



## Opinion

# Is the government at par with His Highness the Amir's aspirations?

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

AT its recent meeting, the Council of Ministers reviewed a visual presentation detailing the ministry's preparations for the 2024/2025 academic year. This included arrangements for rehabilitating schools, securing teaching staff, and providing textbooks. However, the presentation did not introduce any new developments.

The selection of food companies for school cafeterias, approved by the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition, was also discussed.

This might either be a joke or a sign of misdirection. When members of the executive authority focus on such a minor procedure, which could be managed by an assistant undersecretary, it suggests that the ministers may have lost their sense of purpose.

Their responsibilities extend far beyond merely reciting the well-known preamble at the start of the school year. What is more useful is a reform of the education system, which has been corrupted after years of irresponsible practices, chaos, and the graduation of illiterate or inadequately educated individuals.

The Council of Ministers has a roadmap outlined by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad during his historic speech last May. The Council must focus on implementing this roadmap, as the proposed measures represent a significant reform revolution, with His Highness identifying issues that need urgent attention.

The people of Kuwait now feel more confident about their future and that of the coming generations. These decrees have restored Kuwait's power and pride, and have offered hope for the substantial reforms the country urgently needs.

To achieve this goal, the executive authority must keep up with the roadmap, which is of considerable importance for the state's institutions, including the Council of Ministers.

Unfortunately, it seems that some individuals have not grasped the significance of the historical messages conveyed by His Highness. Since the establishment of the Council of Ministers, there has been little indication that the state is moving in the right direction.

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## Amir, Crown Prince meet gov't officials

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and the First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah on Tuesday morning at Seif Palace.

On the same day, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received His Highness

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## Athlete dedicates victory to leadership

# Amir, Crown Prince, PM congratulate gold medalist Sorour

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent Sunday a cable of congratulations to athlete Faisal Sorour for his gold medal in the Men's Shot Put - F63 event at Paris 2024 Paralympic Games.

His Highness the Amir praised this achievement and the ability of Kuwaiti disabled youth in overcoming hardships, and wished Sorour further success in various regional and international sporting events.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also sent a cable of congratulations to Faisal Sorour for his gold medal in the Men's Shot Put - F63 event at Paris 2024 Paralympic Games.

His Highness the Crown Prince wished Sorour further success and more sporting achievements.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah then sent a cable of congratulations to the athlete Sorour for his gold medal in the Men's Shot Put - F63 event at Paris 2024 Paralympic Games.

Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi commended Faisal Sorour's winning of a gold medal at the Paris Paralympics 2024.



KUNA photo

Faisal Sorour raises Kuwait flag.

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# Arabs in crisis skip certificate rule for work permit renewal

Move underway to simplify attestation



Photo by Mohammad Morsi

Roads are clogged with cars as teachers and the administration staff report for work at their schools on the first day after the summer vacation.

## Minister visits schools as plan set to control traffic

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8: With the reopening of schools, the Director of Traffic Awareness at the General Traffic Department Colonel Fahad Al-Essa announced a new traffic plan that was developed in collaboration with the Public Security Sector to ease traffic and reduce congestion.

In a TV interview yesterday, Colonel Fahad Al-Essa explained that the plan includes deploying traffic patrols to vital locations, important intersections, and schools to organize and facilitate the flow of traffic.

The General Traffic Department has deployed over 260 traffic patrols and 27 traffic motorbikes, strategically positioning them at intersections, schools, and important entry and exit points throughout various areas.

A central command room has been prepared, equipped with 270 cameras installed at intersections. This command room coordinates

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## Public sector needs to cut power, water use

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8: A government report revealed that the estimated electricity and water bills of 36 ministries and government agencies in the general budget of the State for the current fiscal year increased by 12 percent or KD13.511 million.

The estimated budget for electricity and water bills in the previous fiscal year was KD112.255 million, which increased to KD125.766 million in the current budget -- KD96.159 million for electricity and KD29.597 million for water.

Sources stressed the need for government agencies and ministries to rationalize their electricity and water consumption, which has been increasing annually while energy production remains scarce; prompting the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy to resort to power cuts this summer.

In addition, the electricity price is the highest for the government sector compared to other residential sectors at 25 fils per kilowatt

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## UNESCO's ILD marked

# Kuwait strives to raise literacy rate

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8, (KUNA): Kuwait celebrates UNESCO's International Literacy Day (ILD) on Sunday, with significant achievements at both Gulf and Arab levels.

Since its establishment, Kuwait has always been exerting efforts in the literacy field. The country's total spending for the academic year 2023-2024 was 12.6 percent of the state budget.

The literacy rate for males in 2024 is 0.14 percent with a two percent for females.

In 1957, Kuwait launched centers for literacy across the country.

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## Gov't serious for 'reforms'

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8: In a move that observers consider a continuation of efforts to activate the role of governors in supervising the implementation of the state's general policy, following up on development plan projects, and contributing to the enhancement of service levels in all provinces, an Amiri decree has been

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## 22 days remain for 'biometrics'

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8: The Ministry of Interior has announced that the deadline for citizens to complete their biometric fingerprint registration is fast approaching, with only 22 days remaining until the cutoff.

It warned that all government transactions will be suspended for those who do not complete their fingerprint registration by the deadline.

Therefore, the ministry has extended the working hours for biometric fingerprint centers at identity investigation departments and commercial complexes.

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## KRCS reaches out to needy far and wide

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8, (KUNA): The Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) has reaffirmed that Kuwait's humanitarian efforts were ongoing and will not cease, as Kuwait continues to provide aid, these efforts have reached countries in need across various regions of the world.



Dr. Al-Sayer

On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of Kuwait's designation as a UN Humanitarian Center, celebrated annually on September 9, KRCS Chairman Dr. Hilal Al-Sayer highlighted Kuwait's significant role in supporting humanitarian and developmental efforts.

He emphasized that this role has enhanced Kuwait's standing within the international community.

Dr. Al-Sayer noted that under His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Kuwait remains committed to fulfilling its humanitarian mission, in line with the United Nations Charter.

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## Newswatch

## Kuwait banks shut Sunday for holiday

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8, (KUNA): The Kuwait Banking Association has announced that all banks will be closed on Sunday, September 15, in observance of the Prophet's (PBUH) birthday for the year 1446 AH.

According to a press statement released on Sunday, the association confirmed that banks will reopen and resume operations on Monday, September 16, following a circular issued by the Central Bank of Kuwait.

AMMAN: Jordanian Ministry of Interior launched on Sunday investigations into King Hussein Bridge shooting incident.

The national news agency (PETRA) revealed that the bridge would be closed until further notice. (KUNA)

## Kuwait airport sees surge in post-vacation travelers

By Mohammed Al-Musleh  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8: With the upcoming start of the new academic year, Kuwait International Airport has been witnessing an influx of travelers returning from summer vacations abroad, particularly from Arab and foreign capitals.

The agencies operating at the Kuwait International Airport are ramping up their efforts to facilitate the movement of both departing and arriving passengers.

According to estimates, the total number of travelers at Kuwait International Airport during the months of June, July, and August reached approximately 4.2 million passengers.

Yesterday, Kuwait International Airport witnessed the arrival of approximately 174 flights from various Arab and foreign capitals. Egypt was the leading destination with 20 flights, followed by Saudi Arabia with 19 flights, Dubai with 16 flights, and Turkey with 11 flights.

A reliable source from the Kuwait International Airport explained that operational teams and relevant agencies are working tirelessly to ensure smooth arriving and departing passenger movement. Efforts are focused on facilitating passengers' movement through passport control and guiding them to the transit and customs halls for luggage retrieval.

While the summer travel season continues until the end of October, there is a noticeable increase in returnees due to the

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KUNA photo

First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah receives the Iraqi Minister of Youth and Sports Dr. Ahmad Al-Mubarqa.

## 1st Deputy PM meets Iraqi minister

First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, on Sunday, received Iraqi Minister of Youth and Sports Dr. Ahmad Al-Mubarqa and Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq to Kuwait

Al-Manhal Al-Safi.

A statement released by the Ministry of Defense said the meeting discussed bilateral relations between the State of Kuwait and Iraq how to bolster them along with issues of common interest. (KUNA)

## Prayer Timings

Fajr ..... 04:08 Asr ..... 15:17  
 Sunrise .. 05:29 Maghrib .. 18:02  
 Zohr ..... 11:46 Isha ..... 19:21

# Local

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

## Weather

**Expected weather for next 24 hrs:**  
**By Day:** Very hot and relatively humid over coastal areas with light to moderate northwesterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 08-28 km/h.  
**By Night:** Hot to rather hot and

relatively humid over coastal areas with light to moderate northwesterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 08-28 km/h.  
**Station Max Exp Min Rec**  
 Kuwait City 46 36  
 Kuwait Airport 46 29

Abdaly 46 27  
 Bubyana 45 29  
 Jahra 47 32  
 Salmiyah 41 33  
 Ahmadi 43 31  
 Jal Aliyah 46 28  
 Nuwaisib 44 30  
 Wafra 45 26

## Move aims to spread knowledge of first aid across Kuwait

### 'A Paramedic in Every Home' campaign trains over 10,000 beneficiaries

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8: The Director of the Medical Emergency Department at the Ministry of Health, Dr. Ahmed Al-Shatti, has announced that more than 10,000 trainees have benefited from the "A Paramedic in Every Home" campaign, up until August, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The campaign aims to spread the knowledge of first aid across Kuwait, with participation from all training centers under the department in various governorates.

Dr. Al-Shatti noted that the campaign reached a wide range of ministries, government agencies, public associations, cooperative societies, and individuals.

Between January and August, 4,020 employees from government, charity organizations, and private companies underwent first aid training.

Additionally, 2,100 individuals, including 650 Kuwaitis and 150 children aged 8 and above, participated in the training sessions.

In the Ahmadi Governorate, more than 250 community members benefited from the campaign's courses. Meanwhile, over 4,500 participants completed first aid and advanced medical training at Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate (Jaber Hospital) during the same period. These courses have significantly improved first aid preparedness in the community.

Furthermore, a series of specialized first aid courses, coordinated between the Emergency Medical Services Department and the Public Authority for Housing Care, trained department managers and section heads on efficiently handling emergencies.

The campaign also distributed 1,200 copies of the first edition of the "A Paramedic in Every Home" brochure and 100 copies of the second edition, along with electronic versions for broader accessibility.



Dr. Al-Shatti surrounded by a number of 'Medical Emergency' officials and paramedics.

Al-Jarida photo

## Al-Atiqi receives Omani delegation

### Ambassador Dr. Al-Kharousi visits library for Arabic poetry in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8: The Omani Ambassador to Kuwait, Dr. Saleh Al-Kharousi, recently visited the Al-Babtain Central Library for Arabic Poetry, accompanied by Dr. Mohsen Al-Kindi, Professor of Modern Literature at Sultan Qaboos University, and Engineer Saeed Al-Saqlawi, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Omani Society for Writers and Authors, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The delegation was received by Suad Al-Atiqi, the Director General of Al-Babtain Library. During their visit, they toured the library's extensive collection, which includes literary and scientific books, original manuscripts, rare periodicals, and university theses. The library's design and the breadth of its resources left a profound impression on the visitors.

Ambassador Al-Kharousi praised the library as a modern exemplar of the world's best libraries and information centers, highlighting its exceptional de-

sign and the quality of its information services. The delegation was particularly impressed by how the library supports researchers and visitors with its comprehensive services.

In a gesture of goodwill, the library's staff presented the ambassador and his colleagues with printed publications and the "Rare Books" series from the Abdul Karim Saud Al-Babtain Library. In return, the ambassador gifted the library a collection of books from Oman.

At the conclusion of the visit, Ambassador Al-Kharousi inscribed a message in the guest book, commending the cultural contributions of the late Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain, the library's founder.

He expressed his delight at visiting this cultural treasure in Kuwait and wished continued success to its team. Both Dr. Al-Kindi and Engineer Al-Saqlawi also left appreciative notes, acknowledging the library's role in preserving Arabic poetry and its significant cultural impact.



Al-Seyassah photo

Omani Ambassador Dr. Al-Kharousi and his team during their visit to the Al-Babtain Central Library for Arabic Poetry.

... a milestone in national development

## Tajikistan marks 33 years of independence

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8: On September 9, 1991, Tajikistan regained its independence and was officially recognized by the international community as a sovereign state.

This pivotal moment marked the culmination of thousands of years of historical evolution, inspired by the legacy of the powerful Samanid state, and reaffirmed the ancient Tajik people's ability to uphold their national banner, says Ambassador of Tajikistan and Dean of the Diplomatic Corps in Kuwait, Zubaidullah Zubaidov.



Zubaidov

Today, as the government and people of Tajikistan commemorate the 33rd anniversary of independence, they reflect on a significant milestone in the country's modern history, he said.

This celebration, he added, symbolizes not only happiness and high dignity for the Tajik people but also a turning point in their journey towards sustainable socio-economic development.

Since gaining independence, Tajikistan has embarked on a path to establish a democratic, secular, and social state, with clearly defined domestic and foreign policies reflecting national interests.

He added, extensive development programs are underway across various sectors, including the economy, social services, and infrastructure.

A key figure in Tajikistan's journey has been President Emomali Rahmon,

whose leadership has been instrumental in navigating the country through challenging international and domestic circumstances.

Under his guidance, Tajikistan has focused on improving living conditions, advancing education, and fostering patriotism among its youth. These efforts have strengthened Tajikistan's international standing, enhancing its reputation and authority globally, said the Tajik envoy.

Tajikistan has developed diplomatic and friendly relations with over 180 countries and is an active member of 57 international and regional organizations.

Notably, Kuwait was among the first to recognize Tajikistan's independence and remains a key partner. Diplomatic relations between Tajikistan and Kuwait were established on March 31, 1995, and Kuwait was the first Arab country visited by President Rahmon.

The cooperative relationship between Tajikistan and Kuwait has grown significantly, driven by shared interests and a commitment to mutual development. Both countries are working to enhance economic, trade, investment, and tourism ties.

The forthcoming fourth session of the Kuwaiti-Tajik Joint Commission on Economic, Trade, Scientific, and Technical Cooperation will be a platform to discuss and expand these areas of collaboration, said the Tajik ambassador.

The achievements of the past 33 years of independence are a testament to Tajikistan's progress and its increasing influence on the global stage.

Under President Emomali Rahmon's leadership, Tajikistan is poised to continue its development and strengthen its role among the world's emerging nations.

## Student groups call for probe, poll suspension over 'misuse of funds'

'Movement deviating dangerously from its original path'

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8: Kuwaiti student groups have called for a thorough investigation into the source of substantial funds being used to finance student conflicts, reports Al-Jarida daily.

They have demanded the suspension of student elections until new legal regulations are established to govern them.

The student groups have expressed concern over the declining state of the student movement, which, for over 60 years, has been a symbol of free thought, national awareness, and steadfastness in defending national issues.

They warned that the movement is deviating dangerously from its original path, charted by its early, dedicated founders.

In a press statement, the student groups highlighted recent media reports about significant sums --reaching up to one million dinars annually -- flowing from an unknown source to fuel student conflicts both within and outside Kuwait.

They criticized this unaccounted for and unchecked money for causing disunity and fostering discord among students by promoting factional and sectarian divisions that undermine the core values of student activism.

The statement condemned these covert and illegal manipulations, which they believe are intended to divert the student movement away from its true purpose, established by its founders, to serve the narrow interests of specific groups and dubious political agendas.

They called for an urgent, independent investigation to uncover the origins of these funds, identify the responsible parties, and recover the misappropriated money.

The student groups also demanded a complete halt to student elections until legal reforms are implemented to regulate and safeguard student activities. They stressed that these reforms should ensure the integrity of student work and shield it from harmful interventions and manipulations that threaten the future of the student movement.

The forces noted their growing solidarity and strength in opposing the so-called executive body, which they assert is responsible for the movement's current crisis. They argue that this body serves as a tool for those looking to exploit the student movement for factional and partisan interests.

The statement was endorsed by several groups, including Al Raya - UK, Kuwait Student Club in Jordan, Al Mustaqilla - UK, Student Will - UK, Student Unity - USA, and the Student Gathering.

## New waste collection service proposal: KM

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8: The Kuwait Municipality has submitted a proposal by Council member Alia Al-Farsi concerning a new service for the collection of waste from large residential areas, reports Al-Seyassah.

According to a statement, copy of which has been obtained by Al-Seyassah daily, the proposal has been reviewed by the Public Hygiene Committee, which, in its meeting on July 30, 2023, had given the nod subject to several conditions.

The committee suggested that the proposal be forwarded to the Development and Information sector of the Information Systems Department for the creation of an application for the service.



KUNA photo  
 Kuwait's Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Al-Mutairi receiving the Iraqi minister.

## Minister of information, youth receives Iraqi counterpart

Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi received on Saturday evening Iraqi Minister of

Youth and Sports Dr. Ahmad Al-Mubaraq and his accompanying delegation on the occasion of their official visit to the country.

During the meeting, they discussed boosting sports and youth cooperation in a way that deepens relations between the two brotherly countries. (KUNA)

## Other Voices

### Our mosques, their churches... & the dead

By Ahmed alsarraf

It is a common practice throughout the ages for the victor or invader to convert the places of worship of the defeated party into places of worship for themselves, or to convert them to some other purpose.

Few invaders have left things as they are, and one of the greatest insults directed at the defeated, especially if they are a historical enemy or a fierce defender, is the destruction of their places of worship.

As Muslims expanded into the Levant, Egypt and North Africa in the 7th century AD, they converted some ancient churches and temples into mosques. It is said that Caliph Omar prayed in a location close to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, refusing to pray in the church, so as not to be a precedent for Muslims, but it seems that no one paid attention to this great initiative.

After the Muslims invaded Spain in the 8th century, many churches were converted into mosques, including the Mosque of Cordoba, which had been a church and returned to become a cathedral after the Muslims were expelled from Andalusia.

The Hagia Sophia Church in Constantinople, Istanbul, in 1453, which was the largest in the Orthodox world, was converted into a mosque, then Atatürk turned it into a museum in 1935, but Erdogan returned it to being a mosque in 2020.

Similar things happened in India and elsewhere, but these things almost stopped with the increase in religious and political opposition to them, while they remained in some European and British cities, where non-Arab Muslim communities repeatedly converted churches into mosques, often with Arab money, and often for influence within the group and material enrichment, and then portrayed the matter as a religious victory over the other religion.

The acceptance of the English and others to convert a church into a mosque is considered a

common matter, and within the religious freedoms guaranteed to all, and the sale is often done due to the lack of churchgoers, or the authorities' unwillingness to spend on it, and therefore nothing prevents the building from being sold to be converted to any other use, that does not conflict with the plans of the municipality of the area.

However, the uproar, excitement and commotion, which usually accompanied such matters, prompted many, over time, to stand against it. It was therefore not strange that a pressure group called "Britain First" succeeded in collecting more than 50,000 signatures from the residents of the area, on a petition, appealing to the authorities to withdraw the license granted to an Islamic group, which had purchased an abandoned church building with the aim of converting it into a mosque, and they did so, so the Islamic group was defeated, and became involved in the building, which must be returned to its previous purpose, and no one is interested in that, and it will most likely be left as it is, and the presence of the remains of English Christians buried inside the church played a role in stopping the conversion process.

This was followed by a massive campaign of defamation and hostility towards British Muslims, which turned into something resembling a "crusade" against Islam and Muslims.

This is what we have previously warned against in dozens of articles over the course of thirty years, and we have repeatedly stated that the silence of Christians over the Islamic attack or the assault on their symbols and sanctities will not last long, and that there will come a time when they will close their ranks and will react against those who caused the insult to their churches, and this will have bad consequences, especially for peaceful Muslim citizens who have no connection to all extremist movements, and who represent the majority.

The American University of the Middle East (AUM) proves, day after day, that it is a distinguished university, and all international indicators give it a position that is even better than the official state university by far.

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Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Al-Yahya receiving the UAE ambassador. KUNA photo

### FM receives UAE ambassador

Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya received on Sunday UAE Ambassador to Kuwait Dr. Matar Al-Neyadi.

Sturdy and brotherly bilateral relations and issues of mutual interest were discussed during the reception, said a ministry statement. (KUNA)

## diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

### 'Embracing mediation weakens resolve in the fight for freedom'

"THE longest-standing unresolved issue of settler occupation remains Palestine, a situation the West has manipulated as part of its broader strategy to dominate the Middle East," Nasser Al-Abdeli wrote for *Al-Qabas* daily.

"The core problem lies in the fact that those managing the issue opted for the path of least resistance -- relying on promises. From the failed promises of the Arab armies in 1948 to the disillusionment of the Oslo Accords, this reliance continued until a shift in leadership emerged, bringing with it real signs of liberation.

"True rights cannot be won on the international stage through empty promises or hollow peace initiatives. South Africa, a sister struggle to Palestine, won its freedom from Western settlers through determined resistance, not by banking on promises. Algeria, another nation once targeted by colonial settlement, achieved its liberation by paying a high price through its fight.

"The acceptance of mediation undermines the very seriousness of the struggle, especially when one of the mediators happens to be the military and financial backer of the Zionist entity.

"This support is not hidden -- it's provided openly and unapologetically. This so-called mediator not only supplies Israel with the intelligence it needs but often engages in the dirty work to protect it, while absurdly claiming those actions as its own achievements.

"Joining the serious resistance movement requires aligning with the principles of liberation followed by other successful struggles -- be it in Algeria, South Africa, Vietnam, or Cuba.

"However, the critical lesson from these struggles is that the path to victory is paved by actions on the ground and, as Mao Zedong famously said, through the force of arms, not by attending conferences or issuing statements. Another key point is avoiding reliance on any parties that admire the settler-colonial model or have previously cooperated or allied with it.

"Collaboration with the axis of resistance that is now gaining strength in the region is crucial. However, even more important is waging the battle of liberation from within, rooted in self-reliance.

"After more than 70 years, the Palestinian people are more than ready to engage in this battle for self-liberation, leaving behind the illusory projects of hollow promises. The time has come to secure a foothold on their own land, a step toward full liberation.

"As for the 'naysayers,' whose only aim is to undermine the resistance movement with baseless accusations and distractions, they have existed in every place and time where liberation movements arise. They are nothing new -- ignore them."

#### Also:

"No matter how long or short our time away may be, the love and longing for one's homeland is unmatched. For some, leaving isn't even an option," columnist **Mohammed Al-Saqr** wrote for *Al-Anba* daily.

"No matter how high the temperatures soar or how unbearable the humidity becomes -- among the highest in the world -- our country remains a sanctuary, a place of safety and blessings both within and beyond its borders.

"Only those at odds with themselves or their homeland would oppose this truth. Its greatness lies in our loyalty to it, and the people of this nation are known for their steadfast loyalty and

goodness, traits that time has proven. They are known for their noble deeds.

"However, there are grievances about the unjust treatment some individuals face from those in higher official or civil positions, which can dissuade the younger generation from their work.

"Often, there's no real reason for such behavior -- just a difference in perspectives or, worse, outright injustice from those in authority. Such injustice must end, as it is a form of darkness.

"Fairness, on the other hand, is a duty, especially for those in positions of power. It stems from fear of Allah Almighty and His retribution on the Day of Judgment. The people of this land have never hesitated to stand up for what is right, for the just among them far outnumber the unjust, and they will always defend the oppressed.

"In the end, we trust that better days are coming, by the will of Allah -- not because we can see the future, but because we have faith in a merciful Lord. After hardship comes ease, after sorrow comes happiness, and after deprivation comes abundance. Allah will bring relief after difficulty."

"After announcing a temporary hiatus from writing, I am compelled to make an exceptional return due to a pressing humanitarian issue," columnist **Sheikh Ali Al-Jaber Al-Ahmad** wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

"The government's recent decision to remove 700 houses in Sulabiya and Taima areas has prompted me to speak out. This is an issue I had previously addressed over 20 years ago when I served as the governor of Jahra. At that time, I demanded the removal of these houses due to the distortion of the original design through the addition of "shinko", various paints, and other modifications that marred their appearance, making them unsuitable for a country like Kuwait. I had also insisted that alternative housing be provided for the residents. However, the government did not agree with this approach, as was often the case, leading to delayed decisions that only increased project costs and, seemingly, wasted public funds.

"Had the government acted on this issue at that time, the cost of removing and rebuilding new housing would have been only half of what is currently required. This approach would have allowed for the repurposing of the lands into parks, playgrounds, and other beneficial projects.

"It also would have ensured that new housing was provided to the residents of the two areas without causing problems or legal disputes against the government.

"As is well known, any removal should only proceed once alternative solutions are fully prepared. Making hasty decisions without considering their negative consequences often leads to more issues down the line.

"We must also differentiate between genuine Bedouin residents and those who have falsified their identities. It is important to pursue those forgers and reveal their true identities, but we should also be mindful of the impact on families with limited financial means.

"The legal process differs from the humanitarian approach. Considering that we are in a humanitarian country, I respectfully appeal to His Highness Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, whose leadership and compassion we deeply admire, to allow these families, which comprise the elderly, women, and children, to remain in their homes until new housing is completed. The government has shown patience with this situation for many years. Extending that patience for an additional two or three years would cause no harm."

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes and Mahmoud Ateyeh

### 'Appeals' to look into cases of former MPs

By Jaber Al-Hamoud  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8: Today, the Court of Appeal, presided over by Counselor Hani Al-Hamdan, will look into the cases of former MPs Anwar Al-Fikr, Hamad Al-Aliyan, Abdullah Fahhad, and candidate MUSAED AL-QURAIFA.

The Criminal Court had earlier sentenced Fahhad to 6 months in prison for insulting the former Attorney General, Al-Quraifa to 4 years for spreading false news, Al-Fikr to 3 years, and Al-Aliyan to 2 years for offenses related to challenging the rights of His Highness the Amir.



