



**soccer**  
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90 days stay allowed

## Pakistan lifts visa need for Kuwaitis, all of GCC

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

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 15: The Embassy of Pakistan in Kuwait announced that its government has exempted citizens of Kuwait and other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries from requiring entry visas to visit Pakistan.

In a press statement issued yesterday, the embassy explained that under the "amended visa policy" of the Government of Pakistan, citizens of GCC countries, which are Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Qatar, and Bahrain, are no longer required to obtain an electronic travel permit or visa through the Pakistani e-Visa system for business or tourism purposes. GCC citizens can now travel to Pakistan for business or tourism purposes without needing a visa and by simply purchasing an air ticket. They may stay in Pakistan for up to 90 days.

The embassy highlighted that the amendment to the visa policy was aimed to streamline business and tourism processes for GCC citizens.

## Fate of Sept 22 student polls remains uncertain

By Najeh Bilal  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 15: Following last Thursday's security services raid on the National Union of Kuwaiti Students' building in Khalidiya -- where files and computers were seized in an investigation into suspected activities -- the fate of the upcoming student elections, scheduled for September 22, remains uncertain.

The raid has intensified calls from academics, activists, and student figures to "liberate the student movement" from what they describe as the dominance of the Islamic Constitutional Movement or the Muslim Brotherhood.

While the debate continues as stakeholders push for a reform in student elections to restore their true educational and democratic spirit, free from political and sectarian influence, Dr. Abdullah Al-Ghanim, Professor of Political Science at Kuwait University, criticized the coalition list supported by ICM, alleging that it exploits social and religious components to maintain control over student elections.

He highlighted concerns about the Brotherhood's influence, noting that Salafi votes are being used to support the coalition list, despite many Salafis adhering to the Brotherhood's ideology.

Dr. Al-Ghanem has stated that freezing the activities of the National Assembly will not affect the upcoming student union elections.

He emphasized the importance of cleansing Kuwait from partisan politics, criticizing how political parties exploit religion to achieve their political aims.

He noted that parties play on Islamic sentiments to advance their interests, even though Islam does not support partisanship.

Consequently, student unions are merely a façade for political currents, issuing statements that serve the dominant political faction. In recent years, student elections have turned into a state of tension, intellectual extremism, and tribal disputes, which do not contribute to democratic principles but rather foster a fractured, illogical mentality, he said.

Dr. Al-Ghanem further explained that student unions and other similar organizations have become sources of societal division in Kuwait, reinforcing partisan, tribal, and factional tendencies.

In a related context, Islamic preacher Saleh Al-Ghanem mentioned that the influence of external agendas supporting student lists at Kuwait University for many years needs to end.

He hopes that the state will take action similar to Saudi Arabia and the UAE to eradicate extremist parties, which negatively impact Kuwaiti society.

He pointed out that the Muslim Brotherhood still supports the student movement and continues to exert pressure on students who align with its ideology.

He added that the issue is not just about religious leaders or preachers but about state intervention, especially since student elections contribute to national fragmentation rather than fostering loyalty and a sense of unity.

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### NewsWatch

**AMMAN:** On Sunday, Jordanian King Abdullah II appointed Dr. Jafar Hassan to form the new government, succeeding Dr. Bisher Khasawneh's administration. Khasawneh's government resigned after overseeing the parliamentary elections held last Tuesday.



King Abdullah II

King Abdullah II initially tasked Al-Khasawneh with forming a government on October 7, 2020, during a period marked by health and economic challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Al-Khasawneh's government continued its duties until its resignation. (KUNA)

**CAIRO:** Two passenger trains collided in Egypt's Nile Delta on Saturday, killing at least three people, two of them children, authorities said.

The crash happened in the city of Zagazig, the capital of Sharqiya province, the country's railway authority said in a statement. Egypt's Health Ministry said the collision injured at least 40 others. (AP)

**TUNIS:** Two people were killed and 33 others injured due to heavy rains in Sebha, southern Libya, late Saturday; destroying houses and causing water and power cuts, said Sebha Municipal Council on Sunday.

In a statement, the Council urged paramedics to head to Sebha Medical Center to assist with rescue efforts and treat emergency cases, as armed forces and security personnel began rescuing families. The Council called on all citizens to follow safety instructions to avoid further incidents. (KUNA)

# Afia coverage for hospitalized retirees continues until release

No added financial burden until treatment ends: GIG



Sunset in Kuwait bids farewell to the day, mesmerizing watchers as the orange twilight adds to the beauty of the shores with a fascinating horizon decorating the serene sea waters. (KUNA)

KUNA photo

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 15:** The Gulf Insurance Group (GIG) announced on Sunday, September 15, that it will continue to cover the treatment of retirees insured under the Afia insurance policy.

In a press statement, GIG highlighted that coverage will extend to retirees who began treatment at a private hospital in Kuwait prior to the termination date of the Afia contract, and will continue until they are discharged from the hospital.

GIG reaffirmed its commitment to providing uninterrupted medical care for these retirees, ensuring that there will be no additional financial burden on patients until their treatment is complete.

Since 2016, GIG has been dedicated to offering comprehensive health-care coverage for retirees nationwide, in accordance with the terms agreed upon with the Ministry of Health.

Such a statement follows the announcement issued by the Ministry of Health regarding the suspension of Afia health insurance policy from Thursday, Sept 12 due to the insurance company's failure to meet the requirements for extending the Afia-3 contract.

The ministry explained that the insurance company had not only refused to adhere to the previous terms and prices without increases but also abdicated its contractual responsibilities. As a result, it failed to ensure proper insurance coverage and guarantees, leaving the responsibility to reinsurers unfulfilled.

It stated that it was coordinating with the country's legal and other concerned authorities, including the Fatwa and Legislation Department, to clarify the legal procedures to be followed in response to the company's evasion of contractual obligations and refusal to meet the contract extension requirements, which violate the terms of the concluded contract.

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## Hussein & Al-Juwaid nationality revoked

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 15:** Decree No. 155 of 2024 announced the revocation of Kuwaiti citizenship from Alaa Hussein Ali Al-Khafaji Al-Jaber and Muhammad Hamad Fahd Al-Juwaid and another person, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Alaa Hussein, who was sentenced to life imprisonment in 2001 for "high treason," had led the so-called "Kuwaiti interim government," a puppet regime established by Iraq during its invasion of Kuwait in 1990.

He was found guilty of collaborating with the occupying Iraqi forces and undermining Kuwait's independence by supporting the occupation and its annexation of Kuwaiti territory.

Mohammad Al-Juwaid, a former sergeant in the National Guard, was arrested in 2003 for "spying for a hostile state" and providing Iraq with critical military and political information.

His actions included monitoring key political figures and sharing sensitive security data with Iraqi intelligence, potentially facilitating terrorist and sabotage activities in Kuwait.

The revocation of their citizenship was based on Article 14 of the Kuwaiti Nationality Law, which allows for the withdrawal of citizenship from individuals working for a foreign country at war with Kuwait or with which political relations have been severed.

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## MoE, Mol launch road-awareness campaign

## 500,000 students to return in new scholastic year

By Abdulrahman Al-Shammari  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 15:** Tuesday, September 17 marks the beginning of the 2024/2025 academic year, with over half a million students returning to school. To be precise, 504,559 students will head back to their classrooms, including 419,208 in public schools and 85,351 in private Arab schools.

The school year kicks off on Tuesday for first-grade students, with approximately 26,000 of the 178,039 students in the elementary stage starting their classes.

While students in elementary, intermediate, and secondary schools will begin their academic year on Tuesday, kindergarten students will start their school year on Wednesday.

The number of students is as follows: 31,033 in kindergarten, 159,811 in the intermediate stage, 122,556 in secondary school.

Primary schools are organizing special receptions for first-grade students, including entertainment segments and competitions designed to alleviate tension and fear. These activities aim to help students adjust quickly to their new educational environment.

In preparation for the start of the 2024/2025 academic year, a joint awareness media campaign has been launched under the slogan "With our determination, we achieve our dream."

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## KFA to choose new 'board of directors'

By Khaled Al-Enezi  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 15:** Kuwaiti football clubs have started the process of appointing seven members to serve the remainder of the current board's term, which will continue until May 2026. This follows the announcement about the resignation of the Kuwait Football Association's Board of Directors the day before yesterday.

The clubs held meetings yesterday and will continue to do so until they reach a consensus on the new leaders for the Kuwait Football Association (KFA).

According to Article 35 of KFA's statutes, the Secretary-General of the association Dr. Saleh Al-Majroub is expected to assume the role of KFA manager. He will then call for an extraordinary general assembly to choose a new board of directors within 30 days.

The resignation was due to issues that arose during the Asian qualifier match between Kuwait and Iraq last Tuesday. Serious organizational errors occurred at the stadium, including overcrowding of fans at the entrance gates and the entry of huge number of fans. Most notably, fans did not have access to drinking water, as they were not allowed to carry water into the Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium and there were no water sales centers available in the stadium to meet their needs.

In a lengthy meeting that began at 7:00 pm on Saturday, Abdulaziz Al-Samhan, Mansour Pasha, Fatima Hayat, Jamal Al-Otaibi, and Vice President Ahmed Oqla, along with the acting chairman Haif Al-Daihani, all submitted their resignations from their positions on KFA's Board of Directors.

Al-Samhan was the first to resign, doing so six hours before the board meeting. In his resignation statement, he expressed regret, and stressed the need for thorough preparations for the "Gulf 26". He also highlighted the mistakes made during the Kuwait-Iraq match.

Shortly after the meeting on Saturday, KFA issued a statement to express gratitude to "the loyal

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## Kuwait to join IAEA Rays of Hope initiative representing Gulf area

**VIENNA, Sept 15, (KUNA):** Kuwait has reached an initial agreement to join as a regional (Gulf) center for the 'Rays of Hope' initiative launched by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to help low- and middle-income countries and enhance their ability to obtain cancer treatment.

In remarks to KUNA Sunday, the Head of the Radiotherapy and Oncology Department at the center and the head of the Kuwaiti delegation to Vienna, Dr. Yasser Hassan, confirmed that the visit aimed to meet with technical officials from the IAEA to discuss the development of radiotherapy techniques, the importance of this step in establishing new partnerships that work to expand capabilities in the field of radiotherapy.

He noted that the preliminary agreement allows Kuwait, represented by the Department of Radiotherapy and Oncology, to join as a representative center in the region within the innovative initiative of the Atomic Energy Agency (Rays of Hope).

This move received great support and encouragement from senior officials at the Atomic

Energy Agency, in addition to the support and encouragement of the Ambassador of Kuwait and its Permanent Representative to the International Organizations in Vienna, Talal Al-Fassam, who pledged to provide all necessary support to facilitate this important agreement, he added.

He pointed out that the meetings with the technical team, technical members and managers at the IAEA addressed many important topics, most notably improving the quality of health care and technologies related to radiotherapy and nuclear therapy for cancer patients.

The Kuwaiti delegation included Dr. Hassan, radiation oncology specialist Dr. Ahmad Bush-ehri, from the Department of Nuclear Medicine Dr. Sarah Murad, and the National Liaison Officer with the International Atomic Energy Agency Dr. Nader Al-Awadhi.

The Kuwait Cancer Control Center, which was established in 1968, is a governmental center affiliated with the Ministry of Health and was designated for the purpose of providing care for cancer patients.

## Bid to protect public funds

## Awqaf probes salaries given to dead

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 15:** In a step highlighting its commitment to reform and safeguarding public funds, the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs has launched an investigation into the disbursement of salaries to deceased persons, confirming a report first published by Al-Seyassah daily over a year ago, on August 25, 2023, under the headline 'Salaries for the Dead in Awqaf', says Al-Seyassah daily.

Minister of Justice and Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, Mohammad Al-Wasmi, has ordered the formation of a committee to investigate findings of the Financial Controllers Authority's second semi-annual report on the ministry's 2021/2022 budget.

The report revealed that salaries were paid to employees who were no longer employed, in-

cluding those who had passed away or resigned years ago.

According to Al-Seyassah daily, the committee is tasked with scrutinizing attendance and departure records to identify those involved in the forgery and who signed in place of deceased employees. Initial findings suggest that the salaries were not transferred to the deceased's bank accounts but to other individuals.

Sources indicate that this may involve more than one individual, potentially uncovering a broader network of individuals behind the fraudulent payments.

The Financial Controllers Authority had previously confirmed that the Ministry of Awqaf

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## Case of Syrian siblings and forged nationality

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 15:** In an extraordinary case of citizenship forgery, a Syrian resident, who came to Kuwait in 2003, managed to naturalize his three sons by registering two of them under the name of a Kuwaiti citizen after paying the latter KD 15,000 for each son, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The first son later received employment in the Criminal Investigations Department and the second in Kuwait Municipality. The third son left the country following a financial dispute with another citizen under whose name he was naturalized.

According to details of the case revealed by retired Major General Hamad Al-Suraye' on his X account, investigations related to nationality cases uncovered bizarre instances of tampering with citizenship records.

It revealed the presence of two individuals with Kuwaiti citizenship - one of who works in

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Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi while delivering a motivational speech to the national team's delegation. — See Page 16

KUNA photo



## Prayer Timings

Fajr .....	04:12	Asr .....	15:13
Sunrise ..	05:32	Maghrib ..	17:54
Zohr .....	11:43	Isha .....	19:12

# Local

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

## Weather

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

**By Day:** Hot and relatively humid over coastal areas with light to moderate northwesterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 08-32 km/h.

**By Night:** Hot to rather hot and relatively humid over coastal

al areas with light to moderate southeasterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 08-30 km/h.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	41	28
Kuwait Airport	43	25

Abdaly	43	25
Bubyan	43	24
Jahra	44	28
Failaka Island	41	24
Salmiyah	41	32
Ahmadi	40	24
Jal Aliyah	42	25
Nuwaisib	42	27

## National Day

# HH Amir congratulates El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 15, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent Sunday a cable to President of El Salvador Nayib Bukele, congratulating him on the occasion of his country's National Day.

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

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent a cable to President Nayib Bukele, congratulating him on the occasion of his country's National Day.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent a cable to President Nayib Bukele, congratulating him on the occasion of his country's National Day.

### Guatemala

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad sent Sunday a cable to President of Guatemala Bernardo Arevalo, congratulating him on the occasion of his country's National Day.

His Highness the Amir wished the president all wellness and Guatemala and its people further progress and

### prosperity.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled sent a cable to President Bernardo Arevalo, congratulating him on the occasion of his country's National Day.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah sent a cable to President Bernardo Arevalo, congratulating him on the occasion of his country's National Day.

### Honduras

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad sent Sunday a cable to President of Honduras Xiomara Castro, congratulating her on the occasion of her country's National Day.

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

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent Sunday a cable to President Xiomara Castro, congratulating her on the occasion of her country's National Day.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah sent a cable to President Xiomara Castro, congratulating her on the occasion of her country's National Day.

## Charter published in Official Gazette

### Cabinet issues decree to OK setting up Digital Cooperation Organization

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 15: The Council of Ministers issued Decree Law No. 92/2024 on the approval of the charter for the establishment of the Digital Cooperation Organization, which was signed on April 26, 2021.

This is a confirmation of the desire of the signatory countries to enhance the field of digital development, preserve the values of society, and strengthen economic cooperation and trade and investment exchange among member states.

The charter, which was published in the Official Gazette on Sept 15, 2024, consists of the following articles:

**Article One:** Definitions

**Article Two:** Formation of Digital Cooperation Organization, countries and entities that signed the charter, and ways to join the organization

**Article Three:** Objectives of the organization, such as strengthening cooperation between members in enabling platforms for digital transformation, enactment of legislation and regulations, and making policies that contribute to the development of digital transformation and expansion of the technology market

**Article Four:** Headquarters of the organization and the possibility of establishing branches outside Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

**Article Five:** Legal authority, privileges and diplomatic immunities of the organization to accomplish its goals, provided the host nation enters into an agreement governing the organization's status and the privileges and immunities accorded to it

**Article Six:** Location of the organization's meetings

**Article Seven:** Organization's bodies

**Article Eight:** Formation of the council for managing the organization, including the date and place of its meeting

**Article Nine:** Powers of the council

**Article 10:** Methods for the council to vote on decisions

**Article 11:** Secretariat General of the organization

**Articles 12, 13 and 14:** Tasks of the Secretariat General, powers of the Secretary General and budget of the organization

**Article 16:** Ways to amend the charter

**Article 17:** Method of resolving disputes over the interpretation or application of the charter or anything related to it

**Article 18:** Provisions on the charter and its application

## Other Voices

### 'The peacocks living among us'

By Ahmed alsarraf

Muslims, especially in the West, never tire of calling others to Islam, or regretting their delay in joining them to eternal paradise.

The matter becomes more urgent when the non-Muslim is a famous figure, even if he is a singer or a second-rate football player.

This call to join the religion only comes from the caller's growing feeling that he is a role model, even if he is the height of ignorance and a mountain of naivety.

There is nothing in our country that makes such callers a role model, especially since their daily behavior does not indicate that they have ever received a good upbringing or a distinguished education.

There is nothing other than what they show of religiosity, what they utter of repeated and well-known words, and what they wear of "robes," which they believe, in their entirety, constitute a passport to the hearts and minds of those who hear them, and give them a certain status wherever they are.

All of this creates in them a false sense of superiority, which prevents them from seeing the reality of their false and miserable situation, and that they are in fact a burden on knowledge and the world.

This feeling, as a friendly writer explained to him that he was deprived of the anger and rebellion necessary against his situation, and prevented him from developing himself and freeing himself from his backwardness.

When these people move to live in other countries, especially the West, which they describe as the countries of the infidels, they strive hard to enjoy all the benefits of those countries, and at the same time, they strive, with certainty, steadfastness and absolute determination, to evade paying their taxes.

They do not hesitate to resort to the

worst ways and tricks to obtain financial assistance from the state, and its medical and social support, from specialists and others, and they do not forget to demand all their wages according to the minimum wage laws, and if they have a side job, they often employ those who work for them illegally, without social security, and do not give them the minimum wage.

Some of them, as we see even in Kuwait, and perhaps in other Gulf countries, divorce their wives, in a formal manner, so that she can obtain aid from the government, and perhaps an apartment from the municipality of the area, and they do not hesitate to conclude their marriage contract with her secretly, and there is always someone willing to testify for them, legally, to the validity of the marriage.

Then such people puff up their feathers, like proud peacocks, because they see themselves as "cleaner and purer" than followers of other faiths!

The behavior of some Muslim communities in Western countries, based on personal experiences spanning years, is disturbing and painful for the peaceful majority.

They behave in a way that provokes sorrow and causes societies to hate them. This of course applies to other communities that are no less evil and bad than them, but these have never claimed that they are better than others.

The Islamic minorities in Western countries do not receive sufficient attention from the moderate religious institutions in our countries.

Rather, they have been left to the extremist clerics there, who have led many of them astray and divided them into sects and parties.

The only concern of their leaders or imams is to obtain money and influence through the places of worship that they control.

It does not seem that the affairs of these communities will become better in the near future, except when they feel that their entire existence is in danger, and this is something that is expected to happen soon.

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

# PAM issues decision to amend certain work permit provisions

Armed Forces Hospital launches eczema awareness drive

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 15: The Director-General of the Public Authority for Manpower has issued an administrative decision to amend certain provisions of the regulations for granting work permits, as outlined in Administrative Decision No. 156/2022, reports Al-Rai daily.

This amendment now includes representatives of banks, financial institutions, and foreign organizations operating in Kuwait among those authorized to sign work permit applications with the Authority.

Specifically, the decision adds a new clause to the last paragraph of Article 4 of the Regulations of Rules and Procedures for Granting Work Permits.

The added text specifies that representatives of "banks, financial, and foreign institutions operating in the State of Kuwait" are also permitted to act as authorized signatories for work permits.

Before this amendment, the regulation allowed non-Kuwaitis to be authorized signatories only for activities related to foreign investors practicing economic activities under Law 116/2013, international organizations established through agreements, or international news agencies and places of worship.

The new update expands this scope, facilitating smoother work permit processes for foreign financial entities operating in Kuwait.

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**'Eczema' awareness:** The Dermatology Department at Jaber Al-Ahmad Armed Forces Hospital is set to launch an awareness campaign titled "Know More About Eczema" from September 16 to 19, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The campaign will be held in the hospital lobby from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm daily.

Lieutenant Colonel Dr. Hadi Al-Fares, head of the Dermatology Department, announced that the campaign is part of World Eczema Day activities, observed on September 14 each year.

The goal is to educate the public, patients, and society about eczema -- its symptoms, diagnosis, prevention, and treatment. The campaign will also cover the latest advancements and medications for managing eczema.

Dr. Al-Fares described eczema as a chronic, non-contagious skin condition that causes dryness, itching, and inflammation.

While it can affect individuals at any age, it is most prevalent among young children. Those with atopic eczema are at an increased risk of developing food allergies, asthma, hay fever, and allergic rhinitis. Eczema can also lead to sleep disturbances, depression, and anxiety.

September is recognized as the month for raising awareness about atopic eczema, or atopic dermatitis. The campaign will feature participation from leading pharmaceutical companies specializing in eczema treatment and prevention.

Dr. Al-Fares expressed his gratitude to the supporters and contributors to the campaign, including First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Defense Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Al-Mishaal, Chief of Staff of the Army Lieutenant General Bandar Al-Muzain, Head of the Medical Services Authority Major General Dr. Walid Mandani, and Director of Jaber Al-Ahmad Armed Forces Hospital Brigadier Dr. Walid Al-Yassin.

## MoSA implements new employee evaluation mechanism

### Call for extension of domestics transfer policy

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 15: The Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) has confirmed the expiry of Ministerial Resolution No. 6/2024 on allowing domestic workers to transfer to the private sector, reports Al-Jarida daily.

First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and acting Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef

issued the resolution to give domestic workers a chance to transfer to the private sector in accordance with the regulations within a certain period -- from July 14 to Sept 12. The conditions for such transfer are as follows: at least one year in service with the current employer, approval of the current employer, KD50 transfer fee and KD10 annual fee.

Domestic labor affairs expert Basam Al-Shammari has reiterated his call for the minister to extend the implementation of the resolution for two months or implement it permanently, similar to the neighboring countries.

He explained this will greatly contribute to ongoing efforts to address the severe manpower shortage and the imbalance in the local labor market, which has been going on for a long time. He said the manpower shortage, especially the professionals and craftsmen, prompted hundreds of business owners and private companies to resort to the recruitment of domestic workers.

In his interview with the daily, Al-Shammari stressed the need to allow expatriate workers in all sectors to transfer between sectors without the impossible conditions. He pointed out this is one way to restore balance in the labor market, revive the market, and realize the lofty vision of transforming Kuwait into a global financial and commercial center. He cited several positive consequences of extending the domestic to private transfer decision; such as addressing the issue of thousands of domestic

### Transfer

workers who escape from their sponsors to work in the private sector and limiting labor disputes that affect hundreds of workers.

Recruitment

Moreover, the Federation of Owners of Domestic Labor Recruitment Offices issued a statement regarding the resumption of the recruitment of new domestic workers from the Philippines. It stated that "the offices which have not previously recruited Filipino domestic workers are the only ones allowed to hire workers from Manila. Their number does not exceed four percent of the total number of local offices authorized to recruit domestic workers. The remaining 96 percent are currently completing their procedures at the Philippine Embassy to enable them to recruit workers again."

Al-Shammari denied the statement, asserting "it is completely false and lacks credibility"; stressing there have been dozens of recruitment requests from several offices that previously recruited workers from the Philippines, contrary to the federation's claim that the recruitment process is limited to the new offices. He expressed surprise at the lack of knowledge of those in charge of the federation of such obvious procedures that are known to everyone.

He said: In the next few weeks, the Philippine Embassy will accelerate the procedures for domestic labor recruitment offices through the approval of the initial work contracts, known as "job orders". This may increase the number of applications; indicating that at present, the Philippines allows the recruitment of experienced workers only -- those who previously worked in Kuwait, other Gulf states or any other country.

Employee evaluation: The Ministry of Social Affairs has revealed a new mechanism for evaluating employees who have been recently seconded to vacant supervisory posi-

tions such as managers, supervisors, and department heads, reports Al-Jarida daily.

According to the new procedure, quarterly reports will be issued to track these employees' performance.

These reports will detail their achievements, engagement levels, challenges faced, and solutions implemented, as well as their contributions to advancing departmental work and expediting transactions.

The assistant undersecretaries of the ministry will submit these evaluations every three months to the undersecretary of the ministry, helping to assess the effectiveness of these employees.

### Evaluation

The evaluation will provide a clear picture of whether the seconded employees should be permanently appointed to the supervisory positions after the legally mandated one-year period.

This move aims to eliminate any "absolute authority" in delegation, instead adhering to specific legal controls and requirements.

Furthermore, each employee in a supervisory role must have four approved efficiency evaluations during their one-year assignment to be confirmed in their position by the Personnel Affairs Committee.

The ministry has recently addressed objections and observations highlighted in the Audit Bureau's annual report for the fiscal year 2023/2024 concerning the filling of vacant supervisory positions.

Notably, the ministry successfully filled positions that had been vacant for three years within just three months.

Sources also disclosed that the ministry is preparing to refer a new batch of employees, who have reached 30 years of service, to retirement.

This follows a similar move last July, where 35 employees meeting the age and service requirements were retired.

The names of the new batch of retirees are expected to be announced after December. This initiative aligns with the Council of Ministers and Civil Service Bureau decisions aimed at refreshing the workforce and meeting government goals for employee service duration.

