



Soccer  
Pages 14-16



## Opinion

### Expedite propagation of HH the Amir's flame

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

PRIOR to May 2023, Kuwait was engulfed in chaos and disarray due to practices that had persisted for three decades since liberation.

The reason for this chaos was the fact that instead of focusing on restoring the psychosocial well-being of the people, which was crucial in the aftermath of the invasion, the authorities focused on reconstruction efforts. These efforts primarily benefited influential individuals and business owners. They deliberately neglected psychosocial reforms and the development of a true national identity, which are of utmost importance.

This explains why we witnessed a profusion of corruption and serious crimes against the nation in a matter of years. It seemed as if the country had turned into a marketplace where stolen goods and insults to state symbols were openly displayed.

We also witnessed conspiracies against the leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council member states, and deceit from the platforms of their people, who had sacrificed much to support Kuwaiti rights.

Instead of recognizing this support, some elites, including lawmakers and self-proclaimed "intellectuals," criticized the solidarity and unity of the Gulf.

This situation made Kuwait appear weak and, at times, even as if it were an outcast within the Gulf region at one stage.

Regarding internal matters, the situation indicated that political, tribal, and sectarian groups were attempting to undermine internal stability and spread radical tribal, sectarian, and partisan affiliations through a multifaceted plan to destroy the state.

Parliamentary, tribal, and sectarian affiliations led to some police stations becoming tribal or sectarian strongholds. Consequently, criminals or wrongdoers emerging from these areas were often treated as heroes. The situation had escalated to such an extent that there were even attempts to undermine the judiciary.

This is why, when we previously stated and reiterate today that His Highness Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad, the Amir of the moment, undertook a courageous rescue operation, we were not exaggerating. The state had reached a point where a tribal and sectarian "de facto authority" seemed to be imposed.

This situation was exacerbated when influential and wealthy individuals sought the support of parliamentary blocs, some clerics, and even members of the ruling family, breaking the social contract between the people and the honorable Sabah family.

Continued on Page 5

Email: ahmed@aljarallah.com

Follow me on:



ahmedaljarallah@gmail.com

### KFA top officials quit in football match row

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14: The acting Chairman of the Kuwait Football Association's Board of Directors Haif Al-Daihani, along with board members Abdulaziz Al-Samhan and Mansour Pasha, have resigned from their positions. Vice President Ahmed Oqla has postponed his resignation until tomorrow.

These resignations follow the controversy surrounding the match between Kuwait and Iraq last Tuesday during the Asian qualifiers for the 2026 World Cup.

The game was marred by organizational errors that distorted its significance and nearly led to disasters by preventing people from bringing drinking water into Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium.

The Kuwait Football Association (KFA) issued a statement last Thursday to announce that it had initiated an investigation into the organizational errors and was holding meetings to address the issue. As a result, the Association's Secretary-General Salah Al-Qena'ei, and the Director of the Media and Public Relations Department Dr. Mohammad Bou Abbas have been suspended and referred for further inquiry.

It is noteworthy that the Board of Directors also includes Fatima Hayat and Jamal Al-Otaibi. The former President Abdullah Al-Shaheen resigned from his position in July.

Continued on Page 5



KUNA photo  
Minister of State for Youth and President of the 26th Arabian Gulf Cup organizing committee Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi holds talks with President of the Arabian Gulf Cup Football Association (AGCFF) Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani. Kuwait expressed readiness to host the Gulf Cup starting December 21 till January 3.

### Fitch affirms Kuwait credit rating at 'AA-' with stable outlook: CBK

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14, (KUNA): The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) welcomed the report released on Friday by Fitch Ratings - one of the big three credit rating agencies, which affirmed Kuwait's long-term foreign-currency issuer default rating (LTFC IDR) at "AA-" with a stable outlook.

A CBK statement, received by KUNA, carried the following highlights from Fitch report:

"Kuwait's heavy dependence on oil, its generous welfare system and large public sector that could be challenging to sustain in the long term.

"Kuwait's external balance sheets remain the strongest of all Fitch-rated sovereigns," the CBK statement quoted the report as saying.

Fitch forecasts Kuwait's sovereign net foreign assets will rise to 538 percent of GDP in 2024 and average 553 percent in 2025-2026, more than 10x

the AA median, according to the statement.

On the implementation of the structural reform plans, Fitch noted that the initial reform plans focus on diversifying oil revenue, improving government efficiency, rationalizing government spending and capping medium-term expenditure at KD 24.5 billion (48 percent of projected GDP the fiscal year ending March 2025; (FY24)), which is slightly below FY23's.

Regarding the draft liquidity/debt law, the Fitch report noted that the enactment of this law would enable Kuwait to raise new debt, following the expiry of the previous debt law in 2017.

Fitch expects the liquidity law will be passed in the coming fiscal year (FY2025-2026), "although delays are possible."

Continued on Page 5

### Sheikh Jaber Mubarak dies at 82

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14: Former prime minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, born in 1942, has passed away. He held a number of prominent positions since 1968, including Supervisor of Administrative and Financial Affairs at the Amiri Diwan, followed by Director of the department, and then Assistant Undersecretary for Administrative and Financial Affairs, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In March 1979, he was appointed as Governor of Hawally, and later as Governor of Ahmadi. He then served as Minister of Social Affairs and Labor, then Minister of Information, and eventually as Advisor in the Office of His Highness the Amir.

On February 14, 2001, Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak was appointed as Deputy



Sheikh Jaber Mubarak

Continued on Page 5

## Penalties stiffened in assault, fatal torture, premeditated kill

2 years jail, KD 1,000 fine for hitting or insulting gov't staff



Spain's Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Albares, centre, poses with members of the Arab-Islamic Contact Group for Gaza and representatives of different European foreign ministries as they pose for a group photo inside the Spanish Foreign Ministry in Madrid, Spain on Sept 13, 2024. (AP)

### Storming of Jordanian Valley condemned

### Kuwait welcomes communique on 2-state solution

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14, (KUNA): Kuwait's Foreign Ministry welcomed on Saturday the communique issued by the joint meeting held in Madrid, on Friday, on the implementation of the two-state solution in the Middle East.

The meeting featured some representatives of Arab and European countries, in addition to the Arab League and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

In a statement, Kuwait's Foreign Ministry also praised efforts made by those countries and organizations, mainly the ministerial committee led by Saudi Arabia to find a solution to the Palestinian cause, in accordance with the relevant UN resolutions, and stop Israeli occupation ongoing aggression on the brotherly Palestinian people.

In addition, the statement extolled ongoing mediation efforts by Egypt, Qatar and the United States in this regard.

Hoping for the success of all endeavors to reach a fair solution to the Palestinian cause and end the suffering of Palestinian people, Kuwait urges supporting all efforts of Palestine's state to obtain a full UN membership and holding an international conference of peace with the participation of all concerned parties, according to the statement.

Kuwait Foreign Ministry also condemned on Friday the Israeli Occupation Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's storming of the Palestinian Jordan Valley.

The Ministry condemned his move as a flagrant violation of international resolutions, especially Security Council Resolution (2334), indicating that it was in line with Tel Aviv's approach aimed at expanding illegal settlements.

It warned in a statement of the consequences in continuing these violations and undermining efforts to stop the aggression on the Gaza Strip, reiterating Kuwait's calls on the international community and the UN Security Council to uphold their responsibilities.

The department also reaffirmed Kuwait's position in support of the Palestinian people's rights, namely their right to establish an independent state on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Meanwhile, Kuwait on Thursday called on the international community to subject all Israeli nuclear facilities to the comprehensive safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Continued on Page 5



Talal Al-Fassam

### KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14: In a bid to curb the repeated assault on civil servants and to protect their rights, recent amendments to the Penal Code introduce severe penalties including life imprisonment for premeditated murder involving torture leading to death.

The new law also imposes up to one year imprisonment and a fine of up to KD 1,000 for insulting judges, prosecution members, or members of the police force, Kuwait Army, or National Guard while they are on duty, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The decree-law No. 93/2024, which was issued yesterday, amends the provisions of the Penal Code established under law No. 16/1960 and law No. 31/1970.

According to Article 1 of the decree law, the texts of Articles 134 and 135 of the Penal Code shall be amended as follows:

Continued on Page 5

### PACI deletes 634 more addresses

By Mohammad Ghanem  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14: The Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) announced in the official gazette "Kuwait Alyoum" the deletion of 634 residential addresses either because the building owners requested the deletion or because the buildings were scheduled for demolition.

It explained that individuals affected by this change must visit the Authority to register their new addresses within 30 days from the announcement. Failure to do so may result in a penalty as stipulated in Article 33 of law No. 32/1982, which imposes a fine of up to KD 100 multiplied by the number of individuals affected.

### NewsWatch

KUWAIT CITY: The Amiri Diwan issued the following statement on Friday: "On behalf of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the gracious Al-Sabah family, the Amiri Diwan extends deep gratitude to all citizens and residents who offered condolences on the demise of Sheikh Badr Nasser Al-Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah." (KUNA)

WASHINGTON: The U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) said that in the past 24 hours, its forces successfully destroyed three uncrewed aerial vehicles and one support vehicle in Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen.

It said in a press release that it was determined these systems presented an imminent threat to U.S. and coalition forces, and merchant vessels in the region. (KUNA)

TEHRAN: Iran Saturday announced the successful launching of its Chamran-1 research satellite into orbit from the Russian space station, according to Iran TV.

Chamran-1 was launched aboard the Qaem-100 satellite carrier, it said, explaining that its primary mission is to test hardware and software systems for orbital maneuver technology validation. (KUNA)

### Decree issued to amend real estate 'rental law'

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14: Amiri Decree Law No. 95/2024 has been issued to amend certain provisions of Decree Law No. 35/1978 related to real estate rental.

According to this amendment, all lawsuits currently pending before the Court of Appeal in any of its circuits must be referred to the Court of First Instance, except for those cases already reserved for judgment. These reserved cases must be decided within one month of the decree's issuance.

The decree, which was published in the official gazette Kuwait Alyoum yesterday, also ratified the lease agree-

ment between the lessor and lessee, establishing it as an enforceable tool for collecting unpaid rent after sending a notification to the lessee and submitting a certificate proving non-payment. The lease agreement must be in writing, signed by both parties, and must specify the full rent amount to be paid on a designated date.

The lease contract must also be documented in accordance with Law No. 10/2020, which is referenced and appended to the executive formula. Any appeals against the rulings issued by the rental departments must be filed with the Court of First Instance in its appellate capacity. The decree is to be implemented as of the date of its publication in the official gazette.

### Almost 1,500 nabbed in intensified swoops

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14, (KUNA): The Ministry of Interior, represented by the General Department of Residency Affairs Investigations, announced on Friday that 1,461 violators of the residency law -- of different nationalities -- were arrested within two weeks since opening the new governorates' offices and forming security teams working round the clock.

In a press statement, the General Department of Security Relations and Media at the ministry, said all the detainees were referred to the competent authority to take the necessary legal measures against them and deport them from the country.

The ministry called on everyone to cooperate with security personnel, report about violators and outlaws by calling the emergency number (112), stressing the continuation of security campaigns nationwide to arrest violators of the residency law and wanted persons.

## Prayer Timings

Fajr ..... 04:12 Asr ..... 15:13  
 Sunrise .. 05:32 Maghrib .. 17:55  
 Zohr ..... 11:44 Isha ..... 19:13

# Local

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

## HH Crown Prince and Prime Minister send greetings

# HH Amir congratulates Nicaragua and Costa Rica on national days

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent Saturday a cable to President of Nicaragua Daniel Ortega, congratulating him on the occasion of his country's National Day.

His Highness the Amir wished the president all wellness and Nicaragua and its people further progress and prosperity.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations to President Daniel Ortega on his country's National Day, wishing him good health and wellness.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah also sent a cable of congratulations to President Ortega on his country's National Day.

tional Day.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad on Saturday sent a congratulatory cable to President of Costa Rica Rodrigo Chaves Robles on his country's National Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished President Rodrigo good health and further progress and prosperity for Costa Rica and its people.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent a congratulatory cable to President Rodrigo Chaves Robles on his country's National Day, wishing him wellbeing.

Also, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah sent a congratulatory cable to President Rodrigo Chaves Robles on his country's National Day.



Abdul Aziz Al-Badr and Dr. Khaled Al-Buqeen during the signing of the agreement.

## Bid to enhance financial sector training

# Capital Markets Academy inks MoU with Kuwait College of Science & Technology

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14: The Capital Markets Academy has formalized a collaboration with the Kuwait College of Science and Technology by signing a memorandum of understanding. The agreement was signed by Abdul Aziz Al-Rashid Al-Badr, Director General of the Academy, and Dr. Khaled Al-Buqeen, President of the College. The ceremony was attended by Abdul Aziz Al-Mishaal, Chairman of the Academy's Board of Trustees, and other board members, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This memorandum aims to advance the Academy's mission to enhance the efficiency of financial market professionals in Kuwait. The Academy plans to elevate its standards to match those of leading financial training institutions through improved cooperation in training and research. Key initiatives include developing specialized programs to boost financial investment skills, incorporating cutting-edge research,

and adopting international best practices.

The agreement reflects a mutual commitment to increase public awareness about securities activities, including the associated benefits, risks, and obligations. It also supports the state's vision to become a premier regional financial hub with a conducive investment climate. The collaboration aligns with the National Authority's goal to promote financial inclusion and investment awareness across different societal segments, including the university education sector.

Notably, the Kuwait College of Science and Technology brings substantial expertise, particularly through its training center's strategic partnerships in cybersecurity and technology sciences. These collaborations with prominent international universities and institutions will significantly enhance the Academy's training programs, positioning it among the top global training institutions.

## Other Voices

# Women ... and the tragedy of the 'children of affairs'

By Ahmed alsarraf

The marginalization of vulnerable groups in society is a profound issue that has persisted for generations, with women historically being the most affected.

Issues such as child marriage, female circumcision, denial of education, rejection of human rights protections, and honor crimes have been central to this marginalization, contributing to the social and intellectual regression of many societies.

Beyond women, other marginalized groups, are homosexuals and individuals with no known parentage, who have also faced immense suffering.

These individuals, often stigmatized for circumstances beyond their control, are subjected to disdain and mistreatment by society, which reflects a deep-rooted prejudice. In many cases, people project their own insecurities and shortcomings onto these marginalized groups, reinforcing harmful stereotypes and sustaining cycles of discrimination.

One poignant example of this is the story of Abdul Razzaq Shihab, a member of the 'unknown parentage' group, often referred to with the pejorative term 'children of the Ministry of Social Affairs'.

Raised under the guardianship of the state until the age of 18, Abdul Razzaq bravely came forward in an interview with Al-Rai, openly discussing the difficulties he has faced throughout his life.

From being placed in a nursing home at just two days old to living in a guest house as an adult, Abdul Razzaq has navigated an existence marked by systemic challenges and the absence of familial support.

One of the most significant challenges faced by individuals like Abdul Razzaq is the near impossibility of marriage.

Despite receiving government care, their lack of a legal family or home makes marriage a rare and difficult prospect.

The transition from childhood homes, where women were the primary caregivers, to guest houses supervised by men was a traumatic shock for Abdul Razzaq, who longed for the maternal care he had known in his youth.

The division of "Social Affairs children" into categories only exacerbates the isolation felt by individuals in Abdul Razzaq's position. Those fortunate enough to be adopted enjoy residential care with their adoptive families, while others are left to fend for themselves.

The state has been slow to provide adequate housing, and legal disputes over housing rights have only further complicated the lives of these individuals.

Abdul Razzaq, who has worked as a government employee for 20 years, speaks of his lost passion and the lack of opportunities to develop his skills and talents.

Despite his love for photography and his desire to spread awareness about the plight of his group, the psychological toll of growing up without stable social or familial support has been immense.

He now channels his energy into creative projects, such as a planned short musical film that will document the lives of foster children, and he hopes to honor the mother who gave birth to him with this work.

The treatment of marginalized groups like Abdul Razzaq's in our society is a stark contrast to how similar individuals are respected and uplifted in other parts of the world. In Western countries, many from such backgrounds have risen to positions of prominence, including notable figures like German Chancellor Willy Brandt.

It takes immense courage to challenge the unjust stereotypes imposed on these individuals. Society must undergo a deep transformation to embrace all its members, regardless of their background, and foster a more humane, just, and inclusive future.

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

Weather		Station		Min Rec	
Expected weather for next 24 hrs:		erate northwesterly wind, with	Bubyan	45	25
By Day: How with light to moderate northwesterly wind, with speeds of 10-35 km/h.		speeds of 08-32 km/h.	Jahra	44	30
By Night: Hot to rather hot with light variable wind to light to moderate		speeds of 08-32 km/h.	Failaka Island	42	24
		Station	Max Exp	Min Rec	
		Kuwait City	45	30	43
		Kuwait Airport	46	28	44
		Abdaly	45	29	45
					27
					46
					28

## Kuwaiti Cultural Week to be held from Sept 17-27: envoy

# 'Kuwait's ties with Russia evolving particularly at cultural level'

MOSCOW, Sept 14, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait Ambassador to Russia Dr. Rashed Al-Adwani has affirmed significance of the diplomatic relations with Moscow disclosing that the ties have substantial growth in the cultural and technical sectors.

The State of Kuwait is keen on enhancing these relations, particularly at the cultural level, said the ambassador, alluding to the ties, established in 1963.

Ambassador Al-Adwani, in a statement addressed at Saint Petersburg International Cultural Forum, disclosed that the Kuwaiti Cultural Week would be held in Moscow on September 17-27, in coordination with the Russian ministries of foreign and cultural affairs, plus their



Dr Al-Adwani

counterparts in the State of Kuwait, namely the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters.

The planned Kuwaiti event in the Russian capital will mirror the national cultural heritage, namely the popular arts and the national heritage linked to the sea and the desert.

Moreover, a film will be screened during the activity shedding light on history of the Kuwaiti formative art, in addition to a paintings' exhibition.

The Kuwaiti Cultural week will also feature a

lecture about the Kuwaiti-Russian relations, to be held at the Russian Diplomatic Academy, in addition to a reception and an exhibition displaying photos and lectures about history of these relations between the two countries.

Meanwhile, the State of Kuwait Embassy to Russia said in a statement that Ambassador Al-Adwani attended the Petersburg Cultural Forum in response to an invitation by the Russian Minister of Culture Olga Lyubimova -- addressed to the Minister of Information, Culture and Minister of State for Cultural Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, indicating that the latter had assigned the envoy to attend the event on his behalf.

The 10th edition of the forum was held between September 11 and 14.

# WHO workshop in Kuwait 'focuses' on accelerating obesity combat plan

Discussions center on current challenges, innovative solutions

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14: The World Health Organization (WHO) office in Kuwait, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition, organized a multi-stakeholder workshop under the title 'Accelerating the Obesity Combat Plan', reports Al-Jarida daily.

Held under the patronage of Dr. Munther Al-Hasawi, Assistant Undersecretary for Public Health Affairs, the workshop brought together various health and nutrition sectors to address obesity in Kuwait.

The workshop aimed to review national initiatives and develop strategic interventions to tackle obesity. Discussions centered on the current challenges, innovative solutions, and evidence-based interventions needed to promote lifestyle changes and curb rising obesity rates.

The participants presented their projects and plans, emphasizing the importance of coordinated efforts to combat this growing issue.

Kuwait's selection as one of the five leading countries in the Eastern Mediterranean Region for the WHO's Acceleration Plan to Stop Obesity underscores its commitment to addressing the obesity crisis.

The plan aims to support multi-sectoral action based on proven policies and implementation science, offering a significant opportunity to enhance the effectiveness of obesity-related health interventions.

The workshop gathered over 60 representatives from diverse stakeholders, including Kuwait University, the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research, Kuwait Flour Mills, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Ministry of Finance. This broad participation highlights the need for a multi-sectoral approach to effectively address obesity.

The workshop concluded with the creation of a national roadmap to accelerate action on obesity in Kuwait. This roadmap will focus on evidence-based strategies and improved collaboration across sectors to provide a unified response to the obesity challenge.

## 55K domestic workers shift to private sector

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14: The private labor market has seen the integration of 55,000 domestic workers following their transfer from Article 20 to Article 18 during the two-month period designated by the Residency Affairs Sector of the Ministry of Interior, in collaboration with the Public Authority for Manpower. This transfer window, which started on July 14 and concluded on September 12, was implemented under Ministerial Resolution No. 6 of 2024, reports Al-Rai daily.

Security sources informed Al-Rai that the Ministry of Interior's Residency Affairs Sector processed 55,000 requests for domestic workers to join the private sector within the set timeframe. This shift is expected to alleviate the labor shortage in the country, significantly benefiting the local job market.

The sources explained that the grace period for the transfer of domestic workers to the private sector was made possible through the directives of First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef.



Sheikha Nabila Salman Al-Hamoud in a group photo during the Women's Forum of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, in China.

## Sheikha Nabila participates in Shanghai women's forum

# 'Forum provides another opportunity to advance cause of Kuwaiti women'

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14: Sheikha Nabila Salman Al-Hamoud, a prominent member of the Board of Directors for the Kuwait Federation of Women's Associations, found herself immersed in a world far from home, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

As she stood among influential leaders at the Women's Forum of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, held in China, she reflected on the importance of her mission.

Sheikha Nabila had always been dedicated to the cause of Kuwaiti women, working tirelessly to strengthen cooperation with local and international bodies to support women in various fields. This forum was yet another opportunity to push that mission forward.

In a statement to the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) after the forum, Sheikha Nabila emphasized the significance of addressing women's issues.

### Ability

"Discussing women's problems is essential to enhancing their ability to play an effective role in all aspects of life," she said. Her words carried weight, as they were spoken in front of global representatives, united in their commitment to eliminating all forms of discrimination against women.

The forum offered more than just dialogue; it provided a platform for collaboration. Sheikha Nabila explained that as economic globalization continued to shape the world, the need for international cooperation had never been more critical. She stressed the importance of empowering women economically, urging governments and organizations to rise to the challenges of the modern world. The event was a powerful reminder of the role cooperation plays in advancing gender equality.

Sheikha Nabila spoke passionately about increasing the role of women in public and governmental life, advocating for their participation in national development plans. She highlighted the necessity of supporting women's entrepreneurship and promoting healthy lifestyles.

Representatives from 26 countries attended the forum, including member states, observers, and dialogue partners. The event was jointly organized by the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the All-China Women's Federation, and the Shandong Provincial Government, making it a truly global affair.

Amid the discussions and speeches, Sheikha Nabila took the opportunity to meet with Uzbekistan's Ozoda Baribayeva, Chairwoman of the Family and Women Affairs Committee.

The two had met before and were eager to discuss how to strengthen the memorandum of understanding signed between Kuwait and Uzbekistan in May. On the sidelines of the forum, they reaffirmed their commitment to working together, sharing ideas, and ensuring a brighter future for women in both countries.

As the forum drew to a close, Sheikha Nabila knew her work was far from over. But she left China with renewed determination, ready to bring the lessons learned back to Kuwait and continue her fight for women's empowerment.

Sheikha Nabila explained that the primary goal of her work was to provide support and assistance in safeguarding women's rights and legitimate interests, in line with the legislation of both Kuwait and other cooperating nations.

She emphasized the importance of strengthening

## 'MoH misleading public on Afia'

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14: Former MP Dr. Jenan Boushehri has accused the Ministry of Health of misleading the public about the Afia insurance program. She pointed out that the current contract is set to end on September 16, 2024, which is just days away, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Boushehri criticized the ministry for not issuing a new tender six months before the contract's expiration as required, opting instead for an extension.

In a post on the "X" platform, Boushehri argued that if the ministry were genuinely committed to upholding the Afia Law and serving retirees, it would have initiated the new tender process earlier.

She claimed that the ministry lacks the courage to openly discuss its intention to cancel the Afia Law, choosing instead to mislead the public and shift the blame for its shortcomings to others.

### Reactions

The Ministry of Health's decision to suspend "Afia" insurance services and terminate its contract with the company has generated various reactions and raised questions about the alternatives and subsequent steps required by the ministry, reports Al-Rai daily.

Constitutional expert Dr. Ibrahim Al-Hamoud said, "Terminating the contract with Afia requires the Ministry of Health to secure new contracts with other insurance providers to ensure health insurance coverage for all those previously insured by Afia."

The state is obligated to provide health insurance and subsequent healthcare to the insured, as mandated by Law No. 114/2014.

Former MP Marzouq Al-Khalifa said, "Canceling the contract with the company does not necessitate the cancellation of the relevant law. The Ministry of Health must realize this and expedite the implementation of all associated privileges and services without any reduction."

In addition, a Law Professor at KU and constitutional expert Dr. Mohammad Al-Muqati questioned whether it is true that the contract amount increased from KD 177 million to KD 354 million.

He also inquired about the number of beneficiaries under this contract in comparison to the retirees who have already benefited from it.

friendly relations between countries, particularly in the face of the growing challenges that women encounter worldwide.

Her mission, she stated, was to improve the status and conditions of women, empowering them to actively participate in various aspects of life, from the economy to public service. This vision of women playing a more significant role in society was central to her message at the forum.

Sheikha Nabila was not alone in her efforts. Accompanying her to the event was the Union's Technical and Educational Advisor, Abeer Al-Amiri, who shared her commitment to advancing the cause of women's rights and empowerment. Together, they represented Kuwait's ongoing dedication to ensuring that women have the opportunities and support they need to thrive.