One of the seized cars being pulled onto the ministry trailer. Mol photo

# GTD cites 50,557 drivers, detains 66 juveniles driving sans licenses

Expat arrested with 400 liquor bottles to be deported

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8: According to the weekly statistics issued by the General Traffic Department, a total of 66 juveniles have been detained after they were caught driving their families' vehicles without licenses. They will soon be referred to the Juvenile Prosecution, along with 65 other violators held at the traffic police station. This brings the total number of detained juveniles and violators to 131, reports Al-Anba daily.**

The statistics, which cover the period from Saturday, August 31, to Friday, September 6, reveal that traffic officers handled 1,363 accidents during this time. Of these, 262 were serious traffic accidents resulting in deaths and injuries, and 1,101 were collision accidents with only material losses. In addition, 50,557 various traffic citations were issued.

Furthermore, 153 vehicles and motorcycles were towed to the impoundment garage. The campaigns also resulted in the seizure of three stolen vehicles, 156 vehicles wanted by judiciary, and the arrest of nine individuals with outstanding warrants.

The Capital traffic police issued the highest number of citations, totaling 11,216. The Hawalli traffic police were second with 10,089 citations, followed by the highway police with 9,807 various traffic citations.

**400 liquor bottles seized:** Farwaniya security patrols arrested an expatriate for trading in locally manufactured alcohol with 400 bottles of alcohol in his possession, reports *Al-Anba* daily.

A security source revealed that the patrol officers suspected the expatriate during an inspection of a public bus where they discovered the bottles of local alcohol; indicating the expatriate admitted to ownership of the bottles of alcohol, which he intended to sell.

The expatriate was referred to the Drug Control General Department at the Interior Ministry for interrogation and other legal measures. The department is keen on identifying the source of the alcoholic drinks. The expatriate will be subjected to administrative deportation and he will be banned from entering the country again, the source added.

**Unidentified body found:** An unidentified body was found near Qaruh Island, reports *Al-Rai* daily.

A security source told the daily that this body could be among those reported missing from the Iranian boat, which sank in Kuwaiti territorial waters.

The daily reported at the beginning of September that three bodies were recovered, while three

others were still missing at the time.

**Wanted man arrested:** Ahmadi securitymen recently arrested a man in his forties with a criminal record in Fahahel, as he was wanted by law in connection with a criminal case and had been sentenced to three years in prison, reports *Al-Anba* daily.

The securitymen, during their routine patrol in Fahahel, became suspicious of a vehicle, and stopped the driver to question him. They discovered that the man was wanted for a criminal case and had been sentenced to three-year imprisonment. He was subsequently referred to the Central Prison.

**650-meter cable stolen:** A citizen, in his capacity as the agent of a major contracting company, filed a report at Mutla'a Police Station stating that a 650-meter long cable was stolen from the company's site along Kilometer 15, Abdally Road, reports *Al-Anba* daily.

The citizen informed police that he has no suspect in mind, so the representative of the Attorney General issued a directive to register a theft case classified as felony.

Investigations are underway to identify and arrest the culprits.

**Gas station worker insulted:** A Kuwaiti employee and a worker at a gas station have filed a report at Qashaniya Police Station against an individual for insulting them and using obscene language, reports *Al-Anba* daily.

The complainants explained that an expatriate attempted to fill a jerry can with fuel at the station. When informed of the station's policy against the filling of jerry cans, the expatriate called his sponsor and handed over the phone. Despite explaining the policy, the man reportedly used offensive language towards them.

The suspect has been summoned to the police station for investigation.

**Expulsion of Darjal, case Nov 6:** The Administrative Court has set a trial session for November 6 to hear the case filed by Lawyer Adel Al-Yahya against the government, demanding the expulsion of Adnan Darjal and a ban on his reentry into Kuwait, citing respect for Kuwait's sovereignty and the feelings of the families of prisoners and martyrs.

Lawyer Al-Yahya said, "We have submitted a request to the department head that the session be expedited and considered as soon as possible."

He explained that Darjal was involved in the theft of Kuwaiti clubs during the brutal Iraqi invasion, and had referred to Kuwait in the media as an Iraqi province. These actions violate international norms and undermine Kuwait's status as a sovereign state with a free people.

**Bid to reorganize 'plot':** Kuwait Municipality has granted the final approval for reorganizing part of Plot No. 4 in Siddeeq in accordance with Regulatory Plots Organization Law No. 40/1978 and Ministerial Resolution No. 325/2023 on the



Municipality photo  
Removal of illegal structures.

## Municipality removes illegal structures near the oil & gas pipelines

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8, (KUNA): The Kuwait Municipality has announced the commencement of efforts to dismantle both permanent and mobile illegal structures situated near essential oil and gas pipelines in the northern region of the country, starting this Sunday.

Eng. Abdullah Al-Daihani, Head of the Violations Removal Department at Jahra Municipality, stated that the sites violating regulations have already been identified and are being prepared for removal. He emphasized that the municipality's violations removal teams, in collaboration with the Public Authority for Agriculture and Fish Resources and the Kuwait Oil Company, will continue conducting field campaigns to eliminate these infringements.

Eng. Al-Daihani called for public cooperation with the field teams to ensure the enforcement of municipal laws, regulations, and systems. He reaffirmed that no tolerance will be shown for violations, and all encroachments will be promptly removed by the inspection teams. Legal actions will be taken against any offenders.

rules and procedures related to the organization of regulatory plots, reports *Al-Seyassah* daily.

This entails amending the status of plots 145 to 153 for private housing use and the converted numbers (A55-B55) by moving them at a distance of 5.88 meters on the southern side to 5.93 meters on the northern side, as these plots conflict with the Road 410 project implemented by the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART).

### PEPs discussed

## Dr Al-Sharian calls for reform in the money laundering law

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8: Counselor Dr. Nawaf Al-Sharian has discussed at length the Kuwaiti Money Laundering Law (Law No. 106 of 2013) and its complexities, particularly concerning politically exposed persons (PEPs), reports *Al-Jarida* daily.

He says, while the law has noble objectives in fighting financial corruption and money laundering, it also presents challenges, notably its broad inclusion of individuals socially or professionally connected to PEPs.

This indiscriminate approach, extending suspicion throughout a person's lifetime and even beyond their death, contradicts key legal principles such as the presumption of innocence and individual accountability.

Dr. Al-Sharian argues that while laws aimed at curbing financial corruption are necessary, they must not impose unjustified restrictions or eternal suspicion.

He points out that most countries, including the US, Canada, and the European Union, limit the PEP status to a specific period after a person leaves office, ranging from one to five years.

Kuwait's indefinite treatment of PEPs, including their second-degree relatives, creates undue complications and raises concerns about constitutionality and human rights.

"Dr. Al-Sharian advocates for more flexible laws that align with international standards, suggesting a time limit for PEP status, even if it exceeds five years.

He emphasizes that this does not affect the punishment of financial crimes, as corruption does not expire. Instead, it would balance safeguarding the financial system with protecting individual rights, contributing to a fairer and more efficient legal framework.

He stresses that the law should serve as a protective shield for society while ensuring justice, fairness, and respect for human rights.



Dr Al-Sharian



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## LOCAL

# Private schools grapple with licensing & rental challenges

## Teacher permits at risk

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8:** More than 30 private schools have failed to renew their licenses and rental contracts due to the licensing and rental crisis -- a first in the history of the private educational sector in the country, reports Al-Rai daily quoting Private Schools Union President Noura Al-Ghanim.

According to Al-Ghanim, the crisis also led to the inability of the affected private schools to renew the residency permits of their employees; prompting many educational institutions to submit complaints to the union.

She said the non-renewal of licenses caused a number of problems, the worst of which is the inability to renew the residency permits of employees. She pointed out that renewing a school's license for one year is not enough to obtain residency permits for employees with a validity period of two or three years; especially the foreign schools that sign employment contracts with foreign teachers for a period of at least two years, since the teachers do not want to leave their home countries and work here for just one year or a few months.

She added "there is obstruction in the Ministry of Education and negligence in terms of the decision-making process of its officials. This will lead to the migration of competent staff. It takes only one email for the new teachers to go to neighboring countries that are keen on attracting qualified academic staff. This entire situation is the result of the action of the previous administration in the ministry, as they emptied the Private Education Department of professionals and left everything in the hands of unqualified officials who do not understand the mechanism of work in private schools."

She hoped that the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research and acting Minister of Education Dr. Nader Al-Jalal would fix the situation and put everything back to their proper place.



Minister Al-Jalal poses for a photo with members of the Teachers Association.

## Preparation, cooperation highlighted

### Al-Jalal, teachers align on school goals

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8:** Dr. Nader Al-Jalal, the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research and Acting Minister of Education, received Hamad Al-Houli, Chairman of the Teachers Association, and a delegation from the Board of Directors, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The meeting, held at the Ministry of Higher Education, was an opportunity for the association to congratulate Dr. Al-Jalal on his new appointment and to discuss key educational issues, particularly the Ministry's preparations for the upcoming academic year and the Teachers Association's plans for the 45th Educational Conference, scheduled for October under the patronage of His Highness the Amir. Hamad Al-Houli expressed his gratitude for Minister Al-Jalal's understanding and commitment to fostering coordination with the association, ensuring a conducive environment for educators to fulfill their mission. The minister emphasized the importance of completing preparations for the new academic year.

The Teachers Association, in a separate statement, congratulated the teachers, school administrators, and all educational personnel on the start of the new school year.

It expressed confidence in the dedication and commitment of teachers to delivering their educational mission with excellence.

The association highlighted its hope for success in resolving ongoing issues and ensuring a stable environment for the upcoming school year, particularly by addressing pending challenges and creating strategies for any emergencies that may arise.

During the meeting, the association also emphasized the importance of protecting teachers' rights, enhancing their skills, and ensuring the stability needed for them to perform their duties effectively. The association reaffirmed its willingness to cooperate with the ministry's leadership in advancing development and reform plans to achieve the nation's educational goals.

Moreover, the association reiterated its support for the legitimate demands of teachers and field workers, pledging to harness its resources to improve the educational process.

It encouraged greater participation in association activities, contributions to the Teachers Magazine, and collaboration with the working committees in governorates like Ahmadi and Jahra to address any obstacles hindering the achievement of educational goals.

## Minister lauds outstanding achievement

### MoE intensifies all efforts to bolster students' skills in AI

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8, (KUNA):** The Ministry of Education (MoE) spares no efforts to boost the students' skills in modern realms particularly the artificial intelligence, said the department official spokesman Ahmad Al-Whaidah.

Al-Whaidah, in a press statement, affirmed that the Minister of Higher Education, Scientific Research and the Acting Minister of Education, Dr. Nader Jalal, was proud of the top results made by the Kuwaiti students in the AI education hackathon, held in Bahrain.

He lauded the remarkable efforts that had been exerted by the teachers and the computer guides and their care for the students, helping them in making this accomplishment. Moreover, he affirmed the resolve to place Kuwait in the leadership in various spheres.

Earlier, the ministry congratulated the students on winning advanced positions at the Gulf Hackathon contest's second

edition for artificial intelligence employment which featured 34 students.

In a statement on its 'X' account, the ministry said the team that had the first place featured Hawraa al-Sharif from Fatima al-Hashimiya secondary school and Ahmad Al-Sharika from Al-Fajr Al-Jadid secondary school.

Abdulwahab Haider who came third is from Palestine High School in Hawali Education area, it added.

The ministry commended the advanced positions won by students, it said, adding that the event aims to develop innovative projects and skills of solving problems as well as enhance artificial intelligence techniques.

Bahrain's Minister of Education Mohammad Juma and head of Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States Ahmad Al-Asi honored the students who won the first places at the end of the contest organized at the bureau on September 2-7.

## Ministries urged to streamline services

### Opinion polls push for reforms

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8:** Recent government opinion polls aimed at improving the quality of services provided by various ministries and government institutions have resulted in a set of targeted recommendations, reports Al-Rai daily.

These recommendations focus on several key areas:

**Mechanization of Services --** Accelerate the implementation of electronic payment systems, streamline procedures, and enhance interaction with client complaints. Emphasize the development and expansion of electronic services and reduce the documentary cycle required to complete transactions.

**General Traffic Department --** Speed up transaction processing, expand services through the "Sahl" application, and give more attention to the feedback and suggestions of clients.

**Supply Branches --** Improve supply

centers, establish storage and distribution centers in residential areas, and develop services that facilitate easier access to food commodities, including delivery options.

**Municipal Transactions --** Reduce the documentary cycle for municipal transactions, enhance employee performance through specialized training, and expedite workflows across branches. Special attention should be given to elderly and special needs clients.

**Postal and Customs Services --** Automate postal notifications and electronic payments, and establish a fully automated link between customs and the Ministry of Transport.

**Birth and Death Management --** Simplify and expedite the documentary cycle related to birth and death management services and certificate issuance, aligning with the broader digital transformation efforts for government services.

## Chronicle of resilience and unity

### KRCS's new publication unveils Kuwait's response to COVID-19

By Marwa Al-Bahawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8:** Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) has documented its efforts in combating the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) from 2020 to 2022 in a new publication entitled, "Kuwait Red Crescent Society, Strategic Partner of the State in Containing Coronavirus (COVID)".

The publication covers the activities and initiatives of KRCS in supporting the community in dealing with the unprecedented pandemic, shedding light on the tremendous efforts exerted by its volunteer teams with photos and statistics.

This is a testimony not only to KRCS' efforts, but also to community solidarity and the tireless efforts made by all members of the Kuwaiti society in combating the pandemic.

The publication, written in Arabic and English, features 15 projects and programs on dealing with the pandemic like supporting the State's efforts in quarantine, air and land evacuation, food baskets, meals, food supplies, in-kind materials, medical equipment and supplies, cleaning materials, house equipment, media materials, field hospital, Khair Park, Kuwait Vaccination Center and Exhibition Grounds.

Chairman of the Board of Directors of KRCS and member of the Standing Committee of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement Dr. Hilal Al-Sayer highlighted the State's efforts and measures in dealing with the pandemic. He pointed out that despite the differences in State's efforts and measures; everything was done according to its vision, circumstances, re-

sources and capabilities. "However, the virus that does not ask anyone's permission prompted those concerned to reach a common vision on combating it, and has largely unified the frameworks for confronting the virus across the world," he asserted.

Al-Sayer stressed that Kuwait was no exception, as the virus reached it early; hence, the need for the concerned authorities in the country, headed by the Ministry of Health, to take rapid, decisive and strict measures to

contain it.

He affirmed that the experience of KRCS in confronting disasters qualified it to be the natural strategic partner and supporter of the national health system. It harnessed all its capabilities, as well as its material, moral and human resources, to combat the pandemic, he added.

The publication also contains information about the discovery of the first Corona case in Kuwait one day before the celebration of the national holidays in 2020; indicating the concerned authorities allocated eight quarantine centers to support and assist 3,227 people and 329 children during the pandemic -- Sulaiyel Jahra, Grand Majestic, Millennium, Grand Salmiya, Khairan, Khalifa, National and Aqua Marina. It also touched on the evacuation of 50,000 citizens -- 40,000 in air evacuation operations and 10,000 in land evacuation.



Dr. Al-Sayer

## Kuwaiti visitor stats increasing

### Italy's proposal to increase tourist tax still under review: Ambassador Morini

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8:** Italian Ambassador to Kuwait Lorenzo Morini has clarified that the Italian government's proposal to increase tourist tax is still under review; affirming it will be the subject of discussion between the government and representatives of the National Association of Italian Municipalities within this month, reports Al-Qabas daily.

In a statement to the daily, Morini said the point of view of the association is important; because the municipalities are in charge of determining and implementing the tourist tax.



Morini

He explained that tourist tax is applied proportionally, based on the hotel fees paid by tourists. He added this tax will be used to improve services provided to tourists in certain fields; such as transportation, security and garbage collection.

He revealed the proposal aims to provide a better experience for foreign visitors by giving the Italian cities the financial tools to improve basic services.

On the number of Kuwaitis who visited his country this year, Morini stated that the Italian Embassy issued 10,000 tourist visas to Kuwaitis between June and August 2024.

He added a large number of Kuwaitis have obtained long-term visas -- for a period ranging from three to five years since July 2023; indicating the number of tourists from Kuwait reached about 40,000 last year.



# September

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## LOCAL

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For instance, at its last meeting, the Cabinet discussed the issue of "school cafeterias" and the ban on certain types of foods, but this falls outside its jurisdiction.

There are more pressing issues that need attention, such as amending the constitution and laws, initiating infrastructure projects, developing the industrial sector and the economy, developing islands and beaches, and opening up to the world.

In reality, prioritizing the opening of the country to national and foreign investments, among other urgent matters, should be at the top of the agenda. However, each session seems to feature decisions that stray from the main concerns of the people.

When His Highness the Amir issued his decisions, it provided much-needed relief to the people, who have endured years of interference and overlapping powers and jurisdictions.

As we mentioned, lawmakers and influential figures had the upper hand in approving laws and imposing decisions that led the country into a vicious cycle.

To deal with these issues, Kuwaitis have placed great hopes in the newly appointed Council of Ministers, which includes several technocratic ministers. This change has sparked optimism among people about the potential for improved performance and development.

This Council is supposed to consist of specialists and be supported by experienced advisors to realize His Highness's aspirations.

Unfortunately, to date, there has been no noticeable shift in the approach of successive Councils of Ministers, leading to a sense of stagnation in Kuwait. When ministers focus their time on secondary issues, it suggests a lack of direction.

Therefore, we hope that the ministers will work on aligning their efforts with the vision articulated by His Highness the Amir in his speech last May, and refrain from spending time on matters that fall within the jurisdiction of their assistants.

## Amir, Crown

Continued from Page 1

the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah at Seif Palace.

He also received the First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah at the palace that morning.

## Amir, Crown Prince

Continued from Page 1

In statements to KUNA, Al-Mutairi hailed Sorour's bagging of the gold medal in the shot put competition as a significant achievement.

It is a testament for his dedication and efforts throughout his career, he said.

The minister reaffirmed that such victories by Kuwaiti champions are the result of significant support from His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah.

Earlier, Faisal Sorour secured the first gold medal for Kuwait in the on-going Paris 2024 Paralympic Games after leading the Men's Shot Put - F63 event at Stade de France on Saturday.

He scored a neat 15.31m. throw, while Aled Davies, of the United Kingdom, came second with a 15.10m throw, and Tom Habscheid - Luxembourg, won the bronze medal - 14.97m throw.

Sorour expressed joy for the being able to secure this outstanding victory and raise Kuwait's flag high at the podium ceremony.

He said, in statements to KUNA, that today's achievement culminated a long time of tireless training and continues support from the competent state bodies.

Appreciating the support given to the Kuwaiti athletes from Kuwait Paralympic Committee, he dedicated the achievement to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and the Kuwaiti people.

Today's gold medal raised Kuwait's tally to two after the bronze secured by Faisal Al-Rajehi in the men's 5000m race - T54 last Saturday.

## 22 days

Continued from Page 1

These centers will now be open daily from 8:00 am to 10:00 pm. It is necessary to schedule an appointment in advance using the "Sahef" application before visiting the centers.

In a related development, the Ministry of Interior has called on bedridden citizens and people with special needs to submit all relevant health documents via WhatsApp to arrange for biometric fingerprinting.

The Directorate General of Security Relations and Media explained that for bedridden citizens and those with moderate to severe disabilities (both motor and mental), biometric fingerprinting can be conducted at their location. To facilitate this, they must upload their health-related documents to the designated WhatsApp contact numbers assigned for each governorate. Calls will not be accepted. Once the documents are reviewed, they will be contacted to schedule an appointment for the biometric fingerprinting.

The Ministry of Interior has specified the WhatsApp contact numbers for biometric fingerprinting arrangements as follows:

- For the Capital and Hawally gov-

ernorates, the number is 97687767.

- For Mubarak Al-Kabeer and Al-Hamad governorates, it is 95576305.

- For Jahra and Farwaniya governorates, it is 97781437.

Meanwhile, Director of the Identity Investigation and Automated Search Department at the General Department of Criminal Evidence Brigadier Nayef Shaddad Al-Mutairi revealed in an interview that nearly 800,000 citizens have completed biometric fingerprinting, with about 175,000 still pending. As for residents, 1.86 million of them have undergone fingerprinting, leaving approximately 800,000 yet to complete the process.

He revealed that the fingerprinting process has been completed for around 1,000 bedridden individuals and people with special needs.

Brigadier Nayef Shaddad Al-Mutairi stressed that the deadline for citizens is September 30, and for residents, it is December 30. After these deadlines, transactions will be suspended for anyone who has not completed the biometric fingerprinting process.

## Arabs in

Continued from Page 1

The sources explained that individuals in these situations can submit their requests to the relevant committees, which will process their renewals after verifying the difficulty in obtaining the necessary documents.

The sources emphasized that verifying the authenticity of university and high school certificates for expatriate workers in the private sector is part of the Cabinet's directives to ensure proper certificates verification, noting that everyone is subject to these requirements.

Additionally, work is underway to introduce a new feature in the 'Sahef' program, which will allow expatriates to upload their certificates for automatic approval, facilitating the renewal process without encountering any issues.

## Minister visits

Continued from Page 1

with the patrols to monitor traffic density and directs them to high-traffic areas to ensure smooth traffic flow.

The Acting Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Dr. Nader Al-Jalal, extended his congratulations to teachers on the commencement of the 2024-2025 academic year. During a press statement made on Sunday, following his inspection of various schools, Dr. Al-Jalal emphasized the pivotal role that teachers play in shaping future generations. He noted that educators serve as role models, inspiring students to embrace the values of learning and contribution.

Dr. Al-Jalal highlighted the unwavering support that the Ministry of Education receives from the nation's political leadership, reflecting a collective belief in the importance of education as the foundation for the country's future. He pointed out that the leadership's consistent focus on enhancing education quality and developing national talents is central to the ministry's objectives. "We are dedicated to turning this vision into reality through strategic plans and programs aimed at achieving excellence and leadership across all educational stages," he stated.

He also underscored that a teacher's role extends beyond delivering information; it encompasses leadership, guidance, and the development of students' character. He called on educators to stay abreast of technological advancements and adopt modern teaching methods that foster an interactive and creative learning environment. According to Al-Jalal, these innovations inspire students to think critically and explore new ideas.

The minister reiterated the ministry's commitment to utilizing all available resources to prepare schools, both new and existing, ensuring they provide a safe, engaging, and supportive environment for both students and teachers. He acknowledged the extensive efforts made by various teams to ready schools for the academic year, expressing deep appreciation for their hard work.

In conclusion, Dr. Al-Jalal remarked, "Education is the most valuable investment in the nation's future. The continued collaboration between teachers, administrators, and parents will undoubtedly lead to positive outcomes, enhancing the overall quality of education and student achievement." He expressed hope that the upcoming academic year would be marked by success and accomplishments for all.

## KRCS reaches

Continued from Page 1

Kuwait has a long history of initiatives aimed at alleviating the suffering of afflicted populations, supporting humanitarian causes, and addressing disasters through its governmental and civil institutions.

Dr. Al-Sayer pointed to the KRCS successful contributions to humanitarian work through the society's ongoing efforts in areas such as Gaza, Sudan, Yemen, Pakistan, Libya, the Comoros, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, and Syrian refugees in Lebanon and Jordan, among other nations.

He added that the KRCS left a significant mark on humanitarian projects in many parts of the world, becoming a prominent symbol of goodwill.

KRCS has played a crucial role in alleviating the suffering of people facing major crises by delivering aid to numerous countries.

The society continues to lead global humanitarian initiatives, aiding those affected by natural disasters and humanitarian crises.

Monday, September 9, marks the 10th anniversary of the UN decision to designate Kuwait as a Humanitarian

## Beijing Summit of Forum on China-Africa Cooperation: Key highlights in numbers

By H.E. Zhang Jianwei  
Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to the State of Kuwait

The 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) was held in Beijing from September 4 to 6. Chinese President Xi Jinping attended the opening ceremony of the summit and delivered a keynote address. The summit was attended by the leaders of all 53 African countries that have established diplomatic relations with China and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, as well as the United Nations Secretary-General and representatives from more than 30 international and African regional organizations. During the summit, the two sides reached a clear political consensus of enhancing all-round cooperation and unanimously adopted two significant outcome documents, namely the Beijing Declaration and the Action Plan, making the summit very fruitful. I would like to give a summary of the summit's key highlights through numbers.

**30 African Countries: Elevating Their Relations with China**

During the summit, President Xi Jinping held bilateral meetings with all heads of state and heads of government who attended the summit respectively to hold in-depth talks about major strategic issues. Meanwhile, China established or elevated its strategic partnerships with a total of 30 countries, whereby China has entered into strategic partnerships with all Af-

rican countries having diplomatic ties with China. Furthermore, the overall characterization of the China-Africa relations has been elevated to an all-weather community with a shared future for the new era. China and Africa will play a greater role in improving the well-being of the Chinese and African peoples and safeguarding world peace and stability.

**6-point Proposition: Jointly Advancing China-Africa Modernization**

President Xi Jinping put a six-point proposition on China-Africa joint efforts to advance modernization and pointed out that China and Africa should advance modernization that is just and equitable, that is open and win-win, that puts the people first, that features diversity and inclusiveness, that is eco-friendly and that is underpinned by peace and security. Such proposition is widely accepted by African leaders and will have a significant and far-reaching impact on spearheading faster modernization of the Global South and advancing global modernization.

**3-year Blueprint: Boosting China-Africa Cooperation**

The Beijing Declaration and Action Plan adopted by the two sides have drawn a blueprint for strengthening China-Africa cooperation in the next

three years. President Xi Jinping announced ten partnership actions that China would take with Africa to advance modernization in the next three years, covering the areas of mutual learning among civilizations, trade prosperity, industrial chain cooperation, connectivity, development cooperation, health, agriculture and livelihoods, people-to-people exchanges, green development, and common security. China will take an array of practical measures, including giving the least developed countries in Africa zero-tariff treatment for 100 percent tariff lines and creating at least one million jobs for Africa, with a view to collaboratively delivering more fruits of development to the African people.

**RMB 360bn: Providing Financial Support**

President Xi Jinping also announced that the Chinese government will provide RMB360 billion yuan of financial support through the next three years. This breaks down into RMB210 billion yuan of credit line, RMB80 billion yuan of assistance in various forms, and at least RMB70 billion yuan of investment in Africa by Chinese companies. It will provide strong support for enhancing China-Africa results-oriented cooperation in all areas.