## Ministry of Commerce and Industry's achievements in August

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 15: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry has confirmed the issuance of 1,577 certificates of origin for Kuwaiti exports to other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries in August -- a slight decrease of 1.3 percent compared to 1,597 in July.

These certificates include 502 for Arab and Islamic countries -- an increase of 27 percent compared to 366 in July, six for European countries, seven for African countries, four for America, and nine for Asian countries and Australia.

In addition, about 180,000 precious metal and stone tests were conducted last month; 466 free-trade business licenses were issued; 1,041 licenses for personal companies were issued; 124 real estate management procedures were completed; and 24 temporary trade fair licenses were issued.

The number of company licensing procedures reached 33,826; including 8,784 for wholesale and retail; 5,135 for construction; 4,667 for restaurants; 2,461 for general trading and contracting offices; 2,393 for the sale of gifts and luxury items; 2,358 for commission agents and commission trading; 2,257 for export and im-

### Nurses among 150 'skilled workers' to arrive in Kuwait from Philippines

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 15: Concurrently with the arrival of the first batch of 32 Filipino domestic workers in Kuwait on Saturday, following a ban that lasted over a year and a half, informed sources have reported that the Philippine Embassy has approved requests of more than 150 skilled workers, including both male and female nurses, who are expected to arrive in Kuwait soon, reports Al-Jarida daily.

According to informed sources, the Philippine Embassy has received visas for the first batch of

skilled workers from the Philippines following their approval. Two private hospitals in Kuwait have recruited approximately 80 male and female nurses, and their procedures are expected to take about two months to complete.

These developments pave the way for a remarkable return of Filipino workers to Kuwait to address the current shortage of domestic workers, especially after some of these workers benefited from the decision issued by the relevant authority to transfer to the private sector.

for managing the business of the joint-stock company, 409 for project management, 971 for the joint-stock company business management office, 259 for company management, 235 for exchange offices, 210 for commercial banks, 182 for restaurants, 96 for banking services and 62 for eggs.

On the other hand, three stores were opened, three stores were closed, 28 license violations were recorded and 224 commercial control reports were submitted in August.

## Probe panels over co-ops accounts complete tasks

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 15: According to sources from the Ministry of Social Affairs, the two investigation committees recently formed to review the work and accounts of the Sabah Al-Salem and Granada Cooperative Societies have completed their tasks, and are now preparing to submit their reports to the undersecretary of the ministry, who will forward them to the Minister of Social Affairs Dr. Amthah Al-Huwailah for a final decision, reports Al-Jarida daily.

They explained that decisions will soon be issued to form about three new committees to review the files and accounts of the new cooperative societies. This is based on the periodic reports submitted to the ministry by financial and administrative auditors within the cooperative societies, as well as

complaints received from shareholders regarding potential violations by the boards of directors.

Each investigation committee is tasked with examining and reviewing the administrative documents and accounting records of each cooperative society individually, and ensuring their accuracy and identifying any violations.

The committees will also investigate any suspicions of mismanagement or misconduct by those responsible for running the cooperative societies and their employees during the investigation period. The findings will be reported to the undersecretary of the ministry in preparation for submission to the Minister of Social Affairs.





## 'Arab satellite channels fueling division and despair in Mideast'

"ACROSS the Middle East, viewers tune into Arab satellite channels around the clock, all year long. These platforms, intended to inform and connect people, instead seem to have become sources of division and hatred," columnist Dr. Abdul Rahman Al-Jeeran wrote for *Al-Rai* daily.

"From political analyses to talk shows and official news reports, the content is often filled with conflict: trench warfare, escalating gunfire, and the relentless reopening of old wounds.

"We witness stories of suffering -- people dying from hunger, thirst, revolutions, snipers, bombs, and even planes. Innocent children fall victim to landmines.

"The cycle continues as statistics are compiled, comparing the past to the present, only to find that the present is even darker. The battlefields remain stained with blood, and the tools of destruction continue to multiply. The seeds of hatred are sown by bankrupt theorists who respond to every scandal with calls for revenge.

"These tragedies, presented almost like scenes from a Rambo movie, contribute to the clouds of hatred that spread across Arab and Islamic societies.

"Divisions deepen between peoples, tribes, races, sects, and religions. Friends become enemies simply because of differences in race, language, craft, or political affiliation. Even if none of these reasons apply, hatred is stirred by the belief that one person alone should lead the nation, as the saying goes, 'O Earth, be strong, no one is as strong as me'.

"This is the damage inflicted upon us by the so-called democracy and wounded freedom of opinion propagated by some satellite channels. Instead of fostering unity, these platforms celebrate media scoops that deepen our wounds and cement our failures in the minds of future generations.

"Why do these channels refuse to show mercy to our nation? Why don't they work to advance or strengthen it instead of crippling it? Our hearts are hardened, our history slandered, and we are subjected to a barrage of inflammatory rhetoric. Sharp tongues in the media sow discord and hatred.

"When will the media purge itself of thieves, debaters who pit people against each other, and merchants who profit from leading the nation into chaos? The Middle East, as a result, risks losing its identity, becoming nothing more than a puddle of water in the middle of the road.

"As long as these false demands and illusory dreams persist, there is no hope for peace, security, happiness, or progress. There is no difference between yesterday, today, or tomorrow if certain satellite channels continue down this path of destruction.

"Only when the Middle East advances and finds stability can we bid farewell to these divisive channels. Until then, the chaos will dominate us."

### Also:

"In recent years, the topic of retirement has become a focal point of debate across the world. France, for example, has seen strikes and public unrest due to a decision to gradually increase the retirement age from 62 to 65 by 2030," columnist **Fawaz Ahmed Al-Hamad** wrote for *Al-Jarida* daily.

"Similarly, Germany has raised the retirement age to 67, while in Britain, it is 65, and in Spain, 66. Each country faces its own challenges as its population ages and economic realities shift.

"In Kuwait, the retirement age is currently set at 55 years, a significantly lower threshold compared to many developed nations. However, there are multiple categories of retirees, each with unique circumstances and needs.

"For instance, many citizens seek early retirement for personal reasons. These early retirees believe they have given the best of their years to their country and now wish to focus on family, hobbies, or personal business ventures.

"Early retirees feel they have contributed all their experience and expertise and wish to exit the workforce before the official retirement age of 55.

"On the other hand, there is a category of citizens who retire due to medical reasons. These individuals suffer from chronic illnesses or disabilities that make it difficult for them to continue working.

"When a person is diagnosed with a medical condition that causes a 50% or greater disability, they are granted medical retirement, allowing them to manage their health and family responsibilities more easily. This category serves as a reminder of the challenges many face when health issues arise.

"Another group of retirees faces a different dilemma. With rising inflation and the increasing cost of living, many citizens cannot afford to retire at the official age.

"This group continues to work because their retirement benefits may not be sufficient to cover their family's financial needs. Given the growing demands of daily life, these individuals prefer to remain employed to avoid financial instability, which would only increase upon retirement.

"Given these diverse needs, it is clear that the General Organization for

Social Insurance in Kuwait should consider more flexible retirement options.

"One proposal is to allow workers the choice to extend their careers for an additional five years, similar to policies in developed countries. Such flexibility would benefit employees who are still capable of contributing to their jobs, while easing the financial strain on families facing inflation and rising costs.

"The government should conduct a comprehensive study of the proposal to raise the retirement age, ensuring that any changes are optional and not mandatory.

"This approach would provide much-needed support for families and allow individuals to make decisions based on their financial and personal circumstances. Many families in Kuwait face financial difficulties, especially as inflation erodes purchasing power, leading to deficits before the end of the month.

"In addition to rethinking retirement policies, the government must also address the broader issue of inflation. The sharp rise in prices has placed significant burdens on Kuwaiti families, increasing the risk of disputes, financial strain, and even family breakdowns. In some cases, these pressures have led to family instability or separation, which can have long-term negative consequences on children and overall societal well-being.

"At the heart of society's strength lies the family. As the cornerstone of any nation, the family unit plays a crucial role in the development and progress of societies.

"A weak family structure leads to a weakened society, disrupting the balance and harmony needed for growth. Ensuring the well-being of Kuwaiti families, both financially and socially, should be a top priority for the government.

"By addressing the retirement age, supporting flexibility in employment, and tackling inflation, the government can help foster a stable and prosperous society. The future of Kuwait depends on the health and strength of its families, and it is essential to create policies that reflect this critical relationship."

"Whenever you visit a government department or even a private office, look for an Asian worker of a known nationality. If you find one, you can be confident that your transaction will be completed," columnist **Talal Al-Saeed** wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

"When you visit a government or private sector office, you might find that handing your transaction, along with a small amount of money, to an Asian worker can expedite the process. Simply wait in the designated area, and they will handle the paperwork and pay any associated fees for you.

"This is especially true in hospitals, both private and government, where the process can involve multiple steps starting from seeing a doctor to undergoing tests.

"If you want detailed information about the workings of a government department, speaking to one or more of these workers can be insightful. Offering a modest reward in installments can often lead to valuable information about their workplace.

"Despite the common misconception that these workers do not understand or know much, they are often keen observers, very knowledgeable, meticulous observers, and very intelligent, and they know everything.

"Here is the crux of the matter: Workers at Jaber Hospital often talk about what happens in the hospital after 9:00 pm when expatriate patients begin to visit, even though the hospital is primarily intended for Kuwaiti patients.

"After 9:00 pm, expatriate doctors reportedly use a back entrance to secretly admit and treat expatriate patients. This situation reflects an old saying, 'Whoever has a baker for a mother will get their fill of bread,' suggesting that those closest to the doctors receive preferential treatment. These 'baker's children' have special access and designated entry points. This occurs amid a lack of strict supervision and malfunctioning or unmonitored surveillance cameras. This issue is not limited to Jaber Hospital, as similar practices can be found in various sectors. This highlights a broader need for stringent oversight and accountability in all areas of life, not just in Jaber Hospital, as there are 'baker's children' everywhere.

"While hospital officials may be complacent, the Asian workers remain vigilant, observing, scrutinizing, and recording their surroundings. They have even begun sharing their insights with citizens, often with a tone of 'Har-am, Baba Haram'.

"Many Kuwaiti visitors to the hospital trust these workers' accounts because they have no reason to deceive. The workers witness firsthand what happens after 9:00 pm, including nighttime procedures referred to as 'one-day operations.' Patients undergoing these procedures often leave in the early hours of the morning without filling any admission or transfer paperwork or paying any fees.

"This situation occurs in a hospital intended for Kuwaiti patients only, yet Kuwaitis face long wait times, require transfers, and undergo extensive procedures. God is our helper!"

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



Al-Seyassah photos

Left-right: The quarter ton of seized adulterated meat.

## 'Inspection campaigns aim at protecting public health'

# PAFN seizes quarter ton of adulterated meat in Hawalli

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 15: The Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN) in Kuwait has announced the seizure of a quarter ton of adulterated meat of unknown origin in Hawalli. The meat was being improperly thawed and sold as fresh, putting public health at risk, reports *Al-Seyassah* daily.

The inspectors also found a food

facility operating with an expired license, trading in adulterated food products of unknown origin, and allowing workers to handle food without the required health certificates.

Moreover, the investigators found that some businesses were thawing frozen meat, poultry, and birds, then selling them as fresh products. The PAFN has empha-

sized that strict legal measures will be taken against those responsible.

Abdullah Al-Kandari, Director of the Hawalli Governorate Inspection Department, assured that inspection campaigns will continue around the clock to cover all food stores, central markets, warehouses, and other locations that handle food products.

The goal is to protect the public health and ensure food safety while preventing violations of the regulations set by the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition.

These efforts highlight the government's commitment to ensuring the safety of food products available to consumers and holding violators accountable.

# Customs officer, 2 others perish in two separate road accidents

Court upholds man's acquittal verdict in drug trafficking case

By **Jaber Al-Hamoud, Munif Naif**  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 15: The Court of Cassation upheld the verdict issued by the Court of Appeals which acquitted an individual who was accused of trafficking in heroin, opium, and psychotropic substances. The acquittal was based on the lack of evidence to support the conviction.**

Earlier, the Criminal Court had sentenced him to life imprisonment for the aforementioned charges.

During the court session, Lawyer Inaam Haidar, representing the defendant, said the arrest and search procedures were flawed, and the evidence did not substantiate the claim that the defendant's possession of the narcotics and psychotropic substances was intended for trafficking.

The court's ruling stated that it was not convinced by the incident officer's findings, either in the investigation report or in the Public Prosecution's testimony, that the defendant was involved in selling or buying drugs through a source provided by the incident officer.

The court emphasized that determining the intent to traffic in narcotics is within the judge's discretion, provided it is based on credible evidence.

**48K traffic citations issued:** The General Traffic Department continued to hold traffic campaigns in all governorates during the past week, which resulted in the issuance of 48,000 traffic citations, the seizure of 111 vehicles, and the referral of 68 juveniles to the Juvenile Prosecution for driving without a license.

According to the department's weekly statistics, 55 individuals were taken into custody at the traffic

## Liquor bottles, other tools seized

### Mol nabs duo in desert area liquor factory raid

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 15, (KUNA): The Ministry of Interior announced on Sunday the discovery of an illegal liquor factory located in a desert area in northern Kuwait. The factory, operated by two Asian nationals, was identified through meticulous surveillance of the site.

At the location, authorities uncovered a significant quantity of locally-produced liquor

ready for sale, along with 1,780 empty plastic bottles intended for refilling. Additionally, numerous barrels used in the distillation process and various manufacturing tools were seized. The suspects have been referred to the appropriate legal authorities for further action. The ministry emphasized its ongoing commitment to combating crime and ensuring public safety.

police station, 66 wanted vehicles were seized, and 13 people were arrested, including one individual who was found in an abnormal condition.

The department also dealt with 1,199 traffic accidents during the week, which resulted in 231 injuries.

**Three die in accidents:** Bader Melhab Eid Al-Nusafi, an officer at Kuwait General Administration of Customs (KGAC), died in a traffic accident in an undisclosed location, reports *Al-Anba* daily.

KGAC issued a statement mourning the death of Al-Nusafi.

In another incident, two people died when their vehicles collided and rolled over on the Sixth Ring Road; while two others sustained serious injuries and were rushed to the nearest hospital.

A security source said the Operations Unit at the Interior Ministry received information about the horrific accident on the Sixth Ring Road, opposite Oyoun going towards Jahra. Rescue, traffic and emergency personnel were quickly dispatched to the location.

A case was registered and investigations are

underway to determine the circumstances leading to these fatal accidents.

**Bahraini fugitive nabbed:** The Kuwaiti Interpol under direct instructions from Major General Hamed Al-Dawas, Assistant Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior for Criminal Security Affairs, has arrested a Bahraini fugitive, reports *Al-Jarida* daily.

This individual, who faces multiple criminal charges in Bahrain -- including a life sentence -- had an international arrest warrant issued by Interpol.

The Kuwaiti authorities were alerted by their Bahraini counterparts about the fugitive's presence in Kuwait after he had evaded arrest in Bahrain.

The 36-year-old suspect is now being handed over to Bahraini security authorities in compliance with the international arrest warrant.



Maj-Gen Al-Dawas

## Classes for female inmates

### Al-Daihani inspects schools in Mutla'a ahead of academic yr

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 15: Acting Undersecretary of the Education Ministry Mansour Al-Daihani has inspected a number of schools in Mutla'a to ensure their readiness for academic year 2024/2025, reports *Al-Anba* daily quoting sources.

Sources disclosed that the ministry has fully equipped seven new schools in Mutla'a; affirming that Jahra Educational District and the Public Education Sector in the ministry have coordinated their efforts to designate educational and administrative bodies to these schools, while a huge number of parents decided to enroll their children in Mutla'a schools according to the students' address.

Sources have emphasized that things are going well and according to plan; asserting that the schools are ready to receive students at the beginning of the new academic year on Monday for primary schools.

On the other hand, the ministry announced the opening of classes for the inmates in correctional institutions for women to continue their intermediate and secondary studies.

The daily obtained a copy of acting Assistant Undersecretary for Public Education Affairs Mansour Al-Dhafiri to his Educational Development and Activities counterpart stating: "With reference to the letter of the Ministry of Interior undersecretary regarding the request to open evening classes for the inmates in correctional institutions for women, similar to that of the male inmates, in line with the regular study system for prisoners and the current home examination system; there is no objection to opening classes (intermediate and secondary stages) for female inmates. Farwaniya Educational District shall take the necessary steps, provided the concerned female inmates will attend classes designated for them in the Central Prison."



Al-Daihani

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# KFAS drives Kuwait's sustainable energy transition

Groundbreaking roadmap promises 120 bln dinars economic gains by 2060

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 15:** Eng. Dina Al-Naqeeb, Director of the Research and Technology Activation Department at the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS), has highlighted the foundation's efforts in driving sustainable energy development in Kuwait, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Over the past decade, she says, KFAS has adopted numerous initiatives aimed at transforming the energy sector, positioning itself as a key player in sustainable development.

One of the most significant steps in this direction is the creation of the energy transformation document (white paper), developed in collaboration with major stakeholders, including the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation, the Ministry of Electricity, the Environment Public Authority, the Kuwait University, and the Avance Consulting.

This document, which outlines Kuwait's first roadmap for energy transformation, was prepared in coordination with the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research and the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development, she added.

Al-Naqeeb stressed the importance of implementing this transformation, which could generate an estimated net gain of \$390 billion (120 billion dinars) for Kuwait by 2060.

She also pointed out that key sectors like electricity, transportation, communications, and oil currently consume around 70 percent of the country's total energy, making cooperation between the government, the oil sector, and the private sector essential for the success of the transformation.

One major initiative KFAS has explored is the installation of photovoltaic solar cells. Al-Naqeeb explained that had solar cells been installed in 200,000 homes at a rate of 5 kilowatts per home, the total installed capacity would have reached 1 GW.

This would have significantly reduced pressure on the national grid during peak times and potentially eliminated the need for programmed power outages or purchasing electricity from the Gulf network, she disclosed.

Al-Naqeeb further elaborated on the broader impact of energy projects supported by KFAS. Over the past five years, energy projects ranked second only to health in terms of funding.

The foundation's investment in innovative technologies and its support for sustainable energy-related policies have not only promoted sustainable development but also opened up new markets, created industries, and supported Kuwait's gross domestic product (GDP) growth, she said.



Al-Seyassah photo

Eng. Dina Al-Naqeeb, Director of the Research and Technology Activation Department at the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS).

## Kuwait Municipality seeks to tender public toilets services

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 15:** Kuwait Municipality has announced the initiation of procedures for issuing a tender to manage the operation of public toilets, reports Al-Jarida daily.

This came in response of Director Saud Al-Dabbous to a proposal submitted by Municipal Council member Eng. Sharifa Al-Shalfan, which suggested separating the cleaning contracts for public toilets from the general cleaning contracts.

The forthcoming tender will cover cleaning municipal buildings, correspondence, and general service and cleaning tasks.

Al-Dabbous explained the Purchasing Committee, in its meeting No. 2024/22 on July 17, decided to include the public toilets cleaning contract within the broader scope of work for municipal buildings and related services. This approach aims to rationalize spending and safeguard public funds.

Moreover, Al-Dabbous noted that the Gulf Building Code has not yet been issued.

KFAS's ongoing work with the energy transformation document, she added, will contribute to developing national capabilities and building a more resilient economy, less dependent on the fluctuations of oil and gas prices.

The coordination between government entities and scientific bodies such as the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research ensures a unified effort in this energy transformation, aiming to push Kuwait toward a future of lower carbon emissions and greater sustainability.

## CSC opens secretarial, hotel support courses

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 15:** The Civil Service Commission has announced that registration is now open for courses in secretarial, typing and hotel support services, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

These courses are available for Kuwaitis with secondary and intermediate qualifications and are registered in the central employment system for up to 'period 87'.

Registration can be completed through the CSC website and will remain open until September 26.

The offered courses will be conducted in cooperation with the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training, aimed at equipping participants with essential skills for these professions.

## Ministry of Information to resume accepting allowances applications

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

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 15:** The Ministry of Information is set to resume accepting new applications for employee allowances starting November 1, 2024.

In this regard, informed sources told Al-Seyassah daily that the ministry continues to process and pay current allowances without any interruptions, ensuring employees receive their shift, food, night, and location allowances as usual.

However, the ministry had temporarily halted the acceptance of

new applications while it updated litigants' numbers in the integrated systems of the Civil Service Bureau.

This pause also allows the completion of the budget project for the fiscal year 2025-2026.

The ministry sources explained that this annual routine, managed by the Administrative Affairs Department, ensures all names are inventoried and submitted to the relevant authorities.

The process is essential for securing the necessary funds for allowances in the upcoming fiscal year's budget.



Al-Jarida photo

Part of the participating students in the programs.

## Renewed opportunities

# AIU reintroduces two initiatives to enhance student campus journey

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 15:** The American International University (AIU) has announced the reintroduction of two initiatives - the Student Representative Committee and the Student Support Program - both of which are aimed at enhancing the university experience, reports Al-Jarida daily.

In a press statement, the university explained that these distinguished programs, which have proven effective in previous years, are being reintroduced to ensure that both new and current students are fully informed about these opportunities throughout the academic year.

The Student Representative Committee continues to serve as a vital platform for students to communicate, express their opinions, and collaborate with university teams to shape activities and initiatives. This committee ensures that students' concerns and ideas are heard, fostering a dynamic and inclusive university environment.

The Student Support Program is designed to offer guidance and assistance to both new and current students. Experienced students in this program provide advice, support, and resources to help their peers navigate university life, whether by aiding new students in adjusting to academic programs or supporting current students in their ongoing success. This initiative plays a fundamental role in enhancing the sense of community on campus.

The inspiration for these programs stems from the success of student ambassadors during the orientation for new students and the scholarship period for private universities. This highlights AIU's commitment to supporting student leadership and peer mentoring. Both initiatives affirm the importance of fostering a supportive and collaborative university culture.

In this regard, Assistant Director for Student Activities Nada Walweel said, "We are dedicated to empowering students to represent their peers and support each other, thereby strengthening the AIU community and creating an environment that benefits every student."

## Unified center endorsed

# GCC ministers commit to joint climate actions

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 15:** The 26th Meeting of the Ministers of Environmental Affairs in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries held recently in Doha, Qatar discussed the establishment of a unified Gulf center for environmental and climate studies, reports Al-Anba daily.

In a statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), acting Director General of the Environment Public Authority (EPA) Eng. Samira Al-Kandari stressed the importance of the meeting.

She also revealed that the meeting focused on several topics like the strategic plan of the concerned ministerial committee to intensify the joint Gulf action in protecting the environment, agreement to preserve wildlife and its natural habitats in the GCC countries, establishment of a unified Gulf center for environmental and climate studies, and preparation of the Gulf environmental index.

She affirmed full support for Saudi Arabia in hosting the 16th Conference of the Parties (COP16) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) that will be held in Riyadh in December. She said the Gulf ministerial meetings greatly contribute to the advancement of joint Gulf action and in supporting joint efforts in various fields, especially in protecting the environment.

She also expressed gratitude and appreciation to the State of Qatar for hosting the 26th Meeting of the Ministers of Environmental Affairs in GCC countries, particularly its efforts in organizing the event and warmly welcoming the participants. She is looking forward to more joint Gulf action to develop the environmental system, indicating she invited all those present to the next ministerial meeting that will be held in Kuwait next year.



Al-Kandari

## Mitigating impact of global warming

# 'Planting trees key to reducing heat'

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 15:** Agriculture is one of the effective channels for mitigating the impact of global warming and 'heat islands' in cities - a term used to describe any area that is relatively hotter than the surrounding areas due to human intervention, reports Al-Qabas daily quoting meteorologist and weather forecaster Issa Ramadan.

Ramadan posted on his official 'X' account: "Planting on the roads and building gardens in suburbs and cities will reduce temperatures. Plants are considered the lungs of the city, as they increase oxygen and reduce carbon

dioxide ... Adopt and plant a tree."

In a previous statement, he suggested that agriculture is one of the best ways to reduce sandstorms and high temperatures in the country. He urged the concerned authorities to think about the international obligations and agreements in this regard, as well as the future generation.

He also pointed out that the whole world is now focusing on combating climate change, indicating studies have proven that planting more trees can reduce temperatures by more than four degrees Celsius during summer.

A study published in The Lancet revealed that planting trees and increasing tree cover in some cities prevents around 40 percent of heat-related deaths and makes the weather cooler; thereby, confirming the importance of afforestation in reducing high temperatures.



Ramadan

# 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>
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<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\*



## Development plan report outlines strategic goals to stimulate economic growth

# Kuwait aims to energize private sector with new power projects

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 15: The 2024/2025 Development Plan Report specified the legislative requirements to enhance the Dynamic Private Sector Program, including the proposed public electricity and water corporation.

The report stated that the Ministry of Electricity and Water's share of the strategic projects is three -- North Zour Power Station (phases two and three) to produce 2,700 megawatts; Khairan Power Station (phase one) to produce 1,800 megawatts; and the supply and installation of turbine units at

Subiya Power Station to produce 900 megawatts (phase four).

The report explained that the goal of the Dynamic Private Sector Program is to transform Kuwait into an attractive environment for investments in various fields, especially in the energy and water fields, led by the private sector through the creation of an easy business environment, fair competition and smooth government procedures.

It also addressed the challenges that the program is facing; such as the decline in the private sector's contribution to the gross domestic product (GDP).