## 'A clear call for alarm as Kuwait's divorce cases surge in H1 of 2024'

"FOR more than one reason, I love the Mubarakiya Market. Maybe it's because it's the only place that carries the scent of the past, or perhaps it's because it holds my memories of walking hand in hand with my father -- God rest his soul in peace -- visiting his friends in their shops and then shopping in their stores. I still visit it every now and then to escape from everything," columnist **Taleb Al-Rifai** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"I stroll through the Mubarakiya School, Wajif Market, and the other parts of Mubarakiya. Eventually, I sit down at one of its cozy cafés, sip a cup of tea, and let my mind wander back to the memories that rest quietly in my heart. While I'm there, I usually pull out my phone to read some articles or check a few social media sites.

"One site I make sure to visit daily is Al Majlis -- @Almajlis, which has more than 2.6 million followers. On Saturday, September 7, while I was sitting in the café, I came across a news post about the 'Kuwaiti Society for the Prevention of Family Disintegration'."



Taleb Al-Rifai

"The site had shared some shocking statistics on marriage and divorce cases from the first six months of 2024. As I read through the numbers, I suddenly felt the bitter taste of my tea. I had to pause for a moment to process the disturbing divorce rates.

"The statistics showed 7,619 marriages, but also 4,038 divorces in just six months! A quick calculation reveals that the divorce rate has reached nearly 53 percent! This alarming percentage points to a serious social and family imbalance, especially in the mindset of young people about to enter marriage.

"I've written many times before that while I accept death with sorrow and grief -- because no one can prevent God's will -- the news of divorce leaves me even more saddened.

"Divorce shouts at me: a family has broken apart. A young man and woman entered the sacred bond of marriage, only to leave it quickly, carrying deep emotional scars. And beyond their pain, divorce inflicts greater suffering on children, creating lasting wounds and psychological challenges.

"In Kuwait, as in many Arab and Islamic countries, the moment a girl earns her university degree and is over the age of 23, the topic of marriage is often raised by her parents, whether subtly or directly. The same is true for young men, with families dreaming of seeing their sons marry and start families.

"But in our small Kuwaiti society, marriage doesn't just unite two individuals; it links two entire families. So, when a divorce happens, the impact ripples through both families, affecting everyone.

"I understand the times we live in, the shifts in values, and the independence that young men and women enjoy today. But I still hope that families return to the traditions and values of the Kuwaiti family -- that marriage is a lifelong commitment, a journey of companionship between husband and wife, and one of the most important responsibilities we take on in life.

"Divorce is like a cancer that eats away at the heart of society. When the numbers are as high as they are now, it's a clear call for alarm. Mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers -- please teach your daughters and sons that marriage is a lifelong project, one that requires deep thought and careful planning before stepping into it.

"Divorce is a loss. As I sat there in the café, the weight of the moment pulled me away from my tea, and my beloved memories of Mubarakiya faded into the oblivion."

### Also:

"I'm not entirely sure of the actual reasons behind the suspension of health insurance services for our esteemed retirees and housewives -- may God protect and care for them," columnist **Fahd Al-Bassam** wrote for **Al-Jarida** daily.

"What's clear, though, is that their contributions to building the modern State of Kuwait will benefit generations for centuries to come. Thanks to their hard work, we enjoy a country that is advanced in its governance, free of administrative and financial corruption -- praise be to God.

"However, one thing is certain: the Afia health insurance service, which has cost the state hundreds of millions, if not billions of dinars over the years, was never truly necessary to begin with.

"Successful governments have failed to fix the country's health system, which, despite having quality medical care and modern equipment, has suffered from poor management.

"This mismanagement has diminished the value of these advancements,

and that's the real problem. The deterioration of government hospitals, long waiting times for appointments, and a lack of communication between patients and doctors have only increased public dissatisfaction with the Ministry of Health's services.

"This issue has been continuously exploited by some members of parliament over the years. Instead of conducting serious discussions and in-depth studies to find ways to improve and develop Kuwait's medical services, a decision was made to introduce Afia.

"This program has created legal inequalities and disparities in medical services among citizens. For some, it's become a reason to retire early, while for others, it's been a tool for manipulation and frustration. Meanwhile, the condition of government facilities and services remains unchanged.

"We don't need to reinvent the wheel here. What's already in place is functional and proven to work. The priority should be a genuine effort to reform the health system, addressing the issues within the Ministry of Health's facilities to ensure that all citizens, without exception, receive equal treatment.

"It's also time to revisit the policy that allows some doctors to work in both the public and private sectors simultaneously, earning a government salary while 'milking' the private sector.

"This situation has led to a conflict of interest and a lack of motivation to improve public healthcare, all at the expense of citizens' health.

"The government must either commit to a full and professional overhaul of the health system, ensuring fairness and equality, or stop the lavish spending on both fronts.

"Instead, it should focus on strict oversight after privatizing hospitals and ensuring all citizens have access to equitable insurance coverage that reduces costs for the state. May God protect and heal everyone."



"Every year during the Hajj season, between two and three million pilgrims gather in one location, yet the event concludes with remarkable calm, excellent organization, and no shortage of services. Similarly, during the Umrah season in Ramadan, about one and a half million pilgrims perform Umrah in a single night, often with no disruption and no pilgrim lacking basic necessities such as water. This success is attributed to the meticulous planning, tight organization, and vigilant oversight," columnist **Talal Al-Saeed** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"In contrast, we have failed miserably in organizing events that have far fewer attendees, such as organizing a match at Jaber Stadium, despite having ample potential and resources. What is the cause for such a degree of failure in organization, turning what should have been a well-managed event into chaos?"

"There are people with brains and creativity both here and there. However, the difference lies in the fact that they place the right person in the right role, and hold him accountable. He knows the consequences of failure, and will therefore prioritize competence and effectiveness. On the other hand, we often assign responsibilities to those who are unqualified, relying on individuals who lack the necessary skills and commitment.

"While they seek to enhance the reputation of Saudi Arabia, our focus tends to be on pleasing certain individuals or groups, often driven by personal connections or party affiliations. For some, maintaining their position or satisfying influential figures takes precedence over the broader goals of improving the state or achieving excellence.

"The primary concern for many is increasing their own wealth, regardless of ethical considerations. What matters to them is retaining their job titles or satisfying those behind them, rather than genuinely contributing to the betterment of their organization or country.

"Every Kuwaiti is deeply concerned about the poor organization and performance of the team. There is a growing fear of failing to successfully organize the next Gulf Cup tournament after our recent mishap in just one match.

"To be fair, the security arrangements were a great success. Despite the large crowds, everything went smoothly without any disturbances, thanks to the dedication of the relevant minister who was committed to showcasing the country in a positive light. The top security official was present throughout, ensuring peace and order until the last fan left.

"After the weekend, we hope to see decisive actions that will improve the state of sports, which is currently in a dire situation. The last resort cannot be to merely wait and see."

— **Compiled by PFX Fernandes**  
and **Mahmoud Ateyieh**



Left: One of the facilities being sealed, and (right) serious violations over storage of gas cylinders.

### KFF administratively shuts 39 facilities over violations

Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) has announced that its inspection campaigns resulted in the administrative closure of 39 shops and other facilities in various governorates for failure to obtain a fire license, and non-compliance with safety and fire prevention regulations, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

A reliable source disclosed that KFF took this decision when the owners of the erring facilities failed to rectify the violations despite the warning issued to them earlier.

Meanwhile, the Director of the Capital Governorate Inspection Department at the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN) Ali Al-Kandari has announced the closure of 11 food establishments after an intensive inspection campaign covering a number of food establishments in the entire governorate, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

In a statement to the daily, Al-Kandari confirmed that the recent inspection campaign resulted in the discovery of several violations,

including the sale of food items deemed unfit for human consumption as the natural properties like color, shape and smell changed; sale of expired food items; opening a food establishment without obtaining a health license from the authority; and non-compliance with public sanitation regulations as live insects were found in the food preparation area.

He stressed that PAFN is keen on ensuring the safety of consumers, so its inspectors are working round the clock.

## DCGD raids Lyrica manufacturing factory; one held, 30K pills seized

Court frees 10 out of 27 in KD 120m laundering case

By **Jaber Al-Hamoud**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14: In a significant breakthrough against drug networks, the Drug Control General Department under the Criminal Security Sector has dismantled a clandestine factory involved in the production of Lyrica narcotic pills. The operation was led by anti-narcotics officers who arrested an individual of unknown nationality for running the illegal operation, reports Al-Seyassah daily.**

Following extensive surveillance and meticulous investigations, law enforcement agencies seized a substantial amount of illegal substances. Among the confiscated items were 30,000 Lyrica capsules ready for distribution, 6 kilograms of raw Lyrica powder, 2,500 Captagon tablets, and 100 grams of hashish. Authorities also discovered a large quantity of empty capsules, along with equipment used for manufacturing and packaging narcotics. The suspect and the confiscated materials were transferred to the Public Prosecution for further legal action.

This successful operation highlights the vigilance and determination of the security services to combat drug trafficking and prevent the spread of harmful substances in society. The Ministry of Interior emphasized the importance of ongoing efforts to protect the public from narcotics and urged citizens and residents to assist law enforcement by reporting any suspicious activity. They can contact authorities via the emergency Hotline (112) or the General

### 'Students'

Mol seizes documents, computers from union

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14: The Ministry of Interior seized documents related to the National Union of Kuwaiti Students and initiated investigations.

According to a source quoted by Al Jarida, the Public Prosecution has authorized State Security Investigations to enter the union's building and confiscate computers and documents.

This action follows allegations of suspicious financial transfers involving the union. Security investigations are expected to continue for several days, with the union's premises currently under seizure.

Department for Combating Narcotics Hotline (1884141).

**10 to be free on bail:** The Criminal Court decided to release 10 out of 27 defendants in one of the largest money laundering cases in the country on bail of KD1,000 each and imposed a travel ban on them, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

The hearing was adjourned until Oct 31 to give the defense team enough time to photocopy the case file and then review it.

Last June, the Public Prosecution ordered the detention of 27 defendants, including six citizens, for forming a gang that laundered money estimated at more than KD120 million within a short period by transferring the amount to local banks in order to hide the money and camouflage the source.

**Boat capsizes, 2 fishermen survive:** Two expatriate fishermen survived when their boat

capsized in Kuwait Bay, reports **Al-Anba** daily. A security source said the boat capsized after colliding with concrete blocks, indicating the expatriate fishermen swam to the shore; hence, losses caused by the accident were limited to damages to the boat and its engine.

**Several violations cited:** The Audit and Follow-up Department of Municipal Services in the Ahmadi Governorate conducted an inspection tour to ensure compliance with advertising regulations and shop licenses, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

This tour resulted in the issuance of 12 citations. These infractions included unauthorized advertisements for business activities and displaying merchandise outside shops without proper licenses. Saad Al-Shaiba, Director of the Audit and Follow-up Department at the Ahmadi Municipality Branch, emphasized that the primary goal of these field tours is to monitor and address violations effectively.

He noted that the supervisory team remains vigilant and committed to enforcing regulations through these inspections. This inspection is part of a broader campaign launched by the municipality at the start of September, aimed at verifying the validity of health and advertising licenses for shops and addressing violations related to shop and market regulations. The campaign is set to continue through the end of September. Meanwhile, the Public Relations Department at Kuwait Municipality has announced that the Municipal Services Audit and Follow Up Department in the Hawally Governorate branch has conducted an intensive inspection campaign throughout the governorate to check the validity of health and shop advertising licenses, uncover violations, and ensure strict compliance with the relevant regulations, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

Director of the Municipal Services Audit and Follow Up Department in Hawally Governorate branch **Mohammad Al-Subaie** affirmed that the intensified inspection campaign aims to uncover violations and take legal measures against those proven to have committed violations.

### 3-year contract

KD 605K deal OK for airport meteorological radar system

By **Mohammed Al-Musleh**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14: According to informed sources at Kuwait International Airport, the State Audit Bureau recently approved a contract worth KD 605,000 between the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and an international company for a three-year period for the provision of operational and technical support to the airport's meteorological radar system.

They explained that DGCA also secured approvals from the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) and the Ministry of Finance for the contract. However, the State Audit Bureau's approval came with a stipulation that the company's letter detailing quantities and modified prices must be included as an integral part of the contract documents.

The State Audit Bureau also required DGCA to confirm the suitability and competitiveness of the prices offered by the company, and ensure they are in line with the current market rates.

It also urged the prompt initiation of procedures for the design, manufacture, and installation of the new weather radar system, stressing that there should be no delays in presenting the matter to them.

The State Audit Bureau had criticized the delay in contracting with DGCA, which took 44 days after CAPT issued its decision to award the contract prior to presenting it to the bureau, stressing that this delay necessitates a review of the administrative procedures and policies followed within the entity.

It has requested that all future meetings between DGCA and the contracting company be documented with meeting minutes.

The sources revealed that the international company selected for the contract has extensive global experience in designing, manufacturing, selling, and maintaining radar systems, sensors, and advanced solutions in the fields of meteorology, hydrology, and aviation.

Drill aims at elevating level of combat prep

### Kuwait concludes naval exercise 'Bahri-5'

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14, (KUNA): The Ministry of Interior on Friday declared conclusion of the naval drill, "Bahri-5," that involved boats of the Coast Guards, the navy and police aircraft.

The exercise aimed at elevating level of the combat preparedness of the naval

forces and bolstering their capacities to safeguard the territorial waters, marine regions and robustly resist any threat from hostile forces and foiling smuggling bids.

Participating personnel fired live ammunition, deployed light and heavy arms during the drill.

**WEDDINGS, UPTO 140**

**AUDITORIUM**

**BUFFET**

**ANNIVERSARY**

**BIRTHDAY**

**KIDS CELEBRATION**

**WE ARE BUDGET-FRIENDLY**

# MUGHAL MAHAL

## FAHAHEEL

Weddings | Seminars | Conferences | Celebrations

Sea view | Ample car parking

**For more enquires Call: 23911174 / 23911175**

**Mr. Jack: 97644421**

**Email: fahaheel@mughalmahal.com**  
**info@mughalmahal.com**

## LOCAL

## Al-Huwailah reshuffles PADA, Al-Muhanna appointed

By Faris Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14: In a recent administrative move, Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah, the Minister of Social Affairs, Family, and Childhood Affairs, announced significant changes at the Public Authority for the Disabilities Affairs.

Dr. Al-Huwailah decided to terminate the assignment of Al-Hamidi Al-Mutairi, who had been serving as the Director of Administrative Affairs at the Authority.

In place of Al-Mutairi, Wafaa Al-Muhanna, the Director of the Research and Statistics Department, has been appointed to assume the role of Director General of the Authority. This decision

marks a pivotal shift in the leadership of the Authority as part of a broader overhaul.

Under Dr. Al-Huwailah's direction, the Authority is undergoing substantial restructuring. The changes include a comprehensive review of all files and the implementation of various procedural amendments to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the Authority's operations.

## Kuwait Zakat House continues humanitarian efforts for Egypt

## Overcoming charity barriers

CAIRO, Sept 14, (KUNA): Director General of Kuwait's Zakat House Dr. Majed Al-Azmi stressed the importance of humanitarian and charitable acts supervised by Kuwait Office for Charity Projects in Cairo, and contributing to helping the needy.

Speaking to KUNA after meeting with Egypt's Minister of Awqaf Usama Al-Azhari on Thursday, Al-Azmi said they discussed ways of boosting of cooperation, mainly in humanitarian action.

The two sides also focused on means of facilitating the office's duties and removing obstacles to carry out projects across Egypt, Al-Azmi noted.

Egypt's Ministry of Awqaf plays a key role in supporting the office's efforts, he said, affirming continued humanitarian and charitable programs of the office.

He hoped that the current collaboration between the two sides could bear fruits for humanitarian and charitable projects inside Egypt.

The meeting featured some officials from the two sides, including head of the office Adnan al-Sabti and chief of the House's director general Khaled Al-Ouda.

Established in 1987 in Cairo, the office has been supervising and following charitable acts directed to those needy.



KUNA photo

Director General of the Zakat House, Dr. Majed Al-Azmi, during his meeting with the Egyptian Minister of Endowments, Dr. Usama Al-Azhari.



Al-Seyassah photo

Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governor Sheikh Sabah Bader Al-Sabah during an inspection tour of schools in the governorate.

## Mubarak Al-Kabeer schools get Governor's preparations review

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14: Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governor Sheikh Sabah Bader Al-Sabah conducted an inspection tour of several schools in the governorate on Wednesday to assess their preparations for the new academic year of 2024/2025, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

He was received by the Assistant Undersecretary for Public Education Affairs at the Ministry of Education Mansour Al-Dhafiri.

Following the tour, Governor Sheikh Sabah held a meeting with

school managers and principals in the educational zone regarding some observations and requirements related to maintenance, textbook distribution, and air conditioning in these schools, with the aim of finding solutions to urgent issues.

He called on senior officials of the Ministry of Education to collaborate effectively, assume their responsibilities diligently, and work tirelessly to meet the educational goals and ensure a successful academic year for students.



Al-Seyassah photos

Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi hosts the chairpersons of several cooperative society boards at his office.

## Farwaniya Governor hosts cooperative leaders

Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi received the chairpersons of the boards of directors of several cooperative societies in his office at the governorate on Wednesday morning, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

He commended the role of consumer cooperative societies, and highlighted the need for meeting all requirements and ensuring the quality of the provided commodities.

Governor Sheikh Athbi expressed pride in the performance of the cooperative societies within Farwaniya Governorate, and appreciation for their commitment to societal responsibilities.

He praised the collaborative efforts of those managing these cooperative societies and their teamwork to develop the services offered to citizens and residents in various areas within the governorate.

Highlighting the long-standing tradition of Kuwaiti cooperative experience, Governor Sheikh Athbi affirmed its significant contribution to developing and supporting services for citizens and residents.

He expressed satisfaction with the current and upcoming projects being undertaken by the boards of the cooperative societies in order to improve services for their shareholders.

Meanwhile, the governor received the former mayors of the governorate's areas and commended their efforts during their tenures.

The former mayors expressed their gratitude to Governor Sheikh Athbi, affirming their continued readiness to serve the country in any capacity.

They praised the governor for his efforts and dedication to improving services for citizens, which they observed during his term.

## Project aims to ease drought impact

## IICO launches solar-powered Kuwait Artesian Well in Niger

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14, (KUNA): The International Islamic Charitable Organization (IICO) opened a solar-powered Kuwait Artesian Well in Niger, which operates on a solar energy system to serve more than 2,500 beneficiaries in a village in Dosso Region, in cooperation with the Cooperation Society for Human Services.

IICO said in a press statement that the project contributes to addressing the problem of thirst that the population of Niger suffers from due to the dryness of most of its lands, in addition to serving the people of the village and helping the state in combating drought and developing agriculture and trade.

It pointed out that the well was drilled at a depth ranging from 60 to 100 meters and was provided with a water tank 8 meters high and with a capacity of 5,000 liters, along with a pump capable of withdrawing about 2,500 liters per hour.

The organization explained that the well is equipped with solar panels, pointing out that the life span of the well is 15 years and represents an urgent need for the residents of Niger.

During the past five years, the Charitable Organization opened model villages with integrated facilities and services in the Nigerian capital, Abuja, which provided an advanced state of security, sta-



KUNA photo

IICO opens the Kuwait Artesian Well in Niger in cooperation with Humanitarian Services.

bility and a decent life for about 2,500 people.

Niger is one of the poorest countries in the world, with more than 63 percent of the population living below the poverty line, according to a UNESCO report, and it is ranked last in the world on the Human Progress Index, according to a report by the United Nations Development Program.

## Measures in place

## KU Deanship ensures fair student elections

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14: Dr. Jassim Al-Hamdan, the Dean of Student Affairs at Kuwait University, has emphasized his commitment to ensuring fair and transparent elections for the University Students Union, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a meeting held recently with members of the Higher Committee for Student Elections and representatives from the National Union of Students, it was agreed that the Deanship of Student Affairs will oversee the elections scheduled for Sunday, Sept 22.

During the meeting, it was decided that the Deanship will also be responsible for supervising the General Assembly, organizing the election process, counting votes, and announcing the results.

Dr. Al-Hamdan stressed the importance of transparency and integrity throughout the electoral process, and affirmed that the various departments at Kuwait University will provide full support to ensure everything runs smoothly and serves the best interests of the students.

The Security and Safety Department will be in charge of implementing security measures during the elections, organizing the General Assembly, and ensuring compliance with academic and union regulations.

On election day entry will be restricted and only students will be allowed to enter. This will be done in coordination with the Ministry of Interior to prevent any unauthorized interference and maintain the regular school schedule.

Dr. Al-Hamdan reaffirmed the Deanship's dedication to fostering fair competition and upholding the values of unity and national cohesion cherished by Kuwait University and the State of Kuwait.



KUNA photo

Tons of waste are removed annually by the Kuwaiti diving team from the country's coasts.

## Kuwaiti Diving Team vows continued coastal cleanup

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti Diving Team affirmed on Thursday its continued environmental efforts to remove all types of waste from the country's coasts and beaches, both north and south, in order to preserve the marine environment, protect it from damage, and stop pollution.

Team leader Waleed Al-Fadhel told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that the team has launched its major annual environmental campaign to clean Kuwaiti coasts, beaches, and islands in conjunction with the global campaign to clean coasts. He noted that the United Nations General Assembly adopted September 20 as World Environment Day, which the team celebrates through various activities aimed at spreading awareness and achieving sustainable development.

Al-Fadhel explained that the campaign, which runs from September to April each year, is supported by many governmental and civil bodies as well as volunteers. It aims to remove plastic waste, iron pieces, ropes, and sunken ships from the seas and beaches due to their negative effects on marine creatures and navigation.

He emphasized the team's commitment to environmental awareness, spreading it within society, and creating opportunities for volunteers to enhance environmental responsibility, preserve the marine environment, and serve the country.



# September

## Room Promotion





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

Promo period from 1<sup>st</sup> September to 20<sup>th</sup> September 2024    Terms & conditions apply\*

## PAFN headquarters project set for bidding in December

## Public Works unveils major health infrastructure plan in 2025

By Mohammad Ghanem  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14: The Ministry of Public Works has included a contract for the study, design and supervision of the construction of the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN) headquarters in its plan for fiscal 2024/2025.

Sources affirmed this project is one of the ministry's most important construction projects, considering the role of PAFN in protecting public health and that it will be implemented for the benefit of the Health Ministry.

Sources revealed the design contract will be offered for bidding in December, indicating the implementation period for the design work is 24 months and 39

months for supervising the implementation phase. Sources said the tender will be offered through the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT), stating the bidding will be among qualified consulting offices for the study and design works in accordance with the regulations and laws governing the entire process -- from the time of announcing the project until the start of implementation.

Sources stated that the design and study phases will be implemented according to the current and future requirements of the authority; including the provision of a building for employees, another building for inspection in Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate, a theater, a library, a building for sports activities, a mosque, sample cooling stores, a mobile vehicle inspection area and 1,750 parking spaces.

## 'Legacy of excellence'

## KISR pays tribute to late leader Dr Naji Al-Mutairi

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14: Dr. Mishaa Al-Otaibi paid heartfelt tribute to the late Dr. Naji Mohammed Al-Mutairi, the former Director General of the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR), who passed away last Tuesday, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In his statement, Al-Otaibi praised Dr. Al-Mutairi for his significant contributions to advancing scientific research in Kuwait and for his leadership during a pivotal phase of strategic transformation at the institute.



Dr Al-Mutairi

Al-Otaibi, the current Director General of KISR, highlighted that Dr. Al-Mutairi was not only a brilliant leader but also a person of great humility. He had a deep appreciation for the efforts of others, which endeared him to all employees at the institute, regardless of their position. Al-Otaibi emphasized that Dr. Al-Mutairi always placed the public interest and service to the nation above all else.

During his illustrious career, Dr. Al-Mutairi held several key administrative roles within KISR, including Director of the Civil and Construction Engineering Department,

Director of the Engineering Department, and Director of the Environment and Urban Development Department.

He also served as Director of the Research Department at the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences for six years, contributing to several influential committees, including the Higher Committee for the Development of Scientific Research.

Dr. Al-Mutairi's tenure as Director General of KISR, from 2007 to 2016, was marked by a period of substantial transformation.

He played a crucial role in reshaping the institute's organizational and administrative structures, which in turn supported national research projects and helped secure additional financial resources. His efforts in developing KISR's infrastructure and laboratories, along with his dedication to attracting top researchers, set new standards of excellence within the institute.

One of Dr. Al-Mutairi's lasting legacies was laying the groundwork for a commercial company aimed at marketing the outputs of scientific research, a move that provided vital funding for future research projects.

Al-Otaibi concluded his statement by offering his sincere condolences to Dr. Al-Mutairi's family, praying for God's mercy upon him and asking for patience and solace for his loved ones.

## Kuwait Municipality grants site for MoCI's supply center in Farwaniya

Plans for medical storage land in progress

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14: Kuwait Municipality has approved the request of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to allocate a site measuring 1,000 square meters for

the establishment of a supply center with parking space in Farwaniya Governorate (Ardiya Crafts Area, Block One).

The newspaper obtained a copy of the technical opinion approved by Director General of the Municipality Saud Al-Dubous. The technical opinion states that the Ministry of Commerce and Industry should coordinate with the Ministry of Social Affairs regarding the transfer of the supervision



Minister of Social Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah inaugurates the Wasa Community Development Center.

KUNA photo

of the supply activity from the latter to the former; as well as the re-surveying procedures. It stressed the need for the Social Affairs Ministry to continue managing the existing supply centers until the completion of the transfer to its Commerce and Industry counterpart. It also emphasized the importance of obtaining the approval of the services ministries before establishing the proposed supply center.