In its long-term cooperation with Africa, China has always been committed to the principles of not interfering in Africa's internal affairs and sincerely providing assistance to Africa without attaching any political conditions. China does not engage in geopolitical games and opposes taking ad-

vantage of Africa for selfish interests. This is in stark contrast to the practices of some Western countries. Western politicians and media, whenever they are talking about China-Africa cooperation, invariably hype up the so-called "debt trap". As a matter of fact, recent statistics published by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) show that China-Africa bilateral debt only represented 11 percent of Africa's total external debt. China has never been the primary creditor of African debt. African politicians also stressed that China's investment in Africa brings about mutual benefits and win-win results. The so-called "debt trap" rhetoric reveals the sour grapes attitude of some countries. Countries smearing and slandering China-Africa cooperation are exactly those that caused untold misery in the African history and failed to truly help Africa with its development.

China-Africa cooperation has set a successful example for international cooperation in today's world. It also gives great inspiration for deepening China-Kuwait and China-Arab friendship and cooperation. As China-Kuwait strategic partnership is presented with a golden opportunity for further growth, China stands ready to work with the Kuwaiti side to earnestly implement the important consensus between the two heads of state and make sustained progress in key cooperative projects in a way to contribute to Kuwait's diversified economic development and achieve win-win results and common development of both nations.



Zhang Jianwei

## Ministry plans to construct 20 new buildings to alleviate overcrowding

MEW submits tender for 9 water towers in Mutlaa

By Mohammed Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8: According to informed sources in the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy, the ministry has included 20 new buildings in its plan for the current fiscal year. The ministry has prepared the necessary**

**approvals and documents for offering these buildings.**

They explained that the latest statistics for the month of July revealed that the total number of employees reached 35,145 in 11 technical and administrative sectors, which caused overcrowding within the administration and various departments.

The construction of these buildings is intended to address the large annual increase in the number of employees at both external sites and the ministry's main site in South Surra, as well as the annual increase in the number of visitors, which contributes to overcrowding at work sites.

These buildings are designed to meet the needs of both employees and visitors, and create an appropriate environment for performance. They will have halls for workshops and employee training, and will adhere to modern construction standards. Some buildings will be environmentally friendly and equipped with the latest technological requirements and devices.

Among the 20 new buildings, there will be an integrated training center and two external buildings for the design, supervision, and extension departments.

A number of private tenders are currently being offered by the Central Agency for Public Tenders, with the remaining tenders to be released successively. These tenders will allow companies to compete for implementation in accordance with the established frameworks, regulations, and scheduled dates.

Meanwhile, according to informed sources, the ministry has recently submitted the tender contract for the construction of nine fresh water towers in Mutlaa Residential City, along with associated works for site No. 3, to the State Audit Bureau for review and audit. The ministry is awaiting the bureau's approval before proceeding with the signing of the tender, which costs a total of KD 8.368 million.

The sources explained that the project contract is an important initiative for the ministry, given its importance to a new residential city designed to provide suitable housing for citizens. It also aligns with the ministry's efforts to coordinate its projects with those of other government agencies, particularly concerning essential services such as electricity and water.

The planned towers will help the ministry increase its reserve of freshwater, providing a safeguard for emergencies and ensuring adequate supply during peak consumption periods as the area becomes operational.

Al-Seyassah has learned from informed sources that the Ministry of Public Works has included the project to expand and maintain the main building of the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) in South Surra in its annual plan for 2024/2025.

The expansion will feature an administrative building with three basements and four floors, totaling seven floors, spanning an area of 4,000 square meters.

The project is expected to take 24 months to complete, with an official announcement coming from the Central Agency for Public Tenders in October as per the ministry's annual plan.

The sources noted that the ministry is giving significant attention to this project, as PACI serves a high volume of visitors and employees daily.

The new building is expected to alleviate congestion and create a more efficient environment for both visitors and staff. The project has been carefully coordinated with PACI to ensure all necessary requirements are met.



Part of the meeting of the Malaysian delegation at the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

## KCCI ready to boost economic ties with Malaysia

The Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) has affirmed on Sunday its readiness to provide all necessary services to strengthen economic relations with Malaysia.

The Chamber, in a statement, said that it aims to attract investment projects and establish successful partnerships between Kuwait and Malaysia.

This came during the visit of head of Selangor State governor Sulaiman Shah Al-Hajji's office and his delegation. The meeting was also attended by Malaysia's

Ambassador to Kuwait, Alauddin Mohd Nor.

The statement highlighted Al-Hajji's emphasis on the Malaysian government's commitment to deepening economic cooperation with Kuwait, noting that Malaysia was working to enhance trade across various sectors and to forge strategic investment partnerships.

During their visit, the Malaysian delegation presented their activities in key sectors, such as oil and gas, real estate development, food security, and pharmaceuticals among others. (KUNA)

Center.

The late Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, was honored as a Humanitarian Leader, in recognition of Kuwait's extensive humanitarian efforts worldwide.

## Kuwait airport

Continued from Page 1

upcoming school year and the return of students and teachers.

The success in organizing the passenger movement this summer is largely due to the availability of multiple airport terminals, which has helped in facilitating movement and preventing congestion.

The source revealed that the airport's work plan is aimed to improve performance in both operational and support sectors while increasing service efficiency to accommodate the rising number of passengers, by deploying work teams to streamline movement, prepare arrival and departure halls, and operate additional counters during peak hours.

## Kuwait strives

Continued from Page 1

After its independence, Kuwait issued article number 11/1965 on mandatory education for all Kuwaiti male and female children, from primary school to intermediate school.

For those who wished to continue their studies after graduating from the primary level in the literacy centers, Kuwait opened the first middle school class in 1959-1960.

In 1967-1968 academic year, the first night high school center was opened in Kaifan high school.

In 1981, Kuwait issued a law consisting of 23 articles on ending litera-

cy, increasing the number of literacy centers to 100. Moreover, a ministerial article was issued in 1982, defining an illiterate person as someone who's over 14 years of age and did not receive an education equal to the fourth grade.

The centers were not only dedicated to teaching Kuwaitis and Gulf nationals, but was also accepting expats of certain nationalities, as well as special needs people.

## Public sector

Continued from Page 1

per hour, compared to five fils per kilowatt per hour in the industrial and agricultural sectors.

The price of 1,000 gallons of water in the government sector is also the highest - KD4 per month, compared to KD1.250 in the industrial and agricultural sectors.

Sources called for the formation of committees to rationalize electricity and water consumption in each building in coordination with the ministry. They pointed out that a single building belonging to a government agency can be controlled by raising awareness among employees and ensuring their commitment to administrative decisions on rationalizing consumption in all parts of the buildings, especially during summer.

Meanwhile, Kuwait Ministry of Health announced that one of its systems has experienced a technical error early Sunday morning.

The Ministry said, in a press statement, that protection measures have been activated, systems have been disconnected, and the level of the failure is being assessed.

The Ministry also confirmed that the procedures are to divert some of its works to paper transactions until the problem is resolved.

## Gov't serious

Continued from Page 1

issued establishing a "Provincial Council" in the country's six governorates, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

These councils will assist the governors in exercising their duties, based on Decree No. 81 of 2014 concerning the provincial system, as amended by Decree No. 24 of 2024.

The new Decree No. 151 of 2024, published in the "Kuwait Alayawm" newspaper, stipulates the "formation of the Provincial Council by a decision of the Council of Ministers, headed by the governor and including his deputy and representatives of government agencies determined by the Council of Ministers."

These representatives are nominated by their respective ministers in coordination with the governor, provided that each holds a rank not lower than a department director, along with three citizens residing in the province nominated by the governor."

The decree permits the governor to "invite whom he deems appropriate to attend the council meetings to assist in its work. A regulation organizing the meetings, operations, and decisions of the Provincial Council shall be issued by a decision of the governor."

According to observers, the new decree aims to fill the legislative gap concerning the formation of the Provincial Council, entrusting the task to the Council of Ministers.

This is particularly significant as these councils have not been formed in any province over the past ten years, despite being stipulated in Article Nine of Decree No. 81 of 2014.

Conversely, the decree does away with the local chiefs (mukhtars) of the province, following the decree issued last May that abolished Law No. 40 of 1966 concerning mukhtars.

## World News Roundup

## Europe

## Charles attends service

## UK, Ireland PMs signal ties 'reset'

DUBLIN, Sept 8. (AP) - British Prime Minister **Keir Starmer** met with his Irish counterpart, Saturday in what was billed as an attempt to reset relations between the two countries after years of tensions following the UK's departure from the European Union.

Starmer's visit to meet Irish premier Simon Harris is the first by a British leader to Ireland in five years. It is a further sign that the two wish to deepen relations on economic and security matters. Harris was the first international leader Starmer hosted following his Labour Party's landslide election victory on July 4.



Starmer

"Today is really significant because we have made clear our ambition to reset the relationship and today we take that forward," Starmer said after the afternoon meeting with Harris at Farnleigh House in Dublin, the Irish Government's formal reception house for state visits. "We are clear that by March we want to have a summit to show the yield from this and then annual summits after that."

Relations between the two countries have been strained ever since the UK voted in June 2016 to leave the European Union, especially in light of how it affected the political structures of Northern Ireland, which is part of the UK.

When the UK left the bloc, the British government and the EU agreed to keep the Irish border free of customs posts and other checks because an open border is a key pillar of the peace process that ended 30 years of violence in Northern Ireland. Later, Starmer's Conservative predecessor Rishi Sunak renegotiated the initial agreement, and that has won the support of both sides of the Northern Irish political divide.

## Rejoin

Starmer said now was a chance to further solidify the relations, both with Ireland as well as the EU. He has said that the UK will not seek to rejoin the EU under his leadership, nor the bloc's frictionless single market and customs union. However, he has made it clear that he wants to renegotiate elements of the post-Brexit trade deal with the EU in order to bolster growth.

"We are also resetting our relationship with the EU and I have made it very clear that I want a closer relationship with the EU," he said. "That is of course on security, on defense, but also on trade, reducing the friction and any business here in Ireland will tell you that reducing the friction helps and so we want to reset that relationship."

He has been touring EU capitals since he got elected in the hope of generating the goodwill to move forward on that front, as well as "stand together" on international issues such as the war in Ukraine.

The two leaders participated in a business roundtable in Dublin to explore how a "reset" in relations can benefit trade. The economic relationship is worth around 120 billion euros (\$130 billion), supporting thousands of jobs on both sides of the Irish Sea.

The two leaders headed off after the early meeting to a soccer match between Ireland and England in Dublin, which provided them with a clear photo opportunity.

## Also:

**LONDON:** King Charles III attended church near the royal Balmoral estate in Scotland for prayers and reflection in remembrance of his mother **Queen Elizabeth II** on Sunday, the second anniversary of her death.

Charles, 75, and his wife **Camilla** have been spending the summer in the Scottish Highlands, where the late monarch died at 96 years old on September 8, 2022.

Charles and Camilla were seen arriving for the Sunday morning service at the tiny granite church of Crathie Kirk, the royal family's place of worship when they stay in nearby Balmoral Castle. Charles' great-great-great-grandmother, **Queen Victoria**, laid the foundation stone for the church, and Elizabeth was a regular attendee.

Charles ascended the throne two years ago Sunday when his mother died in her Platinum Jubilee year after reigning for a record seven decades.

His second year as sovereign was marked by two significant health blows - both Charles and his daughter-in-law **Kate**, the Princess of Wales, announced they were diagnosed with unspecified types of cancer earlier this year.

The monarch has gradually returned to public duties, undertaking dozens of visits, meetings and events. On Saturday Charles, dressed in a tartan kilt, and Camilla were seen laughing and in good spirits as they visited the Braemar Gathering Highland Games, an annual event featuring bagpiping, Highland dancing and traditional games including tug-of-war.

**KYIV, Ukraine:** A Russian drone violated Romania's airspace during nighttime attacks on neighboring Ukraine, the NATO member reported Sunday, urging Moscow to stop what it described as an escalation.

The incident occurred as Russia carried out attacks on "civilian targets and port infrastructure" across the Danube River in Ukraine, Romania's Ministry of National Defense said.

Romania deployed F-16 warplanes to monitor its airspace, and NATO allies were kept informed, the ministry said. Romanian emergency authorities also issued text alerts to residents of two eastern regions.

Preliminary data indicates there may be an "impact zone" in an uninhabited area near the Romanian village of Periprava, the ministry said. It added that an investigation is underway.

Since Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, Romania has confirmed drone fragments on its territory on several occasions and as recently as July this year.

The Romanian Defense Ministry strongly condemned the Russian attacks on Ukraine, calling them "unjustified and in serious contradiction with the norms of international law."

**Mircea Geoana**, NATO's outgoing deputy secretary-general and Romania's former top diplomat, said the military alliance also condemned Russia's violation of Romanian airspace. "While we have no information indicating an intentional attack by Russia against Allies, these acts are irresponsible and potentially dangerous," he wrote on X.

In Ukraine, two civilians died and four more suffered wounds in a nighttime Russian airstrike on the northern city of Sumy, the regional military administration reported.



This photo taken on Sept 7, 2024 shows a wildfire in San Bernardino County, California. Inset: A firefighter works at the site of a wildfire. (Xinhua)

## Evacuations ordered as wildfire burns in foothills of national forest east of LA

Evacuations were expanded as a wildfire with leaping flames scorched the foothills of a national forest east of Los Angeles, amid a days-long heat wave that pushed temperatures into the triple digits across the region.

The so-called Line Fire was burning uncontrolled along the edge of the San Bernardino National For-

est, about 65 miles (105 kilometers) east of LA. As of Saturday afternoon, the blaze charred about 11 square miles (28 sq. km.) of grass and chaparral, leaving a thick cloud of dark smoke blanketing the area.

The fire began Thursday evening, and the cause is under investigation.

About 500 firefighters were battling the blaze, supported by water-dropping helicopters that hovered over homes and hillsides, along with aircraft.

Firefighters said the blaze had the "potential for large fire growth" in the next 12 hours.

The fire produced coiling clouds of dense smoke, and flames could be seen cresting hillside ridges. (AP)

## Politics

## Ex-president threatens to jail adversaries

## Trump appeals to voters in Wisconsin

MOSINEE, Wis., Sept 8. (AP) - With just days to go before his first - and likely only - debate against Vice President Kamala Harris, former President Donald Trump posted a warning on his social media site threatening to jail those "involved in unscrupulous behavior" this election, which he said would be under intense scrutiny.

"WHEN I WIN, those people that CHEATED will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the Law, which will include long term prison sentences so that this Depravity of Justice does not happen again," Trump wrote, again sowing doubt about the integrity of the election, even though cheating is incredibly rare.

"Please beware," he went on, "that this legal exposure extends to Lawyers, Political Operatives, Donors, Illegal Voters, & Corrupt Election Officials. Those involved in unscrupulous behavior will be sought out, caught, and prosecuted at levels, unfortunately, never seen before in our Country."

## Insist

Trump's message represents his latest threat to use the office of the presidency to exact retribution if he wins a second term. There is no evidence of the kind of fraud he continues to insist marred the 2020 election; in fact, dozens of courts, Republican state officials and his own administration have said he lost fairly.

Just days ago, Trump himself acknowledged in a podcast interview that he had indeed "lost by a whisker."

While Trump's campaign aides and allies have urged him to keep his focus on Harris and make the election a referendum on issues like inflation and border security, Trump in recent days has veered far off course.

On Friday, he delivered a stunning statement to news cameras in which he brought up a string of past allegations of sexual misconduct, describing several in graphic detail, even as he denied his accusers' allegations. Earlier, he had voluntarily appeared in court

for a hearing on the appeal of a decision that found him liable for sexual abuse, turning focus to his legal woes in the campaign's final stretch.

Earlier Saturday, Trump had leaned into familiar grievances about everything from his indictments to Russia's meddling in the 2016 election as he campaigned in one of the most deeply Republican swaths of battleground Wisconsin.

## Exposing

"The Harris-Biden DOJ is trying to throw me in jail - they want me in jail - for the crime of exposing their corruption," Trump claimed at an outdoor rally at Central Wisconsin Airport, where he spoke behind a wall of bullet-proof glass due to new security protocols following his July assassination attempt.

There's no evidence that President Joe Biden or Harris have had any influence over decisions by the Justice Department or state prosecutors to indict the former president.

Trump has eschewed traditional debate preparation, choosing to hold rallies and events while Harris has been cloistered in a historic hotel in downtown Pittsburgh, working with aides since Thursday.

Harris has agreed so far to a single debate, which will be hosted by ABC.

At the rally, Trump outlined his plans to "Drain the swamp" - a throwback to his winning 2016 campaign message as he ran as an outsider challenging the status quo. Though Trump spent four years in the Oval Office, he vowed anew to "cast out the corrupt political class" if he wins again and to "cut the fat out of our government for the first time, meaningfully, in 60 years."

As part of that effort, he repeated his plan, announced Thursday, to create a new "Government Efficiency Commission" headed by Elon Musk that will be charged with conducting "a complete financial and performance audit of the entire federal government"

to root out waste.

## Also:

**MADISON, Wis.:** The mayor of Waukesha condemned a campaign ad run by a Republican independent group that links Democratic US Sen **Tammy Baldwin** with the killings of six people at a 2021 Christmas parade in that Wisconsin city.

Waukesha Mayor **Shawn Reilly** called the ad a "pitiful political tool" that "doesn't just hurt the families that had members that were killed, or those that were injured or those that even saw it, it hurts the whole entire community."

Baldwin faces Republican **Eric Hovde** in one of the most hotly contested Senate races in the country this year. The race is crucial for Democrats to win to maintain majority control of the Senate.

The ad, which began airing across Wisconsin last week, was paid for by One Nation, an independent group aligned with Republican Senate Majority Leader **Mitch McConnell**.

"This issue ad focused on Senator Baldwin's vote against increased funding for pretrial detention of violent criminals and included a call-to-action at the end," said One Nation spokesperson **Torunn Sinclair**. "It's not political."

Reilly said in a telephone interview that "our pain and our suffering from the 2021 Waukesha Christmas parade is once again being used by unprincipled people to drive votes."

Reilly referred to a joint statement issued by Baldwin and Republican US Sen **Ron Johnson** shortly after the parade killings in 2021 urging no one to use it for political gain.

"I would hope that **Eric Hovde** would also support what Sen. Johnson said," Reilly said. "No politician should allow the use of the Waukesha Christmas parade attack and its impact on our community to drive votes by creating fear and disgust to purposely create divisions."

An abandoned, 22-story building in Lake Charles, Louisiana - once an icon in the city that became a symbol of destruction from hurricanes Laura and Delta - was imploded Saturday after sitting vacant for nearly four years.

The Hertz Tower crashed down in a

matter of seconds after a demolition crew set off a series of explosions inside. The tower fell in a large cloud of dust into a pile about five stories high.

The building, formerly known as the Capital One Tower, had been a dominant feature of the city's skyline for more than

four decades. However, after a series of hurricanes ripped through southwest Louisiana in 2020, the building became an eyesore, its windows shattered and covered in shredded tarps.

Lake Charles Mayor **Nic Hunter** described the implosion of the building as "bittersweet." (AP)



The Prime Minister of Ireland Simon Harris, (left) listens to his British counterpart Keir Starmer as they meet for talks at Farnleigh House in Dublin, Ireland on Sept 7. Starmer met with Harris on Saturday in what was billed as an attempt to reset relations between the two countries after years of tensions following the UK's departure from the European Union. (AP)



English



Hunter

## America

**Authorities search for shooter:** A manhunt was underway early Sunday as police searched for a gunman in a rural area of southeastern Kentucky near Interstate 75. When they arrived at the scene in London, a small city of about 8,000 located about 75 miles (120 kilometers) south of Lexington, they found numerous vehicles on the side of the highway at Exit 49. (AP)

The shooting Saturday was followed by an intense search for a suspect by multiple law enforcement agencies. The Laurel County Sheriff's Office said in a post on Facebook that it was an "active shooter situation" and "numerous persons" were shot near the highway.

Deputy Gilbert Acciardo, a spokesperson for the Laurel County Sheriff's Office, said authorities were notified about 5:30 p.m. Saturday about gunshots along Interstate 75. When they arrived at the scene in London, a small city of about 8,000 located about 75 miles (120 kilometers) south of Lexington, they found numerous vehicles on the side of the highway at Exit 49. (AP)

**'Gray's mom called school':** The mother of the 14-year-old who has been charged with murder over the fatal shooting of four people at his Georgia high school called the school before the killings, warning staff of an "extreme emergency" involving her son, a relative said.

Annie Brown told the Washington Post that her sister, Colt Gray's mother, texted her saying she spoke with a school counselor and urged them to "immediately" find her son to check on him.

Brown provided screen shots of the text exchange to the newspaper, which also reported that a call log from the family's shared phone plan showed a call was made to the school about 30 minutes before gunfire is believed to have erupted.

Brown confirmed the reporting to The Associated Press on Saturday in text messages but declined to provide further comment. (AP)

**Louisiana skyscraper imploded:**



King Charles and Queen Camilla arrive at Crathie Kirk, near Balmoral, for Sunday church service on Sept 8. Charles attended church for prayers and reflection in remembrance of his mother Queen Elizabeth II on Sunday, the second anniversary of her death. (AP)

**'Boy fatally stabbed by brother':** A 2-year-old boy was fatally stabbed by his 6-year-old brother in Joliet, Illinois, police said.

The child suffered multiple stab wounds from a kitchen knife inside a home Friday afternoon and later was pronounced dead at a hospital, Joliet police said.

Their mother called 911 and told police she was at the home, but in a different room at the time of the stabbing, WLS-TV reported Saturday.

"Everyone in this incident is a victim," Joliet police Sgt **Dwayne English** told reporters. "We are always looking for the why. Those are answers we are hopeful that we are going to get but we may never get just because of some of the difficulties that surround the investigation."

The Department of Children and Family Services has been notified and the victim's family is cooperating with investigators, police said.

Joliet is southwest of Chicago. (AP)

## Asia

## Filipino preacher arrested

## 14 dead, 176 injured in Vietnam typhoon

HANOI, Vietnam, Sept 8, (Agencies): At least 14 people have died and 176 others injured in Vietnam after Typhoon Yagi slammed the country's north, state media said Sunday, as officials warned of heavy downpours despite its waning power.

Described by Vietnamese officials as one of the most powerful typhoons to hit the region over the last decade, Yagi left more than 3 million people without electricity in northern Vietnam. It also damaged vital agricultural land, nearly 116,192 hectares where rice and fruits are mostly grown. Hundreds of flights were canceled after four airports were closed.

The typhoon made landfall in Vietnam's northern coastal provinces of Quang Ninh and Haiphong with wind speeds of up to 149 kilometers per hour (92 miles per hour) on Saturday afternoon. It raged for roughly 15 hours before gradually weakening into a tropical depression early Sunday morning. Vietnam's meteorological department predicted heavy rain in northern and central provinces and warned of floods in low-lying areas, flash floods in streams and landslides on steep slopes.



Horton

Municipal workers along with army and police forces were busy in the capital, Hanoi, clearing uprooted trees, fallen billboards, toppled electricity poles and rooftops that were swept away, while assessing damaged buildings.

Yagi was still a storm when it blew out of the northwestern Philippines into the South China Sea on Wednesday, leaving at least 20 people dead and 26 others missing mostly in landslides and widespread flooding in the archipelago nation. It then made its way to China, killing three people and injuring nearly a hundred others, before landing in Vietnam.

Storms like Typhoon Yagi were "getting stronger due to climate change, primarily because warmer ocean waters provide more energy to fuel the storms, leading to increased wind speeds and heavier rainfall," said Benjamin Horton, director of the Earth Observatory of Singapore.

**Shanghai road mishap claims 5:** Five people have been confirmed dead after a container lorry rolled over and crushed a sedan in Shanghai on Sunday, according to police in Pudong District.

The accident took place at 10:18 a.m. when the lorry overturned onto a passing car while attempting to avoid an oncoming vehicle. All the casualties were in the crushed car and were later confirmed dead at the hospital.

The drivers of both the lorry and the turning vehicle have been detained by police. The accident is still under police investigation.

**Hainan resumes air traffic:** South China's island province of Hainan began gradually resuming maritime and air transportation after being struck by Super Typhoon Yagi, which left four dead and 95 injured.

According to the provincial transport department, Haikou Meilan International Airport in the provincial capital is expected to resume operations by noon on Sunday, while airports in the cities of Sanya and Bo'ao reopened on Saturday.

Seaports on the island are set to resume shipping, with a priority on cargo transport, starting at 1 p.m. Sunday. The eastern section of Hainan's high-speed railway loop also resumed service at 11 a.m., while the western section, Haikou's city train service, and outbound railway services remain suspended.

The transport department has pledged to accelerate post-disaster recovery efforts to restore normalcy in production and daily life.

**Filipino preacher arrested:** A Filipino preacher accused of sexual abuse and human trafficking in the Philippines and similar charges in the United States has been captured, officials said Sunday.

Interior Secretary Benhur Abalos announced the arrest of Apollo Quiboloy in a brief statement on his Facebook account but did not provide other details. Philippine police chief Gen Rommel Francisco Marbil confirmed Quiboloy's arrest also without elaborating.

Quiboloy went into hiding after a Philippine court ordered his arrest and several others on suspicion of child and abuse. The Philippine Senate has separately ordered Quiboloy's arrest for refusing to appear in committee hearings that were looking into criminal allegations against him.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr has urged Quiboloy to surrender and assured him of fair treatment by authorities.

The preacher and his lawyer have denied the allegations against him, saying they were fabricated by critics and former members who were removed from the religious group.

In August, about 2,000 police backed by riot squads raided a vast religious compound of Quiboloy's group in southern Davao city. The police brought equipment that could detect people hiding in underground tunnels but did not find him in the 30-hectare (75-acre) compound that includes a cathedral, a stadium, a school, a residential area, a hangar and a taxiway leading to Davao International Airport.

In 2019, Quiboloy claimed he stopped a major earthquake from hitting the southern Philippines.