It pointed out that "the policies for enhancing the program include transferring activities from the public sector to the private sector through a privatization strategy, such

## MoH enables 'sick leave' downloads via Sahel app

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 15: The Ministry of Health has announced that sick leaves can now be downloaded through the unified government application "Sahel," reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The ministry explained that the feature includes sick

leaves that were requested, registered, and sent to users via the app's notification list over the past few days.

This new service offers a convenient way for users to access their sick leave documentation directly through the app.

as electricity and water. This is in addition to increasing projects financed through partnerships between the public

and private sectors, and supporting and developing direct investments by easing entry into the national economy."

## Regulations overhauled

### MoCI assigns 28 inspectors to enforce standards compliance

By Marwa Al-Bahrabi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 15: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry will assign 28 employees to oversee the application of Kuwaiti, Gulf and international standard specifications for imported and local materials; as stipulated by laws and decisions on products covered by the conformity system.

These employees will be in charge of taking samples and reviewing records to ensure compliance with Law No. 56/1996 and overseeing the application of Decree No. 128/1977 on standards unification and uncovering violations. They will be granted the right to

request assistance from police officers, if the need arises.

Meanwhile, Ministerial Resolution No. 18/2024 was issued on the modification of the legal status of Kuwaiti standard specifications -- technical specifications for cellular concrete building blocks -- from optional to mandatory. It nullifies earlier decisions on the adoption of technical regulations and Kuwaiti standard specifications that contradict the resolution.

Ministerial Resolution No. 19/2024 was issued on the adoption and change of the legal status of three Gulf standard specifications from optional to mandatory, as per the details in the appendix to this resolution.

# Educators and parents push to reinstate flexible working hours

## Traffic chaos expected

By Abdulrahman Al-Shammari

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 15: With the start of the new academic year, educational circles have called for a review of the decision to cancel flexible working hours, as it is a lifeline to avoiding traffic congestion, especially on main roads and around schools.

They highlighted that cancellation of flexible working hours will nega-

tively affect students, teachers and parents. The exit of students, teachers and administrators at the same time from all schools will cause huge confusion and paralyze traffic in front of schools, especially in areas with multiple schools in close proximity.

Educational circles are currently experiencing a heated debate over the recent decision to cancel flexible working hours, which were in place during the last semester.

Many educators and parents have

voiced their concerns and urged the Ministry of Education to reinstate the flexible working hours from the previous semester to prevent traffic congestion and ensure smoother movement in various areas.

These circles also warned that the start of the school year next week will likely cause heavy traffic, particularly around schools.

They explained that if a school has approximately 500 students and 200 teachers, around 700 vehicles will be exiting simultaneously at the end of the school day, leading to heavy traffic congestion. The situation is expected to be even more problematic in residential areas with multiple schools, where the influx of vehicles could cause severe traffic jams, affecting school entrances, exits, and surrounding streets.

Severe traffic congestion increases the likelihood of accidents and violations, as noted by several parents. Drivers often resort to excessive speed in an attempt to bypass the congestion, which, combined with the stress of delays, contributes to a rise in traffic violations and accidents. This poses a huge risk to the safety of students, teachers, and parents.

Traffic data shows a notable increase in violations during both the morning and afternoon periods.

Meanwhile, educational circles noted that severe congestion was observed at schools when the fingerprint attendance system was first implemented at the beginning of the second semester. This issue persisted until the Ministry of Education approved flexible attendance, a decision that was widely welcomed and praised.

They stressed that flexible attendance was not a luxury but a crucial measure that greatly alleviated psychological stress for students, teachers, and parents. It facilitated smoother arrival and departure for students and substantially reduced traffic congestion.

In a press statement, Head of the Kuwait Teachers Society Hamad Al-Houli confirmed that flexible fingerprint attendance is one of the work controls established by the Civil Service Council with the intention of regulating attendance and departure across all state agencies and institutions, including the Ministry of Education, which is not authorized to alter these directives.

He expressed surprise at the Ministry of Education's silence regarding the ongoing discussions about flexible fingerprint attendance and its mechanisms, which have been widely covered on social media and in the press.

Al-Houli said the Kuwait Teachers Society views flexible fingerprint attendance as a right of teachers, who, as state employees, should receive the same considerations as their counterparts in other agencies.

He indicated that teachers have adhered to the laws and regulations governing work mechanisms, but these regulations do not always account for the unique demands of the teaching profession.

Al-Houli warned that the lack of clarity on this issue could lead to significant challenges, particularly concerning traffic congestion when students begin their new school shifts.

In addition, educators insist that flexible working hours are necessary for ensuring smooth traffic flow and reducing accidents and traffic violations.

They believe that adopting this system permanently could significantly enhance daily life, benefiting not only students and teachers but society as a whole.

Educational experts and parents have called for the return of flexible working hours to prevent the worsening of traffic conditions and increased difficulties on the roads.

They highlighted the growing support among educational circles for reconsidering the decision to cancel flexible working hours, adding that these calls are based on the successful implementation of the system during the last semester, which resulted in less crowded streets and safer exits for students.

## Kuwait boosts 'naval ties' with UAE and Saudi Arabia



Assistant Commander of the Naval Forces meets Commander of the Eastern Fleet of the Royal Saudi Naval Forces.



KUNA photos Assistant Commander of the Naval Forces meets Commander of the Eastern Fleet of the Royal Saudi Naval Forces.

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 15, (KUNA): Assistant Commander of the Naval Forces, Major General Saif Al-Hamlan, paid two official visits to the UAE and Saudi Arabia, the Ministry of Defense announced Sunday. During the visits, he met with the Commander of the UAE Naval Forces, Major General Sheikh Saeed bin Hamdan bin Mohammed Al Nahyan, and the Commander of the Eastern Fleet of the Royal Saudi Naval Forces, Major General Sajer Al-Enezi.

The Ministry of Defense stated in a press release that the visits, which took place last week, were aimed at enhancing joint military cooperation between the sister navies. The discussions focused on ways to develop joint operations, training, and the exchange of expertise.

It was noted that the meetings highlighted the importance of continuous coordination between the naval commands to strengthen joint naval operational capabilities.

## Fate of

Continued from Page 1

In a related note, Dr. Khidr Al-Baroun, a psychology professor at Kuwait University, lamented that student elections have regrettably become a breeding ground for tribalism, partisanship, and sectarianism, overshadowing the merit-based selection of representatives.

He expressed concern over the rhetoric used by students during elections and emphasized the need for security presence during elections to maintain order and prevent conflicts.

Dr. Al-Baroun stressed the importance of university administration and faculty educating students regularly so that they understand that their behavior and ethics reflect their academic learning. He encouraged students to demonstrate their scholarly values through their conduct rather than merely declaring their student status.

He also pointed out that certain organizations back student lists, unfortunately pushing political agendas onto students.

He questioned how it is possible for one list to dominate the elections for many years without any turnover in leadership.

Dr. Al-Baroun believes that the dominance of a single list in student elections indicates a form of dictatorship in the student election process.

authenticated at the embassy, after which he submitted it to Kuwaiti authorities to officially declare him as deceased. He was then compelled to obtain a passport and a residence permit for himself.

After arresting him and analyzing his fingerprints, the presence of both Kuwaiti and Syrian fingerprints was discovered, which validated his claims.

The first two brothers were referred to the Public Prosecution on charges of citizenship forgery, and the third brother was deported to Syria.

## Afia coverage

Continued from Page 1

The ministry revealed its intention to carry out all necessary legal actions against the company, including filing a lawsuit and seeking compensation for damages resulting from the breach of contract, adding that it will also activate all penalty clauses stipulated in the contract.

It reaffirmed its commitment to providing comprehensive health care services - primary, secondary, and specialized, including diagnostic, therapeutic, and rehabilitative care - to citizens covered by Afia health insurance. It pledged to prioritize these citizens and all eligible groups while adhering to the laws currently in effect in the country.

## Hussein &

Continued from Page 1

In addition to Hussein and Al-Juwaid, another individual had their citizenship revoked under the same decree, extending to those who acquired it through dependency.

However, records show in 1993, Ali was sentenced in absentia to death by hanging for treason by the Kuwaiti government. In January 2000 he returned to Kuwait attempting to appeal the sentence. The court however, affirmed Ali's conviction on May 3, 2000. In March 2001, his sentence was commuted to life in prison.

## Awqaf probes

Continued from Page 1

mistakenly disbursed 10,588 million Kuwaiti dinars in salaries between November 2021 and January 2022 to



Wael Al-Qatami with board members during the opening of the new vegetable branch in the central market.

## Discounts boost sales by 25%

### Nuzha Co-op opens new produce section

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 15: Chairman of the Board of Directors of Nuzha Cooperative Society Wael Al-Qatami has inaugurated the new fruit and vegetable section in the Central Market, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors Mishari Al-Qanaei, Purchasing Committee Chairman Abdullah Ghaith, Finance and Administration Committee Chairman Fawaz Al-Awad, Services Committee Chairman Abdulaziz Al-Bassam, Board Member Abdulaziz Al-Bannai, Director General of the cooperative Mohammad Nasser Al-Jamil, Director of the Purchasing Department Essam Al-Din and Central Market official Faraj Saadoun attended the inauguration ceremony.

Al-Qatami disclosed the new fruit and vegetable section measures 150 square meters for the consumers to shop comfortably, indicating it has an attractive and modern design. He said a large number of varieties of vegetables and fruits are displayed at the new section, stressing the design and

final touches added a special charm that is well received by the shareholders and honorable patrons of the cooperative.

He added the cooperative sold fruits and vegetables at discounted prices on Thursday to celebrate the opening of the new section, indicating there are special offers every Tuesday.

He affirmed the Board of Directors focuses on the fruits and vegetables section, which increased sales by more than 25 percent compared to last year's sales. He said the cooperative purchases directly from the fruit and vegetable market in Sulabiya, as per the decision of the Ministry of Social Affairs in this regard.

On the other hand, Al-Qatami revealed that the cooperative launched the stationary and school supplies festival on Sept 5 and it will continue for the whole month, offering large discounts on school supplies.

He added the cooperative is currently holding the back-to-school festival in the Central Market with discounts of up to 50 percent on a big number of items.

employees who had either died or resigned, a detail originally reported by Al-Seyassah.

The ministry had responded at the time by downplaying the issue as isolated incidents that had been addressed.

## KFA to

Continued from Page 1

Kuwaiti fans, who will remain the cornerstone of support for the national teams and have consistently demonstrated their loyalty and support at every sporting event."

It affirmed that the supporters are "the source of our pride and honor," and thanked them for their trust and support throughout various administrative and technical milestones.

The statement announced that the KFA Board of Directors decided to accept the resignation of the Secretary-General Salah Al-Qanaei, along with the resignations of Director of Media and Public Relations Dr. Muhammad Bou Abbas, and the entire Board of Directors. It also noted that Dr. Saleh Al-Majroub has been entrusted with the responsibilities and duties of the Secretary-General.

It also announced the acceptance of the resignations from KFA's Board of Directors and the Director of the Public Relations and Media Department Dr. Muhammad Bou Abbas.

The statement concluded with, "We extend our appreciation and apologies to all sports fans who love Kuwaiti football."

## 500,000 students

Continued from Page 1

This campaign is a collaborative effort between the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Information, and the Government Communication Center.

The relevant sectors of the Ministry of Interior have completed all preparations to ensure the safety and security of students and road users. These measures include deploying patrols on both main and secondary roads to manage traffic flow and deal with traffic congestion, particularly around schools and their access routes. The ministry will also take necessary legal actions against violators of traffic rules and laws.

The Ministry of Education explained that the main goal of the campaign is to mentally prepare and motivate students for the new academic year. It aims to highlight the role of teachers, recognize their contributions, and reinforce the importance of discipline and adherence to laws and regulations both inside and outside the school. This approach is intended to enhance academic achievement and advance the educational process.

The ministry emphasized the need to continually refine the media message to align with the nation's goals and aspirations of fostering a well-educated and aware generation capable of facing future challenges.

The Ministry of Education also commended the efforts of the ministries and supporting organizations that contributed to the launch of the media campaign "With our determination, we achieve our dream." The ministry highlighted the great impact of the campaign, which resulted from collaborative meetings with representatives from the participating entities to determine its direction.

The ministry affirmed that the campaign's cognitive content effectively supports practical achievement, creativity, and security culture.

It praised the use of various media platforms as the best way to deliver awareness and guidance messages to both parents and students.

Meanwhile, the Government Communication Center highlighted the importance of collaborating with relevant authorities to launch the campaign. This stems from the need to convey positive messages that boost enthusi-

asm among students and support the achievement of academic goals at each educational stage.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Information affirmed its keenness to deliver awareness and educational messages to students and parents through various media outlets and social media platforms. The goal is to enrich security and traffic culture, promote patriotism, foster loyalty, and reinforce national identity.

Also, the Ministry of Interior will organize awareness seminars in schools to enhance security and traffic awareness among students. These seminars will provide necessary guidance to ensure students' safety and adherence to traffic regulations.

These seminars will focus on how to respond in emergency situations and avoid potential risks both inside and outside the school. The ministry aims to reinforce public safety principles and strengthen the partnership between students and security agencies to ensure a safe educational environment.

The campaign will run throughout the academic year, targeting male and female students, parents, and teachers. It will include organizing awareness seminars, distributing informational materials, and implementing training programs. Media and social media platforms will be utilized to spread awareness messages. It highlighted the importance of community involvement and its role in supporting national efforts.

In addition, Kuwait Finance House (KFH), Mobile Telecommunications Company (Zain), Kuwait National Cinema Company, and M2R Media Group have supported the awareness media campaign titled "With Our Determination We Achieve Our Dream."

Their contributions involve spreading awareness and guidance messages that promote discipline and adherence to laws both inside and outside the schools. This support aims to help build a well-informed generation capable of actively contributing to Kuwait's future.



## World News Roundup

## Europe

**Italy deputy PM faces potential 6 years sentence:** Italian prosecutors on Saturday requested a six-year prison sentence for right-wing League leader **Matteo Salvini** for his decision to prevent more than 100 migrants from landing in Italy when he was interior minister in 2019. If convicted Salvini could be barred from holding government office.

The prosecutors in the city of Palermo have accused Salvini - who's currently deputy premier and transport minister in the right-wing government led by Giorgia Meloni - of alleged kidnapping for leaving a migrant rescue ship operated by charity Open Arms stranded at sea for 19 days.



Salvini

During the 2019 standoff, some of the migrants threw themselves overboard in desperation as the captain pleaded for a safe, close port. The remaining 89 people onboard were eventually allowed to disembark in Lampedusa by a court order.

"I would do it all again: defending borders from illegal immigrants is not a crime," Salvini said on his social media on Saturday.

His lawyer, Giulia Bongiorno, will make her defense statement in Palermo on Oct. 18, and a first sentence could come by the end of the month. A conviction - which in Italy is definitive only at the end of a three-stage judicial process -- could bar Salvini from holding government office.

Meloni and several ministers of her government expressed solidarity with the League leader, defending his decisions. (AP)

**'8 dead trying to cross English Channel':** At least eight people died during a failed attempt to cross the English Channel from northern France, French maritime authorities said Sunday.

The incident occurred Saturday just before midnight when authorities spotted a boat, carrying dozens, in distress near a beach in the northern town of Ambleteuse.

A French rescue ship was deployed to the area and rescue services offered medical assistance to 53 migrants on the beach, a statement from the French maritime authorities in charge of the Channel and the North Sea said.

"Despite the emergency care provided, eight people have died," the statement said.

No people were discovered during the search at sea, it added.

Six people were taken to hospital "in relative emergency," including a 10-month-old baby with hypothermia, Jacques Bilant, the Pas-de-Calais prefect, told French media on Sunday. He said survivors of the accident come from Eritrea, Sudan, Syria, Afghanistan, Egypt and Iran. (AP)

**Floodwaters trigger evacuations in Czech, Poland:** Another night of torrential rains pounding Central Europe forced massive evacuations in the hardest hit areas in the Czech Republic, where floods reached extreme levels on Sunday.

Meteorologists have warned the situation still might get worse as waters in most rivers are rising, the flood wave made its way through the country and more heavy rains could return overnight.

Authorities declared the highest flood warnings in almost 90 places across the country and in two northeastern regions that recorded the biggest rainfall in recent days, including the Jeseniky mountains near the Polish border.

In the city of Opava, up to 10,000 people out of a population of some 56,000 have been asked to leave their homes for higher ground. Rescuers used boats to transport people to safety in a neighborhood flooded by the raging Opava River.

"There's no reason to wait," Mayor Tomáš Navrátil told the Czech public radio. He said the situation was worse than during the last devastating floods in 1997, known as the "flood of the century." (AP)

**Royal Family site offers b-day wishes to Harry:** Britain's royal social media accounts posted 40th birthday wishes Sunday for Prince Harry, marking the milestone celebration despite longstanding strains following the publication of his explosive memoir, "Spare."

The Royal Family site shared an image of a beaming Harry with a birthday cake emoji and the caption "Wishing The Duke of Sussex a very happy 40th birthday today!" The Prince and Princess of Wales shared the image, adding their own birthday wishes.

The post from the royal family account marked the first public birthday message for Harry since 2021.

The Duke and Duchess of Sussex announced they were giving up royal duties in January, 2020. They moved to America and said they hoped to become financially independent, signing lucrative deals with Netflix and Spotify.

Harry famously shared his story in the memoir, "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. (AP)

**2 killed after Moscow, Kyiv exchange attacks:** Two people died in a missile attack on the Ukrainian Black Sea port city of Odesa, local officials said, as Moscow and Kyiv exchanged drone and missile attacks.

The Ukrainian air force said Sunday it shot down 10 of the 14 drones and one of the three missiles Russia launched overnight.

Oleh Kiper, Odesa's regional governor, said the two who died in the suburbs of Odesa on Saturday night were a married couple, and that another person was wounded in the attack.

Meanwhile, the Russian Defense Ministry said it downed 29 Ukrainian drones overnight into Sunday over western and southwestern regions, with no damage caused by the falling debris. It also said another Ukrainian drone was shot down Sunday morning over the western Ryazan region.

While Ukraine and Russia regularly launch overnight drone raids on each other's territory, Ukrainian officials generally do not confirm or deny attacks within Russia's borders. (AP)

**NATO army committee chair backs Ukraine:** The head of NATO's military committee said Saturday that Ukraine has the solid legal and military right to strike deep inside Russia to gain combat advantage - reflecting the beliefs of a number of US allies - even as the Biden administration balks at allowing Kyiv to do so using American-made weapons.

"Every nation that is attacked has the right to defend itself. And that right doesn't stop at the border of your own nation," said Adm. Rob Bauer, speaking at the close of the committee's annual meeting, also attended by US Gen CQ Brown, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Bauer, of Netherlands, also added that nations have the sovereign right to put limits on the weapons they send to Ukraine. But, standing next to him at a press briefing, Lt. Gen. Karel ehka, chief of the General Staff of the Czech Armed Forces, made it clear his nation places no such weapons restrictions on Kyiv. (AP)

**'Approve strikes on Russian territory':** Ukraine made a new call Saturday on the West to allow it to strike deeper into Russia after a meeting between U.S. and British leaders a day earlier produced no visible shift in their policy on the use of long-range weapons.

The renewed appeal came as Kyiv said Russia launched more drone and artillery attacks into Ukraine overnight.

"Russian terror begins at weapons depots, airfields and military bases inside the Russian Federation," Ukrainian presidential adviser Andriy Yermak said Saturday. "Permission to strike deep into Russia will speed up the solution."

Ukrainian officials have repeatedly called on allies to greenlight the use of Western-provided long-range weapons to strike targets deep inside Russian territory. (AP)

So far, the U.S. has allowed Kyiv to use American-provided weapons only in a limited area inside Russia's border with Ukraine. (AP)



US President Joe Biden, (left), holds up the arm of Democratic presidential nominee Vice President Kamala Harris, (right), while on stage at the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's Phoenix Awards Dinner in Washington on Sept 14. (AP)

## Politics

## Jury weighs 'Trump Train' intimidation claims

## Harris promotes goals as she courts voters

WASHINGTON, Sept 15, (AP) - While US President Joe Biden was hosting a celebration of Black excellence at the White House with lawmakers, advocates and celebrities this past week, Kamala Harris was instead headed off to campaign in Pennsylvania.

The nation's first Black vice president spoke with voters there about supporting small businesses, building more housing and expanding the child tax credit. She said the country "needs a president of the United States who works for all the American people."

What she did not do was spend time talking about her race or gender or the prospect that she would be the nation's first Black and South Asian woman to be president if she defeated Republican Donald Trump.

As Harris courts voters, she embodies her identity as a woman of color rather than making it an overt part of her pitch, choosing instead to emphasize her policies and resume.

She's making her case to minority voters in a number of key settings in the coming days. On Saturday at a Washington awards dinner sponsored by the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, she told the crowd that as president she would work to build a strong middle class economy and protect freedoms including the right to vote and the right for a "woman to make decisions about her own body."

## Joyful

"We have some hard work ahead of us. But hard work is good work. Hard work is joyful work," she said. "Generations of people before us led the fight for freedom; now the baton is in our hands."

Biden, meanwhile, speaking to the crowd right before her, talked about Harris as the first Black and South Asian woman vice president, and said "God willing, she will become the first woman president of the United States of America."

On Tuesday, she'll sit with members of the National Association of Black Journalists in Philadelphia. On Thursday, she'll attend a livestream rally headlined by Oprah Winfrey and

involving groups such as "Win with Black Women," "White Women: Answer the Call," and "South Asians for Harris." On Friday, she campaigns in Wisconsin.

Throughout her career, Harris has been "many different firsts, and has never really led with that as a descriptor," said Brian Brokaw, who managed Harris' winning campaign for California attorney general in 2010.

"Her life story and her identity and her background and her job experience have all been critical parts of her campaigns," he said. But he added that "becoming the first - that has never actually been part of her core rationale for why she should be elected a office. It just happens to be an important result of her elections."

## Chooses

Harris' identity, too, is evident in how she chooses to engage with voters. A member of a historically Black sorority while attending Howard University, Harris spoke this summer in Houston at the annual assembly of another sorority, where she told the women "it is so good to be with you this evening, and I say that as a proud member of the Divine Nine. And when I look out at everyone here, I see family."

It's a different approach from Hillary Clinton's in her 2016 Democratic campaign for president, when she put front and center her potential to break the glass ceiling. Harris' aides and allies say with no time to lose in a compressed campaign this year, it is perhaps more valuable to focus on voters rather than herself.

North Carolina's Crystal McLaughlin, who attended a Harris rally in Greensboro this past week, acknowledged Harris' candidacy as an important "historical moment" but added that what is more important is to look at "who wants to do what's right."

Still, she said Harris' identity matters even if it is not the focus on her campaign.

"It's important, not only for Black young girls, but for girls period," said McLaughlin, 53, who is Black. "If you can see it, you can actually be it."

So far, it's been Trump who has brought up race in the campaign, falsely claiming that Harris belatedly "turned Black." During the presidential debate this past week, he again said he had read she was "not Black" and then she was.

Harris did not mention herself once in her response, saying instead: "I think it's a tragedy that we have someone who wants to be president who has consistently over the course of his career attempted to use race to divide the American people."

After Biden dropped out of the race in July, polling indicated that Black Americans were more excited about Harris as the Democratic nominee. In late July, an Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll showed that about 7 in 10 Black adults said would be satisfied with Harris as the Democratic nominee. That was a marked increase from earlier in July, when about half of Black adults and 15% of Hispanic adults felt that way about Biden.

## Also:

**AUSTIN, Texas:** A Texas jury will soon decide whether a convoy of supporters of then-President **Donald Trump** violently intimidated former Democratic lawmaker **Wendy Davis** and two others on a **Biden-Harris** campaign bus when a so-called "Trump Train" boxed them in for more than an hour on a Texas highway days before the 2020 election.

The trial, which began on Sept. 9, resumes Monday and is expected to last another week.

Attorneys for the plaintiffs argued that six of the Trump Train drivers violated state and federal law. Lawyers for the defendants said they did not conspire against the Democrats on the bus and that their actions are protected speech.

Dozens of cars and trucks organized by a local Trump Train group swarmed the bus on its way from San Antonio to Austin. It was the last day of early voting in Texas for the 2020 general election, and the bus was scheduled to make a stop in San Marcos for an event at Texas State University.



Firemen help a resident during floods in Jeseniky, Czech Republic on Sept 15. Another night of torrential rains pounding Central Europe forced massive evacuations in the hardest hit areas in the Czech Republic, where floods reached extreme levels on Sunday. (AP)



Bellendir



Kyle

## America

**River otter attacks child:** A river otter attacked a child at a Seattle-area marina, dragging the youngster from a dock and into the water before the mother rescued her child, wildlife officials said.

The child was pulled underwater and resurfaced after a few moments during the encounter Thursday at 9:30 a.m. at the Bremerton Marina in Kitsap County, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife officers said in a news release.

The otter continued to bite and scratch as the mother pulled the child out of the water. The animal chased them as they left the dock, wildlife officials said. The child was treated at a hospital.

"We are grateful the victim only sustained minor injuries, due to the mother's quick actions and child's resiliency," Fish and Wildlife Sgt Ken Balazs said. "We would also like to thank the Port of Bremerton for their quick coordination and communication to their marina tenants." (AP)

**Man gets 33 yrs for killing wife:** A Minnesota man was sentenced to more than 33 years in prison for stabbing his wife to death during a study session.

Robert Castillo, 41, who pleaded guilty in March to second-degree murder, apologized in court Friday for killing his wife, Corinna Woodhull, the St. Paul Pioneer Press reported. They had been married about two years and have five children, who are now ages 11 to 24.