Al-Dubous

This is in addition to authorizing the Urban Planning Department to transfer and modify the shape and boundaries of the site in case it overlaps with any existing infrastructure or for any regulatory reasons; and the establishment of a multi-storey building (basement - ground - first - second floors) without exceeding the heights permitted in private residential areas.

The Municipality's approval is in line with Cabinet Resolution No. 269/2024 regarding the report of the Government Performance Follow-up Agency on the provision of strategic areas for the establishment of warehouses for food storage purposes and others. Based on this, the Municipality was instructed to allocate plots for the company that will be established as per the report of the agency.

It will also allot land in the vicinity of Kuwait International Airport measuring not less than 15,000 square meters for the establishment of a company for storing medical and pharmaceutical supplies. It has been mandated to coordinate with the Government Performance Follow-up Agency before taking decisions on requests to allocate land for storage purposes.

Furthermore, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) must allocate land for the benefit of the company that will be established in the Air Cargo City.

## MoCI reaffirms ban on live livestock export

## Transformer failure sparks 'power outage' in old Jahra

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14: The Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy reported that a main power transformer at the Jahra B main transformer station experienced a malfunction, resulting in power outages in some areas of old Jahra, specifically in parts 3, 4, and 5, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Emergency teams were promptly dispatched to address the issue and restore power supply to the affected areas as quickly as possible.

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14: The Kuwaiti Ministry of Commerce and Industry has issued a clarification regarding recent social media reports about the potential resumption of live livestock exports, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The ministry confirmed that Decision No. 8 of 2024, which calls for a ban on the export of live livestock, remains fully in effect.

In its statement, the ministry emphasized that there have been no amendments or lifting of the ban as of now. It urged the public to verify information and avoid relying on unverified news sources.

## 68 wedding halls and centers ready for public use: minister

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14: Minister of Social, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah has confirmed that 68 wedding halls and development centers in the six governorates are now ready for reservation under the supervision of the Social Affairs Ministry.

In a statement during the opening of the Community Development Center and Wedding Hall in Jaber Al-Ahmad (5A), Al-Huwailah revealed that more wedding halls will be ready upon completion of the maintenance and restoration works -- 24 halls and centers included in the events hall program for electronic reservation within the framework of the digital transformation of the ministry's services to ease procedures for citizens. She said this is in line with the ministry's commitment

to speed up the documentary cycle in providing venues for various social occasions in compliance with the directive of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to provide the best services to citizens.

Al-Huwailah stated "we are keen on implementing a clear strategy to provide the best services to all segments of society, especially the wedding halls, which are important to the citizens."

On the mechanism for dealing with donors for the construction of wedding halls, Al-Huwailah affirmed her full support for donors wishing to build wedding halls; indicating she is keen on removing all the obstacles they might face. She added a special committee will be formed to assess the requests in accordance with the relevant regulations.

## KPC moves forward with Aspen PIMS tender

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14: Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) has announced the launching of the tender for building and operating the integrated software -- Aspen

PIMS -- for the optimal integration of the operational activities of the corporation.

This is in response to the request of the Supreme Purchasing Committee in charge of the tenders of the corporation and its affiliated companies. The above-mentioned tender will be launched on Sept

19, while the closing date is Oct 15. KPC also confirmed that its internal purchasing committee has approved the awarding of ATM service areas to Commercial Bank of Kuwait; indicating the highest bid that conform to the specifications and technical conditions is about KD12,024.

## Expedite propagation

Continued from Page 1

Nonetheless, it is not possible to clap with one hand. Without a responsible elite to translate the ruler's aspirations into action, either by amending and updating laws or by appointing competent individuals to executive positions, all efforts will be in vain.

We therefore say it again - The torch ignited by His Highness the Amir requires determined individuals to carry it forward and illuminate the path to serve the nation and fulfill the people's aspirations.

Today, Kuwait needs substantial efforts to address the repercussions of the practices of the last 60 years of chaos. This includes revitalizing the national economy through strategic economic development, establishing industrial infrastructures, achieving food self-sufficiency, and reforming education, which is crucial for the development of any nation.

We have repeatedly stated that Kuwait could benefit from tapping into talent from abroad. It is essential to think outside the box, as other countries have done, and to move beyond the sentiments that have caused a lot of harm, either in the view of expatriates or the notion that "Kuwait is a democratic state and therefore differs from other Gulf countries". Everyone should work to serve their country and avoid clinging to past practices that have led to devastation.

Considering the huge improvements witnessed over the past four months due to the rescue measures of the Amir of the moment, it is crucial for the Council of Ministers and all state institutions to live up to the goodwill of the people, whose aspirations were declared by His Highness the Amir as his own.

We must overcome 60 years of misery, decline, looting, self-interest, and tribal and sectarian divisions, and instead follow in the guidance of the torch of the renaissance.

## KFA top

Continued from Page 1

In a statement posted on his "X" account today, Abdulaziz Al-Samhan

announced his resignation from the Board of Directors, citing the recent events during the match between the national teams of Kuwait and Iraq at Jaber Stadium.

The statement read, "After fulfilling my responsibility by submitting the report to hold the negligent accountable and taking necessary measures against them, and in light of my national and social duties, I resign from my position on the Authority's Board of Directors following the unfortunate incidents that occurred during the World Cup qualifiers.

"We face a significant national responsibility and challenge in organizing the 'Gulf 26.' Given our current capabilities and the preparations made so far, we must address the situation immediately to prevent repeating the same mistakes in front of Kuwait's guests.

"Out of respect for Kuwait, its reputation, and its history, we must make the necessary decisions, prepare to the highest standards, and consider hiring experienced foreign firms to ensure the successful organization of this important event.

"As I pray for the success of our national team in the qualifiers and for Kuwait to be held in high regard under the guidance of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and his esteemed Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, I hope you will accept my apology for any mistakes I may have made during my tenure on the Board."

## Penalties stiffened

Continued from Page 1

- Article 134: Anyone who verbally or physically insults a public servant while they are performing their duties or due to their work will face a maximum penalty of three-month imprisonment and/or a fine ranging from KD 100 to KD 300.

- Article 135: Anyone who assaults or resists a civil servant using force or violence while they are performing their duties will be punished with imprisonment for up to one year, and/or a fine ranging from KD 300 and KD 1,000.

If the assault happens to any of the

individuals mentioned in the second paragraph of the preceding article, the offender may face up to two years in prison and/or a fine ranging from KD 500 to KD 2,000.

Police and Army:

If a member of the police force, Kuwait Army, or the National Guard is assaulted while performing duties related to dispersing a gathering, meeting, demonstration, or procession with the intent to resist or obstruct their work, the penalty is imprisonment for up to five years and/or a fine ranging from KD 1,000 to KD 5,000.

Reconciliation Prohibited:

According to the Article 2 of the decision, a new Article 135 bis shall be added to the Penal Code, which stipulates that victims of the crimes specified in Articles 134 and 135 cannot withdraw their complaints, reconcile with the accused, or pardon them, in accordance with the provisions of Articles 110, 240, and 241 of the Criminal Procedures and Trials Law No. 17/1960.

Family Members:

According to the Article 2 of the decision, the text of Article 53 of law No. 31/1970 shall be replaced with the following:

- Any public servant, worker, or individual charged with performing public service who directly or indirectly causes physical or psychological harm, or intimidates an individual or their family with the intent to coerce them into confessing to a crime or providing information about it, shall face the same punishment. This also applies to any official who was present when the act occurred, approved it, or remained silent when they could have intervened.

Regardless of the cause or nature of the discriminatory act, the punishment for violating the provisions of the previous paragraphs is imprisonment for up to seven years and/or a fine ranging from KD 3,000 to KD 10,000.

The Most Severe Penalty: The most severe punishment will be applied if the torture is accompanied by an act that constitutes a more serious offense. If the torture results in death, the accused will face the penalty for premeditated murder.

According to Article 4 of the decision, the ministers, each in their respective capacities, are responsible for

implementing this decree-law, which will be effective from the date of its publication in the official gazette.

Explanatory Memorandum:

The explanatory memorandum of decree-law No. 93/2024 states the following:

In response to the increasing attacks on public servants, which have diminished the state's prestige, and to safeguard the rights and stability of these employees, the decree-law will increase the penalties for the crimes committed against them due to their work or while they are on duty.

As per the first paragraph of Article 134, the minimum fine for insulting a public employee has been increased to KD 100. It also increases the penalties for offenses against judges and members of the Public Prosecution, imposing a maximum of one year imprisonment and a fine ranging from KD 300 to KD 1,000.

Furthermore, the decree-law sets a minimum penalty for crimes against police force members, the Kuwait Army, and the National Guard during the performance of their duties.

The penalty for assaulting a public servant under Article 135 has been increased, by setting a minimum fine to ensure deterrence.

In addition, victims of these crimes cannot withdraw their complaints or reconcile with the accused, as outlined in Articles 210, 240, and 241 of the Criminal Procedures and Trials Law.

## Sheikh Jaber

Continued from Page 1

Prime Minister and Minister of Defense. He was appointed to the same position in the government formed on July 14, 2003.

On February 9, 2006, he was appointed as the First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior, and Minister of Defense. He was reappointed to the same positions in the two governments formed on July 11, 2006 and March 25, 2007.

Following a Cabinet reshuffle on October 28, 2007, Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak assumed the role of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense. He was reappointed to these positions in the successive govern-

ments formed in May 2008, January 2009, May 2009, and May 2011 until the government submitted its resignation on November 28, 2011. An Amiri decree was issued on November 30, 2011 to appoint him as Prime Minister.

He was reappointed as Prime Minister in the governments formed in February 2012, July 2012, December 2012, July 2013, November 2016, and finally on November 1, 2017, when an Amiri order appointed him as Prime Minister and tasked him with nominating members of the new government.

In December 2009, French President Nicolas Sarkozy honored Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, who was then serving as First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, with the Legion of Honor, First Class, in recognition of his efforts to strengthen bilateral relations between France and Kuwait.

In November 2009, Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak was awarded the "Highest Order of the Rising Sun" by the Emperor of Japan, one of the highest Japanese honors, during a ceremony held at the Imperial Palace.

## Fitch affirms

Continued from Page 1

"Even without a liquidity law, the government would still be able to meet its financing obligations in the coming years, given the assets at its disposal," according to the report.

On the budget deficit, Fitch report expects it to widen to 4.4 percent of GDP in FY24, from 3.1 percent in FY23, and further to 6.0 percent in FY25.

The government plans to rationalize spending in line with its expenditure target, which we anticipate is achievable through modest reductions in non-core expenditures and continued under-spending of the budget.

However, significant reform of the generous public employment and welfare spending (81 percent of total expenditure; 41 percent of GDP) is unlikely, thereby keeping total expenditure near the target ceiling, according to the report.

Fitch expects the oil revenues to continue to decline, even as non-oil revenues rise modestly.

Oil revenue loss from lower oil prices

is partly mitigated by the potential unwinding of OPEC+ oil production quotas from 4Q24. Fitch forecasts that the government will continue to rely on the assets of the General Reserve Fund (GRF) to cover its budget deficit and meet domestic maturities.

Fitch's FY25 forecast assumes that the government will resume borrowing, with about 30 percent of deficit being financed by debt issuance.

On the Gross government debt, Fitch forecasts it will rise to 4.8 percent of GDP in FY25 and further in FY26, despite a USD 4.5 billion Eurobond maturing in March 2027.

Nonetheless, it expects the debt levels to remain well below the projected 2025 'AA' median of 50 percent of GDP. Regarding the impacts of regional conflict on the economy, Fitch report finds that the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East and disruptions to Red Sea shipping have had "minimal impact on Kuwait," which has large government assets that provide an important buffer to support the economy if tensions were to escalate.

On ESG - Governance, Fitch rated Kuwait at ESG Relevance Score (RS) of "5[+]" respectively for both Political Stability and Rights and for the Rule of Law, Institutional and Regulatory Quality and Control of Corruption.

"These scores reflect the high weight that the World Bank Governance Indicators (WBI) have in our proprietary Sovereign Rating Model (SRM). Kuwait has a medium WBI ranking at 53, reflecting low scores for voice and accountability, and middling scores across other governance indicators," according to the report.

## Kuwait welcomes

Continued from Page 1

Addressing the IAEA's Board of Governors meeting on Israel's nuclear capabilities, Talal Al-Fassam, Kuwait Ambassador to Austria and Permanent Representative to the International Organizations in Vienna, stressed the importance of Israel joining the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. He denounced Israel's rejection of every kind of nuclear inspection and continued opposition to any UN initiative to denuclearize the Middle East.

## World News Roundup

## Europe

## Romania storms kill 5

## Russia expels six British diplomats

MOSCOW, Sept 14, (AP): Russia on Friday accused six British diplomats of spying and said it decided to expel them. The UK said the "completely baseless" move came weeks ago and was linked to its action in May to revoke the credentials of an attaché at the Russian Embassy and limit Moscow's diplomatic activities in London.

President **Vladimir Putin** has warned that Kyiv's use of long-range weapons would put NATO at war with Moscow.



Putin

Russia's Federal Security Service said in an online statement that the Foreign Ministry withdrew the British envoys' accreditations, and Russian TV quoted an FSB official as saying it was decided to expel them.

The FSB said it received documents indicating the diplomats were sent to Russia by a division of the U.K.'s Foreign Office "whose main task is to inflict a strategic defeat on our country," and that they were involved in "intelligence-gathering and subversive activities." It did not identify the six diplomats.

The FSB warned that if other diplomats are found to be carrying out "similar actions," it "will demand early termination of their missions" to Russia.

Russian TV said the six diplomats had met with independent media and rights groups that have been declared "foreign agents" - a label Russian authorities have actively used against organizations and individuals critical of the Kremlin.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova said in a statement that the diplomats were carrying out "subversive actions aimed at causing harm to our people."

"We fully agree with the assessments of the activities of the British so-called diplomats expressed by the Russian FSB," she added in an online statement. "The British Embassy has gone far beyond the limits outlined by the Vienna Conventions."

RT hit with sanctions: The US State Department announced new sanctions on Russian state media Friday, accusing a Kremlin news outlet of working hand-in-hand with the Russian military and running fundraising campaigns to pay for sniper rifles, body armor and other equipment for soldiers fighting in Ukraine.

While the outlet, RT, has previously been sanctioned for its work to spread Kremlin propaganda and disinformation, the allegations announced Friday suggest its role goes far beyond influence operations. Instead, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said, RT is a key part of Russia's war machine and its efforts to undermine its democratic adversaries.

"RT wants its new covert intelligence capabilities, like its longstanding propaganda disinformation efforts, to see main hidden," Blinken said Friday. "Our most powerful antidote to Russia's lies is the truth. It's shining a bright light on what the Kremlin is trying to do under the cover of darkness."

RT has also created websites posing as legitimate news sites to spread disinformation and propaganda in Europe, Africa, South America and elsewhere, officials said. They say the outlet has also expanded its use of cyber operations with a new unit with ties to Russian intelligence created last year.

The crowd-sourcing effort ran on Russian social media platforms and sought to raise funds for military supplies, some of which were procured in China, officials said.

Romania rainstorms kill 5: Five people in eastern Romania have been found dead after torrential rainstorms left scores of people stranded in flooded areas, emergency authorities said Saturday.

Rescue services scrambled to save 95 people in the hard-hit eastern counties of Galati and Vaslui. The bodies of three elderly women and two men were found in the localities of Pechea, Draguseni, Costache Negri, and Corod, the Department for Emergency Situations said.

Authorities later added that it was determined one of the victims had been dead for two days and "did not die due to the effects of the weather" but from other causes.

Emergency authorities released video footage that showed a team of rescuers evacuating an elderly man on a small lifeboat before carrying him to safety.

A Black Hawk helicopter was deployed to Galati to help with the search and rescue missions.

The storms battered 19 localities in eight counties in Romania, with strong winds downing dozens of trees that damaged cars and blocked roads and traffic. Authorities sent text message alerts to residents to warn them of adverse weather as emergency services rushed to remove floodwaters from homes. Some roads have also been closed.

Romania's Prime Minister Marcel Ciolacu canceled planned engagements Saturday to travel to Galati county to assess the fallout.

Man faces 86 charges in Denmark: A 29-year-old man in Denmark faced a whopping 86 preliminary charges Friday for driving at high speed on motorcycles, riding on the rear wheel - also at high speed - and endangering others, police said, adding that the man had mounted a camera on his motorcycle helmet which provided investigators with several hours of footage of how he drove.

"I don't think I've ever seen anything like it," Amrik Singh Chadha of the police in eastern Denmark said in a statement. "There is no doubt that it has been a big and unconventional case for us to investigate."

When detained in May for riding a motorcycle with no license plates and without having a valid permit, police found a video camera had been mounted on the man's helmet which had recorded how he drove on the rear wheel at high speed. Police said that it led to the man facing 25 cases of preliminary charges for that alone. He has not been identified.

The incriminating videos also led to an additional 38 preliminary charges of reckless driving for speeding over 100% above the limit. On top of that, the footage led to a series of other charges related to the man's driving which the police considered likely to endanger the life and safety of others.

After months of watching the incriminating footage, police on Friday went public. The preliminary charges are one step short of formal charges.

In Denmark, reckless driving includes driving more than 100% above the speed limit, driving at a speed of 200 kilometers per hour (124 miles per hour) or above and driving with a blood alcohol level above 2.0.



Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer, (right), and Foreign Secretary David Lammy, (second right), during a meeting with US President Joe Biden, (centre left), in the Blue Room at the White House in Washington on Sept 13. (AP)

## Biden meets with UK PM, brushes off Putin threats about weapons for Ukraine

US President Joe Biden brushed off a threat from Russian leader Vladimir Putin about war against the West if Ukraine's allies allow it to use weapons deeper inside Russia. It's a shift that Kyiv has pleaded for, but no decision was immediately announced following a meeting Friday between Biden and Britain's prime minister.

Ukraine and many of its supporters in the US and Europe want Biden to lift restrictions on

Western-provided long-range weapons, and there are signs Biden might shift the administration's policy.

The US, concerned about any step that could lead Russia to escalate the conflict, has moved cautiously before granting a series of earlier requests from Ukraine for specific arms, including advanced tanks, missiles and rocket systems, and F-16 fighter jets. Russian officials have is-

sued similar threats before many of those past decisions.

Ukraine was a key topic for Biden and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer after this week's visit to Kyiv by their top diplomats, who came under fresh pressure to loosen weapons restrictions. So far, the US has allowed Ukraine to use American-provided weapons only in a limited area inside Russia's border with Ukraine. (AP)

## Politics

## 'I offer a new generation of leadership'

## Harris says she's different from Biden

WASHINGTON, Sept 14, (AP): US Vice President Kamala Harris, who presents herself as the candidate of change as she runs for president against Republican Donald Trump, said Friday that she's different from President Joe Biden because she offers "a new generation of leadership."

In her first solo television interview since she became the Democratic presidential nominee, Harris also criticized the "hate and division that we see coming out of Donald Trump" and said she thinks people are "exhausted" by his style of leadership.

She also said she's a gun owner and doesn't want to take away anyone's guns, but believes a ban on assault-style weapons is necessary and consistent with the Second Amendment.

Anchor Brian Taff of WPVI-TV in Philadelphia asked Harris to describe one or two areas where she's different from the president.

"Well, I'm obviously not Joe Biden" and "I offer a new generation of leadership," Harris said, adding that things once taken for granted cannot be overlooked anymore.

## Critical

"For example, another plan that I have that is a new approach is to expand the child tax credit to \$6,000 for young families for the first year of their child's life because that is obviously a very critical stage of development of child, and so my approach is about new ideas, new policies that are directed at the current moment," she said. "And also, to be very honest with you, my focus is very much on what we need to do over the next 10, 20 years to catch up to the 21st century around, again, capacity but also challenges."

The interview was conducted in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, as Harris campaigned there Friday.

Trump, his running mate Sen. JD Vance and other Republicans have criticized Harris for largely avoiding media interviews or interacting on the record with reporters who cover her campaign events. She and her running mate, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, gave a joint interview to CNN last month. Her campaign recently said she will begin to do more local interviews, and the National Association of Black Journalists announced Friday that some of its members will interview Harris on Tuesday in Philadelphia.

Harris used a question about the former president's appeal and how she would speak to his supporters to criticize Trump and his leadership style.

## Professes

"I also believe that I am accurate in knowing that most Americans want a leader who brings us together as Americans and not someone who professes to be a leader who is trying to have us point our fingers at each other," she said.

The vice president suggested that her support from Republican officials, including former Vice President Dick Cheney and his daughter, former Rep. Liz Cheney, is a result of people being "exhausted" with Trump.

"I think people are more willing now, in light of the hate and division that we see coming out of Donald Trump to say, 'Hey, let's put country first' and I think that just makes us stronger and more healthy as a country," she said.

Trump's campaign did not immediately respond to an emailed request for

comment.

The vice president, 59, is a former San Francisco district attorney, California attorney general and US senator. She offered a few answers when asked to share one thing she would like people to know about her they don't yet know.

"Probably it's not very different from anybody watching right now," she said. "I love my family. One of my favorite things that I lately have not been able to do is Sunday family dinner. I love to cook."

Harris also said her best friend from kindergarten "is still my best friend."

## Also:

**RANCHO PALOS VERDES, Calif:** Donald Trump refused on Friday to condemn recent racist and conspiratorial comments from right-wing provocateur **Laura Loomer**, who traveled with him earlier this week to Tuesday night's presidential debate and several 9/11 memorial events.

"Laura's been a supporter of mine," Trump told reporters at a press conference near Los Angeles, where he was pressed on concerns from Republican allies about his ongoing association with Loomer, who has a long history of promoting ugly and extreme conspiracies.

Trump said Loomer has "strong opinions," but insisted at the news conference he was unaware of her recent comments, including a post on X in which she played on racist stereotypes by writing that "the White House will smell like curry & White House speeches will be facilitated via a call center" if his Democratic rival, Vice President **Kamala Harris**, wins in November.



Britain's Prince William, Prince of Wales presents an award to a graduate cadet during the Sovereign's Parade at the Royal Air Force (RAF) College, in Cranwell near Sleaford, eastern England, on Sept 12. (AP)



Austin



Jill Biden

## North America

**1st lady, Austin visit Ala base:** US First lady **Jill Biden** and Defense Secretary **Lloyd Austin** are traveling to Maxwell Air Force Base in Alabama to highlight programs the Pentagon and White House are rolling out to improve the quality of life and early childhood education in the military.

At Maxwell on Friday, Biden and Austin will visit a pre-kindergarten program that the first lady has championed that funds universal preschool and help for children aged 3 and 4. The administration plans to expand that program beyond military facilities and into education systems nationwide.

Austin is expected to discuss efforts the Pentagon has made to ease some of the financial and career hurdles that military families face. Austin has made improving troop quality of life a goal during his time as defense secretary. (AP)

**Canadian man admits shootings:** A Canadian man has pleaded guilty to federal crimes for shootings at electrical substations and an oil pipeline in the Dakotas that caused \$1.7 million in damages.

Cameron Monte Smith pleaded guilty Wednesday in US District Court in Bismarck, North Dakota, to two counts of destruction of an energy facility - one in North Dakota and one in South Dakota. He could face up to 20 years in prison and fines of up to \$250,000 on each charge, the Bismarck Tribune reported. Sentencing is in December.

Federal authorities said Smith, 49, was in the US illegally when he fired shots into the Wheelock Substation near Ray, North Dakota, in May 2023, knocking out power for over 240 people and causing \$1.2 million in damage. (AP)

## Driver charged with killing player:

The driver charged with killing NHL hockey player Johnny Gaudreau and his brother Matthew as they bicycled on a ru-

ral road had a blood-alcohol level of .087, above the .08 legal limit in New Jersey, a prosecutor said Friday.

Gaudreau, 31, and brother Matthew,



Firefighters battle against wildfire, dubbed the Bridge Fire, in the Angeles National Forest near the border between Los Angeles and San Bernardino Counties, in California, the United States, on Sept 13. Helped by cooler temperatures, firefighters gained ground on Friday against three blazes in Southern California and authorities began scaling back evacuation orders that displaced thousands of people. (Xinhua)

29, were killed near their childhood home in South Jersey on Aug. 29, the evening before they were set to serve as groomsmen at their sister Katie's wedding.

The driver, 43-year-old Sean M. Higgins of nearby Woodstown, New Jersey, is charged with two counts of death by auto, along with reckless driving, possession of an open container and consuming alcohol in a motor vehicle. (AP)

## Crews gain ground on blazes:

Helped by cooler temperatures, firefighters gained ground Friday against three blazes in Southern California and authorities began scaling back evacuation orders that displaced thousands of people.

The largest blaze is the Bridge Fire east of Los Angeles, which has burned 81 square miles (210 square km), torched at least 33 homes and six cabins and forced the evacuation of 10,000 people. The cause of the fire is not yet known. After days of burning without fire crews being able to stop its forward march, it was 3% contained on Friday.

While firefighters have made significant progress, the three major wildfires that have ravaged the mountains east of Los Angeles, destroying dozens of homes, injuring a dozen people, and burning more than 100,000 acres (40,470 hectares). (AP)

## Africa

## 37 get death in Congo

## Comoros prez slightly injured in knife attack

MORONI, Comoros, Sept 14, (AP): The president of the Indian Ocean island nation of Comoros was "slightly injured" in a knife attack while attending the funeral of a religious leader on Friday, his office said. The suspect, who was identified as a 24-year-old male soldier, was then found dead in a police cell on Saturday.

President **Azali Assoumani's** injuries were not serious and he had returned to his home, his office said in a statement. It said the attacker was arrested by security forces and was taken into custody, but authorities said he had been discovered a day later "unresponsive" in a cell where he was being held and was declared dead.