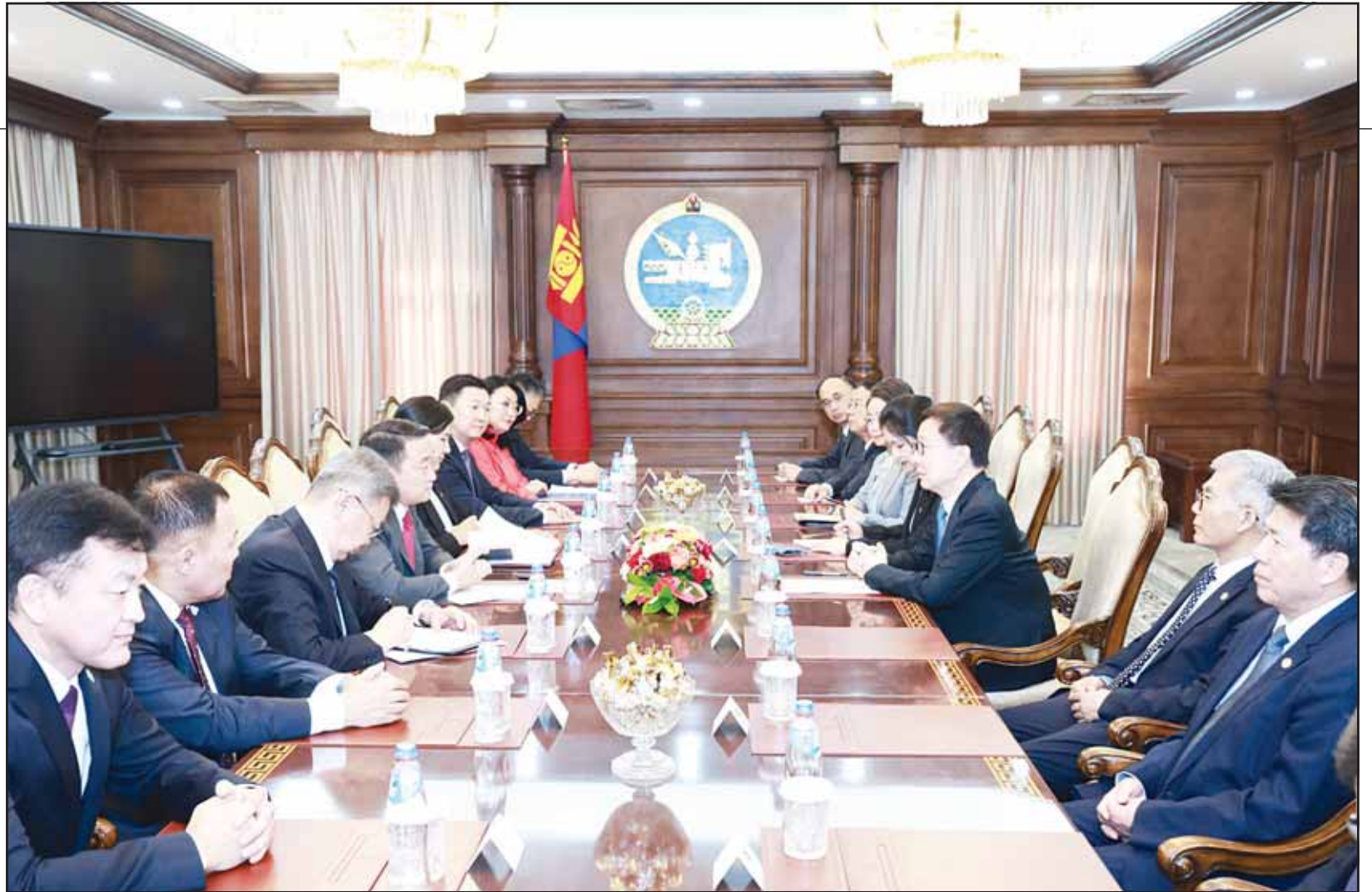
He was also a close supporter and spiritual adviser of former president Rodrigo Duterte, who is being investigated by the International Criminal Court in connection with the extrajudicial killings by police of thousands of drug suspects.

**CDP leadership race kicks off:** An official campaigning for the leadership election of Japan's largest opposition party began on Saturday, with four contenders debating on how to work with other parties in a general election expected later in the year and bring about a change in government, local media reported.

Four members of the Constitutional Democratic Party (CDP) of Japan, including a former prime minister and two lawmakers with experience running the party, filed candidacies on the day for the Sept. 23 election, Kyodo News reported.

Familiar faces vying for the leadership are Yoshihiko Noda, 67, who served as Japan's prime minister from 2011 to 2012 under the now-defunct Democratic Party of Japan, Yukio Edano, 60, leader of the CDP from its 2017 founding to 2021, and his successor, incumbent head Kenta Izumi, 50.

First-term House of Representatives lawmaker Harumi Yoshida, 52, was the final addition to the roster and is the only woman running.



Chinese Vice President Han Zheng meets with Mongolia's Parliament Speaker Dashzegve Amarbayasgalan in Ulan Bator, Mongolia on Sept 7. Han visited Mongolia from Friday to Sunday upon invitation. (Xinhua)

## China and Mongolia vow to deepen ties, expand cooperation

China is willing to deepen bilateral ties and expand cooperation with Mongolia, Chinese Vice President Han Zheng said here on Saturday.

During his three-day visit from Friday to Sunday, Han met separately with Mongolian Prime Minister Luvsannamsrai Oyun-Erdene, President Ukhnaa Khurelsukh and Parliament Speaker Dashzegve Amarbayasgalan.

When meeting with Oyun-Erdene, Han said China and Mongolia will continue to consolidate political trust, expand mutually beneficial cooperation and

promote mutual understanding among people.

Han called for cooperation in energy, connectivity and infrastructure construction, as well as consultation and coordination in international and regional affairs between the two countries. China welcomes Mongolia's designation of 2023-2025 as the "Years to Visit Mongolia," and stands ready to strengthen exchanges with Mongolia's youth, students and media.

The Chinese vice president also expressed hope for deepening cooperation among China, Mongolia and Russia, calling for the speeding up of the construction

of the China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor.

For his part, Oyun-Erdene said this year marks the 75th anniversary of diplomatic ties between Mongolia and China, the 30th anniversary of the revision of the Friendship and Cooperation Treaty between Mongolia and China, and the 10th anniversary of the establishment of their comprehensive strategic partnership, saying that Mongolia is willing to work with China to push forward bilateral relations in a new era in the spirit of mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and common development. (Xinhua)

## Lat/Am

## Brazil's X ban drives Bolsonaro supporters to rally

## 'González flees Venezuela for asylum in Spain'

CARACAS, Venezuela, Sept 8, (Agencies): Former Venezuelan opposition presidential candidate Edmundo González has fled into exile after being granted asylum in Spain, delivering a major blow to millions who placed their hopes in his upstart campaign to end two decades of single-party rule.

The surprise departure of the man considered by Venezuela's opposition and several foreign governments to be the legitimate winner of July's presidential race was announced late Saturday night by Venezuelan Vice President Delcy Rodríguez.

She said the government decided to grant González safe passage out of the country, just days after ordering his arrest, to help restore "the country's political peace and tranquility."

Neither González nor opposition leader Maria Corina Machado has commented.

Meanwhile, Spain's center-left government said the decision to abandon Venezuela was González's alone and he departed on a plane sent by the country's air force.

## Grant

Foreign Minister José Manuel Albares told Spanish national broadcaster RTVE that his government will grant González political asylum as he has requested. Albares spoke while en route to China with Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez on a state visit.

"I have been able to speak to (González) and once he was aboard the airplane he expressed his gratitude toward the Spanish government and Spain," Albares said. "Of course I told him we were pleased that he is well and on his way to Spain, and I reiterated the commitment of our government to the political rights of all Venezuelans."

Sánchez said in a speech Friday, before González's departure was an-

nounced, that the opposition leader was "a hero whom Spain is not going to abandon."

Albares said that González had spent an unspecified number of days at the Spanish Embassy in Caracas before his departure.

A Spanish official with knowledge of details on González's departure said that his government did not discuss González's exit with Maduro's administration. The official spoke on condition of anonymity in line with ministry protocols.

## Ignited

González, a 75-year-old former diplomat, was a last minute stand-in when Machado was banned from running. Previously unknown to most Venezuelans, his campaign nonetheless rapidly ignited the hopes of millions of Venezuelans desperate for change after a decade-long economic freefall.

While President Nicolás Maduro was declared the winner of the July vote, most Western governments have yet to recognize his victory and are instead demanding that authorities publish a breakdown of votes. Meanwhile, tally sheets collected by opposition volunteers from over two-thirds of the electronic voting machines indicate that González won by a more than 2-to-1 margin.

The tally sheets have long been considered the ultimate proof of election results in Venezuela. In previous presidential elections, the National Electoral Council published online the results of each of the more than 30,000 voting machines but the Maduro-controlled panel did not release any data this time, blaming an alleged cyberattack mounted by its opponents from North Macedonia.

Attorney General Tarek William Saab, a staunch Maduro ally, sought González's arrest after he failed to appear three times in connection with a

criminal investigation into what it considers an act of electoral sabotage.

Saab told reporters the voting records the opposition shared online were forged and an attempt to undermine the National Electoral Council.

## Also:

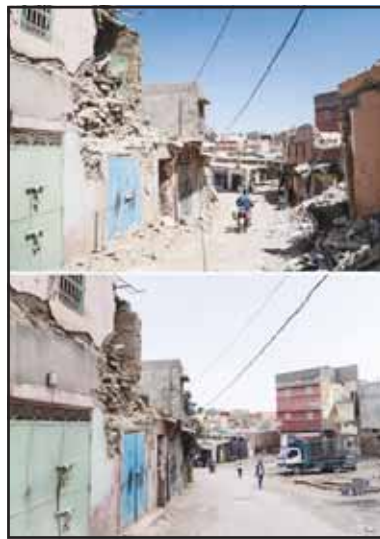
**SAO PAULO, Brazil:** Thousands of supporters of former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro flooded Sao Paulo's main boulevard for an Independence Day rally Saturday, buoyed by the government's blocking of tech billionaire Elon Musk's X platform, a ban they say is proof of their political persecution.

A few thousand demonstrators, clad in the yellow-and-green colors of Brazil's flag, poured onto Av. Paulista. References to the ban on X and images of Musk abounded.

"Thank you for defending our freedom," read one banner praising the tech entrepreneur.

Saturday's march was seen as a test of Bolsonaro's capacity to mobilize turnout ahead of the October municipal elections, even though Brazil's electoral court has barred him from running for office until 2030. It's also something of a referendum on X, whose suspension has raised eyebrows even among some of Bolsonaro's opponents all the while stoking the flames of Brazil's deep-seated political polarization.

Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes ordered X's nationwide ban on Aug. 30 after months of feuding with Musk over the limits of free speech. The powerful judge has spearheaded efforts to ban far-right users from spreading misinformation on social media, and he ramped up his clampdown after die-hard Bolsonaro supporters ransacked Congress and the presidential palace on Jan. 8, 2023, in an attempt to overturn Bolsonaro's defeat in the presidential election.



In this combination of photos, a man drives past earthquake damage in the town of Amizmiz, Morocco, near Marrakech, Sept. 10, 2023, and people walking down the same street on Sept 4, 2024. A year after nearly 3,000 people died when a record earthquake shook communities throughout Morocco's High Atlas, it still looks like a bomb just went off in villages like Imi N'tala, where dozens of residents died when a chunk of mountainside cracked off and flattened the majority of buildings. (AP)



Mwaaura

Ruto

## Africa

**Ivory Coast vehicle crash kills 13:** A tanker truck crashed into a bus in northern Ivory Coast, killing 13 people and injuring 44, the Transportation Ministry and local media said Saturday.

The bus and the truck crashed Friday night on the highway between Bouake and Korhogo, two large cities in the country's north. The road's width had been narrowed by a freight truck parked without indicators. Police Secours, a platform monitoring deadly accidents in the country, wrote.

"The collision between the bus and the tanker truck started a fire of frightening intensity," Police Secours wrote.

The report and death toll were confirmed by the Ivorian Press Agency and on the state television channel Radiodiffusion Television Ivoirienne.

Road accidents are frequent in Ivory Coast due to roads in bad conditions and reckless driving. Over 1,000 people are killed every year in road accidents in the West African country, according to the Transportation Ministry. (AP)

Kenyan officials remove bodies:

Officials began removing the bodies of children who burned to death in a school dormitory in central Kenya on Saturday as they tried to account for dozens of boys who are still missing.

Journalists were moved to wait outside the school compound as a team that included morticians from the Nyeri provincial hospital set up tables outside the dormitory on Saturday.

Eighteen boys aged between 10 and 14 are known to have died and 27 were hospitalized after the Thursday night fire at Hillside Endarasha Primary school, but 70 others are still unaccounted-for.

Government spokesperson Isaac Mwaaura called for patience from members of the public as government agencies comb

through the scene to ascertain the numbers of those who died and cause of fire.

Mwaaura said that more than 20 children had been accounted for by Saturday after-

noon but did not clarify if this number was an update from the previous number of

accounted-for students that stood at 86 by Friday night. He added that the number of

children who died still stands at 18 and that the process will take longer.

"These figures are still preliminary because the process is ongoing. ...It's a DNA process that will take a number of days," he said.

The country's president, William Ruto, on Friday declared three days of mourning. Police are still investigating the cause of the fire. (AP)

**Atlas marks 1 yr since quake:** The rescue crews and bystanders are long gone but the remnants of homes still sit in piles off to the side of the jagged roads.

A year after nearly 3,000 people died when a record earthquake shook communities throughout Morocco's High Atlas, it still looks like a bomb just went off in villages like Imi N'tala, where dozens of residents died after a chunk of mountainside cracked off and flattened the majority of buildings.

Broken bricks, bent rods of rebar and pieces of kitchen floors remain but have been swept into neat piles alongside plastic tents where the displaced now live. Some await funds to reconstruct their homes. Others await approval of their blueprints.

The region shaken by the earthquake is full of impoverished agricultural villages like Imi N'tala, accessible only via bumpy, unmaintained roads. Associated Press reporters revisited half a dozen of them last week ahead of the first anniversary. (AP)



Former Brazilian president Jair Bolsonaro waves to supporters during a protest calling for the impeachment of Supreme Court Minister Alexandre de Moraes, who recently imposed a nationwide block on Elon Musk's social media platform X, in Sao Paulo on Sept 7. Saturday's march was seen as a test of Bolsonaro's capacity to mobilize turnout ahead of the October municipal elections, even though Brazil's electoral court has barred him from running for office until 2030. (AP)

As part of its comprehensive financial market development plan, the Capital Markets Authority (CMA) in Kuwait is making significant strides with the Central Counter Party (CCP) Project, reports Al-Jarida daily. This initiative aims to enhance the Kuwaiti market's infrastructure by implementing a central counter party system, which is set to bring a transformative shift and elevate Kuwait's market standing within the regional financial landscape. In a recent development, the CMA has been surveying foreign institutions to gather their opinions on the legislative frameworks and operational rules of the central counter party system. According to in-

formed sources, this survey is crucial as it ensures that the new system aligns with international standards and meets the expectations of global investors. The central counterparty system is expected to greatly improve the settlement and clearing processes for securities transactions, mitigating risks and supporting the trading of new financial instruments, including derivatives. Foreign institutions have expressed interest in how the CCP system will affect the Boursa Kuwait, particularly concerning the approval and trading of financial derivatives. These institutions have integrated the Kuwaiti market into their active and passive fund

indices following its upgrade to the emerging markets club in recent years. Thus, any substantial changes to the market's operating system, such as the introduction of the central counterparty system, must be thoroughly reviewed and incorporated into the regulatory framework to ensure market stability and compliance. The sources also indicated that the Boursa Kuwait is scheduled for a review by FTSE Russell on September 19 and Standard & Poor's (S&P) on September 22. These reviews are expected to influence foreign liquidity flows in and out of the market, potentially affecting the market's weight and the listed

companies' performance. In addition, the results of tests conducted on the market members' systems, including the central counterparty system, are anticipated to be announced on August 25. These tests cover various aspects such as the qualified broker, sub-accounts, bonds, and index funds, ensuring that the system is ready for its planned launch. The feedback from foreign institutions, especially regarding the central counterparty system, is pivotal for the market's ongoing development and integration into international financial standards.

Market Movements

08-09-2024

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts
SAUDI	-	Tadawul	-117.19	11,982.30	
EGYPT	-	EGX 30	-755.97	30,273.73	

# Business

## Kuwaiti loan plans halted amid anticipation of US Fed rate cut

Banks see surge in one-year deposit renewals

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8:** As anticipation builds for a potential interest rate cut by the US Federal Reserve in its upcoming meeting on September 17-18, Kuwait's financial market is experiencing a ripple effect, reports Al-Rai daily.

Both companies and individuals are holding off on their loan plans, choosing instead to wait for clarity on the Federal Reserve's decision and its subsequent impact on the Central Bank of Kuwait's policies.

According to informed sources, many clients have paused their financing plans after preliminary discussions with banks, hoping to benefit from potentially lower borrowing costs in the near future.

Meanwhile, banks have observed a notable uptick in demand from individuals renewing their one-year deposits. Customers are opting to lock in rates similar to those on their expired or nearly expired deposits, reflecting a cautious approach in the face of uncertain interest rate trends.

In a recent development, several banks have reduced their interest rates on one-year deposits to what is known as "counter pricing," a level set by regulatory guidelines that cannot be lowered further. These rates have dropped to 4.25 percent, down from previous rates of 4.6 percent and 4.9 percent.

This reduction comes as part of a broader global shift away from the monetary tightening cycle that began in March 2022.

In response to these market changes, officials from the Central Bank of Kuwait have recently engaged with local banks to ensure adequate liquidity levels.

They confirmed that banks are comfortably managing liquidity in both dinars and dollars and are not facing any significant financing or regulatory pressures. This reassures the market about the overall soundness of the banking sector's liquidity.

Additionally, the Central Bank has directed banks to restrict the conversion of loans granted in dinars into dollar purchases, except in cases where the dollar funds are needed for pre-determined customer requirements. This move aims to prevent speculative or unscheduled investments and ensure that foreign currency is used solely for its intended purposes.

The Central Bank's policies emphasize maintaining the stability of the Kuwaiti dinar by using a weighted basket of currencies from countries with significant trade and financial relationships with Kuwait. This strategy has proven effective in stabilizing the dinar's exchange rate against major global currencies.

Overall, while the market remains cautious and waits for the Federal Reserve's next move, the Central Bank of Kuwait continues to regulate financial activities to support stability and prevent speculative practices.

## The Bank ranked 35th on magazine's list

Burgan Bank ranks among 'The Banker's' top 100 Arab Banks in 2024, marking a new achievement

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8:** Burgan Bank, one of the most prominent financial institutions in the region, added a new achievement to its track record by ranking 35th on The Banker magazine's list of Top 100 Arab Banks in 2024. This high ranking affirms Burgan Bank's leading position and influential role both regionally and internationally, reflects the confidence both investors and customers have in the Bank, and confirms its robust financial strength and commitment to the highest standards of governance and transparency.

Commenting on this achievement, Mr. Fadel Abdullah, Chief Executive Officer – Kuwait at Burgan Bank, said: "We are proud of this prestigious recognition, which stands witness to the success of our strategies and reflects our unwavering efforts to achieve excellence and leadership and reinforce our role as a trusted financial partner. Our ranking among the top 100 Arab banks is a culmination of our ambitious vision and tireless efforts of our talented staff, as well as an incentive for us to go the extra mile in our journey of continued innovation."

He added: "This achievement is owed to many factors, including the prudent management adopted by Burgan Bank in enhancing its profit growth, the quality of its assets, the sustainability of its business, in addition to the strength of its capital base and the continued investment in technology and innovation."

Mr. Fadel affirmed Burgan's commitment to upholding its pioneering banking journey by providing integrated services and products that meet all the requirements and needs of its customers from different segments. He also underscored the Bank's steady resolve to accelerate the adoption of technological solutions, in adherence to Burgan's comprehensive strategy for digital transformation – noting that Burgan Bank has achieved good success in its digital journey, thanks to its commitment to investing in and adopting modern technologies.

On its dedicated digital transformation journey, Burgan Bank marked several notable milestones



Mr. Fadel Abdullah, Chief Executive Officer – Kuwait at Burgan Bank

including being one of the first Kuwaiti banks to join the Gulf Payments System "AFAQ" and signing an agreement with Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) to upgrade its core banking system by introducing TCS BaNCSS™ technology solutions.

It serves to note that Burgan Bank recorded solid financial results for the first half of 2024 (H1 2024), highlighting its outstanding performance and operational efficiency. During this period, the Bank achieved revenues of KD 111 million, recording a 19% year-on-year (YoY) growth. It also

recorded a significant 24% YoY growth in operating profits, which amounted to KD 48 million.

Burgan Bank maintained solid financial foundations as part of its strategy and its firm commitment to being the most modern and advanced bank in Kuwait by enhancing the overall customer banking experience and making it more convenient and intuitive. In addition, the Bank remains committed to building a robust business model that focuses on enhancing operations through investment in technology and digital transformation, enhancing innovation, developing human capital, and adhering to Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) standards.

It is worth noting that The Banker magazine, founded in 1926, is owned by the Financial Times Group – one of the most recognized magazines with a focus on international financial affairs – and is considered a reliable source for financial analysis and data-based reports. It enables leaders and experts in the financial sector to remain up to date with the latest global trends in the financial sector and banking industry, and to make operational and strategic decisions through the specialized research and reports it publishes.



Burgan Bank headquarters.

## Investment funds sector market share drops to 0.7%

## KCC reports increase in institutional trading

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8:** The Kuwait Clearing Company has released its report on trading volumes for the official market, covering the period from January 1, 2024, to August 31, 2024, reports Al-Jarida daily.

This report, published on the Boursa Kuwait website, provides insights into trading activities based on the nationality and category of traders.

According to the report, the institutions and companies sector continues to dominate trading activities, with its share increasing significantly.

This sector accounted for 59.5 percent of the total value of purchased shares (up from 45.7 percent during the same period in 2023) and 58.6 percent of the total value of sold shares (compared to 45.6 percent in 2023).

Institutions and companies bought shares worth 5.186 billion dinars and sold shares worth 5.110 billion dinars, resulting in a net purchase of 75.806 million dinars. The individual sector remains the second largest contributor to market liquidity. Its share has also grown, capturing 37.1 percent of the total value of sold shares (up from 31.8 percent in 2023) and 36.3 percent of the total value of purchased shares (up from 32.4 percent in 2023).

Individual investors sold shares worth 3.229 billion dinars and bought shares worth 3.162 billion dinars, resulting in a net selling of 67.365 million dinars.

The client accounts sector (portfolios) has seen a decline in its market share. It contributed 3.6 percent of the total value of shares sold (down from 18.4 percent in 2023) and 3.5

percent of the total value of shares purchased (down from 17.8 percent in 2023). This sector sold shares worth 316.816 million dinars and bought shares worth 308.178 million dinars, leading to a net selling of 8.638 million dinars.

The investment funds sector also experienced a decrease in its market share. It accounted for just 0.7 percent of the total value of purchased shares (down from 4.1 percent in 2023) and 0.7 percent of the total value of sold shares (down from 4.3 percent in 2023). This sector bought shares worth 56.955 million dinars and sold shares worth 56.758 million dinars, resulting in a net trading value of 197,000 dinars.

The report highlights a notable trend in the Boursa Kuwait's local investor base, Kuwaiti investors remain the most significant players in the market, having sold shares worth 7.241 billion dinars, which represents 83.1 percent of the total value of shares sold (up from 80.8 percent in 2023). They also purchased shares worth 7.191 billion dinars, capturing 82.5 percent of the total value of purchased shares (down slightly from 82.7 percent in 2023), leading to a net selling of 50.305 million dinars.

In contrast, other investors' share in the total value of purchased shares was 15.7 percent (up from 14.5 percent in 2023), with purchases amounting to 1.367 billion dinars. Their share in the total value of sold shares was 14.2 percent (down from 14.7 percent in 2023), with sales totaling 1.241 billion dinars, resulting in a net buying of 125.316 million dinars.

## US services PMI rises to 51.5, JOLTS openings drop to 7.7 million

## NFP reading bolsters expectations of further easing as oil prices fall to YTD lows

- Highlights**
- Services PMI in the US increased to 51.5 from 51.4 previously.
  - JOLTS report shows openings at 7.7 million versus 7.9 million previously.
  - Bank of Canada delivers third consecutive 25 bps cut to take the overnight rate to 4.25%.
  - NFP payrolls at 142,000 versus 160,000 forecasted.
  - UK manufacturing sector PMI at 26 month high of 52.5.
  - Oil prices fall to YTD lows, last seen at 71.06.

By National Bank of Kuwait

United States & Canada

US PMI Steady

In August, the US manufacturing sector continued to contract, though at a slower rate, with the ISM Manufacturing PMI slightly increasing to 47.2 from 46.8 in July, but still below market expectations of 47.5. The Employment Index improved to 46 from 43.4, while the New Orders Index declined to 44.6 from 47.4. The Prices Paid Index, which measures inflation, rose to 54 from 52.9. Timothy R. Fiore, Chair of the ISM Manufacturing Business Survey Committee, noted that although manufacturing is still contracting, the pace of contraction has slowed, with weak demand, declining output, and accommodative input conditions. Meanwhile, economic activity in the services sector edged higher to 51.5 from 51.4 in July, beating expectations of a 51.1 print. Steve Miller, chair of the Institute for Supply Management (ISM) Services Business Survey Committee, stated that "low-to-moderate growth was cited across many industries, while ongoing high costs and interest-rate pressures were often mentioned as negatively impacting business performance and driving softness in sales and traffic."

JOLTS Report Show Openings at New Lows

US job openings fell to 7.7 million in July, the lowest since January 2021, down from 7.9 million in June. The decrease, below the expected 8.1 million, represents a 13% decline from last year and signals a slowdown in

Currencies	Previous Week Levels				This Week's Expected Range		3-Month
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	Forward
EUR	1.1045	1.1025	1.1155	1.1083	1.1000	1.1100	1.1131
GBP	1.3119	1.3084	1.3238	1.3123	1.3040	1.3180	1.3134
JPY	146.18	141.77	147.20	142.27	141.00	143.00	140.54
CHF	0.8494	0.8374	0.8537	0.8428	0.8360	0.8500	0.8344

labor demand. Layoffs also increased to 1.8 million, the highest level since March 2023. These developments, coupled with recent weaker payrolls and job growth revisions, have heightened expectations for Federal Reserve interest rate cuts. Treasury yields fell sharply, after the 2s10s disinverted, with the two-year note now at 3.65% and the ten-year note at 3.72%. Meanwhile, US equities mostly fell for a second day, with Nvidia sliding further after its \$279 billion, 9.5% drop on Tuesday, the largest one-day market-cap loss for a US company.

