



## Opinion

### Mishal Al-Ahmad rescued Kuwait from chaos of graft

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

THE decisions that His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah took on the evening of May 10 continue to surprise people up to this day.

The changes were evident from the start, such that traffic was regularized and the State's good reputation started to emerge; that is, after things got out of hand.

The widespread contentment that resulted from these actions in Kuwait demonstrated the extent of the public's dissatisfaction over the policies, which had been in place for 50 years and such dissatisfaction exacerbated after the nation was freed from the Iraqi invasion.

As a result, action must be taken so the citizen will immediately feel the effects and be reassured about his future through wise choices that will allow him to let go of the anxiety that has pervaded the nation.

This is the reason why we repeat that Kuwait has witnessed, in the past 50 years, the fragmentation of decisions and lack of decisiveness, because the 'thread and needle' were left to the National Assembly and the deep State to creep into the government's powers. Since then, we have lived the most difficult days, while the successive councils of ministers seemed old.

Just to remind you that at that stage, ministerial decisions were issued by the lawmakers to the ministers, up to the extent that some of them were conveyed through WhatsApp message -- whether regarding concerts or preventing the entry of someone. In 2014, a lawmaker even threatened to prevent the entry of poet Jalal Al-Din Al-Roumi who died in 1273 AD.

This is in addition to the unnatural appointments witnessed by all institutions, up to the extent of appointing those who

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### Mol sheds light on nationality reform

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 28, (KUNA): The Director of the Citizenship Department at the Ministry of Interior, Colonel Abdulrahman Al-Othman, said the decree-into-law amending some provisions of the Amiri Decree (15/1959) regarding the Kuwaiti Nationality came after it was studied from all legal aspects and that it aimed at bolstering the "the citizenship principle in line with the State general order."

Col. Al-Othman, in a statement to KUNA on Friday, said the decree-into-law, approved by the Cabinet on Tuesday, had been drafted due to the keenness on the national identity and preserving it. Accordingly, the first two paragraphs of the provision 7 were substituted.

Articles 8 and 13 of the Amiri Decree (15/1959) state:

The first paragraph of Provision 7 stipulates that the wife of a foreigner who acquires the Kuwaiti citizenship is not recognized as a Kuwaiti citizen. His juvenile children are considered Kuwaitis and enjoy the option to uphold their original nationality in adulthood.

The second paragraph of the same article says that children who maintain the Kuwaiti citizenship are subject to the rules of the previous term.

Provision 8: A foreign woman who marries a Kuwaiti cannot become Kuwaiti.

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KUNA photo Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya.

### FM participates in GCC-China forum

NEW YORK, Sept 28, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya took part in the joint ministerial meeting between GCC foreign ministers and their Chinese counterpart and state advisor Wang Yi.

During the meeting, held on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly's 79th session in New York late Friday, the two sides discussed strategic partnership and cooperation in different fields.

They also discussed regional and international topics of mutual concern and the current developments in the region.

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### Army chief stresses vigilance, combat readiness

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 28, (KUNA): Lieutenant General Bandar Al-Muzain, Chief of Staff of the Kuwaiti Army, conducted an inspection tour of several military camps and sites on Saturday.

In a press statement, he noted that during his visit, he received detailed briefings from the commanders of the crews and guards on their assigned tasks,

duties, and operational readiness.

Lieutenant General Al-Muzain emphasized the importance of maintaining high levels of vigilance and combat readiness, expressing his wishes for their continued success in fulfilling their responsibilities to ensure the security and safety of the homeland.

### KUWAIT URGES CITIZENS TO LEAVE LEBANON IMMEDIATELY

# Hezbollah confirms Nasrallah death following Israeli attack

'Avoid Lebanon airspace until end of Oct'



Flames rise after an Israeli airstrike in the southern suburbs of Beirut, Lebanon, Saturday, Sept. 28, 2024. (AP)

BEIRUT, Lebanon, Sept 28, (Agencies): Lebanon's Hezbollah group confirmed on Saturday that its leader and one of its founders, Hassan Nasrallah, was killed in an Israeli airstrike in Beirut the previous day.

A statement said Nasrallah "has joined his fellow martyrs." Hezbollah vowed to "continue the holy war against the enemy and in support of Palestine."