Castillo's sister told police she hosted a weekly study at her St. Paul home. On the night of March 21, 2023, the couple was sitting on a couch when Castillo whispered something in Woodhull's ear. After she shook her head "no," Castillo pulled out a hunting knife and stabbed her multiple times, until his own family disarmed him.

His attorney, Mark Austin, told the court that Castillo's last memory as a free man was from early that morning when he got high with a friend and ingested so much he didn't recall what happened afterward. He asked Ramsey County District Judge **Richard Kaye** for a sentence of just 25 years, saying Castillo was remorseful. (AP)

**Boy found dead in pond:** An 8-year-old student was found dead in a pond after

running away from his classroom Thursday at an elementary school in South Carolina, authorities said.

Lionel Ramirez Cervantes was in a

classroom with two other students and three school employees when he ran out into the hall, outside the building and then over or through a fence and into a field



A woman writes Chinese calligraphy during a celebration of the upcoming Mid-Autumn Festival at the Chinese Cultural Center in Berlin, Germany on Sept 14. (Xinhua)

with high grass where he could no longer be seen, Greenville County Schools said in a statement.

Police were immediately called and officers, school officials and community members began searching. Divers found Lionel's body about four hours later in a neighborhood pond about 1,000 feet (300 meters) from Bell's Crossing Elementary in Simpsonville, authorities said. (AP)

**Kansas cold case ends:** More than 44 years after a nursing student was slain in her trailer home in central Kansas, her former neighbor has been sentenced to 10 to 25 years in prison for killing her.

The investigation into the Jan. 24, 1980, shooting death of Mary Robin Walter, 23, of Great Bend, had gone cold until 2022, when a detective persuaded Barton County Sheriff **Brian Bellendir** to reopen the case and use technology and techniques that weren't available at the time.

The new evidence pointed to Steven L. Hanks, who was 25 at the time and had been a suspect early on. The Kansas Attorney General's Office said in a statement Friday that it was Hanks' admission in new interviews that allowed authorities to charge him in 2022, when he was living in Burden, Kansas.

Hanks, now 70, got his sentence for second-degree murder. His plea agreement in August called for not less than 5 years and not more than 25 years. (AP)



## Africa

## 13 hostages rescued

## Election campaign kicks off in Tunisia

TUNIS, Tunisia, Sept 15. (Agencies): The official start of the presidential campaign season in Tunisia began on Saturday, a day after Tunisians took their anger to the streets of the capital to decry what protesters say is the deteriorating state of the country.

In what appeared to be the largest protest since authorities began a monthlong wave of arrests earlier this year, hundreds of Tunisians marched peacefully on Friday and called for an end to what they called a police state.

"We're here to say no and show that we don't all agree with what's really happening in the country," Khaled Ben Abdelslam, a father and urban development consultant, told The Associated Press.

In 2011, longtime Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali was toppled by nationwide protests that unleashed revolt across the Arab world.

More than a decade later, Ben Abdelslam said he was worried about the growing number of political figures who've been thrown in jail under President Kais Saied and said he wants to ensure Tunisia

"turns the page" for the good of his kids.

"Nobody dares to say or do anything anymore today," he said as protesters neared Tunisia's powerful Interior Ministry.

## Concerns

He and other demonstrators slammed both Tunisia's economic and political woes, carrying signs that grouped together the growing costs of staple items and growing concerns about civil liberties.

"Where is sugar? Where is oil? Where is freedom? Where is democracy?" signs read.

Some carried posters telling the government that "human rights are not optional" while others revived the popular slogans that mobilized Tunisia's masses against Ben Ali.

This time though, they directed scorn toward Saied. The protests capped off a week in which the North African country's largest opposition party, Ennahda, said its senior members had been arrested en masse, at a scale not previously seen.

They come as Saied prepares to campaign for reelection on Oct. 6, when he will ask voters to grant him a second term.

When first elected in 2019, Saied used anti-corruption promises to win over people disillusioned with the political controversies that plagued Tunisia's young democracy in the years that followed the Arab Spring.

Since taking office, the 66-year-old former law professor has gone to lengths to consolidate his own power, freezing the country's parliament and rewriting the constitution. Throughout his tenure, authorities have arrested journalists, activists, civil society figures and political opponents across the ideological spectrum.

## Promised

And though he promised to chart a new course for the country, its unemployment rate has steadily increased to one of the region's highest at 16%, with young Tunisians hit particularly hard.

The economy continues to face significant challenges, yet Saied has managed to energize supporters with populist rhetoric, often accusing migrants from sub-Saharan Africa of violence and crime and aiming at changing the country's demography.

In the months leading up to his reelection bid, the political crackdown has expanded.

His opponents have been arrested, placed under gag order or faced criminal investigations that observers have called politically motivated. Figures who said they planned to challenge him have been sentenced for breaking campaign finance laws. Others have been ruled ineligible to challenge him by Tunisia's election authority.

**13 hostages rescued:** Nigerian troops have rescued 13 hostages who were kidnapped by an extremist group in the northwestern state of Kaduna, the country's army said on Saturday.

The army said in a statement that "the troops successfully overwhelmed the terrorists, forcing them to abandon their captives."

Several kidnappers were killed and others captured, the military added. It didn't specify what armed group the kidnappers belonged to.

The rescued hostages were taken to a military facility for a medical assessment before being reunited with their families. Weapons, ammunition, solar panels and cash were also discovered during the rescue operation.

Kidnappings have become common in parts of northern Nigeria, where dozens of armed groups take advantage of a limited security presence to carry out attacks in villages and along major roads. Most victims are released only after the payment of ransoms that sometimes run into the thousands of dollars.

**Somalia explosions kill 5:** Roadside explosions in the Somali capital killed five people and wounded eight others Saturday, according to a city official.

An explosive device had been planted at a spot in a street where many young people had gathered to take photos, Abdullahi Sheikh Abdurahman, district commissioner of Mogadishu's Kahda district, told reporters.

"I saw several people lying on the street minutes after the first explosion, and when rescuers came to assist, another blast happened, causing most of the casualties," witness Abdusamad Osman told The Associated Press.

No group immediately claimed responsibility for Saturday's attack. But the Islamic extremist group al-Shabab, which opposes Somalia's federal government, frequently carries out such assaults.

The attack comes just weeks after a similar explosion at a beach where more than 30 people were killed and over 60 others wounded. That attack, one of the deadliest in recent months, raised concern over the increasing frequency of violent attacks in Mogadishu.

**10 dead in Guinea bus crash:** Ten people were killed and more than 30 injured in a bus crash in western Guinea, national radio reported on Friday.

The accident occurred overnight on Thursday when a bus bound for Conakry with more than 50 passengers onboard plunged into a ravine in Timbo.

Two women and two children were among the victims. The injured had been taken to a regional hospital. According to the report, speeding and poor driving were the leading cause of the crash.



Xi Jinping, Li Qiang, Zhao Leji, Wang Huning, Cai Qi, Ding Xuexiang, Li Xi and Han Zheng attend a meeting to celebrate the 70th founding anniversary of the National People's Congress (NPC) at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, China, Sept. 14. (Xinhua)

## Xi urges running people's congresses to good effect

China's President Xi Jinping emphasized continuous efforts to uphold, improve and run the system of people's congresses, China's fundamental political system, to good effect at a meeting held here on Saturday to celebrate the 70th founding anniversary of the National People's Congress (NPC).

Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, stressed the need to further firm up confidence in the path, theory, system and culture of socialism with Chinese characteristics in developing whole-process people's democracy.

Addressing the meeting, attended by about 3,000 people, Xi said that the system of people's congresses is the outcome of the Chinese people's arduous exploration and long-term struggle under the leadership of the CPC.

He called the system "an entirely new political system that has grown from Chinese soil," hailing it as a great invention in the evolution of political institutions in human history.

The NPC is China's highest organ of state power. The first session of the first NPC was convened in September 1954.

The establishment of this system marked a pro-

found transformation in China's political landscape, signifying a shift from a system where the power was concentrated in the hands of a few while the majority faced oppression and exploitation, to one that empowers the people to govern the country as its masters under the Party's leadership, Xi said.

Over the past 70 years, the system of people's congresses has demonstrated its clear political strength, providing an important institutional guarantee for creating miracles of rapid economic development and long-term social stability, Xi noted.

It is a sound system that embodies the country's socialist nature, he said. (Xinhua)

## Lat/Am

## Fuel truck explosion kills 15 in Haiti

## 6 foreigners held over plot to kill Maduro

BOGOTA, Colombia, Sept 15. (AP): Three Americans, two Spaniards and a Czech citizen were arrested Saturday after Venezuelan officials accused them of coming to the South American country to assassinate President Nicolas Maduro.

The arrests were announced on state television by Diosdado Cabello, the nation's powerful interior minister. Cabello said the foreign citizens were part of a CIA-led plot to overthrow the Venezuelan government and kill several members of its leadership. In the television program, Cabello showed images of rifles that he said were confiscated from some of the plotters of the alleged plan.

The arrest of the American citizens included a member of the Navy, who Cabello identified as Wilbert Joseph Castañeda Gomez. Cabello said that Gomez was a navy seal who had served in Afghanistan, Iraq and Colombia. Spain's embassy in Venezuela did not reply to a request for comment on the arrests of its citizens.

The US State Department late Saturday confirmed the detention of a US military member and said it was aware of "unconfirmed reports of two additional US citizens detained in Venezuela."

## Support

"Any claims of US involvement in a plot to overthrow Maduro are categorically false. The United States continues to support a democratic solution to the political crisis in Venezuela," the statement said.

The announcement of the arrests comes just two days after the US Treasury imposed sanctions on 16 allies of Maduro who were accused by the US government of obstructing voting during the disputed July 28 Venezuelan presidential elec-

tion, and carrying out human rights abuses.

Earlier this week, Spain's parliament recognized opposition candidate Edmundo Gonzalez as the winner of the election, angering Maduro allies who called on the Venezuelan government to suspend commercial and diplomatic relations with Spain.

Tensions between Venezuela's government and the US have increased as well following the election, whose result sparked protests within Venezuela in which hundreds of opposition activists were arrested.

**Haiti truck explosion kills 15:** A tanker truck carrying gasoline in Haiti on Saturday flipped and exploded, killing at least 15 people and seriously injuring 40 others, officials said.

Prime Minister Garry Conille provided the figures in an X post. Earlier, Radio Caribes reported that 17 people had been killed.

Haiti's hospitals are poorly equipped to treat victims of severe burns. The nation of 12 million people has also been struggling with fuel shortages, as fighting between gangs makes it more difficult to import goods into the country.

Saturday's explosion happened in Miragoane, a city of 60,000 people that was hit by a strong earthquake three years ago.

In 2021, 75 people were killed in Haiti's second largest city Cap-Haitien, when another fuel truck overturned and unleashed a fireball that swept through several homes and businesses that were built closely next to each other. Some of those killed were on-lookers who had rushed to the truck to try and scoop up fuel.

The new official death toll announced by the country's military government was more than double the 33 reported on Friday. Typhoon Yagi earlier hit Vietnam, northern Thailand and Laos, killing more than 260 people and causing major dam-

**Ex-Peru prez Fujimori buried:** Controversial former Peruvian president Alberto Fujimori was buried Saturday after three days of national mourning in which thousands of supporters lined up outside a museum in Lima to visit the politician's casket.

Peruvian President Dina Boluarte saluted the former president before his burial at a pompous ceremony held in the presidential palace, where his casket was saluted by soldiers dressed in 19th-century uniforms.

But Boluarte did not speak about Fujimori, a divisive figure who ruled Peru for a decade, and whose eldest daughter is now one of the country's most influential politicians.

Fujimori died of cancer on Wednesday at age 86. He was Peru's president from 1990 to 2000 and had been in prison for most of the past 15 years after being convicted of crimes against humanity.

**Ileana hits Mexico's Sinaloa:** Tropical Storm Ileana made landfall on the coast of the Mexican state of Sinaloa Saturday a day after it pounded the resort-studded Los Cabos.

The tropical storm formed Thursday off Mexico's Pacific coast and was packing winds of 40 mph (65 kph) as it moved ashore Saturday, the Miami-based National Hurricane Center said. It made landfall near the coastal city of Topolobampo and was located late Saturday about 15 miles (25 kilometers) south-southeast of Los Mochis.

Forecasters say Ileana will churn over the coastal region of northern Sinaloa during the next several hours and then move over the Gulf of California roughly parallel to the coast on Sunday, weakening into a tropical depression.

The new totals were announced after state media reported that Senior Gen Min Aung Hlaing, the head of the ruling military council, said that Myanmar was requesting relief aid from foreign countries. (AP)



Keiko Fujimori places a flower over the grave of her father, former President Alberto Fujimori, during his funeral in Lima, Peru on Sept 14. (AP)



Marcos



Aung Hlaing

## Asia

**Quake hits Indonesia:** A 5.7-magnitude under-land earthquake struck off Indonesia's western North Sumatra province on Sunday, the country's meteorology and geophysics agency said.

The tremors occurred at 04:37 am Jakarta time (2137 GMT Saturday) with its epicenter being 17 km southwest of North Tapanuli (Tapanuli Utara) regency at a depth of 131 km under-earth, the agency reported.

The quake's intensity registered at III MMI (Modified Mercalli Intensity) in Central Tapanuli (Tapanuli Tengah) regency and Gunungsitoli town, it said.

Indonesia is prone to earthquakes as the archipelagic country lies in a vulnerable quake-stricken zone called "the Pacific Ring of Fire." (Xinhua)

**Philippines storm kills 6:** Tropical storm Bebinca left the Philippines with six dead and at least two missing, the Philippine government said Sunday.

The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) said four died in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao and two in Zamboanga Peninsula in the southern Philippines.

The agency added that one is missing in Zamboanga Peninsula and the other in Western Visayas region in the central Philippines.

The agency said that Bebinca, the sixth tropical cyclone to lash the Philippines since January this year, has affected over 200,000 people in nearly 300 villages. Almost 14,000 displaced villagers are in government-run temporary shelters. Philippine president is Ferdinand Marcos Jr.

Bebinca damaged infrastructure, including roads, bridges, and houses.

Bebinca exited the Philippines on Saturday afternoon. However, it continued to bring rain after enhancing the Southwest. (Xinhua)

**Myanmar's Yagi toll reaches 74:** The death toll in Myanmar from flooding and landslides caused by Typhoon Yagi

has reached at least 74, with 89 people missing, Myanmar's state television said Saturday.

Difficulties in compiling information have raised fears that the number of casualties may be higher.



Tunisians take part in a protest against President Kais Saied ahead of the upcoming presidential elections on Sept 13 on Avenue Habib Bourguiba in the capital Tunis. The official start of the presidential campaign season in Tunisia began on Sept 14 a day after Tunisians took their anger to the streets of the capital to decry what protesters say is the deteriorating state of the country. (AP)

## 'Political conspiracy'

## Delhi chief minister announces resignation

NEW DELHI, Sept 15. (AP): One of India's main opposition figures and Delhi state's chief minister said he would resign from office Sunday, two days after he was granted bail in a bribery case.

Arvind Kejriwal, a fierce critic of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, was arrested nearly six months ago ahead of national elections on charges of receiving bribes

from a liquor distributor. India's top court released him on bail Friday.

Kejriwal has consistently denied the accusations and called them a political conspiracy.

"Today I have come to ask the public whether you consider Kejriwal honest or a criminal," he said in a public address Sunday at the headquarters of his Aam Aadmi Party, which governs Delhi. "I will resign from the post of chief minister two days from today."

Kejriwal said his party - a part of a broad alliance of opposition parties called INDIA and was the main challenger to Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party in June's elections - will hold a meeting later to decide who will take over his position.



Kejriwal



## Under the umbrella of its dedicated ESG strategy

## Kuwait International Bank publishes its third Annual Sustainability Report

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 15: For the third consecutive year, and in parallel with its 50th anniversary, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) published its Annual Sustainability Report, which underscores the Bank's achievements on the Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) front and its short and long-term impact on the market. Besides falling under the Bank's ESG mandates for transparency as a committed adopter of the Central Bank of Kuwait's (CBK) guidelines and a signee of the UN Global Compact, the KIB Annual Sustainability Report serves as an openhouse of knowledge and insight into Kuwait's evolving banking and financial market.

"Kuwait's banking and finance market is in a state of constant evolution, and we are proud to be contributors to this change. Among the most notable factors of this change is the market's accelerating need for and adoption of digital banking in addition to the rising market-wide awareness of the opportunities and risks that leave lasting marks on the economy, environment, and society," commented Raed Jawad Bukhamseen, Vice Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of KIB. "As a committed forward-looking bank, a trusted financial partner and a proactive corporate citizen, KIB continues to embed ESG considerations in every business decision, ensuring that the Bank's growth and success reflect positively on society and the domestic economy."

He added: "To guarantee that KIB's ESG efforts bear a tangible, lasting impact on our community, it is vital to adopt and promote sustainability as a philosophy and not merely an item on a business checklist; guiding every business decision we make and shaping our internal culture. This paradigm shift has inspired our employees, from managers to new hires, to make mindful, inclusive decisions within the workplace and beyond to reaffirm commitment to a better future."

On his part, Nawaf Najia, Executive Manager of ESG and Sustainability – Strategy Department at KIB, said: "The establishment of a dedicated ESG Unit and the formulation of a governing ESG Policy in 2023 marked an important step in our sustainability journey. As a result, we conducted a double materiality assessment to identify the ESG topics most relevant to the Bank and its stakeholders. The assessment results reflected great alignment between the Bank's and the stakeholders' priorities, especially in Digitization and Innovation, Shari'ah and Business Ethics, Transparency and Accountability, and Efficiency."

Najia added: "Through the ESG Unit and its implementation of the ESG Policy, we guarantee that our steps forward continue to reflect positively and sustainably on all stakeholders, from customers to employees, investors, shareholders, regulatory bodies, suppliers, partners, and the community."

The third KIB Annual Sustainability Report, curated in accordance with the Global Reporting Initiative's (GRI) standards, leads with KIB's 2023 accolades, including World Finance's "Best Customer-Focused Islamic Banking Products and Services in Kuwait" and "Best Islamic Bank in Kuwait" awards, in addition to the Capital Finance International (CFI.co) awards for "Best Bank in Financial Literacy Program", "Best Sharia Compliant Bank", and "Best Banking Vision".

These recognitions echo the Bank's numerous ESG achievements in 2023, which include USD 132 million worth of nominal ESG Sukuk investments in addition to its ESG-related investments that account for 16.3% of the total Sukuk investments. On the human resources front, in 2023, KIB achieved a 73.1% Kuwaitization rate while successfully offering 99.4% of its workforce



Raed Jawad Bukhamseen, Vice Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of KIB.



Nawaf Najia, Executive Manager of ESG and Sustainability – Strategy Department at KIB.

training material of different formats, with an average of 53.19 training hours per employee.

A key area that witnessed remarkable progress at KIB is the Bank's digital infrastructure following the introduction of three new digital platforms, including an upgraded retail app (KIB Mobile), an all-new and revamped Corporate Online Banking platform, and a first-of-its-kind digital real estate platform (KIB Aqari) – with a total of 49,755 online customers.

As for KIB's impact on the growth and development of Kuwait's entrepreneurship and SME market, KIB Mubader Center, the Bank's dedicated entrepreneurship incubator and one-stop-shop for all SME mentorship and support needs, successfully supported four small and medium-sized businesses in their marketing outreach, enabling them to grow in sales. The KIB Mubader App also attracted 141 new subscribers, allowing the Bank to support more aspiring entrepreneurs and ultimately boosting Kuwait's economic growth.

Guided by the country's vision and economic development plans, KIB is adamant about innovating new sustainable solutions as well as forward-looking banking products and services that guarantee the shared welfare of all market participants, members of the community, the economy, and the environment. Furthermore, KIB – through its ESG Unit – remains focused on achieving ESG wins throughout the year, ensuring a lasting positive impact on the Bank's growth and the multifaceted development of Kuwait.

## About KIB

Kuwait International Bank (KIB) is a bank that operates according to the Islamic Shari'ah, based in the State of Kuwait. Incorporated in 1973, and originally



KIB's annual sustainability report.

known as Kuwait Real Estate Bank, KIB made the transition to its current Islamic operating model in 2007. In 2018, KIB embarked on a new phase of its journey full of innovation and development. As part of its new strategic direction, the Bank focuses on offering a next-level customer experience under the slogan: "Bank for Life".

Through a network of branches spread across the State of Kuwait, KIB offers a broad range of banking products and services, as well as innovative digital banking solutions in line with international best standards. As part of its duty towards the community, the Bank also encompasses a leading social responsibility program that aims at positively impacting all members of the community through a wide range of impactful initiatives and activities.

Today, KIB has taken concrete steps in implementing its new strategic objectives. The Bank has cemented its role as a key player in the local banking industry and has continued to maintain its strong financial performance; enabling it to be globally recognized for its strong credit rating and financial position.

## CBK reports economic, monetary trends for second quarter of 2024

Kuwait consumer prices rise 3.0% in Q2

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 15: The Central Bank of Kuwait's quarterly statistical bulletin for April-June 2024 has highlighted several key economic and monetary indicators, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The consumer prices increased by approximately 3.0 percent in Q2 2024, averaging 133.5 (2013=100), up from 129.6 in Q2 2023.

This rise is largely due to higher costs in clothing and footwear, which climbed from 131.9 to 139.5 (+5.8 percent), and food and beverage prices, which grew from 142.1 to 150.4 (+5.8 percent).

The weighted interest rate on deposits decreased from 2.757 percent in Q1 2024 to 2.707 percent in Q2 2024, marking a 1.8 percent quarterly drop. However, it increased by 8.1 percent from 2.504 percent in Q2 2023.

Conversely, the weighted interest rate on loans rose from 5.187 percent to 5.216 percent, a 0.6 per-

cent quarterly increase, and up 7.5 percent from 4.854 percent in Q2 2023.

Private sector deposits in local banks grew to 38.490 billion dinars from 38.106 billion dinars in Q1 2024, a 1.0 percent quarterly increase, and up 1.8 percent from 37.810 billion dinars in Q2 2023.

The claims of local banks on the private sector also rose to 46.138 billion dinars, up from 45.595 billion dinars in Q1 2024 (1.2 percent quarterly increase) and up 3.2 percent from 44.725 billion dinars in Q2 2023.

## Organized by the Arab Monetary Fund

## CINET partakes in 18th Arab Committee on Credit Information Meeting

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 15: CINET the leading and only provider of credit information and credit reporting and scoring services in Kuwait, which operates and supervised by the Central Bank of Kuwait, participated in the 18th Regular Meeting of the Arab Committee on Credit Information (ACCI), which was organized by the Arab Monetary Fund (AMF), and took place in Abu Dhabi between 11-12 September 2024 and brought together key players from the credit information industry, to discuss current challenges, industry best practices, and the future of credit reporting and scoring.

CINET was represented by Mrs. Alia Al-Humaidhi, Chairperson of the Board, and Mrs. Mai Al-Owaish, CEO, to participate in this valuable forum for exchanging experiences, discussing challenges, and exploring innovative ways to integrate credit information with advanced financial technologies to provide reliable and accurate credit solutions, along with key industry leaders and experts in the MENA and the European Union.

The meeting highlighted technologies for providing reliable credit solutions through discussions on the latest trends in customer registration in the Know Your Customer (KYC) system, supplementary data for credit scoring, and protecting the rights of credit users. It also explored how technology can transform the sector by using credit data to predict insurance risks. Discussions also included a presentation on the experience of credit companies from the European Union in "Buy Now, Pay Later" (BNPL). CINET's leadership communicated its ongoing commitment to shaping the future of the credit industry and aligning it with global best practices to deliver robust credit solutions that meet the needs of individuals



Alia Al-Humaidhi and Mai Al-Owaish during the meeting.

and businesses in the Kuwaiti market.

The Arab Credit Information Committee, whose secretariat is managed by the Arab Monetary Fund, is a specialized committee emanating from the Council of Arab Central Banks and Monetary Authorities' Governors. It includes directors and officials from credit information centers at Arab central banks, as well as executives of licensed national credit information companies. The committee focuses on developing the credit information industry in the Arab region, exchanging knowledge and expertise to keep pace with modern trends, and benefiting from innovations, given their significant impact on financial inclusion and stability.



Group photo of the attendees.

## Oman state-run oil firm OQ will make IPO

DUBAI, Sept 15, (AP): An Omani state-run oil and gas company announced last week it will make an initial public offering of its exploration and production business, potentially seeking billions in a major move toward privatization in the sultanate.

OQ, formerly known as the Oman Oil Co., follows moves by the Saudi oil giant Aramco and the Abu Dhabi National Oil Co. to seek to raise money through the markets. It also could provide a boost for its local Muscat

Stock Exchange, long viewed as being the sleepest among the Gulf Arab states.

OQ will offer up to 25% of shares in its exploration and production arm, the announcement said. It offered no proposed values for the deal, though Bloomberg quoted anonymous officials with knowledge of the deal suggesting the company could be worth an overall \$8 billion, making the stake being put up worth some \$2 billion.

"The intention to float OQ Exploration and Production reflects our commitment to unlocking new opportunities for growth, both for the company and for the sultanate of Oman," OQ CEO Ashraf Hamed Al Mamari said in a statement.

The plan calls for the listing to take place in October, pending regulatory approvals. It plans dividends of \$150 million for the first two quarters after that, with a planned dividend of \$600 million annually, plus one linked to its

performance.