Bank of Canada Deliver Rate Cut

Elsewhere, the Bank of Canada has lowered its benchmark overnight rate by 25bps to 4.25% on Wednesday, marking its third consecutive cut and signaling the possibility of further reductions if inflation continues to trend toward the 2% target. Canadian CPI slowed to 2.5% y/y in July, with weak economic growth and an unemployment rate of 6.4%. Wednesday's rate cut was also targeted at addressing housing affordability pressures, a significant issue for Trudeau's Liberal government. The policy outlook aligns with global trends, as other G7 central banks, including the Bank of England and European Central Bank, have also begun reducing rates, reflecting a broader easing of monetary conditions amid moderating inflation.

NFP Reading Came in Short of Expectations

Nonfarm payrolls in the US rose by 142,000, greater than the previous revised reading of 89,000 but short of the expected 160,000 figure. The unemployment rate edged lower to 4.2%, while labor force participation remains unchanged at 62.7%. Average hourly earnings rose to 3.8% annually versus 3.6% previously, which represents an increase of 0.4% m/m, coming in above the ex-

pected 0.3% growth. The greenback came under selling pressure following the NFP data, with markets pricing in further easing by year-end. Prior to the reading, markets were favoring a 100 bps cut until year-end, however following the print, odds of a 125 bps cut rose sharply despite markets still slightly favoring 125 bps.

The US Dollar index closed the week at 101.187.

Europe

PMI Shows Decline in Business Activity

In August, eurozone manufacturing remained in contraction, with the S&P Global PMI coming in at 45.8, slightly above July's 45.6 figure, and signaling ongoing economic difficulties. Meanwhile, the index for new orders fell to 43.3 from 44.1, its lowest since December, as domestic and international demand fell. Although factory prices rose for the first time in 16 months, overall inflation in the currency bloc decreased to a three-year low of 2.2%. Moreover, eurozone final services PMI declined to 52.9 from 53.3 prelim. These declines bolster expectations for further policy easing by the European Central Bank.

Retail Sales in the Eurozone Rebounds

Eurozone retail sales edged higher by 0.1% in July from a 0.4% decline previously in June. The slight increase was in line with market expectations. Food, drinks, and tobacco sales rose by 0.4%, while sales excluding food and automotive fuel saw a 0.1% increase. On the other hand, sales of automotive fuel saw a 1% fall. Despite the recovery of retail sales on the month, the numbers continue to highlight the persistent struggles in consumer spending as households remain squeezed amid elevated interest rates.

The EUR/USD currency pair closed the week at 1.1083.

United Kingdom

PMI Reaches New Highs

The manufacturing sector in the UK reached a 26-month high in August, with UK Manufacturing PMI rising to 52.5, up from 52.1 in July. This indicates continued growth in output, new orders, and employment, supported by easing inflationary pressures. Despite robust domestic demand, new export orders declined for the 31st consecutive month due to weak European and Chinese markets, high shipping costs, and geopolitical uncertainties. Overall, the UK's manufacturing outlook remains positive, with strong domestic performance offsetting export challenges. The services sector also experienced greater than expected expansion, with the final PMI reading at 53.7 from 53.3 prelim. The recent positive economic data from the UK has markets questioning if the Bank of England has more room to hold rates higher for longer than their counterparts in Europe and the US. Markets are currently pricing in two 25 bps cuts by year-end to take the bank rate down to 4.5% and are currently pricing in no change for the upcoming September meeting.

The GBP/USD currency pair closed the week at 1.3123.

Commodities

Oil Decline Continues

WTI crude oil futures fell below \$70 per barrel, continuing a decline due to concerns about weaker global demand and economic uncertainty. Furthermore, reports of an agreement between different factions in Libya that would restore oil output after previously being disrupted is also contributing to the fall in prices. Meanwhile, manufacturing in China fell to a six-month low in August adding to demand concerns after a series of economic data indicated a slowdown in the world's second largest economy and largest oil importer. OPEC+ countries agreed to boost oil production in October, adding to the narrative of excess supply amid global economic slowdown and weaker demand, but have since declared plans to delay this move for two months. Officials previously indicated that the decision could be adjusted or reversed depending on market conditions.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti Dinar USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30495.





Bashar Al-Qattan and Tahseen Abdullah at the moment of signing the contract in the presence of Ali Al-Qattan and Amer Al-Yasiri.



A picture of the 'Yarmouk City' residential complex in Baghdad.

## Green Flame ... Expectation of a contract for implementation of gas extensions of the 'Yarmouk City Residential Complex' in Baghdad

New horizons opened for projects in Iraq in cooperation with Al-Qawaser Contracting Company

**BAGHDAD, Sept 8:** After the Green Flame Gas Company established its presence in the local market, and managed to maintain its position of experience and adherence to accuracy standards for seventeen years, until it became a distinctive mark in gas extensions within Kuwait, and within the framework of its expansion in the Gulf, the company recently opened new horizons for gas extensions in the Republic of Iraq, where it signed a contract for the design and implementation of gas extensions for the "Yarmouk City" complex in Baghdad, in cooperation with Al-Qawaser Contracting Company Limited, which is one of the largest and most important residential, commercial and entertainment complexes, according to the Baghdad Investment Authority License No. 613/2022.

The signing ceremony of the contract between the two companies was held in Kuwait at the

### Al-Qattan:

- We extend and maintain gas networks to more than 1,229 residential units, villas, marketing centers, schools and other services
- We seek to be one of the pioneers in the region. Providing innovations and services in the field of gas

headquarters of the Green Flame Gas Company in the presence of the Chairman of its Board of Directors, Eng. Bashar Hussein Al-Qattan, the Plenipotentiary Director of Al-Qawaser Contracting Company, Dr. Tahseen Ali Abdullah, and the General Manager of the Green Flame Gas Company Branch in the Republic of Iraq, Dr. Amer Al-Yasiri, as the two sides expressed their happiness with this strategic cooperation between the two brotherly countries.

On this occasion, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Green Flame Gas Company, Eng. Bashar Hussein Al-Qattan, said: "I take this happy opportunity to thank His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmed Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah for the wise policy pursued by the Kuwaiti government in attracting foreign investment, and its insightful future

outlook and its keenness to make Kuwait a global commercial and financial center, which helps support the Kuwaiti economy, advance development and put Kuwait in the ranks of developed countries. He also thanked His Excellency the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense and Acting Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Al-Sabah to facilitate all measures related to the local sector and international companies, and open the Kuwaiti market to local investment and the removal of the previous obstacles faced by local companies in bringing in foreign investors, and facilitating the procedures for obtaining visas to enter Kuwait.

For his part, the Managing Director of Al-Qawaser Contracting Company, Dr. Tahseen Ali Abdullah, said: We are pleased to sign this contract with the Green Flame Company, which was selected to implement this project due to its previous work and great experience in the extensions of gas

### Tahseen Abdullah:

- Yarmouk City Complex is one of the largest residential investment projects in Iraq according to the leave of the Baghdad Investment Authority

networks, foremost of which includes the extensions of the gas networks of the "The Avenues - Kuwait" and "Avenues - Bahrain", in addition to its distinguished works in the Republic of Iraq, the Kingdom of Jordan and the Kingdom of Bahrain, where the Green Flame Gas Company was able to occupy the first place within a short period in Kuwait and the Gulf countries in the field of design and implementation of liquefied gas networks, in accordance with local and international specifications, and has become one of the well-known brands in the field of gas extensions. In addition to its commitment to the implementation of the concluded contracts and maintaining the accuracy of the specifications used and the periodic maintenance, it always maintains the agreed delivery dates in all the work assigned to it.

Dr. Tahseen Abdullah added: Al-Qawaser Company is also one of the integrated and leading companies in Iraq, and plays an important regional role in finding industrial, ready and innovative solutions in the field of

construction and contracting, and that cooperation in working between major companies, such as the "Green Flame and Al-Qawaser" is a remarkable success in the completion and implementation of the "Yarmouk City Residential Complex" project, which is one of the largest and most important residential, commercial and recreational complexes in Baghdad.

Al-Qattan returned to the speech, saying: "We are proud of this fruitful cooperation with Al-Qawaser Contracting Company, as it is one of the leading companies in the field of contracting and real estate investments, and has a team dedicated to providing high-quality services and innovation in all the projects it has implemented, pointing out that the implementation of the design and extensions of the gas networks of the "Yarmouk City Residential Complex" includes more than 1,229 residential units, including villas with Roman residential designs and model schools for all the late educational, in addition to marketing centers, sports and entertainment clubs, green spaces and other

services, as this project is among the list of projects of the Green Flame Gas Company in the Republic of Iraq.

Al-Qattan concluded by saying: "Green Flame Gas Company has several branches in Arab and Gulf countries, including a branch in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, a branch in the Republic of Iraq, and the branch of the Kingdom of Bahrain, in addition to the main branch in Kuwait. The company always seeks to be one of the leaders in the region, and provide innovations, services and solutions in the field of gas. It is also trying hard to maintain the position it has reached in Kuwait and the Gulf region, thanks to attracting a large elite of engineers and consultants in the field of gas extensions, in addition to the presence of a team of technicians and workers with extensive and long experience in this field, pointing out that the company is working on designing and extending gas networks for residential complexes and malls, commercial establishments and restaurants in addition to industry projects of all kinds, hospitals and medical laboratories. The company has obtained the ISO 9001 - 2008 and 2009 quality certificate, in addition to obtaining international membership in the International Standards Council (ICC) since 2007, membership of the World Gas Organization (WGLA) and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) since 2008.

### 'Connect the West'

## Cars talking to each other could help reduce fatal crashes in US

WASHINGTON, Sept 8, (AP): The secret to avoiding red lights during rush hour in Utah's largest city might be as simple as following a bus.

Transportation officials have spent the past few years refining a system in which radio transmitters inside commuter buses talk directly to the traffic signals in the Salt Lake City area, requesting a few extra seconds of green when they approach.

Congestion on these so-called smart streets is already noticeably smoother, but it's just a small preview of the high-tech upgrades that could be coming soon to roads across Utah and ultimately across the U.S.

Buoyed by a \$20 million federal grant and an ambitious calling to "Connect the West," the goal is to ensure every vehicle in Utah, as well as neighboring Colorado and Wyoming, can eventually communicate with one another and the roadside infrastructure about congestion, accidents, road hazards and weather conditions.

With that knowledge, drivers can instantly know they should take another route, bypassing the need for a human to manually send an alert to an electronic street sign or the mapping apps found on cellphones.

"A vehicle can tell us a lot about

what's going on in the roadway," said Blaine Leonard, a transportation technology engineer at the Utah Department of Transportation. "Maybe it braked really hard, or the windshield wipers are on, or the wheels are slipping. The car anonymously broadcasts to us that blip of data 10 times a second, giving us a constant stream of information."

When cars transmit information in real time to other cars and the various sensors posted along and above the road, the technology is known broadly as vehicle-to-everything, or V2X. Last month, the U.S. Department of Transportation unveiled a national blueprint for how state and local governments and private companies should deploy the various V2X projects already in the works to make sure everyone is on the same page.

The overarching objective is universal: dramatically curb roadway deaths and serious injuries, which have recently spiked to historic levels.

A 2016 analysis by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration concluded V2X could help. Implementing just two of the earliest vehicle-to-everything applications nationwide would prevent 439,000 to 615,000 crashes and save 987 to 1,366 lives, its research found.

## Apple's upcoming iPhone will catapult the tech trendsetter into the age of AI

NEW YORK, Sept 8, (AP): Apple's ubiquitous iPhone is about to break new ground with a shift into artificial intelligence that will do everything from smartening up its frequently dim-witted assistant Siri to creating customized emojis on the fly.

The new era will dawn Monday with the unveiling of the hotly anticipated iPhone 16 in a Cupertino, California, auditorium named after Apple co-founder Steve Jobs, who pulled out the first iPhone in 2007 and waved it like a magic wand while predicting it would reshape society.

Apple has sold billions of iPhones since then, helping to create about \$3 trillion in shareholder wealth. But in the past decade, there have been mostly minor upgrades from one model to the next - a factor that has caused people to hold off on buying a new iPhone and led to a recent slump in sales of Apple's marquee product.

The iPhone 16 is generating a big-

ger buzz because it is the first model to be tailored specifically for AI, a technology that is expected to trigger the biggest revolution in the industry since Jobs thrust Apple into the smartphone market 17 years ago.

The advances included in the iPhone 16 could set up Apple to be "the gatekeeper of the consumer AI revolution," Wedbush Securities analyst Dan Ives wrote in a research note.

Apple's pivot began three months ago with a preview of its new approach during a developers conference, helping to build anticipation for Monday's showcase.

Since that June conference, competitors such as Samsung and Google have made even more strides in AI. Google even took the unusual step of introducing its latest Pixel phones packed with their own AI magic last month instead of hewing to its traditional October timetable in an effort to upstage Apple's release of the iPhone 16.

### Campaign focused on taxpayers with more than \$1 mln, in income

## Treasury recovers \$1.3 bln in unpaid taxes from high-wealth tax dodgers

WASHINGTON, Sept 8, (AP): The IRS has collected \$1.3 billion from high-wealth tax dodgers since last fall, the agency announced Friday, crediting spending that has ramped up collection enforcement through President Joe Biden's signature climate, health care and tax package signed into law in 2022.

Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen and IRS Commissioner Danny Werfel traveled to Austin, Texas, to tour an IRS campus and announce the latest milestone in tax collections as Republicans warn of big future budget cuts for the tax agency if they take over the White House and Congress.

Yellen said in a speech in Austin that in 2019, the top one percent of wealthy Americans owed more than one-fifth of all unpaid taxes, "leaving ordinary Americans to shoulder the burden."

"To fix this, we've channeled IRS funding toward significant investments to combat tax evasion," she said.

In 2023 and 2024 the IRS launched a series of initiatives aimed at pursuing high-wealth individuals who have failed to pay their tax debts. The IRS said the campaign is focused on taxpayers with more than \$1 million in income and more than \$250,000 in recognized tax debt.

Agency officials said since the program's launch, almost 80% of the 1,600 millionaires targeted by the IRS for failing to pay a delinquent tax debt have now made a payment, leading to over \$1.1 billion recovered. And in the first six months of a new February 2024 initiative, the IRS collected \$172 million from 21,000 wealthy taxpayers who have not filed tax returns since 2017.

Republicans have called for funding for the IRS to be cut.

Donald Trump's campaign for president said he would drastically reduce spending on federal agencies - and that

Issue over share transfer

## Stakeholder in Trump's Truth Social parent company 'wins' court ruling

DOVER, Del., (AP): A federal judge in Delaware has ruled in favor of a firm seeking assurance that it will be able to sell its minority stake in the parent company of former president Donald Trump's Truth Social platform.

The judge on Friday granted summary judgment to Florida-based United Atlantic Ventures LLC in a lawsuit filed against Minnesota-based Odyssey Transfer and Trust Co., a business that handles securities transfers among registered shareholders.

UAV is owned by Andrew Litinsky and Wesley Moss, former contestants on Trump's TV show, "The Apprentice" who also helped facilitate a merger that took Trump Media public in March.

Since then, UAV and Trump Media have been battling in courts in both Delaware and Florida over UAV's stake in the company. Attorneys for Trump Media assured a state judge in Delaware

earlier this year that UAV was entitled to an 8.6% stake and would suffer no merger-related dilution. They now contend, however, that UAV is not entitled to its shares because of pre-merger mismanagement by Litinsky and Moss.

Friday's ruling involves UAV's concerns that it will not receive its Trump Media shares, currently valued at about \$350 million, from Odyssey when a post-merger lockup period expires Sept. 19. According to court filings, Odyssey told UAV earlier this year that it would be taking direction from TMTG and its lawyers.

After Odyssey filed a lawsuit, the parties appeared to have reached a resolution, with Odyssey saying it would remove transfer restrictions on the share after the lockup period expires "without preference to any TMTG shareholder." After seeking approval from Trump Media, however, Odyssey

tried to change that language to "on the same basis as other similarly situated TMTG shareholders."

Trump holds about 115 million TMTG shares, or roughly 60% of the company's outstanding shares.

U.S. District Judge Gregory Williams questioned Odyssey's conduct, noting that it claimed the language change was "immaterial," while allowing it to scuttle settlement negotiations.

"Even outside settlement negotiations, Odyssey's conduct has been elusive," Williams wrote.

Williams ordered that when Odyssey is notified by TMTG of the expiration of the lockup provisions, it must promptly notify UAV, remove transfer restrictions on all shares and not interfere with the delivery of the shares.

TMTG's share price hit a high of \$79.38 on its first day of trading but is now hovering around \$17, closing Friday at \$17.10.

Democratic nominee Kamala Harris "cast the tiebreaking vote to hire 87,000 new IRS agents to go after your tip income."

That debunked claim comes from a plan the Treasury Department proposed in 2021 to bring on that many IRS employees over the next decade if it got the money. At least 50,000 IRS employees are expected to retire over

the next five years.

The National Taxpayer Advocate, the independent IRS watchdog, issued a 2023 annual report stating that the IRS employs roughly 681 armed agents.

In its efforts to modernize, the agency this year also launched a program called Direct File, which allows people with very simple W-2s to calculate and submit their returns directly to the IRS.

The IRS said in April that those using the program claimed more than \$90 million in refunds.

While the program included 12 participating states in the 2024 tax filing season, more states have joined in for the 2025 tax season, including Maryland, Oregon, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, New Mexico, Connecticut, North Carolina, Wisconsin, and Maine.

## China and US hold talks on business issues

BEIJING, Sept 8, (Xinhua): The China-US commercial and trade working group held its second vice-ministerial meeting in Tianjin on Saturday to engage in professional, rational and pragmatic discussions on policy issues and business matters.

The meeting was co-chaired by China International Trade Representative and Vice Minister of Commerce Wang

Shouwen and the U.S. Under Secretary of Commerce for International Trade Marisa Lago, according to the Ministry of Commerce (MOC).

China is willing to make joint efforts with the United States to strengthen communication, expand cooperation, address differences and create a favorable policy environment for business cooperation between the two

countries, Wang said.

The country will further deepen reforms, expand opening up and pursue high-quality development, Wang noted, highlighting that a modernized China with a large population presents an opportunity, not a threat for the United States.

During the meeting, the Chinese side expressed concerns regarding the

U.S. Section 301 tariffs, the Section 301 investigation into China's shipbuilding and other sectors, the overstretching of the concept of national security, sanctions on Chinese companies, restrictions on bilateral investments, the U.S. trade remedies against China, and unfair treatment of Chinese firms in the United States, among other issues.

## 100 more winners to be announced on Oct 17, 2024

# Gulf Bank announces 10 winners of AIDanah monthly draw

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8: As part of its commitment to rewarding customers, Gulf Bank announced the 10 winners of the August monthly draw, each receiving a prize of KD 1,000. The winners are:

1. Meshari Gharabally Abdulwahab Al- Gharabally
2. Haitham AbdulDayem Hassan Al-Said
3. Hasan Amir Ahmad Mohammad
4. Mohammed Khalil Ibrahim Al-Hajj
5. Mohammad Saleh Mohammad Al-Faddaghi
6. Battol Redha Najar Boor
7. Ihaab Mohammed Mohammed Ismaeel
8. Shatha Fathi Mohammad Ghunaim
9. Salwa Abdulaziz Al-Saud Al-Sabah
10. Charles Stephan Ziyadey

On October 17th, 2024, the bank will hold a special draw where 100 winners will each receive KD 1,000. This is the first time this draw is being held, following the bank's decision to divide the quarterly prize of KD 100,000 among 100 winners, rather than awarding the entire amount to one individual. Previously, the bank also increased the grand annual prize from KD 1.5 million to KD 2 million, earning recognition in the Guinness World Records as the largest cash prize tied to a bank account globally.

With these updates, the Al-Danah Millionaire Account draw schedule, which began in 1998 and is now in its 26th consecutive year, has been revised. Moving forward, two millionaires will be crowned annually through two major draws.

The grand prize for the annual draw is KD 2 million, and the semi-annual prize is KD 1 million. Each month, 10 winners are selected, with each receiving



AIDanah monthly draw

ing KD 1,000. A special draw for KD 100,000 was held on April 18, 2024.

The next special draw, scheduled for October 17, 2024, will award KD 1,000 to 100 winners. The deadline to participate in this draw is June 30, 2025.

The semi-annual draw for the Al-Danah Millionaire Account will take place on July 18, 2025, where the winner of KD 1 million will be announced in the presence of representatives from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Ernst & Young.

Additionally, Gulf Bank announced the grand prize winner of the Al-Danah Millionaire Account's annual draw on February 1, 2024. This was the first draw since the annual prize amount was increased from KD 1.5 million to KD 2 million. This change is part of the bank's ongoing efforts to reward its customers and promote a culture of saving in the community.

The Al-Danah account is one of the top savings accounts in Kuwait, offering regular draws with valuable prizes and numerous benefits for account holders. Each month, 10 winners receive KD 1,000. Additionally, there are two quarterly draws of KD 100,000 each, a semi-annual draw with a prize of KD 1 million, and an annual grand prize draw of KD 2 million.

A unique advantage of the Al-Danah account is that it is the only account in Kuwait where your chances of winning carry over from one year to the next, as part of the bank's loyalty and reward program.

To increase their chances of winning, customers must maintain a minimum deposit of KD 200 in the account or increase their balance to improve their odds of winning in the monthly, quarterly, and annual draws.

Gulf Bank aims to be Kuwait's leading bank, fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace to deliver exceptional customer service while contributing sustainably to the community. Through its extensive branch network and innovative digital services, the bank empowers customers to conduct banking transactions conveniently and efficiently, ensuring a seamless experience.

In alignment with Kuwait Vision 2035, "New Kuwait," and its commitment to fostering collaborative partnerships, Gulf Bank is dedicated to driving robust sustainability initiatives across environmental, social, and governance (ESG) dimensions. The bank is committed to implementing strategically selected and diverse sustainability programs both internally and externally.

## In support of 'Diraya/Let's be Aware' awareness campaign

# Warba Bank warns against emerging fraud techniques in electronic scams

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8: Warba Bank has issued a warning about new and sophisticated methods of fraud and electronic scams, reinforcing its commitment to raising public awareness and participating actively in initiatives that enhance trust and confidence in the financial system. As part of its efforts, the bank is supporting the "Let's Be Aware" campaign launched in collaboration with the Central Bank of Kuwait and the Kuwait Banking Association.



Ayman Al-Mutairi

Ayman Salem Al-Mutairi, Director Marketing & Corporate Communication at Warba Bank, stated that the bank continuously strives to educate the public through targeted awareness campaigns, utilizing various media, including informative videos and text messages disseminated across social media and digital banking channels. The bank also republishes important messages from the Central Bank of Kuwait, emphasizing the importance of protecting individuals from financial scams, such as unauthorized transactions and phishing attempts on official-looking platforms.

Al-Mutairi emphasized, "Our participation in the 'Let's Be Aware' campaign highlights the increasing threat posed by fraudulent messages aiming to steal personal and banking information.

These new techniques are executed by organized crime rings that target customer data and attempt to gain unauthorized access to bank accounts."

He elaborated that scammers frequently send deceptive messages via email or fake websites designed to look like well-known institutions or large companies, misleading users who may struggle to distinguish between genuine and fraudulent communications.

With regards to scam Tactics and Precautions, Al-Mutairi states that the tactics employed by scammers are

diverse, including deceptive emails, fake ads, and phishing calls that falsely promise financial rewards. Scammers attempt to gain access to personal information under the guise of official entities, targeting unsuspecting users and exploiting their trust.

Al-Mutairi highlighted the critical importance of verifying the legitimacy of any email or message claiming to be from official sources, particularly when they involve requests for sensitive information like banking details or account credentials. He also stressed the necessity of using strong, unique passwords and regularly logging out of banking applications after use.

Furthermore, Al-Mutairi reiterated that Warba Bank will never request personal information via email, text, or unsolicited phone calls. Any such requests should be regarded with suspicion, as they are likely attempts to fraudulently obtain customer data for unauthorized access to funds.

Warba Bank remains committed to enhancing its service offerings and supporting the community by promoting safe and secure banking practices. The bank continues to innovate in the field of Islamic banking services, positioning itself as a trusted partner close to the community.

## Al-Hassad account accessible via KFH branches, online & ATMs

# KFH announces KD 100,000 winner of Al-Hassad draw

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) announced Naser Al-Rasheedi as the Monthly winner of Al-Hassad draw, winning KD 100,000 for the month of September 2024.

KFH Deputy General Manager-Products, Nehal Almosalem, said that Al-Hassad is based on the Wakala investment principle, indicating the Bank invests the entire account balance at an expected profit rate agreed upon in advance with the customer.

She added: Al-Hassad offers weekly, monthly, and quarterly draws, a total of more than 400 prizes. The draws offer KD 1000 weekly, for 10 winners, KD 100,000 monthly and KD 250,000 quarterly in addition to prizes between 100 to 250 thousand Kuwaiti Dinars worth of value, as well as the year-end profits distribution. The account meets the aspirations of a wide segment of customers who wish to invest their funds through a multi-featured banking account.

To facilitate customer access and provide opportunity to a wider segment of clientele, Almosalem pointed out that Al-Hassad account can be opened in KFH branches, KFHonline, and ATMs.

Speaking about the eligibility criteria, Almosalem explained that the customer must hold the balance for a period of 15 days for an opportunity to enter the draws. The customer will have one chance for every KD 50. If the balance is held for 90 days before the draw date, the customer will get two chances for every KD 50, and three chances for every KD 50 if the balance is held for a period of 180 days prior to the draw date. The customer will have a maximum of 30 thousand chances in one draw. Accordingly, KFH will deposit the value of prizes in the winning customers' accounts.