Assoumani

The suspect was identified as Ahmed Abdou. Public prosecutor Ali Mohamed Djouaid said Abdou had attacked Assoumani with a kitchen knife at the funeral. A civilian was also injured during the attack while attempting to protect the president, government minister Aboubacar Said Anli said.

The attack happened in the town of Salimani on the outskirts of the capital Moroni.

"The president's security agents immediately subdued the young man and handed him over to investigators," public prosecutor Djouaid told reporters. He said an investigation was underway into the attacker's motive and the circumstances of his death while in custody.

Assoumani was reelected as president of Comoros in January in a vote denounced by opposition parties as fraudulent. At least one person died in unrest following the election.

Assoumani, 65, is a former military officer who first came to power in a coup in 1999.

He has been the leader since and extended his presidency into a fourth term this year after changing the constitution to remove term limits and abolishing a system that saw the presidency rotated between Comoros' three main islands.

□ □ □

**Congo court sentences 37 to death:** A military court in Congo handed down death sentences Friday to 37 people, including three Americans, after convicting them on charges of participating in a coup attempt.

The defendants, most of them Congolese but also including a Briton, Belgian and Canadian, have five days to appeal the verdict on charges that include attempted coup, terrorism and criminal association. Fourteen people were acquitted in the trial, which opened in June.

The open-air military court in the capital, Kinshasa, convicted the 37 defendants and imposed "the harshest penalty, that of death" in the verdict delivered in French by presiding judge Maj. Freddy Esuma. The three Americans, wearing blue and yellow prison clothes and sitting in plastic chairs, appeared stoic as a translator explained their sentence.

Richard Bondo, the lawyer who defended the six foreigners, disputed whether the death penalty could currently be imposed in Congo, despite its reinstatement earlier this year, and said his clients had inadequate interpreters during the investigation of the case.

Six people were killed during the botched coup attempt led by the little-known opposition figure Christian Malanga in May that targeted the presidential palace and a close ally of President Felix Tshisekedi.

□ □ □

**Mourners pay respects to athlete:** Dozens of mourners in Uganda paid respects to Rebecca Cheptegei, the Olympic athlete who died last week in Kenya after her partner set her on fire.

Local leaders and others gathered at the local administration hall Saturday as they awaited her burial at her ancestral home in a village near the Kenya border.

Cheptegei died after her body suffered 80% burns in the attack by Dickson Ndiema, who doused her in gasoline at her home in western Kenya's Trans-Nzoia County on Sept 3. Ndiema sustained 30% burns on his body and later succumbed to his injuries.

According to a report filed by the local chief, they quarreled over a piece of land the athlete bought in Kenya.

The horrific gasoline attack shocked many and strengthened calls for the protection of female runners facing exploitation and abuse in the East African country.

□ □ □

**S.Sudan postpones Dec elections:** The government in South Sudan has postponed elections scheduled for December for two years citing the need to complete processes such as a census, the drafting of a permanent constitution and the registration of political parties.

The Presidential Adviser on National Security Tut Gatluak on Friday said the extension would provide an opportunity to complete critical processes before the new election date of Dec. 22, 2026.

This is the second time the country, which gained independence in 2011, is postponing elections and extending a transitional period that started in February 2020.

President Salva Kiir and his former rival turned deputy, Riek Machar, signed a peace agreement in 2018 that ended a five-year civil war in which more than 400,000 people died.

Last month, the chairperson of National Election Commission, Prof Abednego Akok, told the Associated Press the country was behind the electoral calendar which required voter registration to have started in June but was still pending due to a shortage of funds.

□ □ □

**Senegal prez dissolves parliament:** Senegal's President Bassirou Diomaye Faye dissolved the opposition-led parliament on Thursday, paving the way for a snap legislative election six months after he was voted in on an anti-establishment platform.

The new election will take place Nov. 17, Faye said in a televised address Thursday evening in which he asked voters to give his party a mandate so that he can carry out the "systemic transformation that I promised." Analysts say that Faye's political party, PASTEF, has a high chance of securing a majority, given his popularity and his margin of victory in the March presidential election.

The Benno Bokk Yaakar opposition platform led by former President Macky Sall condemned the move. They said Faye had convened a legislative session under false pretenses in order to announce the dissolution and accused him of "perjury."

Faye, 44, won the vote in March to become Africa's youngest elected leader, less than two weeks after he was released from prison.



This undated photo provided on Sept 13, 2024, by the North Korean government shows what they say is test-firing from their new launch vehicle of 600mm multiple rockets at an undisclosed location in North Korea. Inset: Kim Jong Un, (center), on an inspecting visit at what they say is an institute of nuclear weapons and a facility for nuclear materials at an undisclosed location in North Korea. (AP)

## Asia

## Cambodia decries US sanctions

## N.Korea unveils uranium enrichment site

SEOUL, South Korea, Sept 14, (AP): North Korea offered a rare glimpse into a secretive facility to produce weapons-grade uranium as state media reported Friday that leader Kim Jong Un visited the area and called for stronger efforts to "exponentially" increase its number of nuclear weapons.

It's unclear whether the site is at North Korea's main Yongbyon nuclear complex, but it's the North's first disclosure of a uranium-enrichment facility since it showed one at Yongbyon to visiting American scholars in 2010. While the latest unveiling is likely an attempt to apply more pressure on the US and its allies, the images released by North Korean media of the area could provide outsiders with a valuable source of information for estimating the amount of nuclear ingredients that North Korea has produced.

During a visit to the Nuclear Weapons Institute and the facility producing weapons-grade nuclear materials, Kim expressed "great satisfaction repeatedly over the wonderful technical force of the nuclear power field" held by North Korea, the official Korean Central News Agency reported.

KCNA said Kim went around the control room of the uranium enrichment facility and a construction site that would expand its capacity for producing nuclear weapons. North Korean state media photos showed Kim being briefed by scientists while walking along long lines of centrifuges. KCNA didn't say when Kim visited the facilities or where they are located.

## Increase

KCNA said Kim stressed the need to further augment the number of centrifuges to "exponentially increase the nuclear weapons for self-defense," a goal he has repeatedly stated in recent years. It said Kim ordered officials to push forward the introduction of a new type of centrifuge.

Kim said North Korea needs greater defense and preemptive attack capabilities because "anti-(North Korea) nuclear threats perpetrated by the U.S. imperialists-led vassal forces have become more undisguised and crossed the red line," KCNA said.

South Korea's Unification Ministry strongly condemned North Korea's push to boost its nuclear capability. A ministry statement said North Korea's "illegal" pursuit of nuclear weapons in

defiance of U.N. prohibitions is a serious threat to international peace. It said North Korea must realize it cannot win anything with its nuclear program.

North Korea first showed a uranium enrichment site in Yongbyon to the outside world in November 2010, when it allowed a visiting delegation of Stanford University scholars led by nuclear physicist Siegfried Hecker to tour its centrifuges. North Korean officials then reportedly told Hecker that 2,000 centrifuges were installed and running at Yongbyon.

Satellite images in recent years have indicated North Korea was expanding a uranium enrichment plant at Yongbyon. Nuclear weapons can be built using either highly enriched uranium or plutonium, and North Korea has facilities to produce both at Yongbyon. Some U.S. and South Korean experts believe North Korea is covertly running at least one other uranium-enrichment plant.

□ □ □

**Cambodia decries US sanctions:** Cambodia on Friday decried newly imposed US sanctions on one of the country's top tycoons who has been implicated in allegations of forced labor, human trafficking and lucrative online scams.

Cambodia's foreign ministry expressed "deep regret over the unjust decision" to sanction Ly Yong Phat and suggested that the action could hurt bilateral relations. Ly Yong Phat, one of Cambodia's richest men, is also a Cambodian senator and a leading member of the ruling Cambodian People's Party of Prime Minister Hun Manet.

The US Treasury Department on Thursday imposed sanctions on Ly Yong Phat and five of his businesses "for their role in serious human rights abuses related to the treatment of workers subjected to forced labor in online investment scam operations."

"Victims forced to run virtual currency investment scams and other online schemes are often lured by fraudulent jobs and promises of free housing," said the statement. "Instead, they find themselves forced to run scam operations for criminal organizations under horrifying working and living conditions."

Washington's move, which blocks any of Ly Yong Phat's assets in the United States and prohibits U.S. enti-

ties from doing business with him, reflects mounting concern about cyber-crime, including from Southeast Asia and Cambodia in particular.

□ □ □

**'HK journalists harassed':** Dozens of Hong Kong journalists and some of their family members and associates were harassed over the summer, a prominent media professional group said Friday.

Drastic political changes have created an increasingly restricted environment for journalists in the semi-autonomous city once regarded as a bastion of press freedom in Asia.

Selina Cheng, chair of the Hong Kong Journalists Association, said in a news conference Friday that her group found self-proclaimed patriots sent anonymous complaints to at least 15 journalists' family members, the employers of their family members, their landlords and other related organizations since June.

Many of the letters and emails threatened the recipients that if they continued to associate with the reporters in question or their family members, they could be endangering national security, the trade union for the city's journalists said. Additionally, at least 36 journalists were identified in Facebook posts baselessly calling their articles inflammatory and portraying legitimate reporting as problematic or illegal.

□ □ □

**Berlin sails ships thru Taiwan:** Germany sailed two warships through the Taiwan Strait on Friday in its first transit of the disputed waters in more than two decades, as Berlin seeks to increase its defense engagement in the Asia-Pacific region.

China claims the self-governing democratic island of Taiwan as its own, and views such transits as provocative actions.

To challenge China's claims, the United States and allies including Australia, Canada, Britain and France, have regularly conducted "freedom of navigation" operations there, sailing through the strait to emphasize that it is international waters.

In its last naval deployment to the region in 2021-22, Germany had sought to avoid confrontation with China and attempted a diplomatic balancing act, seeking a port call in China, which Beijing denied, and by not sailing through the Taiwan Strait.



Police officers patrol a street near the airport in Port-au-Prince, Haiti on Sept 5. (AP)



Maduro



Obrador

## Lat/Am

**Mexico prez slams cartel:** Mexican President **Andrés Manuel López Obrador** on Friday asked the warring factions of the Sinaloa cartel to act "responsibly" so no one else gets killed, after a week of escalating violence nearly paralyzed the Sinaloa state capital, Culiacan.

Asked by a journalist if he trusted that the cartels would heed his call, López Obrador answered bluntly: "The president of Mexico is always listened to."

"By everyone, more so if one has moral authority," responded the president.

The exchange Friday during the president's morning press briefing is the latest in a series of instances where López Obrador has downplayed the clashes between factions of the Sinaloa cartel.

The president, who leaves office on Sept 30, has repeatedly refused to confront cartels, laying out various justifications for his "hugs, not bullets" strategy offering opportunities to youths so they won't join cartels.

The latest clashes in Culiacan are the latest example of the violence that continues to plague Mexico, where cartels employ increasingly sophisticated forms of warfare including roadside bombs or IEDs, trenches, home-made armored vehicles and bomb-dropping drones. (AP)

□ □ □

**Cartel leader pleads not guilty:** Ismael "El Mayo" Zambada, the powerful longtime leader of Mexico's Sinaloa drug cartel, is scheduled to be arraigned Friday in New York on a 17-count indictment accusing him of narcotics trafficking and murder.

Sought by American law enforcement for more than two decades, Zambada has been in US custody since July 25, when he landed in a private plane at an airport outside El Paso in the company of another fugitive cartel leader, Joaquín Guzmán López, according to federal authorities.

Zambada later said in a letter that he was forcibly kidnapped in Mexico and brought to the US by Guzmán López, the son of the imprisoned Sinaloa co-founder Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán.

US prosecutors in Brooklyn have asked the judge to detain Zambada permanently while he awaits trial. If convicted on all charges, Zambada, 76, faces a minimum sentence of life in prison and would be eligible for the death penalty.

In a letter to the judge, prosecutors called Zambada "one of the world's most notorious and dangerous drug traffickers."

"The defendant maintained an arsenal of military-grade weapons to protect his person, his drugs, and his empire," they wrote. (AP)

□ □ □

**16 allies of Maduro sanctioned:** The US government responded to Venezuela's disputed July presidential election by im-

posing sanctions against 16 allies of President **Nicolás Maduro**, accusing them of obstructing the vote and carrying out human rights abuses.

Those targeted by the Treasury Department include the head of the country's high

court, leaders of state security forces and prosecutors. The move came days after the departure into exile of Edmundo González Urrutia, the former diplomat who represented the main opposition parties and claimed to have won the July 28 presidential election



Suspects are seen at a military court in Kinshasa, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) on Sept 13. Thirty-seven alleged coup plotters, including three Americans, were convicted and sentenced to death on Friday by a Kinshasa military court in a trial against the failed coup of May 19. (Xinhua)

by a wide margin.

Venezuela's electoral authorities declared Maduro the victor hours after polls closed, but unlike previous presidential elections, they never released detailed vote tallies to back up their claim arguing that the National Electoral Council's website was hacked. To the surprise of supporters and opponents, González and opposition leader María Corina Machado shortly afterward announced not only that their campaign had obtained vote tallies from over two-thirds of the electronic voting machines used in the election but also that they had published them online to show the world that Maduro had lost. (AP)

□ □ □

**Violence erupts in Haiti:** A fresh wave of violence between rival gangs in one of the Haitian capital's poorest neighborhoods was sparked by gunfire that broke out over a referee's call during a soccer match, a pastor and newspaper said Friday.

The awarding of a penalty kick in Wednesday's championship match in the Cité Soleil community of Port-au-Prince touched off a shootout at the venue that killed the second-in-command of one gang and injured another gang leader, the pastor said.

"A lot of people were killed," Pastor Enock Joseph told Magik 9 radio station on Friday. Joseph, whose church is located inside Cité Soleil, said he did not know exactly how many people have died so far. (AP)

## OPEC marks 64th anniversary, celebrates milestone in energy industry

Secretary General of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Haitham Al-Ghais said Saturday that the establishment of OPEC on September 14, 1960, marked the beginning of a new era in the energy industry and global economic sector.

This came in a joint press statement made by the Secretary General to KUNA and Kuwait TV on the occasion of the organization's celebration of the 64th anniversary of its establishment.

OPEC's Secretary General congratulated His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, recalling the pioneering role of Kuwait in the organization's journey in all stages.

Al-Ghais said that the organization has remained faithful and committed to the principles and values it has adopted since its establishment until to-

day, supporting the stability of the oil market and the global energy market. He said that the distinguished Kuwaiti presence in OPEC indicates Kuwait's sound forward-looking vision and its awareness of the utmost importance of the energy industry in the global economy.

On this occasion, Al-Ghais extended his congratulations and gratitude to all member states, including heads of state, kings, heads of government and ministers, for their support for OPEC and its activities.

He also praised the efforts made by former OPEC secretaries general over the past decades, which has made OPEC gain a prestigious position and trust at the global level.

He said that the 64th anniversary of OPEC's establishment is an ideal opportunity to focus on the role of the organization and its progress over the past decades. (KUNA)

Haitham Al-Ghais – Secretary General of OPEC



## Market Movements 13-09-2024

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts		
DUBAI	- DFMGI	+15.62	4,380.49	JAPAN	- Nikkei 225	-251.51	36,581.76
PAKISTAN	- KSE 100	+357.49	79,400.63	PHILIPPINES	- PSEi	-1.82	7,022.85
BRITAIN	- FTSE 100	+32.12	8,273.09				
EUROPE	- Euro Stoxx 50	+29.91	4,843.99				

# Business

## Stock market falls 0.39%, losing KD 138 mln in value

Kuwait general index rises 0.16% on latest trading day

By Mahmoud Shendi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14: In the past week, the Kuwaiti stock market experienced a decline, with the general stock market index falling by 28 points, or 0.39 percent, ending at 7,158.56 points. This drop resulted in a decrease in market value by KD 138 million, bringing the total to KD 42.324 billion, down from KD 42.492 billion the previous week.**

The Premier Market Index also saw a reduction of 0.90 percent, closing at 7,748.44 points, a loss of 70.72 points from the prior week.

The performance of the Kuwait Stock Exchange remained mixed for the third consecutive week, with market participants closely watching the upcoming Federal Reserve meeting.

The main market index rose by 2.09 percent, gaining 127.49 points to close at 6,237.35 points. The main market index 50 ended the week at 6,611.85 points, reflecting a 3.33 percent increase or 195.61 points from the previous week.

Trading activity showed signs of recovery, with volumes up 32.66 percent to 2.03 billion shares and liquidity rising 21.26 percent to KD 375.21 million. The number of deals also increased by 22.82 percent to 104,290.

Sector performance varied, with 9 sectors declining, led by technology (-9.61 percent), while 4 sectors rose, notably insurance (+5 percent).

Among individual stocks, Unicap led the declines with a 23.44 percent drop, while Giad stock saw the highest increase at 28.32 percent. MENA stock, which surged 22.31 percent, led in trading volume with 184.78 million shares, and IFA stock led in liquidity with KD 49.69 million and a 7.73 percent price increase.

Market analysts anticipate ongoing fluctuations in the Kuwaiti Stock Exchange, driven by selling pressures on major stocks and expected new incentives.

This volatility is largely attributed to falling oil prices, raising concerns about sustained declines due to decreased demand and increased supply. Lower oil revenues pose challenges for Gulf countries, affecting their budgets and project investments.

Market observers are closely watching developments in the US economy, where August's inflation data came in at 2.5 percent, the lowest since February 2021. However, the core consumer price index, excluding food and energy, exceeded expectations, fueling speculation that the Federal Reserve might reduce interest rates by 25 basis points in its upcoming meeting. This uncertainty has led to continued market fluctuations as investors await clearer signals on oil prices and the Federal Reserve's decision.

On the latest trading day, the Kuwait Stock Exchange saw a modest rise in its general index, which increased by 11.5 points, or 0.16 percent, closing at 7,158 points. A total of 3.273 million shares were traded across 16,269 transactions, amounting to KD 51.8 million (approximately USD 158 million).

The Main Market Index also posted gains, rising by 25.2 points, or 0.4 percent, to finish at 3,562.37 points. This was achieved through trading of 197.4 million shares in 9,090 transactions, valued at KD 26.1 million (around USD 79.7 million).

The Premier Market Index experienced a slight increase of 8.4 points, or 0.1 percent, closing at 7,748 points. Trading volume in this segment reached 75.9 million shares, with 7,179 transactions totaling KD 25.6 million (about USD 78.8 million).

Similarly, the Main 50 Index rose by 32.5 points, or 0.5 percent, to 6,085.61 points, supported by the trading of 115.7 million shares across 4,576 transactions, amounting to KD 15.9 million (approximately USD 48.4 million).

Sector and Stock Performance  
Among individual stocks, Synergy, M. Business, Inovest, and Hotels saw the most significant gains. In contrast, Ubak, Jiyad, Imtiyazat, and Al-Inzam experienced notable declines.

As market conditions remain volatile, stakeholders are keeping a close eye on both U.S. monetary policy and oil price trends to gauge their potential impact on future market movements.

## Other Voices

### Organization's mission far from complete

## OPEC celebrates 64 yrs of influence in the oil industry

By Kamel Al-Harami

Independent Oil Analyst

ON September 14, 1960, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) was formed. The founding members were Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela.

At the time, the global oil industry was dominated by major oil companies, known as the "Seven Sisters" - Esso, Mobil, Gulf, Texaco, Chevron, BP, and Shell. These companies controlled most of the world's oil resources, with American companies managing Saudi Aramco and Kuwait Gulf Oil, while BP had interests in Iran and Iraq. In Iran, BP had to share its control with American companies following the Mossadegh Revolution. Chevron primarily operated in Venezuela.

This organization was created in response to the overwhelming control these companies had over the global oil market, marking a pivotal moment in the history of the oil industry.

However, most oil-producing countries were initially unaware of the oil business and struggled to calculate their annual oil income. Major oil companies often exploited this ignorance, treating these nations poorly by offering lower income and reducing their oil production.

OPEC's primary objective was to secure a fair price for its members' natural resources and enhance their understanding of the oil industry. The goal was to learn how to navigate this complex sector, which had long been shrouded in secrecy for the owners of the resources. In other words, OPEC aimed to master the art of selling and trading in an industry that had been some sort of a taboo for them and was inaccessible to them.

Previously, oil producers had little insight into income calculations, oil movements, or the broader petroleum knowledge. They were merely recipients of payments

without much understanding or auditing, expected to be grateful without questioning. The major oil companies, often referred to as the "Seven Sisters," used their dominance to manipulate and pit one producer against another, leaving the oil-producing nations with minimal leverage and little room for negotiation.

With the process of nationalization and a shift from simple participation to full control, OPEC began to play a more active role in managing and controlling oil production. However, this control was not without limitations.

Oil-producing countries still needed the expertise and technology that major oil companies provided. This dependence remains evident today in the oil and gas sector. Major oil companies are now willing to share their knowledge, but this often comes with the condition of securing a percentage of shares in oil reserves. This new arrangement is a strategy to keep these companies engaged in our oil fields. Without their participation, oil-producing countries would struggle to fully exploit their resources and extract every last barrel.

While we control the land, the true wealth lies in the advanced technology that is not yet in the hands of the producers. OPEC takes pride in its achievements, having become a powerful entity that commands respect and admiration through its policies and influence.

Today, OPEC faces new challenges in diversifying its role and ensuring that oil production contributes positively to a clean and sustainable global environment. The organization is striving to balance its crucial role in the energy sector with environmental stewardship, aiming to make the oil industry more environmentally-friendly, user-friendly and less polluting.

Ultimately, global consumers should contribute to covering the costs of OPEC's investments.

After 64 years of existence, OPEC recognizes that its mission is far from complete. The organization remains committed to maintaining stability, ensuring fair and competitive prices, and upholding oil discipline. OPEC aims to continue as the guardian of these principles, adapting to new demands and challenges in the global energy landscape.

Email: nafikkuwaiti@yahoo.com



Al-Harami

## A modern banking experience

## ABK unveils new Salmiya branch

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) announces the relocation of its Salmiya branch to a state-of-the-art facility situated in Block 7, Salem Al Mubarak Street; this new branch epitomizes ABK's commitment to branch transformation and delivering customer-centric banking solutions.

The newly designed Salmiya branch stands as a testament to modernity, seamlessly blending sophisticated aesthetics with technology-driven features. Customers will enjoy access to a wide range of banking services in a space that prioritizes comfort and accessibility.

"We believe that the future of banking lies in providing a customer



Ms. Johair Marafi, General Manager of Retail Banking at ABK.

experience that is not only efficient but also pleasant and impactful," said Johair Marafi, General Manager of Retail Banking at ABK. "This new location is designed to reflect our vision of accessible banking that enhances the overall experience of our customers."

"As we continue to transform our branches, our primary goal remains focused on our customers. The Salmiya branch is a perfect example of our dedication to fostering a banking environment where sophistication meets service excellence," Marafi added.

The new Salmiya branch is now open for business, welcoming customers to experience a new standard in banking excellence.

## 300,000 jobs lost in West Bank

## Palestinian economy is in free fall and will require billions to rebuild, UN says

GENEVA, Sept 14, (AP): The Palestinian economy is "in free fall," the United Nations reported Thursday, with production in Gaza plunging to one-sixth of its level before Israeli forces began a blistering military response to the Oct. 7 attacks in the territory.

The report from UN Trade and Development, or UNCTAD, also warned of "rapid and alarming economic decline" in the West Bank, citing expanded Israeli settlements, land confiscations, demolition of Palestinian buildings and violence by settlers.

The report made no mention of corruption in Palestinian institutions.

"The Palestinian economy is in free fall," Pedro Manuel Moreno, the agency's deputy secretary-general, told reporters in Geneva. "The report calls for the international community to halt this economic free fall, address the humanitarian crisis, and lay the groundwork for lasting peace and development."

That would include a "comprehensive recovery plan" for Palestinian areas, more international aid, the lifting of Israel's blockade on Gaza, and the release of revenues and withheld funds for Palestinians retained by Israel, he said.

Gaza's economy was weak even before the war, when unemployment was close to 50%, but the war has brought it to a near-standstill, with the U.N. estimating that roughly 90% of the territory's population has been displaced, many living in squalid tent camps and dependent on international aid.

The war has also hurt the West Bank. After the Oct. 7 attacks, Israel immediately revoked work permits that allowed some 150,000 Palestinians to work inside Israel, depriving them of a key source of income.

A military crackdown that Israel says is aimed at militants has also rippled through the economy, with frequent army raids and military checkpoints making it difficult for people to work or move around.

With violence continuing, there's little sign of any recovery plan being launched anytime soon.

Mutasim Elagrar, who coordinates UNCTAD's assistance to Palestinians, said: "If we want to return Gaza to pre-October 2023, we need tens of billions of dollars, or even more, and decades."

The ultimate goal is "to put Gaza on a path of sustainable development," which will take more time and money, he said.

Economic output in Gaza plunged to just over \$221 million in the half-year including the last quarter of 2023 and first quarter of 2024 - the last quarter for which figures are available - or about 16% of the total figure for the same half-year period in 2022 and 2023, when the total was just over \$1.34 billion, the agency said.

Meanwhile, more than 300,000 jobs in the West Bank - home to some 3 million Palestinians - have been lost, driving unemployment rates up to 32%, up from under 13% before the conflict, the agency reported.

By early this year, as much as 96% of Gaza's farming assets, including livestock farms, orchards, machinery and storage facilities, had been "decimated," UNCTAD said.

Over 80% of businesses were damaged or destroyed, and the damage has continued to worsen, it said.

Since the 1990s, Israel has collected import duties for Palestinians - leaving about two-thirds of all Palestinian tax revenue under the control of the Israeli government. Israel has repeatedly withheld or suspended the payments, accusing the Palestinian Authority of encouraging violence or taking hostile steps against Israel in the U.N. and other international bodies.