OQ was founded in 2009 and is Oman's third-largest firm in the oil industry, following the state-owned Petroleum Development Oman and U.S. firm Occidental Petroleum.

Oman, on the eastern edge of the Arabian Peninsula, is a member of the OPEC+ coalition, though not a member of the cartel itself. It produces around 1 million barrels of oil a day and China remains the top client for its crude.

## Egypt calls for reforming global financial system

CAIRO, Sept 15, (Xinhua): Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi has called for reforming the structure of the global financial system and boosting the engagement of developing countries in economic decision-making mechanisms.

He made the appeal in a virtual speech at the UN event "Global Call on the Summit of the Future."

The event convenes amid growing international crises, both politically and economically, he said, underscoring the grave escalation in the Middle East in particular.

Sisi deemed it a priority to strength-

en the role of the United Nations in international economic governance, which will significantly contribute to facilitating the Global South's access to essential funding.

He called for enhancing efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger globally while addressing the challenges of food security.

"International cooperation to secure universal access to water and to uphold international law in the management of cross-border rivers is necessary to ensure harmony among the concerned countries and prevent any harm to any country," said Sisi.

Bilateral trade hits \$94.98 bln in 2023

## China &amp; UAE strengthen strategic partnership during Li Qiang's visit

DUBAI, Sept 15, (Xinhua): With bilateral trade flourishing across various sectors, China and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are making concerted efforts to explore new paths for cooperation, aiming for further win-win outcomes and strengthening their comprehensive strategic partnership.

This focus was underscored during Chinese Premier Li Qiang's visit to the UAE, which concluded on Friday. In meetings with UAE leaders and business representatives, both sides expressed a strong will and offered valuable suggestions to enhance economic and trade collaboration while marking 40 years of diplomatic relations.

While meeting with UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan on Thursday, Li noted that China is willing to further expand the scale of bilateral trade with the UAE and explore cooperation in new energy, electric vehicles, high-end manufacturing, biomedicine, digital economy and other fields.

He hoped that the two countries could jointly make a forward-looking layout of emerging and future industries to cultivate more new economic growth points.

For his part, Mohamed said the UAE looks forward to closer exchanges at all levels with China, giving full play to the mechanism of the high-level committee on China-UAE investment and cooperation, deepening practical cooperation in economy, trade, investment, energy, health, education, and other fields.

During talks with the UAE's Vice President and Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Li pointed out that China and the UAE are good partners on the path of common development. It is in the fundamental interests of both sides to strengthen cooperation and help each other succeed.

Li said China is willing to share development opportunities with the UAE for better mutual benefit, welcoming more UAE investment in China and encouraging Chinese enterprises to invest and do business in the UAE.

Also on the premier's visit agenda was the UAE-China Business Forum, which was held in Dubai on Thursday. Over 200 representatives from the governments, chambers of commerce, and businesses of both countries attended.

While addressing the forum, Li said bilateral ties have matured over the past

40 years, and economic and trade cooperation has yielded strong results.

China has been the UAE's largest trading partner for many years. The UAE is China's largest export market and second-largest trading partner in the Middle East.

Official data showed bilateral trade between China and the UAE reached 94.98 billion U.S. dollars in 2023. In the first half of 2024, the figure reached nearly 50.11 billion dollars.

Behind such success lies a profound inevitability, Li noted. As China-UAE economic and trade exchanges have spanned over a millennium, both countries have actively embraced economic globalization and worked together to create development miracles through opening-up.

The premier called on enterprises from both countries to seize the new opportunities of high-quality Belt and Road cooperation and identify more areas of shared interests and opportunities for collaboration from the intersection of their strategic priorities.

He also urged both sides to jointly seize the burgeoning opportunities in technological and industrial innovation, and harness innovation as a driving force.

UAE business representatives spoke highly of China's development dynamism and market potential at the forum, expressing their eagerness to increase investment in China and expand cooperation with their Chinese partners.

In his speech, Chairman of Dubai Chambers Abdul Aziz Abdulla Al Ghurair hailed China as a crucial market for the UAE business community and a preferred partner for UAE enterprises.

Recognizing the growing significance of the Chinese market, the Dubai International Chamber has opened three overseas offices in China: Shanghai, Shenzhen, and Hong Kong, the highest number of offices in any single country.

UAE Minister of Economy Abdulla bin Touq Al Marri shared recent data highlighting the vibrancy of economic exchanges: The UAE is now home to about 15,500 Chinese businesses, and the number of flights between the two countries operated by the UAE's national carriers has reached 44 per week, he noted.

The minister invited Chinese enterprises to fully explore the growing opportunities brought by the UAE's increasingly favorable business environment to scale up investments, particularly in emerging industries.



# ABK successfully prices \$300 mln AT1 bond offering

Move highlights ABK's strong market position and confidence investors have in its financial stability

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 15:** Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait K.S.C.P. (ABK) has successfully priced a US\$300 million Additional Tier 1 (AT1) bond offering with a coupon rate of 6.5% per annum. This marks the Bank's return to the debt capital markets since its last issuance in 2018 and showcases a significant achievement with notable price tightening for an AT1 issuance. It highlights ABK's strong market position and the confidence investors have in its financial stability.

Initially, ABK opened the order books with initial price thoughts (IPTs) in the low 7% area and for a transaction sized at US\$300 million. The substantial and robust demand from both international and regional investors enabled the Bank to set the final coupon rate at 6.5%. Despite strong interest, the order book remained resilient with minimal adjustments from investors. The Perpetual Non-Callable 5.5-year AT1 bond was priced with a reset margin of +292.2 basis points.

J.P. Morgan Securities plc acted as the Global Coordinator, while Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank,



Abdulla Al Sumait - Acting Group Chief Executive Officer

Citi, Emirates NBD Capital, HSBC, Kamco Invest, Mashreqbank, and SMBC Nikko acted as Joint Lead



ABK logo

Managers and Bookrunners for this issuance.

The transaction garnered overwhelming interest, with the order book peaking at over US\$1.4 billion, resulting in an over subscription of over 4.5 times. The allocation breakdown showed that 68.0% was in the Middle East, followed by Europe (including the UK) at 26.0%. Notably, real money investors, including private banks and high-quality asset managers, accounted for 94% of the issuance.

On this occasion, Abdulla Al Sumait, Acting Group Chief Executive Officer at ABK, said, "The strong demand for subscription to the bonds reflects the confidence and reputation we have among investors at both regional and international levels. It confirms the success of our plans to address local, regional, and global economic challenges, as well as our commitment to

providing the best returns for our shareholders and all our stakeholders."

Al Sumait added that the issuance marks ABK's return to international capital markets for the first time since 2018, reaffirming its commitment to seizing the best opportunities to enhance its financial position, provide exceptional investment opportunities, and support the Bank's growth strategy at various levels.

He indicated that the issuance will contribute to strengthening the capital adequacy of ABK and will provide additional liquidity for the long term to support its expansion investment plans, alongside its ongoing commitment to regulatory and international requirements set by Basel III.

He noted that the Bank will use the proceeds from the issuance to develop its products and services for clients, as well as continue investing in its digital transformation plan across all its divisions and operations, keeping up with the continuous developments in the banking industry. This will aid in enhancing its financial position in all markets where it operates in Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, and Egypt.

Al Sumait concluded that the strong demand for participation in the issuance serves as confirmation of the financial strength of the ABK Group and the confidence in its credit history. It also demonstrates investors' trust in the economic environment of Kuwait and its banking sector.

## Bid to plug labor market gaps

### Germany, Kenya sign deal to bring in skilled workers

**BERLIN, Sept 15, (AP):** German and Kenyan officials signed an agreement Friday in Berlin to promote the recruitment of skilled workers who can fill gaps in Germany's labor market, and to facilitate the repatriation of Kenyans who don't have the right to stay in Germany.

The agreement was signed during a visit to Germany by Kenyan President William Ruto, who met with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz.

Scholz told reporters after a signing ceremony that it was an important agreement that marks an effort by Germany and Kenya to cooperate more closely on migration.

"This can help us to compensate for a shortage of skilled workers," Scholz said, adding that Germany is already feeling the impact of such a labor shortage and that it "will be with us for years and decades to come."

Germany has grappled for years with the need to attract more skilled workers from outside the European Union. Experts say the country needs about 400,000 skilled immigrants each year as its aging workforce shrinks.

"On the other side of the coin, so to speak, the agreement provides for effective return procedures for those who have come to us from Kenya but do not have or cannot acquire the right to stay here. They can now return home more easily and quickly," Scholz

said.

Ruto said the agreement benefits both sides because it brings together the potential of educated young Kenyans and German technology and resources.

He said that he wasn't worried that the departure of some Kenyans could hurt his own nation's development, noting that Kenya has a large population of young people, with the median age being around 20. He said there were enough to support the further development of both Kenya and Germany.

Scholz said Germany would benefit from the large number of Kenyan IT specialists.

Germany has already signed similar agreements with India, Georgia and Morocco, and will sign one this weekend with Uzbekistan during a visit there by Scholz, according to the German news agency dpa.

The agreement was signed by German Interior Minister Nancy Faeser and Kenyan's Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi in a ceremony at the chancellery in Berlin on Friday as Scholz and Ruto stood behind them. Scholz's unpopular coalition government is facing a challenge from the far-right, anti-immigration Alternative for Germany, or AfD, which did well in two recent state elections in eastern Germany. Another comes Sept. 22 in Brandenburg, the state surrounding Berlin.

## China's economy softens in Aug

**BEIJING, Sept 15, (AP):** China's economy softened in August, extending a slowdown in industrial activity and real estate prices as Beijing faces pressure to ramp up spending to stimulate demand.

Data published by the National Bureau of Statistics Saturday showed weakening activity across industrial production, retail sales and real estate this month compared to July.

"We should be aware that the adverse impacts arising from the changes in the external environment are increasing," said Liu Aihua, the bureau's chief economist in a news conference.

Liu said that demand remained insufficient at home, and the sustained economic recovery still confronts multiple difficulties and challenges.

China has been grappling with a lagging economy post-COVID, with weak consumer demand, persistent deflationary pressures and a contraction in factory activity.

Chinese leaders have ramped up investment in manufacturing to rev up an economy that stalled during the pandemic and is still growing slower than hoped.

Beijing also has to deal with increasing pressure to implement large-scale stimulus measures to boost economic growth.

While industrial production rose by 4.5% in August compared to a year ago, it declined from July's 5.1% growth, according to the bureau's data released.

Retail sales grew 2.1% from the same time last year, slower than the 2.7% increase last month.

Fixed asset investment rose by 3.4% from January to August, down from 3.6% in the first seven months.

Meanwhile, investment in real estate declined by 10.2% from January to August, compared to last year.

The figures released Saturday come after trade data for August saw imports grow just 0.5% compared to a year ago.

The consumer price index rose 0.6% in August, missing forecasts according to data released Monday. Officials attributed the higher CPI to an increase in food prices due to bad weather. But the core CPI, which excludes food and energy prices, rose by just 0.3% in August, the slowest in over three years.

## Trump Media & Tech Group stock jumps

**NEW YORK, Sept 15, (AP):** Shares of Trump Media & Technology Group Corp. jumped Friday after former President Donald Trump said he won't sell shares of the social media company.

"I don't wanna sell my shares. I don't need money," Trump said while speaking to reporters at his golf club in Los Angeles.

Trump owns nearly 115 million shares of the company, according to a recent filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission. Based on Thursday's closing price of \$16.08, Trump's shares are worth approximately \$1.85 billion.

The former president can start selling shares of Trump Media, the parent company of Truth Social, starting on Sept. 19 when a lockup provision ends, if he chooses to do so. The lockup provision prevented company insiders from selling newly issued shares for six months after the company began trading publicly in March.

Even though Trump would receive a sizeable payout if he did sell, the stock of Trump Media is now worth considerably less than it was valued at several months ago. When the company made its debut on the Nasdaq in March, it hit a high of \$79.38.

Trump created Truth Social after he was banned from Twitter and Facebook following the Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol riot. Based in Sarasota, Florida, Trump Media has been losing money and struggling to raise revenue. It lost nearly \$58.2 million last year while generating only \$4.1 million in revenue, according to regulatory filings.

"I use it as a method of getting out my word," Trump said Friday of Truth Social. "For me, it is a great voice." The stock dipped more than 10% Wednesday following the debate between Trump and Vice President Kamala Harris. On Friday, shares rallied as much as 29% and ended the day up 11.8%.

## ECB's rate cuts reflect struggles

The European Central Bank (ECB) reduced its key interest rate (deposit rate) by 25 basis points to 3.5 percent on Thursday due to weak consumer demand and stagnating growth in key economies like Germany.

It was the same size as its previous cut in June, which marked the end of a record-breaking hiking cycle that had commenced in mid-2022 to tame surging consumer prices.

The interest rate cuts underscore the persistent challenges facing the eurozone economy, and reflect a broader shift in international markets, which are increasingly prioritizing economic growth amid lingering global uncertainties. Cutting, watching and repeating.

Although ECB President Christine Lagarde emphasized that future rate decisions will be data-driven, with no predetermined paths for cuts, analysts generally believe that interest rate cuts will continue.

"All eyes will be on ... the likelihood of another 25 basis point cut being announced as early as October," said Antonio Villarroya, an economist at Banco Santander, Spain's largest lender.

The risk of the economy overheating due to further rate cuts appears low, suggesting that another rate cut before the end of the year is very likely, said Michael Field, European market strategist at the investment research firm Morningstar. (Xinhua)

But Traynor wrote that the rules

## Former president says won't sell shares



Republican presidential nominee former President Donald Trump speaks during a news conference held at Trump National Golf Club Los Angeles in Rancho Palos Verdes, Calif., Friday, Sept. 13, 2024. (AP)

## Mulling a mortgage refi?

### Lower rates are just one factor when refinancing a home loan

**LOS ANGELES, Sept 15, (AP):** Mortgage rates haven't been this attractive in more than a year, good news for homeowners eager to refinance. Many homeowners have already jumped at the opportunity to lower their monthly payment, spurring a surge in mortgage refinancing applications.

And that was before the average rate on a 30-year mortgage fell this week to 6.2%, according to mortgage buyer Freddie Mac. As recently as May, the rate averaged 7.22%. It's now at the lowest level in 19 months.

The rush to refinance makes sense, as even a slight drop in mortgage rates can translate into significant savings over the long run. For a home with the median U.S. listing price of \$422,600, a buyer who makes a 20% down payment at this week's average mortgage rate would save \$360 a month compared to what it would have cost to buy the same home in October, when the average rate hit a 23-year high of 7.79%.

Still, there's more to consider than the mortgage rate. It can cost thousands of dollars to refinance, and not all the fees can always be rolled into the new loan.

Breaking even on the costs of refinancing may take months or years, depending on the difference between your current rate and your new rate. So refinancing may not make sense if you're planning to sell the home before that happens.

Here are some key factors to consider as you weigh whether now is the right time to refinance your home loan:

While mortgage rates have come down, the average rate on a 30-year home loan is still more than double what it was just three years ago.

Some 86% of all outstanding home

mortgages have an interest rate below 6%, and more than three quarters have a rate 5% or lower, according to Realtor.com. If your mortgage rate falls within that range, you'll want to make sure you can refinance to a significantly lower rate than you have now.

One rule of thumb to consider is whether you can reduce your rate by half to three-quarters of a percentage point, said Greg McBride, chief financial analyst at Bankrate.

"That's when it's time to start thinking about it," he said. Someone with a 30-year mortgage at 7.5% or 8%, for example, should be looking for rates to be in the low 6% range.

Homeowners with an adjustable-rate mortgage, or ARM, that's set to adjust to a higher rate may also want to consider refinancing while rates head lower. The break-even period on a mortgage refinance will be shorter the more significant your savings are. For example, if you're refinancing from a rate of 8% down to 6%, the break-even period is going to be far shorter than if you refinance from 6.75% down to 6.25%.

So, it's important to factor in how long you plan to live in the home, to make sure you're going to make up the cost of refinancing.

Charges and fees can shortchange refinancers who are focused only on the potential savings. And just because you can typically roll over many or most of the costs into a new loan doesn't mean that loan is free.

If you're rolling over the costs into your new loan, you're either taking on a larger balance or you're paying a slightly higher rate to compensate for those costs.

And there may be fees that you have to pay at closing, including costs for

an appraisal, title insurance, a survey fee or local taxes outside the lender's control.

Mortgage rates are influenced by several factors, including how the bond market reacts to the Federal Reserve'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.

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 3.66% in morning trading in the bond market Friday. Yields fall as bond prices go up. 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.

If bond yields continue to decline in anticipation of the Fed lowering rates more than once this fall, that could lead mortgage rates to ease further, though many economists' forecasts call for the average rate on a 30-year home loan to remain above 6% this year.

An argument could be made that the bond market's expectations of a Fed pivot to easing interest rates have already been priced in, which could mean mortgage rates may not come down much more than they already have in coming months.

If you're on the fence on whether to refinance now or hold out for lower rates, it's good to at least get ready and speak with your lender or shop around, so that you can move quickly when you're able to lock in an attractive rate.

"We are likely to see mortgage rates trend lower, but rates can move suddenly and it pays to jump on it when the opportunity arises," McBride said.

## Judge temporarily blocks Biden admin rule to limit flaring of gas at oil wells

**BISMARCK, N.D., Sept 15, (AP):** A federal judge in North Dakota has temporarily blocked a new Biden administration rule aimed at reducing the venting and flaring of natural gas at oil wells.

"At this preliminary stage, the plaintiffs have shown they are likely to succeed on the merits of their claim the 2024 Rule is arbitrary and capricious," U.S. District Judge Daniel Traynor ruled Friday, the Bismarck Tribune reported.

North Dakota, along with Montana, Texas, Wyoming and Utah challenged the rule in federal court earlier this year, arguing that it would hinder oil and gas production and that the Interior Department's Bureau of Land Management is overstepping its regulatory authority on non-federal minerals and air pollution.

The bureau says the rule is intended to reduce the waste of gas and that royalty owners would see over \$50 million in additional payments if it was enforced. But Traynor wrote that the rules

"add nothing more than a layer of federal regulation on top of existing federal regulation."

When pumping for oil, natural gas often comes up as a byproduct. Gas isn't as profitable as oil, so it is vented or flared unless the right equipment is in place to capture.

Methane, the main component of natural gas, is a climate "super

pollutant" that is many times more potent in the short term than carbon dioxide.

Well operators have reduced flaring rates in North Dakota significantly over the past few years, but they still hover around 5%, the Tribune reported. Reductions require infrastructure to capture, transport and use that gas.

North Dakota politicians praised the ruling.

"The Biden-Harris administration continuously attempts to over-regulate and ultimately debilitate North Dakota's energy production capabilities," state Attorney General Drew Wrigley said in a statement. The Bureau of Land Management declined comment.



## CEO highlights enhanced shopping experience

## Sultan celebrates reopening of renovated Shuwaikh store

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 15: Sultan Center Food Products Company (Sultan), announced today the reopening of its newly renovated Shuwaikh store, featuring a fresh identity and enhanced customer experience. The ribbon-cutting ceremony was attended by partners, key suppliers, branch managers, board members, executive management, and social media influencers.

The event featured various interactive stations, free giveaways, and the launch of exclusive offers and discounts valid until September 22nd. These offers give Sultan's Kanzee loyalty program members a chance to win valuable prizes and enjoy significant savings. Additionally, Sultan Market Shuwaikh introduces new retail partners into this store: Karak and Juice, Cups Coffee, Dali Sweets, Mr. Glasses, and Ajmal Perfumes. This is in addition to existing partners such as Intersport, Xcite, Kings Coffee, Outlet Perfumes, Al Derwaza clothing, Mujeza Honey, Zain, STC, and Ooredoo.

Sultan CEO, Mr. Bassam Zantout, said: "We have revitalized Sultan Shuwaikh to offer our customers a more convenient and enjoyable shopping experience. With a modernized layout and an extensive range of in-demand local and fresh food products, we are committed to serving the diverse needs of over a million shoppers annually through tailored offers and promotions that matter to them."

He added: "This renovation in Shuwaikh begins the journey and rollout of Sultan Market identity where its key offering is catered



Group photo of the Sultan team during the opening ceremony.



A glimpse of the opening ceremony.



Sultan Market Shuwaikh entrance.



Sultan Market Shuwaikh.

around the customers choice for value."

Sultan Center Food Products Company is the largest independ-

ent retailer on the Kuwait Stock Exchange. It owns and operates a network of over 70 stores in the Middle East. This includes 12

branches in Jordan, three branches in Bahrain, and eight branches in Oman. In Kuwait, Sultan operates 49 branches, spanning from Jahra

to Nwaiseeb, through three distinct store formats. These include 8 flagship stores, which cater to daily needs in every neighborhood;

11 Sultan Market stores; and 30 Sultan Express stores, which offer quick and convenient shopping options.

## Bank distributes 1,000 school bags to underprivileged children

## Gulf Bank partners with 'Basta' for back to school initiative

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 15: In its ongoing efforts to enhance community sustainability, Gulf Bank has joined the "Back to School" initiative for the new academic year. The bank prepared 1,000 fully stocked school bags, complete with all necessary supplies, to be distributed to children from underprivileged families, in partnership with the volunteer team 'Basta'.

Ms. Najla Al-Eisa, Gulf Bank's Chief Marketing Officer, commented, "We are thrilled to partner with 'Basta' to bring joy to students and their families, and to make a positive impact that encourages them to continue their educational journey."

She emphasized that this initiative reflects Gulf Bank's commitment to community sustainability. "We strive to participate in various community events throughout the year, spreading joy and support to those in need."

Al-Essa added, "For more than sixty years, Gulf Bank has played a significant role in Kuwait's economic and social spheres, consistently dedicating resources to support those in need. We recognize the profound impact these efforts have on underprivileged families."

Gulf bank is dedicated to sustainability through a



Najla Al-Eisa

range of thoughtfully selected initiatives that benefit both the community and the bank, aligning with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and Kuwait Vision 2035.

She continued, "As a financial institution, Gulf Bank is dedicated to supporting active civil society organizations like 'Basta,' which play a significant

social and humanitarian role. We believe the private sector has an important role in advancing community sustainability. Additionally, Gulf Bank supports students and parents who hold Gulf Bank credit and prepaid cards by offering exclusive discounts and promotions on school supplies in partnership with major retailers in Kuwait. The bank also provides educational loans and promotes savings through its savings accounts.

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

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



Meshal Al-Obaid

## Al-Obaid highlights WAMD's features

## KFH launches 'WAMD' for instant payments using mobile numbers

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 15: In an interview with EMEA Finance magazine, Executive Manager of Digital and Alternative Channels at Kuwait Finance House (KFH), Meshal Al-Obaid said that the bank has recently launched WAMD service through KFHonline in collaboration with K-Net, allowing customers to make payments quickly without the need to remember or enter complex details like account or IBAN number to send money to other customers in KFH or any other local bank, indicating mobile number is something most people already have and use regularly. Through WAMD transactions are completed instantly in a few seconds, which is beneficial for both the payer and the payee. This reduces waiting times, especially in urgent situations, taking into consideration service is available 24/7.

Al-Obaid mentioned that WAMD KNET is a real-time payment system that enables instant money transfers between individuals using only their mobile numbers. It leverages advanced technology to facilitate seamless and secure transactions.

In the same context, Al-Obaid explained that the underlying technology includes:

1. Real-time payment infrastructure. This ensures funds are transferred immediately between accounts.
2. Registration allows for linking mobile numbers to bank accounts.
3. KNET's payment gateway provides a secure platform for processing transactions.

Al-Obaid pointed out that WAMD KNET prioritizes the security of its users and employs robust measures to safeguard transactions.

He added that the security measures for WAMD KNET include SSL encryption: This protects data transmitted between the two systems and Digital signing: This ensures data integrity and authenticity.

Regarding the feedback from users/customers so far, Al-Obaid confirmed that the feedback is positive, and customers are extremely satisfied with the service, where customers can send/request money in a few steps within seconds.

comparing the service to other real-time payments schemes launched in the GCC region, Al-Obaid explained that Other real-time payments schemes user experience can vary based on the platform and user interface of the banking or payment service providers. In addition, other real-time payments schemes may require IBANs, account numbers, or other identifiers, which can be less user-friendly compared to mobile numbers, however the choice between them may depend on user preference

and specific use cases.

Al-Obaid pointed out that the payments services are evolving rapidly, and it is driven by several key trends and developments such as:

- Increased adoption of digital payments where there is a significant shift from cash to digital payments. Consumers and businesses are increasingly using online banking, mobile wallets, and contactless payments.
- E-commerce growth: The rise in e-commerce has spurred the need for robust digital payment solutions, leading to innovations in payment gateways.

- Regulatory support and enhanced frameworks: Governments in the GCC are promoting digital payments through initiatives like WAMD service for local instant payment in Kuwait and AFAQ transfer service for the GCC instant payments which KFH has been among the first banks to launch the service in Kuwait through KFHonline. Moreover, the Central Bank of Kuwait is introducing Enhanced regulatory framework, which is established to support digital payments, improve security, and ensure compliance with international standards.

- Rise of FinTech's where the region is seeing a surge in fintech startups offering innovative payment solutions.
- Growing Use of Contactless and Mobile Payments due to their convenience and safety.
- Focus on Financial Inclusion where efforts are being made to provide banking and payment services to underbanked and unbanked populations, leveraging mobile technology and digital payment solutions.

