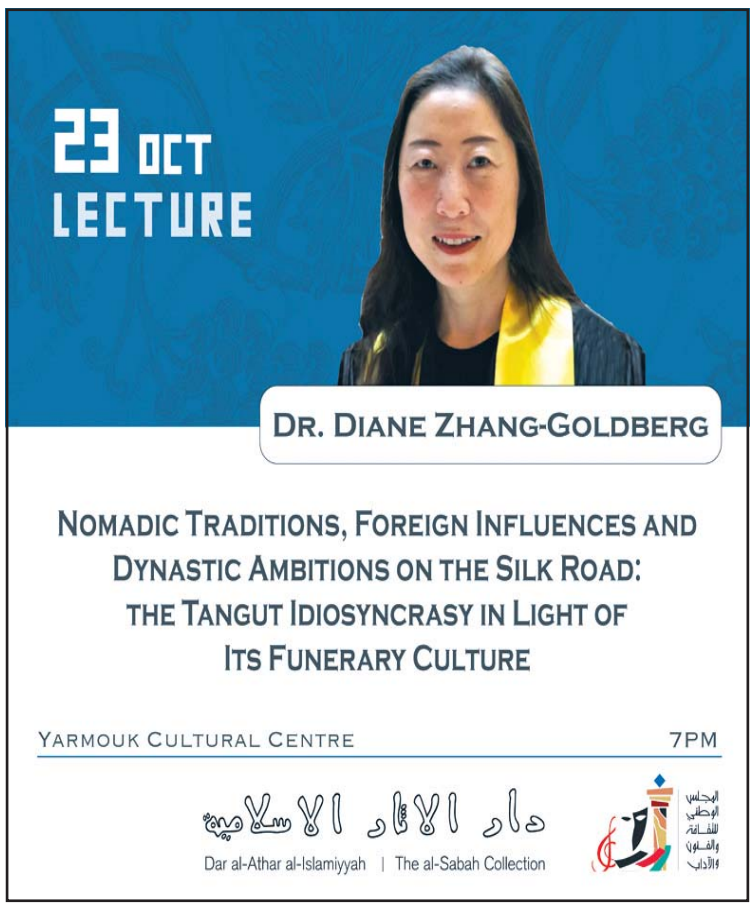
Prophetic Medicine: Importance and Benefits by Dr. Raziul Islam Nadwi:

Renowned Scholar Dr Raziul Islam Nadvi shed light on the significance and advantages of Prophetic Medicine. His lecture delved into traditional healing practices advocated by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), providing attendees with an understanding of their role in maintaining good health and well-being.

Dr Diwakar Chaluvaiah, President-Indian Doctors' Forum briefly addressed the audience on the role and purpose of IDF who is working whole-heartedly round the clock for the welfare of the community. He thanked IMA for regular organizing similar events in collaboration with IDF for community welfare.

The event witnessed active participation from a diverse audience, including medical professionals, community leaders, and general public.

The talks were followed by an engaging Q&A session, allowing attendees to seek clarification on health-related queries from the experts. The event started with the recitation of Holy Quran by Master Hamza Nisar, well conveyed by Br Yusuf and was concluded with concluding speech and vote of thanks by IMA President Janab Moulana Umar Falahi.



A flyer of the event.

A glimpse of future tech

App reveals ancient Greek world

ATHENS, Greece, Oct 19, (AP): Tourists at the Acropolis this holiday season can witness the resolution of one of the world's most heated debates on cultural heritage.

All they need is a smartphone.

Visitors can now pinch and zoom their way around the ancient Greek site, with a digital overlay showing how it once looked. That includes a collection of marble sculptures removed from the Parthenon more than 200 years ago that are now on display at the British Museum in London. Greece has demanded they be returned.

For now, an app supported by Greece's Culture Ministry allows visitors to point their phones at the Parthenon temple, and the sculptures housed in London appear back on the monument as archaeologists believe they looked 2,500 years ago.

Other, less widely known features also appear: Many of the sculptures on the Acropolis were painted in striking colors. A statue of goddess Athena in the main chamber of the Parthenon also stood over a shallow pool of water.

"That's really impressive ... the only time I've seen that kind of technology before is at the dentist," Shriya Parsotam Chitnavis, a tourist from London, said after checking out the app on a hot afternoon at the hilltop Acropolis, Greece's most popular archaeological site.

"I didn't know much about the (Acropolis), and I had to be convinced to come up here. Seeing this has made it more interesting - seeing it in color," she said. "I'm more of a visual person, so this being interactive really helped me appreciate it."

The virtual restoration works anywhere and could spare some visitors the crowded uphill walk and long wait to see the iconic monuments up close. It might also help the country's campaign to make Greek cities year-round destinations.

Tourism, vital for the Greek economy, has roared back since the COVID-19 pandemic, even as wildfires chased visitors from the island of Rhodes and affected other areas this summer. The number of inbound visitors from January through July was up 21.9% to 16.2 million compared with a year ago, according to the Bank of Greece. Revenue was up just over 20%, to 10.3 billion euros ($10.8 billion).

oil surges

The price of Kuwait oil went up by USD 1.80 to USD 95.61 per barrel on Wednesday in contrast with USD 93.81 pb the day before, said Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on Thursday.

At the global level, the price of the Brent crude was at USD 1.60 up to USD 91.50 per barrel, the same case with the West Texas Intermediate, which went up by USD 1.66 to USD 88.32 pb. (KUNA)

Kuwait's Sept trade surplus up

Kuwait's trade surplus with Japan widened 16.3 percent from a year earlier to JPY 77.8 billion (USD 519 million) in September, up for the first time in six months, as exports outpaced its imports by a big margin, government data showed on Thursday.

Kuwait stayed in black ink with Japan for 15 years and eight months, the Finance Ministry said in a preliminary report.

Overall Kuwaiti exports to Japan increased 20.1 percent year-on-year to JPY 102.9 billion (USD 687 million) for the first expansion in five months.

Imports from Japan rose 10.1 percent to JPY 25.1billion (USD 168 million), up for the 17th month in a row.

Middle East's trade surplus with Japan narrowed 42.4 percent to JPY 734.1 billion (USD 5.9 billion) last month, with Japan-bound exports from the region sliding 32.0 percent from a year earlier.

Crude oil, refined products, liquefied natural gas (LNG) and other natural resources, which accounted for 94.9 percent of the region's total exports to Japan, plunged 32.5 percent. (AP)

American Airlines posts $545 mln loss

American Airlines is reporting a $545 million loss for the third quarter in contrast with the huge profits posted by its two closest rivals.

American said its results were dragged down by $983 million in charges related to a new labor contract with its pilots, but United Airlines and Delta Air Lines reached similar deals with their pilots and still earned $1.1 billion each in the quarter.

Labor costs at American jumped 17%, an increase of nearly $600 million, which was roughly offset by lower fuel prices than a year ago.

American's revenue was roughly flat with last summer, compared with 12% and 11% increases at United and Delta.

American Airlines Group Inc., based in Fort Worth, Texas, said its earnings excluding special items worked out to 38 cents per share. Analysts expected 25 cents per share, according to a FactSet survey.

Revenue of $13.48 billion was slightly below Wall Street forecasts. (AP)

Market Movements 19-10-2023

			Change	Closing pts
PAKISTAN	-	KSE 100	+917.78	50,323.97

			Change	Closing pts
EUROPE	-	Euro Stoxx 50	-10.35	4,095.51
UK	-	FTSE 100	-76.38	7,511.62
DUBAI	-	DFM	-74.81	3,808.25
JAPAN	-	Nikkei	-611.63	31,430.62
SAUDI	-	Tadawul	-59.50	10,654.56
PHILIPPINES	-	PSEi	-49.11	6,219.16

Business

Vice Chairman of the Board, Bader Khalid Al-Shalfan heads bank delegation

Warba Bank actively participates in IMF, World Bank meetings

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 19: A delegation from Warba Bank concluded its active participation in the annual meetings and events of the Boards of Governors of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank Group for the year 2023, which were recently held in Marrakesh, Morocco, in the presence of a large number of central bank governors, ministers of finance and development, and senior financial policy officials from various countries.

During the conference, a series of meetings were held with global financial institutions, central bank governors from various countries, and participating dignitaries to strengthen relations, exchange visions and perceptions related to the global economy , its growth and development opportunities, and to emphasize the importance of cooperation and to make efforts to enhance this cooperation.The Warba Bank delegation was headed by Vice Chairman of the Board, Bader Khalid Al-Shalfan, with the participation of Board Member Mai Muhalhal Al-Mudhaf, Board Member Mohammad Hamid Al-Shalfan, and CEO ShaheenHamad Al-Ghanem.

The delegation participated in lectures that discussed the most prominent and important financial and economic challenges that the global banking industry is currently witnessing, in addition to global and regional economic transformations and their impact on the banking sector, and discussed opportunities for exchanging experiences and ways of cooperation for financing and investment as they are the main engine for achieving sustainable growth, as well as the role of regulatory bodies in developing the work and activities of banking and financial institutions.

Warba Bank Vice Chairman of the Board, Bader Khalid Al-Shalfan poses for a group photo at the event.

Warba's participation in the annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank Group came from its commitment to consolidating its role in Islamic banking, and the necessity of its presence in global conferences, to discuss ways to enhance this field as part of its keenness to review and enhance the role of the Islamic finance industry and its products globally.

Warba is keen to be present in these annual meetings of the IMF due to its importance, as it is the most prominent economic and financial gathering that includes world banking leaders and prominent government officials, which addresses regional and international economic, financial and banking issues and developments, and discusses different topics in various sectors and markets.

Future cooperation

The Warba Bank delegation met with many officials in various sectors, where ways of future cooperation between the bank and representatives of these parties were discussed. The delegation also participated in attending the reception organized by the Kuwait Banking Association in the presence of representatives of Kuwaiti banks and participants of the annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the Board of the World Bank Governors.

Warba Bank is one of the banks that has achieved great successes in a short period, as it occupied a leading position in the field of Islamic digital banking services for individuals, and it is one of the largest local banks in the number of shareholders, and these are among the most prominent components that make the bank close to all members of society, in addition Warba Bank is considered among the 50 largest banks in the Middle East in terms of market value for the year 2023 - Forbes Middle East classification.

'Investing in Sustainable Development'

Kuwait takes center stage at 8th World Investment Forum

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 19: Kuwait actively participates in the Eighth World Investment Forum organized by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), in Abu Dhabi from October 16 to 20, 2023, under the slogan "Investing in Sustainable Development," reports Al-Rai daily.

The Kuwaiti delegation was led by Finance Minister Fahd Al-Jarallah, representing Prime Minister His Highness Sheikh Ahmed Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. The forum's primary objective was to foster discussions and initiatives addressing global investment and development challenges, both existing and emerging.

The forum tackled key investment challenges stemming from multiple worldwide crises, including methods to boost investments in food security, the transition to low-carbon energy sources, healthcare systems, supply chain flexibility, and strategies to enhance productive capabilities in less developed nations. A dedicated session was also convened to focus on climate action and investment solutions, particularly pertinent with the approaching launch of the Conference of the Parties (COP28) scheduled for November in Dubai.

Clean energy

Furthermore, the forum delved into measures to bolster clean energy investments in developing countries, where there exists an annual investment shortfall of $2.2 trillion in transitioning to low-carbon energy, as highlighted in UNCTAD's World Investment Report 2023.

Minister Al-Jarallah emphasized the forum's significant and constructive role in addressing global investment challenges, extending appreciation to the Department of Economic Development in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi for its pioneering efforts in establishing this influential platform. He commended the valuable discussions and topics presented during the forum's opening day, which sought to devise solutions to economic and investment challenges. Al-Jarallah conveyed his gratitude and well-wishes for the success of those overseeing the forum and hoped for recommendations that would address investment challenges comprehensively.

The UNCTAD World Investment Forum is a biennial event, gathering various stakeholders at the level of Heads of State and Government, Ministers, Executive Directors, and Heads of International Organizations. It is considered a foremost global assembly for investment partnership and policy formulation, offering a platform for engagement among various stakeholders, including policy-makers, business leaders, investment promotion agency heads, and sovereign wealth fund managers, as well as representatives from academia and civil society.

Minister Al-Jarallah underscored the need to spotlight Kuwait's investment climate and promote promising investment opportunities through collaboration between the public and private sectors. During his visit to the "Direct Investment Promotion" and "Public-Private Partnership" pavilions at the forum, he stressed the importance of showcasing Kuwait's investment landscape, emphasizing the diverse and viable investment prospects within the country.

Al-Jarallah also highlighted the importance of participation in international investment forums, as they serve as pivotal platforms for shaping public policies and global decisions in a collective effort.

He reiterated Kuwait's commitment to attracting foreign investments, expanding cooperation with global markets, and staying abreast of developments and technological advancements to advance sustainable development in the country. He emphasized that Kuwait's participation in the forum aimed at knowledge sharing and gaining insights into global investment practices within one of the most significant and advanced international platforms.

The forum received sponsorship from His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President of the United Arab Emirates, Prime Minister, and Ruler of Dubai, and was graced by the presence of His Highness Sheikh Khalid bin Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Chairman of the Executive Council of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, and His Highness Sheikh Maktoum bin Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, First Deputy Ruler of Dubai, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance.

Participants in the Eighth World Invest Forum organized by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), in Abu Dhabi.

Kuwait pledges full support for Belt and Road Initiative

Strong commitment aligns with Vision 2035

TOKYO, Oct 19, (KUNA): The Secretary-General of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development Dr. Khaled Mahdi said on Thursday that Kuwait was keen on supporting the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), indicating that his country was one of the first to join from the Middle East.

Kuwait seeks to develop the logistical infrastructure and include it in Kuwait Vision 2035, through a program to develop the Northern Economic Zone and creating an establishment to develop Silk City and Kuwaiti islands.

KUNA photo

Dr. Khaled Mahdi, The Secretary-General of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development delivers his speech.