Nasrallah, who led Hezbollah for more than three decades, is by far the most powerful target to be killed by Israel in weeks of intensified fighting with Hezbollah. The Israeli military said it carried out a precise airstrike on Friday while Hezbollah leadership were meeting at their headquarters in Dahiyeh, south of Beirut.

The Lebanese Health Ministry said six people were killed and 91 injured in the strikes, which leveled six apartment buildings. Ali Karki, the commander of Hezbollah's Southern Front and other commanders were also killed, the Israeli military said.

Lt. Col. Nadav Shoshani, an army spokesperson, said the airstrike was based on years of tracking Nasrallah along with "real time information" that made it viable. He declined to say what munitions were used in the strike or provide an estimate on civilian deaths, only saying that Israel takes measures to avoid civilians whenever possible and clears strikes ahead of time with intelligence and legal experts.

The Palestinian militant group Hamas in a statement issued condolences to its ally, Hezbollah. Nasrallah frequently described launching rockets against northern Israel as a "support front" for Hamas and Palestinians in Gaza.

"History has proven that the resistance ... whenever its leaders die as martyrs, will be succeeded on the same path by a generation of leaders who are more valiant, stronger and more determined to continue the confrontation," the Hamas statement said.

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## NewsWatch

### Kuwait set to emerge as global tourist hub

MADRID, Sept 28, (KUNA): Secretary General of the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Zurab Pololikashvili

hailed Kuwait's tourism initiatives that contribute to peacemaking in the Gulf region, pointing out that Kuwait has a great potential to be a destination for tourists from various corners of the world.

Speaking to KUNA on the sidelines of World Tourism Day (WTD), commemorated each year on September 27, Pololikashvili said Kuwait's initiatives highlight cultural heritage, hospitality and peacemaking in the Gulf region, inviting people of different cultures to learn about Kuwait's history and traditions.

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### PACI slashes 522 more addresses from record

By Mohammad Ghanem Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 28: The Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) has reported the removal of residential addresses for 522 individuals. This action was taken based on either the property owner's declaration or the demolition of the building associated with these addresses.

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### Amir's Rep urges Iraq to address 'Khor Abdullah', pending issues

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 28, (KUNA): Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and his accompanying delegation returned to Kuwait after leading the country's delegation partaking at the 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), held in New York.

The accompanying delegation of His Highness the Amir's Representative comprised Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya, Director General of Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority Sheikh Dr. Meshal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and senior officials of His Highness the Crown Prince's Diwan.

Earlier, Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and his accompanying delegation left on Friday New York, from John F. Kennedy International Airport.

His Highness the Crown Prince chaired the Kuwaiti delegation to the 79th session of the UN General Assembly held in New York.

His Highness the Crown Prince was seen off at the airport by Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya, Assistant Foreign Minister for the Minister's Office Ambassador Bader Al-Tunaib, Kuwait's Ambassador to the United States Sheikhha Al-Zain Sabah Al-Naser Al-Sabah and Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Tareq Al-Bannai.

Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah called on Iraq to take tangible steps to address all pending issues between the two countries.

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### Law and order immaculate: poll

### Kuwait one of safest countries globally

LONDON, Sept 28: A recent Gallup global safety survey has classified Kuwait as the safest country in the world for 2024 regarding individuals walking alone in the streets, with an impressive 99% of respondents reporting they feel safe. Singapore follows in second place with 94%, while Norway and Saudi Arabia both score 92%, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Kuwait also achieved the highest score on the Law and Order Index, receiving an impressive 98 out of 100, maintaining its position as one of the safest countries in the world since 2019.

Additionally, the insurance company Hellosafe has released a "Travel Safety Index," which rates countries on a scale of 0 to 100, where 0 indicates the safest countries and 100 the least safe, according to a report by Le Soir. This index is based on 35 criteria, including the occurrence of natural disasters, societal violence, involvement in armed conflicts (both internal and external), and health infrastructure.

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### Gasoline, diesel rates same until December

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 28: The Subsidies Committee has announced that gasoline and diesel prices will remain fixed from October 1 until the end of December, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The committee stated that the prices for 91-octane (premium) gasoline will stay at 85 fils, 95-octane (special) gasoline at 105 fils, and 98-octane (ultra) gasoline at 205 fils. Diesel and kerosene prices have also been maintained at 115 fils.