Al-Obaid added: the payments services in the Middle East are undergoing a dynamic transformation, characterized by digital innovation, regulatory support, and a focus on financial inclusion and security. These changes are positioning the region as a growing hub for advanced payment technologies and solutions, which provides financial institutions with numerous advantages, including improved customer satisfaction, increased transaction volumes, competitive differentiation, cost efficiency, and new revenue opportunities, while also supporting regulatory compliance and financial inclusion.

KFH Group is keen to introduce different payments solutions tailored to satisfy our customers' needs such as (WAMD) service for local instant payments in Kuwait, (AFAQ) service for instant payments in the GCC and instant transfer to (KFH- Turkey) through Ripple network and more services moving forward, concluded Al-Obaid.



Photos during the event.



## The Conversation

## Students ride rails to learn about sustainability and tourism

By Mark Alan Rhodes II

Michigan Technological University

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



As a geographer, I wanted to offer a summer study abroad program on sustainability. However, it wouldn't make sense to design a sustainability program that includes flying abroad due to planes' excessive carbon footprint. Alternatively, Amtrak's diesel-powered trains reduce per person carbon dioxide emissions by 40% compared with flying.

Aside from an environmental lens, I also wanted students to learn about sustainability from economic and social perspectives. During the program, students use only public transit, stay in locally owned lodgings and eat at locally sourced restaurants.

Combine my love of Amtrak with a desire to get students out of the classroom, and we found ourselves riding across the country to learn about sustainable tourism, landscapes and urban and regional planning.

Over the course of three weeks, students visit six locations, with overnight train rides between each ranging from 16-24 hours. The days are broken up into lessons on observing landscape and land use, sustainable tourism and urban deindustrialization, with at least an hour of class time on each train ride.

Destinations serve as living laboratories for our students. Classes in some cities, such as Galesburg, Illinois, or Sacramento, California, learn more heavily on exploring the cities' industrial histories, also known as industrial heritage. In cities such as Portland, Oregon, or Glenwood Springs, Colorado, which experience large influxes of visitors every year, we focus more on tourism and planning.

The federal government is investing billions of dollars to create a "new era of rail" in the United States.

The course appeals to millennial and Gen Z students who are increasingly concerned about the climate crisis and continued carbon emissions. The experience gives students real-world examples of how they can make a difference, such as through engaging with public officials and changing small habits in how they travel.

Tourism will not save a community.

While staying in Glenwood Springs in Colorado, students complete an assignment about "destination tourism" - when tourism becomes the primary driver or economic base of a region. Students ride the country's only rapid rural bus transit systems "up valley" to Aspen. On the bus, they come to understand what they've read in the "The Slums of Aspen," a book about how the elite ski town passed a resolution that pushed out their immigrant workers, who live farther and farther "down valley" due to gentrification but still work in Aspen.

Once students arrive in Aspen - during the off-

season, in May - they find a polished ghost town full of Prada, Dior and other high-end fashion stores and highly manicured city parks. After returning to Glenwood Springs, they reflect on the differences between the cities in terms of housing costs, sustainability and tourism labor. They also walk away with a more critical eye toward water access, the seasonality of labor, public transportation availability and Indigenous rights in our college's own area - the Keweenaw Peninsula.

Students read journalist James McCommons' "Waiting on a Train: The Embattled Future of Passenger Rail Service," which provides both historical and engaging context organized by route and destination.

With about 100 hours aboard Amtrak trains, I also assign students podcasts such as "99% Invisible" and "Working Class History." I often see students on the train listening to podcasts with their headphones and writing journal entries that are due every time we arrive at a new hotel.

After finishing this course, the students - who are predominantly from rural areas in Michigan - have a better understanding of how and why they can use public transportation in their daily lives and travels. They also have a greater understanding of the positive and negative impacts of tourism on a place, particularly in postindustrial communities, and how they can be more intentional tourists themselves. Ultimately, they learn how they, as travelers and community members, can contribute to a more sustainable and equitable future. (AP)



### Obituary

# Ballerina DePrince, whose career inspired many, dies at 29

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla., Sept. 15, (AP) — Ballet dancer Michaela Mabinty DePrince, who came to the United States from an orphanage in war-torn Sierra Leone and performed on some of the world's biggest stages, has died, her family said in a statement. She was 29.

"Michaela touched so many lives across the world, including ours. She was an unforgettable inspiration to everyone who knew her or heard her story," her family said in a statement posted Friday on DePrince's social media accounts. "From her early life in war-torn Africa, to stages and screens across the world, she achieved her dreams and so much more."

A cause of death was not provided. DePrince was adopted by an American couple and by age 17 she had been featured in a documentary film and had performed on the TV show "Dancing With the Stars."

After graduating from high school and the American Ballet Theatre's Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School, she became a principal dancer Dance Theatre of Harlem. She then went to the Netherlands, where she danced with the Dutch National Ballet. She later returned to the US and joined the Boston Ballet in 2021.

"We're sending our love and support to the family of Michaela Mabinty DePrince at this time of loss," the Boston Ballet said in a statement to The Associated Press on Saturday. "We were so fortunate to know her; she was a beautiful person, a wonderful dancer, and she will be greatly missed by us all."

In her memoir, "Taking Flight: From War Orphan to Star Ballerina," she shared her journey from the orphanage to the stage. She also wrote a children's book, "Ballerina Dreams."

DePrince suffered from a skin pigmentation disorder that had her labeled "the devil's child" at the orphanage.

"I lost both my parents, so I was there (the orphanage) for about a year and I wasn't treated very well because I had vitiligo," DePrince told the AP in a 2012 interview. "We were ranked as numbers and number 27 was the least favorite and that was my number, so I got the least amount of food, the least amount of clothes and whatnot."

She added that she remembered seeing a photo of an American ballet dancer on a magazine page that had blown against the gate of the orphanage during Sierra Leone's civil war.

"All I remember is she looked really, really happy," DePrince told the AP, adding that she wished "to become this exact person."

She said she saw hope in that photo, "and I ripped the page out and I stuck it in my underwear because I didn't have any place to put it," she said.

Her passion helped inspire young Black dancers to pursue their dreams, her family said.

"We will miss her and her gorgeous smile forever and we know you will, too," their statement said.

Her sister Mia Mabinty DePrince recalled in the statement that they slept on a shared mat in the orphanage and used to make up their own musical theater plays and ballets.

"When we got adopted, our parents quickly poured into our dreams and arose the beautiful, gracefully strong ballerina that so many of you knew her as today. She was an inspiration," Mia DePrince wrote. "Whether she was leaping across the stage or getting on a plane and flying to third-world countries to provide orphans and children with dance classes, she was determined to conquer all her dreams in the arts and dance."

She is survived by five sisters and two brothers. The family requested that in lieu of flowers, donations could be made to War Child, which is an organization that DePrince was involved with as a War Child Ambassador.

"This work meant the world to her, and your donations will directly help other children who grew up in an environment of armed conflict," the family statement said.



DePrince

### Variety



This image released by Amazon shows Maisy Stella, (left), and Aubrey Plaza in a scene from 'My Old ...' (AP)

### Film

Sweetness wins in battle of two ideas

## Young meets older self in 'My Old ...'

By Mark Kennedy

They say tripping on psychedelic mushrooms triggers hallucinations, anxiety, paranoia and nervousness. In the case of Elliott, an 18-year-old restless Canadian, they prompt a visitor.

"Dude, I'm you," says the guest, as she nonchalantly burns a 'smores on a campfire next to a very high and stunned Elliott. "Well, I'm a 39-year-old you. What's up?"

What's up, indeed: Director-writer Megan Park has crafted a wistful coming-of-age tale using this comedic device for "My Old ..." and the results are uneven even though she nails the landing.

After the older Elliott proves who she is - they share a particular scar, childhood memories and a smaller left boob - the time-travel advice begins: Be nice to your brothers and mom, and stay away from a guy named Chad.

"Can we hug?" asks the older Elliott. They do. "This is so weird," says the younger Elliott, who then makes things even weirder when she asks for a kiss - to know what it's like kissing yourself. The older Elliott soon puts her number into the younger's phone under the name "My Old ...". Then they keep in touch, long after the effects of the "shrooms have gone.

Part of the movie's problem that can't be ignored is that the two Elliotts look nothing alike. Maisy Stella plays the coltish young version and a wry Aubrey Plaza plays the older. Both turn in fine performances but the visuals are slowly grating.

The arrival of the older Elliott coincides with her younger self counting down the days until she can flee from her small town of 300 in the Muskoka Lakes region to college in Toronto, where "my life is about to start." She's sick of life on a cranberry farm.

Park's scenes and dialogue are unrushed and honest as Elliott takes her older self's advice and tries to repair relationships with her golf-loving older brother and gloriously odd younger one, who has an obsession with Saoirse Ronan. This is a filmmaker who knows siblings and how they vibrate.

Then Chad pops up. Chad is sweet and thoughtful and goofy and cute

and smart and resourceful and really, really into Elliott. "Everything about him feels so right," the younger wails. A central question in the movie is why My Old ... wants young Elliott to stay away from Chad, played so beautifully by Percy Hynes White that you want to shake sense into both women.

Both parts of Park's movie - the coming-of-age tale and the me-visiting-from-the-future tale - work, but maybe not in the same movie, a little like the two different Elliotts. The tone of each part are different, one wistful, the other zany, and together threaten to pull "My Old ..." apart.

Aside from a stunningly funny 'shroom-induced dream sequence that includes a Justin Bieber concert, Park is strongest exploring the liminal space between one thing ending and another beginning - soft beautiful memories that are sad and yet necessary.

Both Chad and Elliott's mother (a strong Maria Dizzia) have lovely dialogue about the profound effects that tiny moments of change can have: Sometimes you know it has ended forever - like a baby transitioning from your bed to a crib - and sometimes you never get to say goodbye, like the last day you spent all day messing around with your friends on bikes.

Even if the road is a little rocky, stay for a satisfying end, one in which, somewhat predictably, the younger Elliott offers some wise advice to the older. There's a moment or two when Chad threatens to overpower "My Old ..." and steer it into a third movie, but Park knows her way out. It's a story that has always been about the younger Elliott and seeing her finally steer her boat - literally and metaphorically - is a joy.

"My Old ..." an Amazon MGM Studios release that opens in movie theaters in New York and Los Angeles on Friday and wide Sept. 27, is rated R for "for language throughout, drug use and sexual material." Running time: 89 minutes. two and a half stars out of four.

#### Also:

**PARK CITY, Utah:** The Sundance Film Festival has narrowed its search for a new home down to three finalists.

One option remains a combination of Salt Lake City and Park City, Utah, the latter its base for over

40 years. The other two, Boulder, Colorado, and Cincinnati would find the country's foremost showcase for independent film putting new roots down, the Sundance Institute said Thursday.

Eugene Hernandez, the festival's director and head of public programming said that each of the finalist cities "has shown us the blend of exciting possibilities, values, and logistics needed to produce a vibrant, inviting, and inclusive festival."

For now, Sundance will continue operating out of Park City for the 2025 and 2026 festivals. Changes won't go into effect until the 2027 festival. Should the organization stick with Utah, the festival would center itself in Salt Lake City, with some elements in Park City.

Local leaders all issued statements as well. Colorado Gov. Jared Polis said that Boulder is "the next natural home" for the festival, touting Colorado's creative communities. Cincinnati Mayor Aftab Pureval and Kristen Schlotman, the head of Film Cincinnati spoke about the Ohio city's dedication to the arts and its ability to offer a "dynamic, walkable and accessible new venue." Finally, Salt Lake City Mayor Erin Mendenhall, Park City Mayor Nann Worel and Salt Lake County Mayor Jenny Wilson said they are eager to "forge an even stronger bond to inspire artists and elevate the festival experience."

The Robert Redford-founded festival has been a launching pad for many top filmmakers over the years, from Quentin Tarantino to Ryan Coogler. It's also premiered many eventual Oscar nominees and winners, including "CODA," their first best picture winner, and the past three documentary winners "20 Days in Mariupol," "Navalny" and "Summer of Soul."

Last year's hybrid festival generated just over \$118 million for the state of Utah, according to Sundance's 2023 economic impact report. But there have been growing concerns that it has outgrown its mountainside ski town. The festival has long sparred with local ski resorts - Park City's other major money maker - as more than 86,000 festivalgoers fill the hotels and leave the slopes virtually empty for two weeks during peak ski season. (AP)

**BOSTON:** A scuffle between members of the groundbreaking alternative rock band Jane's Addiction came amid "tension and animosity" during their reunion tour, lead singer Perry Farrell's wife said Saturday.

The band is known for edgy, punk-inspired hits "Been Caught Stealing" and "Mountain Song" in the late 1980s and early 1990s as the alternative rock and grunge music movements were growing.

In videos post on social media from Friday night's concert in Boston, Farrell, 65, is seen singing loudly into his mic and then lunging at guitarist Dave Navarro, bumping Navarro with his shoulder before taking a swing at Navarro with his right arm. Navarro is seen holding his right arm out to keep Farrell away before Farrell is dragged away by others on stage. The show ended shortly after.

"Perry's frustration had been mounting, night after night, he felt that the stage volume had been extremely loud and his voice was being drowned out by the band," Eddy Lau Farrell wrote in an Instagram post Saturday morning.

She said her husband had been suffering from tinnitus and a sore throat and "by the end of the song, he wasn't singing, he was screaming just to be heard." She said her husband later broke down "and cried and cried." (AP)

**LOS ANGELES:** Lil Wayne opened up for the first time about his devastation after not being selected as the 2025 Super Bowl halftime show headline performer in his hometown of New Orleans.

The rap megastar publicly expressed his hurt feelings in an Instagram video post Friday, nearly a week after Los Angeles-based rapper Kendrick Lamar was announced as the headliner. He said being overlooked "broke" him, adding that "I'm just trying to put myself back together."

Over the years, Wayne has been vocal about his desire to perform during halftime of the NFL's championship game, which will be held at the Caesars Superdome on Feb. 9. It will be the second time Lamar will perform during the halftime show after he made a guest appearance with Dr. Dre, Snoop Dogg, Mary J. Blige, 50 Cent and Eminem in 2022.

Wayne appeared somber in the video, saying he had to muster up enough strength to express his thoughts "without breaking." "That hurt a whole lot," said Wayne, a five-time Grammy winner, who has a variety of hits including "Lollipop" featuring Static Major, "Mr. Carter" with Jay-Z, "Go DJ" and "A Milli." He also helped ignite the careers of Drake, Nicki Minaj



Wayne



Farrell

and Tyga. (AP)

**AUCKLAND, New Zealand:** The "Mid-Autumn Concert of Timeless Poetry" was held Saturday evening, with ancient Chinese poetry sung and danced with melody, in celebration of the Auckland Moon Festival. Organized by the New Zealand National Opera House, the

concert featured a blend of classic Tang and Song dynasties poetry with traditional Chinese music, dance, western instruments and New Zealand indigenous songs.

The concert commenced with performance of Guzheng Ensemble's "Flourishing Age", setting the stage aglow with melodies and leading the audience to a realm of timeless beauty. The stage

swiftly transformed, unveiling the enchanting "Ode to Xuan Bird," a Dunhuang dance performed by the Silver Fern Chinese Dance Troupe.

Later on, Baritone Zhou Nan's resonant voice, singing Tang and Song dynasties poetry, accompanied by chamber music and piano, brought the audience to nostalgic Mid-Autumn memories of ancient China. (Xinhua)



## People &amp; Places

## Television

## Miami celebrates

## Actors, fans mark 'Miami Vice' at 40

MIAMI BEACH, Fla., Sept. 15, (AP) — Miami Beach residents and visitors can feel it coming in the air tonight — and the rest of the weekend — as “Miami Vice” cast and crew gather to celebrate the iconic television series’ 40th anniversary.

The show premiered on NBC on Sept. 16, 1984, and ran for five seasons. The “cocaine cowboy”-era crime drama, featuring Don Johnson and Philip Michael Thomas as undercover cops, was revolutionary in its use of pop culture, style and music and spawned a film reboot in 2006. And by filming the show primarily in South Florida, the series helped transform the image of Miami and Miami Beach in a way that would reverberate for decades.



Olmos

Former cast members, including **Edward James Olmos** and Michael Madsen, met with fans Friday at the Royal Palm South Beach and were set to return Saturday. Also attending were Saundra Santiago, Olivia Brown, Bruce McGill, Joaquim De Almeida, Bill Smitrovich, Pepe Serna and Ismael East Carlo.

“It was not ‘Hill Street Blues.’ It was not ‘Police Story,’” Olmos said on Friday. “It was way different in artistic endeavor on all levels. The creativity, as far as music, writing, production value. The production value was so overwhelming. We spared nothing. I mean, these people were serious, and they spent a lot of time and money for each episode, and it shows.”

Olmos said that the show had a profound effect on introducing Miami to the world and creating an idealized version of South Beach that would later become a reality.

“When we were here, when we started the show in 1984, there was no South Beach,” Olmos said. “There was a South Beach, but it was dilapidated. The buildings were all literally falling into disrepair.”

## Restoration

Years before serious restoration efforts would transform South Beach into a center of fashion, music and tourism, Olmos said productions crews were painting the exteriors of the neighborhood’s historic Art Deco buildings themselves to make them look good on camera.

“We would paint the facades and put out tables, and we did what now became the reality of South Beach,” Olmos said.

While most television production was still being done in Los Angeles or New York in the 1980s, Olmos doubts the show would have been as successful if they had tried to fake South Florida in California.

“They could have never shot this anywhere else in the world,” Olmos said. “Look at the show from the very first episode, and as it went on, the beauty of Miami is unprecedented.”

Premiering just a few years after the launch of MTV, “Miami Vice” embraced contemporary style and music. Besides Jan Hammer’s original scoring, the producers regularly included songs from popular artists like Glenn Frey, Don Henley, Dire Straits and Foreigner.

Fred Lyle, an associate producer and music coordinator for “Miami Vice,” said the importance of music was evident from the first episode, as “In the Air Tonight” by Phil Collins plays while Johnson and Thomas cruise the streets of Miami in their Ferrari convertible.

“And that’s when ‘Miami Vice’ became different musically than anything else,” Lyle said. “Music was going over this scene, that scene. One song was helping to stitch the fabric of the narrative together.”

Aside from the show’s style, the stories and characters also had substance. Veteran television actor Bruce McGill has played countless cops, coaches and other authority figures over several decades, but he said his guest role as a burnt-out former detective in the second season of “Miami Vice” stands out compared to the straight-laced characters that comprise most of his career.

“It was a very good part that they allowed me to make better, to enhance, to ham it up a little,” McGill said. “And it was very satisfying.”

“Miami Vice” fan Matt Lechliter, 39, traveled all the way to Miami Beach from Oxnard, California, to celebrate the show’s anniversary.

“I wasn’t alive when it premiered, but it’s a part of me,” Lechliter said.

Lechliter said he remembers watching the later seasons and reruns with his parents as a child but really became a fan when he rediscovered the show about five years ago.

“I binge-watched it,” Lechliter said. “I was like, ‘Wow, this really is amazing.’ When I heard about this event, I said, ‘I’ve gotta go.’”

The anniversary celebration will continue through the weekend with career discussions, as well as bus and walking tours of filming locations.

The Miami Vice Museum is open to the public from Friday to Sunday, featuring a wide range of items never before displayed together since the show’s conclusion in 1989. The exhibit is being hosted at the Wilzig Erotic Art Museum.

And to kick off the celebration on Thursday, Miami Beach Mayor Steven Meiner met with cast and crew at the Avalon Hotel in South Beach to present a proclamation declaring Sept. 16, 2024, as “Miami Vice Day.”

## Also:

**LOS ANGELES:** Hallmark launched a streaming service called Hallmark+ on Tuesday with two new original series, the scripted drama “The Chicken Sisters” and unscripted series “Celebrations with Lacey Chabert.” If you’re a Hallmark holiday movies fan, you know Chabert. She’s starred in more than 30 of their films and many are holiday themed. Off camera, Chabert has a passion for throwing parties and entertaining. In “Celebrations,” deserving people are surprised with a bash in their honor — planned with Chabert’s help. “The Chicken Sisters” stars **Schuyler Fisk**, **Wendie Malick** and **Lea Thompson** in a small town. The eight-episode series is based on a novel of the same name.

Meanwhile, first there was Bravo’s “The Real Housewives of Salt Lake City,” and now Hulu introduced “The Secret Lives of Mormon Wives,” a docuseries following young wives in Utah. They are also online influencers who banded together to create TikTok content they called #MomTok. The women juggle their online personas with family life and remaining in good standing with the Church — and each other — after a sex scandal brings worldwide attention.



A model walks on the catwalk during the Richard Quinn show at the Dorchester Hotel Park Lane, in central London, during London Fashion Week on Saturday, Sept. 14. (AP)

## Music

## Singer embraces music and motherhood

## Waterhouse pens ‘Memoir’ album

NEW YORK, Sept. 15, (AP) — Suki Waterhouse discovered the Sparklemuffin spider during a late-night stroll.

“He’s wildly colored. He’s cute,” she said. Best of all: He dances. “I felt somewhat akin to him.”

The spider became a foil and a mascot for Waterhouse’s sophomore album, “Memoir of a Sparklemuffin,” out Friday.

The release follows the British singer-songwriter’s 2022 debut “I Can’t Let Go” and her time playing keyboardist Karen Sirko in “Daisy Jones and the Six,” the Amazon Prime series based on Taylor Jenkins Reid’s best-selling novel about a 1970s rock band. The record’s 18 songs cover heartache and the search for a “Big Love,” but also the 32-year-old’s time in the industry, which she entered as a teen, modeling first. The project wrapped just days before the birth of her daughter, now six months old, with partner Robert Pattinson.

After celebrating the release with stops at the Michael Kors fashion show and the MTV Video Music Awards, Waterhouse talked with The Associated Press about making the album while pregnant and how playing Sirko motivated her to fully embrace her music career.

This interview has been edited for clarity and brevity.

**AP:** Much of “Memoir of a Sparklemuffin” was made while you were pregnant with your daughter. How did that shape the music you were making during that time?

**Waterhouse:** I think the physical limitations were something that shaped the album, in a really good way. It was sort of amazing to not be able to leave the house for a couple of months. I mean, I really got to focus in a way that I don’t know if sometimes you are able to when the world keeps moving.

I’m someone that loves working at home. All of my music that I’ve made pretty much has been made in home studios — big studios can freak me out a little bit. There’s something especially about being in Los Angeles, there’s just so many talented people

around you, so you’re literally able to call up the best guitarist and he lives 15 minutes away. So it was very much that feeling of having awesome people just flow in and out of my house, with also a good deadline. It wasn’t just the deadline of — finish the record. It was, we must finish the record. There will be a baby here if we don’t.

**AP:** The song, “Model, Actress, Whatever,” feels like a reclamation of those labels.

**Waterhouse:** It’s funny, when I wrote that song, I kind of had that loop going around — (singing) “call me a model, an actress, whatever” — and it was something that I thought was kind of self-deprecating and funny. But I also felt like I would want to be in my car singing that. It’s dramatic, it’s glamorous.

I love consuming stories about people’s lives written by them, I love reading a memoir, I love reading from someone’s perspective what really went down, what really happened. That song, I guess, I was a little afraid after I wrote it — like, I’ve been trying to get away from being called this, from having these kind of labels — and then I think that was why I ended up writing it. There were a couple of months where I was like, “I’m not going to have this as a single. Let’s sweep that one under the carpet.” And then it’s always those ones actually, that eventually, you’re like, “No, yeah, this is reclaiming those words.”

Especially with the video, I wanted to have just like a ton of fun and play into the stereotypes. I actually feel very empowered by the song. The video is like, really funny and I hope everyone watches it because it’s just like a giggle. I really feel proud of that.

**AP:** You told AP last year that playing Karen Sirko in “Daisy Jones and the Six” helped you embrace your own music career. Why do you think that was?

**Waterhouse:** Looking at the book, she was cool and calm and collected and she knew exactly what she wanted to do and she knew exactly who she was. She wanted to be on tour for the

rest of her life. And you know, there was a reason why I was drawn to the part. I think whenever you step into a role, you do just absorb — that’s the job. There’s just so much to be gained from that experience.

Something about playing her gave me that nudge, that voice in my head that you need to go and make that album that you’ve been wanting to make for years and years and years, that you’ve been working towards. You’ve got the songs, they’re all there, go and make the album.” Also, playing a role where we were all in a band, hanging out in Sound City Studios everyday, I was kind embracing that life of a musician. I had this hole in my heart like, that’s what I want to be doing too.

**AP:** Do you ever find yourself tapping into Karen, now?

**Waterhouse:** (Laughs) Yeah, I guess. She’s always there, she’s always there.

**AP:** You’ve played so many shows since your debut album came out and since filming “Daisy Jones,” including a stop at Coachella this spring. Has seeing people react to your live sets influenced the music you’re creating?

**Waterhouse:** I feel like it’s difficult not to. When I did Taylor (Swift)’s show the other day, I went straight into the studio afterward. You’re so inspired watching that show, so I was like, “I want to make a stadium song.” I ended up making a slow ballad, but obviously it’s still super inspiring.

The first record I made, I had so many voices in my head — like, “Don’t do anything too upbeat.” Those voices, a lot of those insecurities, are kind of gone now, in many ways.

When I wrote “My Fun,” that was the first kind of upbeat song that I’d done that still felt like it was true to my palette and my world and that I liked. And I was like, “OK, I can write an upbeat song and not be cringed out by it.” And that is so fun, to do an upbeat song on stage. So 1,000%, from this record, I can’t wait to be going on tour and have those different songs that are a little more upbeat.