This came in the Secretary-General's speech to the third high-level forum of the BRI held in the Chinese Capital of Beijing.

Dr. Khaled Mahdi said that the main principals of BRI matched Kuwait Vision 2035 and its development plans and agendas, as this coherence is considered a key for success for the participating countries.

Developing the necessary infrastructure to achieve communication and interconnection between the economies of the participating countries is a top priority, seeking to make the initiative successful and achieve its noble goals, he said.

He noted that this development is based on several foundations, such as investing in the infrastructure of aerial, land and sea transportation in the participating countries, encouraging trade exchange, joint investment and supporting national development plans, in addition to exchanging knowledge and experiences in the field of innovation, creativity and economics.

He added that these foundations were framed in the meeting of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah with the Chinese President Xi Jinping last September, which resulted in the signing of seven important agreements in the field of developing marine and land infrastructure, renewable energy and waste management, green economy and circular carbon economy.

US announces $3.5b for projects nationwide to strengthen electric grid, bolster resilience

Pacific Gas and Electric CEO Patti Poppe looks down while being interviewed during a tour of PG&E workers burying power lines in Vacaville, Calif., Wednesday, Oct. 11, 2023. (AP)

WASHINGTON, Oct 19, (AP): The Biden administration has announced $3.5 billion for 58 projects across the country to strengthen electric grid resilience as extreme weather events such as the deadly Maui and California wildfires continue to strain the nation's aging transmission systems.

Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm said it was the largest federal investment ever in grid infrastructure, supporting projects that will harden electric systems and improve energy reliability and affordability. The federal spending, combined with money promised by private partners, could result in up to $8 billion in investments nationally to upgrade the grid, Granholm said.

"The grid, as it currently sits, is not equipped to handle all the new demand" and withstand natural disasters and extreme weather worsened by climate change, Granholm said at a news conference. "We need it to be bigger, we need it to be stronger, we need it to be smarter" to bring a range of renewable energy projects online and meet the Biden administration's goal of reaching 100% clean electricity by 2035, she said.

Projects funded by the federal Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships program will increase the flexibility, efficiency and reliability of electric power systems, with a particular focus on spurring solar, wind and other renewable energy, Granholm said. The projects also are aimed at fixing problems that may contribute to wildfires and other disasters and will improve reliability by deploying innovative approaches to electricity transmission, storage and distribution, she and other officials said.

Projects to be funded include $249 million each for rural areas in Georgia and Louisiana and $250 million for a Native American tribe in Oregon.

The largest grant, $464 million, will go to improve five transmission projects across seven Midwestern states, from Iowa to North Dakota. The money includes $95 million previously announced for Hawaii in the wake of devastating wildfires this summer, and $150 million to PacifiCorp to upgrade the grid and boost wildfire mitigation in California, Oregon, Utah and other states.

"Our outdated grid has been in need of an update for a long, long time," said Mitch Landrieu, a White House senior adviser who coordinates implementation of the 2021 infrastructure law signed by President Joe Biden.

The grid "is especially vulnerable to the increasing impacts of the climate crisis," Landrieu added. "Older equipment can overload during extreme heat and cold when power is needed most. And it's more likely to fail when communities are washed out by historic floods and decimated by stronger storms.''

The nation's existing power grids are not built to handle the growing energy demand, a fact that is complicated by the intermittent nature of renewables, since energy isn't generated when the sun doesn't shine or the wind isn't blowing.

Japan's exports rise and imports decline in Sept

Japan's exports climbed 4.3% in September from a year earlier as shipments of vehicles, machinery and electronics rose while imports of oil and gas fell sharply, the government said Thursday.

Exports totaled 9.2 trillion yen ($61 billion) in September while imports fell 16.3% from the year before to 10.9 trillion yen ($72 billion), according to provisional customs data released Thursday.

That left a positive balance of 62.4 trillion yen ($410 billion), the first monthly trade surplus in three months.

September's increase in exports was the biggest gain since March and was stronger than analysts had expected. The figures suggest strong activity in Japan's vital manufacturing sector despite faltering global demand.

Economists said the drop in imports was mainly due to base effects from the year before.

In the first half of Japan's fiscal year, from April-September, exports edged up just 1.4% from a year earlier, to a record 50.2 trillion yen ($330 billion) while the trade deficit shrank by three-quarters to 2.7 trillion yen ($18 billion).

Trade with the rest of Asia has weakened in the past half-year, with a drop in exports of computer chips and semiconductor making equipment taking a toll on exports to China. (AP)

BRI offers vision for the development of all countries

Ten years after the launch of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the strategic partnership between China and Egypt has flourished, yielding substantial results in practical cooperation. Assem Hanafi, the Egyptian Ambassador to China, stated, "The Belt and Road Initiative is of great significance, offering a vision for the development of not just China, but also other countries in the 21st century."

Discussing the importance of the BRI to Egypt, Ambassador Hanafi remarked, "Egypt was among the countries that actively engaged in this initiative from the outset. Within this framework, Egypt has initiated numerous major projects." Major undertakings in Egypt, among them, the Suez Canal Economic Zone (TEDA Cooperation Zone), the Central Business District development in the suburbs of Cairo, the large construction project in the Mediterranean coastal city of El-Alamein, the light rail system linking Cairo and its outskirts, and the green transition and renewable energy initiatives under the sustainable development framework, have been well-received by the Egyptian populace.

Ambassador Hanafi expressed appreciation for Chinese companies operating in Egypt and urged more of them to invest and start business there.

Bid to navigate current market uncertainty

Nokia plans to cut up to 14,000 jobs after sales and profits plunge

HELSINKI, Oct 19, (AP): Telecom gear maker Nokia said Thursday that it is planning to cut up to 14,000 jobs worldwide, or 16% of its workforce, as part of a push to reduce costs following a plunge in third-quarter sales and profit.

The Finnish wireless and fixed-network equipment provider said the planned measures are aimed at reducing its cost base and increasing operational efficiency "to navigate the current market uncertainty."

The company said it is aiming to lower its cost base by between 800 million euros ($843 billion) and 1.2 billion euros by the end of 2026. That was set to lead to a reduction from 86,000 employees now to between 72,000 and 77,000 during that time period.

Nokia's third-quarter sales plummeted 20%, to 4.98 billion euros from 6.24 billion, compared with the same three-month period last year. Comparable net profit plunged to 299 million euros from 551 million in the July-to-September quarter from a year earlier.

Revenue

The company's biggest unit by revenue - the mobile networks business - declined 24% to 2.16 billion euros, driven mainly by weakness in the North American market. Operating profit for the division fell 64%.

"We continue to believe in the mid- to long-term attractiveness of our markets," Nokia CEO Pekka Lundmark said in a statement. "Cloud computing and AI revolutions will not materialize without significant investments in networks that have vastly improved capabilities."

While it's unclear when the market will improve, Nokia isn't "standing still but taking decisive action on three levels: strategic, operational and cost," Lundmark said. "I believe these actions will make us stronger and deliver significant value for our shareholders."

Nokia is one of the world's main suppliers of 5G, the latest generation of broadband technology, along with Sweden's Ericsson, China's Huawei and South Korea's Samsung.

Earlier this year, Ericsson said it was cutting 8% of its global workforce as it looked to reduce costs.

Germany launches a drive to get more Ukrainian and other refugees into jobs

Govt trying to address shortage of skilled labor

BERLIN, Oct 19, (AP): The German government on Wednesday announced a drive to get more Ukrainian and other refugees into jobs now that many have a usable knowledge of the German language.

The government is trying to address both a shortage of skilled labor and concerns about high levels of migration. Germany has taken in more than 1 million Ukrainians since Russia's invasion last year, and also is seeing large numbers of refugees and migrants from elsewhere.

Unlike others who arrive, Ukrainians immediately receive residency status in Germany and the 26 other European Union countries. Labor Minister Hubertus Heil said 132,000 Ukrainians already have found jobs.

"This is a success, but it's far from sufficient," he told reporters in Berlin. "It is time now to enter a new phase."

Completed

Counting Ukrainians and others who have recently completed or will soon complete integration courses, which include language learning, there is "a potential for our labor market of about 400,000 people" who are currently receiving benefits and already speak German, he added.

The "job turbo" that the government is now launching involves having job centers put more effort into getting refugees into work. The idea is for officials to meet with refugees every six weeks at most to help them seek suitable jobs and address potential obstacles.

"It's also clear that we expect them to make efforts and offers must be accepted," Heil said, noting that jobless benefits can be reduced if people refuse to take work. He said he also wants to get businesses involved and plans a meeting with employers' organizations and others on Nov. 20.

The government also aims to speed up the recognition of foreign job qualifications. It is appointing a senior official at the Federal Labor Agency, Daniel Terzenbach, to oversee the effort as a "special envoy" for integrating refugees into the labor market.

Heil said the message to refugees with a long-term prospect of staying in Germany is that "now it's time to get to work," with help from authorities.

The logo of Arriva, the Deutsche Bahn's European public transport subsidiary, is seen on a bus as the driver, wearing a protective mask and gloves due to the coronavirus outbreak, gives the thumbs up, in London, Sunday, March 29, 2020. Germany's state-owned railway operator, Deutsche Bahn, said Thursday, Oct. 19, 2023, that it has agreed to sell its European public transport subsidiary Arriva, to U.S.-based infrastructure investor I Squared Capital. (AP)

Deutsche Bahn sells European 'subsidiary' Arriva to I Squared

BERLIN, Oct 19, (AP): Germany's state-owned railway operator, Deutsche Bahn, said Thursday that it has agreed to sell its European public transport subsidiary, Arriva, to U.S.-based infrastructure investor I Squared Capital.

Deutsche Bahn didn't disclose the value of the planned sale. It said the transaction should be completed next year. The company is selling Arriva "to enable additional growth in rail transport in Germany and allow it to focus its resources on its core business."

Arriva has about 35,500 employees and operates in 10 European countries. It has bus and train units in the U.K. and also has operations in the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain.

Deutsche Bahn acquired the British-based company in 2010. Arriva businesses in "non-core markets," including Sweden and Portugal, already have been sold.

Deutsche Bahn Chief Financial Officer Levin Holle said in a statement that "Arriva has good prospects for sustainable growth as market liberalization in Europe progresses."

I Squared Capital, headquartered in Miami, was described in Thursday's statement as an independent global infrastructure manager with over $37 billion in assets under management. Arriva Group CEO Mike Cooper said that it "has an established track record of supporting companies which provide essential services, and of investing in the energy transition."

Home sales fell again in Sept as surging mortgage rates and rising prices discouraged homebuyers

LOS ANGELES, Oct 19, (AP): Sales of previously occupied U.S. homes fell for the fourth month in a row in September, held back by surging mortgage rates and a thin supply of properties on the market.

Existing home sales fell 2% last month from August to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 3.96 million, the National Association of Realtors said Thursday. That's just above the 3.9 million unit pace that economists were expecting, according to FactSet.

Sales sank 15.4% compared with the same month last year and are down 21% through the first nine months of the year versus the same period in 2022.

Despite the housing market slump, home prices kept climbing versus a year ago. The national median sales price rose 2.8% from September last year to $394,300. It slipped 3.1% from August.

"Clearly, the story of limited inventory and rising and rising mortgage rates continues to hinder the home sales market," said Lawrence Yun, the NAR's chief economist.

The weekly average rate on a 30-year mortgage moved above 7% in August, when many of the home sales that were finalized in September would have gone under contract. It has remained above that threshold since, surging last week to 7.57%, the highest level since 2000, according to mortgage buyer Freddie Mac.

High rates can add hundreds of dollars a month in costs for borrowers, limiting how much they can afford in a market already out of reach for many Americans. They also discourage homeowners who locked in rock-bottom rates two years ago from selling.

While surging mortgage rates have shut out many prospective buyers, a chronic shortage of homes for sale continues to keep the market competitive, especially for the most affordable homes.

Homes sold last month typically within just 21 days after hitting the market, and about 26% of homes sold for more than their list price, the NAR said.

All told, there were 1.13 million homes on the market by the end of last month, up 2.7% from August, but down 8.1% from September last year, the NAR said. That amounts to just a 3.4-month supply, going by the current sales pace. In a more balanced market between buyers and sellers, there is a 4- to 5-month supply.

NerdWallet

Employers offer emergency savings options to thousands US of workers

By Liz Weston

When I wrote about employer-provided emergency savings accounts four years ago, the idea was still pretty novel. Some companies were experimenting with ways to help their workers save for short-term needs, but the concept wasn't even on the radar for many employers.

What a difference the pandemic made. Millions were thrown out of work with little warning, and few had the financial reserves to survive even a few months of unemployment. Big employers, and lawmakers, took notice, says Claire Chamberlain, global head of social impact for investment manager BlackRock. The result: Hundreds of thousands of workers now have options to build emergency savings through their employers, and Congress passed laws to encourage more companies to add short-term savings options.

"I think a lot of people woke up," Chamberlain says.

Pandemic highlighted Americans' financial fragility

Employers tend to overestimate their workers' financial stability, says Timothy Flacke, cofounder and executive director of Commonwealth, a nonprofit that promotes financial security. The pandemic brought home the reality that most Americans live paycheck to paycheck, and many have little or no emergency savings.

"COVID really changed a lot of things in terms of an employer's understanding of the day-to-day financial challenges of their people," Flacke says.

But there's also been a growing awareness that emergency savings are key to financial health, he says. Even a small amount of savings can help families avoid falling behind on bills or turning to high cost loans. Workers without emergency savings are less likely to contribute to retirement plans, and those with savings are less likely to tap the retirement savings they have, Flacke says.

In addition, companies are aware that financial stress takes a toll on workers' productivity by distracting them during working hours, Chamberlain says.

"It's that productivity drag that I think at its core is motivating employers," Chamberlain says.