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### New rules to prevent building fires mulled: KFF

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 28, (KUNA): Acting Chief of Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) Lieutenant General Khaled Fahad said that there would be new requirements on investment buildings as a step to further prevent fires.

In an interview with KUNA, Lieutenant General Fahad said Saturday that KFF has been working on a project to link commercial buildings with the main KFF operations center, which is expected to be completed by the end of this year.

He explained that these new requirements came after Al-Mangaf fire, and that these include intensifying inspection operations on buildings, especially the doors of the facility's roof, basements and storage areas.

He added that all investment buildings, regardless

of the number of floors, would be required to install a fire sprinkler system, whereas before it was only applied to buildings with more than 10 floors.

In regards to private housing, Lieutenant General Fahad said that the Fire Force Law exempted private housing from the safety requirements of the force, pointing out that KFF advises the owners to have smoke detectors and fire extinguishers.

He added that the simple requirements also include that the elevators used and gas extensions be approved by KFF, pointing out that these procedures don't require licenses.

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Dr. Abdullah Al-Sanad, spokesperson for the Ministry of Health, speaks to a child during the Teddy Bear Hospital Campaign at Avenues Mall, designed to ease children's anxiety about medical visits. - See Page 5





# Municipal Council endorses key 'waste management' initiatives

New services enhance cleanliness, sustainability

By Inaas Awadh  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 28: The Environmental Affairs Committee at the Municipal Council, in a meeting pre-



Al-Seyassah photo

Participants of the workshop conducted by the Ministry of Finance.

## Finance ministry hosts workshop to streamline government purchasing

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 28: In a strategic move towards financial sustainability, the Ministry of Finance, through its Warehousing Affairs and Purchasing Systems Sector, recently conducted a workshop aimed at developing collective purchasing guidelines for government agencies, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This initiative is part of the ministry's broader objective to control and rationalize government spending.

The workshop sought to refine the purchasing guides and address challenges faced by government agencies in their preparation and implementation.

Those who were present during the event were encouraged to share their

insights and suggestions to enhance the effectiveness of the guidelines.

Among the notable participants were Khaled Al-Kandari, the Director of the Purchasing Systems Department, and Mohammed Al-Omar, the Group Purchasing Supervisor, along with various specialists from the ministry.

Representatives from a diverse range of public entities participated in the workshop, including 19 public agencies, 11 agencies with attached budgets, and 12 independent budget agencies. This broad participation highlights the collaborative effort to streamline procurement processes across government sectors.

sided over by Alia Al-Farsi, approved the proposal to provide a service for the removal of large-sized residential waste (bulky waste).

The committee returned to the executive body four out of eight items in its agenda, including the request of Green Wall of Kuwait Association regarding its cooperation with the council and the proposal to allocate specific areas according to an integrated plan for windbreaks in the country.

It also approved the request of the Ministry of Health about health control over landfills, proposal to put garbage containers underground, and the formation of a committee headed by Kuwait Municipality to study the minutes of the first workshop of the Environmental Affairs Committee in the second session held on Sept 21, 2024.

It deferred the response of the executive body to the proposal of council member Sherifa Al-Shalfan to maintain the cleanliness of the marine environment due to her prior approval of it, and the proposal of a female citizen to help citizens reduce their burdens and to focus on recycling.

Meanwhile, the Engineering Professions Committee, in its third meeting for the third round presided over by Farah Al-Roumi on Thursday, approved the proposal of council member Abdullatif Al-Daai to add the register of construction contractors, engineering offices and consultancy firms classified and accredited by the Municipality to the latter's website.

The committee retained in its agenda the executive body's response to the proposal of council member Abdullatif Al-Daai on licensing and classifying subcontractors for construction work in private residential buildings to invite the competent authorities, and the proposal of council member Fahad MUSAED Al-Abdul Jader to conduct a study on classifying engineering offices and consultancy firms until the response from the executive body is received.