Suki Waterhouse poses for a portrait on Thursday, Sept. 12, 2024, in New York. (AP)



Weinstein



Rudolph

## Variety

**LOS ANGELES:** If it seems like the Emmys just happened, you’re not wrong.

The 76th Emmy Awards are Sunday, roughly nine months after the last celebration of the best television. Last year’s Hollywood strikes delayed the show’s 75th edition until January, when “Succession” and “The Bear” dominated the show.

“The Bear” will factor heavily in this weekend’s show, but January’s “Succession” celebration was for its final season, clearing the way for a new drama series winner.

Enter “Shogun.” The FX series about feudal Japan enters the show with 14 wins thanks to the Creative Arts Emmy ceremony last weekend. That makes it the record-holder for most wins for a single season, and it will likely extend that lead.

Here’s what you need to know about Emmys, including how to watch and stream the red carpet and show, and who’s nominated.

The show begins at 8 p.m. Eastern and is being shown live on ABC, which is available with an antenna or through cable and satellite providers.

The Emmys can be streamed live through live TV streaming services that include ABC in their lineup, like Hulu+ Live TV, YouTube TV and FuboTV.

For those without the service, the show will be streaming Monday on Hulu.

Lots of folks from “Shogun,” including actor **Néstor Carbonell**. **Maya Rudolph** also won a trophy for her work on “Big Mouth,” and **Jamie Lee Curtis** claimed her first Emmy for her guest appearance on “The Bear.”

The Creative Arts Emmys honor many of the craft workers who make shows work, leaving the top prizes for Sunday’s ceremony, which will be hosted by actors **Eugene** and **Dan Levy**. (AP)

**NEW YORK:** Disgraced ex-movie mogul **Harvey Weinstein** faces mounting legal and health troubles some seven years after scores of women came forward with allegations of sexual misconduct against him, helping launch the global #MeToo movement.

On Thursday, he was indicted on additional sex crimes charges in New York ahead of a retrial this fall. The grand jury decision remains sealed until he is formally arraigned in court.

Weinstein has maintained that any sexual activity was consensual.

Meanwhile, the 72-year-old remains hospitalized following emergency heart surgery — just the latest in an assortment of medical ailments that have cropped up

while in custody.

Here’s a recap of where things stand: In April, New York’s highest court overturned Weinstein’s 2020 conviction on rape

and sexual assault charges, ruling that the trial judge had unfairly allowed testimony against him based on allegations from other women that were not part of the case. (AP)



Director and Actress Rebel Wilson, (back center), along with cast members pose on the red carpet for the film “The Deb” during the Toronto International Film Festival in Toronto on Saturday, Sept. 14. (AP)

**NEW YORK:** DirecTV announced Saturday it had reached a deal with Walt Disney Co. that will restore ESPN and ABC-owned stations to its service after a nearly 2-week dispute that blacked out those networks for millions of viewers across the U.S.

The end of the impasse came in time for sports fans to watch ESPN’s slate of college football games on DirecTV. It also will ensure that ABC’s telecast of the Emmy Awards on Sunday night will be available in more major markets where viewers subscribe to DirecTV’s pay service.

ABC had been unavailable since Sept. 1 on DirecTV in several markets where the station is owned by Disney. Those were located in the **San Francisco Bay Area**; **Fresno, California**; **New York**; **Chicago**; **Philadelphia**; **Houston**; and **Raleigh, North Carolina**.

DirecTV’s 11 million subscribers abruptly lost access to ESPN, the ABC-owned stations and other Disney-owned channels such as FX and National Geographic during the Labor Day weekend in a dispute over carriage fees and programming flexibility. (AP)



## Gut microbes and leftovers make your calories count

## Is weight loss as simple as calories in, calories out?

By Christopher Damman  
University of Washington

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

Is the adage "calories in, calories out" true? The short answer is yes, but the full story is more nuanced.

From the moment food touches your tongue to the time it leaves your body, your digestive system and gut microbiome work to extract its nutrients. Enzymes in your mouth, stomach and small intestine break down food for absorption, while microbes in your large intestine digest the leftovers.

"Calories in, calories out" refers to the concept that weight change is determined by the balance between the calories you consume and calories you expend. This includes not only the number of calories you eat due to appetite and absorb via digestion, but also how well those absorbed calories are burned through metabolism.

Recent research indicates that a significant factor influencing people's variable appetites, digestion and metabolism are biologically active leftover components of food, known as bioactives. These bioactives play a key role in regulating the body's metabolic control centers: your brain's appetite center, the hypothalamus; your gut's digestive bioreactor, the microbiome; and your cells' metabolic powerhouses, the mitochondria.

I'm a gastroenterologist who has spent the past 20 years studying the gut microbiome's role in metabolic disease. I'll share how dietary bioactives help to explain why some people can eat more but gain less, and I'll offer some dietary tools to improve metabolism.

Research has shown that consuming whole foods still "packaged" in their original fibers and polyphenols - the cellular wrappers and colorful compounds in plants that confer many of their health benefits - leads to more calories lost through stool, when compared with processed foods that have been "predigested" by factories into simple carbs, refined fats and additives.

This is one way calorie-free factors influence the "calories in, calories out" equation, which can be beneficial in a society where calorie intake often exceeds needs. Eating more whole foods and less processed foods simply lets you eat more because more of those unprocessed calories go out the other end unused.

Fiber and polyphenols also help regulate your appetite and calorie intake through the brain. Your microbiome transforms these leftover bioactives into metabolites - molecular byproducts of digestion - that naturally decrease your appetite. These metabolites regulate the same gut hormones that first inspired the popular weight

loss drugs Wegovy, Ozempic and Mounjaro, controlling appetite through your brain's satiety center, the hypothalamus.

Processed foods lack these bioactives and are further formulated with salt, sugar, fat and additives to be hyperpalatable, causing you to crave them and eat more.

A full accounting of calories also depends on how effectively your body burns them to power your movement, thoughts, immunity and other functions - a process largely orchestrated by your mitochondria.

## Calories

Healthy people typically have high-capacity mitochondria that easily process calories to fuel cellular functions. People with metabolic diseases have mitochondria that don't work as well, contributing to bigger appetites, less muscle and increased fat storage.

They also have less of a mitochondria-rich type of fat called brown fat. Rather than storing calories, this fat burns them to produce heat. Less brown fat may help explain why some people with obesity can have lower body temperatures than those who aren't obese, and why there has been a decline in average body temperature in the U.S. since the industrial revolution.

Healthy mitochondria that burn more calories might also help explain why some people can eat more without gaining weight. But this raises the question: Why do some people have healthier mitochondria than others?

Your mitochondrial health is ultimately influenced by many factors, including those usually associated with overall well-being: regular exercise, adequate sleep, stress management and healthy eating.

The latest nutrition research is revealing the roles that previously underappreciated dietary factors play in mitochondrial health. Beyond the essential macronutrients - fat, protein and carbohydrates - and micronutrients such as vitamins and minerals, other leftover factors in food, including fibers, polyphenols, bioactive fats and fermentation products, are also key for metabolism.

Unlike a Western diet, which often lacks these bioactives, traditional diets such as the Mediterranean and Okinawan diets are rich in foods - nuts, seeds, fruits, vegetables, whole grains and fermented foods - replete with these factors. Many bioactives pass undigested through the small intestine to the large intestine, where the microbiome converts them into activated metabolites. These metabolites are then absorbed, influencing the number of mitochondria in cells and how they function.

At the most fundamental level of cell biology, metabolites turn on and off molecular switches in your genes through a process called epigenetics that can affect both you and your off-

spring. When the metabolic "lights" are turned on, they enliven the mitochondria responsible for a faster metabolism, effectively increasing the calories you use.

A healthy microbiome produces a full range of beneficial metabolites that support calorie-burning brown fat, muscle endurance and metabolic health. But not everyone has a microbiome capable of converting bioactives into their active metabolites.

Long-term consumption of processed foods, low in bioactives and high in salt and additives, can impair the microbiome's ability to produce the metabolites needed for optimal mitochondrial health. Overuse of antibiotics, high stress and lack of exercise can also adversely affect microbiome and mitochondrial health.

This creates a double nutrition gap: a lack of healthy diet and a deficiency in the microbes to convert its bioactives. As a result, well-studied nutritional approaches such as the Mediterranean diet might be less effective in some people with an impaired microbiome, potentially leading to gastrointestinal symptoms such as diarrhea and negatively affecting metabolic health.

In these cases, nutrition research is exploring the potential health benefits of various low-carb diets that may bypass the need for a healthy microbiome. While the higher protein in these diets can reduce the microbiome's production of beneficial metabolites, the lower carbs stimulate the body's production of ketones. One ketone, beta-hydroxybutyrate, may function similarly to the microbiome metabolite butyrate in regulating mitochondria.

Emerging microbiome-targeting approaches might also prove helpful for improving your metabolic health: butyrate and other postbiotics to provide preformed microbiome metabolites, personalized nutrition to tailor your diet to your microbiome, intermittent fasting to help repair your microbiome, and the future possibility of live bacterial therapies to restore microbiome health.

For most people, restoring the microbiome through traditional diets such as the Mediterranean diet remains biologically achievable, but it is not always practical due to challenges such as time, cost and taste preferences. In the end, maintaining metabolic health comes back to the deceptively simple healthy lifestyle pillars of exercise, sleep, stress management and nutritious diet.

Some simple tips and tools can nonetheless help make nutritious diet choices easier. Mnemonics such as the 4 F's of food - fibers, polyphenols, unsaturated fats and ferments - can help you focus on foods that best support your microbiome and mitochondria with "leftovers." Bioactive-powered calculators and apps can also aid in selecting foods to control your appetite, digestion and metabolism to rebalance your calorie "ins and outs." (AP)

## Start of spacesuits test for Mars exploration

## Tech billionaire returns to Earth after historic private spacewalk



In this image made from SpaceX video, tech entrepreneur Jared Isaacman, (center), reacts as he gets out of its capsule upon his return with his crew after the capsule landed in the Gulf of Mexico near Florida's Dry Tortugas early Sunday, Sept. 15. (AP)

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla., Sept. 15, (AP) - A billionaire spacewalker returned to Earth with his crew on Sunday, ending a five-day trip that lifted them higher than anyone has traveled since NASA's moonwalkers.

SpaceX's capsule splashed down in the Gulf of Mexico near Florida's Dry Tortugas in the predawn darkness, carrying tech entrepreneur Jared Isaacman, two SpaceX engineers and a former Air Force Thunderbird pilot.

They pulled off the first private spacewalk while orbiting nearly 740 kilometers above Earth, higher than the International Space Station and Hubble Space Telescope. Their spacecraft hit a peak altitude of 1,408 kilometers following Tuesday's liftoff.

Isaacman became only the 264th person to perform a spacewalk since the former Soviet Union scored the first in 1965, and SpaceX's Sarah Gillis is the 265th. Until now, all spacewalks were done by professional astronauts.

"We are mission complete," Isaacman radioed as the capsule bobbed in the water, awaiting the recovery team.

It was the first time SpaceX aimed for a splashdown near the Dry Tortugas, a cluster of islands 70 miles (113 kilometers) west of Key West. To celebrate the new location, SpaceX employees brought a big, green turtle balloon to Mission Control at company headquarters in Hawthorne, California.

## Hatch

During Thursday's commercial spacewalk, the Dragon capsule's hatch was open barely a half-hour. Isaacman emerged only up to his waist to briefly test SpaceX's brand new spacesuit followed by Gillis, who was knee high as she flexed her arms and legs for several minutes. Gillis, a classically trained violinist, also held a performance in orbit earlier in the week.

The spacewalk lasted less than two hours, considerably shorter than those at the International Space Station. Most of that time was needed to depressurize the entire capsule and then restore the cabin air. Even SpaceX's Anna Menon and Scott "Kidd" Potec, who remained strapped in, wore spacesuits.

SpaceX considers the brief exercise a starting point to test spacesuit technology for future, longer missions to Mars.

This was Isaacman's second chartered flight with SpaceX, with two more still ahead under his personally financed space exploration program named Polaris after the North Star. He paid an undisclosed sum for his first spaceflight in 2021, taking along contest winners and a pediatric cancer survivor while raising more than \$250 million for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

## A must-see sky event

## Catch partial lunar eclipse during Sept's supermoon

NEW YORK, Sept. 15, (AP) - Get ready for a partial lunar eclipse and supermoon, all rolled into one.

The spectacle will be visible in clear skies across North America and South America Tuesday night and in Africa and Europe Wednesday morning.

A partial lunar eclipse happens when the Earth passes between the sun and moon, casting a shadow that darkens a sliver of the moon and appears to take a bite out of it.

Since the moon will inch closer to Earth than usual, it'll appear a bit larger in the sky. The supermoon is one of three remaining this year.

"A little bit of the sun's light is being blocked so the moon will be slightly dimmer," said Valerie Rapson, an astronomer at the State University of New York at Oneonta.

The Earth, moon and sun line up to produce a solar or lunar eclipse anywhere from four to seven times a year, according to NASA. This lunar eclipse is the second and final of the year after a slight darkening in March.

No special eye protection is needed to view a lunar eclipse. Viewers can stare at the moon with the naked eye or opt for binoculars and telescopes to get a closer look.

To spot the moon's subtle shrinkage over time, hang outside for a few hours or take multiple peeks over the course

of the evening, said KaChun Yu, curator at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science.

"From one minute to the next, you might not see much happening," said Yu.

For a more striking lunar sight, skywatchers can set their calendars for March 13. The moon will be totally eclipsed by the Earth's shadow and will be painted red by stray bits of sunlight filtering through Earth's atmosphere.

## Also:

**NEW YORK:** Solar storms brought faint but visible auroras to the Northern Hemisphere starting late Thursday and extending into early Friday morning.

People in Canada and northern US states including Alaska, Washington, Montana, North Dakota and Minnesota were able to see faint colorful displays, according to the current space weather forecast.

If the moderate solar storms become more intense as nighttime approaches, people as far south as Illinois and New York were able to glimpse the phenomenon.

"All the stars have to align" for that to happen, said Erica Grow Cei, spokesperson for the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

## New device to boost research

## China unveils microscope for '3D imaging'

BEIJING, Sept. 15, (Xinhua) - A team of Chinese scientists crafted a super-intravital microscope that is capable of seeing clearly the entire three-dimensional (3D) interactions of a large-scale cell's network at the mammalian organ level.

The instrument, developed by Tsinghua University, is designed to enhance innovative research in oncology, immunology and neuroscience, in order to provide a systemic understanding on how organs are organized and functioning at the single cell resolution.

This microscope called the RUSH3D system offers a centimeter-scale field of view and subcellular resolution. It is capable of high-speed 3D imaging at

a rate of 20 frames per second, while also enabling continuous observation for dozens of hours with low toxicity, according to the study published on Friday in the journal Cell.

In neuroscience, for instance, the intricate interactions among a large population of neurons are responsible for complex functions like intelligence and consciousness. Understanding the architecture and operational dynamics of neural circuits is crucial for deciphering the inner workings of the brain.

The research team utilized the system to achieve high-speed 3D observation covering layers of the cerebral cortex in live mice at single-cell resolution.

They captured the distinct response

patterns of various cortical regions under multi-sensory stimulation and tracked large-scale neural responses with single-neuron precision across several consecutive days, according to the study.

"The traditional fluorescence microscopy allowed us to observe only part of an organ, such as a specific brain region in a mouse," said Dai Qionghai, the paper's corresponding author from Tsinghua University.

"The RUSH3D system, however, is akin to using 100 microscopes simultaneously, providing complete coverage of the mouse cortex and capturing the dynamic interactions of hundreds of thousands of neurons," said Dai.

## New, high-end hearing aid enhances hearing

BURLINGTON, Ontario, Sept. 15, (AP) - Over 1.5 million people suffer from hearing loss, but most don't want to admit it. In a recent study among Canadian adults between the ages of 40 and 79, just 8% of men and 5% of women admitted to hearing impairment, but when experts evaluated their hearing, the results were alarming; 63% of men and 46% of women had measurable hearing loss, showcasing a deep-seated stigma around hearing loss and a subsequent aversion to hearing aids.

Signia, a global leader in hear-

ing aids, is devoted to shattering this stigma once and for all to help improve the quality of life for hearing-impaired consumers with the launch of its newest product: Signia Active Pro IX - now available in Canada.

Active Pro IX is in a category of its own. As the world's only instant-fit rechargeable solution powered by the Signia Integrated Xperience platform with RealTime Conversation Enhancement technology, Active Pro IX empowers mild to moderate hearing loss users to reconnect and contribute to dynamic conversations in any noisy

environment to live fully social and active lives, just as they are meant to.

Gone are the days when you can say you're "not old enough" for hearing aids. Active Pro IX shatters every stigma of the look and feel of a traditional hearing aid. Created for a generation who hasn't yet found an attractive solution to support their hearing loss, the Active Pro IX is designed to look like an effortlessly cool earbud that offers all the benefits of a prescription-grade hearing aid with advancements in modern technology and connectivity to iPhone and Android devices.

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## Duo met for the third consecutive time

## Dvalishvili wins unanimous decision over O'Malley

LAS VEGAS, Sept 15, (AP): The Sphere, Las Vegas' transformational new masterpiece, stole the show at UFC 306, but Merab Dvalishvili put on a performance not to be forgotten in capturing the bantamweight championship with a unanimous decision over Sean O'Malley.

The judges scored it 49-46, 48-47 and 48-47 in favor of Dvalishvili (18-4), a 33-year-old from the country of Georgia. He used a ground-and-pound attack to control most of the action against O'Malley (18-2).

O'Malley, 29, who lives in Phoenix, was a slight -125 favorite at BetMGM Sportsbook.

Valentina Shevchenko reclaimed the women's flyweight championship with all three judges awarding her a 50-45 victory over Alexa Grasso in the co-main event.

This was the third consecutive meeting between the two after Grasso took Shevchenko's belt in the first match. The second was a draw.

The third one wasn't closer, with the 36-year-old Shevchenko (24-4-1) using a ground-and-pound strategy to win all three rounds over 31-year-old Grasso (16-4-1) on the judges' cards.

"It's so huge," said Shevchenko, who is from Kyrgyzstan. "It like a dream come true fighting in the Sphere."

This show at the Sphere was unlike

any show in the UFC's history, taking full advantage of the 160,000-square-foot high-definition LED screen to create an outer-space type feel as the pay-per-view portion of the card was about to begin.

UFC President Dana White called this card his "love letter to Mexico," and mini stories of the neighboring country's history and culture as part of a celebration of the country's Independence Day weekend were told on the screen throughout the evening. One created the illusion the arena was moving as the video played out.

## MIXED MARTIAL ARTS

Seven Mexican fighters, including Grasso, populated the card, and chants from the crowd of "Mexico" broke out several times.

Aztec pyramids seeming to hover over one contest in the octagon changed from night to morning. Another fight took place with a Dia de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) holiday scene that included dressed up male and female skeletons lighting up the screen. Other matches had similar scenes dominating the background.

The screen was used throughout to introduce a tell-of-the-tape of each fighter, and highlights were shown on

## Alvarez in dominating title defense vs Berlanga

LAS VEGAS, Sept 15, (AP): Undisputed super middleweight champion Saul "Canelo" Alvarez outpointed challenger Edgar Berlanga on Saturday night in front of a sold-out crowd at T-Mobile Arena.

Making his eighth super middleweight title defense, the 34-year-old Alvarez (61-2-2) dominated much of the fight, using his experience and tenacious pursuit to wear down the 27-year-old challenger, frequently sending 20,312 fans into a frenzy, often chanting "Mexico! Mexico!" or "CA-NEL-O! CA-NEL-O!"

Berlanga lost for the first time in his career, dropping to 22-1-0.

"I did good. Now what are they going to say? They said I don't fight young fighters," said Alvarez, who was making his eighth super middleweight title defense. "They always talk, but

the building's exterior.

White has said this is a one-and-done given the overwhelming undertaking to put together the show as well as the roughly \$20 million cost. To help pay for it, White secured a title sponsor for the first time for one of his

I'm the best fighter in the world."

Judges Max DeLuca and Steve Weisfeld scored the fight 118-109, and judge David Sutherland had it 117-110.

Berlanga almost matched Alvarez's punch output, but the champion was much more accurate. Alvarez landed 43.3% (201 of 464) of the punches he threw, while Berlanga connected on just 119 of 446 (26.7%). Alvarez also landed 49.1% (133 of 271) of his power punches.

Alvarez, a four-division champion, still hasn't ended a fight early since scoring a technical knockout of Caleb Plant nearly three years ago, when he became the undisputed champion.

It appeared that drought might end when a sharp left hook to the chin dropped Berlanga in the third round, and further punishment from Alvarez seemed to be taking a toll. Alvarez

landed a crisp right uppercut in the fifth and a vicious hook in the sixth.

But Berlanga wouldn't go away, as he stood toe-to-toe and matched Alvarez's machismo, refusing to be bullied

## BOXING

by the man he'd call "my idol" after the fight. He also got wild in the seventh, missing a wild overhand right that caused him to fall on the canvas, and was warned for a headbutt to Alvarez's face in the eighth round.

"I got a little angry with his tactics, but I'm Mexican man," Alvarez said. "It means a lot to fight on this day. It's an honor to represent my country on this day."

It marked one of the biggest nights in combat sports on Mexican Inde-

cludes T-Mobile Arena. An exception was made for this night and perhaps there will be more.

T-Mobile had its own tribute to Mexican Independence Day three miles away with Canelo Alvarez winning by unanimous decision as the

pendence Day for Las Vegas, as the UFC made its debut at the Sphere, just three miles down Las Vegas Boulevard, with seven Mexican fighters in the lineup.

Alvarez closed as a -1600 favorite at BetMGM Sportsbook, which means a bettor would have had to wager \$1,600 to win \$100.

The IBF removed Alvarez's title after he chose to fight Berlanga rather than fight its No. 1 challenger, William Scull.

In a very uneventful WBA middleweight championship bout, 41-year-old Erislandy Lara (31-3-3) successfully defended his title against Danny Garcia (37-4-0) with a TKO at three minutes of the ninth round thanks to a straight left jab to the face. Garcia's father and trainer, Angel, requested the stoppage after the round.

headline fighter.

UFC's in-house production team crew worked with Antigravity Academy production led by founder and Academy Award-nominated filmmaker Carlos López Estrada to put together this event.

## AC Milan gets boost with coach's first win ahead of a crucial week



AC Milan's Ruben Loftus-Cheek, center, slides in to challenge Venezia's Hans Nicolussi Caviglia for the ball during a Serie A soccer match between AC Milan and Venezia at the San Siro Stadium in Milan, Italy. (AP)

## Juventus draws at Empoli

MILAN, Sept 15, (AP): New AC Milan coach Paulo Fonseca got his first Serie A win in style. It couldn't have come at a better time for the Rossoneri.

A devastating opening half an hour set Milan on its way to a convincing 4-0 win over promoted Venezia for its first victory of the season after two draws and a loss.

The result and the manner of the victory are a timely confidence boost ahead of a crucial week. Fonseca's team hosts Liverpool in the Champions League on Tuesday followed by a Serie A derby match against defending champion Inter Milan.

Also, Bologna remained winless but came from two goals down to salvage a 2-2 draw against Como.

## SOCCER

Juventus drew at Empoli 0-0.

Rafael Leao and Theo Hernandez were benched for Milan's last match but were back in the starting lineup and the pair combined to score the opener after just 90 seconds.

Hernandez won the ball in midfield and played it to Leao who gave it back to him with a delicious backheeled flick on the half turn. That sent the France international down the left and he squeezed his shot past Jesse Joronen at the near post.

Milan doubled its lead in the 16th minute when Youssouf Fofana headed in a Christian Pulisic corner, and the United States international got on the scoresheet himself in the 25th by converting a penalty after Tammy Abraham was tripped by Joronen.

The Rossoneri were awarded another penalty less than three minutes later after the video assistant referee spotted Venezia defender Joël Schillingien trodding on Leao's foot.

This time Abraham stepped up to net his first goal for Milan since joining from Roma last month.

It was the first time Milan scored

## Japan reaches Pacific Nations Cup final after record victory over Samoa

TOKYO, Sept 15, (AP): Japan beat Samoa by a record 49-27 in an entertaining Pacific Nations Cup semifinal at Prince Chichibu Memorial Stadium on Sunday.

The Japanese will face defending champion Fiji in the final next weekend in Osaka. Japan last won the PNC in 2019.

In an open, fast-paced match, Japan's Seungsin Lee shone in his first start at fullback, scoring a try and assisting in four more. His six goalkicks also extended his perfect record off the tee in the competition to 20 goals from 20 attempts.

Japan's seven tries in total built its highest score against Samoa and biggest margin.

four times in the first half hour of a Serie A match since 1958.

Francesco Zampano thought he pulled one back for Venezia but it was

The hosts were up 14-0 after 10 minutes. Warner Dearn's stolen line-out take led to Lee's grubber kick for center Dylan Riley's opening try.

Lee's visionary pass then set free wing Malo Tuitama, who was stopped in front of the tryline by Samoa debutant Elisapeta Alofipo. But Alofipo then was offside when he knocked down a pass, and conceded a penalty try and was sin-binned.

When 14-man Samoa finally got ball, No. 8 Iakopo Petelo-Mapu made the break that finished with wing Tuna Tuitama's try.

A clever front-of-the-line-out move caught Samoa napping. Hooker Mamoru Harada charged, and Lee's crosskick while being tackled fell to

wing Tomoki Osada to score.

Two Rodney Iona penalties closed the gap to 21-13 and Samoa flanker Izaiaha Moore-Aiono was set to score until Japan's Malo Tuitama tackled

## RUGBY

him on the tryline.