Push for emergency savings picks up steam

In 2019, BlackRock launched its Emergency Savings Initiative in partnership with Commonwealth, the Financial Health Network and a third nonprofit, Common Cents Lab. The initiative started with a handful of employers and financial services firms experimenting with emergency savings programs.

Since the pandemic began, those companies have been joined by several big employers - including UPS, Starbucks, Delta Air Lines and Best Buy. Some provide incentives to encourage savings: Delta will chip in up to $1,000 for workers who complete a financial education program, for example, while Starbucks contributes up to $250.

One of the biggest hits so far is a savings feature that payroll processor ADP added to its Wisely prepaid debit card and app. Wisely can be used by employers to pay workers as an alternative to checks or direct deposit. The savings feature allows users to set up automatic transfers to a "savings envelope," and transfer savings back to their available balance whenever they need to spend the money. By the end of 2022, Wisely users had saved more than $1.55 billion, Chamberlain says.

Don't expect an emergency savings plan at open enrollment

We're a long way from employer-provided emergency savings accounts being as common as employer-provided health insurance or retirement plans. But momentum seems to be building.

"It is rare that I have a conversation with an organization of any size that is not thinking about emergency savings," says Matt Bahl, Financial Health Network's vice president and head of workplace financial health.

It doesn't hurt that SECURE 2.0, the retirement legislation that became law late last year, includes provisions that encourage employers to offer emergency savings options.

Starting in 2024, employers can add an after-tax emergency savings option to their retirement plans, allowing workers to put aside up to $2,500 - an option often referred to as a 401(k) "sidecar." In addition, employers can opt for automatic enrollment to increase participation. Another provision allows companies to let workers take penalty-free withdrawals of up to $1,000 from their 401(k)s and other workplace retirement accounts.

But employers may be more likely to offer emergency savings programs in addition to, rather than as part of, their retirement plans, Bahl says. Standalone savings plans could be easier and cheaper to implement, and could attract some of the most financially fragile workers who may not feel able to contribute to retirement, Bahl says.

"We work with some of the largest employers in the country. Not a single one of them is doing a sidecar program, but more than half of them have or are planning to deploy an out-of-retirement-plan emergency savings option," Bahl says.

Still, having Congress' blessing on the concept of employer-provided emergency savings plans was a watershed moment, Bahl and Flacke agree.

"Certainly having policymakers who can't agree on much these days pass a bill that includes these provisions is a pretty clear signal," Flacke says. (AP)

Mexican court employees call five-day strike to protest proposed funding cuts

MEXICO CITY, Oct 19, (AP): Mexican court employees said Wednesday they will go on strike from Thursday through Tuesday to protest proposed funding cuts, threatening an already creaky court system.

President Andrés Manuel López Obrador has proposed cutting funds for the judicial branch, arguing that judges make too much money and often protect criminals.

The court employees' union denied that its members - which include employees like typists and bailiffs - are overpaid, and said the cuts would affect them.

Mexican courts have never been known for their speed or efficiency. One court recently handed down sentences against five soldiers in the 2010 killing of two university students, after legal proceedings that lasted almost 13 years.

Despite some reforms, such multi-year trials are not uncommon in Mexico. That has contributed to the controversy surrounding López Obrador's push to require more suspects to stay in jail pending trials that may last years, even if they end in acquittal.

Nor is it unusual for López Obrador to quarrel with other branches of government, especially the judiciary.

López Obrador regularly criticizes judges by name for court rulings he doesn't like, accusing them of corruption or political bias. The president has also proposed reforming the constitution to make top court seats elected positions.

Obituary

Stallone pays tribute to co-star with heartfelt message

Burt Young, Oscar-nominated 'Rocky' actor, dies at 83

LOS ANGELES, Oct 19, (AP): **Burt Young**, the Oscar-nominated actor who played Paulie, the rough-hewn, mumbling-and-grumbling best friend, corner-man and brother-in-law to Sylvester Stallone in the "Rocky" franchise, has died.

Young died Oct. 8 in Los Angeles, his daughter, Anne Morea Steingieser, told the New York Times on Wednesday. No cause was given. He was 83.

Young had roles in acclaimed films and television shows including "Chinatown," "Once Upon a Time in America" and "The Sopranos."

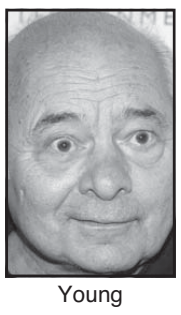
But he was always best known for playing Paulie Pennino in six "Rocky" movies. The short, paunchy, balding Young was the sort of actor who always seemed to play middle-aged no matter his age.

When Paulie first appears in 1976's "Rocky," he's an angry, foul-mouthed meat packer who is abusive to his sister Adrian (Talia Shire), with whom he shares a small apartment in Philadelphia. He berates the shy, meek Adrian for refusing at first to go on a Thanksgiving-night date with his buddy and co-worker Rocky Balboa, and destroys a turkey she has in the oven.

The film became a phenomenon, topping the box office for the year and making a star of lead actor and writer Stallone, who paid tribute to Young on Instagram on Wednesday night.

Along with a photo of the two of them on the set of the first film, Stallone wrote "you were an incredible man and artist, I and the World will miss you very much."

"Rocky" was nominated for 10 Oscars, including best supporting actor for Young. It won three, including best picture. Young and co-star Burgess Meredith, who was also nominated, lost to Jason Robards in "All the President's Men."


Young

As the movies went on, Young's Paulie softened, as the sequels themselves did, and he became their comic relief. In 1985's "Rocky IV" he reprograms a robot Rocky gives him into a sexy-voiced servant who dotes on him.

Paulie was also an eternal pessimist who was constantly convinced that Rocky was going to get clobbered by his increasingly daunting opponents. His surprise at Rocky's resilience brought big laughs.

"It was a great ride, and it brought me to the audience in a great way," Young said in a 2020 interview with Celebrity Parents magazine. "I made him a rough guy with a sensitivity. He's really a marshmallow even though he yells a lot."

Born and raised in Queens, New York, Young served in the Marine Corps, fought as a professional boxer and worked as a carpet layer before taking up acting, studying with legendary teacher Lee Strasberg at the Actors Studio.

On stage, in films and on television, he typically played small-time tough guys or down-on-their luck working class men.

In a short-but-memorable scene in 1974's "Chinatown," he plays a fisherman who throws a fit when Jack Nicholson's private detective Jake Gittes shows him pictures proving his wife is cheating on him.

Young also appeared in director Sergio Leone's 1984 gangster epic "Once Upon a Time in America" with Robert De Niro, the 1986 comedy "Back to School" with Rodney Dangerfield, and the 1989 gritty drama "Last Exit to Brooklyn" with Jennifer Jason Leigh.

In a striking appearance in season three of "The Sopranos" in 2001, he plays Bobby Baccalieri, Sr., an elderly mafioso with lung cancer who pulls off one last hit before a coughing fit leads to him dying in a car accident.

He guest-starred on many other TV series including "M(asterisk)A(asterisk)S(asterisk)H," "Miami Vice" and "The Equalizer."

Later in life he focused on roles in the theater and on painting, a lifelong pursuit that led to gallery shows and sales.

His wife of 13 years, Gloria, died in 1974.

Along with his daughter, Young is survived by one grandchild and a brother, Robert.

Variety

This image released by Netflix shows Annette Bening as Diana Nyad, (left), and Jodie Foster as Bonnie Stoll, in a scene from the film 'Nyad.' (AP)

Film

Foster shines as Diana's loyal trainer

'Nyad,' a tale of perseverance, triumph

NEW YORK, Oct 19, (AP): In "Nyad," there are two feats of perseverance on display. First, there is the ceaseless determination of Diana Nyad (Annette Bening) to accomplish a marathon swim from Cuba to Florida across 103 miles of open, shark-infested waters. Then there is the mettle of Nyad's support team to tolerate the singularly self-absorbed and stubborn Nyad. Both, in the film, are an endurance sport.

"Nyad," which opens in limited theaters Friday and streams Nov. 3 on Netflix, is in many ways a conventional sports drama, defined by long odds and personal triumph. But there is enough here to help the film, directed by the intrepid filmmakers Elizabeth Chai Vasarhelyi and Jimmy Chin, if not swim against the tide of sports-biopic convention then at least ride a swift current to the finish line.

First and foremost there's the fact that this is a sports drama led by two actresses in their 60s: Bening and Jodie Foster, who plays Diana's best friend and personal trainer Bonnie Stoll. When "Nyad" gets underway, the setting isn't the 1970s, when Nyad's record swims made her a headline-grabbing sensation. It's Diana's 60th birthday, which for her only marks her long distance from a real challenge. "Where's the excellence?" she says.

Diana soon thereafter gets back in the pool, resolving to complete the Cuba-to-Florida swim, a route some moviegoers may associate more with the Go-Fast boats of Michael Mann's "Miami Vice" than athletic pursuit. For Diana, the 50-hour endeavor is a matter of completing a long-ago abandoned dream and a way to prove to herself (and everyone else) that age is no match for her will.

It's the rare role that could be said to be both shark and Oscar bait. Yet Bening's performance has little vanity to it. Her Diana is obsessively single-minded to the point of unlikeable. When Diana hits the ocean, Bening turns into a ferociously forward-moving force who won't let anything - not thunder storms, nor jelly fish stings - stop her in her quest. Just keep swimming? She'd leave Dory in the dust.

Diana also comes close to outswimming the people trying hardest to help her. Though the film is principally a showcase for Bening, it's Foster's supporting turn that lifts "Nyad." Foster is a rare screen presence these days, which only makes her warmth and ease all the more powerful here. "Nyad" is balanced between Diana's admirably insane ambition and Bonnie's loyal (up to a point) support for her friend. In any case, it's a reminder, like a pail of cold water, of just how good Foster can be.

Other supporting characters are along for the ride, too, most notably Rhys Ifans' crusty sea-dog navigator John Bartlett. He's a cliche but a darn likable one. Nyad has, herself, often been a brash and savvy self-promoter less likely to share the spotlight. It's to the movie's credit that it pushes back against its prickly protagonist at the same time it exalts her.

But "Nyad" does accept Nyad's ultimate accomplishment, even if some have disputed it. Her 2013 swim to the Florida Keys was never ratified by the World Open Water Swimming Assn., and fellow marathon swimmers have cast doubts on it. Nyad has forcefully maintained she completed the swim, without assistance. At times, "Nyad" bends over backwards to depict Nyad as conscientious of the rules.

Vasarhelyi and Chin, in their narrative debut, mix in documentary footage throughout the film, smoothly transitioning from the non-fiction world they come from. They're the filmmaking team behind documentary standouts like the Oscar-winning "Free Solo" and the Thai cave chronicle "The Rescue."

Those films were excellent not just due to Vasarhelyi and Chin's own filmmaking adventurousness but because of their firm grasp of the psychology of those who push themselves to physical extremes. "Nyad" relies on flashbacks to Diana's past - including an encounter with an unnamed swim coach Nyad said sexually assaulted her and others - to dig into what fuels her.

And just like Alex Honnold of "Free Solo" and the British cave divers of "The Rescue," "Nyad" convincingly argues that to accomplish something great - to really dream big - you may need a dose of delusion, too.

"Nyad," a Netflix release is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association for thematic material involving sexual abuse, some strong language and brief partial nudity. Running time: 121 minutes. Three stars out of four.

Also:

LONDON: Mike Skinner is doing it all himself - even if it takes years.

He wrote, directed, edited and starred in a feature-length movie, "The Darker the Shadow, the Brighter the Light." It is accompanied by an album of the same name released last Friday - the first album from The Streets in 12 years. Formed in London in the early 1990s, The Streets' debut record "Original Pirate Material" was released in 2002 and became an instant classic. Their lyrics reference club culture, hangovers in cafes and dating celebrities, but also topics like male fragility in "Dry Your Eyes" and battles with grief in "Never Went to Church."

Skinner's movie "The Darker the Shadow, the Brighter the Light" is described as a "neo-noir detective film" but instead of a private eye solving the case, it's a DJ. Though obviously nonfiction, it references Skinner's life as a DJ in his mid-40s - taking place in backstage rooms, on dance floors and behind decks and in the backseats of cars as the sun comes up.

Skinner jokes that it didn't really feel like he had "much choice" in taking on all of the roles in the filmmaking process, because "no one was going to give me any money to do it." It took seven years.

Because the record was made at the same time, it too is more than seven years old now. Skinner says this is a good thing because it's had "time to breathe," as his focus was on the film.

The movie has been screened in several venues round the **UK** and Europe, with Skinner taking part in question-and-answer sessions afterward. He likens the film tour to "DJing, but not in the middle of the night, which is great."

"A film is almost designed as the perfect amount of time to have dinner. And then when you come back, everyone's finished the film. I think I'd like to take that idea and put that back in to DJing, and just be like, introduce the DJ set, but then just sort of press play, go off and have dinner," he says.

And after the album's release, The Streets are hitting the road. Skinner says he's looking forward to the tour - especially after the "nightmare" of finishing his movie.

"When you're on tour, despite what everyone says, you've only got an hour's work to do a day, like you're sleeping behind the venue in the tour bus, it's really easy," he says. "Don't tell anyone I said that, but I'm looking forward to an easy life, put it that way."

It maybe easier, but Skinner describes the experience as being "zero glamor."

"Oh, yeah, no you're parked in a car park the whole time. Don't think it's all, you know, limousines and after-show parties. It's not, but it's definitely relaxing," he says.

NASHVILLE, Tenn.: Maren Morris has filed for divorce from her husband **Ryan Hurd**, citing the prominent country music couple's "irreconcilable differences" after five years of marriage.

Morris filed the divorce complaint in Nashville circuit court on Oct. 2, writing that the couple have been separated since that date. They were married in March 2018.

Morris and Hurd have one 3-year-old son, **Hayes**, who has lived with them in Nashville since he was born.

According to the filing, Morris and Hurd "are unable to live together successfully as husband and wife and are experiencing irreconcilable differences in their marriage." Morris also filed proof that she has already completed a parenting seminar generally required in divorce cases.