From 2019 through April this year, Israel had withheld or deducted a total of more than \$1.4 billion, crippling the ability of Palestinian officials to provide public services and pay salaries, pensions and debts, it said. The European Union last month said it paid some \$43 million to help the Palestinian Authority pay salaries and pensions in the West Bank.

Israel's offensive in Gaza has killed at least 41,084 Palestinians and wounded another 95,029, the territory's Health Ministry said. The ministry's count does not differentiate between civilians and militants.

Israel launched its campaign vowing to destroy the Palestinian group Hamas after the Oct. 7 attack on southern Israel in which militants killed some 1,200 people and abducted 250 others.

## Brent crude falls to \$71.61

## Kuwaiti oil price rises to \$74.01 pb

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti oil price rose by 85 cents to USD 74.01 per barrel (pb) on Friday, compared with USD 73.16 pb the previous day, said Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on Saturday.

At international markets, Brent crude futures fell by 36 cents to USD 71.61 pb, and West Texas Intermediate crude went down by 32 cents to USD 68.65 pb.

## Plans underway for potential merger of KGOC & KOC

## KGOC & Saudi Chevron aim to double Wafra field production

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14: Kuwait Gulf Oil Company (KGOC) and Saudi Chevron Company are working hard to double the production capacity of Wafra field to reach 320,000 barrels before the end of 2028; say reliable sources who disclosed that the current production ranges from 165,000 to 170,000 barrels per day.

Sources said acting Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of KGOC Abdul Wahab Al-Mazen and Deputy CEO for Joint Operations Bader Al-Munifi had earlier discussed the company's action plan with those in charge of operations. They deliberated on all means to improve the company's performance, sources confirmed.

Sources added the meeting also tackled the achievements of the company over the years; such as the establishment of the main lines to increase the production capacity of Khafji and Wafra fields, particularly in terms of overcoming all difficulties, especially since Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) is working hard to increase oil production in the divided zone between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

Moreover, sources revealed that KGOC has updated the administrative regulations and internal executive procedures by adding the incentives and rewards system for employees in Chapter Six, Item No. 15. Source said these amendments aim to motivate the national staff, considering the new executive management is seen on ad-

ressing all the problems and difficulties that Kuwaiti employees in Wafra and Khafji fields are facing.

Sources disclosed the concerted efforts of KGOC and Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) in the drilling operations in KGOC projects are part of the preliminary procedures for merging the two companies like Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) and Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company (KIPIP).

Sources pointed out that using the equipment of KOC, whose long history confirms that all oil companies affiliated with the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) are working together for the benefit of the Kuwaiti oil industry, is in line with the strategy of KPC to achieve the desired goals.

## Saudi business leaders express confidence

## China and Saudi 'enhance' economic cooperation amid global uncertainty

RIYADH, Sept 14, (Xinhua): Chinese Premier Li Qiang on Wednesday urged Saudi companies to deepen their involvement in the Chinese market, and invest with greater confidence.

Li made the remarks in a meeting with representatives of the Saudi business community including Saudi Public Investment Fund, Saudi Arabian Oil Company, Saudi Basic Industries Corporation, ACWA Power, and the Ajlan & Bros Holding Group. Saudi Minister of Commerce Majid bin Abdullah Al-Qasabi, Minister of Investment Khalid Al-Falih, and representatives from the China-GCC (the Gulf Cooperation Council) joint

investment commission also attended the meeting.

During the meeting, Li said that in recent years, under the strategic guidance of Chinese President Xi Jinping and Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, the political relationship between China and Saudi Arabia has remained stable, their development strategies are well-aligned, and the practical cooperation between the two countries has yielded fruitful results, with economic and trade cooperation in particular maintaining a strong momentum.

Against the backdrop of accelerating changes in the world unseen in a

century and insufficient momentum for global economic recovery, there is increasing instability and uncertainty in international economic and trade cooperation, and entrepreneurs are keenly interested in finding the next promising investment destinations, said the Chinese premier.

China is comprehensively advancing Chinese modernization by promoting high-quality development, continuously unlocking the demand of a large-scale market of over 1.4 billion people, Li said, adding that the country is steadily pushing forward the digital, intelligent, and green transformation and upgrading its industries.



**Russian central bank hikes rates to fight inflation**

Russia's central bank raised its key interest rate by a full percentage point to 19% to combat high inflation as government spending on the military strains the economy's capacity to produce goods and services and drives up workers' wages. The central bank said in a statement Friday that "growth in domestic demand is still significantly outstripping the capabilities to expand the supply of

goods and services." It held out the prospect of more rate increases to return inflation from the current 9.1% to the bank's target of 4% in 2025. Russia's economy continues to show solid growth despite sanctions from countries opposed to what the Kremlin calls a "special military operation" in Ukraine. Gross domestic product benefits from high levels of government spending, including for

the military, with tax coffers bolstered by oil exports. One result of government outlays is inflation, which the central bank has tried to combat with higher rates that make it more expensive to borrow and spend on goods, in theory relieving pressure on prices. So far it has been fighting a losing battle, and economists say that at some point tight credit may slow growth. (AP)

**US filings for jobless benefits inch up slightly**

Slightly more Americans filed for unemployment benefits last week, but layoffs remain at historically low levels despite two years of elevated interest rates. Jobless claims rose by 2,000 to 230,000 for the week of Sept. 7, the Labor Department reported Thursday. That number matches the number of new filings that economists projected. The four-week average of

claims, which smooths out some of week-to-week volatility, ticked up by 500, to 230,750. The total number of Americans collecting jobless benefits rose by a modest 5,000, remaining in the neighborhood of 1.85 million for the week of Aug. 31. Weekly filings for unemployment benefits, considered a proxy for layoffs, remain low by historic standards, though they are up from earlier this year.

During the first four months of 2024, claims averaged a just 213,000 a week, but they started rising in May. They hit 250,000 in late July, adding to evidence that high interest rates were finally cooling a red-hot U.S. job market. Employers added a modest 142,000 jobs in August, up from a paltry 89,000 in July, but well below the January-June monthly average of nearly 218,000. (AP)

**Next up: The Fed**

**Inflation's down and ECB has slashed rates, again**

FRANKFURT, Germany, Sept 14, (AP): With inflation subsiding, the European Central Bank cut interest rates again on Thursday to prop up tepid growth with lower borrowing costs for companies and home buyers. The U.S. Federal Reserve likely won't be far behind in joining the rate-cutting process. The bank's rate-setting council lowered the deposit rate from 3.75% to 3.5% at a meeting at its skyscraper headquarters in Frankfurt. It was the second rate cut as the bank starts to withdraw some of the swift rate increases it imposed to snuff out a burst of double-digit inflation that broke out after Russia cut off most natural gas supplies over its invasion of Ukraine. But experts don't expect a rapid series of rate cuts from either the ECB or the Fed central bank to anywhere near the rock-bottom levels from before the 2020 outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. They say the ECB will tiptoe, rather than slash, and might cut rates only one more time this year. Inflation's down with the help of lower oil prices.

Inflation in the 20 countries that use the euro currency fell to 2.2% in August, not far from the ECB's 2% target, down from 10.6% at its peak in October, 2022. At her post-decision news conference, bank President Christine Lagarde said recent data had confirmed "our confidence that we are heading towards our target in a timely manner." Asked about the next meeting on Oct. 17, she said, "I'm not giving you any commitment of any kind as far as that date is concerned." But she steered clear of any guidance on further cuts. She said the bank would make rate decisions on a meeting by meeting basis depending on incoming information about the economy and was "not pre-committing to a particular rate path." Policy makers must keep an eye on simmering inflation among services companies and rising wages as workers push to make up for purchasing power lost to the outburst of inflation that followed the end of the pandemic.

The ECB cut once in June and then hit pause in July before going on summer break in August. The rate-setting council led by President Christine Lagarde has to juggle concerns about a disappointing outlook for growth against - which argues for cuts - against the need to make sure inflation is going to reach the bank's 2% target and stay there - which would support keeping rates higher for a bit longer. Consumer prices spiked after Russian cut off most natural gas shipments to Europe over its February, 2022 invasion of Ukraine, sending utility bills higher. The rebound from the pandemic also led to bottlenecks in supplies of parts and raw materials, further boosting inflation that then spread more broadly to services, a broad category that includes medical care, personal services such as haircuts, restaurants, hotels and entertainment. The ECB and the Fed responded with swift rate rises, the ECB bringing its benchmark rate to a record high of 4%, since cut in June to 3.75%.

The central bank's benchmark rate strongly influences what private-sector banks pay to borrow - and through that rates across the rest of the economy. Higher rates cool inflation by making it more expensive to borrow and buy things, holding back price rises. But high rates can slow growth, and that worry is coming into focus. Higher rates in Europe and the U.S. have meant increased mortgage costs for home buyers, and higher payments for people who run credit card balances or buy cars on credit. But they have been a boon to savers and retirees who like interest income and are getting visible returns on their bank holdings or money market accounts after years of zero returns. The Fed is also expected to make a first cut in its benchmark rate at its Sept. 17-18 meeting from a 23-year high of 5.25%-5.5%. Consumer prices rose 2.5% in August from a year earlier, down from 2.9% in July. It was the fifth straight annual drop in inflation. Core inflation excluding volatile fuel and food - which can be a better guide - was higher at 3.2%.

**Research ... targeted**

**Moderna lays out its plan to cut spending**

NEW YORK, Sept 14, (AP): Shares of Moderna tumbled early Thursday after the vaccine developer said it was cutting research and development spending and pushed back its time frame for breaking even. The company also forecast a 2025 revenue range that fell below Wall Street expectations. Moderna said it planned an approximately 20% reduction in expected research and development expenses for 2025 to 2028 from \$20 billion to \$16 billion. It expects a reduction of about \$1.1 billion in annual spending starting in 2027 through cost cuts and by prioritizing its portfolio. Moderna developed the Spikevax COVID-19 vaccine, and regulators approved this year its vaccine for RSV

or respiratory syncytial virus. The company also has a combination flu/COVID vaccine and an RSV vaccine for high-risk younger adults that it expects to submit to regulators in 2024. The company also said Thursday that it now expects to break even in 2028. It predicted last November that this would happen in 2026. For 2025, Moderna said it expects revenue ranging from \$2.5 billion to \$3.5 billion. Analysts forecast \$3.87 billion, according to FactSet. Shares of Cambridge, Massachusetts-based Moderna Inc. were down 12% to \$69.61 before markets opened Thursday. That price has already dropped 20% so far this year after starting 2024 around \$100.

**Wholesale inflation in US mostly cooled last month**

Data latest sign price pressures are slowing

WASHINGTON, Sept 14, (AP): U.S. wholesale price increases mostly slowed last month, the latest evidence that inflation pressures are cooling enough for the Federal Reserve to begin cutting interest rates next week.

The Labor Department said Thursday that its producer price index - which tracks inflation before it reaches consumers - rose 0.2% from July to August. That was up from an unchanged reading a month earlier. But measured from a year ago, prices were up just 1.7% in August, the smallest such rise since February and down from a 2.1% annual increase in July. Excluding food and energy prices, which tend to fluctuate from month to month, so-called core wholesale prices moved up 0.3% from July and have risen 2.3% from August 2023.

Taken as a whole, last month's wholesale price figures suggest that inflation is moving back toward the Fed's 2% target level. After peaking at a four-decade high in mid-2022, the prices of gas, groceries and autos are either falling or rising at slower pre-pandemic rates. On Wednesday, the government reported that its main inflation measure, the consumer price index, rose just 2.5% in August from a year earlier, the mildest 12-month increase in three years. The pickup in core wholesale prices from July to August was driven by a 0.4% rise in the cost of services, such as internet access and banking.

Goods prices were unchanged from July to August, with the cost of energy falling 0.9%. Wholesale food prices ticked up just 0.1% last month and are down 0.8% compared with a year earlier, a sign that grocery store prices, though still up nearly 25% since the pandemic, are now barely increasing.

The latest inflation figures follow a presidential debate Tuesday night in which former President Donald Trump attacked Vice President Kamala Harris for the price spikes that began a few months after the Biden-Harris administration took office, when global supply chains seized up and caused severe shortages of parts and labor. During the debate, Trump falsely characterized the scope of the inflation surge when he claimed that inflation during the Biden-Harris administration was the highest "perhaps in the history of our country." In 1980, inflation reached 14.6% - much higher than the 2022 peak of 9.1%.

The producer price index can provide an early sign of where consumer inflation is headed. Economists also watch it because some of its components, notably healthcare and financial services, flow into the Fed's preferred



Kubota excavators are displayed at a dealership in Butler, Pa., July 11, 2024. (AP)

**Average rate on a 30-year mortgage falls to 6.20 pct**

WASHINGTON, Sept 14, (AP): The average rate on a 30-year mortgage in the U.S. fell this week to its lowest level in 19 months, reflecting a pullback in Treasury yields ahead of an expected interest rate cut from the Federal Reserve next week.

The rate fell to 6.20% from 6.35% last week, mortgage buyer Freddie Mac said Thursday. A year ago, the rate averaged 7.18%.

The average rate is now the lowest it's been since February 12, 2023, when it was 6.12%.

Borrowing costs on 15-year fixed-rate mortgages, popular with home-owners seeking to refinance their home loan to a lower rate, also eased this week. The average rate fell to 5.27% from 5.47% last week. A year ago, it averaged 6.51%, Freddie Mac said.

Mortgage rates are influenced by several factors, including how the bond market reacts to the Fed's interest rate policy decisions. That can move the trajectory of the 10-year Treasury yield, which lenders use as a guide to pricing home loans.

Signs of waning inflation and a cooling job market have raised expectations that the Fed will cut its benchmark interest rate for the first time in four years at its meeting of policymakers next week.

The yield, which topped 4.7% in late April, has pulled back sharply since then in anticipation of a Fed rate cut. It was at 3.68% in midday trading in the bond market Thursday.

"Rates continue to soften due to incoming economic data that is more sedate," said Sam Khater, Freddie Mac's chief economist. "But despite the improving mortgage rate environment, prospective buyers remain on the sidelines, as they negotiate

a combination of high house prices and persistent supply shortages."

After climbing to a 23-year high of 7.79% in October, the average rate on a 30-year mortgage has hovered around 7% for most of this year. That's more than double what it was just three years ago.

The elevated mortgage rates, which can add hundreds of dollars a month in costs for borrowers, have put off many would-be homebuyers, extending the nation's housing slump into its third year. Sales of previously occupied U.S. homes are running below last year's pace, though they ended a four-month slide in July as homebuyers seized on more attractive mortgage rates.

Despite the sales slump, home prices have kept rising, pushing the limits of what homebuyers can afford. The national median home sales price rose in July on an annual basis for the 13th month in a row to \$422,600, just shy of the all-time high set in June, according to the National Association of Realtors.

Lower mortgage rates would help boost home shoppers' purchasing power. But many economists' forecasts call for the average rate on a 30-year home loan to remain above 6% this year.

"Prospective homebuyers expecting mortgage rates to drop dramatically after the Fed cuts rates will be disappointed," said Lisa Sturtevant, chief economist at Bright MLS. "The impact of the Fed lowering short-term rates has already been largely baked into mortgage rates, which have been falling since early July. High home prices and a lack of supply continue to be driving affordability challenges in the market."



A 'For Sale' sign is displayed in front of a home in Morton Grove, Ill., Sunday, Aug 25, 2024. (AP)

**China raising its retirement age**

BEIJING, Sept 14, (AP): Starting next year, China will raise its retirement age for workers, which is now among the youngest in the world's major economies, in an effort to address its shrinking population and aging work force.

The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, the country's legislature, passed the new policy Friday after a sudden announcement earlier in the week that it was reviewing the measure, state broadcaster CCTV announced.

The policy change will be carried out over 15 years, with the retirement age for men raised to 63 years, and for women to 55 or 58 years depending on their jobs. The current retirement age is 60 for men and 50 for women in blue-collar jobs and 55 for women doing white-collar work.

"We have more people coming into the retirement age, and so the pension fund is (facing) high pressure. That's why I think it's now time to act seriously," said Xiujian Peng, a senior research fellow at Victoria University in Australia who studies China's population and its ties to the economy.

The previous retirement ages were set in the 1950's, when life expectancy was only around 40 years, Peng said.

The policy will be implemented starting in January, according to the announcement from China's legislature. The change will take effect progressively based on people's birthdates.

For example, a man born in January 1971 could retire at the age of 61 years and 7 months in August 2032, according to a chart released along with the policy. A man born in May 1971 could retire at the age of 61 years and 8 months in January 2033.

Demographic pressures made the move long overdue, experts say. By the end of 2023, China counted nearly 300 million people over the age of 60. By 2035, that figure is projected to be 400 million, larger than the population of the U.S. The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences had previously projected that the public pension fund will run out of money by that year.

Pressure on social benefits such as pensions and social security is hardly a China-specific problem. The U.S. also faces the issue as analysis shows that currently, the Social Security fund won't be able to pay out full benefits to people by 2033.

"This is happening everywhere," said Yanzhong Huang, senior fellow

for global health at the Council on Foreign Relations. "But in China with its large elderly population, the challenge is much larger."

That is on top of fewer births, as younger people opt out of having children, citing high costs. In 2022, China's National Bureau of Statistics reported that for the first time the country had 850,000 fewer people at the end of the year than the previous year, a turning point from population growth to decline. In 2023, the population shrank further, by 2 million people. What that means is that the burden of funding elderly people's pensions will be divided among a smaller group of younger workers, as pension payments are largely funded by deductions from people who are currently working.

Researchers measure that pressure by looking at a number called the dependency ratio, which counts the number of people over the age of 65 compared to the number of workers under 65. That number was 21.8% in 2022, according to government statistics, meaning that roughly five workers would support one retiree. The percentage is expected to rise, meaning fewer workers will be shouldering the burden of one retiree.

inflation gauge - the personal consumption expenditures, or PCE, index. In its fight against high inflation, the Fed raised its benchmark interest rate 11 times in 2022 and 2023, taking it to a 23-year high. With inflation now

close to their target level, the Fed's policymakers are poised to begin cutting their key rate from its 23-year high in hopes of bolstering growth and hiring. A modest quarter-point cut is widely

expected to be announced after the central bank meets next week. Over time, a series of rate cuts should reduce the cost of borrowing across the economy, including for mortgages, auto loans and credit cards.

**China's consumer market continues recovery**

BEIJING, Sept 14, (Xinhua): China's consumer market has maintained stable recovery this year with expanding retail sales, official data showed Saturday.

Retail sales of consumer goods went up 2.1 percent year on year in August, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) said in a statement.

Rural consumption gained 3.9 percent last month from a year ago and the catering sector saw its revenue rise by

3.3 percent -- well above the average level, according to the data.

In terms of products, sales of communications equipment climbed 14.8 percent, while sales of cereals, oil and food went up by 10.1 percent. Medicine sales increased by 4.3 percent, and that of home appliances and audio and video products rose by 3.4 percent.

In the first eight months of 2024 combined, retail sales of consumer goods increased 3.4 percent compared

to a year earlier. Online sales remained a bright spot, rising by 8.9 percent year on year in the January-August period. In particular, sales of physical goods increased by 8.1 percent and accounted for a quarter of total retail sales.

Commenting on the data, NBS spokesperson Liu Aihua highlighted the recovery trend of the consumer market, especially in services, new-type consumption and online sales.

Recent vibrant summer travel and strong cultural and tourism demand underlined the great potential of service consumption, while digital and green consumption also emerged as a new fashion and favorites of consumers, Liu said.

China has rolled out an array of measures to boost consumption this year, including a program promoting large-scale equipment upgrades and consumer goods trade-ins.



Photos during the event.

## Promoting sustainable practices through agricultural techniques as part of its sustainability program 'Small Move, Big Impact'

# stc hosts indoor planting workshop in collaboration with Alya Younes

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14: Kuwait Telecommunications Company – stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, hosted an indoor planting workshop at its headquarters in Olympia Tower in collaboration with Alya Younes who is also known through her social media handle 'Grow-It-Green'. The initiative comes as part of stc's sustainability program "Small Move, Big Impact", while aligning with the Company's strategic direction to integrate environmentally conscious practices into its daily operations and community engagement.

The creative workshop, conducted in collaboration with and led by Alya Younes, explored various innovative techniques to agriculture, including organic farming methods suitable for Kuwait. Younes provided participants with practical knowledge on selecting resilient plants that can sustain the conditions in Kuwait, explained how to properly care for the plants, as well as an overview of the benefits of relying on self-grown produce as a sustainable

food source. The on demand workshop held at stc training centers was a huge success and attended by a large number of participants who were interested in exploring and learning more about proper planting techniques.

stc highlighted in a statement that the initiative was organized with the aim of educating participants on the added benefits behind organic farming and self-grown produce. With the proper knowhow, individuals can play an active role in building a sustainable green environment in Kuwait. Additionally, the Company expressed that it highly values the importance of sustainability in both personal and business practices. This is why stc seeks to highlight such topics through various activities and collaborations with institutions and businesses across different sectors.

In addition to its role in promoting environmental consciousness, stc is dedicated to empowering young entrepreneurs by providing them with the necessary opportunities and tools to grow their businesses. This workshop is one of

many initiatives that demonstrate stc's role in enabling the next generation of entrepreneurs to innovate and thrive in a rapidly evolving marketplace.

### About stc

Kuwait Telecommunications Company (stc) is a Kuwaiti shareholding company incorporated pursuant to Amiri Decree No. 187 on 22 July, 2008, to operate and manage the third GSM mobile network in Kuwait as per Law No. 2 of 2008. Accordingly, stc launched its operations in December 2008 and was listed on Boursa Kuwait in December 2014.

stc Kuwait is a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and solutions to customers, both for individuals and enterprises, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, and is a subsidiary of stc Group. stc Kuwait has expanded its portfolio by acquiring companies such as Qualitynet General Trading and Contracting Company (solutions by stc) in Kuwait, and e-portal Holding Company and its subsidiaries.

### Ten winners receive KD 1,000 each

## Warba announces winners of Al Sunbula weekly draw

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14: Warba Bank - the best bank in corporate and investment banking services in Kuwait - announced the winners of the weekly Al Sunbula draws. Warba Bank will continue to hold weekly draws for ten winners of Al Sunbula account, in the presence of a representative of Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Warba Bank employees.

Each of the 10 lucky winners of the Sunbula weekly draw of Warba Bank received KD 1,000, and the winners are: Mohammed Ahmed Faris Al-Khaldi, Jdea Mohammed Jdea Al-Azmi, Adel Saleh Hamad Al-Dhuweikh, Khaled Mohammed Fahad Al-Mshout, Firas Faisal Bader Al-Qattan, Hlayil Sant Hlayil Al-Harbi, Intisar Barghash Khaled Al-Janafawi, Mshari Nasser Zaid Al-Otaibi, Nawaf Suleiman Al-Maghribi, and Sultan Mubarak Farhan Al-Anezi.

As for the Sunbula account, it is the ideal choice for all those wishing to save money and achieve appropriate financial returns on their accounts at the same time, in addition to the opportunity to win cash prizes throughout the year.

Regarding the conditions, Mr. Abdulaziz Saud Al-Bakhait, Area Manager Retail Banking Group said: "KD 100 is now required to enter the weekly Sunbula draws and major draws, and the client still gets one chance for every KD 10 in the account, and the chances are counted according to the lowest balance in the account during the month. Therefore, a full month must have passed in the account to qualify for the weekly draw, and two full months for the major draws to count the chances. There are no restrictions or limits for withdrawal and deposit, the higher



Abdulaziz Al-Bakhait

the deposited amount, the greater the client's chances to win."

Warba Bank launched its latest banking solutions service, "Customer Onboarding", in accordance with the terms of its ambitious five-year strategy, which enables non-Warba Bank clients to apply for opening a Sunbula account in an easy digital way via the Bank's website without the need to visit any of the Bank's branches, and within only five minutes - through the new and unique automated system used to enable this service - new clients will be able to complete the request to open an account at any time and any place.

Warba Bank is one of the banks that has achieved great successes in a short period, as it occupied a leading position in the field of Islamic digital banking services for individuals, and it is one of the largest local banks in the number of shareholders, and these are among the most prominent components that make the Bank close to all members of society.

### Training program features hands-on experience across various departments

## KFH launches fourth training program for KSH students

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has launched its fourth edition of a tailored training program designed for students with special needs to develop their skills and enhance their expertise. The initiative highlights KFH's commitment to corporate social responsibility and its dedication to empowering individuals of this special society segment. It also reflects the strategic partnership and collaboration between KFH and the Kuwait Society for the Handicapped (KSH).

Marked by the presence of trainees of special needs and their families, the launch event was held at KFH Auto eco-friendly showroom. Distinguished executives from KFH including KFH Group Chief Human Resources and Transformation Officer, Zeyad Abdullah AlOmar, Deputy General Manager Public Relations and Media, Yousef Abdullah Al-Ruwaieh, Deputy General Manager-Products, Nehal Almosalem, Executive Manager Credit and Charge Card Products, Talal AlArbeed, and Regional Manager, Abdulwahab Alshehab were in attendance, affirming the strategic importance of this initiative.

In his statement, KFH Group Chief Human Resources and Transformation Officer, Zeyad Abdullah AlOmar said: "It gives me great pleasure to welcome a new group of students in the fourth edition of KFH

training program in collaboration with KSH. The first of its kind initiative reflects KFH's dedication to providing an opportunity for students with special needs to engage with society, learn new skills and gain experience through direct interaction with employees and customers. It also enriches their knowledge through hands-on experience necessary to achieve their goals and contribute effectively to society. The program will include training hours in different departments including Human Resources, Branches, Credits, Products and more."