On the other hand, the Farwaniya Governorate Committee, in its meeting presided over by Deputy Chairman of the Municipal Council Khaled Al-Mutairi on Thursday, approved the proposal of Al-Mutairi, who also serves as chairman of the committee, to widen the entrance and exit points at Gate Two of Sabah Al-Salem University City; as well as the request of the Ministry of Social Affairs to allocate a site for the establishment of a divaniya for the elderly in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh, Block 26; and the creation of an overpass as an exit for cars from Hamoud Al-Tasha Street in Abdullah Al-Mubarak to Hamoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Road.

The committee referred to the executive body the proposal of council member Nasser Al-Jadaani on the redistribution of signboards along the 6.5 Ring Road; and deferred the proposal to establish entrance and exit points on Street Nine, Block Six in Abdullah Al-Mubarak.

## Automotive partnership with China urged

# Ex-minister calls Kuwait to create giant industrial city

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 28: Economic expert and former Minister of Housing, Yahya Al-Sumait, has emphasized the importance of Kuwait entering the automotive industry through strategic partnerships with China.

In a recent interview with Al-Seyassah daily, Al-Sumait urged the nation to go beyond its current cooperation with Beijing, which has largely focused on housing and infrastructure projects, and instead focus on industrial sectors, particularly car manufacturing.

He praised China's leading role in the global automotive industry and suggested that Kuwait should harness this expertise to create a thriving domestic industry.

Al-Sumait called for the establishment of a giant industrial city in Kuwait, centered on new and innovative ideas. He believes this would be key to revitalizing Kuwait's economy, attracting foreign investment, and removing barriers to development.

The industrial city, he said, should include factories for the production of cars, iron and steel, electrical devices, and building materials like cement.

He hopes Kuwait could establish both large and medium-sized factories, pushing the country toward self-sufficiency in manufacturing.

One area Al-Sumait highlighted was petrochemicals, urging the government to tap into this highly profitable industry. He questioned why Kuwait has not yet ventured into manufacturing and assembling various devices, as many Asian countries have successfully done.

With its strategic location and financial resources, Kuwait has the potential to become a major exporter to Arab, Gulf, and Middle Eastern markets.

Al-Sumait also pointed to the advantages provided by Mina Abdullah, which could play a vital role in increasing Kuwait's export activity.

Expressing dissatisfaction with Kuwait's continued reliance on imported goods, Al-Sumait stressed that the time had come for the nation to become an industrial powerhouse in the region. He stressed the importance of fostering public-private sector partnerships in this new venture, ensuring that industrial lands are not allocated with annual fees, a practice that has led to exploitation.



Al-Seyassah photo

Yahya Al-Sumait, Economic expert and former Minister of Housing.

Al-Sumait criticized the current system, where many individuals who obtained industrial lands at low fees now rent them out at exorbitant prices. He stressed that this new city should operate with transparency and fairness, free from such manipulations.

Al-Sumait also emphasized the urgent need for Kuwait to diversify its sources of income, urging the government to move away from its heavy reliance on oil. He warned that the oil industry is subject to unpredictable global political and financial fluctuations, citing the time when oil prices plummeted to just \$8 per barrel.

With developed nations actively seeking alternatives to oil, Al-Sumait underscored the importance of Kuwait implementing income diversification policies in a concrete, actionable way, rather than leaving them as mere words on paper.

He also suggested that the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training prioritize training students in trades and industries. This would not only support Kuwait's industrial ambitions but also address youth unemployment by providing graduates with skills relevant to the growing industrial and economic sectors.

To further support industrial growth, Al-Sumait called for a reform of Kuwait's outdated commercial and industrial laws, ensuring they align with modern developments, especially the rise of e-commerce.

## CAPT negotiating for lower costs

# Public Works reveals 18 companies bid for road maintenance tenders

By Mohammed Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 28: The results table for the final road maintenance contract tenders issued by the Ministry of Public Works revealed that 18 companies submitted bids, with rates ranging from 21.61 percent for the lowest bid to 26.70 percent for the highest, compared to the estimated prices set by the ministry. The total value of the contracts amounted to KD 383.242 million.