Almosalem stated that Al-Hassad represents an excellent addition to KFH's comprehensive suite of financial products, offering a unique opportunity for customers in



Nehal Almosalem



KFH AlHassad winners

which the deposited amounts are invested in Al-Hassad based on the Wakala principle.

## IMWA elects Syed Hanif Ahmed as new president

# Indian Muslim Welfare Association holds 29th Annual General Body Meeting

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8: Indian Muslim Welfare Association held its 29th Annual General Body Meeting on Friday, August 30, 2024, after giving 30 days' notice with the agenda of the meeting specifying the date, time, and venue to all members of the association. The AGBM was held at Rajdhani Restaurant in Khaitan.

The meeting commenced with a recitation from the holy Quran. Members were accorded a grand welcome by the General Secretary Brother Firdaus Alam Khan who was the encee of the meeting presented his high-spirited speech which resonated among the audience.

The presence of a good number of attendees was indeed very encouraging. The outgoing President Dr. Mohammad Naimuddin spoke about the achievements during his tenure as a President, he expressed his views on good leadership which is a source of guidance to collective success.

He talked about the current worldly affairs and prayed for the restoration of peace in disturbed nations.

He praised the Executive Committee Members who worked hard despite confronting hurdles under his leadership in organizing IMWA's annual events orderly while praising their dedication towards discharging their responsibilities as and when assigned to them.

Dr Naimuddin thanked the members for bestowing the honor of the highest position in the association and stated that he is now signing off as President. The association treasurer Brother Mohammad Asif read out the annual audited financial report. for the academic year 2023, Brother Firdaus Alam requested the audience members to express their views and give suggestions to improve the association's functioning.

Brother Mohammad Azeem came up with a good proposal of imparting free tuition in Mathematics to students who hail from economically weak families, which was welcomed by all amid applause when another member Brother Salman said he would be happy to provide classrooms free of rent to carry out this good deed.

The General secretary announced that it was time to conduct the election and called upon the election commissioner Brother Syed Iftekar Ahmed to take over the dais. Brother Iftekar read out the names of the nominees who were proposed and seconded by IMWA members. After scrutinizing the nominations, he then conducted the plebiscite in a swift manner after which there was a healthy interaction between the Election Commissioner and the members present in the audience.

The election commissioner declared



Photo during the meeting.

the results by announcing the names of the office-bearers and executive committee members. Brother Syed Hanif Ahmed was declared the new President amid applause and congratulations from cheering members.

Following are the names of the newly elected executive committee members

**Governing Body**  
President: Syed Hanif Ahmed, Vice-President Muzammil Malik, General Secretary: Firdaus Alam Khan, Joint-Secretary: Khalid Damodar, Treasurer: Mohammed Asif, Joint Treasurer Feroz Maqbool Khazi,

**Executive Committee Members**  
Dr Mohammad Naimuddin, Israr Ahmed, Shafaq Mumtaz, Kaleem Ansari, Syed Nadeem, Aleem Siddiqi, Noiz Mansoor Ali, Muhammad Mohiuddin, Hamad Irfan.

Brother Firdaus Alam Khan thanked the members for their gracious presence and ended the meeting. A Buffet dinner was served to the members. The meeting created a better understanding and strengthened the bond among IMWA members, which ended with a positive note.

## Al Saleh highlights AUK's commitment to local sports culture

# AUK to host HOOP Season 4 Basketball Tournament

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8: The American University of Kuwait (AUK) will be the official venue sponsor for the HOOP Season 4 basketball tournament this September. HOOP is an alumni-led organization that embodies the entrepreneurial drive and leadership of its graduates. AUK will once again host the event on its campus, reaffirming its commitment to supporting alumni. Renowned for its intense competition and vibrant community spirit, the tournament's return to AUK represents a meaningful homecoming to its roots.

HOOP will feature 12 teams with 120 players and 12 captains. The theme for this year's tournament, "Where it All Started," celebrates



AUK campus

the return of HOOP Season 4 to its original venue at AUK.

Mohammed Al Saleh, senior

sports coordinator, expressed enthusiasm about the partnership, stating, "This tournament not only

celebrates competitive spirit but also strengthens our commitment to supporting local events and enhancing the sporting culture in the region. We look forward to another successful tournament and the dynamic interactions it will bring to our AUK community."

This partnership is just one of many examples of how the university encourages alumni-led projects, strengthening its community through ongoing collaboration and support.

AUK is known for its commitment to fostering community engagement and supporting local events. The university's role as a venue sponsor underscores its dedication to enhancing the sporting culture in the region.

# Rudolph and Bassett win big at Creative Arts Emmys

LOS ANGELES, Sept. 8, (AP) — Maya Rudolph won her sixth career Emmy on Saturday night, taking the trophy for best character voice-over for her work on “Big Mouth” at the Creative Arts Emmy Awards, while Angela Bassett won her first for her narration of the National Geographic show “Queens.”

The former and future “Saturday Night Live” star Rudolph is up for three more Emmys. Her voice-over work as the Hormone Monstress on the Netflix animated show “Big Mouth” has earned her four of her Emmys.

“I’m really proud to be a part of this show,” she said. “It humanizes being human.”

She got emotional when she talked about the privilege that she gets to do what she loves in her life.

“It’s making me cry because I’m very menopausal,” Rudolph said.

She won on the first of the two-night Creative Arts Emmys, which honor behind-the-scenes artistic and technical achievement in television and are a precursor to the main Emmys ceremony, hosted by Dan and Eugene Levy, that will air at 8 p.m. EST Sept. 15 on ABC.

Bassett appeared to collect her trophy for best narrator, a category that is usually star studded but where the winner, like Barack Obama last year, rarely shows.

“Oh my god, wow, my first Emmy,” an emotional Bassett said. “I couldn’t be more thrilled and more grateful.”

Bassett was attracted to the wildlife documentary project because

of the all female-led production team, a rarity in the medium, she said backstage.

“It just touched my heart,” she said. “So I said yes.”

Bassett is a two-time Oscar nominee who won an honorary Academy Award earlier this year.

Other winners included the recently retired Pat Sajak, who won best game show host for his final season on “Wheel of Fortune.” It was his fourth time winning the award, and first time since 1998.

“Saturday Night Live” thrived in the craft categories with six wins, including victories for its makeup and production design.

## Nominated

Rudolph won two Emmys when she was a cast member on the show, and is nominated for two more for her work as host of the sketch institution last season. Those will be awarded Sunday.

She will be returning this fall to play Vice President Kamala Harris on the 50th season of “SNL” in the weeks leading up to the election.

“I feel like I am connected somehow to an incredible time in this country and an excitement that I haven’t felt in a long time,” she said backstage on Saturday.

She is also nominated at the main Emmys ceremony for best actress in a comedy for her Apple TV+ series “Loot.” She is a longshot for that award, where the favorites are Jean Smart for “Hacks” and Ayo Edebiri for “The Bear,” which leads all shows in the comedy category

with 23 nominations.

The Ron Howard-directed documentary “Jim Henson Idea Man” won four times and “Welcome to Wrexham” won three including best unstructured reality show. “Shark Tank” won best structured reality show. In an awards show crossover, the telecast of the Oscars won four Emmys including best live variety special.

Dick Van Dyke, who turns 99 next month, may have stolen the show when “Dick Van Dyke 98 Years Of Magic” won best pre-recorded variety special.

Van Dyke did a little dance and announced “that hurt” afterward. As the winners were being played off stage, he said, “I’d like to take this opportunity to invite you to my memorial. I don’t have a date yet but I’m not feeling very well.”

Van Dyke became the oldest person to get a daytime Emmy when he won in June for appearing on “Days of Our Lives.”

The season’s top overall nominee, “Shogun,” got a win of sorts Saturday when the team that puts together the post-show making of featurette took home an Emmy. The FX series itself is up for 25 Emmys. Seventeen of those will be handed out on Sunday, which focuses on scripted television.

Plenty of big names are also up for Creative Arts Emmys on Sunday, including Oscar winners Jamie Lee Curtis and Da’Vine Joy Randolph and Oscar nominee Ryan Gosling.

Television

## Variety



Pedro Almodóvar, winner of the Golden Lion for best film for ‘The Room Next Door’, poses for photographers at the awards photo call during the closing ceremony of the 81st edition of the Venice Film Festival in Venice, Italy, on Saturday, Sept. 7. (AP)

## Film

Kidman misses acting honor due to mom’s death

# ‘Room Next Door’ tops Venice Fest

VENICE, Italy, Sept. 8, (AP) — “The Room Next Door,” Pedro Almodóvar’s English-language debut starring Julianne Moore and Tilda Swinton, topped the Venice Film Festival and was awarded its Golden Lion award Saturday.

Nicole Kidman was awarded the best actress prize, for her raw and exposing portrayal of a CEO embroiled in an affair with an intern in “Babygirl,” but missed the ceremony due to the death of her mother.

“I arrived in Venice and found out shortly after that my beautiful, brave mother, Janelle Ann Kidman has just passed,” Kidman said in a statement read by “Babygirl” director Halina Reijn. “I’m in shock and I have to go to my family, but this award is for her. ... She shaped me and made me.”

The 81st edition of the festival came to a close Saturday, with the Isabelle Huppert-led jury bestowing top prizes to Brady Corbet, for directing the 215-minute post-war epic “The Brutalist” and Vincent Lindon, for his lead performance in “The Quiet Son.” Lindon plays a single father whose son is radicalized by the far right.

Maura Delpero’s “Vermiglio” won the Silver Lion award, the runner up prize. The Italian-French-Belgian drama is about the last year of World War II, in which a refugee soldier happens upon a large family.

Almodóvar’s win came after his film, a meditation on friendship and death, received a nearly 20-minute standing ovation. The Spanish filmmaker is a Venice favorite, having premiered many of his films at the festival over the past four decades.

“I would like to dedicate it to my family,” Almodóvar said. “This movie ... it is my first movie in English but the spirit is Spanish.”

Corbet, whose “The Brutalist” is about an architect and a Holocaust survivor rebuilding a life in America, came armed with a written statement to read at the ceremony — something his filmmaker wife had encouraged him to do.

“This is all very overwhelming. ... Brevity has never been my strong suit,” Corbet said. “Thank you for not holding its length against me.”

The Venice Film Festival used its closing film slot to host the world premiere of Kevin Costner’s “Horizon: An American Saga - Chapter 2.” The film played out of competition.

Many of the 21 competition titles were divisive, with passionate supporters and detractors.

“I have good news for you,” Huppert said at the ceremony. “Cinema is in great shape.”

Among the highest profile of the films of the festival in competition were: Todd Phillips’ “Joker: Folie à Deux,” the not-a-musical-musical with Joaquin Phoenix and Lady Gaga; Pablo Larraín’s Maria Callas film “Maria,” starring Angelina Jolie as the famed soprano; and Luca Guadagnino’s William S. Burroughs adaptation “Queer,” with Daniel Craig as a junkie expat obsessed with a young student.

## Surprised

Five years ago, the Venice jury surprised the film world by giving the Golden Lion to “Joker,” which went on to win a best actor Oscar for Phoenix. Last year the top award went to “Poor Things” and the year before, the documentary “All the Beauty and the Bloodshed.”

The Luigi De Laurentiis award for a debut film went to Sarah Friedland’s “Familiar Touch,” about an octogenarian’s transition to life in assisted living as she grapples with her age, her memory and her relationship to her caregivers. Friedland also won the director prize in the horizons section and her star, Kathleen Chalfant, won the actress prize.

Though always a player in the international festival scene, Venice has cemented its reputation as a major launching pad for awards campaigns over the past 12 years. Since 2014, they’ve hosted four best picture winners (“Birdman,” “Spotlight,” “The Shape of Water” and “Nomadland”) and 19 nominees. And buzz is already swirling about possible best actress nominations for Kidman and Jolie, actor for Craig and supporting actress for Gaga, as the fall film season kicks into full gear.

The festival this year marked a return to form with true A-listers back on the Lido to celebrate films both

in and out of competition after last year’s strike addled outing. In addition to the names above, George Clooney, Brad Pitt, Michael Keaton, Winona Ryder, Ethan Hawke, Sigourney Weaver were all lending their star power to the event.

And many rose to the occasion with their fashion. Gaga’s Christian Dior gown paired with a vintage lace Philip Treacy headpiece made for a major red-carpet moment. As was Kidman’s body hugging Schiaparelli, Blanchett’s Armani Privé with strands of pearls cascading down her back, and Jolie with her fur stole. Rachel Weisz and Daniel Craig also played the power couple, with her in a glittery blue Versace gown and him in a cream Loewe suit. The “Beetlejuice Beetlejuice” cast did also did a spin on the movie’s aesthetic with their wares.

Almodóvar returned to the Venice Film Festival with stars Tilda Swinton and Julianne Moore. Their film, “The Room Next Door,” had its world premiere on the Lido, where it received a standing ovation for nearly 20 minutes.

Though a new Almodóvar film is always an event for cinephiles, this one has special significance: It’s his English-language debut.

“My insecurity disappeared after the first table read with the actresses, with the exchange of the first indications,” he wrote in his director’s statement. “The language wasn’t going to be a problem, and not because I master English, but because of the total disposition of the whole cast to understand me and to make it easy for me to understand them.”

Moore and Swinton play disconnected friends, who met in their youths at a magazine job, and whose lives took different paths. Ingrid (Moore) wrote novels. Martha (Swinton) became a war reporter. And now after years apart, they meet again, in New York, when Ingrid finds out Martha has cancer and is in a nearby hospital.

Over the next weeks and months, they reconnect, learning about one another’s lives and Martha’s estranged daughter through a series of revealing conversations.

**NEW YORK:** Linkin Park is back with a new lineup and debuting their first new music since the 2017 death of lead singer Chester Bennington.

On Thursday, the band kicked off a livestream showcasing new singer **Emily Armstrong** and drummer **Colin Brittain**, who will join returning members **Mike Shinoda**, **Brad Delson**, **Phoenix** and **Joe Hahn** in Linkin Park’s new lineup. Shinoda and Armstrong share vocal duties.

The new lineup launched into a new single, “The Emptiness Machine,” at the top of the stream. Armstrong’s performance style comfortably continues the band’s legacy: Her full-throated vocals recall Bennington without attempting parody, immediately evidenced on the second song of the set: “Somewhere I Belong.”

“This is a very special day for us,” Shinoda said as he led introductions, mentioning that guitarist **Alex Feder** was filling in **Delson** for the night. “In the role of Chester Bennington this afternoon is each of you,” Shinoda addressed the crowd.

The new Linkin Park also announced a new album, “From Zero.” It releases Nov. 15.

The rock-rap band is one of the most commercially successful acts of the 2000s, aided by Bennington’s vocals. At 41, he died by suicide shortly after the release of the group’s last album, “One More Light.” In the years since, Linkin Park has dropped a number of re-releases, including 20th anniversary editions of “Hybrid Theory,” “Metora” and, this year, the career-spanning greatest hits collection, “Papercuts.”

“Before Linkin Park, our first band name was Xero. This album title refers to both this humble beginning and the journey we’re currently undertaking,” Shinoda said in a statement announcing the upcoming release.

Armstrong comes from all-rock band Dead Sara and Brittain is a songwriter and producer who has worked with Papa Roach, One OK Rock and All Time Low, among others. He replaces original drummer **Rob Bourdon**, who “has decided to step away,” a band representative told The Associated Press. (AP)



**LOS ANGELES:** After striking for over a month, video game performers have reached agreements with 80 games that have signed interim or tiered budget agreements with the performers’ union and accepted the artificial intelligence provisions they have been seeking.

Members of the Screen Actors



Armstrong



Bennington

Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists began striking in July after negotiations with game industry giants that began more than a year and a half ago came to a halt over AI protections. Union leaders say game voice actors and motion capture artists’ likenesses could be replicated by AI and used without

their consent and without fair compensation.

SAG-AFTRA announced the agreements with the 80 individual video games on Thursday. Performers impacted by the work stoppage can now work on those projects.

The strike against other major video game publishers, including

Disney and Warner Bros.’ game companies and Electronic Arts Productions Inc., will continue.

The interim agreement secures wage improvements, protections around “exploitative uses” of artificial intelligence and safety precautions that account for the strain of physical performances, as well as vocal stress. (AP)

## People &amp; Places

## Film

## Unexpected talent

## Chu on shooting the moon with 'Wicked'

NEW YORK, Sept. 8. (Agencies): "Musical" has been a dirty word lately in Hollywood marketing, but "Wicked" director **Jon M. Chu** isn't having it.

Of course, there's no running from the term when you're bringing to the screen one of the most popular Broadway shows of the 21st century, or telling a story so connected to one of the most beloved movie musicals ever, "The Wizard of Oz." But Chu, the 44-year-old filmmaker of 2021's "In the Heights" who as a young man was transported by "Wicked" on the stage, is a true believer in form.

"When words aren't enough, music is the extension of your expression. That's what movies do, and that's what musicals do," says Chu. "When it's tied into their communication of where characters are at in this moment and time, it's the most beautiful thing."



Chu

"Wicked," which Universal Pictures will release Nov. 22 in theaters, is one of the fall's biggest gambles not just because it's been split in two (the second "Wicked" film will arrive in fall 2025), but because it's going all-out for a big-screen, song-and-dance spectacular at a time when other films (see "Wonka" and "Mean Girls") have sought to shroud their musical underpinnings.

"Everyone knew this was a once-in-a-lifetime experience, once in a lifetime to make a movie of this scale, of this moment when cinema is being questioned of what place it has in our life," says Chu. "We had to shoot the moon."

"Wicked," written by Winnie Holzman (who penned the book to the musical) and Dana Fox, stars Cynthia Erivo as the green-skinned Elphaba Thropp, who becomes the Wicked Witch of the West, and Ariana Grande as Galinda, the future Good Witch of the South.

## Development

Various forms of a "Wicked" movie been in development almost since the Broadway show opened in 2003 - earlier, in fact, because producer Marc Platt initially developed Gregory Maguire's book "Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West" as a film before shifting to the stage.

Over the years, J.J. Abrams, Ryan Murphy, Rob Marshall and Stephen Daldry have all been attached to it, along with a wide array of actors.

But Chu and Platt, who are also together developing a Britney Spears biopic, consider it destiny that Chu would helm "Wicked." During a recent interview by Zoom, Chu said he identifies strongly with the story's themes of taking alternate routes to Emerald City.

"The 'Wizard of Oz' had such an influence of my own family - an immigrant family that came to America with these dreams," says Chu, whose parents were born in Taiwan and China. "We're going through such a changing period in our culture, and this hit it so on the nose - that change is difficult, that the Yellow Brick Road may not be the path for all of us."

Much of "Wicked" will hinge on its two leads (though the supporting cast includes Jeff Goldblum as the Wizard, Jonathan Bailey as Fiyero and Michelle Yeoh as Madame Morrible). Chu says he never did a chemistry read with Erivo and Grande together - even though Grande auditioned numerous times.

"Ari, she came in five times for us. Every time, she was the most interesting person in the room," Chu says. "I resisted. I was like, 'There's no way Ariana Grande, the person we think of, can handle this, carrying a movie, her first movie.' Wait until you see her in this. She will blow your mind and break your hearts."

Erivo, who was already won a Tony, Grammy and Emmy, and been nominated for an Oscar, was an easier call.

"I knew Cynthia could do 'Defy Gravity' anytime, anywhere," says Chu. "What I didn't know was how vulnerable she could be. But when she came in and sang 'The Wizard and I,' she showed her wounds. To me, that's why I fell in love with movies, when you get to see someone so raw."

The first "Wicked" film will emphasize Elphaba's transformation, the second Glinda's.

"That structure and those journeys made it that much easier to see, oh, there's two different stories," says Platt, the veteran producer of "La La Land," "Into the Woods" and "Legally Blonde." "They're the same story and it's about both of them all the time. But, really, one character changes significantly through the first and one changes significantly in the second."

Measuring up to not just "Wicked" but "The Wizard of Oz" was an added pressure that led to some extremes. Chu, for example, had nine million tulips grown for his sets.

"Very few filmmakers have had the opportunity to paint Oz, and I took that very seriously," says Chu. "We built a lot of sets. A 16-ton Emerald City train. We built Emerald City. We built Munchkin Land. You could walk around. You could go into stores. You could look at the labels in the stores!"

## Also:

**NEW YORK:** The Upside Down is coming to Broadway.

Producers of the "Stranger Things" stage play said Tuesday the franchise's latest effort will jump to New York City's Marquis Theatre in spring 2025. It is directed by **Stephen Daldry** and co-directed by **Justin Martin**.

"Stranger Things: The First Shadow" will begin performances on March 28, 2025, ahead of an official opening of April 22, 2025. Earlier this year in **London**, it won the Olivier Award for best new entertainment or comedy play award, as well as the trophy for best set design.

The original story by the Duffer Brothers, **Jack Thorne** and **Kate Trefry** starts four decades before the 1983 start of the series on Netflix. It is in many ways an origin story for **Henry Creel**, the original Hawkins Lab test subject who surfaced in Season 4 and was known as Vecna.

The play was a hit with critics, with Time Out calling it a "sprawling maximalist monolith, a gargantuan entertainment that goes beyond being a mere 'play,'" and the Guardian saying, "This is breathtaking theatre with its own arresting imagination."



This image released by Universal Pictures shows Jeff Goldblum as The Wizard of Oz, (left), and Michelle Yeoh as Madame Morrible in a scene from the film 'Wicked.' (AP)

## Film

## Film's 'star' performs his own stunt double

## 'Unstoppable' portrays Robles' life



Jharrel Jerome, (left), the star of 'Unstoppable,' and the film's subject Anthony Robles pose together to promote the film during the Toronto International Film Festival, Friday, Sept. 6, in Toronto. (AP)



Usher



Turlington

## Variety

**BRIDGEHAMPTON, N.Y.:** Ralph Lauren took to Hamptons horse country for a rollout of his signature Americana featuring first lady **Jill Biden**, **Usher** and **Colman Domingo** on his front row and **Naomi Campbell**, **Christy Turlington** and a bevy of adorable kids on his runway.

Horses and riders meandered Thursday night in a nearby field behind a white picket fence at a tony equestrian complex in **Bridgehampton** as Lauren showed bright tennis whites, baby blue dresses and jackets, and bright orange, green and yellow looks for men, women and the aforementioned tots.

The sun faded as the open-air show came to a close and Lauren's guests made their way to dinner in an on-site pop-up of his iconic Polo Bar restaurant.

Lauren, taking his bow with Biden at his side, has fond memories of the Hamptons, where he maintains a home and visited as a child. For his spring 2025 show, a day ahead of the official start of New York Fashion Week, he chose **Khalily Stables**, a state-of-the-art, 19-acre equestrian compound of stalls, barns, riding arenas and grassy paddocks.

Lauren mixed his Ralph Lauren Collection, Purple Label, Polo Ralph Lauren and children's wear for an extra-long show that stressed wearability on a weather-perfect evening as summer turns to fall.

There were picnic looks in soft blue dresses, and white trousers and shorts paired with stripes and jackets. There were evening looks, including a stunning long blush pearled skirt worn by Campbell with a knotted white T-shirt.

For the men, Lauren offered skinny cuffed trousers, blue floral dinner jackets and splashes of color blocking in orange pants paired with navy nautical jackets and wide multicolored ties over pinstripe shirts.

Whites and blues dominated, with a sprinkling of crocheted and khaki. He threw in some sparkle in slinky sequined evening gowns, backless white cocktail dresses and blue blouses, adding a bit of his fairy dust to a pair of torn khaki trousers and other looks. (AP)

**NEW YORK:** Spared from prosecution in Britain on Thursday, **Harvey Weinstein** now faces the prospect of a new indictment in New York, where prosecutors retrying the disgraced movie mogul's rape case are

TORONTO, Sept. 8, (AP): A few hours before the film about his life, "Unstoppable," was to premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival, Anthony Robles, sitting alongside the actor who plays him, Jharrel Jerome, was remembering the moment he won the NCAA wrestling national title.

He had done something that was, by any measure, extraordinary. Robles was born without his right leg. Through grit and determination, Robles had risen to be the best 125-pound wrestler in the country. But the last thing on his mind at that moment was Hollywood.

"I was sitting there showering off after the match," Robles says. "I was excited and then I was like, 'I gotta find a job. I gotta start getting my resume together.' I never got into any of this for the attention."

"Unstoppable," which premiered Friday night in Toronto, was one of the most-anticipated premieres of the festival partly because of outside drama. The film is produced by Ben Affleck and Matt Damon and co-stars Jennifer Lopez as Robles' mom, Judy. But if all the talk going in was about who would turn up between Affleck and Lopez (Lopez did), the talk after the movie belonged to Robles and Jerome.

The film, directed by the Oscar-winning editor William Goldenberg ("Argo," "Heat") and which Amazon MGM will release in December, is in many ways a conventional sports drama, with an uplifting message and terrific supporting performances from Lopez, Don Cheadle, Michael Peña and Bobby Cannavale. But it also, rather than building toward one big challenge, takes a more naturalistic path. Robles, as played by Jerome, doesn't face a hurdle or two. He faces continual adversity, at home and on the mat.

"That's honestly how I felt going through my life," says Robles, who redshirted as a freshman at Arizona State University. "I was constantly fighting something, whether it was on the mat against a flesh-and-blood opponent or it was in my family or the world. There was always something I

was fighting against. All those things, that frustration got channeled inside me. But wrestling was my outlet."

While many real-life stories include some involvement from the subject, "Unstoppable" went several steps further. Robles, a producer on the film, also serves as Jerome's stunt double. For the wrestling scenes, Jerome and Robles, both in costume, would take turns performing the moves on the mat. Goldenberg would later mix the two together, using visual effects to remove Jerome's leg.

"I signed on to the movie and then I was like: How am I going to do the wrestling?" says Goldenberg. "I watched so many hours of him wrestling. I thought, there's no way I can do this without him doubling himself. He moves in a way that I just thought no one could ever master."

Jerome, the talented 26-year-old actor from "Moonlight" and "I'm a Virgo," first met Robles in 2020. Robles wanted to meet in a gym.

## Pressure

"You can imagine how I feel. I'm barely in the gym and this is the guy I gotta play. I think it was a test," says Jerome, laughing. "I remember the pressure of meeting him was so intense for me. But once you get to meet him and know him, all that pressure goes out the window."

