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Opinion

Dear government, fast track updating of laws

By **Ahmed Al-Jarallah**

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

THE government, which currently holds both legislative and executive functions, must establish a legal workshop to eliminate the repercussions of the recent parliamentary chaos characterized by partisanship, the misuse of power, and the rise of corruption in most of the state institutions. Only through this can the state truly flourish and advance.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad recognized this aspect, and understood that any weakness in any one institution can lead to widespread corruption in others. This is why he has called for decisive and bold measures to prevent any encroachment on the powers of all authorities.

Furthermore, the Constitution requires amendments to reflect the changes that have occurred globally in the past 61 years since its enactment. It has become outdated and is no longer able to effectively support the state's objectives.

The country has been trapped in a vicious cycle for the past 50 years, which has been worsening since the end of the Iraqi invasion. Amending the master laws may be necessary, but updating legislation designed to promote corruption would not be beneficial.

The state's decline must be recognized as the result of a powerful faction that has thrived in these anomalous circumstances, and insisted on disregarding the Constitution. This faction has worked to maintain its dominance over institutions, imposing its will on ministers and even restricting people from enjoying life.

All of this happened after they imposed social norms, political laws, and self-interest on the populace. They monopolized large-scale projects and many smaller ones, depleting society's resources and public funds for centuries.

These agendas can be reversed if the current Council of Ministers is empowered to amend outdated laws, particularly those related to opening the country.

In this context, we commend the First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and the Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef for taking the initiative to improve residency conditions, traffic laws, nationality regulations, and more. While this requires a lot of effort and time, it is better late than never.

The Council of Ministers must work on the mortgage law, which was canceled by the National Assembly members to strengthen the influence of powerful real estate traders over those in need of housing care, particularly individuals who are unable to complete the construction of their homes.

Prior to the cancellation, there was ample potential to improve the relationship between property owners and banks, as well as opportunities to reduce the high costs of real estate and land.

Reform must start with meeting the basic needs to provide people with reassurance and stability. It is imperative to create more opportunities for economic activity, allowing both local and foreign companies to operate with greater independence, as is the case in many countries, including those in the Gulf Cooperation Council.

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Email: ahmed@aljarallah.com

Follow me on:



ahmedaljarallah@gmail.com

Kuwait urges caution amid online fraud schemes spike

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 6: The Ministry of Commerce has issued a stern warning to the public about the increasing number of fraud and scam attempts occurring through WhatsApp, suspicious emails, and unreliable websites, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The Ministry highlighted a recent surge in fraudulent activities, where scammers exploit unregistered numbers, fake companies, and dubious online platforms to deceive consumers.

The Ministry urged citizens and residents to remain cautious and avoid sharing any personal or banking information through text messages or WhatsApp with unverified parties.

They advised against clicking on links from unknown numbers or unfamiliar sources, emphasizing the importance of verifying the legitimacy of companies before engaging with them.

Consumers were reminded to ensure that businesses are registered and approved by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry before proceeding with any transactions.

The Ministry also cautioned against being enticed by overly attractive offers that seem too good to be true, as scammers often use these unrealistic deals to lure in unsuspecting victims.

The Ministry called for increased awareness and vigilance, urging everyone to take precautionary measures to protect themselves from falling victim to these scams.

NewsWatch

Kuwait Airways boosts passenger capacity on Tehran-Kuwait flight

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 6: Kuwait Airways announced on Sunday evening an increase in passenger capacity for its Tehran to Kuwait route, effective Monday, October 7, 2024, on Flight KU516. The airline is offering passengers the option to change their reservations for this flight free of charge.

In a statement posted on its official X (formerly Twitter) account, Kuwait Airways advised passengers wishing to modify their bookings to visit the reception office located in the baggage check-in area. For further inquiries, customers can contact Kuwait Airways at 0096524345555 (extension 171) or via WhatsApp at 0096522200171.

BAGHDAD: Two members of the Iraqi paramilitary Hashd Shaabi forces were killed and a third wounded on Sunday in an attack by Islamic State (IS) militants in Iraq's eastern province of Diyala, according to a police source.

The incident occurred late Saturday night when IS militants targeted a military vehicle carrying Hashd Shaabi members, also known as the Popular Mobilization Forces, near the town of Maqadadiyah, approximately 100 km northeast of Baghdad. (Xinhua)

Amir receives Crown Prince, Prime Minister and 1st Deputy PM



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives First Deputy Prime Minister, Interior Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah accompanied by the newly appointed Director General of the General Department of Investigations, Major General Dr. Faisal Khaled Al-Mukrad.

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 6, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received Sunday His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Amir received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdulah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Furthermore, His Highness the Amir received First Deputy Prime Minister, Interior Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah accompanied by the newly appointed Director General of the General Department of Investigations, Major General Dr. Faisal Khaled Al-Mukrad, where he took the oath before His Highness.

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Amir congratulates Egyptian president

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 6, (Agencies): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations on Sunday to Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, on the occasion of the 51st anniversary of the October 6 War victory.