According to the table, the maintenance contract costs were as follows - Salmi Road at KD 22.800 million (14 percent), Sixth Ring Road at KD 18.240 million (14 percent), Subbiya Road at KD 14.570 million (26 percent), King Fahad Road and Fahheel Road at KD 18.147 million (19 percent), Abdali and Jahra Road at KD 27.001 million (14.50 percent), and the First Ring Road along with the intersections of the Third, Fourth, and Fifth ring roads, and King Faisal Road at KD 23.906 million (27.50 percent).

The following are the costs for road maintenance:

- Capital Roads, First Zone at KD 2.364 million (19 percent)
- Capital, Second Zone at KD 20.893 million (7.70 percent)
- Hawally, First Zone at KD 20.438 million (5.90 percent)
- Hawally, Second Zone at KD 21.473 million (9 percent)
- Farwaniya, First Zone at KD 19.639 million (14.61 percent)
- Farwaniya, Second Zone at KD 26.112 million (8.80 percent)
- Jahra, First Zone at KD 19.924 million (12 percent)
- Jahra, Second Zone at KD 20.708 million (7.80 percent)
- Ahmadi, First Zone at KD 34.444 million

## Scheduled maintenance to disrupt power supply

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 28: The Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy has announced that scheduled maintenance work will begin, Saturday, and continue until October 5, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The maintenance will affect several secondary transformer stations across the six governorates, resulting in temporary power outages in certain areas.

The power cuts will take place daily from 4:00 am to 8:00 am during this period. The ministry advises residents to prepare accordingly and apologizes for any inconvenience caused, emphasizing that the maintenance is essential to ensure the reliability of the electrical grid.

(8 percent)

- Ahmadi, Second Zone at KD 26.368 million (21.61 percent)
- Mubarak Al-Kabeer, First Zone at KD 23.421 million (11 percent)
- Mubarak Al-Kabeer, Second Zone at KD 22.788 million (8 percent).

It is worth noting that the bid price percentages from the 18 qualified companies varied between seven percent and 95 percent prior to the negotiation session between the Central Authority for Public Tenders (CAPT) and the companies.

CAPT had conducted a negotiation session with 26 companies qualified to undertake the 18 road maintenance projects offered by the Ministry of Public Works with the aim of reducing prices.

## Solutions must take precedence over delays

# Municipal Council pushes for measures amidst ongoing development confusion

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 28: The Deputy Chairman of the Municipal Council Khaled Mufleh Al-Mutairi says, "The metro project is likely to disrupt and hinder the execution of government development projects, particularly since it is still a fictitious project that is just ink on paper. We still don't know who is responsible for it or its implementation. We hope that the Council of Ministers will clearly identify and announce the entity or agency that the Municipal Council can collaborate with regarding this project", reports Al-Seyassah daily.

He indicated that one of the key responsibilities of the Municipal Council is to support housing file, as it is the most pressing issue in Kuwait, adding, "Based on that, our efforts in the council are focused on finding suitable solutions to resolve this issue which has been stalled".

Al-Mutairi revealed that the Plots Committee has referred a proposal to the executive body to allocate land in southwest of Abdullah Al-Mubarak to the Public Authority for Housing Welfare for establishing a housing project southwest of the Fifth and Sixth ring roads, following coordination with the authority responsible for the metro station.

## 30 percent of retirement applications withdrawn

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 28: After the government denied rumors about canceling or reducing end-of-service bonuses, several educators submitted requests to withdraw their retirement applications that they had submitted in the past two weeks, reports Al-Jarida daily.

According to educational sources, approximately 30 to 40 percent of those who filed retirement requests during that time have now sought to withdraw their resignations. The official denial from multiple government entities played a significant role in encouraging many individuals to reconsider their retirement decisions.

The Public Education Sector has requested to limit both retirement and withdrawal requests to better assess vacancies and begin filling them.

The sources revealed that the rumors had caused huge confusion in the educational field.



# September

## Room Promotion





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# At the New York Film Festival, an art form at play

NEW YORK, Sept 28, (AP) — When you think of blockbusters, the first thing that comes to mind might not be a 215-minute postwar epic screening for the first time at Lincoln Center.

But that was the scene last week when the New York Film Festival hosted a 70mm print of Bradley Corbet's "The Brutalist." The festival hadn't then officially begun - its 62nd edition opened Friday - but the advance press screening drew long lines - as some attendees noted, not unlike those at Ellis Island in the film - and a packed Walter Reade Theatre.