Representatives for Morris and Hurd could not immediately be reached for comment about the divorce filing.

The Grammy-award winning Morris, who is from **Texas**, is best known for platinum country hits like "The Bones," "My Church" and her 2018 dance hit "The Middle" with EDM DJ Zedd, which proved Morris' musical interests stretched beyond the confines of genre and ushered her into the pop mainstream.

She joined the country music supergroup The Highwomen in 2019. Recently, she made the decision to step away from country music.

"I felt like I don't want to say goodbye, but I really cannot participate in the really toxic arms of this institution anymore," she told the New York Times' Popcast podcast.

She has long been vocal about sexuality, femininity, politics and her acknowledgement of country music's racist history.

The **Chicago**-born Hurd began his career as a songwriter, composing songs for **Tim McGraw**, **Dierks Bentley**, and **Blake Shelton** - including the 2014 No. 1 country radio hit, "Lonely Tonight," for Shelton and featuring Ashley Monroe.

He has been writing with Morris since her first major label album, "Hero," was released in 2016 and hit No. 5 on the Billboard 200. His debut solo album, "Pelago," was released on Sony Music Nashville in 2021. The album's most successful single is a collaboration with Morris titled "Chasing After You." (AP)

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LAS VEGAS: The **Southern California** street gang leader charged in the fatal shooting of **Tupac Shakur** in 1996 in Las Vegas will make a court appearance Thursday with a lawyer from one of the city's best-known political families, one that has represented mobsters, athletes and other famous clients.

Morris

Shakur

Attorney **Ross Goodman** told The Associated Press Wednesday he'll appear in **Duane** "Keffe D" **Davis**' defense against accusations that Davis orchestrated the drive-by killing of the rap music icon. Davis won't immediately enter a plea, Goodman said, he'll seek another two weeks to confirm that he'll be hired for Davis' case.

Davis, 60, originally from **Compton**, California, was arrested Sept. 29 outside his home in suburban **Henderson**. He told a police officer wearing a body camera that he moved there in January because his wife was involved in opening grocery stores in **Nevada**.

Edi Faal, Davis' longtime personal lawyer in **Los Angeles**, told AP after Davis' first court appearance on Oct. 4 that he was helping Davis find a defense attorney in Nevada. Faal on Wednesday confirmed Goodman's involvement.

Goodman is a son of former Las Vegas Mayor **Oscar Goodman** and current **Mayor Carolyn Goodman**. As a lawyer for more than two decades, he has handled a range of high-profile cases including a plea deal in August with which former Las Vegas Raiders cornerback Damon Arnette resolved a felony gun charge by pleading guilty to two misdemeanors. (AP)

People & Places

People

Crackdown pays off

Netflix subscribers up amid price hike

SAN FRANCISCO, Oct 19, (AP): Netflix on Wednesday disclosed summertime subscriber gains that surpassed industry analysts' projections, signaling the video streaming service's crackdown on password sharing is converting former freeloaders into paying customers.

In an effort to bring in even more revenue, Netflix also announced it's raising the price for its most expensive streaming service by $2 to $23 per month in the US - a 10% increase - and its lowest-priced, ad-free streaming plan to $12 - another $2 bump. The $15.50 per month price for Netflix's most popular streaming option in the US will remain unchanged, as will a $7 monthly plan that includes intermittent commercials.

Cheruvu

It also raised its prices for subscribers in the UK and France.

The company added nearly 8.8 million worldwide subscribers during the July-September period, more than tripling the number gained during the same time last year when Netflix was scrambling to recover from a downturn in customers during the first half last year. The increase left Netflix with about 247 million worldwide subscribers, well above the 243.8 million projected by analysts surveyed by FactSet Research.

Netflix's financial performance also topped the analyst forecasts that shape investor expectations. The Los Gatos, California, company earned $1.68 billion, or $3.73 per share, a 20% increase from the same time last year while revenue climbed 8% to $8.54 billion.

The company's stock price soared nearly 13% in extended trading after the latest quarterly numbers came out. Netflix shares have increased by about 30% so far this year amid mounting evidence its video streaming service is faring better than most in a crowded fielded of competitors that is testing the financial limits of many households.

Attracted

Netflix has picked up more than 16 million subscribers through the first nine months of the year, already eclipsing the 8.9 million subscribers that it added all of last year. But it's still a fraction of the more than 36 million additional subscribers that Netflix attracted in 2020 when the pandemic turned into a gold mine for the service at a time when people were looking for ways to stay entertained while tethered to home.

Subscriber growth "isn't going to be what it was three or four years ago. That has to do with (market) penetration and who can afford to pay for it," said

This year's subscriber inroads have been made despite entertainment labor strife centered in part on writers' and actors' complaints about unfairly low payments doled out by video streaming services such as Netflix. The company has been able to withstand the recently settled writers' strike and ongoing actors strike by drawing upon a backlog of already finished TV series and movies in the US, as well as productions made in international markets unaffected by the labor disputes.

In an apparent effort to rebuild its library of original programming after everyone returns to work, Netflix said it expects to spend about $17 billion on TV series and films next year.

Netflix's decision to abandon its long-established practice of allowing subscribers to share their account passwords with friends and family outside their households has prompted more viewers who had been watching the video service for free to sign up for their own accounts. The crackdown also has boosted Netflix's in another way - current subscribers can share their accounts with someone living outside their households by paying higher monthly fees.

In a shareholder letter released with its latest quarterly results, Netflix said the backlash to the password-sharing crackdown has been minimal and expressed optimism that management will find ways to convert more "borrower households" into subscribers in the upcoming months.

The apparent success of the password-sharing crackdown could now free management to focus on other ways to bring in more revenue, such as a low-priced option that includes advertising introduced a year ago.

Netflix's decision to open its service up to commercials hasn't been a big boon yet, but Harding Loevner analyst **Uday Cheruvu** believes that will change as advertisers realize that the personal information the company has gleaned from viewers' entertainment tastes can help target their commercials at consumers most likely to buy their products in the same way internet powerhouses such as Google and Facebook have been doing for years.

"I think the advertising potential of Netflix is underappreciated," Cheruvu said. "The audience engagement with the video advertising there could be multiple times stronger than a social media platform."

In the shareholder letter, Netflix said roughly 30% of its incoming subscribers are opting for the $7 plan with commercials, growth that is likely to attract more spending from advertisers. The higher prices for Netflix's premium plans also seems likely to divert more subscribers into the ad-supported option.

"The 'streamflation' era is upon us, and consumers should expect to be hit with price hikes, password sharing limits, and enticed with ad supported options," said Scott Purdy, US media leader for KPMG.

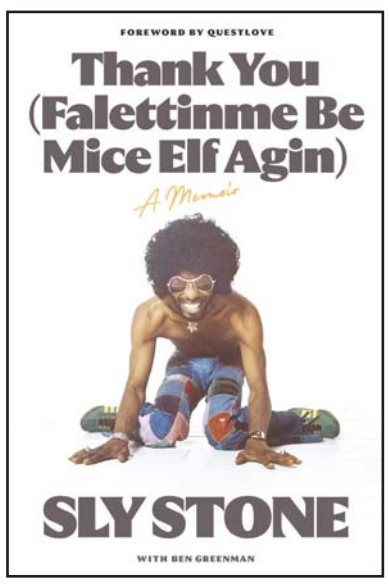
Also:

WASHINGTON: National Geographic and **Antoni Porowski** embark on a global adventure with the greenlight of an all-new docuseries following Porowski, bestselling author and star of Netflix's hit series "Queer Eye," on his epic journey to discover the rich heritages of global celebrities by way of their ancestors' food traditions, techniques and culinary experiences.

With extensive culinary expertise, a passion for connecting people through food and pride in his own Polish heritage, Porowski guides celebrities on an unprecedented journey toward cultural and personal discovery.

"Food is such an integral part of understanding who we are and where we come from," said Porowski. "I am so grateful for this once-in-a-lifetime adventure, alongside some wonderful friends both new and old, traveling the globe, making up for all the times I skipped geography class in high school, to explore food traditions and cultures, and am honored to embark on this journey with National Geographic."

Janelle Monae performs at the YouTube Theater, Wednesday, Oct. 18, in Inglewood, Calif. (AP)



This image released by AUWA Books shows 'Thank You (Falettinme Be Mice Elf Agin) by Sly Stone and Ben Greenman. (AP)

Music

Maestro's book overflows with wit

Stone's tales of funk, survival in memoir

LOS ANGELES, Oct 19, (Agencies): Sly Stone wants to take you higher in memoir with tales of funk, drugs and survival

While summoning stories from his remarkable yet erratic life in music, Sly Stone admits he occasionally had to depend on the recollections of others because his own memory wasn't always reliable.

At one point in his new memoir, Stone, now 80, remembers that during the hazy excesses of his 1970s rock stardom he briefly shared a Los Angeles mansion with a baboon that had the run of the place. He's just not sure where the primate came from.

"I forgot where I got him?" Stone muses. "Baboon store?"

His book, co-written with Ben Greenman, overflows with wit and wordplay befitting a maestro whose funkiest song with his band the Family Stone was "Thank You (Falettinme Be Mice Elf Agin)" — also the title of the book.

Born Sylvester Stewart in Texas and raised in Vallejo, California, across the bay from San Francisco, he studied music composition at a junior college while working as a radio DJ, becoming known for his whimsical patter and eclectic playlists.

Stone clearly recalls his early and evolving vision of a no-barriers style of music that would meld Motown pop-soul, James Brown's funk, R&B, gospel and psychedelic rock. Shortly after forming in 1966, Sly and the Family Stone produced a string of sunny hits including "Everyday People," "I Want To Take You Higher," "Hot Fun in the Summertime" and "Stand!" that captured the hippy spirit of the times.

Stone's band included Black and white musicians while featuring women not just singing but playing instruments — a rarity at the time. A triumphant set at Woodstock and a star turn in the subsequent film of the concert made him a household name.

"Rhythm, melody and lyrics carried inspiration to the people," he writes. That inspiration became a lasting influence for generations of artists including The Jackson 5, Prince and countless hip-hop acts.

Stone's music took a darker and more cynical turn as drugs took hold and the dream of the '60s devolved into political assassinations, racial strife and lingering war in Vietnam. He takes readers through the agonizing recording process of his 1971 classic "There's a Riot Goin' On," on which he says he "sacrificed technique for feeling." The album has an anguished tone, exemplified by the volatile funk of the single "Luv N' Haight."

Meanwhile at concerts, fans never knew whether they'd get one of his famously ecstatic performances, or if Stone would bother showing up at all.

Addiction

He espoused Black Power, but not loudly enough for Black Panthers, who accused Stone of acquiescing to white America. Meanwhile, some white people thought he was too militant. While unafraid to be political, he remained defiantly nonviolent and never shook the notion that, yes, people can all get along. "We exist to coexist," he writes.

That uplifting spirit returns, if only sporadically, for 1973's "Fresh," his last great album. The band splintered soon after and Stone entered a decades-long cycle of addiction, middling solo offerings, doomed tours and tax troubles.

Predictably, the memoir contains no shortage of occasionally humorous — but mostly bleak — backstage tales of debauchery and drug abuse. While on tour in his glory days Stone carried a violin case filled with cocaine. Later he said he went on PCP binges because "it threw your perspective off, which I liked." Eventually he was overtaken by a dependence on crack cocaine that drained his talents, ruined relationships and led to regular stints in jail and rehab.

"Arrest records were the new records, and I was hitting the charts," he writes. "Court dates were my new concerts, and I was still just as good as arriving on time."

Hip-hop empresario Questlove, whose publishing imprint produced the book, writes in the introduction that "Sly has lived a hundred lives, and they are all here." Fans will certainly appreciate the vivid accounts from recording studios, concert stages and star-studded parties. But readers looking for personal insights will come away disappointed. Stone is self-aware but not particularly self-reflective.

However, even during his gloomiest days, Stone said he relied on his compositions to keep the darkness out, always remaining true to "the larger idea of music as a spiritual force."

Also:

KUALA LUMPUR: **Malaysia** has decided to withdraw its participation in the upcoming Frankfurt Book Fair 2023, citing the event organizers' support for Israel.

Malaysian Minister of Education **Fadhlina Sidek** made the announcement late Monday in a press statement, confirming that the ministry will not compromise with **Israel**'s violence in **Palestine** as it clearly violates international law and human rights.

She also added that the move to pull out of one of the biggest international book fairs is "in line with the government's stand to be in solidarity and offer full support for Palestine".

The Frankfurt International Book Fair has been held for over 500 years annually and will run for five days starting on 18 October at the Frankfurt Messe.

Michel

Dogg

Variety

WASHINGTON: A multimillion-dollar conspiracy trial that stretched across the worlds of politics and entertainment is now touching on the tech world with arguments that a defense attorney for a Fugees rapper bungled closing arguments by using an artificial intelligence program.

Prakazrel "Pras" Michel argued that the use of the "experimental" generative AI program was one of a number of errors made by his "unqualified, unprepared and ineffectual" trial attorney before his conviction earlier this year, according to a motion for new trial his new lawyers filed this week. The company behind the program, on the other hand, said it was a tool used to help write closing statements, and a harbinger of major changes in the field.

Generative AI programs are capable of creating realistic text, images and video. They're raising tough questions about misinformation and copyright protections as well as industry calls for regulations in Congress. Programs like ChatGPT have already had ripple effects across professions like writing and education. The arguments in the Michel case could preview issues to come as the technology makes a rapid advance.

The Grammy-winning rapper's trial was touted as the first time generative AI was used in a federal trial in a news release from the startup company that designed the system. Defense attorney **David Kenner**, well known for his previous representation of rappers like **Suge Knight** and **Snoop Dogg**, also gave a quote calling the system a "game changer for complex litigation."