He added: "At KFH, we are continuously commit-

ted to supporting individuals with special needs at all levels. This commitment is part of our ongoing strategy as a leading global Islamic financial institution. We pay close attention to the employment, training, and providing specialized services for this segment of society, including sign language-trained staff at our branches, designated parking spaces, wheelchairs, accessible entrances, ATMs equipped with accessibility features such as audio assistance, and Braille-printed account opening forms and contracts."

AlOmar emphasized that KFH has successfully integrated employees with special needs within its workforce line with sustainability standards as well as inclusion and diversity principles. In 2023, KFH created a workspace equipped with all the necessary facilities to ensure comfort, safety, and ease of access for 234 employees with special needs across the Group.

He thanked the Kuwait Society for the Handicapped for their notable collaboration and expressed his appreciation to everyone involved in preparing and implementing this program, with all participants continued success.



Zeyad AlOmar



Zeyad AlOmar and the officials of KFH with the trainees.

### Cultural events highlight LuLu's Onam festivities, including Kathakali and fashion show

# LuLu Hypermarket launches 'Awesome Onam 2024' festival

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14: LuLu Hypermarket, Kuwait's premier retail destination, kicked off its "Awesome Onam 2024" festivities, held on the occasion of the annual Onam festival in the southern Indian state of Kerala. The festivities began on 12 September with a lighting of the traditional oil lamp at the Al-Rai outlet by the top management of LuLu Kuwait.

This year's Onam celebrations promise to be a treat for customers, with amazing discounts and offers across all LuLu Hyper outlets from 11-17 September that allow shoppers to enjoy unbelievable prices on fresh fruits, groceries, vegetables, household items, garments, and much more.

The retailer has also curated a special collection of Onam-themed products, such as Onam Special Mixed Flowers (available at all outlets), Onam Sadyha (a traditional Onam feast with 21 varieties of dishes), Payasams (delicious sweet puddings), Onam Special Ethnic Wear 'Dhawani' (available exclusively only at LuLu outlets), and special sale promotions on sarees, churidars, and ethnic wear.

The resplendent celebrations also feature an array of cultural events, including a traditional 'Kathakali' performance, a special highlight of the event. On the sidelines of the festival's inauguration on September 12, the Al Rai outlet hosted an Onam fashion show for kids, awarding gift vouchers for first, second & third place winners. In addition, all participants were rewarded with consolation prizes.

Other exciting events include the Onam Special 'Payasamela', also held on September 12 at Al Rai, with prizes of KD150, KD 125, and KD 100 gift vouchers presented to the first, second and third place winners respectively.

In addition on September 12, a special Onam 'Floral Carpet Competition', was held at the Al Rai outlet, with the winner receiving KD130 worth of gift vouchers. The second and third placed winners received gift vouchers worth KD100 and KD75 respectively.

Traditional cultural programs, including 'Chendamelam' and 'Pulikali with Maveli', were held at LuLu Al Rai, Fahaheel, and Dajeej outlets, added to the

excitement of the inauguration on September 12 and provided an unforgettable experience for shoppers and visitors alike.

On September 13, the Al-Rai outlet witnessed an energetic 'Vadam Vali' (tug-of-war) competition, with KD400 worth of gift vouchers presented to the winning team. The second placed team received gift vouchers worth KD300, while the third place winning team were granted gift vouchers worth KD200 & KD100 for special consideration. More than 10 teams vigorously participated in the competitions.

Customers can also savor traditional Onam delicacies, enjoy exclusive discounts, or participate in lively cultural events, during the week-long festival, as this celebration has been specially crafted to bring people together and create lasting memories.

LuLu Hypermarket's Onam celebrations are supported and sponsored by Al-wazzan, Bayara, Noor, London Dairy, and Eastern, ensuring a truly grand and memorable celebration. Visit the nearest LuLu Hypermarket outlet to experience the uniting spirit of Onam.



Photos from the festival.

### Film

TORONTO, Sept. 14, (AP) — August Wilson's "The Piano Lesson" deals profoundly with ancestry and heritage, which makes it all the more fitting that the new film adaptation, produced by Denzel Washington and directed by his son Malcolm, is a family affair.

"The Piano Lesson," which premiered recently at the Toronto International Film Festival, is the third in Washington's ongoing project to bring Wilson's plays to the screen. It follows "Fences" and "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom" and, like those films, features several powerhouse performances, including Danielle Deadwyler as Berniece and John David Washington, Malcolm's older brother, as Berniece's brother Boy Willie.

In 1930s Pittsburgh, Boy Willie has arrived at his sister's home with plans to sell a family heirloom, a piano engraved by their ancestors who took it from their enslaver. In the tortured family drama that ensues, Berniece, Boy Willie and others (the cast includes Samuel L. Jackson, Michael Potts and Ray Fisher) wrestle with the haunting shadow of slavery and the weight of family legacy.

"There are so many legacies tied into this," says Malcolm Washington. "I think it's part of our duty when you're in the position to make a film like this to honor that and uphold it. We're here because so many people fought and sacrificed and acted to give opportunity for the next generation. This film and the story of it, ultimately, is much bigger than

my family."

Malcolm, 33, was sitting alongside his older brother and Deadwyler a few hours before the premiere of "The Piano Lesson," which Netflix will release Nov. 8 before it streams Nov. 22. As the interview was wrapping up, Denzel Washington burst into the room.

"It really all started with me," Denzel jokingly declared as the other three howled with laughter. "Then I had two sons, and the next thing I knew I was out of work!"

### Spotlight

Denzel, joined by his producing partner Todd Black, said it was his son's idea that he might direct "The Piano Lesson." A 2022 Broadway production had run of Wilson's Pulitzer Prize-winner with much of the same cast, including John David.

"Malcolm said he had a take," recalls Denzel. "He said, 'Let me put something together.' So he made a little short. I looked at it like, 'Whoa, OK. You want to make the movie? This is great, make the movie.'"

Yet Malcolm didn't immediately go for it. He told his father: "Let me see if I see the movie first." He began working on a treatment and ultimately co-authored the script with Virgil Williams ("Mudbound").

"At first, I was like, 'See the movie?' But I get it now," says Denzel.

"He's a real filmmaker. He took his time, and he didn't just jump in."

While John David, the 40-year-old star of "BlacKkKlansman" and "Tenet," has firmly established himself as his own leading man in Hollywood, Malcolm, an alum of the American Film Institute's directing program, is just stepping into the spotlight. "He knew what he wanted," says Black. "And he wasn't afraid to reach out to people who knew more than he knew."

During the making of "The Piano Lesson," Denzel largely kept his distance to let Malcolm work. Still, his passion for Wilson's plays pervaded throughout the production.

"He's such a fan of August Wilson and it's such an important part of his legacy to continue telling August's stories," Malcolm says. "His main thing with all of us was to keep that focus: We're here to honor one of our greats."

"The Piano Lesson" is a Washington family production in other ways, too. Malcolm and John David's mother, Pauletta Washington, plays the role of Mama Ola. The movie is dedicated to their mother.

"I started with a clear idea of this is about fathers and sons," Malcolm says. "As we were shooting, I just really started to see this mother-daughter story, and my mom is such an inspiration for me. I always saw my mom as tied into the Berniece story."

### Variety



This image released by Universal Pictures shows James McAvoy in a scene from 'Speak No Evil.' (AP)

### Film

Country home horror with a sinister twist

## Sinister McAvoy elevates 'Speak No Evil'

By Jocelyn Noveck

Quick. Has there ever been a horror film set in a country home with a decent cell signal? Nope, and there's no signal at Paddy and Ciara's house, either, deep in the English countryside. Soon, that land line will be cut, too, but we're getting ahead of ourselves.

Paddy and Ciara are that fun-but-somewhat-odd British couple whom Louise and Ben, early in "Speak No Evil," meet on their idyllic Tuscan family holiday. Americans based in London, Louise and Ben are at loose ends, with both job and relationship issues. And so, when the new acquaintances write to invite them for a country weekend, they decide to go.

After all, how bad could it be? Don't answer that. There are many such moments in the first two-thirds of "Speak No Evil," a Hollywood remake of the 2022 Danish film, here starring a deeply menacing James McAvoy. Moments where Louise and Ben, out of mere politeness and social convention, act against their instincts, which tell them something is wrong - very wrong.

Director James Watkins and especially his excellent troupe of actors, adult and children alike, do a nice job of building the tension, slowly but surely. Until all bloody hell breaks loose, of course. And then, in its third act, "Speak No Evil" becomes an entertaining but routine horror flick, with predictable results.

But for a while, it's a way more intelligent film. And the jumpy moments work - I'll confess to literally springing out of my seat when someone uneventfully turned on a power drill.

We begin in stunning Tuscany, where Louise (Mackenzie Davis, in the film's most accessible and empathetic performance) and Ben (Scoot McNairy, all nerves and insecurity) are vacationing with 11-year-old daughter Agnes (Alix West Laffer). At the pool, they meet Paddy (McAvoy) and Ciara

(Aisling Franciosi), a British couple with a disabled son, Ant, apparently born without a proper tongue.

One day in town, Paddy offers Agnes a ride on his Vespa. Louise is frightened to see her daughter disappear on the motorbike with a strange man, but it would be churlish to say no, right?

In briefly sketched backstories, we learn that Louise and Ben moved to London for Ben's job, but he was soon downsized out. As for Paddy, all we know is he's a doctor.

At least, we think he is. The Americans, accepting the weekend invitation back in England, arrive at the secluded country home in dead of night. Immediately something feels off. The rooms are quirky but musty, the sheets stained. How can a doctor live like this, Louise asks? Ben brushes off her concern, quipping that even Downton Abbey is in terrible shape.

### Guests

When the couple cooks dinner, Paddy proudly explains they've butchered their prize goose in their guests' honor. He proffers Louise a forkful - even though he well knows she's a vegetarian. Louise is disgusted but, politely, takes a bite.

Daughter Agnes, too, is freaked out. She's being made to sleep on the floor next to Ant (Dan Hough, poignant in a role with no words.) And the next evening, when everyone dresses for a special dinner out, Paddy and Ciara inform Louise and Ben that the kids will stay home with a strange male babysitter. "We've had mannies before," Ben tells Louise, unconvincedly.

Soon, though, we have the obligatory attempt to flee, followed by the "Oh no, we have to go back" moment - you know, where you're yelling: "No!" But return the family does.

In perhaps the movie's most effective scene, the two kids have put together a dance routine. The parents sit back proudly to watch, but repeatedly,

Paddy stops the routine to admonish, brutally, his son, telling him he's out of rhythm. McAvoy, a terrific actor who has made villainy part of his potent toolbox, is truly chilling as he becomes unhinged by his son's inability to keep time.

Then there's the scene fans of "The Shining" will recognize as the "Here's Johnny," Jack Nicholson moment. By then, everything's gone off the rails, and it's time for the blood to flow, predictably.

If there's a moral here, it's to trust those instincts when things feel wrong. But if movie characters did that, the horror genre would not exist.

Still, there's some satisfaction to be had, especially in the creative use of household implements to inflict pain and death. Revenge, they say, is a dish best served cold - except in horror films, where it is served raw and bloody, with a side of toxic cleaning fluid.

"Speak No Evil," a Universal Pictures and Blumhouse release, has been Rated R by the Motion Picture Association "for some strong violence, language, some sexual content and brief drug use." Running time: 110 minutes. Two and a half stars out of four.

### Also:

**LOS ANGELES:** Alex Garland's "Civil War" finally made its debut on MAX on Friday, Sept. 13. The film stars **Kirsten Dunst** as a veteran photojournalist covering a violent war that's divided America; She reluctantly allows an aspiring photographer, played by **Cailee Spaeny**, to tag along as she, an editor (**Stephen McKinley Henderson**) and a reporter (**Wagner Moura**) make the dangerous journey to **Washington, D.C.**, to interview the president (**Nick Offerman**), a blustery, rising despot who has given himself a third term, taken to attacking his citizens and shut himself off from the press. In my review, I called it a bellowing and haunting experience; Smart and thought-provoking with great performances. It's well worth a watch. (AP)

mous reports and videos from crew members of the shooting for "Megalopolis" of a nightclub scene in an Atlanta concert hall in February, 2023. The story said Coppola tried to kiss young female extras and "appeared to act with impunity" on the set. It said the film's financial arrangements meant "there were none of the traditional



Coppola



Macron

checks and balances in place." (AP)

**PARIS:** France's First Lady **Brigitte Macron** is appearing as a surprise guest on the fourth season of the Netflix show "Emily in Paris," parts of which were released on Thursday.

The show's main actress, **Lily**

**Collins**, who plays **Emily Cooper**, told The Associated Press on Wednesday that Brigitte Macron was "a big fan of the show." The First Lady invited her and **Darren Star**, the series' creator, to meet a few years ago and shared her desire to appear on the show, Collins said.

"She was so kind and warm and

welcoming and she was so enthusiastic about the show," Collins said. "Having her on set was so fun, she improv-ed, we had such a great time together ... It was an honor to do that with her."

The First Lady plays herself in one of the new season's episodes. The first half of Season 4 came out on Netflix on Aug. 15. (AP)

## People &amp; Places

## People

## Timberlake guilty

Prince Harry hits 40:  
From scamp to sage

LONDON, Sept. 14, (AP) — Prince Harry was always something different.

From the moment he first appeared in public, snuggled in Princess Diana's arms outside the London hospital where he was born in 1984, Harry was the ginger-haired scamp who stuck his tongue out at photographers. He grew to be a boisterous adolescent who was roundly criticized for wearing a Nazi uniform to a costume party, and then a young man who gave up the trappings of royal life and moved to Southern California with his American wife.

Through it all, there was a sense that Harry was rebelling against an accident of birth that made him, in the harsh calculus of the House of Windsor, just "the spare." As the second son of the man who is now King Charles III, he was raised as a prince but wouldn't inherit the throne unless brother William came to harm.

Now the angry young man is turning 40, the halfway point in many lives, providing a chance to either dwell on the past or look forward to what might still be achieved.

For the past four years, Harry has focused mainly on the past, making millions of dollars by airing his grievances in a wildly successful memoir and a Netflix docu-series. But he faces the likelihood that the royal aura so critical to his image may be fading, said Sally Bedell Smith, author of "Charles: The Passions and Paradoxes of an Improbable Life."

"He is at a sort of crossroads," Smith told The Associated Press. "And he appears to be struggling with how he wants to proceed."

It wasn't always this way.



Harry

## Popular

Six years ago, Harry and his wife were among the most popular royals, a glamorous young couple who reflected the multicultural face of modern Britain and were expected to help revitalize the monarchy.

Their wedding on May 19, 2022, united a grandson of Queen Elizabeth II with the former Meghan Markle, a biracial American actress who had starred for seven years in the US television drama "Suits." George Clooney, Serena Williams and Elton John attended their wedding at Windsor Castle, after which the couple were formally known as the Duke and Duchess of Sussex.

But the optimism quickly faded amid allegations that Britain's tabloid media and even members of the royal household treated Meghan unfairly because of racism.

By January of 2020, the pressures of life in the gilded cage had become too much, and the couple announced they were giving up royal duties and moving to America, where they hoped to become "financially independent." They signed lucrative deals with Netflix and Spotify as they settled into the wealthy enclave of Montecito, near Santa Barbara, California.

Since then, Harry has missed few opportunities to bare his soul, most famously in his memoir, aptly titled "Spare."

In the ghostwritten book, Harry recounted his grief at the death of Princess Diana, a fight with Prince William and his unease with life in the royal shadow of his elder brother. From accounts of cocaine use and losing his virginity to raw family rifts, the book was rife with damning allegations about the royal family.

Among the most toxic was Harry's description of how some family members leaked unflattering information about other royals in exchange for positive coverage of themselves. The prince singled out his father's second wife, Queen Camilla, accusing her of feeding private conversations to the media as she sought to rehabilitate an image tarnished by her role in the breakup of Charles' marriage to Diana.

The allegations were so venomous that there is little chance of a return to public duty, Smith said.

"He criticized the royal family in such a powerful and damaging way. You can't un-say those things," she said. "And you can't unsee things like Meghan in that Netflix series doing a mock curtsy. It's such a demeaning gesture to the queen."

Harry, who agreed not to use the honorific HRH, or "his royal highness," after he stepped away from front-line royal duties, is now fifth in line to the British throne, behind his brother and William's three children.

While he grew up in a palace and is said to be in line to inherit millions of pounds (dollars) on his 40th birthday from a trust set up by his great-grandmother, applied developmental psychologist Deborah Heiser thinks that, in many ways, Harry is just like the rest of us.

## Also:

**SAG HARBOR, N.Y.:** Justin Timberlake is expected to plead guilty to a traffic offense Friday, resolving the criminal case stemming from his June arrest in New York's Hamptons on a drunken driving charge.

The boy band singer-turned-solo star and actor will appear in Sag Harbor Village Court to formally enter a new plea, prosecutors said.

Details of the agreement with prosecutors weren't disclosed, but a person with knowledge of the deal said Timberlake has agreed to admit guilt to a lesser offense of "driving while ability impaired," a traffic violation that carries a \$300 to \$500 fine and a 90-day license suspension.

The person spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly about the deal until it was approved by a judge Friday.

The pop star originally pleaded not guilty to a misdemeanor charge of driving while intoxicated and had his driver's license suspended during a hearing last month.

Suffolk County District Attorney Ray Tierney's office, which is prosecuting the case, declined to comment ahead of the hearing, as did Timberlake's attorney, Edward Burke.

Timberlake was arrested in Sag Harbor, New York, a little after midnight on June 18 after police said he ran a stop sign in the village center, veered out of his lane and got out of his BMW smelling of alcohol.

Police in court filings also said the 43-year-old Tennessee native's eyes were "bloodshot and glassy" and that he had "slowed speech," was unsteady on his feet and performed poorly on all sobriety tests.

Timberlake told the officer he had had one martini and was following some friends home, police said.

**Sag Harbor** is a one-time whaling village mentioned in Herman Melville's classic novel "Moby-Dick" that is nestled amid the Hamptons, an area of seaside communities around 100 miles (160 kilometers) east of New York City.



This image released by FX shows Eita Okuno as Saeki Nobutatsu, (from left), Anna Sawai as Toda Mariko, Hiromoto Ida as Kiyama Ukon Sadanaga in a scene from 'Shogun.' (AP)

## Television

## What to expect from Sunday's show

## Will Emmys be the 'Shogun' show?

NEW YORK, Sept. 14, (AP) — The Emmys have become the "Shogun" show well before Sunday's ceremony even begins.

The FX series about political machinations among local lords, Portuguese traders and a wandering British sailor is already the winningest series for a single season in Emmy history after taking 14 trophies at the precursor Creative Arts ceremony on Sunday.

The main Emmys show could not only extend its lead - it could bring historic wins for its lead actors.

Here's a look at the 76th Primetime Emmy Awards, which will be held Sunday night at the Peacock Theater in Los Angeles, hosted by Dan and Eugene Levy and airing on ABC.

"Shogun" could win six more trophies, including best drama series, best actor in a drama for Hiroyuki Sanada and best actress in a drama for Anna Sawai.

Though if it fails to win in the biggest categories, "Shogun" may end up feeling like a sports team that has a record-setting regular season then tanks in the playoffs.

Sanada, 63, is a revered veteran Japanese actor whose face may be familiar to most American viewers for films including "The Last Samurai" and "John Wick: Chapter 4" even if his name is not. He's favored by most experts to win best actor over more widely known performers including Gary Oldman, Donald Glover and Idris Elba.

Sawai, 32, even less known in the US, is in the same situation, favored over famous names like Jennifer Aniston - who had been considered a frontrunner for "The Morning Show" before the "Shogun" wave took shape - and her castmate Reese Witherspoon.

Either Sanada or Sawai would be the first Japanese actor to win an Emmy.

## Dominance

When "Shogun" led all Emmy nominees with 25 at the announcements in July, many - including The Associated Press - suggested it was at least in part because of the absence of last year's HBO big three: "Succession," "The White Lotus" and "The Last of Us."

But its dominance at the Creative Arts ceremony put it in its own class. It wasn't just the number, it was the percentage. It won 14 of the 16 awards it was up for, getting snubbed only in two music categories. It won for its costumes, its hairdressing, its cinematography, its costumes, its casting and many more categories on its way to breaking the record of 13 Emmys set by the 2008 limited series "John Adams."

When Néstor Carbonell won best guest actor in a drama and thanked the crew, he gleefully declared, "You're all here!" because the crowd was so full of people who worked on the show.

Possibly getting a whiff of the golden possibilities, the makers of "Shogun" shifted from the limited series to

## 'Slow Horses' gets Emmy love after many seasons

NEW YORK, Sept. 14, (AP) — Jackson Lamb is an Englishman who solves mysteries, but he's not your typically elegant, charming type. One clue is that he often passes gas, rather loudly.

Lamb - portrayed by Gary Oldman - is the beating heart of Apple TV+'s "Slow Horses," a critical darling that seems to have gained traction in the US only lately, now in its fourth season. Ignored at the Emmys for two seasons, it goes into Sunday's telecast with nine nominations, including for best drama series.

"I think it's been a slow burn," says Oldman, who earned an Emmy nod for his Lamb. "More people are now coming up to me and saying, 'I really like the show.' I've become that guy on TV, which I kind of like, actually."

Lamb is the comically unpleasant leader of a band of dejected British spies nicknamed the "Slow Horses" because they work at lowly Slough House, far from the gleaming center of power in London. They've messed up their careers in a variety of ways, including botching surveillance operations, gambling addictions or leaving a top secret file on a train.

Lamb's hair is unkempt and greasy. He wears a ratty, dirty rain-

coat and his stocking feet are forever up on his desk. He smokes too much, drinks scotch on the job, is violently un-politically correct and is blunt to the point of rude. His voice mail says: "This is Lamb. If I didn't answer it's because I don't want to speak to you."

He's also fiercely loyal to his team and is the sharpest - if the most unclean - knife in the drawer. He can tell from just a footprint the person's salary and is at least three steps ahead of anyone else. He refuses to follow rules - a petulant middle finger to the establishment.

"If there's a sign that says 'No smoking,' Lamb will smoke," says Oldman. "He's just a bloody pig. We just like watching. Maybe we'd would love to be so direct."

Will Smith, the showrunner and executive producer, says he's meeting Lamb late in his career after he has run afoul of the hierarchy and been dismissed by others.

"He's a puzzle. He's an enigma because he's not like what you've seen. I think the character is intriguing on that level," says Smith. "You're meeting him at the end of his arc - he's burned out - and then you're kind of unpacking what made him this way and given little glimpses of the man he was and can be when he when he has to be."

after a shift from supporting actress to lead.

While "Shogun" and "The Bear" may lack household names, there are truly major stars who are potential winners at these Emmys, several of them Oscar winners.

Two-time Academy Award winner Jodie Foster is a good bet to win her first Emmy as best actress in a limited or anthology series or TV movie for playing a hot-tempered cold-weather cop in "True Detective: Night Country."

Meryl Streep could end up with more Emmys than Oscars if she wins her fourth for best supporting actress in a comedy for "Only Murders in the Building."

Reigning best supporting actor Oscar winner Robert Downey Jr. could also become a first-time Emmy winner. He's up for best supporting actor in the limited series category for playing five different roles in "The Sympathizer."

Academy Award winners Gary Oldman and Brie Larson are also among the nominees, and one Oscar winner, Jamie Lee Curtis, already won an Emmy for her guest role on "The Bear."

Old Emmy constants will also be featured. Aniston is a 10-time Emmy nominee who only won once during her time on "Friends."



Callina Liang poses on the red carpet for the movie 'Presence' during the Toronto International Film Festival in Toronto on Friday, Sept. 13. (AP)

## Variety

**NEW YORK:** Chad McQueen, an actor known for his performances in the "Karate Kid" movies and the son of the late actor and race car driver Steve McQueen, has died. He was 63.

McQueen's attorney and friend Arthur H. Baren confirmed to The Associated Press that he died Wednesday. The cause of death was not disclosed. His wife Jeanie and his children Chase and Madison shared a statement on Instagram Thursday afternoon from McQueen's verified account, announcing the news of his death with "a heavy heart."

"His remarkable journey as a loving father to us, along with his unwavering commitment to our mother, truly exemplified a life filled with love and dedication. His passion for racing not only highlighted his exceptional talent, but also served as a way to honor his father's legacy, a testament to the values instilled in him," the statement reads.

The family requested privacy while they "remember and celebrate his extraordinary life." McQueen followed in his father's footsteps, pursuing both acting and race car driving. He became well-known for his role as Dutch, the antagonist in 1984's "The Karate Kid," and its sequel two years later. (AP)

**NEW YORK:** Percival Everett's "James," his acclaimed retelling of Mark Twain's "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn," is a fiction nominee for the National Book Awards. The long list of 10 also includes Rachel Kushner's innovative thriller, "Creation Lake," and novelist-filmmaker Miranda July's exploration of middle age, "All Fours." The National Book Foundation released the fiction list Friday, capping a week of announcements in five competitive categories - fiction, nonfiction, poetry,

young people's literature, and books in translation. Judges will narrow the lists to five on Oct. 1, and winners will be announced Nov. 20 during a dinner ceremony in Manhattan, when honorary prizes will be presented to novelist Barbara Kingsolver and publisher-activist Paul Coates. (AP)

**NEW YORK:** Disgraced ex-movie mogul Harvey Weinstein has been indicted on additional sex crimes charges in New York ahead of a retrial in his landmark #MeToo case. Manhattan prosecutors said at a court hearing Thursday.