Word had gotten around: "The Brutalist" is something to see. Corbet's epic, starring Adrian Brody as an architect remaking his life in Pennsylvania, is the kind of colossal cinematic construction that doesn't come around every day. Shot in VistaVision and structured like movements in a symphony (with a 15-minute intermission to boot), "The Brutalist" is indeed something to behold. It's arthouse and blockbuster in one, and, maybe, a reminder of the movies' capacity for uncompromising grandeur - and the awe that can inspire.

It's been fashionable in recent years to wonder about the fate of the movies, but it can be hard to placate those concerns at the New York Film Festival. The festival prizes itself on gathering the best cinema from around the world. And this year, the movies are filled with bold forays of form and perspective that you can feel pushing film forward.

This is also the time Oscar campaigns begin lurching into gear, with Q&As and cocktail parties. But, unlike last year when "Oppenheimer" and "Barbie" were entrenched as favorites, the best picture race is said to be wide open. In that vacuum, movies like "The Brutalist" and the NYFF opener, RaMell Ross' "Nickel Boys," not to mention Sean Bak-

er's "Anora" and Jacques Audiard's "Emilia Perez," are poised to test arthouse boundaries. This year, those films might be the blockbusters to beat.

"Nickel Boys," the opening night selection, is Ross' fictional film debut, but it also carries over the exquisite eye he brought to his 2018 Oscar-nominated documentary "Hale County This Morning, This Evening." Ross films the adaptation of Colson Whitehead's novel from the subjective points of view of two boys - Ellwood (Ethan Herisse) and Turner (Brandon Wilson) - who are among the Black students abused at Nickel Academy, a Florida reform school. In a film sprinkled with brutality and tenderness, the first-person approach gives "Nickel Boys" a radical sense of empathy.

## Sections

The festival includes a number of sections and sidebars, but its main slate remains its core. This year, that's 32 films from 24 countries, including "The Seed of the Sacred Fig," by exiled Iranian director Mohammad Rasouli; "Caught by the Tides," by Chinese filmmaker Jia Zhangke; and French director Mati Diop's documentary "Dahomey."

One of the standouts is Georgian director Dea Kulumbegashvili's devastating, despairing sophomore feature "April." Like, "Nickel Boys," it, too, plays with perspective. An obstetrician, Nina (Ia Sukhishvili), is blamed for the death of a newborn, but the subsequent investigation has more to do with the illegal abortions she performs in a small Georgian village beneath the Caucasus Mountains.

Kulumbegashvili's follow-up to her debut, "Beginning," is both

bracingly real - she shot a live birth for the film - and mysteriously surreal. Occasionally we see from Nina's perspective, other times we hover just outside it; sometimes "April" seems to visualize something inside her. The effect is chilling, as if Nina's body is a moving target.

Like Ross, Indian filmmaker Payal Kapadia worked in documentary before turning to fiction with her luminous "All We Imagine as Light." Despite being a prize-winner at Cannes, the film was surprisingly overlooked for India's Oscar submission. But that shouldn't detract from Kapadia's remarkable accomplishment.

In it, three women (Kani Kusruti, Divya Prabha, Chhaya Kadam) juggle dreams and reality in modern Mumbai while working at a hospital. Midway, the film shifts from city to country, allowing them a new outlook on Mumbai and the class structures that govern their private lives. "All We Imagine as Light" begins with the gritty realism of a documentary but melts enchantingly into fable.

Like "All We Imagine as Light," another main slate entry, Carson Lund's "Eephus," reaches its conclusion at sunset with the dying out of light. In Lund's charming, wry hangout movie, a group of small-town middle-aged guys gather for a baseball game on a field that's soon to be turned into something else. With the fewest of fans and the creakiest of knees, they play one last one. There's laughter and storytelling but they're also sliding like they mean it.

There's an existentialist quality to "Eephus" that could make it a good parable for plenty of things, even the movies. But it's a lovely reminder that, whomever is watching, you play for the love of the game.