But in his last words to the jury, Kenner appeared to mix up key elements of the case and misattributed the lyric "Every single day, every time I pray, I will be missing you," to the Fugees, the 1990s hip-hop group his client co-founded, when actually it is a well-known line from a song by the rapper **Diddy**, then known as **Puff Daddy**, court documents from Michel's new attorney, **Peter Zeidenberg**, stated.

Kenner did not respond to a phone call and email seeking comment from The Associated Press. The company, EyeLevel. AI, said the program wasn't "experimental" but instead trained using only facts from the case, including court transcripts, not musical lyrics or anything found online. It's intended to provide fast answers to complex questions to help, not replace, human lawyers, said co-founder and COO **Neil Katz**. (AP)

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ROCHESTER, N.Y.: They are playfully called the "forgotten five": A handful of toys - the pogo stick, the Fisher-Price Corn Popper, My Little Pony, PEZ dispensers, and Transformers - that regularly approach toybox royalty as finalists for the National Toy Hall of Fame, only to be tossed back on the pile.

For one of them, this is the year they finally make it in. The Hall of Fame is letting fans decide which one.

Toys usually are chosen for the annual induction ceremony with input from a panel of historians, educators and other experts. The members vote for their top three out of a dozen finalists that have been selected by an internal committee from among thousands of nominations that come in each year.

But this year, fan voters will pick one of the so-called forgotten five, to celebrate the National Toy Hall of Fame's 25th anniversary. That's along with three toys to be chosen in the usual way.

"They're like **Susan Lucci** was to the Emmy Awards, or **Steve Tasker** to the Pro Football Hall of Fame," chief curator **Christopher Bensch** said. "Now, one of these five will make the hall and, for the first time, it will be purely in the hands of the voting public."

Fans can cast one vote per day through Oct. 24 on the National Toy Hall of Fame website.

The winner, along with the other inductees, will be revealed during the induction ceremony on Nov. 9.

Anyone can nominate a toy to the National Toy Hall of Fame. But to be considered, toys must have inspired creative play and enjoyed popularity over a sustained period of time. Last year, the spinning top, Masters of the Universe action figures and Lite-Brite joined past honorees that range from scrounged items like the stick and cardboard box, to store-bought toys that everyone seemed to have, including the Wiffle Ball, alphabet blocks and the teddy bear.

The Fisher-Price Corn Popper, a push toy with colorful balls, has been a repeat finalist for encouraging babies who are learning to walk. My Little Pony mini horses are in the running after outselling even Barbie for several years while at the height of their popularity between 1982 and 1993, according to the Hall of Fame. (AP)

Japan's Shigeru Umebayashi, (right), receives the Lifetime Achievement Award at the opening ceremony of the 18th Rome Film Festival in Rome, Wednesday, Oct. 18. (AP)

The Conversation

'Appreciate the beauty of our diverse night sky'

Why space so dark even though universe is filled with stars?

By Brian Jackson
Boise State University

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

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Curious Kids is a series for children of all ages. If you have a question you'd like an expert to answer, send it to curiouskidsus@theconversation.com.

Why is space so dark despite all of the stars in the universe? – Nikhil, age 15, New Delhi

People have been asking why space is dark despite being filled with stars for so long that this question has a special name - Olbers' paradox.

Astronomers estimate that there are about 200 billion trillion stars in the observable universe. And many of those stars are as bright or even brighter than our sun. So, why isn't space filled with dazzling light?

I am an astronomer who studies stars and planets - including those outside our solar system - and their motion in space. The study of distant stars and planets helps astronomers like me understand why space is so dark.

You might guess it's because a lot of the stars in the universe are very far away from Earth. Of course, it is true that the farther away a star is, the less bright it looks - a star 10 times farther away looks 100 times dimmer. But it turns out this isn't the whole answer.

Pretend, for a moment, that the universe is so old that the light from even the farthest stars has had time to reach Earth. In this imaginary scenario, all of the stars in the universe are not moving at all.

Picture a large bubble with Earth at the center. If the bubble were about 10 light years across, it would contain about a dozen stars. Of course, at several light years away, many of those stars would look pretty dim from Earth.

Bubble

If you keep enlarging the bubble to 1,000 light years across, then to 1 million light years, and then 1 billion light years, the farthest stars in the bubble will look even more faint. But there would also be more and more stars inside the bigger and bigger bubble, all of them contributing light. Even though the farthest stars look dimmer and dimmer, there would be a lot more of them, and the whole night sky should look very bright.

It seems I'm back where I started, but I'm actually a little closer to the answer.

In the imaginary bubble illustration, I asked you to imagine that the stars are not moving and that the universe is very old. But the universe is only about 13 billion years old.

Even though that's an amazingly long time in human terms, it's short in astronomical terms. It's short enough that the light from stars more distant than about 13 billion light years hasn't actually reached Earth yet. And so the actual bubble around Earth that contains all the stars we can see only extends out to about 13 billion light years from Earth.

Galaxies

There just are not enough stars in the bubble to fill every line of sight. Of course, if you look in some directions in the sky, you can see stars. If you look at other bits of the sky, you can't see any stars. And that's because, in those dark spots, the stars that could block your line of sight are so far away their light hasn't reached Earth yet. As time passes, light from these more and more distant stars will have time to reach us.

You might ask whether the night sky will eventually light up completely. But that brings me back to the other thing I told you to imagine: that all of the stars are not moving. The universe is actually expanding, with the most distant galaxies moving away from Earth at nearly the speed of light.

Because the galaxies are moving away so fast, the light from their stars is pushed into colors the human eye can't see. This effect is called the Doppler shift. So, even if it had enough time to reach you, you still couldn't see the light from the most distant stars with your eyes. And the night sky would not be completely lit up.

If you wait even longer, eventually the stars will all burn out - stars like the sun last only about 10 billion years. Astronomers hypothesize that in the distant future - a thousand trillion years from now - the universe will go dark, inhabited by only stellar remnants like white dwarfs and black holes.

Even though our night sky isn't completely filled with stars, we live in a very special time in the universe's life, when we're lucky enough to enjoy a rich and complex night sky, filled with light and dark.

Hello, curious kids! Do you have a question you'd like an expert to answer? Ask an adult to send your question to CuriousKidsUS@theconversation.com. Please tell us your name, age and the city where you live.

And since curiosity has no age limit - adults, let us know what you're wondering, too. We won't be able to answer every question, but we will do our best. (AP)

'Teach children resilience through play'

Toys designed for mental, emotional health gain traction among parents

NEW YORK, Oct 19, (AP): As more children emerge from the pandemic grappling with mental health issues, their parents are seeking ways for them to build emotional resilience.

And toy companies are paying close attention.

While still in its early phase, a growing number of toy marketers are embracing MESH - or mental, emotional and social health - as a designation for toys that teach kids skills like how to adjust to new challenges, resolve conflict, advocate for themselves, or solve problems.

The acronym was first used in child development circles and by the American Camp Association 10 years ago and gained new resonance after the pandemic. Rachele Harmuth, head of ThinkFun, a division of toy company Ravensburger, and resilience expert and family physician Deborah Gilboa, formed a MESH taskforce earlier this year with the goal of getting manufacturers to design toys with emotional resilience in mind and to have retailers market them accordingly.

"We just need to educate parents and educators just a little bit to know that we could be using their play time a little bit intentionally," Gilboa said.

The plan is to certify MESH toys by mid-2024 the same way the Toy Association did for STEAM toys, which emphasize science, tech, engineering, arts, and math. Adrienne Appell, a spokeswoman at the Toy Association, notes that MESH is an area it will continue to monitor as it evolves.

Memory

Many toys that could be considered MESH happen to already be in children's toy chests - like memory games, puppets, certain types of Legos, Pokémon trading games, and Dungeons & Dragons. The concept was highlighted at the toy industry's recent four-day annual show in New York, which featured an abundance of toys from the likes of hand2mind and Open the Joy that encourage children to express their feelings with mirrors or puppets.

James Zahn, editor- in-chief of the trade publication the Toy Book, noted the bulk of the new toys being developed with MESH in mind will be out starting next year.

But some worry the MESH approach might end up promising parents something it can't deliver. There's also a risk of companies preying on parents' anxieties about their kids' mental health.

"My fear is that MESH will be used as the next marketing gimmick," said Chris Byrne, an independent toy analyst. "It will create a culture of fear that their children are not developing socially and emotionally. And that's not really the job of the toy industry. "

Experts say childhood depression and anxiety were climbing for years, but the pandemic's unrelenting stress and grief magnified the woes, particularly for those already grappling with mental health issues who were cut off from counselors and other school resources during remote learning. Many educators began emphasizing social emotional learning in response, which teaches children soft skills like helping them manage their emotions and create positive rapport with others.

Dave Anderson, vice president of school and community programs and a senior psychologist in the ADHD and Behavior Disorders Center at the Child Mind Institute, applauded the toy industry's efforts to likewise address emotional resilience. But he said parents need to be careful about claims that companies may be making. While there's evidence that skills highlighted by the MESH taskforce can build resilience, there's no evidence that the toys themselves will, he said.

"The concepts are evidence based; the toys themselves are not," he said.

Bryne notes that the skills being highlighted by the MESH taskforce are the basics of play, whether it's skateboarding that builds perseverance or learning how to share toys to help with conflict resolution.

"In my opinion, if you live in a healthy home and you're having healthy play and your parents are engaged, the MESH stuff kind of happens automatically, " he said.

The US toy industry itself has been in need of a jolt following a weak year, particularly a lackluster holiday 2022 season when retailers were stuck with a surplus of toys after enjoying a pandemic-induced toy splurge by parents. The malaise has continued so far this year, with toy sales in the US down 8% from January through August, based on Circana's retail tracking service data.

For its part, the MESH taskforce is initially working with specialty stores like Learning Express and small toy companies like Crazy Aaron's, which has expanded beyond its Thinking Putty to add activity kits that teach kids problem solving like how magnets work with putty. One game ThinkFun is marketing: Rush Hour, a sliding block logic game that has kids battle traffic gridlock.

Quinn Byrne, 5 (left), shops with her mother, Jamie Byrne, at a Learning Express store in Lake Zurich, Ill., Tuesday, Sept. 26, 2023. While still in its early phase, a growing number of toy marketers are embracing MESH - or mental, emotional and social health - as a designation for toys that teach kids skills like how to adjust to new challenges, resolve conflict, advocate for themselves, or solve problems. (AP)

Study sheds new light on MASLD

Low birthweight tied to higher fatty liver risk

COPENHAGEN, Denmark, Oct. 19, (Agencies): A groundbreaking new study, presented at UEG Week 2023, has discovered a significant connection between birthweight and the onset of nonalcoholic fatty liver disease, now known as metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD), in young people.

Notably, babies with a low birthweight were found to be four times more likely to develop MASLD in childhood, adolescence or young adulthood.

Researchers conducted a population-based case-control study of all people aged 25 years and younger, who had been diagnosed with MASLD between January 1992 and April 2017, totalling 165 cases. Each individual with MASLD was matched with up to five controls from the general population based on age, sex, calendar year and county of residence.

Individuals born with a low birthweight (2500 g/5 lbs 8 oz) were four times more likely to develop MASLD when compared with those born with normal birthweight. Those born as small for gestational age (SGA), falling below the 10th percentile, were also over three times more likely to develop MASLD early in life compared with those with an adequate (10th–90th) birthweight.

In addition, the researchers found that individuals with a low birthweight, or those born as SGA, had an up to ~6-fold higher relative risk of developing more severe stages of MASLD in the form of liver fibrosis or cirrhosis.

Dr Fahim Ebrahimi, first author of the study, comments, "While previous research has established the link between birthweight and major diseases, the connection to MASLD remained unclear. Our study now provides compelling evidence that foetal developmental factors play a significant role in the development of MASLD and progressive liver disease."

Amidst escalating rates of obesity, MASLD has become the most common cause of chronic liver disease worldwide. In Europe alone, it is estimated to affect over 25% of adults, and its prevalence is increasing.

Dr Ebrahimi adds, "It is deeply concerning that individuals born with a low birthweight face a heightened relative risk of this disease at a young age, as early-onset MASLD often persists into adulthood and has been associated with an increased risk of developing cirrhosis and end-stage liver disease. It is important that we develop proactive and effective strategies to identify at-risk individuals and help reduce the burden of this disease."

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Juventus, Milan renew rivalry

Celebrations replaced by concern at Napoli amid slow start to title defense

ROME, Oct 19, (AP): There are still blue-and-white streamers hanging over alleyways and banners all over the city celebrating Napoli's first Serie A title since the days when Diego Maradona played for the club.

There hasn't been much to celebrate lately in the southern city, though.

With only four wins in their opening eight matches and already two losses - both at home - Napoli are off to a much slower start to the season than they had a year ago when the Partenopei didn't lose until January and remained unbeaten at home until March.

So it's plain to see why new Napoli coach Rudi Garcia is already under pressure, with club president Aurelio De Laurentiis meeting several times with the coach recently amid speculation that Antonio Conte or some other manager might be called in as a replacement.

Garcia, the Frenchman who formerly coached Roma, was hired after Luciano Spalletti left Napoli saying he needed to take a season off. Spalletti then took over Italy's national team when Roberto Mancini unexpectedly left that job to take on the same role in Saudi Arabia.

While Spalletti and the free-flowing attack he employed at Napoli are sorely missed, so too is center back Kim Min-jae. Kim, one of the revelations of last season, joined Bayern Munich in an expensive transfer.

Fiorentina dismantled Napoli's defense in a 3-1 win at the Stadio Diego Armando Maradona before the international break. That came five days after a 3-2 home loss to Real Madrid in the Champions League.

Now Garcia is missing his standout center forward after Victor Osimhen injured his right thigh while with Nigeria's national team.

"Napoli is in trouble," said Fabio Cannavaro, who began his career with the club before captaining Italy to the 2006 World Cup title. "It plays one very good match and then struggles a lot in the next game. This team is lacking continuity.