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Kuwait reaffirms support for Palestinian statehood

Mosque strike kills 19 as Israel bombards Gaza and Beirut

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 6, (Agencies): The State of Kuwait is steadfast on its efforts to support the Palestinian cause through the establishment of an independent state of Palestine with east Jerusalem as capital, said a diplomat on Sunday.

Speaking to KUNA after a symposium on Gaza held at the Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah Kuwaiti Diplomatic Institute, Assistant Foreign Minister for Arab Affairs at the Foreign Ministry Ambassador Ahmad Al-Bakr said that the Palestinian cause was a priority for Kuwait and was a standing issue that would hopefully end with Palestinians gaining full rights and an independent state with eastern Jerusalem as capital.

Kuwait always support the cause in all regional and international participation, he affirmed, adding that the current year-long brutal Israeli occupation campaign against

the Gaza Strip must stop and end in a ceasefire.

He stressed that providing protection to the Palestinian people, freeing their prisoners, and establishing an independent state were all but a few demands that the Palestinians deserved.

He warned that the harrowing situation in the region, due to the Israeli aggressors, might lead to grave consequences.

On his part, Mazen AboulHosn -- IOM Chief of Mission in Kuwait -- told KUNA that recent UN reports revealed that over 1.9 million people were internally displaced in Gaza, adding that the number might be far greater than what was reported.

The IOM official deemed the happenings in Gaza as catastrophic especially with 70 percent of infrastructure in Gaza already collapsed.

With the number of operating hospitals at 16 and casualties' numbers reaching over 41,000 deaths and 96,000 injured, the whole image could only be described as bleak, he said.

Matters, according to what was occurring daily, would

only get worse with no intervention by the UN, the international community, and key parties, AboulHosn said, indicating that abiding by international law was the only way to prevent the situation from worsening.

Also providing similar statements, head of the executive committee of The Kuwait Society for Relief (KSR), Jamal Al-Nouri revealed that the KSR had spent last year and during the Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip around USD 21 million to help in the relief aid efforts, pointing out that over 6,000 tons of material managed to reach Gaza.

He went on to say that the KSR teams managed to enter Gaza on two occasions early this April delivering 10 tons of medical aid and medicine in addition to performing 420 surgeries in Gaza's hospitals.

Meanwhile, the Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council, Jassim Al-Budaiwi, renewed his call on Sunday for the international community to assume its responsibilities and take immediate action to stop the dangerous Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip.

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Tribute to heroism

Kuwait martyrs immortalized in new airport mural at Terminal 1

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 6, (KUNA): Assistant Undersecretary at the Amir Diwan and Director General of the Martyrs and Their Families Honoring Office, Salah Al-Aufan, inaugurated the Kuwait Martyrs Mural at Terminal 1 of Kuwait International Airport on Sunday.

In a press statement, Al-Aufan noted that the mural features images of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, along with the names and pictures of all Kuwaiti martyrs and those from 14 other nationalities who sacrificed their lives for Kuwait.

He emphasized the Martyrs Office's commitment to honoring Kuwaiti martyrs in significant

venues both domestically and internationally, underscoring the importance of martyrdom in fostering national pride within society.

The mural's location at the international airport was chosen as it represents the true face of Kuwait, welcoming visitors from around the globe.

Eng. Duajj Al-Otaibi, Acting Director General of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation, echoed Al-Aufan's sentiments, stating that the mural serves to honor the martyrs who gave their lives for the nation, preserving their memory and heroism. He remarked that without these sacrifices, Kuwait would not have achieved its freedom and independence, praying for the martyrs' eternal rest in paradise.



Symposium on Gaza held at the Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah Kuwaiti Diplomatic Institute.

KUNA photo

Innovation takes center stage at Al-Saad forum

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 6, (KUNA): The Al-Saad Foundation for Knowledge and Scientific Research celebrated its 25th anniversary on Sunday with a forum titled "Education of the Future: Innovation and Technology for Sustainability." The event, held under the patronage of Sheikh Fadia Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah, highlighted the foundation's commitment to fostering science and technology in Kuwait.

In her opening remarks, Sheikh Nabila Al-Sabah, a board member of the foundation, praised the pivotal role of Kuwait's political leadership in supporting advancements in these fields.

She expressed pride in the conducive environment created for innovation, stating that it paves the way for a brighter, more sustainable future. "Our goal has always been to provide a platform for talented female students across the Arab world to showcase their creativity and expand the boundaries of knowledge," she noted.

The foundation has persevered in facing challenges over the past 25 years, driven by a distinguished team and a clear vision. Sheikh Nabila

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Local

'Delay visas for Ethiopian workers ; settle pay issue'
— See Page 2

Business

ABK Capital partners with Blackstone
— See Page 9

Books

Middle-grade magic with McKinnon
— See Page 11

Ministry of Education recovers KD 4.8 million in misused funds

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

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 6: As part of its ongoing efforts to preserve public funds and recover the state's financial dues, the financial sector of the Ministry of Education has successfully recovered KD 4.8 million that was unjustly spent in previous years.