Film

## Variety



This image released by Sony Pictures shows Nicholas Braun as Andy Kaufman in a scene from 'Saturday Night.' (AP)

## Film

Reitman's film is thinly sketched but satisfying

# 'Saturday Night' a joyful ode to 'SNL'

By Jake Coyle

We are at the apex of "Saturday Night Live" appreciation. Now entering its 50th year, "SNL" has never been more unquestioned as a bedrock American institution. The many years of cowbells, Californians, mom jeans, Totino's, unfrozen cave-man lawyers and vans down by the river have more than established "SNL" as hallowed late-night ground and a comedy citadel.

So it's maybe appropriate that Jason Reitman's big-screen ode, "Saturday Night," should arrive, amid all of the tributes, to remind of the show's original revolutionary force. Reitman's film is set in the 90 minutes leading up to showtime before the first episode aired Oct. 11, 1975.

The atmosphere is hectic. The mood is anxious. And through cigarette smoke and backstage swirl rushes Lorne Michaels (Gabriel LaBelle), who's trying to launch a new kind of show that even he can't quite explain.

"Saturday Night," which opened in theaters Friday and expands in the coming weeks, isn't a realistic tick-tock of how Michaels did it. And, while it boasts a number of fine performances, I wouldn't recommend it for anyone hoping to see an illuminating portrait of the original Not Ready for Prime Time Players.

No, Reitman's movie is striving for a myth of "Saturday Night Live." Michaels' quest in the film - and though he never strays farther than around the corner from 30 Rock, it is a quest - is not just to marshal together a live show on this particular night, it's to overcome a cigar-chomping old guard of network television. (Milton Berle is skulking about, even Johnny Carson phones in.) In their eyes, Michaels is, to paraphrase Ned Beatty in "Network," meddling with the primal forces of nature.

In mythologizing this generational battle, "Saturday Night" is a blistering barn-burner. In most other ways (cue the Debbie Downer trombone), it's less

good. Reitman, who penned the script with Gil Kenan, is too wide-eyed about the glory days of "SNL" to bring much acute insight to what was happening 50 years ago. And his film may be too spread thin by a clown car's worth of big personalities. But in the movie's primary goal, capturing a spirit of revolution that once might have seized barricades but instead flocks to Studio 8H, "Saturday Night" at least deserves a Spartan cheer.

A clock ticking down to showtime runs as ominously as it might in "MacGruber" throughout "Saturday Night." Nothing is close to ready for air. John Belushi (Matt Wood) hasn't signed his contract. Twenty-eight gallons of fake blood are missing. And, most pressing of all, the network is poised to air a Carson rerun if things don't take shape. An executive pleading for a script is told, "It's not that kind of show."

## Uncertain

What kind is it? Michaels, himself, is uncertain. He's gathered together a "circus of rejects," most of them then unknown to the public. There is Gilda Radner (Ella Hunt), Chevy Chase (Cory Michael Smith), Garrett Morris (Lamorne Morris), Jane Curtin (Kim Matula) and Dan Aykroyd (Dylan O'Brien). Also in the mix are Jim Henson (Nicholas Braun), who spends much of the movie complaining about the untoward things the cast has been doing to Big Bird, Andy Kaufman (Braun again), Billy Crystal (Nicholas Podany) and the night's host, George Carlin (Matthew Rhys).

Most of them pass too quickly to make too much of an impression, though a few are good in their moments - notably Smith, playing up Chase's braggadocio, O'Brien and Morris. Garrett Morris, the cast's lone Black member, is in a quandary over his role - because of his race and because he was a playwright before being cast. Though "SNL" was revolutionary, it hardly arrived a finished product. Morris here is a reminder of the show's sometimes - and ongoing - not always easy relationship to diversity, in race and gender.

It also wasn't always such a break from what came before. When Chase faces off with Berle in a contest over Chase's fiancée, Jacqueline Carlin (Kaia Gerber) - one of the movie's few truly charged scenes - they seem more alike than either would like to admit.

It's not a great sign for "Saturday Night" how much better the old guard is than the young cast. Along with Simmons' Berle is Willem Dafoe's NBC executive David Tebet. He provides the movie its most "Network"-flavored drama, seeing "a visionary" in Michaels and, despite wavering skepticism, urging him to be "an unbending force of seismic disturbance." Also in the mix - and a reminder that the suits had newbies, too - is Dick Ebersol (a refreshingly genuine Cooper Hoffman), a believer in Michaels but only up to a point.