After the two had gotten started, the pandemic shut down development on the film, and "Unstoppable" didn't reassemble until several years later. But that also gave Jerome and Robles more time to get to know each other.

"Missing my leg, he'd see how I interact with people," says Robles. "People would just look at me because I'm a little bit different, how that motivated me. That was something that I couldn't really explain with words. Him just seeing it and being around it, he could feel it after a while."

Jerome trained intensely not just as a wrestler but to match Robles' poise. After training with Robles, he would work with a movement coach to capture how Robles, who uses crutches to get around, walked and carried him-

self. When it came time to wrestle in the film, Jerome says they were like a tag team.

"As an actor, you always have somebody walking around who looks like you, your body double or stunt double," says Jerome. "But I have the guy I'm playing, so it was a weird mind bend for me."

Robles, 36, who's married and has a young son, now coaches wrestling at his old high school in Mesa, Arizona. But stepping back on the mat, in gymnasiums decorated to look just like those he experienced his greatest triumphs in, was surreal.

"I got the butterfly feelings like I was really wrestling," Robles says. "That for me was fun, being able to train for something again."

Robles' high school coach taught him, as a wrestler, to focus on his strengths and camouflage his weaknesses. On that mat, that meant dropping to his knee to wrestle from a neutral position, allowing him to use his hands to move around. His upper body strength is extreme, as is his grip strength from always being on crutches. "It's kind of like I'm working out 24/7," he says.

But much of "Unstoppable" focuses on Robles' relationship with his mother. Robles' strength, he says, comes from family and faith.

"My mom has always been my hero from day one. Being born missing my leg, immediately everyone thinks about what I'm not going to be able to accomplish in my life or how this is going to hold me back," Robles says. "I was blessed to have a mom who chose not to have that mentality, and not allow me to have that mentality growing up. She called it a challenge. She said: You don't let your challenge become an excuse."

Now, Robles looks at "Unstoppable" as part of his legacy. He'll show it to his son when he's a little older.

"Going through this whole process of filming this movie, meeting Jharrel and talking about things, I kind of feel like I'm at the point now where I'm done fighting," Robles says. "I'm just blessed to be on the journey."

taking steps to potentially charge him with up to three additional sex assaults.

Britain's Crown Prosecution Service, which authorized two charges of indecent assault against Weinstein in 2022, announced Thursday that it decided to discontinue the proceedings because there was "no longer a realistic prospect of conviction."

"We have explained our decision to all parties," the CPS said in a statement. "We would always encourage any potential victims of sexual assault to come forward and report to police, and we will prosecute wherever our legal test is met."

At the same time, the Manhattan district attorney's office in New York has begun pre-

sending evidence to a grand jury of up to three previously uncharged allegations against Weinstein - two sexual assaults in the mid-2000s and another sexual assault in 2016.

The New York grand jury's term expires Friday, and a vote on an indictment could happen by the end of the week, though it's possible the process could extend beyond that. Prosecutors said they would seek to combine any new charges with ones previously brought against Weinstein so that they could be tried together. (AP)

**LONDON:** Salman Rushdie's account of a stabbing attack that blinded him in one eye is among contenders announced Thursday for a prestigious nonfiction book prize.

Rushdie's memoir "Knife: Meditations After an Attempted Murder" is among 12 books on the long list for the 50,000 pound (\$66,000) Baillie Gifford Prize.

The 77-year-old novelist recounts being attacked at the Chautauqua Institution in western New York in 2022 as he was about to deliver a lecture on keeping writers safe from harm. A New Jersey man, **Hadi Matar**, is awaiting trial for the stabbing.

Prize judges called the book "brutally clear, honest and, best of all, funny." Rushdie won the Booker Prize for fiction in 1981 for "Midnight's Children." He spent years in hiding after **Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini** issued a fatwa, or edict, in 1989 calling for his death for the alleged blasphemy in his novel "The Satanic Verses." (AP)



Maya Rudolph kisses her trophy for outstanding character voice-over performance on 'Big Mouth' on night one of the Creative Arts Emmy Awards on Saturday, Sept. 7, in Los Angeles. (AP) — Details Page 11

## How eastern equine encephalitis spreads, symptoms and prevention

# As 'triple E' virus spreads, expert explains how to stay safe

By Daniel Pastula

University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus

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

The 2024 outbreak of eastern equine encephalitis - known as triple E or EEE - has caused six reported and confirmed human disease cases in five states, including one death, as of Sept. 4, 2024.

EEE surfaces nearly every year in the US, but with another outbreak of West Nile virus also spreading across the country, health officials are working hard to alert people about the serious risks that come with getting a mosquito bite.

The Conversation asked Daniel Pastula, a neurologist and medical

epidemiologist from the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, to explain how EEE spreads and what you can do to reduce your risk of encountering it.

Eastern equine encephalitis is a virus that is primarily transmitted by certain mosquitoes. It was first identified in horses that died of encephalitis along the mid-Atlantic coast in 1933. EEE was recognized to cause human disease during an outbreak involving horses and humans in southeastern Massachusetts in 1938.

Since then, sporadic human and horse cases have been reported nearly every year in the Atlantic, Great Lakes and Gulf Coast regions of the US, with larger outbreaks occurring several years apart in these areas. The last significant outbreak of human EEE disease was in 2019 when over three dozen cases were reported, largely from Massachusetts and Michigan.

EEE virus exists in a natural cycle

between *Culiseta melanura* - the black-legged or black-tailed mosquito - living in eastern freshwater hardwood swamps and certain birds that reside in such swamps.

*Culiseta melanura* mosquitoes feed almost exclusively on birds and usually do not bite humans or horses. However, more common mosquitoes such as *Aedes*, *Coquillettia* and *Culex* can sometimes bite infected birds, become infected themselves and then transmit EEE virus to nearby humans or horses. These are called "bridging" mosquitoes.

Rarely, EEE virus has also been transmitted through organ donation. Theoretically it also may be transmitted by blood transfusion.

Typically, there are about 10 human cases reported annually in the Atlantic, Great Lakes and Gulf Coast regions of the US, though there are likely many more mild cases that go unreported. Most human cases occur from July through October in endemic areas.

Every few years, there are much larger outbreaks of EEE disease in certain areas. For instance, in 2019 over three dozen cases were reported, primarily from Massachusetts and Michigan. These cyclic outbreaks are likely due to a complex interaction between temperature, rainfall, mosquito populations, bird immunity and bird migration patterns.

### Infected

Researchers do not have great estimates on how often people become sick after being infected with the virus. Our best estimate is that about 95% of infected people have either no or relatively mild symptoms. Some may develop fever or a flu-like illness after an incubation period of four to 10 days.

About 5% of people infected with EEE virus can go on to develop a brain swelling called encephalitis.

This brain swelling can be particu-

larly severe and may require intensive care. Among those who develop encephalitis, approximately one-third die. The other two-thirds may have permanent neurologic deficits including cognitive problems, weakness or movement disorders.

People younger than 15 and older than 50, as well as those who are immunocompromised, are at higher risk of progressing to encephalitis.

There are no proven effective treatments for EEE at this time. Some clinicians have tried steroids to reduce swelling or antibodies to improve immune response, with variable success. But no treatments have been proven in large clinical trials.

Brain swelling may need to be managed in the intensive care unit, and seizures may need to be treated with anti-seizure medications. Almost all patients who develop encephalitis and survive will need prolonged rehabilitation.

There are currently no commercially

available human vaccines for EEE, but there are vaccines for horses in endemic areas.

Generally speaking, if you prevent mosquito bites, you prevent EEE virus infection.

There are several things you can do to prevent mosquito bites:

- Use an insect repellent registered by the Environmental Protection Agency on exposed skin when you are outside and mosquitoes are around. They are safe and effective when used as directed.

- Wear long-sleeved shirts and pants when feasible. It is much harder - or even impossible, depending on the fabric - for mosquitoes to bite through clothing. You can also treat your clothing with the insecticide permethrin, which further repels mosquitoes.

- Avoid being outside from dusk to dawn. This is when many species of mosquitoes are most active. (AP)

### Negative effects cited

## Sweden 'pushing' to ban screen time for under-2s

SWEDEN, Sept 8, (AP) - Sweden says children under the age of 2 should not be exposed to any digital screens. The recommendations, issued by the Scandinavian country's public health agency earlier this month as a new school year begins, are the latest in a worldwide effort to limit screen time for young children. The coronavirus lockdowns exacerbated the problem as schools turned to Zoom for distance-learning and parents relied on TV shows and movies to keep their children occupied while they worked from home.

Sweden suggests that toddlers should not have any exposure to digital screens, including television. The recommendations ease slightly as the children age: From 2 to 5 years old, they should have a maximum of one hour a day in front of a screen, while for youngsters aged 6 to 12 it's two hours. Teenagers should have no more than three hours of screen time a day.

### Recommendations

Sweden's suggestions came after research found that children reported negative effects like poorer sleep, depression and limited physical activity with high use of digital devices.

Similar recommendations have come out of other countries as well, including the United States, Ireland, Canada, Australia and France.

France has the strictest suggestions so far, saying children under 3 should not have any time in front of screens. The recommendation comes from a report published in April that was commissioned by President Emmanuel Macron.

Ireland and the U.S. say babies and toddlers can engage in video calls with family and friends - though Canada, Australia and Sweden do not make such distinctions.

Cellphone bans are already in place at many schools across the United States. Cellphone pouches, lockers and bins have grown in popularity to help carry out the prohibitions.

But the bans aren't always enforced, and students often find ways to bend the rules, like hiding phones on their laps. Some parents have expressed concerns that bans could cut them off from their kids if there is an emergency, such as a school shooting.

But while the bans are gaining traction, many experts say they're not enough. They argue for alternative stimulation: steering students outdoors or toward extracurricular activities to fill time they might otherwise spend

### 'A huge gain'

## Teen vaping drops to 10-yr low in US

WASHINGTON, Sept 8, (AP) - Fewer adolescents are vaping this year than at any point in the last decade, government officials reported Thursday, pointing to a shrinking number of high school students who are using Elf Bar and other fruity, unauthorized e-cigarettes.

The latest survey numbers show the teen vaping rate fell to under 6% this year, down from 7.7% in 2023. More than 1.6 million students reported vaping in the previous month - about one-third the number in 2019, when underage vaping peaked with the use of discrete, high-nicotine e-cigarettes like Juul.

This year's decline was mainly driven by a half-million fewer high school students who reported using e-cigarettes in the past month, officials said. Vaping was unchanged among middle schoolers, but remains less common in that group, at 3.5% of students.

"This is a monumental public health win," FDA's tobacco director Brian King told reporters. "But we can't rest on our laurels. There's clearly more work to do to further reduce youth use."

King and other officials noted that the drop in vaping didn't coincide with a rise in other tobacco industry products, such as nicotine pouches.

Sales of small, flavored pouches like Zyn have surged among adults. The subject of viral videos on social media platforms, the pouches come in flavors like mint and cinnamon and slowly release nicotine when placed along the gumline. This year's U.S. survey shows 1.8% of teens are using them, largely unchanged from last year.

alone online. And students need outlets, they say, to speak about taboo topics without fear of being "canceled" on social media.

A 2023 UNESCO report says while digital technology can augment education - through new learning environments and expanded connections and collaboration - it comes at a cost to socialization and real-life learning. Negative effects on physical and mental health also play a role.

### Australia to hold bird flu biosecurity exercise

# Patient with no animal contact tests positive for bird flu in US

MISSOURI, Sept 8, (AP) - A hospitalized patient in Missouri was infected with bird flu despite having had no known contact with dairy cows or other animals associated with an ongoing outbreak, health officials said Friday.

This is the 14th person in the US sickened with bird flu since March, when the virus was detected in cows, after infecting wild birds and mammals worldwide. One other person was infected in 2022.

The risk to the general public remains low, US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention officials said in a statement. No unusual flu activity has been detected in the US, including in Missouri, officials said.

The latest case was confirmed after the person, an adult, was hospitalized on Aug. 22 with other medical conditions, officials with the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services said in a statement.

### Medication

The person tested positive for influenza A, and CDC officials later confirmed it to be bird flu. The person received antiviral medication and has since recovered and gone home, health officials said. It's not clear whether the hospitalization was caused by the bird flu infection or the person's existing health conditions, said Lisa Cox, a spokesperson for the Missouri health department.

Health officials didn't release the person's name, age or hometown. No close contacts of the person have been infected, CDC officials said. The case raises questions about how the person was exposed to the virus. All the previous US infections were among people who worked around cows and poultry.

Bird flu has been detected in nearly 200 dairy herds in 14 states, but not in Missouri, according to the Agriculture Department. Bird flu has also been found in commercial and backyard flocks and in wild birds. The person did not report drinking raw milk, which can contain live virus, Cox said.

### Also:

**CANBERRA:** Australia's ability to respond to an outbreak of a deadly strain of avian influenza will be tested on Monday in a major national exercise, the federal government said on Sunday.

Australia is the only continent that



A health worker attends to an mpox patient, at a treatment center in Muniagi, eastern Congo, Aug. 19, 2024. (AP)

## Congo's mpox vaccinations drive to 'begin' next month

KINSHASA, Congo, Sept 8, (AP) - A vaccination campaign against mpox in Congo will begin Oct. 2, authorities said Saturday, with workers focusing on the three most affected provinces first.

Adults in Equateur, South Kivu and Sankuru provinces will be vaccinated first, Cris Kacita Osako, coordinator of Congo's Monkeypox Response Committee, told The Associated Press.

Earlier this week, the first batch of mpox vaccines arrived in the capital of Congo, the center of the outbreak. The 100,000 doses of the JYNNEOS vaccine, manufactured by the Danish company Bavarian Nordic, were donated by the European Union through HERA, the bloc's agency for health emergencies. Another 100,000 were delivered on Saturday.

The 200,000 doses are just a fraction of the 3 million doses authorities have said are needed to end the mpox

outbreaks in Congo, the epicenter of the global health emergency. The European Union countries pledged to donate more than 500,000 others, but the timeline for their delivery remained unclear.

Since the start of 2024, there have been 5,549 confirmed mpox cases across the continent, with 643 associated deaths, representing a sharp escalation in both infections and fatalities compared to previous years. The cases in Congo constituted 91% of the total number. Most mpox infections in Congo and Burundi, the second most affected country, are in children under age 15.

On Friday, the Africa Center for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization launched a continent-wide response plan to the outbreak of mpox, three weeks after WHO declared outbreaks in 12 African countries a global emergency.

has not recorded a case of the H5N1 strain of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). According to the federal government, representatives from bi-

osecurity agencies, environmental authorities and industry groups will meet on Monday to test Australia's response to the H5N1 strain.

### Egg recalls in US

## Dengue deaths hit 100 in Bangladesh

DHAKA, Sept 8, (Agencies) - The death toll from dengue fever in Bangladesh so far this year is nearing the 100 mark, official figures showed. The Bangladeshi government Saturday confirmed another 3 deaths from dengue fever, bringing the total number of fatalities in the country since January to 95.

According to the Ministry of Health, the deaths included 12 in September, 27 in August, 12 in July and 8 in June.

From Sept. 1 to Sept. 7, 2,366 more dengue cases were recorded after 6,521 people were infected last month.

A total of 403 fresh dengue cases were reported in the 24 hours till 8:00 a.m. local time Saturday, the data showed. The total number of dengue fever cases reported since the start of January reached 15,207.

The June-September monsoon period is the season of dengue fever in Bangladesh, which is considered a high-risk country prone to the mosquito-borne disease.

**Polio vaccine:** Around 2.5 million children aged under 5 years are the focus of a national polio vaccination campaign launched Saturday in Kindia in eastern Guinea, according to official sources.

The campaign will cover 21 health districts across the country, providing additional doses of vaccines to combat the disease, which causes paralysis in young children, said Oumar Diouhe Bah, minister of health and public hygiene.

**Salmonella infections:** Wisconsin health officials initiated a recall of eggs following an outbreak of salmonella infections among 65 people in nine states that originated on a Wisconsin farm.

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services said in a statement Friday that among those infected by salmonella are 42 people in Wisconsin, where the eggs are believed to have been sold.

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## Georgia native continued to excel under the venue

## Hill wins again at Atlanta to sweep Xfinity Series season

HAMPTON, Sept 8, (AP): Austin Hill swept the Xfinity Series season at Atlanta Motor Speedway, his home track, as the Georgia native continued to excel under the venue reconfiguration.

Since moving to the drafting track configuration in 2022, Hill has won three of the five Xfinity races at Atlanta. The other two winners - Cup Series regulars Ty Gibbs and John Hunter Nemechek - were not in Sat-

urday's race.

"It had plenty of speed, we had to dig deep for that one," said Hill, who won in a Chevrolet for Richard Childress Racing. He did his post-race reconfiguration.

## MOTOR RACING

interview holding his young son, who was wearing a Georgia Bulldogs shirt.

"This is Barrett," Hill introduced his son as the youngster kept interrupting, "Dad, you won."

"And he's wild," Hill continued. It was the third win of the season for Hill, who opened with back-to-back Xfinity races at Daytona and Atlanta, but then went winless until Saturday. Hill led one time, for the final 21 laps of the race.

Parker Kligerman finished second, and AJ Allmendinger was

third in a podium sweep for Chevrolet.

Chandler Smith and Corey Heim were fourth and fifth for Toyota, and Smith was angry he wasn't more selfish and had expected help from Heim. Instead, as Hill and Smith raced for the late lead, Heim worked with Hill and pushed him past Smith to the win.

Lawless Alan in 13th was the highest-finishing Ford driver.

## Uganda selected to host ICC Challenge League B

KAMPALA, Sept 8, (Xinhua): Uganda has been selected to host the International Cricket Council (ICC) Challenge League B from November 4 to 16 in Kampala and Entebbe.

The Challenge League B is a qualification pathway for the 2027 ICC World Cup, which will be hosted by Zimbabwe, South Africa and Namibia.

Uganda Cricket Association (UCA) communications chief Denis Musali told Xinhua on Sunday that the team is glad to be selected again to host another international tournament.

The ICC Challenge League B will include Uganda, Tanzania, Italy, Bahrain, Singapore and China's Hong Kong.

## Springboks close in on Rugby Championship crown after 4th straight win over All Blacks

Pumas rally to win and hand Wallabies worst ever test defeat

CAPE TOWN, South Africa, Sept 8, (AP): South Africa regained the Freedom Cup and put a hand on the Rugby Championship trophy by beating New Zealand 18-12 for a rare fourth successive time.

The Springboks trailed 9-3 at halftime but scored the only two tries of the penalty-plagued game to remain unbeaten in the championship after four rounds. They can clinch their first championship since 2019 - before they won the last two Rugby World Cups - in two weeks against the Pumas in Argentina.

They last won the Freedom Cup, played for only between the teams, 15 years ago.

Behind 13-12, the All Blacks had two penalty kick attempts in the last quarter to regain the lead while Springboks fullback Willie le Roux was in the sin-bin. But Damian McKenzie hit the post in the 63rd minute and missed from just 35 meters in front in the 72nd.

## RUGBY

Moments later, All Blacks prop Tyrel Lomax obstructed Cheslin Kolbe and was yellow-carded. The Springboks put the kickable penalty into the corner, mauled from the lineout, and replacement hooker Malcolm Marx charged over the tryline in the left corner.

For the last five minutes, world champion South Africa pinned the defending champion All Blacks in their half then celebrated.

They'd ended the All Blacks reign over the Rugby Championship for the last four years, and kept their greatest foe tryless in this contest for the first time since 2007.

The game never reached the heights of the classic last weekend at Ellis Park, where South Africa won 31-27. There were too many errors on top of 27 penalties, the Boks conceding 14.

In the first half, New Zealand deserved its 9-3 lead, all the points from penalties. It had the two best players on the field in hooker Codie Taylor, despite missing 10 minutes for a head injury check, and flanker Wallace Sititi, making his first test start on his 22nd birthday.

The pair continued to lead the All Blacks after the break. But the Springboks finally got a foothold in the New Zealand 22 and made it count in the 45th minute after a third straight lineout maul. Rucks thinned the New Zealand defense and Kolisi - playing with a broken nose - plunged over.

Handre Pollard converted to put South Africa in front for the first time at 10-9, and was replaced by Sacha Feinberg-Mngomezulu, who immediately landed a penalty for 13-9.

McKenzie's fourth penalty from five attempts cut the gap to one as they entered the final quarter.

The All Blacks, slower to clear their bench than South Africa, were



Argentina's Los Pumas celebrate defeating Australia in a rugby championship test match in Santa Fe, Argentina. (AP)

on a roll that English referee Matt Carley rewarded with penalties. But McKenzie missed them and, in between, a penalty in Jordie Barrett's range was turned down.

The visitors never got chances at points again.

The yellow card for Lomax, the All Blacks' co-leading tackler, was the fourth of the match, split evenly between the teams, and the most decisive. In all four losses to South Africa, the All Blacks' indiscipline - two red cards and four yellows - has been key.

South Africa used the Lomax penalty to set up a lineout maul, and Marx's 20th test try extended his record for a Springboks forward.

Up 18-12 with five minutes to go and a man advantage, the Springboks confidently finished off their fourth straight win over New Zealand, a string they hadn't achieve since 1949.

In Santa Fe, Argentina handed Australia its worst ever test defeat in a stunning turnaround from 20-3 down after 30 minutes to win 67-27 in the Rugby Championship.

The 67 was the most points the Wallabies have ever conceded, and the 40-point margin was their second biggest. Only a 53-8 loss to South Africa in 2008 was heavier.

The Pumas scored nine tries, seven in a second half in which they scored 50 points. At one stage, the Pumas scored 38 consecutive points as Australia wilted in searing heat.

Australia opened a 17-point lead with first half tries to back-rower Carlo Tizzano and fullback Andrew

Kellaway. Flyhalf Ben Donaldson, who kicked the last-minute penalty which gave Australia a 20-19 win last weekend in La Plata, had a creative role in both tries.

But Argentina slashed the margin to three points by halftime with tries to winger Mateo Carreras and captain Julian Montoya in his 100th test.

They then opened a 31-20 lead with tries from five-meter scrums to back-rowers Juan Martin Gonzalez and Pablo Matera in the first 17 minutes of the second half.

The Pumas reveled in the hectic, high-tempo nature of a match played in hot, dry conditions which contrasted with the gale and driving

rain last weekend.

They constantly ran the ball at Australia, keeping it alive with slick handling between backs and forwards. From the 31st minute when it scored its first try, Argentina dominated the match and Australia simply couldn't keep up.

"We played some really good footy in the first half but in the second Argentina got a roll on and we couldn't stop them," Wallabies captain Harry Wilson said.

After an exchange of penalties in the first five minutes, Alborno first for Argentina, then Donaldson, Tizzano scored in the 14th.

Donaldson carried the ball back from a deep kick and made a tell-

ing line break that eventually finished with Tizzano crawling over the tryline. Donaldson also played a prominent role in the next try to Kellaway. Donaldson linked with winger Max Jorgensen who put Kellaway in.

Argentina trailed 20-3 but roared back with tries to winger Carreras and Montoya. Fullback Juan Cruz Mallia set up the first by keeping a deep Donaldson in play on the right touchline. With the open field ahead of him, Mallia linked with Matera and Carreras finished in the 31st.

Argentina went close to scoring through Marcos Kremer from a tapped penalty in the 17th and tried the same tactic in the 37th for success through Montoya.

Argentina took the lead in the 48th with Gonzalez's try after a five-meter scrum, and Matera also scored from a five-meter scrum in the 57th. The Pumas first went wide from the set-piece to center Lucio Cinti and Matera supported to score.

Alborno, perfect off the tee, hit a second penalty for 34-20. Then a turnover by Eduardo Bello saw Oviedo break away and score a try.

Argentina scored 38 straight points when the Wallabies finally broke the sequence with a solo try to scrumhalf Tate McDermott in the 69th through four Pumas.

There was plenty of time for the Pumas to a late double for fullback Juan Cruz Mallia, Oviedo to notch his second try, and Cinti to cap the match with Argentina's ninth try.



New Zealand's Scott Barrett, left, tackles South Africa's Ox Nche during a rugby championship test match between South Africa and New Zealand at Cape Town Stadium, South Africa. (AP)

## England allrounder Moeen retires from international cricket

ENGLAND, Sept 8, (AP): England allrounder Moeen Ali has announced his retirement from international cricket, continuing the changing of the guard in the English game that has also seen fast-bowling greats Stuart Broad and Jimmy Anderson quit the sport over the past year.

The 37-year-old Ali, who was overlooked for the upcoming white-ball series against Australia, said in an interview with British newspaper the Daily Mail that it was "time for the next generation."

"It felt the time was right. I've done my part," said Ali, who played 68 tests, 138 one-day internationals and 92 Twenty20 internationals for England - winning the World Cup in both of the shorter forms.

Ali, who was a role model for British Muslims, said he still feels like he can compete at the highest level, but was "trying to be realistic" about his international future.

"I could hold on and try to play for England again, but I know in reality I won't," Ali told the Mail.

## CRICKET

Matthew Mott was fired as head coach of England's limited-overs teams last month after disappointing title defenses in the ODI and T20 World Cups and the appetite for change continued with the removal from the squad of Ali and Jonny Bairstow - two senior players sharing over 400 caps.

Broad retired from cricket after last year's Ashes and Anderson followed suit in July during the test series against the West Indies.

The likes of spinner Shoaib Bashir and 20-year-old fast-bowler Josh Hull have been brought into the fold to help usher in a new era for English cricket across all formats.

Ali had been an influential vice-captain to Jos Buttler in the white-ball teams in recent years and was brought out of test retirement for the 2023 Ashes as a favor to captain Ben Stokes with England in need of a spinner.

Throughout it all, Ali was an extremely popular member of the England dressing room - with his cover drive his most memorable shot.

"I was a free-spirit kind of player and played on instinct a lot of the time," he told Sky Sports.

Ali is one of only five men to take 200 wickets and score 3,000 runs in tests for England, the others being Stokes, Ian Botham, Andrew Flintoff and Broad. He brought up both landmarks in successive tests in the 2023 Ashes series.