SOCCER

"When you change coaches there are always some issues," Cannavaro added. "But we're still only at the start and the club will figure things out. Napoli has a very strong roster."

For Saturday's match at Hellas Verona, Giovanni Simeone will likely replace Osimhen in attack, with Giacomo Raspadori another option. Osimhen was also injured early last season and Simeone and Raspadori stepped up to help extend Napoli's strong start.

Dribbling wizard Khvicha Kvaratskhelia is set to play after getting married at home in Georgia during the break.

When Juventus visit Serie A leader AC Milan at the San Siro on Sunday, there will be a strong American presence with four U.S. internationals involved.

Christian Pulisic and Yunus Musah at Milan will be facing Juventus duo Weston McKennie and Tim Weah - the son of former Milan player George Weah.

It's shaping up as a key match for both sides' title ambitions, with second-place Inter Milan visiting Torino on Saturday.

Aces become first repeat WNBA champs in 21 years

Wilson named Finals MVP

NEW YORK, Oct 19, (AP): A'ja Wilson and the Las Vegas Aces secured their place as one of the greatest teams in WNBA history.

The Aces became the first team to repeat as champions in 21 years, getting 24 points and 16 rebounds from Wilson and a defensive stop in the closing seconds to beat the New York Liberty 70-69 in Game 4 of the Finals on Wednesday night.

"It's not easy, as you know. This is what it's all about," Wilson said. "Not a lot of people get to do it. To be shorthanded and win is amazing. It makes the win that much better. It's hard to get back to the Finals to win again."

The Aces joined the Los Angeles Sparks (2001-02) and the Houston Comets (1997-2000) as the only teams in league history to win consecutive titles.

BASKETBALL

Las Vegas did it without starters Chelsea Gray and Kiah Stokes, who were both sidelined with foot injuries suffered in Game 3. Gray, the 2022 WNBA Finals MVP, was constantly in the ear of her teammates during timeouts and shouting encouragement from the sideline. Las Vegas was also still missing veteran Candace Parker, who had foot surgery in late July.

"We've been facing adversity all season, playing without different players. ... We have some professional fighters," said Alysha Clark, who was pressed into the starting lineup Wednesday.

Coach Becky Hammon said this was the closest team she has ever been around. The entire team attended the postgame news conference and cheered every answer, especially those by Wilson, the Finals MVP, who finished third in the regular-season MVP balloting.

With the game tied at 64, Las Vegas scored six straight points, including the first four by Jackie Young, to go ahead 70-64 with 1:26 left.

Courtney Vandersloot hit a 3-pointer on New York's next possession, then stole the ball from Kelsey Plum, which led to Sabrina Ionescu's foul-line jumper to get the Liberty within one with 41.7 seconds left.

On the ensuing possession, Las Vegas worked the shot clock down before Hammon called timeout with 3 seconds left on the shot clock. The Aces got the ball to Wilson on a lob, but Breanna Stewart blocked the shot, giving New York one last chance.

After a timeout with 8.8 seconds left, the Liberty got the ball to Stewart, who was double-teamed. The ball swung over to Vandersloot in the corner, but her shot missed badly, setting off a wild celebration by the Aces at midcourt.

Vandersloot finished with 19 points and Betnijah Laney added 15 for New York.

Hammon said before the game she would be "throwing the kitchen sink at (the Liberty), see what sticks, see what works."

The Aces rotated defenses, which stymied New York after the Liberty scored 23 points in the first quarter.

Hammon started WNBA sixth woman of the year Clark and Cayla George in place of Gray and Stokes. Clark did a stellar job on her former Seattle Storm teammate Stewart, holding her to 10 points on 3-of-17 shooting. George had 11 points.

This was the first close game of the season between these teams. The four regular-season matchups were all blowouts with the closest contest being a nine-point win by New York on Aug. 28. The first three games of the WNBA Finals were also routs, with New York winning Game 3 87-73 to stave off elimination.

Game 4 was so tense that Ionescu was seen vomiting into a trash can during a timeout midway through the fourth quarter, shortly after she hit a 3-pointer to get the Liberty within 60-58. Ionescu stayed in the game after the timeout.

Once again, New York drew dozens of celebrities to the game, including basketball royalty Sue Bird and Dawn Staley - the South Carolina coach who loudly cheered on her former star player, Wilson. The two embraced in a long hug after the game. Also in attendance were Liberty Ring of Honor members Vickie Johnson and Sue Wicks, and actors Jennifer Connelly, Issa Rae and Jason Sudeikis.

The Las Vegas Aces celebrate with the trophy after Game 4 of a WNBA basketball final playoff series against the New York Liberty in New York. The Aces won 70-69. (AP)

South Africa go with same 23

England tinker with pack for World Cup semis

PARIS, Oct 19, (AP): South Africa were unchanged and England tinkered with their pack on Thursday ahead of their Rugby World Cup semifinal, a rematch of the title game in Japan four years ago.

The defending champions Springboks kept Cobus Reinach at scrumhalf and Manie Libbok at flyhalf, with Faf de Klerk and Handre Pollard set to come off the bench, as they did last weekend in the 29-28 quarterfinal win over host France.

Veteran No. 8 Duane Vermeulen starts again at the back of the scrum at Stade de France on Saturday.

RUGBY

Six players in South Africa's 23, replacement Willie le Roux, center Damian de Allende, Pollard and forwards Frans Malherbe, Eben Etzebeth and Vermeulen played in World Cup semifinals in 2015 and 2019.

"When we had our selection meeting, there were lots of discussions but we felt everybody who played last Sunday (against France) had a proper performance so we decided to go for continuity," Springboks coach Jacques Nienaber said. "From a performance point of view and from a medical point of view, we saw no reason to change."

Unbeaten England freshened up their forwards by recalling lock George Martin and prop Joe Marler for Ollie Chessum and Ellis Genge, who are among the reserves.

In anticipation of likely a bigger aerial bombardment than they faced in the quarterfinals against Fiji, the English started Freddie Steward at No. 15 in place of Marcus Smith, who was more of a broken-field runner who was bashed up against the Fijians and was struggling to be fit anyway.

"Through this tournament, the team has progressed, with the players repeatedly finding a way to win, sometimes in challenging circumstances," England coach Steve Borthwick said. "We will once again need to be at our very best this weekend as we face an excellent team in South Africa."

The Springboks are aiming to be the second team to successfully defend the Rugby World Cup after New Zealand went back-to-back in 2011 and 2015. New Zealand faces Argentina in the other semifinal on Friday.

South Africa's thrilling win over the French moved it to No. 1 in the world rankings. England are No. 5, making the Springboks clear favorites, although the English have countered doubts over their form and ability to be the only unbeaten team left at the World Cup despite a poor run coming into the tournament.

"We are not silly," South Africa captain Siya Kolisi said. "Our motivation doesn't come from without, it comes from within. They will have their motives and so will we."

South Africa have won four of the five meetings with England at the Rugby World Cup, including in the finals in 2007 and 2019.

England's Owen Farrell (left), kicks the ball as teammate Lewis Ludlam watches during their training session on the outskirts of Paris, France. (AP)

Becker to coach Rune for rest of season

Fritz loses to local wild-card Mochizuki in three sets

TOKYO, Oct 19, (AP): Taylor Fritz was eliminated from the Japan Open on Thursday after losing to Japanese wild-card Shintaro Mochizuki 0-6, 6-4, 7-6 (2) in the second round.

The 20-year-old Mochizuki, ranked 215th in the world, trailed 5-2 in the third set before forcing the deciding tiebreaker. It was his first win over a top-10 player.

"I don't really know what is happening right now," said Mochizuki, who advanced to the quarterfinals for the first time. "I lost the first set so easy, so quick. Everyone knows he is a great player but I kept fighting and that is all I could do. I am so happy. I don't know how, but I won the match."

Mochizuki will next play Alexei Popyrin, who rallied from a set and a break down to beat qualifier Cristian Garin 4-6, 7-6 (3), 6-2.

Fourth-seeded Alex de Minaur became the first Australian since Lleyton Hewitt in 2004 to make 10 tour-level quarterfinals in a season. He beat Diego Schwartzman 6-0, 7-5.

Boris Becker is returning to coaching for the first time since the six-time Grand Slam tennis winner's release from a British prison last year, with sixth-ranked Holger Rune.

Becker told broadcaster Eurosport on a podcast published on Thursday that he will work with the 20-year-old Danish player for the rest of the season, starting at the Swiss Indoors next week.

"It makes me a little proud that he asked me. The contact has existed for a long time. Now it was a very good fit," Becker said. "My calendar allows it and I have always been interested in Holger because he is on the tennis court with so much commitment and temperament."

Becker signalled he would focus on the mental side of the game and described Rune as "a rough diamond that needs polishing."

The 55-year-old German previously coached Novak Djokovic from 2014 through 2016. Before his release in December, Becker served eight months in prison for illicitly transferring large amounts of money and hiding assets after he was declared bankrupt.

With a career-high slot of fourth in August, Rune is the highest-ranked Danish player ever and has reached the quarterfinals of the French Open and Wimbledon.

Since his loss to Carlos Alcaraz in the Wimbledon quarterfinals in July, he has won just one match, including a first-round loss at the U.S. Open and a loss to Miomir Kecmanovic in Stockholm on Wednesday.

TENNIS

Meanwhile , Billie Jean King wants the groups with a say in the tennis schedule to avoid potential conflicts such as the close timing and far distance between the WTA Finals and Billie Kean King Cup Finals, which led Iga Swiatek, Coco Gauff and Jessica Pegula to choose to compete in the former and skip the latter.

On a conference call Wednesday to promote the competition named in her honor - its finals will be Nov. 7-12 in Seville, Spain - King said she isn't sure how much discussion there's been between the International Tennis Federation, which oversees the BJK Cup, and the WTA, whose championships are Oct. 29 to Nov. 5 in Cancun, Mexico.

"We all need to get together and figure out a better calendar for the players and everybody knowing what's going to happen, because you can't start making these decisions, like on the (WTA) Finals, in October or ... September," King said. "They have to know ahead of time. It's only fair."

Added Conchita Martinez, tournament director for the BJK Cup Finals and, like King, someone who has a player won the team competition that used to be known as the Fed Cup: "We need to work together for better solutions."

The WTA announced in June when its season-ending tour event would be played, but it did not make the site known until Sept. 7. The choice to hold the 2022 WTA Finals in Fort Worth, Texas, also was not announced until September of last year. That prompted Swiatek to point out that the location and the timing - competition in Fort Worth ended a day before the start of the Billie Jean King Cup Finals in Glasgow, Scotland - were problematic.

"This situation is not safe for our health and could cause injury," Swiatek said last year.

In this file photo, Denmark's Holger Rune returns in a men's singles match on day ten of the Wimbledon tennis championships in London. (AP)

Wemba leads Spurs past Rockets

Warriors run winning streak to 4

WASHINGTON, Oct 19, (AP): Top draft pick Victor Wembanyama scored 15 points in 21 minutes to lead the San Antonio Spurs to a 117-103 victory over the visiting Houston Rockets in preseason action on Wednesday night.

The 7-foot-4 Wembanyama missed all five of his shots from the field in the first half, but made 7 of 8 from the free throw line to help the Spurs (2-2) to a 60-44 advantage at halftime. He hit 3 of 5 shots in the second half ,with two 3-pointers, and finished with six rebounds and two blocks.

BASKETBALL

Devin Vassell hit five 3-pointers and scored 25 points to lead the Spurs. Zach Collins had 11 points, nine rebounds, three assists. He also accounted for six of the Spurs' 22 turnovers.

Amen Thompson, the fourth overall selection in June's draft, and 20th pick Cam Whitmore started and combined to score five points in the first half for Houston (3-1). Thompson and Whitmore scored 15 points apiece in the Rockets' 99-89 win over the Spurs in Houston on Monday night, with Wembanyama sitting out.

Warriors 116, Kings 115

Stephen Curry hit a go-ahead 3-pointer with 6.1 seconds left and scored 16 of his 30 points in the final 4:46 as Golden State ran its preseason winning streak to four games and sent Sacramento to its fourth straight loss.

Curry hit eight 3-pointers for Golden State (4-0), including four late in the fourth quarter as the Warriors outscored the Kings (0-4) by 14 in the final period. He added five assists and four rebounds.

Jonathan Kuminga had 18 points and Andrew Wiggins scored 16 for the Warriors. Second-round pick Trayce Jackson-Davis, acquired in a trade with Washington, started and finished with 13 points and 10 rebounds. Chris Paul had 13 points, nine assists and six rebounds off the bench.

Wizards 131, Knicks 106

Jordan Poole scored 41 points in 27 minutes and Washington rolled past New York at Madison Square Garden.

Poole hit 10 of 19 shots, including 6 of 12 from 3-point range, and made 15 of 16 free throws - in three quarters - as the Wizards remained unbeaten in three preseason games.

Mike Muscala scored 15 of his 20 points in the first half on 5-for-5 shooting from long distance. Tyus Jones added 13 points and seven rebounds.

Julius Randle paced the Knicks (1-3) with 20 points and 10 rebounds. RJ Barrett had 19 points and seven rebounds, and Mitchell Robinson added 12 points and 10 rebounds.

Nets 107, Heat104

Reserves Lonnie Walker IV scored 22 points and Day'Ron Sharpe added 19 points on 6-for-7 shooting and 11 rebounds as visiting Brooklyn held off Miami.

Walker made half of his 14 shots and was 4 for 7 from long distance for Brooklyn (2-2).

Haywood Highsmith and Cole Swider scored 15 apiece to lead Miami (2-2). Jamal Cain had 14 rebounds and seven points.

San Antonio Spurs' Victor Wembanyama (1) executes a no-look pass as he is defended by Houston Rockets' Alperen Sengun during the second half of a preseason NBA basketball game in San Antonio. (AP)

Girona looking to up impressive start to season

Ramos face Real for first time since Sevilla return, Barcelona host Bilbao

BARCELONA, Spain, Oct 19, (AP): Sergio Ramos, a long-time defensive pillar for Real Madrid, will face his former club on Saturday when the Spanish league leaders visit struggling Sevilla.