Just before halftime, Japan pummeled Samoa and flyhalf Harumichi Tatakawa's miss-pass put Lee over to lead 28-13. There was no let up in the second half either.

Lee's grubber kick was collected by wing Tomoki Osada and Lee supported for flanker Kanji Shimokawa's try in the 44th minute.

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.

Bologna, which hosts Shakhtar Donetsk on Wednesday, has just three points from its opening four matches. Its only other appearance in Europe's top competition was in 1964 in the preliminary round of the old European Cup.

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 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.

## LA Galaxy roars past LAFC

## Messi returns, scores twice as Inter Miami sinks Union

FORT LAUDERDALE, Sept 15, (AP): Lionel Messi made a successful return after a lengthy absence, scoring two goals and assisting on the third to lead Inter Miami to a 3-1 victory over the Philadelphia Union on Saturday night.

The Argentine star winger and eight-time Ballon d'Or winner had not played with Inter Miami since June 1 because of national team commitments and a right ankle injury sustained in a victory over Colombia in the Copa America final on July 14.

Messi, who resumed practicing three weeks ago, showed no rust or ill-effects from the injury with his multi-goal performance. He scored twice in a four-minute span midway through the first half that negated an early goal by Philadelphia.

Without Messi, Miami went 8-2 and clinched an MLS playoff spot. Miami (19-4-5) also took the lead in the Sup-

## SOCCER

porters Shield table with 62 points.

Luis Suárez had one assist and clinched Miami's win with a strike on Messi's assist during second half stoppage time. It was Suárez's 17th goal of the season.

Messi's first goal in the 26th minute evened it at 1-1. Suárez sent a short pass near the large area, where Messi retrieved it, outmaneuvered Union defender Kai Wagner into the box and converted a shot that landed inside the left post.

Dejan Lovren scored two of the LA Galaxy's four goals in the second half as they rallied from a two-goal halftime deficit for a 4-2 victory over Los Angeles FC in another thrilling edition of the El Tráfico rivalry.

Joveljic put the Galaxy ahead 3-2 in the 67th minute with a backheel goal, completing a flurry of three goals in 14 minutes by the first-place club in this rivalry derby between the top two teams in Major League Soccer's Western Conference.

Riqui Puig added a late goal as the Galaxy snapped their three-game losing streak in El Tráfico while formally clinching a playoff berth and moving seven points ahead of second-place LAFC.

Denis Bouanga scored his 17th goal of the season and set up another in the first half for LAFC, but Joveljic and Edwin Cerrillo scored two minutes apart early in the second half to even it for the Galaxy, with Cerrillo recording his first MLS goal.

Amine Bassi scored in the 27th minute, Griffin Dorsey added a goal in first-half stoppage time and the Houston Dynamo beat Real Salt Lake 4-1.

## 1st Pak woman nominated as international cricket 'umpire'

ISLAMABAD, Sept 15, (AP): Saleema Imtiaz became the first Pakistani woman to be nominated to the ICC international panel of development umpires, the Pakistan Cricket Board said on Sunday.

Imtiaz's nomination on the panel makes her eligible to officiate in women's bilateral international matches and ICC women's events.

"This isn't just a win for me, it's a win for every aspiring female cricketer and umpire in Pakistan," Imtiaz said in a statement. "I hope my success motivates countless women who dream of making their mark in the sport."

"This moment reflects the growing influence of women in cricket and the PCB's commitment to fostering that development."

Imtiaz's daughter, Kainat, played 40 international games for Pakistan - 19 one-day internationals and 21 T20s. Imtiaz said she had always wanted



Philadelphia Union midfielders Jack McGlynn (16) and Leon Flach (31) defend Inter Miami forward Lionel Messi (10) during the first half of an MLS soccer match in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. (AP)

Houston (12-8-8) is unbeaten in three consecutive games and has allowed just one goal over that span.

Real Salt Lake (13-7-8) has lost four of its last six games.

Bassi played a one-touched shot off a failed clearance that ricocheted off the ground and slipped inside the near post to give the Dynamo a 1-0 lead and Dorsey's first-touch finish of a pass from Héctor Herrera made it 2-0 at halftime.

An own goal by Houston's Erik Svitchenko cut Real Salt Lake's deficit to 2-1 in the 49th minute but Sebastian Kowalczyk, near the penalty spot, took a pass from Coco Carrasquilla and bent a right-footer inside the post in the 75th and Ezequiel Ponce scored on the counter-attack to make it 4-1 in the 80th minute.

Rafael Navarro scored a second-half goal, Djordje Mihailovic had two assists and the Colorado Rapids defeated the Portland Timbers 2-1.

Colorado (14-9-5) took a 1-0 lead in the 14th minute on a goal by Jonathan Lewis. Mihailovic notched an assist on Lewis' third netter of the season.

David Ayala used an assist from defender Miguel Araujo off a corner kick to score his first goal this season, pulling Portland (11-10-7) even in the 24th minute. Araujo's helper was the second of his career with both coming this season.

The Rapids regained the lead in the 71st minute when Navarro headed in a cross from Mihailovic off a set piece. It was the 14th goal for Navarro this season and the 12th assist for Mihailovic.

to make her own name in the field of umpiring ever since her daughter made her international debut against South Africa in 2010.

"My own dream was to represent my country at an international level," Imtiaz said. "I've had opportunities with the Asian Cricket Council,

## CRICKET

but officiating at the highest level has always been the ultimate goal."

Imtiaz joined the PCB's women's umpires panel in 2008 and has officiated in a number of Asian Cricket Council tournaments over the last three years.

Imtiaz's first on-field appointment in a bilateral series will see her officiate the three-match T20 series between Pakistan women and South Africa women that begins at Multan from Monday.



Juventus' Andrea Cambiaso, right, jumps past Empoli's Liam Henderson during the Italian Serie A soccer match between Empoli and Juventus at the Carlo Castellani Stadium in Empoli, Italy. (AP)



## Verstappen has a low-key run to fifth

## Piastrri holds off Leclerc for Azerbaijan Grand Prix victory

BEIJING, Sept 15, (Xinhua): McLaren's Oscar Piastrri withstood heavy pressure from Ferrari's Charles Leclerc to take victory in Sunday's Formula 1 Azerbaijan Grand Prix, as the race ended under caution after a penultimate lap tangle between Carlos Sainz and Sergio Perez.

Starting second on the grid, Piastrri remained close to polesitter Leclerc and took the lead at the start of lap 20, diving down the inside of the Monegasque at Turn 1.

From then on, the Australian had Leclerc breathing down his neck for the remainder of the race, and though the Ferrari driver came close to drawing alongside on several occasions, the McLaren always seemed to have just enough to stay ahead, with Piastrri seemingly having better rear traction out of corners.

However, Leclerc's challenge faded with around three laps remaining as he struggled with his tyres, and the Monegasque fell into the clutches of Perez and Sainz, who then collided on lap 50 while battling over third.

But while chaos reigned behind, Piastrri reigned supreme to take his second Grand Prix win of 2024, in what he called the "most stressful afternoon of [his] life" on his slow-down lap.

"After the [pit] stop, it felt like we had a bit of extra grip, and I had to go for it; I knew if I didn't get past [Leclerc] at the start of the stint, I was never going to get past," said Piastrri after the race.

"I went for a pretty big lunge but I managed and then hung on for dear life for the next laps. Once he dropped out of DRS, it was a little bit more relaxing, but there was no relax-

ing lap around here.

"It definitely goes down as one of the better races of my career." Behind Piastrri, Leclerc took second place, with the Monegasque rueing his Ferrari's lack of pace on the Hard compound tyres.

Sainz and Perez's clash promoted

## MOTOR RACING

Mercedes' George Russell into an unexpected third place, with Piastrri's teammate Lando Norris salvaging fourth place after starting only 15th following a disrupted qualifying session.

The Briton also took the bonus point for the fastest lap, taking a total of three points out of championship leader Max Verstappen, who had a low-key run to fifth.

Fernando Alonso took sixth for

Aston Martin, while an excellent afternoon for Williams saw Alex Albon and Franco Colapinto finish seventh and eighth.

Lewis Hamilton salvaged ninth after having started from the pit lane, with Haas stand-in Oliver Bearman taking a point in tenth in only his second Grand Prix.

In the Drivers' Championship, Verstappen still leads on 313 points, with Norris edging ever closer and now sitting on 254 points. Leclerc is third on 235.

In the Constructors' Championship, McLaren have taken the lead from Red Bull and currently have 476 points. Red Bull are second on 456, with Ferrari edging closer on 425.

The 18th round of the 2024 F1 season is next weekend's Singapore Grand Prix.



McLaren driver Oscar Piastrri of Australia in action during a Formula One Grand Prix in Baku, Azerbaijan. (AP)

## Yarmouk appoints Dr. Al-Felakawi as handball director for the season



Dr. Abdulaziz Al-Felakawi with Youssef Al-Felakawi.

## By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 15: The Yarmouk Club administration has appointed Dr. Abdulaziz Al-Felakawi as the Director of the first handball team for the upcoming 2024-2025 season.

Dr. Al-Felakawi brings a solid

## HANDBALL

background in handball, having previously played the sport and, after retirement, coached youth teams.

In response to his appointment, Abdulaziz Al-Felakawi expressed

his deep gratitude to the Board of Directors of Al-Yarmouk Club and the Director of Handball, Youssef Al-Felakawi, for their trust in him to lead the first handball team.

He stated, "The team will work collaboratively, with the technical and administrative staff alongside the players, under the guidance of the club's Board of Directors and the handball department, to rejuvenate the sport and restore Yarmouk Handball to its former prominence in local competitions."

Dr. Al-Felakawi noted that achieving this goal will require consistent effort and dedication from everyone involved, emphasizing that it won't happen overnight but through hard work.

## Al Arabi begins Cup campaign

## By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 15: Al Arabi is set to kick off its campaign in the 2024-2025 AFC Challenge Cup group stage on October 26, facing Abdish Atta of Kyrgyzstan in its opening match of Group Two. The team will then play Maziya Sports from the Maldives on October 29 and wrap up the group stage with a match against Arkadag from Turkmenistan on November 1.

Following a disappointing early exit in the last edition of the AFC Cup, where Al Arabi managed two wins, two draws, and two losses, the team is determined to

## SOCCER

compete strongly for the championship this season.

The group stage will feature a single-round-robin format hosted in a single country. The top team from each of the three groups in the West region will advance to the quarter-finals, along with the best second-place team. Similarly, the top two teams from each group in the East region will also qualify for the quarter-finals.

The quarter-finals are scheduled to be played over two legs from March 5 to 13, 2025, with the semi-finals set for April 9 to 17, 2025. The final will take place on May 10, 2025.

This inaugural edition of the third-tier club competition will see 18 clubs vie for the title, showcasing the talent from various aspiring leagues across the continent.



Al-Arabi player is tackled by an opponent.

## Vinicius, Mbappé strike as Real overcomes Sociedad challenge

## Sevilla earns first win of campaign

BARCELONA, Sept 15, (AP): Kylian Mbappé and Vinicius Júnior converted penalties to help earn Real Madrid a 2-0 win at Real Sociedad after the host was repeatedly denied by the woodwork in La Liga.

Vinicius put the visitors ahead in the 58th minute after an unnecessary handball by former Manchester City player Sergio Gómez gave the Madrid forward the chance to break the deadlock.

Mbappé put the result beyond doubt in the 75th after a video review by the referee determined that Sociedad defender Jon Aramburu stomped on Vinicius' foot in the box.

But before the goals, Madrid had to weather a furious attack by the Basque club that found ways through the defending champion's defense only to be turned back by the goal-frame.

"We probably didn't deserve to win," Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti said. "But we knew how to dig in during the worst moments. I value that sacrifice that is often tough to

see on a team with the talent that this one has."

Ancelotti's side drew its other two outings in the Spanish league. Its first away victory put it one point behind leader Barcelona before it visits Girona on Sunday. Madrid opens its Champions League defense against Stuttgart on Tuesday.

Sociedad matched Madrid's pace and punch in a frenetic first half.

Luka Sucic hit the post twice, including a missile that rattled the crossbar in the 25th, and Sheraldo Becker also sent a ball off the crossbar.

On the other end, Madrid relied on Mbappé to provide its main threat, while Sociedad goalkeeper Alex Remiro did well to turn back an Antonio Rudiger header.

Sucic sent another ball off the post from a pass by Umar Sadiq just seconds after halftime.

"We got lucky with the posts," Madrid goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois said.

But Sociedad was undone when Gómez raised his arm above his head and blocked a shot by Arda Guler, allowing Vinicius to go to

the spot where he fired right past Remiro. Mbappé then beat Remiro when he shot one way as the goalie dove the other.

"We played a great game against the best team in the league and one of the best teams in the Champions League," Sociedad coach Imanol Aguilera said. "We are angry at ourselves because we were better than

## SOCCER

they were today."

Sociedad has lost all three homes games this season.

Madrid forward Brahim Díaz was substituted in the first half with a leg muscle issue.

Jesus Navas rifled in a powerful shot from a tight angle to give Sevilla its first victory of the campaign after edging Getafe 1-0 at home.

The 38-year-old wing back won the European Championship with Spain this summer, adding to his 2010 World Cup. Afterwards, he announced he was retiring from international soccer and he would likewise retire from club competi-

tion at the end of 2024.

His goal in the 23rd minute relieved some pressure on new coach Francisco García Pimentia.

Sevilla defender Marcão was substituted in the first half after taking a hard knock to the head.

Javi Puado scored a hat trick to lead Espanyol to a 3-2 win at home over Alaves and secure a second consecutive win for the Barcelona-based club that spent last season in the second division.

Puado steered in a low cross to open the scoring in the 21st. He struck again with a glancing header to restore the host's lead in the 56th after Tomas Conechny equalized for Alaves.

The Espanyol forward took the winner from the spot after Nahuel Tenaglia pulled it even at 2-2. Puado converted the penalty earned after goalkeeper Antonio Sivera tripped Walid Cheddira in the area.

Also, Ayoze Pérez scored late for Villarreal to win at Mallorca 2-1. That was his third goal in five games since Ayoze joined Villarreal from Real Betis in the summer.



Real Sociedad's Jon Aramburu, left, challenges for the ball with Real Madrid's Kylian Mbappe during a Spanish La Liga soccer match between Real Sociedad and Real Madrid at the Reale Arena in San Sebastian, Spain. (AP)

## No government interference in running of soccer

## England could be barred from UEFA competitions if new regulator's powers are not 'strictly limited'

MANCHESTER, England, Sept 15, (AP): England and English soccer teams could be removed from UEFA competitions if a new regulator is considered to be "Government interference" in the sport.

In a letter sent by UEFA to the U.K.'s new culture secretary, Lisa Nandy, European soccer's governing body raised concerns about a proposed independent football regulator (IFR) in English soccer. The regulatory will ensure the financial sustainability of clubs and stop teams from joining breakaway competitions like the European Super League.

UEFA regulations state there should be no government interference in the running of soccer.

"We have specific rules that guard against this in order to guarantee the

autonomy of sport and fairness of sporting competition; the ultimate sanction for which would be excluding the federation from UEFA and teams from competition," UEFA general secretary Theodore Theodore wrote in his letter, which has been seen by The Associated Press.

England, which has been runner-up in the last two European Championships, is co-hosting the 2028 edition of the tournament.

If UEFA imposed its ultimate sanction of excluding the English

Football Association, the England team would be barred from competing in the Euros. It could also mean Premier League clubs being barred from the Champions League and other competitions.

The U.K. government's Football Governance Bill would give an independent regulator powers to safeguard the future of clubs. It includes strengthened tests over who can run or own clubs.

In its letter, UEFA said "normally football regulation should be managed by the national federation."

It said it was concerned by what it described as "scope creep" by a regulator into areas beyond "the long-term financial sustainability of clubs and heritage assets."

UEFA said if all countries estab-

lished regulators with wide-reaching powers it would hinder its ability to maintain effective governance across Europe. It wants England's regulator to be "strictly limited" to the long-term financial sustainability of clubs

## SOCCER

and heritage assets.

A U.K. government spokesperson said "the Football Governance Bill will establish a new Independent Football Regulator that will put fans back at the heart of the game, and tackle fundamental governance problems to ensure that English football is sustainable for the benefit of the clubs' communities going forward."



Nandy





Al-Mutairi and Bashar with other officials waiting for the arrival of Kuwait junior handball team.

# Sports

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Youth Minister congratulates the Kuwaiti team

## Junior handball team receives warm welcome after Asian Championship bronze

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 15: The national junior handball team received a warm and official welcome at Kuwait International Airport's VIP lounge upon its return from Amman, Jordan, where it secured the bronze medal at the 10th Asian Championship after beating Saudi Arabia 30-26. In the final match, Japan emerged as the champion, defeating South Korea 26-24. The match was officiated by Kuwaiti international referees Dalal Al-Naseem and Maali Al-Enezi.

The delegation, was greeted by the Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi; the Director General of Public Authority for Sports, Bashar Abdullah; and members of the Handball Federation Board of Directors. Al-Mutairi extended his congratulations to Kuwait's youth handball team for securing the bronze medal at the 10th Asian Championship and earning a spot in the 2025 World Handball Championship in Slovenia.

### HANDBALL

In a press statement, Minister Al-Mutairi celebrated the team's achievement as a testament to its exceptional performance throughout the tournament. The Minister praised the Kuwaiti team for its hard work and discipline, which reflect the collaborative spirit and professionalism of Kuwaiti federations and clubs.

Abdullah congratulated the players and expressed his best wishes for their continued success and further achievements.

Assistant Secretary-General of the Handball Federation, Abdullah Al-Dhiyab, dedicated the achievement to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and to the Kuwaiti people and the players' families. He highlighted the team's journey from its successes at the Asian Games in China to its qualification for the 2025 World Cup in Croatia, Norway, and Denmark, and now the World Cup in Egypt.

Kuwait Handball Federation member Talal Zaid Al-Otaibi expressed his gratitude to the players for their performance that led to World Cup qualification. He also thanked the political leadership and government for their support of Kuwaiti sports and handball, including Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, the Director General of Public Authority for Sports, the Board of Directors of the Federation, and everyone who supported the junior team. He affirmed confidence in a bright future for Kuwaiti handball.

Captain Hussein Mandani expressed pride in the team's performance, noting their strong competition and successful qualification for the Junior Handball World Cup set for Slovenia in 2025.

The final standings were as follows: Saudi Arabia in fourth place, Bahrain fifth, Iran sixth, and Jordan seventh. Kuwaiti player Youssef Madouh was named the best player in the match against Saudi Arabia.



A group photo of the Minister of Information and Culture, the Minister of State for Youth Affairs, with the national team players and the administrative and technical staff of the team.

## Arsenal weathers Tottenham storm

Chelsea pips Bournemouth

**LONDON, Sept 15, (AP): Arsenal is leaving archrival Tottenham's stadium with a win for the third season in a row after Gabriel Magalhaes' second-half header settled a feisty and physical north London derby in the Premier League on Sunday.**

Tottenham had Arsenal pegged back for much of the game but couldn't make its chances count as the visitors weathered the pressure before Gabriel secured a 1-0 win by scoring in the 64th minute. The Brazilian center back lost his marker and met a corner from Bukayo Saka with a thumping header from the middle of the box.

The goal came largely against the run of play but secured a vital victory for Arsenal, which is already

two points behind defending champion Manchester City and could ill afford to drop more points ahead of a trip to the Etihad Stadium next weekend.

The visitors were slightly fortunate not to be trailing early, though, as Tottenham took full advantage of Arsenal's weakened midfield to boss proceedings for much of the opening hour.

Without the suspended Declan Rice and the injured Martin Odegaard,

### SOCCER

Arsenal never looked comfortable against Tottenham's press and struggled to establish anything resembling its normal passing game.

But Arsenal goalkeeper David Raya made two good early saves to keep Tottenham at bay, while Spurs striker Dominic Solanke failed to make the most of a couple of decent chances.

It was a very different game com-

## Kuwait's Ali Mulla Yousef claims bronze at Asian Junior Kyokushin Karate Champ'ship



Ali Mulla Yousef displays his bronze medal.

RIYADH, Sept 15: Kuwait's Ali Mulla Yousef earned bronze medal in the 50 kg weight category at the Asian Junior Championship for Under-13s in Kyokushin Karate, held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, with the participation of 15 teams.

Ali Mulla Yousef expressed his joy in winning the Asian bronze medal, proudly raising the Kuwaiti flag in this prestigious continental event. He extended his heartfelt gratitude to everyone who supported and motivated him throughout his journey, especially thanking his coach Abdullah Al-Mutawa and the technical staff.

Mulla Yousef emphasized the importance of competing in a continental championship of this scale, noting how it has boosted his experience and confidence. He looks forward to winning more medals for Kuwait in future competitions.

Chelsea rode its luck before Nkunku's goal in the 86th, as Bournemouth twice hit the woodwork and a first half penalty was saved by Robert Sanchez.

Marcus Tavernier hit the bar in the fourth and Evanilson was denied from the spot in the 38th.

In the second half, Ryan Christie saw another effort hit the post.

Nkunku went on in the 79th and didn't take long to fire the winner, with fellow substitute Jadon Sancho providing the assist.

After three straight defeats to start the league, Everton looked set for its first win when leading Aston Villa

2-0. Goals from Dwight McNeil and Dominic Calvert-Lewin put Sean Dyche's team in control until Ollie Watkins struck twice to even the game.

Jhon Duran completed Villa's comeback and sealed a 3-2 win in the 76th to leave Everton rooted to the bottom of the table and the only top flight team without a point.

Not good enough. That was Arne Slot's verdict after his first defeat as Liverpool manager on Saturday.

A shock 1-0 loss at home to Nottingham Forest in the English Premier League ended Slot's perfect record since succeeding Jurgen Klopp at Anfield at the end of last season.

"We had a lot of ball possession but only managed to create three (or) four quite good chances, so that is by far not enough if you have so much ball possession," said the Dutchman, who suggested his team should not be losing to the likes of Forest.

"If you lose a home game it's always a setback, especially if you face a team ... we never know, maybe they will go all the way to fight for Champions League tickets, but normally this team is not ending up in the top 10, so if you lose a game against them that's a big disappointment."

Slot won his first three games in charge, including a memorable 3-0 victory against Manchester United before the international break.

pared to last year's fixture, when Arsenal went 3-0 up before holding off a late fightback to win 3-2. But it had its usual share of physical tackles and temper flare-ups, with seven bookings handed out in the first half alone.

And Arsenal had to hang on in the final minutes again, although Tottenham's only half chances for an equalizer came when Solanke sent a header straight at Raya in the 88th and Dejan Kulusevski sent his long-range shot over the bar in injury time.

Arsenal only had three senior outfield players available on the bench, including transfer deadline-day signing Raheem Sterling who came on for his Gunners debut in the 80th minute.

Christopher Nkunku scored seven minutes after going on as substitute to seal a 1-0 win for Chelsea at Bournemouth.

ports of the Kuwait Club's board, led by Khaled Al-Ghanem, to ensure smooth tournament preparations. He promised that the championship would be presented at its best, highlighting the strong technical level expected given the history of the competing clubs.



Tottenham's Dominic Solanke, left, is challenged by Arsenal's Gabriel during the English Premier League soccer match between Tottenham Hotspur and Arsenal in London. (AP)

## Kuwait Club welcomes the participating teams

## Arab Handball Clubs Championship kicks off in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 15: The 39th edition of the Arab Handball Clubs Championship for League and Cup Champions will kick off, hosted by Kuwait Club from September 16-26. Ten clubs are set to participate, divided into two groups following the draw. Group One features the title-holder and host Kuwait Club, alongside Al-Ahly of Qatar, Al-Karkh of Iraq, Al-Qoton of Yemen, and Al-Salmiya of Kuwait. Group Two



A file photo of Al-Qadisiya and Kuwait Club players in action.

Olympique El Wadi, as well as Al-Huda of Saudi Arabia and Al-Sha'la of Yemen. Mudhar of Saudi Arabia withdrew after the draw.

Kuwait is the defending champion. Kuwait will be represented for the first time, by three teams, offering a strong opportunity for one or more to reach the final and retain the title that the "Sons of Kaifan" won in the last edition.

Historically, Tunisia's Esperance

leads with seven Arab Championship titles, followed by Egypt's Al-Ahly with five. Tunisia's Etoile and Algeria's Mouloudia have each claimed three titles. Teams such as Al-Ahly, Al-Nour, and Al-Khaleej of Saudi Arabia, as well as Tunisia's African Club and Algeria's Naft Wahran, have won two titles each. The championship has also been won by clubs from the UAE, Algeria, Egypt, Qatar, Bahrain, and Tunisia.

The Whites participate with key professionals including Qatar's Frankis Marzo and Portugal's Angel Hernandez, along with Egyptian Mandouh Hashem and Portugal's Semedo, coached by Haitham Al-Rashidi. The "Yellow" team relies on Montenegro's Vladan, Egypt's Abdullah Farouk, and Bahraini goalkeeper Mohammed Abdulhussain, under the leadership of Croatian coach Slavko Klosa. Meanwhile, the "Sky Blues" are led by Tunisian Mohammed Al-Soussi and German Valentin Spon, alongside tournament professionals including Brazilian Vinicius and Tunisian Anwar bin Abdullah, coached by Yaqoub Al-Moussawi.

Chairman of the Organizing Committee, Sameh Al-Hajri, warmly welcomed the participating Arab teams and acknowledged the ef-