Ali said he was "especially" proud of taking 204 test wickets as well as getting five test centuries and a hat-trick against South Africa.

"He would do anything the team required, probably to the hindrance of his career - he batted from No. 1 to No. 8," former England captain Alastair Cook said. "He was one of the great teammates."

Broad described Ali as "one of my favorite ever teammates", adding on Sky Sports: "He was someone who could make the whole changing room feel relaxed."

Ali said he wants to continue playing franchise cricket but ultimately hopes to move into coaching.

"Coaching is something I want to do - I want to be one of the best," he said. "I can learn a lot from (England coach Brendon McCullum)."

England hosts Australia in an eight-game white-ball tour, beginning on Wednesday with a T20 in Southampton.

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## Canada beats US at home for first time since 1957

KANSAS CITY, Sept 8, (AP): Hoping to show its first-round exit at the Copa America was a fluke, the United States instead displayed an alarming lack of intensity and an abundant defensive disarray that resulted in its first home loss to Canada since 1957.

Jacob Shaffelburg and Jonathan David scored off defensive misplays, and Canada dominated 2-1 in a friendly on Saturday for just its second win over the Americans in 27 matches over 99 years on U.S. soil.

While Jesse Marsch, Canada's American-born coach, glowed following a win over a team that bypassed him for its coaching opening last year, interim U.S. coach Mike Varas rebuked himself and his players.

"The mentality is on the players. Sorry, they know it," Varas said. "That mentality to fight and to run and to sacrifice, I can't do that for them. I can't do that for them. That's on them." Coming off defeats to Panama and Uruguay at the Copa America, the U.S. has lost three straight games for the first time since 2015 against Brazil, Mexico and

Costa Rica. A defeat to New Zealand on Tuesday at Cincinnati would result in the Americans' first four-game losing streak since 2007.

"All over the park today, our mentality just wasn't quite there," defender Chris Richards said.

Varas moved up from assistant after Gregg Berhalter was fired following the Copa America flop. The U.S. Soccer Federation has been trying to reach an agreement for Mauricio Pochettino to become the team's 10th coach in 14 years but has not commented on the talks, which began in mid-August.

"You just never know how it's going to translate from training to the game after three training sessions, and I asked a lot of them," Varas said. "The first goal, that's on me, both the goals, because when you don't have a lot of time to work and you want to play a certain way, it creates confusion." Before a crowd of 10,523 in a just over half-full Children's Mercy Park, Shaffelburg put Canada ahead in the 17th minute after Tim Ream's pass bounced away from Johnny Cardoso. David

added his 29th international goal in the 58th when Ream turned over the ball in front of his own goal.

Luca de la Torre scored his first international goal for the U.S. in the 66th minute off a pass from Aidan Morris, who entered with de la Torre four minutes earlier.

Canada goalkeeper Maxime Crépeau used his right hand to bat away Ricardo Pepi's open shot in the 86th.

"The translation of the ideas weren't clear enough because you shouldn't be static and you shouldn't pass the ball just to pass the ball," Varas said.

Canada hired Marsch as coach in May and finished fourth in the Copa America. He had interviewed in 2023 with the USSF before Berhalter was rehired that June.

"I'm not bitter," Marsch said. "Most people, if they ask me a question, I answer it. That's how I operate in the media." Canada outshot the U.S. 17-8, including 11-1 in the first half, and had a 31-12 margin in tackles, the worst differential for the Americans since a 2020 exhibition at Wales.

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## SPORTS



A Kuwaiti goes for a goal.

## Kuwait seeks a 'comeback'

By Khaled Al-Enezi  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

AMMAN, Sept 8: Kuwait's junior handball team will play its second match today in Group Two of the main round at the 10th Asian Championship, currently taking place in Amman, Jordan. The tournament serves as a qualifier for the 2025 World Junior Cup in Slovenia.

The Kuwaiti team will face Qatar at 4:30 pm. In the same group, Bahrain will play Japan. Meanwhile, in the consolation rounds, the UAE will face Chinese Taipei, and India will take on China.

## HANDBALL

In the first match of the main round, Kuwait suffered its first defeat of the tournament, narrowly losing to Bahrain 33-35, while Japan dominated Qatar with a 39-20 victory.

The tournament teams will have a rest day on Tuesday, with the third and final round of the main stage scheduled for Wednesday, where Kuwait will face Japan.

Under the tournament rules, the top five teams qualify for the 2025 World Cup. The semi-finalists qualify directly, while the third-placed teams from each group will compete in a play-off, with the winner advancing to the World Cup alongside the four semi-finalists.

# El Idrissi 'smashes' women's marathon world record on last day of Para Games

Netherlands defends wheelchair basketball gold

PARIS, Sept 8, (AP): Morocco's Fatima Ezzahra El Idrissi has smashed the world record in the women's marathon for runners with visual impairments on the last day of the Paralympic Games.

El Idrissi finished in 2 hours, 48 minutes and 36 seconds on Sunday, beating the previous record from Japan's Misato Michishita in Hofu City in December 2020 by nearly 6 minutes.

"I wasn't running for a time, only for a medal," the 29-year-old Moroccan said. "I wasn't aiming to get the world record, just to get the gold, and now I have both."

Compatriot Meryem En-Nourhi was just over 9 minutes behind, followed by Michishita, almost 15 minutes behind the winner.

Elena Congost thought she'd won bronze, but the Spanish runner was later disqualified for releasing the tether to her guide, Mia Carol Bru-

## PARALYMPICS

guera, before the finish.

Michishita only found out she was upgraded to bronze after doping control. "I just couldn't believe it," said the Japanese runner, who said she got injured after winning the last edition in Tokyo and wasn't certain she'd be able to race in Paris.

Tunisia's Wajdi Boukhili won the men's T12 marathon.

The 25-year-old Boukhili finished in 2 hours, 22 minutes and 5 seconds, ahead of Spain's Alberto Suarez Laso and Paralympic record holder El Amin Chentouf of Morocco. All three ran season-best times.

Swiss wheelchair racers Catherine Debrunner and Marcel Hug won the women's and men's marathons for the T53/54 categories.

Debrunner, the world record holder, finished in 1:41:50, more than



Morocco's Fatima Ezzahra El Idrissi wins the women's marathon T12 at the 2024 Paralympics in Paris, France. (AP)

four minutes ahead of Australia's Madison de Rozario and the United States' Susannah Scaroni, who took silver and bronze, respectively.

Tatyana McFadden, the most decorated American wheelchair racer, was seventh, just over 12 minutes behind Debrunner. The 35-year-old leaves Paris with a silver medal from the 100 and bronze from the 4x100 universal relay.

Hug won the men's race in 1:27:39, ahead of China's Jin Hua

and Tomoki Suzuki of Japan.

The Netherlands' women's team defended its gold medal in wheelchair basketball with a 63-49 win over the United States in the final.

Bo Kramer contributed 23 points and Mariska Beijer 22 as the Dutch made their experience count before an appreciative crowd at a packed Bercy Arena.

Trailing 48-37 going into the fourth quarter, the American players clasped hands as they listened to

coach Christina Schwab's team-talk. Ixhelt Gonzalez lifted their hopes with 2 points on a break, but Kramer responded with two frees and then a 3-point shot to underline Dutch control. Rose Hollerman scored 17 for the U.S.

Canada defeated China 65-43 earlier for the bronze medal.

Defending champion Folashade Oluwafemiayo of Nigeria broke her own world record in women's para powerlifting by bench-pressing 167

kilograms above her chest for another gold in the final for women over 86kg.

The 39-year-old Oluwafemiayo beat her previous best mark from Tbilisi in Georgia in June by one kilo by lifting 166 in round three. Oluwafemiayo then delighted spectators at La Chapelle Arena by adding another kilo to the record in a powerlift.

Iran's Ahmad Aminzadeh won the men's final for athletes over 107kg with a lift of 263.

## Germany's revival goes on

## New England era off to winning start

DUBLIN, Sept 8, (AP): After the pain of the European Championship, England kicked off a new era by beating Ireland 2-0 in Dublin.

Some 55 days since the defeat to Spain in the Euros final, England began the UEFA Nations League under a new regime following the departure of Gareth Southgate. Interim coach Lee Carsley made an impressive start at Aviva Stadium after first half goals from Declan Rice and Jack Grealish.

The identity of those scorers would have been especially painful for the Irish fans who jeered Rice and Grealish for their decision to switch to England after representing Ireland.

Carsley, who has stepped up from coaching England's European champion under-21s, also represented Ireland as a player.

"We've shown that we've got real talent. We can be really pleased with

## SOCCER

the clean sheet as well," he said.

Rice, who made three appearances for Ireland, fired England ahead in the 11th minute. Grealish represented Ireland at youth level up to the U21s and doubled the lead at the end of a slick passing move.

Grealish was a surprise omission from Southgate's Euro 2024 squad.

New Ireland coach Heimir Hallgrimsson hoped to cause another upset against England after he was co-manager for Iceland's victory over the Three Lions at Euro 2016. But even though England failed to build on its first half superiority after the break, it was a routine win for Carsley's first game in charge.

England is behind leader Greece on goal difference in Group B2. Greece beat Finland 3-0 with two goals from Fotis Ioannidis.

Germany's revival goes on. After some positive performances at the Euros - following its group stage elimination from the 2022 World Cup - the Germans kept that feelgood feeling going by routing Hungary 5-0 in Duesseldorf.

Niclas Fullkrug struck in the first half before Germany went on a scoring spree after the break with goals from Jamal Musiala, Florian Wirtz, Aleksandar Pavlovic and Kai Havertz. Coach Julian Nagelsmann is aiming to lead Germany to the knockout stage of the Nations League for the first time.

This is a new-look Germany following the retirements of Toni Kroos and Ilkay Gundogan after the Euros.

Germany tops Group A3 ahead of

Netherlands on goal difference.

Joshua Zirkzee scored in his first start for Netherlands in a 5-2 win against Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The striker didn't have to wait long for his goal at Philips Stadion in Eindhoven, opening the scoring in the 13th.

Ermedin Demirović evened the score but Tijjani Reijnders and Cody Gakpo put the Netherlands

3-1 up and on course for victory.

Veteran striker Edin Dzeko pulled another back for Bosnia, but two late goals sealed the Dutch win. Wout Weghorst scored in the 88th and Xavi Simons added on in the second minute of injury time.

Netherlands trails Germany on goal difference in Group A3.

Georgia, which won admirers for its performances at the Euros, rout-

ed Czechia 4-1 in Group B1, with star Khvicha Kvaratskhelia scoring first from the penalty spot.

Also in the group, Albania came from behind to beat Ukraine 2-1.

Armenia beat Latvia 4-1 in Group C4, while there was a penalty for each team as the Faroe Islands and North Macedonia drew 1-1. In Group D2, Moldova beat Malta 2-0.



Ireland's Will Smallbone, left, vies for the ball with England's Robbie Mainoo during the UEFA Nations League soccer match between Ireland and England at the Aviva stadium in Dublin, Ireland. (AP)

## Benteke, Pirani lead DC United to victory over Fire

## Rusnák scores hat trick as Seattle routs Crew 4-0

COLUMBUS, Ohio, Sept 8, (AP): Albert Rusnák scored three goals, Jordan Morris had a goal and an assist and the Seattle Sounders rolled to a 4-0 victory over Columbus on Saturday night, taking advantage of a first-half red card on goalkeeper Abraham Romero in his league debut.

Neither team scored until Rusnák found the net off a free kick from outside the box in the sixth minute of stoppage time to put the Sounders (12-9-7) up 1-0 at halftime. The free kick came after Romero was tagged with a red card for a foul on Morris, forcing the Crew (14-5-7) to play a man down in the second half.

Starter Patrick Schulte was away on international duty, leaving the Crew without a backup and forcing them to use midfielder Sean Zawadzki in goal in the second half.

Morris took advantage of the mismatch to score his 11th goal of the season, giving the Sounders a 2-0 lead in

the 60th minute. Paul Rothrock earned his second assist of the campaign.

Rusnák netted his second goal when he scored in the 67th minute for 3-0 advantage. Joshua Atencio had his first assist of the season on the goal. Rusnák took a pass from Morris and scored three minutes later to complete the scoring. It was the eighth goal this season for Rusnák and the second assist for Morris.

Andrew Thomas made his fourth career start for the Sounders, saving one shot to notch his second clean sheet. Thomas blanked Austin FC in a scoreless draw in the second match of the season, filling in for starter Stefan Frei.

Romero finished with one save. Zawadzki saved two shots.

Christian Benteke and Gabriel Pirani scored three minutes apart in the first half to spark D.C. United to a 2-1 victory over the Chicago Fire.

Benteke gave DC United (8-12-8) the lead in the 26th minute with his

league-leading 18th goal of the season. Pirani found the net for the fourth time this season for a two-goal lead. Mateusz Klich had assists on both goals, giving him 10 this season. Pedro Santos collected his fourth assist on Benteke's goal.

Chicago pulled within a goal in the 54th minute when defender Andrew Gutman found the net for the first time this season - unassisted.

Hugo Lloris saved four shots for Los Angeles FC and Steve Clark had two saves for the Houston Dynamo in a scoreless draw on Saturday night.

Lloris notched his 10th clean sheet of the season, tying him with Patrick Schulte of the Columbus Crew for the league lead.

Clark's shutout was his sixth. L.A.F.C. (14-6-6) was missing high-scoring Denis Bouanga, Mateusz Bogusz, Omar Campos, Maxime Chanut, David Martínez and Cristian Olivera because of international duties.



The Kuwaiti team celebrates on the podium.

## Kuwait secures bronze

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

Kuwait's basketball team secured the bronze medal at the Gulf Basketball Championship, concluding their campaign with an 80-77 victory over Saudi Arabia in the third-place match held in Manama, Bahrain.

In a historic win, the Bahraini team claimed its first-ever championship title by defeating Qatar 73-68 in the final.

The tournament, which ran from September 2 to 8, was hosted in Bahrain under the patronage of Sheikh Khalid bin Hamad, First Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports.

## Ogier crashes on last stage

## Belgian crew wins Acropolis Rally

ATHENS, Greece, Sept 8, (AP): The Belgian crew of Thierry Neuville and Martijn Wydaeghe won the Acropolis Greece Sunday, leading a sweep of the first three places by the Hyundai Shell Mobil World Rally Team.

Dani Sordo and Candido Carrera of Spain were the runners-up, 1 minute, 36.8 seconds behind the winners. Estonians Ott Tanak and Martin Jarveoja were third, 2 minutes, 57.3 seconds behind.

France's Sebastien Ogier and Vincent Landais were in second place when calamity struck

## RALLYING

on the 15th and final stage Sunday, which was also designated a Power Stage with extra points awarded. Their car overturned, rolled and they finished in 51st place, 22 minutes 59.4 seconds behind the stage winners, compatriots Adrien Fournaux and Alexandre Coria, who ran the stage in 10:43.8.

Ogier crashed shortly after the stage was interrupted to let an ambulance pass to pick up a spectator who had suffered a medical emergency.

Ogier finished 16th overall, 23 minutes 44.5 seconds behind Neu-

ville. "I didn't have the information on Ogier's crash at all, and when I saw the car I still wasn't sure it was him... I understood from that point on that I just had to bring home the car and get through," said Neuville, who dealt with his own mishap on Friday morning, the first full day of the rally, when his engine misfired.

The Acropolis Rally is known for its rough, treacherous terrain but this year in particular, it appeared that survival was the most important task for the top drivers. Sordo and Tanak both suffered tire damage Saturday, allowing their Hyundai teammate, Neuville, to surge ahead of them.

The results not only dropped Ogier further behind Neuville in the overall standings of the WRC with three races remaining, but he was also overtaken for second place by Tanak - Neuville has 192 points, Tanak 158 and Ogier 154. If he holds on to the lead, it will be Neuville's first championship while Ogier has won 8, all from 2013 to 2021.

Next up is the championship's 11th round, Rally Chile, from Sept. 26-29. Races in Central Europe and Japan in October and November conclude the season.



Kuwaiti players preparing for the upcoming World Cup qualifying match against Iraq.

# Sports

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Key players rejoin the squad

## Kuwait ready for high-stakes World Cup qualifier against Iraq

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8: Kuwait held a morning training session at the health institute within their residence at the Radisson Blu Hotel, under the direction of Argentine head coach Juan Pizzi. The team later conducted an evening training session at Thamer Stadium in preparation for its crucial match against Iraq at Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium, as part of the second round of Group Two in the 2026 World Cup qualifiers for the U.S., Canada, and Mexico.

Key players Mohammed Daham, Hassan Hamdan, and Mashari Ghanem rejoined the squad for training after missing the first-round match against Jordan due to travel issues.

During the morning session, Pizzi focused on preparing all players for the upcoming Iraq clash and improving the physical fitness of several players. The evening training at Thamer Stadium saw full participation, with the national team's medical chief, Dr. Abdul Majeed Al-Bannai, confirming that all players are fit and ready for the match, with no significant injuries reported.

Meanwhile, Iraq's head coach, Jesus Casas, granted player Ali Jassim a rest following a minor injury he sustained in the opening match against Oman. Casas opted for Jassim to continue his recovery exercises while the rest of the squad trained

as usual in preparation for the game against Kuwait.

The Iraqi delegation is set to arrive today and will conduct a single training session at Jaber Stadium. Coach Casas emphasized the importance of staying focused, acknowledging the difficulty of the match against Kuwait and the need to secure a win to maintain momentum in the qualifiers.

### SOCCER

In other news, Iraqi players rallied to support their teammate Ayman Hussein, who was hospitalized in Kuwait following an injury. The team stayed in contact with him and his family, sending well wishes for a speedy recovery.

FIFA has appointed a Japanese refereeing team to officiate the match, led by Kimura Hiroyuki as the main referee, with assistants Asada Takeshi, Takebi Yusuke, and fourth official Kasahara Hiroki. Additional officials include Qatari Jassim Mohammed Al-Hayel as referee observer, Myanmar's Win Si Thu as match observer, and Japan's Mitsutoshi Ota overseeing VAR technology.

A pre-match press conference will be held this evening at Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium's media center, featuring a coach and player from each team to discuss their preparations. The press conference will be preceded by a technical meeting.

## Sheikh Al-Badr donates 500 'free' tickets to supporters

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 8: Sheikh Khaled Al-Badr Al-Sabah, President of the Kuwaiti and Asian Aquatics Federations, has generously allocated 500 free tickets for loyal Kuwaiti fans to support the national team in its upcoming match against Iraq at Jaber International Stadium. Of these tickets, 100 have been designated for individuals with special needs and distributed to the Tomooh Club for Mental Disabilities, while the remaining tickets will be managed by the Kuwait Football Association.

Salah Al-Qanaei, Secretary-General of the Football Association, noted the strong support from the sports community for the national team. This enthusiasm reflects the unity and solidarity among Kuwait's citizens. The initiative by Sheikh Khaled Al-Badr Al-Sabah, who donated these 500 tickets, is a testament to the widespread encouragement and support for the team.

Rehab Brosly, National Director



Sheikh Khaled Al-Badr

of the Kuwait Special Olympics and founder of the Tomooh Club, commented on Sheikh Khaled Al-Badr Al-Sabah's initiative. She highlighted the significant impact of providing free tickets to the members of the Tomooh Club for Intellectual Disabilities, expressing hope that the Kuwaiti national team will secure a victory and bring joy to the devoted Kuwaiti fans.

Meanwhile, The Football Association has issued a warning against purchasing tickets from unofficial sources for tomorrow's match between Kuwait and Iraq.

In a statement, the association addressed reports circulating on social media about unidentified individuals illegally selling tickets for the match. These sellers are attempting to exploit the strong turnout of loyal Kuwaiti fans eager to support their national team. The association emphasized that tickets should only be purchased through the official, approved platform, which is the only authorized means for entry into the stadium.

The statement also urged fans to avoid dealing with unauthorized sellers or websites, warning that those who buy from these sources risk being denied entry to the stadium, losing money, and falling victim to fraud. The association further stated that it would take appropriate legal action against such illegal activities.

Finally, the association clarified that it holds no financial, administrative, or legal responsibility for any transactions made with these unauthorized groups or websites. Fans were advised to follow the correct procedures and purchase tickets through the official channels in accordance with the regulations set by the Federation.

## Sheikh Nasser retains World Endurance Championship title

MONPAZIER, France, Sept 8: Sheikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Representative of the King of Bahrain for Humanitarian Work and Youth Affairs and leader of the Royal Bahraini Endurance Team, claimed victory at the World Endurance Championship. The championship took place in Monpazier, France, where Sheikh Nasser covered a distance of 160 kilometers in a time of 8 hours, 32 minutes, and 00 seconds.

This achievement marks Sheikh Nasser's consecutive World Championship title, having previously won the title in Boudheib, UAE, in 2023.

The UAE team secured the runner-up position, with Saeed

Ahmed Jaber Al Harbi finishing second in 8 hours, 32 minutes, and 51 seconds.

Sheikh Salman bin Hamad Al



Sheikh Nasser celebrating his victory.

Khalifa, Crown Prince of Bahrain, attended the championship and highlighted Bahrain's significant progress in endurance racing. He

commended the sport's advancement and Bahrain's growing prominence on the global stage.

Reflecting on his victory, Sheikh Nasser bin Hamad shared, "From the start of my preparations, my sole goal was to win the world title. I devised a strategic plan despite knowing the fierce competition from global riders." He acknowledged the challenging conditions, including heavy rains and tough stages, but credited his experience and strategic planning for securing the title and reaffirming Bahrain's standing in endurance sports.

The World Endurance Championship featured 118 riders from 39 countries, competing over 160 kilometers in six stages.

NEW YORK, Sept 8, (AP): Aryna Sabalenka left the U.S. Open in tears 12 months ago as the runner-up. She exited in the semifinals each of the two years before that, other losses that were difficult to digest. On Saturday, Sabalenka was in a joking mood after winning her first championship at Flushing Meadows and the third Grand Slam title of her career.

### TENNIS

Sabalenka, the No. 2 seed, got past No. 6 Jessica Pegula 7-5, 7-5 in a rollicking final under a closed retractable roof at Arthur Ashe Stadium, displaying her typical power while sprinkling in some variation to add this triumph to those at the Australian Open each of the past two seasons.

Sitting near the U.S. Open trophy at her news conference, Sabalenka alluded to "a lot of challenges" away from the court. There was the death of her father in 2019. The death of an ex-boyfriend this March. A right shoulder problem that forced her to withdraw from Wimbledon right before it began this July.

That includes semifinal defeats in 2021 against Leylah Fernandez and in 2022 against No. 1 Iga Swiatek. Most poignant, of course, was last

Belarusian clinches third Grand Slam title

Singh elected as the new President

## Asian Olympic Council thanks HH Amir for support

NEW DELHI, Sept 8: The Asian Olympic Council extended its gratitude to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for his significant support of the "Asian Olympic Council and for hosting its headquarters in Kuwait. The Council highlighted how this support contributes to the advancement of sports across the Asian continent.

This acknowledgment took place during a meeting held in New Delhi, India, where the Executive Council members for the 2024-2028 term were elected.

Kuwait is set to host the "Asian Congress" meeting in 2025.

During the 44th General Assembly, Raja Randhir Singh from India was elected as the new President of the Council. Singh, an Olympic athlete who has competed in five Olympic Games, was elected unopposed, demonstrating the strong support he has from the member states.

These elections underscore Kuwait's growing influence in Asian sports and its commitment to enhanc-

ing cooperation among member states. The newly elected Executive Board includes: **Chairman:** Raja Randhir Singh (India) **Vice-Chairs:** Timothy Fok (Hong Kong, China) for East Asia; Dr. Norza Zakaria (Malaysia) for Southeast Asia;



The Asian Olympic Council meeting in progress.

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HRH Prince Jigyel Ugyen Wangchuck (Bhutan) for West Asia; Dr. Thani Al Kuwari (Qatar) for Central Asia.

**Board Members:** Mikako Kotani (Japan) for East Asia; Dr. Supeter Samahito (Thailand) for Southeast Asia; Olga Rybakova (Kazakhstan) for Central Asia

After extending her winning streak to 12 matches, Sabalenka thanked the fans for cheering for her - which probably (wink, wink) was unrelated to her kidding offer of "Drinks on me" after an earlier victory.

There were light moments Saturday evening, too. After her coach, Anton Dubrov, was awarded a smaller version of the champion's trophy for his role in her success, Sabalenka teased that its size "actually looks sad" compared to the real thing. She also laughed after pointing out that if both guzzle booze out of their respective trophies, "I'll have a hangover tomorrow, more than you're going to have."

Pegula, a native New Yorker whose parents own the NFL's Buffalo Bills and NHL's Buffalo Sabres, was participating in a major final for the first time at age 30. She's won 15 of her past 17 matches over the past month; both losses came against Sabalenka.

To Pegula's credit, she did not fold after Sabalenka reeled off five consecutive games to grab the opening set and move ahead 3-0 in the second. In the next game, Pegula dropped a point and showed her frustration by whacking a ball off the video wall behind the baseline, dislodging a little square panel.

Maybe that released some tension, because suddenly Pegula asserted herself, using her own five-game run to go up 5-3. But when she served at

5-4 with a chance to force a third set, Pegula let Sabalenka break.

"She played some big tennis in big moments," Pegula said.

Sabalenka is as demonstrative as anyone, her body language usually a spot-on barometer of whether things are going well. But as she sputtered at the start Saturday, it was tough to read what she was thinking against Pegula, who eliminated Swiatek in the quarterfinals.

Even while down an early break, Sabalenka reacted to mistakes by calmly turning her back and breathing deeply as star athletes from other sports such as Stephen Curry, Lewis Hamilton and Noah Lyles looked on from the stands. Once Sabalenka calibrated her booming strokes - her forehands were the fastest of the past two weeks, speedier than any woman's or man's - it was apparent the outcome would be determined by her.

By the close, the statistics made that obvious: Sabalenka finished with far more winners than Pegula, 40-17, and also more unforced errors, 34-22. Sabalenka controlled most exchanges, but also sprinkled in the occasional drop shot or deft volley.

There was one moment of clear anger from Sabalenka. It came at 5-all in the first set, when she double-faulted to face a break point, then leaned forward and cracked her racket against the court four times.