Ramos left Madrid in 2021 after helping the club win 22 titles in 16 seasons, including four Champions Leagues and five Spanish leagues. Following two disappointing seasons at Paris Saint-Germain, the 37-year-old Ramos re-joined boyhood club Sevilla last month for what is expected to be his last hurrah.

Madrid are playing the best soccer in Spain, largely thanks to the explosion of new arrival Jude Bellingham.

SOCCER

The game will also mark the debut of Sevilla's new coach, the Uruguayan Diego Alonso, who replaced José Mendilibar during the international break that has just ended.

Mendilibar led Sevilla to the Europa League title last season, but was let go with his team in 14th place and just two points off the relegation zone.

Ramos returned to Sevilla with the season already underway and Mendilibar left him on the bench for two of the four league games he was available for.

Madrid lead the surprising second-placed Girona by two points, with Barcelona three points off the pace in third spot.

Bellingham has been on a superb scoring run since joining Madrid in the off-season. The England midfielder has netted 10 times in as many appearances overall for the club, including a league-leading eight goals.

Barcelona host fifth-placed Athletic Bilbao on Sunday, after a judge stepped up his scrutiny of the club by including its current president in his investigation into the payment of millions of euros (dollars) to a referee official.

The judge, investigating the payments made over several years to a vice president of Spain's refereeing committee, widened his probe on Wednesday to include the first mandate of current president Joan Laporta between 2003-2010. Laporta returned to power in 2021.

Sergio Ramos

Laporta denied any wrongdoing on Thursday while accusing the judge and state prosecutors of working against his club and in favor of Madrid.

"We can remain calm, nothing has been proven and nothing will be proven, because (the accusations) are not true," Laporta told Catalunya Radio.

"There is an orchestrated campaign to destabilize Barça ... by those in favor of Madrid in the center of power in the capital that is very strong."

Barcelona coach Xavi Hernández may be without several key players due to injury.

Striker Robert Lewandowski, who missed Barcelona's last game, a 2-2 draw at Granada, may still be suffering with an ankle injury. Xavi is also expected to be without starting midfielders Pedri González and Frenkie de Jong, forward Raphinha and defender Jules Koundé.

Forward Lamine Yamal and defender Alejando Balde could be back fit for Barcelona.

Bilbao will be without central defender Yeray Álvarez, who is expected to be sidelined for several months with a leg injury, while it hopes to have winger Nico Williams back.

Girona will try to keep up their impressive start to the season when they host last-placed Almeria on Sunday.

Atletico Madrid are in fourth place before playing Celta Vigo on Saturday. Álvaro Morata has scored seven times this season for Atletico, including five goals in the league, and four goals for Spain in recent European Championship qualifiers.

The Athlete's Foot staff pose for a photo.

The Athlete's Foot relocates to new spot in Al Kout Mall

The Athlete's Foot (TAF), the world's leading athletic footwear brand, franchised by Ali Abdulwahab Al Mutawa Commercial Co. (AAW) in Kuwait, celebrated today its relocation to a larger and more central spot within Al Kout Mall, during a grand opening event.

The event featured sports and fun-filled activities, competitions, music, prizes, and more. It was attended by the AAW management team, social media influencers, and mall visitors.

The Athlete's Foot Al Kout's new store, on the mezzanine 1, offers a wide range of lifestyle, sportswear, footwear, and accessories for men, women, and children. The store provides a wide selection of modern sports and lifestyle fashion apparel from global brands such as Nike, adidas, New Balance, Puma, On Running, The Giving Movement, ASICS, and many others.

Al Kout Mall is the largest mall in southern Kuwait. The mall offers customers a unique blend of traditional and modern shopping and entertainment experiences. It is connected to Al Kout Souq by an air-conditioned glass pedestrian bridge, and to Hyatt Regency Hotel by a private entrance.

The Athlete's Foot stores in Kuwait are located in Al Fanar Mall, Mishref Co-Op, Kuwait International Airport in both the departure and arrival areas, Marina Mall, The Avenues, The Gate Mall, The Promenade, The Walk Mall, Al Khiran Mall, Al Kout Mall, and the online store at www.theathletesfoot.com.kw.

The interior of The Athlete's Foot.

Zain Premier League makes a comeback after 2-week hiatus

Al-Kuwait face off against Khaitan

Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 19: The Zain Premier League makes a comeback after a two-week hiatus, featuring two exciting matches. In the first encounter, Al-Kuwait will face off against Khaitan at Al-Kuwait's home stadium at 5:40 pm. Simultaneously, the second match will unfold at Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium, where Al-Arabi and Al-Fahaheel will compete at 8:30 pm

The action continues tomorrow with a pair of matches. The first match, scheduled for 5:40 pm at Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium, pits Kazma against Al-Shabab. Later, at 8:30 pm, Al-Salmiya will take on Al-Jahra at Thamer Stadium.

The tour will conclude next Sunday with a single match between Al-Qadsia and Al-Nasr.

SOCCER

At the moment, Al-Kuwait lead the league standings with 12 points, closely pursued by traditional rivals Al-Arabi and Al-Qadsia, both with 7 points. Al-Nasr and Kazma share fourth place with 7 points each, while Khaitan hold 4 points, Al-Salmiya with 3 points, Al-Fahaheel and Al-Shabab at 2 points apiece, and Al-Jahra is currently at the bottom of the standings with just one point.

Al-Abyad aim to maintain their excellent form and secure their fifth consecutive victory, propelling them further toward a potential championship.

This evening's clash serves as the team's final preparation before their upcoming showdown with the Syrian Al-Ahly Aleppo Union next Tuesday in the third round of the AFC Cup.

Conversely, Khaitan aspire to recapture the success they achieved in the initial rounds, following a draw and a win, prior to two consecutive losses in the third and fourth rounds against Al-Arabi (4-0) and Al-Nasr (2-0).

In the second match, Al-Arabi seek to return to the winning column after a recent draw against Al-Qadsia in the previous round (1-1). A victory today would significantly boost the team's confidence ahead of their upcoming AFC Cup clash against Bahrain's Riffa next Monday.

Meanwhile, Al-Fahaheel are determined to put past disappointments behind them and hopes to secure their first victory in the competition.

Kazma vying for their third consecutive victory, while Al-Shabab are in pursuit of their first win.

In the other match, Al-Salmiya aim to erase the memory of two consecutive defeats in the last rounds as they go up against Al-Jahra, who managed to secure their first point in the last round with a 0-0 draw against Al-Fahaheel.

Al Kuwait players celebrate at the end of a match.

Inter Miami earn 2-2 draw with Charlotte

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla., Oct 19, (AP): Robbie Robinson scored his first goal of the season and Inter Miami rallied for a 2-2 draw with Charlotte FC on Wednesday night.

Robinson subbed into the match in the 73rd minute and scored the equalizer for Inter Miami (9-17-7) in the 84th with assists from Leonardo Campana and DeAndre Yedlin.

Charlotte (9-11-13) and Inter Miami play again on Saturday in Charlotte to close out the regular season. Lionel Messi missed the match for Inter Miami. He was in Peru, scoring both goals in Argentina's 2-0 victory over the hosts in a World Cup qualifier. The club has not announced whether Messi will play in the finale.

Neither team found the net until Enzo Copetti used assists from Kerwin Vargas and Brandt Bronico in the 45th minute to score his sixth goal of the season and give Charlotte the lead.

Rookie Nicolás Stefanelli pulled Inter Miami even in the sixth minute of stoppage time with his second career goal, unassisted.

SOCCER

Charlotte regained the lead in the 52nd minute when Vargas took passes from Kamil Józwiak and Brecht Dejaegere and scored for a third time this season.

Drake Callender finished with four saves for Inter Miami. Kristijan Kahlina saved five shots for Charlotte. The home side had won all three previous meetings - two by Inter Miami.

Karol Swiderski saw a three-match goal-scoring streak end for Charlotte. Messi's annualized compensation from his Major League Soccer contract with Inter Miami is just over $20.4 million, the MLS Players Association said Wednesday.

Messi earns more than the entire payroll of all but three other MLS teams and twice as much as every player combined on Orlando City.

The 36-year-old star has a $12 million base salary and total guaranteed compensation of $20,446,667, the players association said in its 2023 salary update.

Brazilian to undergo surgery: Al Hilal

Neymar's ACL injury compounds troubled start to his next chapter as Ronaldo and Messi thrive

MANCHESTER, England, Oct 19, (Agencies): In what has become an all-too familiar sight, Neymar left the soccer field in tears after yet another injury - this time with a torn ACL and meniscus.

Quite a contrast to Lionel Messi's smiles at Inter Miami and Cristiano Ronaldo's reenergized success with Portugal.

SOCCER

Neymar damaged his left knee in the first half of Brazil's 2-0 World Cup qualifying loss at Uruguay on Tuesday. On Wednesday, the extent of the injury was confirmed by his Saudi club Al Hilal, which said he would undergo surgery.

At the 2014 World Cup in Brazil, a knee to the back from Colombia defender Juan Zuniga in the quarterfinals ruled Neymar out of the tournament with a fractured vertebra. Then last year in Qatar, there were more tears when Neymar feared an ankle injury would cut his tournament short. Instead, it was a loss to Croatia in the quarterfinals that prematurely ended his bid to win soccer's biggest trophy.

Ronaldo and Messi turned the Ballon d'Or award for the world's best player into a personal duel at the height of their powers. But the pair recently left elite European soccer behind, with the 31-year-old Neymar also heading to the Saudi league after years of being in the shadow of two of the sport's greatest ever players.

Along with Messi and Luis Suarez, Neymar may have been part of a Barcelona forward line that won the Champions League in 2015, but he was never the main man.

Even his record 222 million euro ($270 million) move to Paris Saint-Germain in 2017 did not provide the platform for him to step out in front of Ronaldo and Messi as he failed to lead the French club to a Champions League title. Instead, it was PSG teammate Kylian Mbappe who emerged as the player most likely to establish himself as soccer's next icon.

Brazil's Neymar, (right), is challenged by Uruguay's Manuel Ugarte during a qualifying soccer match for the FIFA World Cup 2026 at Centenario Stadium in Montevideo, Uruguay. (AP)

In August came a transfer to Saudi Arabia as part of the oil-rich kingdom's bid to lure the sport's biggest names to its league and establish itself as a major force in soccer.

Ronaldo had led the way with his move to Al-Nassr in December. He was followed by Champions League winners like Karim Benzema, Sadio Mane and N'Golo Kante. But aside from Ronaldo, Neymar was arguably the biggest coup for Saudi Arabia after it had missed out on moves for Messi and Mbappe.

Meanwhile, over in the United States, Messi opted to make the switch to MLS with Inter Miami.

The Argentine great, who fulfilled his career ambition of winning the World Cup last year, appears to be loving life in Florida and quickly led Inter Miami to victory in the Leagues Cup.

The goals are flowing as he draws superstar fans such as LeBron James and Selena Gomez to watch him in person.

In Saudi Arabia, Ronaldo has put behind him the difficulties he endured at Manchester United last year, which led to his contract being terminated in November. He went on to have a disappointing World Cup, dropped to the bench by Portugal and then out in the quarterfinals.

It was not clear what direction his career would go when he joined Al-Nassr in one of the most surprising transfers in the sport's history, but it was certainly going to make him even richer after signing a deal reportedly worth up to $200 million a year.

While his best years are clearly behind him, Ronaldo is still producing the goods on the field - leading Portugal to next year's European Championship with nine goals in qualifying and keeping Al-Nassr in contention near the top of the Saudi league.

Neymar's team, Al Hilal, leads the way, but he has yet to make a major contribution on the field since his move, worth a reported 90 million euros ($98 million) - a record for the league.

Injury has limited him to only three appearances in the league and two in the Asian Champions League, where he has scored one goal.

It is hardly the impact he or Al Hilal would have wanted after such a high-profile move. And even if he did break Pele's Brazil scoring record last month, it still feels like he is in the shadow of Ronaldo and Messi.

Meanwhile,The Saudi Roshan Professional League makes a return following a two-week hiatus due to international scheduling.Al-Taawoun take on Al-Ittihad, Al-Akhdood clash with Al-Fayhaa, Al-Hilal square off against Al-Khaleej, and Al-Fateh encounter Abha.

On Saturday, an additional four matches are scheduled, with Al-Nasr facing Damak, Al-Hazm competing against Al-Raed, Al-Ahly meeting Al-Wahda, and Al-Shabab taking on Al-Taei. The round will conclude on Sunday with Riyadh crossing paths with Al-Ettifaq.

The break in the league action provided an opportunity for Nuno Santo, the Portuguese coach of Ittihad Jeddah, to reevaluate his team's strategy. The team faced challenging days just before the hiatus, which resulted in relinquishing their lead in the competition and sliding to fourth place with 19 points.

In the second match, Al-Hilal, with 23 points, emerge as the prime contenders for victory as they take on Al-Khaleej in what is expected to be a relatively straightforward match.

Al-Hilal encountered a setback with the unfortunate loss of their star player, Neymar, who suffered a cruciate ligament injury, while Al-Khaleej, with 11 points, have managed to distance themselves from the bottom positions.

Best of the Rest

Organizers HQ visited: Organizers of next year's Paris Olympics said their headquarters have again been visited by French financial prosecutors who are investigating suspicions of favoritism, conflicts of interest and misuse of funds in the awarding of contracts.

The Paris organizing committee said Thursday in a short statement that the national financial prosecution service visited its north Paris offices on Wednesday "and obtained all the information it requested."

"Paris 2024 is cooperating fully with the investigation, as it has always done," the statement said.

The headquarters were first searched in June.

Financial investigators have been zeroing in on 20 or so of the many hundreds of business contracts that Olympic organizers have signed as they race to prepare the French capital for 10,500 athletes and millions of spectators.