Ultimately, this is Michaels' show, and he's played winningly by LaBelle, the "Fabelmans" star, even if the characterization, like much of "Saturday Night," is a little thin. Sometimes by his side, as he races to get the show ready is the writer and Michaels' then-wife, Rosie Shuster (the excellent Rachel Sennott), who you want more of.

It seems to be an unfortunate truth that dramatizations of "Saturday Night Live" inevitably kill it of laughter. That's true here just as it was in Aaron Sorkin's "Studio 60 on the Sunset Strip." The exception to that, of course, is Tina Fey's "30 Rock," which was smart enough to abandon all the "SNL" mythology and focus on what's funny.

This "Saturday Night" may have a legacy of its own; a lot of this cast, I suspect, will be around for a long time. And, ultimately, when the show finally comes together, it's galvanizing. The cleverest thing about Reitman's film is that it ends, rousingly, just where "SNL" starts.

"Saturday Night," a Columbia Pictures release is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for language throughout, sexual references, some drug use and brief graphic nudity. Running time: 108 minutes. Three stars out of four. (AP)

# Features

ARABIC TIMES

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2024

NEW YORK: "Saturday Night Live" is set to set off its 50th season with host Jean Smart and musical guest Jelly Roll.

Smart, the 73-year-old "Hacks" and "Designing Women" star who just won her sixth Emmy, has never hosted the NBC sketch comedy institution before in her more than 40-year career. She said on Instagram that the gig is a "bucket list" achievement for her.

Former cast member Maya Rudolph is reportedly returning to the show this season to play Vice President Kamala Harris, and if recent patterns of opening episodes with politics-of-the-moment are any indication, she could be in the premiere's cold open at the top of the show.

Lorne Michaels is still at the helm, just as he was for the first episode on Oct. 11, 1975, when George Carlin hosted and the nation got its first dose of the Not Ready for Prime Time Players: Chevy Chase, John Belushi, Gilda Radner, Dan Aykroyd, Jane Curtin, Laraine Newman and Garrett Morris.

There were two musical guests - Billy Preston and Janis Ian - playing two songs apiece, the norm in the early days. The country singer and rapper Jelly Roll has the music role to himself Saturday, and like Smart he's a first-timer.

Upcoming episodes will feature host Nate Bargatze with musical guest Coldplay, Ariana Grande with Stevie Nicks, Michael Keaton with Billie Eilish, and John Mulaney with Chappell Roan.

Those shows will lead up to a three-hour primetime special on Feb. 16 that will serve as the official 50th season celebration. It's sure to feature a wide range of the many stars the show has spawned, including Bill Murray, Eddie Murphy, Billy Crystal, Julia Louis-Dreyfus, Robert Downey Jr., Mike Myers, Adam Sandler, Chris Rock, Tina Fey, Amy Poehler and Will Ferrell. (AP)

NEW YORK: Sean "Diddy" Combs was hit with new sexual assault allegations Friday as a woman filed a lawsuit in New York saying she was repeatedly raped and drugged at the music mogul's homes and became pregnant after one of the encounters. It's the latest of several similar lawsuits by women against Combs, who also was arrested last week on a federal sex trafficking

indictment.

The lawsuit was filed against Combs, his companies and several associates and seeks undisclosed damages for physical injuries, severe emotional distress, humiliation, anxiety and other harms. A lawyer for Combs, his company and one of his representatives did not immediately return emails



Smart



Rudolph

seeking comment Friday.

The woman in the latest lawsuit, identified by the pseudonym Jane Doe, accuses Combs of sexually assaulting her while she was unconscious from drugs, and alleges Combs and his acquaintances recorded sexual encounters without her permission. She says that she met Combs overseas in fall 2020

and that the assaults and harassment continued through July this year.

Doe says she often was coerced and harassed into traveling to Combs' homes in New York, Los Angeles and Miami and other cities, including monthly in 2021 and 2022. (AP)

LONDON: With a few daubs of a paintbrush, the Brontë sisters have got their dots back. More than eight decades after it was installed, a memorial to the three 19th-century sibling novelists in London's Westminster Abbey was amended Thursday to restore the diacreses - the two dots over the e in their surname. (AP)