The indictment will remain under seal until Weinstein is arraigned on the new charges, which could happen as early as Sept. 18. Assistant District Attorney Nicole Blumberg disclosed in court that the indictment charges "Mr. Weinstein with additional crimes" and that multiple accusers are prepared to testify against him. Weinstein, 72, is recovering from emergency heart surgery Monday at a Manhattan hospital to remove fluid on his heart and lungs and was not at Thursday's hearing.

Prosecutors retrying Weinstein's overturned rape conviction disclosed last week that they had begun presenting to a grand

jury evidence of up to three additional allegations against Weinstein, dating as far back as the mid-2000s. (AP)

**LONDON:** Two men have been charged with burglary over the theft of an artwork by street artist Banksy that was taken in a smash-and-grab raid on a London gallery.

The Metropolitan Police force said Friday that Larry Fraser, 47, and James Love, 53, are alleged to have taken "Girl



Weinstein



McQueen

with Balloon" from the Grove Gallery on Sunday night. The suspects appeared at Wimbledon Magistrates' Court on Thursday and were ordered detained until their next hearing on Oct. 9.

Surveillance camera footage showed a masked man smashing a glass door before dashing in and taking the picture from a wall. Police said they have recovered the work, which is valued in court documents at 270,000 pounds (\$355,000). Nothing else was reported stolen. (AP)

## Mpx vaccination in DR Congo to start on Oct 2

## WHO approves first mpx vaccine to combat Africa outbreak

GENEVA, Sept 14, (AP): The World Health Organization said Friday it has granted its first authorization for use of a vaccine against mpox in adults, calling it an important step toward fighting the disease in Africa.

The approval of the vaccine made by Bavarian Nordic A/S means that donors like vaccines alliance Gavi and UNICEF can buy it. But supplies are limited because there's only a single manufacturer.

"This first (authorization) of a vaccine against mpox is an important step in our fight against the disease, both in the context of the current outbreaks in Africa, and in future," said WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

WHO also said it was creating an "access and allocation mechanism" to try to fairly distribute mpox tests, treatments and vaccines to the countries who need them most.

The UN health agency approved the two-dose mpox vaccine for peo-

## Morocco confirms mpox case in Marrakech

RABAT, Sept 14, (Xinhua): Morocco's Ministry of Health and Social Protection reported a confirmed monkeypox (mpox) case in the southern city of Marrakech on Thursday, the official MAP news agency reported.

This marks the first reported case in Morocco amid a new global outbreak.

According to the ministry, the patient is in stable condition and

receiving appropriate medical care. Isolation and monitoring measures have been implemented following national and international health standards. Epidemiological investigations are underway to trace all potential contacts of the patient, with no symptoms observed in these contacts so far, said the report. The ministry urged citizens to rely on official sources for accu-

rate information to prevent the spread of rumors and misinformation. It also advised the public to practice preventive measures, including regular hand washing, avoiding direct contact with infected or suspected individuals, and maintaining good personal hygiene.

Morocco reported its first mpox cases in 2022.

Officials at the Africa Center for Disease Control and Prevention said last month that nearly 70% of cases in Congo - the country hardest hit by mpox - are in children younger than 15, who also accounted for 85% of deaths.

Overall, WHO said over 120 countries have confirmed more than 103,000 cases of mpox since the outbreak began two years ago. Its latest tally, as of Sunday, showed that 723 people in more than a dozen countries in Africa have died of the disease.

African experts have estimated they might need about 10 million vaccines to stop the ongoing outbreaks on the continent while donor countries have promised to provide about 3.6 million vaccines. As of last week, Congo had received only about 250,000 doses.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the "epicenter" of the ongoing mpox outbreak in Africa, will launch its first phase of the vaccination campaign on Oct. 2, the government

announced late Friday.

The vaccination effort, which runs until Oct. 11, follows the receipt of over 265,000 doses from international partners, according to the minutes of the weekly council of ministers meeting.

"The process of procuring 3,000 doses of vaccines for children is sufficiently advancing," the minutes said.

A report released Friday by the Congolese Ministry of Health revealed that the DRC, considered the "epicenter" of the current mpox outbreak, has reported 21,813 suspected cases, including 716 deaths since the start of 2024, accounting for about 90 percent of cases in Africa.

The Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) has called for further strengthening mpox detection and surveillance measures as the total number of cases in Africa climbed to 26,543, including 5,732 confirmed cases and 724 deaths, since the start of 2024.

## Risk to public low

## US officials call Missouri bird flu case a 'one-off'

NEW YORK, Sept 14, (AP): Health officials on Thursday said they don't know how a Missouri person caught bird flu but believe it may be a rare instance of a "one-off" standalone illness.

Investigators trying to determine how the person caught the virus have not been able to confirm the exact strain of flu.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention officials said the risk to the general public remains low. The Missouri case raised questions about the possibility of human-to-human bird flu transmission, but officials said there is no evidence of other people being infected.

"Right now, evidence points to this being a one-off case," said Dr. Nirav Shah, CDC principal deputy director.

Unusual flu strains that come from animals are occasionally found in people. This year alone, health officials identified seven human cases of swine flu in the U.S., officials said. But this is the first time the surveillance system detected an avian flu like this.

The H5N1 bird flu has been spreading widely among wild birds, poultry, cows and a growing number of other animals. Its growing presence in the environment increases the chances that people will be exposed, and potentially catch it, Shah said.

Citing patient confidentiality, health officials have disclosed few details about the Missouri case, which was first announced late last week.

The person had chest pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and weakness and was hospitalized on Aug. 22 "for reasons related to their underlying medical conditions," Shah said.

The patient was tested for flu as part of the treatment and was positive for influenza A, a broad virus category. Subsequent testing - completed last week - found the bug to belong to category of viruses usually seen in birds and not people. However, the patient had a very low concentration of viral genetic material, leaving officials without the ability to full analyze it and confirm exactly which virus it is, Shah said.

## Also:

**NEW YORK:** The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) plans to propose labeling this fall for the front of food and drink packages to help Americans make healthier choices to address exploding obesity rates, years after other countries took similar action, reported The Washington Post on Friday.

The labels are supposed to flag products containing high levels of sodium,

## 1st round ends

## 560K Gaza kids get polio 'shot'

UNITED NATIONS, Sept 14, (Xinhua): The United Nations and its partners have vaccinated against polio more than 560,000 children under 10 in the Gaza Strip, UN humanitarian said on Friday.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said the World Health Organization (WHO) reported that the first round of the emergency vaccination campaign in the north, central, and southern zones of Gaza wound up on Thursday.

OCHA said that during the final phase of the first round in northern Gaza, the United Nations and its partners reached more than 112,000 children with the vaccine over three days.

The office said its partners are set to begin the second round of the vaccination campaign in about four weeks.

The humanitarians said a new analysis by the WHO found 22,500 people injured in Gaza as of July 23 are estimated to have life-changing injuries that will require rehabilitation services now and for years to come. The injuries represent a quarter of the overall injuries the Ministry of Health reported in that period.

OCHA said the report comes amid the decimation of the health system in Gaza, with just 17 of 36 hospitals partially functional, while primary health care and community-level services are often suspended or made inaccessible due to attacks, insecurity and repeated evacuation orders.

saturated fat or added sugars - common features of ultra-processed foods that make up more than half of the calories Americans consume each day, and the labeling options under consideration by the FDA still need to be clear enough to protect Americans' health, some nutrition experts and lawmakers say.

Senator **Bernie Sanders**, chairman of the Senate health committee who has proposed a stricter system, was quoted as saying that "other countries understand that childhood obesity is a major health crisis. We've got to do the same."

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla., Sept 14, (AP): Stuck-in-space astronauts Butch Wilmore and Suni Williams said Friday it's been tough dealing with their Boeing ride leaving without them and the prospect of spending several extra months in orbit.

It was their first public comments since last week's return of the Boeing Starliner capsule that took them to the International Space Station in June. They remained behind after NASA determined the problem-plagued capsule posed too much risk for them to ride back in. Their eight-day mission is now expected to last more than eight months.

"It was trying at times. There were some tough times all the way through," Wilmore said from 260 miles (420 kilometers) up. As spacecraft pilots, "you don't want to see it go off without you, but that's where we wound up."

While they never expected to be up there nearly a year, as Starliner's first test pilots, they knew there could be problems that might delay their return. "That's how things go in this business," Williams said.

## Experiments

Wilmore and Williams are now full-fledged station crew members, chipping in on routine maintenance and experiments. Williams will take over command of the space station in a few more weeks, Wilmore told reporters during a news conference - only their second since blasting off from Florida on June 5.

The duo, along with seven others on board, welcomed a Soyuz spacecraft carrying two Russians and an American earlier this week, temporarily raising the station population to 12, a near record. And two more astronauts will fly up on SpaceX later this month; two capsule seats will be left empty for Wilmore and Williams for the return leg.

The transition to station life was "not that hard" since both had previous stints there, said Williams, who logged two long space station stays years ago. "This is my happy place. I love being up here in space," she said.

Wilmore noted that if his adjustment wasn't instantaneous, it was "pretty close."

The astronauts said they appreci-

## Billionaire pulls off private spacewalk

## Stranded astronauts reflect on adjusting to life in orbit



This image made from a NASA live stream shows NASA astronauts Suni Williams and Butch Wilmore during a press conference from the International Space Station on Friday, Sept. 13. (AP)

ate all the prayers and well wishes from strangers back home, and that it's helped them cope with everything they'll miss out on back home.

Williams couldn't help but fret for a while over losing precious face-to-face time with her mother. Wilmore won't be around for his youngest daughter's final year of high school. He just requested an absentee ballot on Friday so he can vote in the November election from orbit. Both stressed the importance of carrying out their civic duties as their mission goes on.

Their Starliner capsule marked the first Boeing spaceflight with astronauts. It endured a series of thruster failures and helium leaks before arriving at the space station on June 6. It landed safely in the New Mexico desert earlier this month, but Boeing's path forward in NASA's commercial crew program remains uncertain.

The space agency hired SpaceX and Boeing as an orbital taxi service a decade ago after the shuttles retired. SpaceX has been flying astronauts since 2020.

Williams said she's excited to fly two different spacecraft on the same mission. "We're testers, that's what we do," she said.

"We wanted to take Starliner to the completion and land it back on land at home," she added. "But you have to turn the page and look at the next opportunity."

## Also:

**NEW YORK:** A tech billionaire popped out from a SpaceX capsule hundreds of miles above Earth and performed the first private spacewalk Thursday, a high-risk endeavor once reserved for professional astronauts.

Tech entrepreneur **Jared Isaacman** teamed up with SpaceX to test the company's brand new spacesuits on his chartered flight. The daring feat also saw SpaceX engineer **Sarah Gillis** going out once Isaacman was safely back inside.

This spacewalk was simple and quick - the hatch was open barely a half hour - compared with the drawn-out affairs conducted by NASA. Astronauts at the International Space Station often need to move across the sprawling complex for repairs, always traveling in pairs and lugging gear. Station spacewalks can last seven to eight hours; this one clocked in at less than two hours.

Isaacman emerged first, joining a small elite group of spacewalkers who until now had included only professional astronauts from a dozen countries.

"Back at home, we all have a lot of work to do. But from here, it sure looks like a perfect world," Isaacman said as the capsule soared above the South Pacific. Cameras on board caught his silhouette, waist high at the hatch, with the blue Earth beneath.

## Booster return

## China's lunar test stand completed

BEIJING, Sept 14, (Xinhua): A Chinese spacecraft testing center has completed the test firing of a newly-built high-altitude simulation test stand in northwest China's Shaanxi Province, China Space News reported on Wednesday.

This marked a breakthrough in terms of key technologies for the high-altitude simulation of the functioning of the main deceleration engine for China's manned lunar landing spacecraft.

The test run assessed the compatibility of the engine with the stand which utilizes advanced steam active ejector technology, according to the Academy of Aerospace Propulsion Technology, the system's developer. The test stand, featuring the largest steam ejector pump set in the country, is capable of simulating high-vacuum conditions during the engine's full-window operation which lasts for a thousand seconds.

SpaceX has announced that it plans to attempt the "most ambitious objective" in an upcoming fifth flight test of its giant Starship rocket -- to return the Super Heavy booster to the launch site and catch it in mid-air.

"This will be a singularly novel operation in the history of rocketry," said SpaceX in a release.

"It's understandable that such a unique operation would require additional time to analyze from a licensing perspective. Unfortunately, instead of focusing resources on critical safety analysis and collaborating on rational safeguards to protect both the public and the environment, the licensing process has been repeatedly delayed by issues ranging from the frivolous to the patently absurd," SpaceX said.

"These roadblocks have been driven by false and misleading reporting, built on bad-faith hysteresis on online detractors or special interest groups who have presented poorly constructed science as fact," SpaceX said.

## MEDICAL CLASSIFIEDS

Take care of your health



To advertise in this page please call: (+965) 24813566 Ext.: 513 or E-mail: advt@arabtimesonline.com

**For your ads on this page**

Call: **24813805** E-mail: **advt@arabtimesonline.com**

**www.arabtimesonline.com**

**مركز شفاء الجزيرة الطبي**  
**SHIFA AL JAZEERA MEDICAL CENTRE**  
**الفروانية FARWANIYA**

**Dr. Arshad Patel**  
 MBBS, MD  
 (Ophthalmology)

Consultation Hours:  
 Daily (Except Sundays)  
 9am to 1pm & 5pm to 9pm  
 Sunday Holiday

**Phone : 24 734 000**

Behind Maghateer Commercial Complex  
 & Opp. Police station - Farwaniya

[www.shifaaljazeera.com.kw](http://www.shifaaljazeera.com.kw)

American doubles team Bob and Mike Bryan finished 2nd

## Sharapova wins fan vote for International Tennis Hall of Fame

## Duplantis sets pole vault 'meet' record in Diamond League Final



Ackeem Blake, of Jamaica, crosses the finish line to win the men's 100 meters during the Diamond League final 2024 athletics meet in Brussels. (AP)

Mark far from his world record

BRUSSELS, Sept 14, (AP): Pole vaulter Armand Duplantis capped a "beautiful season" with a meet record in the Diamond League Final on Friday that was far from his world record.

Duplantis has broken the world record three times this year; the second time was when he won his second Olympic gold medal in Paris, and the most recent in a league meet in Poland on Aug. 25, clearing 6.26 meters.

But after he made 5.92 that nobody else could match in Brussels, he nailed 6.11 at his first attempt and stopped. That was one centimeter more than his own Memorial Van Damme record set last year, and he said he was too tired to continue.

Afterwards, he said his 100-meter victory over 400 hurdles world record-holder Karsten Warholm in Zurich last week took more out of him than expected.

## ATHLETICS

"My legs felt terrible tonight and I'm just really tired," Duplantis said. "It's been a crazy couple of weeks: The race against Karsten and then I had to jump the day after. That took a lot more from my body than I expected."

"With 6.11 I got a good result, but the world record wasn't meant to be. It's not easy to do better each time. Everything needs to come together. I had some good jumps tonight and I'm really happy about that. Now it's time to celebrate my beautiful season."

Jakob Ingebrigtsen won the men's 1,500 meters in a photo finish. The Norwegian star timed 3:30.07 after a typical last-lap surge. Timothy Cheruiyot of Kenya was barely second in 3:30.93, and just nosed Cole Hocker, the surprising Olympic champion from the U.S., by 0.01.

Hocker's fellow American, Yared Nuguse, who won the league race in Zurich last week, was sixth, less than two seconds behind Ingebrigtsen.

Ingebrigtsen unexpectedly missed out on a 1,500 medal at the Olympics but won the 5,000 gold. He won the league 1,500 in Lausanne and broke the 3,000 world record days later.

"For the whole season, I had some good races and some bad races so I hope to perform better next year," he said.

Olympic champion Julien Alfred's 100-meter clash with world champion Sha'Carri Richardson didn't eventuate. Alfred won in 10.88 seconds.

## US men's players 'should aspire' to achieve like American women

NEW YORK, Sept 14, (AP): Mauricio Pochettino began his tenure as U.S. men's national soccer team coach saying his players should aspire to achieve as much as the American women.

"We are here because we want to win," he said Friday at his introductory news conference. "We have many examples next to us we need to follow."

While the U.S. men haven't reached the World Cup quarterfinals since 2002 and have never won the sport's top tournament, the American women have won four World Cups and five Olympic gold medals.

"We need to believe we can win the World Cup," he said.

A 52-year-old Argentine, Pochettino will be coaching a national team for the first time, becoming the 10th U.S. coach in 14 years and its first foreign-born leader since Jurgen Klinsmann from 2011-16. He was hired to replace Gregg Berhalter, who was fired from his second term on July 10, a week after the Americans were eliminated in the first round of the Copa America.

Emma Hayes, who coached at Chelsea before becoming U.S. women's

coach this year, helped recruit her former club colleague.

"I didn't need to ask. She explained everything," he said.

Wearing a dark jacket, white dress shirt with no tie and a pocket square, Pochettino was flanked by U.S. Soccer Federation President Cindy Parlow Cone, CEO JT Batson and sporting director Matt Crocker, who knew Pochettino from their time together at Southampton a decade ago.

## SOCCER

While some have proclaimed the current group the most talented the U.S. has produced, Pochettino was slightly more restrained in his assessment calling it a "very good generation of players."

"We need to show that we play like a collective on the pitch," he said.

Pochettino arrived in the U.S. on Wednesday, a day after his deal was announced, and dined Thursday night with American soccer stakeholders.

His news conference - on Friday the

13th, for those who are superstitious - was in a Warner Bros. Discovery screening room at 30 Hudson Yards on the far west side of Manhattan, just eight blocks from Berhalter's introduction at Glasshouse Chelsea on Dec. 4, 2018.

Pochettino has led Espanyol in Spain (2009-12), Southampton (2013-14), Tottenham (2014-19) and Chelsea (2023-24) in England and Paris Saint-Germain in France (2021-22), leaving after winning a French league title.

Pochettino had 637 days before the Americans' World Cup opener in Inglewood, California, on June 12, 2026. His first games will be friendlies against Panama on Oct. 12 at Austin, Texas, and at Mexico three days later, and his first competitive matches will be in a two-leg CONCACAF Nations League quarterfinal in November.

Pochettino is likely to have his full player pool available for just eight one-week training periods before the team gathers ahead of the World Cup. The Americans are thin at goalkeeper and central defense and have had difficulty maintaining on-field discipline.

## Chengdu 'shares' spoils with Beijing

BEIJING, Sept 14, (Xinhua): Chengdu Rongcheng were held to a 2-2 draw by Beijing Guoan, while Tianjin Jinmen Tiger squeezed past Henan FC 1-0 in the Chinese Super League (CSL) on Saturday.

Chengdu defender Tang Miao celebrated his 300th CSL appearance in tonight's match. The 33-year-old debuted in 2012 and previously played for Guangzhou City.

Chengdu took the lead in the 24th minute when Tim Chow's pass found midfielder Romulo, who slotted the ball into the far corner. Felipe Silva doubled Chengdu's lead in the 40th minute when he fired home from inside the box.

Beijing seized control in the second half, with Cao Yongjing scoring a header from long range in the 52nd minute. 17 minutes later, Lin Liangming equalized after a swift counter-attack.

Following their draw, Chengdu and Beijing remain third and fourth in the standings with 52 and 43 points respectively, trailing Shanghai Port and Shanghai Shenhua, who have 66 and 64 points, respectively.

Dina Asher-Smith was second and Marie Josee Ta Lou-Smith was third. Richardson was eighth.

Jamaica's Ackeem Blake won the men's 100 in 9.93 seconds in a photo finish from Americans Christian Coleman (10.00) and Fred Kerley (10.01), the Olympic bronze medalist.



Armand Duplantis, of Sweden, reacts after a successful attempt in the men's pole vault during the Diamond League final 2024 athletics meet in Brussels. (AP)

## Change Name

I, ARWA holder of Passport No. M 5964411 (write full name as per present passport) do hereby change my name to ARWA (as Given name)BODLA (as Surname) for all purposes. I will henceforth be known in the name ARWA BODLA (write full name as changed now) and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents.

## Lionel Messi set to return to Inter Miami lineup after 2-month injury recovery

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla., Sept 14, (AP): Lionel Messi has been cleared to play again after taking two months to recover from an ankle injury, and Inter Miami indicated that the eight-time Ballon d'Or winner will return to the lineup on Saturday when the team plays host to Philadelphia.

"Messi is available," Inter Miami coach Gerardo "Tata" Mar-

tino said Friday before the team's training session.

Martino did not reveal if Messi would start, enter the game as a substitute or if there's a plan for a minutes restriction.

His return will be yet another lift to the club with the best record in Major League Soccer. Messi had missed nine consecutive MLS matches and 15 matches overall this season, yet

the team still has the top mark in the league and has wrapped up a playoff berth.

Messi's most recent appearance for Inter Miami was June 1, missing time first while playing for Argentina in the Copa America tournament and then because of the ankle issue.

Messi was injured while playing for Argentina in the Copa America final on July 14. He

returned to group training with Inter Miami late last month, and because of a break for ongoing World Cup qualifying matches the team hasn't played in two weeks - buying him some more time for recovery and conditioning.

Messi has 12 goals and 13 assists in 12 MLS games this season. Despite missing basically half of Inter Miami's games, his 13 assists are third-most in MLS

and he's tied for 13th in goals.

River Plate scored twice in each half to romp to a 4-1 home victory over Atletico Tucuman in Argentina's Primera Division.

The visitors opened the scoring through Franco Albanell but River took a 2-1 lead into the interval after goals from Leandro Gonzalez and Miguel Borja.

a tremendous honor to be considered for the Hall of Fame, and having the fans' support makes it all the more special."

Sharapova became the first Russian woman to reach No. 1 in the world. She won Wimbledon in 2004, the U.S. Open in 2006 and the Australian Open in 2008. She also won the French Open twice, in 2012 and 2014.

Sharapova was also part of Russia's championship Fed Cup team in 2008 and won a silver medal at the London Olympics in 2012.

To make the hall, candidates must receive 75% or higher on combined results of the official voting group and additional percentage from the fan vote. Sharapova will have an additional three percentage points from winning the fan vote.

The Bryans, who won 16 Grand Slam doubles titles, will have two additional percentage points and Nestor, who won eight Grand Slam doubles titles, will get one extra percentage point.

The hall's next class will be announced late next month.

## TENNIS

"I am incredibly grateful to the fans all around the world who supported me during the International Tennis Hall of Fame's fan votes," Sharapova said in a statement. "It is

National harmony at play

## France throws one last party for the Paris Oly

PARIS, Sept 14, (AP): The curtain will come down on the Paris' feel-good summer with a grand parade of French athletes on the Champs Elysees on Saturday as the country throws one last party to celebrate the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The Parade of Champions will include 182 French Olympic representatives, including 78 medalists, and 137 Paralympic participants with 50 para-athletes who medalled at the Paris Games. About 70,000 spectators are expected along the parade's route on the French capital's famed avenue that will end on a ring-shaped stage around the Arc de Triomphe monument. Hundreds of the Games' volunteers and officials are also expected to attend.

Organizers have promised a celebration of French sport on par with the spectacular and audacious opening and closing of the July 26-Aug. 11 Olympics and the Aug. 28-Sept. 8 Paralympic ceremonies.

"Among us, we call it the 5th ceremony," Thierry Reboul, the director of ceremonies, told French media. "We tried to include the same elements to this show as we did to the four ceremonies this summer: surprise, emotion and sharing."

President Emmanuel Macron and his new prime minister, Michel Barnier, will attend the ceremony.

Macron is expected to address the crowd and decorate French Olympians, including the star swimmer and judoka, Léon Marchand and Teddy Riner, with state honors.

Macron's celebration of the Olympic spirit that he said has produced "national harmony" comes against the backdrop of a harsh political reality and a deeply divided society following an inconclusive legislative elections in July, just before the start of the Paris Games.

## OLYMPICS

Faced with a hung parliament, social tensions and ballooning debt, Macron earlier this month appointed Barnier, a veteran conservative and European Union's former Brexit negotiator, to form a new government.

Macron's decision caused fury in the left-wing coalition that won the most seats in the National Assembly, but not enough to govern alone, leaving France's powerful lower house of parliament with no party holding a majority.

Barnier said he will present his ministers next week. The New Popular Front coalition vowed protests and censure against Macron and the new government, insisting that the president has dismissed the popular vote that gave the leftist alliance the mandate to govern.

## Bologna prepares for Champions League debut with draw at Como

MILAN, Sept 14, (AP): Bologna's preparations for its Champions League debut are not going well though it managed to spoil Como's first Serie A home match in 21 years on Saturday.

Bologna came from two goals down to salvage a 2-2 draw to gather three points from its opening four matches.

Bologna hosts Shakhtar Donetsk on Wednesday. Its only other appearance in Europe's top competition was in 1964 in the preliminary round of the old European Cup.

AC Milan is also winless as it prepares for a Tuesday Champions League match against Liverpool. The Rossoneri hosted promoted Venezia later. Juventus visited Empoli with both sides unbeaten in Serie A.

Como made a great start in the fifth minute when Patrick Cutrone attempted to roll the ball across the six-yard box but it took a huge deflection off Bologna defender Nicolò Casale for an own goal.

Bologna thought it was gifted a way back into the match on the stroke of halftime when referee Marco Piccinini signalled for a penalty following an Alberto Moreno handball, but he revoked his decision and instead gave a free kick because the handball was just outside the area.

Bologna improved after the break but found itself further behind when Cutrone raced onto a

through ball and cut inside past a defender and fired into the far bottom corner.

Tommaso Pobega hit the post for Bologna, which finally pulled one back in the 76th through substitute Santiago Castro.