In an Associated Press interview, Paris organizing committee president Tony Estanguet previously vigorously defended colleagues whose homes also have been searched.

Estanguet insisted that the two financial probes of Paris Games contract awards bear no comparison with corruption and ethics scandals that have for decades dogged the Olympic movement and its biggest event, including the Tokyo Olympics in 2021 and the bribery-plagued 2016 Rio de Janeiro Games. (AP)

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Stokes 'in a good place': Ben Stokes declared himself ready Thursday to play in England's crucial Cricket World Cup match against South Africa after missing the first three games because of injury.

Stokes, the match-winner in the 2019 final, has been struggling with a hip problem sustained a week before the World Cup and missed the losses to New Zealand and Afghanistan, which came either side of a win over Bangladesh.

England next faces the Proteas on Saturday with its title defense on the rocks.

"It was a frustrating little niggle to get before the tournament," the test captain told the BBC before a training session at the Wankhede Stadium, "but I have worked very hard to get back to where I am and I am making myself ready to be available for selection.

"We have had a few days off since the last game and the first training session here in Mumbai. I'll give it a good push but, yes, I think everything is pretty good. I am in a good place."

England will hope Stokes' return will resuscitate the team's chances in India and he is relishing the pressure. (AP)

Pakistan's captain Babar Azam (second right) looks at Pakistan's Imam-ul-Haq slips as they play a warm up game during a practice session ahead of the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup match between Australia and Pakistan in Bengaluru, India. (AP)

Sports

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India continue unbeaten streak at WCup

Kohli delivers sensational unbeaten ton

PUNE, Oct 19, (Agencies): Virat Kohli delivered a sensational unbeaten century, scoring 103 not out, as India continued their unbeaten streak with a comprehensive seven-wicket victory over Bangladesh at Cricket World Cup in Pune on Thursday.

Chasing a target of 257, India accomplished the task with ease, reaching 261-3 in just 42 overs. The moment of triumph came when Kohli, in a stunning display of power, sealed his century with a six against spinner Nasum Ahmed.

India's pursuit got off to a strong start, with both Rohit and Shubman adopting an aggressive approach and taking on the Bangladeshi bowlers. Virat Kohli also added another half-century to his impressive record. Bangladesh, after winning the toss, decided to bat first in the ongoing ODI World Cup clash against India on October 19 in Pune.

Although Bangladesh's openers had a slow beginning, they gradually picked up the pace, reaching the 100-run mark in 17.2 overs. However, the situation took a turn as Indian bowlers, led by Kuldeep Yadav and Ravindra Jadeja, started taking wickets, altering the course of the game.

Pakistan need to shake off the disappointment of their loss to archrival India and illness within its squad when they take on five-time champion champions Australia at the Cricket World Cup on Friday.

India's Ravindra Jadeja bowls during the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup match between Bangladesh and India in Pune, India. (AP)

CRICKET

Opening batter Abdullah Shafique and fast bowler Shaheen Afridi were among a group of players sick with a fever after the team left Ahmedabad following a seven-wicket loss to India.

Both Shafique and Afridi rejoined the team in practice at the Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru on Wednesday and are available for selection.

Also back in the selection frame are Fakhar Zaman, who has recovered from knee injury, and middle-order batter Saud Shakeel.

Pakistan made a solid start to the tournament with wins over Netherlands and Sri Lanka at Hyderabad, a venue where the team got a warm reception.

The crowd was behind Babar Azam-led side when Shafique and Mohammad Rizwan both scored centuries in Pakistan's record run chase of 345-4.

But Pakistan -- touring India for the first time in seven years -- faced a vociferous partisan crowd of more than 100,000 India supporters at Ahmedabad as they slumped from 155-2 to be all out for 191.

"Win or lose is part of the game," said Rizwan, who has scored 248 in three innings. "We have lost to India, but if you see we had also won two matches. We have to match our skills with our game awareness … we can't say we are behind the world."

Babar, the No. 1-ranked batter in ODI cricket, is yet to get his momentum in the tournament. But more than batting it's the bowlers who haven't yet got into any sort of rhythm against good batting sides.

Afridi has struggled to pick up early wickets, while Haris Rauf and Hasan Ali have performed in patches. spinners Shadab Khan and Mohammad Nawaz struggled to give Pakistan breakthroughs in the middle overs.

But Rizwan backed his bowlers to come good.

"Everyone is saying we are unpredictable but I believe we have the world's top bowlers," Rizwan said. "Everyone is rightly thinking that our spinners are not picking up wickets, but if you look at their bowling they are doing good … Shadab and Nawaz can turn the match in our favor any time."

The World Cup, which has not yet reached the halfway point, has already seen two big upsets - Netherlands beating high-flying South Africa and defending champions England getting knocked over by Afghanistan's spinners.

"Every match is crucial," Rizwan said. "We are also looking forward to the Australia challenge. We haven't lost our spirits after one," loss.

Australia recovered from its opening losses to India and South Africa to get its first points with a victory over Sri Lanka, moving off the bottom of the standings.

Pat Cummins' squad failed to cross the 200-run mark in heavy losses to India and South Africa in which the Australian skipper managed to get just one wicket.

The big defeats led commentator and former test skipper Michael Clarke to predict on domestic radio that Cummins was set to sit on bench in game against Sri Lanka.

India's Virat Kohli plays a shot during the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup match between Bangladesh and India in Pune, India. (AP)

'A remarkable gathering'

Saudi Arabia hosts ME Sports and Peace Forum

RIYADH, Oct 19: His Highness Prince Abdulaziz bin Turki Al-Faisal, Minister of Sports and Chairman of the Olympic and Paralympic Committee in Saudi Arabia, opened the "Middle East Sports and Peace" Forum. The forum, a collaborative effort between the Sports and Peace Organization and the Saudi Olympic and Paralympic Committee, took place at the Palace of Culture in Riyadh. Notable attendees included His Highness Prince Albert II of Monaco and several distinguished individuals.

Prince Abdulaziz Al-Faisal lauded the forum as a remarkable gathering from which numerous innovative initiatives were launched. These initiatives, he noted, contribute to elevating sports in all its dimensions and emphasize the need to sustain such forums. He emphasized the noble ideals it embodies, fostering peace and the values inherent in sports, which include the allure of competition, the spirit of victory, and the pursuit of excellence.

The leader of the Saudi Olympic and Paralympic Committee underlined the alignment of sports' core values, such as respect, cooperation, and fair play, with the principles of peace. This alignment, he stressed, paves the way for a common language that unites people across the globe.

Prince Albert II of Monaco, in his remarks, highlighted the exceptional mission of sports, uniting people in a shared endeavor, mending relationships among communities, and assisting vulnerable populations in building resilience. He also underscored the profound impact of integrating the values of sports into the service of sustainable peace, using it as a catalyst for the social inclusion of disadvantaged groups.

The forum delved into various sports-related topics and explored effective strategies to forge stronger connections between sports and peace. It witnessed the participation of numerous renowned figures in the world of sports and international affairs, including His Highness Prince Fahd bin Jalawi, Vice President of the Saudi Olympic and Paralympic Committee.

Mbappé needs to start scoring for PSG

PARIS, Oct 19, (AP): After scoring goals for France in European Championship qualifying, Kylian Mbappé needs to start scoring again for Paris Saint-Germain.

Mbappé's three goals in qualifying this month came against the Netherlands and Scotland, and they helped Les Bleus clinch a spot at Euro 2024. Those goals brought him to 43 for the national team at the age of only 24. That's already two more than France great Michel Platini, with only Olivier Giroud (54), Thierry Henry (51) and Antoine Griezmann (44) left ahead of him.

But after scoring eight goals in his first five games for PSG this season, Mbappé has not found the net in the past four. He was ineffective, too, when PSG lost to Newcastle 4-1 in the Champions League two weeks ago.

PSG coach Luis Enrique might choose to rest Mbappé in the French league on Saturday against Strasbourg because the club has a big game against AC Milan in the Champions League on Wednesday.

But with PSG in third place and two points behind leaders Monaco, not starting Mbappé against Strasbourg could be risky given how reliant the team is on him now that Lionel Messi and Neymar have left.

Forward Randal Kolo Muani has scored only two goals since joining from Eintracht Frankfurt for 95 million euros ($101 million) and speedy winger Ousmane Dembélé has not scored in nine matches since arriving from Barcelona for 50.4 million euros ($55.2 million).

SOCCER

Mbappé is PSG's all-time leading scorer with 220 goals from just 269 games. But Strasbourg, which is in 11th place, has one of the league's best goalkeepers in Belgium international Matz Sels.

Since joining Strasbourg from Anderlecht five years ago, Sels has 37 shutouts in 153 games for the sixth-best total in the league over that time - an impressive statistic given that he's played for a team more used to defending.

A physical and imposing keeper who likes to play high up the field, Sels will look to impose himself on PSG's attack.

Prince Abdulaziz bin Turki Al-Faisal, Minister of Sports and Chairman of the Olympic and Paralympic Committee in Saudi Arabia.

Liverpool eye top spot

Chelsea, Arsenal renew rivary in London derby

MANCHESTER, England, Oct 19, (AP): The tables have turned in London. Chelsea, backed by Russian billions, spent the best part of 20 years looking down on their local rivals in England's capital city, but no more.

Now it is Tottenham and Arsenal leading the way in the Premier League, while Chelsea tread an uncomfortable and uncertain path under new owners and yet another new manager.

On Saturday, the club that won the Champions League as recently as 2021 host Arsenal at Stamford Bridge aiming to build on a recent upturn in results, following a calamitous first season under the ownership of Todd Boehly and Clearlake Capital, and a troubled start to this campaign.

It is too soon to say if manager Mauricio Pochettino is on the way to turning Chelsea's fortunes around after three straight wins in all competitions, and the game against Arsenal have the potential to be a sobering reminder of the gap that exists between the teams.

Arsenal are a prime example of how clear-thinking and trust in a manager can reap rewards after Mikel Arteta led the club to the brink of their first league title since 2004 last season. A late collapse cost a team that few expected to run Manchester City so close, but the 1-0 win against the defending champions at the start of the month has fuelled belief Arsenal can end their long wait for the title this time around.

SOCCER

The Gunners' work has been patient. Arteta was hired in 2019 and given the backing to rebuild his squad around a core of young players.

Top players were shown the door as part of the process, with Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang and Mesut Ozil notable departures.

There were dips along the way and it is hard to imagine a Chelsea manager surviving some of the runs Arteta has endured, such as the three losses from his team's opening four games of the 2021-22 season, which culminated in a 5-0 rout by City.

Under former owner Roman Abramovich, Chelsea would regularly hire and fire managers, but the success kept on coming with 19 major trophies, including five Premier League titles and two Champions Leagues.

The British government sanctioned the Russian oligarch after Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine and Chelsea were sold to a consortium led by American businessman Boehly and private equity firm Clearlake for 2.5 billion pounds ($3 billion) last year.

Inter Miami forward Lionel Messi watches from his box on the sideline at the start of an MLS soccer match between Inter Miami and Charlotte FC, Wednesday, Oct 18, 2023, in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. Lionel Messi said he will play in Inter Miami's season finale on Saturday, although the club haven't confirmed that is the actual plan.

The exorbitant spending has continued, as well as a carousel of managers. But the success hasn't.

Even after spending $630 million on players, Chelsea endured its worst Premier League season points-wise and failed to qualify for the Champions League.

Boehly and Clearlake also went through two permanent managers in their first year, firing Thomas Tuchel and his replacement Graham Potter, before giving club icon Frank Lampard a short-term deal and then hiring Pochettino in the off-season.

It has been a chaotic start for the new owners, who spent lavishly again in the last transfer window on players such as Moises Caicedo and Christopher Nkunku, without much of an upturn on the field as Pochettino's team recorded just one win from its opening six league games.

Chelsea's form has improved with back-to-back league wins against Fulham and Burnley and victory against Brighton in the English League Cup. But Arsenal, currently level on points with leaders Tottenham, represent the biggest test Pochettino has faced yet.

Normal service has resumed on Merseyside. Liverpool are in contention at the top of the table once again, while Everton look in store for another fight for survival.

The two rivals face each other at Anfield on Saturday when Liverpool can pile further misery on their neighbours across Stanley Park, the 110-acre site that separates the two clubs.

Jurgen Klopp appears to have put last season's troubles behind him after missing out on Champions League qualification for the first time since 2016. The 2020 champions are just three points off the top of the standings and have quickly adjusted to life without a host of their leading players sold in recent times, such as Sadio Mane and Jordan Henderson.

A win against Everton in the early kick off would see Liverpool move above leaders Tottenham on goal difference or goals scored, even if only temporarily. Arsenal and City have games later in the day and Spurs play Fulham on Monday.

UAE champ'ship commences with 'participation' of Kuwait

DUBAI, Oct 19: Emirates International Figure Skating Championship for men and women commenced in Dubai, a city in the United Arab Emirates. Notably, the Kuwaiti national ice skating team made its debut in this Winter Olympic event.

Mohsen Al-Muasab, the head of the Kuwaiti delegation participating in the tournament and a member of the Board of Directors of the Kuwaiti Winter Games Club, confirmed that the team is represented by two athletes, namely Abdul Wahab Al-Maatouq and Salman Al-Kandari.

FIGURE SKATING

Al-Maasab went on to explain that both Al-Maatouq and Al-Kandari initiated their participation in the tournament by completing six rounds in their respective competitions as per the schedule. These rounds will be repeated today, and the ultimate victors will be determined based on the cumulative number of points they accrue.

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Editor-in-Chief AHMED AL JARALLAH

Editorial Office: Airport Road, Shuwaikh P.O. Box 2270, 13023 Safat, Kuwait

Telephone: 24813566 & 24849144 Fax: 24818267 E-mail: arabtimes@arabtimesonline.com

Advertising: Tel: 24813815 Fax: 24845708 E-mail: advt@arabtimesonline.com

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