Another substitute helped the visitors snatch a point when Samuel Iling-Junior curled a fine strike into the top left corner in stoppage time.

Vitor Roque scored on his home debut as Real Betis left it late to overcome newly promoted Leganes 2-0 in the Spanish league.

Betis had never lost in four previous home encounters with Leganes and although it was on top for most of the match it had to wait until the last quarter to secure all three points.

Moroccan winger Abde Ezzalzouli finally broke the deadlock with 16 minutes remaining when he turned home a cutback from Héctor Bellerin.

Substitute Roque made sure of the win four minutes from time. The 19-year-old Brazilian who joined on loan from Barcelona was on hand to bundle the loose ball home when Juan Soriano parried Ezzalzouli's curling shot.

"I never imagined I'd score on my home debut," Roque said. "Not in my wildest dreams did I expect to start this way."

The result leaves Betis in ninth place, two points above Leganes.

## Al-Nassr, Al-Hilal and Al-Ahli among the favorites

## New 'era' in Asian soccer begins, AFC Champs League Elite debuts

RIYADH, Sept 14, (AP): The first edition of the AFC Champions League Elite begins Monday with stars such as Cristiano Ronaldo, Neymar and Riyad Mahrez looking to lead their Saudi Arabian clubs to success in Asia.

Al-Nassr, Al-Hilal and Al-Ahli are among the favorites to win next May's final and reinforce the ambitions of the Saudi Pro League (SPL) of becoming one of the best in the world.

In the summer transfer windows of 2023 and 2024, SPL clubs spent over \$1 billion on transfers to bring top-level players from the big European leagues.

Al-Hilal midfielder Ruben Neves joined Al-Hilal in 2023 from Wolverhampton Wanderers of the English Premier League for a fee of around \$60 million and has no doubt that the SPL has enough quality.

"I have said this a few times - if you compare my data from English football to Saudi football, I run even more, but with the difference that I run in 40 degrees (Celsius, 104 Fahrenheit)," Neves said after helping Portugal to a 2-1 Nations League win over Scotland on Tuesday when Ronaldo scored the winning goal.

## SOCCER

"I am in good shape physically. Both Cristiano and I proved today that Saudi football has quality." Al-Hilal is the most successful team in Asia with four continental titles and starts its campaign against Al-Rayyan of Qatar. Ronaldo won five UEFA Champions Leagues but has

yet to win a major trophy with Al-Nassr and he will face Iraq's Al-Shorta while Mahrez and Al-Ahli hosts Persepolis of Iran in Jeddah.

As well as the big stars, also reinforcing the chances of the giants from Jeddah and Riyadh, is that from the quarter-final stage on, all games will take place in Saudi Arabia.

There are bigger changes however. The Elite version replaced the AFC Champions League as the continent's top tournament.

The number of teams participating has reduced from 40 to 24. Instead of 10 groups of four, there are two groups of 12, divided into east and west geographic zones, with teams playing eight games with the top eight progressing to the second round.

In the east zone, China, South Korea and Japan all have

the maximum allocation of three teams though Australia has only the Central Coast Mariners.

Clubs from the A-League have struggled in the Champions League in recent years but if the Mariners can succeed, there may be more places for Australian teams in the future.

"We know if we perform and we carry out our game plan and play our way, we know we can compete," Central Coast head coach Mark Jackson said. "We've shown that. Whether we can compete consistently on that front, again with the size of squads these teams have, how they can travel because I'm sure these teams travel in a different way to how we travel." The Elite tournament has become more lucrative with the winner receiving \$10 million in prize money, an increase from \$4 million last season.

## Leclerc 'qualifies' on pole for Azerbaijan Grand Prix

Title challenger Norris 17th

BAKU, Azerbaijan, Sept 14, (AP): Charles Leclerc qualified on pole position for the Azerbaijan Grand Prix on Saturday as Max Verstappen was sixth and Lando Norris only 17th in a session that could have a big impact on the Formula 1 title race.

Ferrari's Leclerc, who won the last race in Italy, was fastest by .321 seconds from McLaren's Oscar Piastri, with the second Ferrari of Carlos Sainz Jr. in third. Pole marked a dramatic turnaround for Leclerc, who crashed in the first practice session Friday.

"It hasn't been an easy weekend because (of) obviously the crash in FP1, which didn't make me lose confidence. I knew that the pace was there," Leclerc said. "But obviously you've got to build back up to speed."

Norris was on what seemed to be a lap fast enough to progress from the first part of qualifying as one of the top 15. But he told broadcaster Sky that "I had to lift" - slow down - because of a yellow flag that was

## MOTOR RACING

apparently for Esteban Ocon's slow-moving Alpine. Norris' time from his first lap missed the 15th-place cutoff by .137 of a second.

"There's a long race ahead, we have some good tires in the bank, I'm still hopeful we can get a good result. I think the car is quick. Bit frustrating, but nothing I can do," Norris told Sky.

Norris is second in the standings, 62 points behind Verstappen with eight rounds of the championship remaining.

McLaren had confirmed before the race weekend that it would favor Norris over Piastri to help his title challenge, with Norris suggesting the Australian would be asked to make way for him on track in some situations.

That almost certainly won't happen Sunday with 15 places separating the two teammates in qualifying. Piastri is aiming to fight for a second career win.

"We'll see what we can do. I think our race pace is good, but the Ferrari is certainly not slow," he said.

Defending champion Verstappen, who hasn't won any of the last six races, had seemed better in Baku but his final lap of qualifying wasn't enough to improve on sixth place. Teammate Sergio Perez was fourth, beating Verstappen in qualifying for the first time all year.

There was a bizarre incident in the final part of qualifying when Williams' Alex Albon stopped on his way out of the pits to remove a large piece of cooling equipment that the team had left in his air intake. Albon qualified 10th and was facing an investigation from the stewards after the session.

Albon's teammate Franco Colapinto, in only his second F1 race weekend, was ninth in the best qualifying result for an Argentine driver in 42 years.

British teen Oliver Bearman, standing in at Haas for the suspended Kevin Magnussen, was 11th after recovering from a crash in third practice Saturday morning.



Ferrari driver Charles Leclerc of Monaco in action during a Formula One Grand Prix qualifying in Baku, Azerbaijan. (AP)



Winners of the tournament honored.

## Wushu Kung Fu Championship concludes successfully

The Kuwait Wushu Kung Fu Championship 2024 concluded recently at the Kuwait Force Academy Hall in Yarmouk Club. Organized in collaboration between the Kuwait Wushu Kung Fu Committee and the Chinese Cultural Center in Salmiya, the

event saw the participation of 38 athletes representing three clubs: Champions Academy, Qim and Humam Club, and Al-Tamimi Taichi Club. The high level of competition showcased the commitment of the participating clubs and the Kuwait

Wushu Kung Fu Committee to advancing the sport. Champions Academy emerged victorious, claiming the championship title. Al-Tamimi Taichi Club secured second place, while Qim and Humam Club finished in third.

## Al-Arabi welcomes Fahaheel

## Al-Qadisiya eyes winning debut for Petrovic

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14: The fourth round of the Zain Premier League wraps up with two matches. First, Al-Fahaheel will visit Al-Arabi at 6:26 pm. at Sabah Al-Salem Stadium. The second match features Al-Qadisiya hosting Al-Salmiya at 8:35 pm. at Mohammed Al-Hamad Stadium.

## SOCCER

Fans are eagerly anticipating Al-Qadisiya's performance in Hawalli, as it makes its debut under new Montenegrin coach Zeljko Petrovic. Petrovic took over from Mohammed Al-Mishaan, who resigned following a 1-2 defeat to Al-Arabi in the previous round. Al-Qadisiya, currently with 3 points, seeks its second win after a narrow victory over Al-Yarmouk. Petrovic is aware of the match's significance and the need to boost player confidence ahead of its next challenging fixture against Kazma later this week.

On the other side, Al-Salmiya, with 6 points, aims to capitalize on Al-

Qadisiya's current struggles to secure its third win. Al-Salmiya defeated Al-Nasr and Al-Tadamon but lost to Kazma.

In the first match, Al-Arabi is pursuing its fourth win to maintain its strong performance, having already defeated Kazma, Al-Tadamon, and won the "derby."

Meanwhile, Al-Fahaheel, also with 6 points, hopes for a positive outcome to stay among the top teams. It started the season with a 4-1 win over Khaitan but faced a setback with a 3-0 loss to Kuwait Club, before bouncing back with a 4-2 victory over Al-Yarmouk.

In other news, the third round's match between Khaitan and Yarmouk ended in a 1-1 draw at Nasser Al-Osaimi Stadium. Khaitan now has 4 points, while Yarmouk has 2.

Meanwhile, the Asian Football Confederation has denied Kuwait Club's request to postpone its match against Uzbekistan's Nasaf, scheduled for next Wednesday in the first round of Group 4 of the AFC Champions League 2. The group also includes Jordan's Al-Hussein Irbid and the UAE's Shabab Al-Ahli.



Al-Qadisiya led by new coach Petrovic holds its final training session.

## Clark sets WNBA assists record

## Gray scores 21 to lead Aces to 78-74 victory over Fever

INDIANAPOLIS, Sept 14, (AP): Chelsea Gray scored 21 points, A'ja Wilson added 15 points and 17 rebounds and the Las Vegas Aces held on to beat the Indiana Fever 78-74 on Friday night to spoil another record-breaking day for Caitlin Clark.

Clark, who scored all of her 18 points in the second half, finished with eight rebounds and nine assists for Indiana (19-19). The rookie set the WNBA's single-season record for assists with 321, breaking the mark of 316 set last season by Alyssa Thomas of the Connecticut Sun.

Gray made 7 of 11 from the field and had six assists for Las Vegas (24-13). Kelsey Plum added 18 points, including four 3-pointers, and Jackie Young scored 12 points.

Clark scored 14 points in the third quarter as the Fever trimmed a 13-point deficit to 60-57 going into the fourth and Damiris Dantas tied it when she hit a deep 3-pointer with 9:41 to go. Gray answered with a layup about a minute later and Plum hit a 3 to give Las Vegas a 65-60 lead with 7:33 to go.

## BASKETBALL

The Fever went 0 for 8 from the field, made 4 of 8 from the free-throw line and committed three turnovers from there until Clark was fouled to put the Fever into the bonus with at the 2:57 mark. Clark hit two foul shots to cut the Aces' lead to 69-66.

Clark blew past a defender for a layup that pulled Indiana within two with 1:48 remaining, but Plum answered with a 3 with 56 seconds left to make it 75-70 and the Aces held on from there. Kelsey Mitchell led the Fever with 20 points, 19 in the first half. Aliyah Boston scored 14 points and grabbed eight rebounds and Dantas added 11 points.

## Sun 88, Mercury 69

In Phoenix, Brianna Jones scored 20 points on 10 of 16 shooting and grabbed nine rebounds, Marina Mabrey added 19 points and the Connecticut Sun beat the Mercury.

Tyasha Harris hit a 3-pointer that made it 11-8 at the 6:16 mark of the first quarter and Connecticut (27-10) led the rest of the way en route to its third straight victory. With the win, the Sun remained a game behind the Minnesota Lynx for second place in the WNBA standings and four games back of the first-place New York Liberty.

## Italy takes 2-0 lead over US

## INEOS tops Alinghi Red Bull, America's Cup playoffs start

BARCELONA, Spain, Sept 14, (AP): Italy took a 2-0 lead over the Americans while the British crushed the Swiss as the America's Cup playoffs started on Saturday.

Luna Rossa Prada Pirelli scored a pair of close wins over NYCC American Magic and is now in a

commanding position in their first-to-five-wins series.

While the Swiss were no match for the Brits in their regattas, the races between Luna Rossa and the yacht representing the New York Yacht Club featured lead changes and boat-on-boat sailing tactics. Italy won the first race by just seven seconds and the second one by 18.

INEOS Britannia brushed aside Switzerland's Alinghi Red Bull Racing to also go up 2-0 on the race course just off the Barcelona beachfront. They won their first race by over two minutes and the second by 1:37.

The last boat standing from the two rounds of playoffs will be awarded the Louis Vuitton Cup and face defending champion Team Emirates New Zealand in the America's Cup final in October.

Luna Rossa swept American Magic 4-0 at this same stage in the 2021 America's Cup in Auckland. The Italians then dispatched with the British, before losing to defending champion New Zealand in the final match series.

American Magic was without helmsman Paul Goodison, who broke five ribs when he fell on the boat last week. Lucas Calabrese was skipping in his place across from Tom Slingsby.

"We are right in there. Just got to stay in it and keep chipping," Calabrese said. "Today I feel that luck was not on our side and maybe that will change tomorrow."

## SAILING

The British, as the highest-scoring team in the opening phase round robin, picked the Swiss as their rival in the first playoff. INEOS finished the round robins with an 8-2 record, while Alinghi barely avoided elimination with a 3-7 record.

That difference in performance held true on Saturday, when the Swiss had a better start only for the Brits to steer ahead on the second leg and never look back.

"It's good to get a couple of wins on the board," INEOS helmsman Dylan Fletcher said. "Like all teams we have our weaknesses, but we will keep them close to our chest."

New Zealand, as winner of previous America's Cup, gets a secured spot in the next final, in addition to the right to organize the event, pick the venue and set the race rules.

## Axelsen advances to 'final' HK Open

HONG KONG, Sept 14, (Xinhua): Two-time Olympic champion Viktor Axelsen of Denmark wasted six match points before beating Indonesia's Anthony Sinisuka Ginting to reach the final of the Hong Kong Open badminton championships on Saturday.

Second-seeded Axelsen took only 15 minutes to win the first set 21-9 and pulled ahead 20-13 in the second. However, Ginting stormed back to make it 20-19 and Axelsen, showing his left side of his back to the referee, immediately called an injury timeout.

After receiving some quick treatment, Axelsen returned to the court to kill off the match 21-19.

"I'm very happy with 90 percent of the match," he said. "But not the last 10 percent. I made too many bad decisions in the second set when he had improved a lot. But I am very happy to be in the final." Axelsen, playing his first tournament since retaining his Olympic crown in Paris, will fight for the title against Lei Lanxi, after the 33rd-ranked Chinese shocked defending champion and third seed Jonatan Christie of Indonesia 21-14, 12-21, 21-17.

On the women's side, third seed Han Yue of China defeated Thailand's Pornpawee Chochuwong 22-20, 21-10, while Indonesia's Putri Kusuma Wardani ousted Japan's Tomoka Miyazaki 22-20, 21-23, 21-18.

Han, who had defeated Wardani in the Malaysia Open in January, believed that she can win the title.



Italy's Fabio Cobolli plays Belgium's Zizou Bergs during their Davis Cup tennis match at the Unipol Arena, Bologna, Italy. (AP)

# Sports

Latest sports scores at — <http://sports.arabtimesonline.com>

## Liverpool loses at Anfield to Forest

Haaland reaches 99 goals for perfect City

**MANCHESTER, England, Sept 14, (AP): Erling Haaland moved to 99 goals for Manchester City after scoring twice in a 2-1 win against Brentford in the English Premier League on Saturday.**

The Norwegian's double maintained City's 100% start to the league after Yoane Wissa fired Brentford ahead with just 22 seconds on the clock.

Liverpool lost for the first time under new manager Arne Slot, to Nottingham Forest by a shock 1-0 at Anfield.

Manchester United won at Southampton 3-0 to end its two-game losing streak.

Haaland scored his 98th and 99th goals in his 103rd City appearance in all competitions. And he was the width of the post away from his third consecutive hat trick after trebles against Ipswich and West Ham.



Fulham's Adama Traore, left, and West Ham United's Mohammed Kudus vie for the ball during the English Premier League soccer match between Fulham and West Ham United at Craven Cottage, London. (AP)

Haaland, who has been nominated for the Ballon d'Or, has nine goals in four league games. He has topped the league scoring charts in each of his two seasons at City since joining from Borussia Dortmund in 2022 for \$63 million.

Haaland's first goal after 19 minutes evened the game following Wissa's opener, which stunned the Etihad Stadium crowd. Haaland turned and swept a shot past goalkeeper Mark Flekken after a slight deflection off Ethan Pinnock.

He was then too strong for Pinnock when shaking off the defender and run-

### SOCCER

ning through for his second in the 32nd.

He was inches away in the 81st; the shot came back off the post after beating the keeper.

Slot suffered his first setback in English soccer after Callum Hudson-Odoi fired Forest to a stunning win at Anfield.

Hudson-Odoi struck in the 72nd with a curling effort from the edge of the box and beyond goalkeeper Alisson.

Liverpool had been the only team other than City to have a 100% winning record after the first three rounds, including a memorable 3-0 win against Man United before the international break.

Marcus Rashford snapped a 12-game barren run in front of goal as United beat Southampton.

Rashford doubled United's lead at Saint Mary's after Matthijs de Ligt's scored his first for the club. Substitute Alejandro Garnacho scored a third in the sixth minute of stoppage time.

The win came after back-to-back defeats for United.

Rashford hadn't scored since March in United's win over Liverpool in the FA Cup quarterfinals. He curled in a shot from the edge of the area to put Erik ten Hag's team 2-0 up at Southampton in the 41st minute.

Ten Hag said it could be a turning point for the forward.

"For every striker, they want to be on the scoring list. Once the first is in, more



Southampton's Flynn Downes, right, and Manchester United's Joshua Zirkzee battle for the ball during the English Premier League soccer match between Southampton and Manchester United at St. Mary's stadium in Southampton, England. (AP)

is coming. Like a ketchup bottle, once it's going, it's coming more," he said.

De Ligt, who joined United from Bayern Munich in the offseason, headed in from Bruno Fernandes' cross in the 35th.

It could have been a different story if Cameron Archer converted a penalty for Southampton in the 33rd. Instead, his effort was saved by goalkeeper Andre Onana.

Newly promoted Southampton was reduced to 10 men when Jack Stephens

was sent off in the 79th for a high challenge on Garnacho.

Jean-Philippe Mateta converted a stoppage time penalty to salvage a 2-2 draw for Crystal Palace against Leicester.

Leicester led 2-0 at Selhurst Park after goals from Jamie Vardy and Steph Mavididi.

But Mateta sparked Palace's response with a goal in the 47th, a minute after Mavididi doubled Leicester's advantage.

Conor Coady fouled Ismaili Sarr in the box right near fulltime and Mateta was cool enough to convert.

West Ham left it even later to salvage a point in a 1-1 draw at Fulham.

Danny Ings struck in the fifth minute of added time after Raul Jimenez's goal looked like earning Fulham the win.

Brighton boss Fabian Hurzeler, the manager of the month for August, was frustrated as his team was held to 0-0 at home by Ipswich.

Guardiola has confirmed that the

long-awaited hearing into Manchester City's alleged financial breaches begins on Monday.

The Premier League champion faces more than 100 charges ranging over a nine-year period when it was trying to establish itself as the biggest force in English soccer. The hearing into the charges will be held by an independent commission, which will be made up of three judges appointed by a lawyer who chairs the league's judicial panel.

## New partnership to improve ticketing and gate systems for Arabian Gulf Cup

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 14: The Public Authority for Sports announced the signing of a contract in partnership with the Gulf Football Federation and L'Oreal International Management, a company specializing in gate systems, electronic ticketing, and sports event organization.

The Authority explained that this partnership aims to enhance the ticket reservation and electronic gate systems at Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium and Sulai-bikhat Club Stadium, ensuring a smooth process for fans entering and finding their designated seats during the Arabian Gulf Cup Football Championship (Gulf 26). This initiative is part of the Authority's ongoing efforts to improve stadium services and enhance the fan experience.

The contract with L'Oreal, known for its extensive experience in organizing major events like the 2022 World Cup, Asian Cup, Gulf Cup, and Arab Cup in Qatar, covers several key areas to ensure a seamless experience for fans. These include managing crowd flow and seat allocations, as well as dividing audience sections into sectors for better organization.

Additionally, the agreement includes the creation of an online ticketing platform, enabling fans to easily book and purchase tickets, with details of their seats available online. Paper ticket printing and mobile payment options will also be offered for added convenience and flexibility.

The contract outlines the installation of 165 fixed ticket readers, along with manual readers to ensure efficient and fast entry across both stadiums. Furthermore, 62 new gates will be installed: 24 single gates and 38 double gates, aimed at improving fan flow and reducing wait times.

Specifically, Jaber Al-Ahmad Stadium will receive 26 new gates, including 20 double gates for general admission (bringing the total to 100 public gates), three gates for the VIP area, and three for the skybox area. Meanwhile, Al-Sulai-bikhat Club Stadium will have 36 new gates, consisting of 18 single and 18 double gates, increasing the



KUNA photos

Left: Abdulrahman Al-Qahtani. Right: Khalil Al-Qattan

### Kuwait's Al-Qahtani shines

Kuwaiti athletics team member Abdulrahman Al-Qahtani secured fourth place in the discus throw final at the 10th Arab Athletics Championship for juniors, held in

### ATHLETICS

Taif, Saudi Arabia, with a throw of 46 meters.

In the high jump final, Khalil Al-Qattan also finished fourth, achieving a new personal best of 1.97 meters, while his teammate Mo-

total number to 54 public gates.

The contract also includes ongoing maintenance and technical sup-

ported for all systems and devices, ensuring continuous high-level performance.

ported for all systems and devices, ensuring continuous high-level performance.

ported for all systems and devices, ensuring continuous high-level performance.

ported for all systems and devices, ensuring continuous high-level performance.

ported for all systems and devices, ensuring continuous high-level performance.



A general view of the Jaber International Stadium.

Leipzig drops points for the first time this season

## Leverkusen gets back on track in Bundesliga

SINSHEIM, Germany, Sept 14, (AP): Victor Boniface scored twice as Bayer Leverkusen beat Hoffenheim 4-1 to rebound from a rare Bundesliga loss, but Leipzig dropped points for the first time this season in a 0-0 draw with Union Berlin on Saturday.

Ahead of playing Feyenoord in its Champions League opener on Thursday, Leverkusen got back to winning ways after a 3-2 loss to Leipzig in its last game. That was the first time Xabi Alonso's title-winning team had lost in the Bundesliga for 15 months.

Boniface set up Martin Terrier for Leverkusen's first goal and scored himself soon after, beating defender Alexander Prass and leaving him sprawled on the ground and he scored past goalkeeper Oliver Baumann.

Leverkusen's three games in the league this season have seen a combined 15 goals scored, in part because

### SOCCER

of lapses in concentration in defense that have frustrated coach Alonso.

Mergim Berisha's goal for Hoffenheim in the 37th minute cut Leverkusen's lead to 2-1 and Alonso's team nearly conceded another soon after. However, Leverkusen took control again after the break and a penalty from Florian Wirtz and another goal from Boniface ensured a 4-1 win.

It was the first time Boniface had scored twice in a game since an adductor muscle injury ruled the Nigerian striker out of much of the second half of last season as Leverkusen won the title.

Union goalkeeper Frederik Rønnow frustrated Leipzig in a goalless draw, saving a penalty from Loïs Openda and a stoppage-time free kick from David Raum. Leipzig created few clear chances in a subdued performance ahead of Thursday's Champions League visit to Atletico Madrid.

Both teams were without their head coaches as Leipzig's Marco Rose was suspended following a red card against Leverkusen and Union's Bo Svensson was ill.

New signing Ermedin Demirovic scored twice as Stuttgart - which visits Real Madrid on Tuesday - beat



Wolfsburg's Cédric Zesiger, left, and Frankfurt's Hugo Ekitiké vie for the ball during the German Bundesliga soccer match between VfL Wolfsburg and Eintracht Frankfurt, at the Volkswagen Arena, in Wolfsburg, Germany. (AP)



Hoffenheim's Mergim Berisha celebrates the goal to make during a match between TSG Hoffenheim and Bayer 04 Leverkusen in Sinsheim, Germany. (AP)

Borussia Mönchengladbach 3-1. Gladbach's Alassane Plea went off injured after colliding with goalkeeper Alexander Nübel while scoring his team's only goal.

Eintracht Frankfurt beat Wolfsburg 2-1 thanks to two goals from Omar Marmoush. Junior Adamu scored twice in three minutes to give Freiburg a comeback 2-1 win over Bochum.

## US beats Germany to secure top spot

ZHUHAI, China, Sept 14, (AP): The United States topped its group and ensured it will be seeded in the last eight of the Davis Cup Finals by beating Germany 2-1 on Saturday.

Both teams were unbeaten and already into the Finals but knew that victory would secure a seeding in Malaga and a quarterfinal against one of the runner's up from the three other groups taking place in Manchester, Bologna and Valencia this week.

The U.S. swiftly ensured it would be them, winning both singles matches in Zhuhai. China. Reilly Opelka rallied to beat Henri Squire 6-7 (4), 7-6 (9), 6-3 and Brandon Nakashima eased past Maximilian Marterer 6-4, 6-2.

However, the U.S. suffered its first defeat when Austin

### TENNIS

Krajicek and Rajeev Ram lost 6-1, 7-6 (4) to Kevin Krawietz and Tim Puetz.

Meanwhile, former world No. 1 Naomi Osaka has announced that she's no longer working with coach Wim Fissette.

Osaka had expressed frustration with her recent results after a second-round exit at the U.S. Open just over two weeks ago.

The 26-year-old Osaka won two of her four Grand Slam titles while working with the Belgian coach. Those were the 2020 U.S. Open and the 2021 Australian Open.

It's the second time Osaka and Fissette have parted ways. On her Instagram story late Friday, the Japanese player wrote: "4 years, 2 Slams and a whole lot of memories. Thanks Wim for being a great coach and an even greater person, wishing you all the best." She's currently ranked No. 75.