According to educational sources, this amount was disbursed as summer vacation salaries to a group of teachers who were appointed at the end of the school year and, therefore, were not entitled to those salaries.

The sources explained that this recovery is part of a series of reform measures taken by the ministry to control expenditures and reclaim public funds. The financial sector is currently working to recover additional amounts related to the years 2021 and 2022, as part of its commitment to comply with financial regulations and to enhance control and accountability mechanisms.

This success adds to the financial sector's previous achievements, which included recovering other amounts earlier in the year as part of a comprehensive plan aimed at preserving public funds and ensuring transparency in financial transactions.

This reform initiative marks the second such effort to recover unjustly spent public funds. In June, the ministry had reclaimed KD 2.086 million that was paid as salaries to current and former employees without entitlement, following the implementation of a fingerprint system to monitor attendance.

The ministry is committed to implementing the directives of the Ministry of Finance, the Civil Service Commission, and other regulatory bodies to strengthen control and accountability mechanisms, ensuring compliance with approved financial regulations.

The sources commended the efforts of the staff of the financial sector,

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Prayer Timings

Fajr	04:25	Asr	14:58
Sunrise ..	05:43	Maghrib ..	17:28
Zohr	11:36	Isha	18:45

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:
By Day: Hot and relatively humid over coastal areas with light variable wind changing to light to moderate southeasterly wind, with speeds of 08-32 km/h.
By Night: Rather hot to mild and relatively humid over coast-

Weather

al areas with light to moderate southeasterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 08-28 km/h.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	37	23
Kuwait Airport	38	19

Abdaly	38	20
Jahra	39	23
Faiilaka Island	35	19
Salmyiah	35	28
Ahmadi	34	19
Jal Aliyah	37	22
Nuwaisib	36	33
Wafra	38	20

'Delay visas for Ethiopian workers; settle pay issue'

MoU ensures rights, protection of employees

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 6, (Agencies): Head of the Union of Domestic Workers Offices Khaled Al-Dakhnan has appealed to the relevant authorities to postpone the opening of visas for Ethiopian domestic workers until a resolution to the salary issue is reached, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press statement, Al-Dakhnan stressed the need to address the issue of high salaries of Ethiopian domestic workers in Kuwait compared to other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

While he acknowledged that the market needs these workers, he insisted that the salary issue must be reconsidered.

Al-Dakhnan said, "We welcome the opening of recruitment from various countries, but coordination with the relevant authorities that interact directly with citizens and foreign recruitment offices is essential", adding that certain details are necessary for proper organization of the recruit-



Al-Dakhnan

ment process.

He insisted that reviewing the salaries of Ethiopian domestic workers is necessary to protect the interests of Kuwaiti citizens, particularly since salaries in GCC countries are lower than those currently offered in Kuwait. He called for equality in this regard.

On May 27, Kuwait and Ethiopia signed a memorandum of understanding regarding the employment of domestic workers, which included provisions addressing this matter.

The memorandum of understanding between Kuwait and Ethiopia on the recruitment of domestic workers outlines the duties and rights of both parties, and ensures the rights and protection of all Ethiopian domestic workers in Kuwait, reports Al-Rai daily.

This MoU, issued by a decree and published in the official gazette, details areas of cooperation and the responsibilities of each party. Among the Kuwaiti side's responsibilities is the assurance that passports or mobile phones will not be confiscated from domestic workers.

Both parties have agreed to prevent discrimination against domestic workers, guarantee their rights at work, and uphold all rights in accordance with the laws of both countries and their commitments under international law.

The MoU also aims to reduce the costs associated with recruiting domestic workers, and stipulates that recruitment should be conducted through agencies, offices, or companies licensed by both governments.

Following the issuance of decree No. 174/2024

that approves the memorandum of understanding signed between the governments of Kuwait and Ethiopia for the recruitment of domestic workers, a specialist in domestic labor affairs Bassam Al-Shammari says the local recruitment offices are now awaiting the Ministry of Interior's official announcement regarding the opening of visa applications for recruiting these workers from Addis Ababa, reports Al-Jarida daily.

In a press statement, Al-Shammari indicated that once the decree is published in the official gazette, the offices will begin completing the procedures for initial recruitment contracts, known as "job orders", from the Ethiopian side before commencing the actual recruitment process, which is expected to take place shortly.

He said he anticipates significant demand from both Kuwaiti and expatriate families for these services, citing the low cost of recruitment, which is no more than KD 750, as a major factor.

Al-Shammari underscored the limited number of countries exporting domestic workers to Kuwait, explaining that the introduction of Ethiopian domestic workers comes at the right time. Currently, Kuwait relies primarily on just two countries for this workforce, along with a recently lifted ban on experienced Filipino workers, which excludes newcomers and has led to a loss of about 70 percent of the domestic workers who used to arrive in the country. Al-Shammari urged relevant government agencies to address any previous shortcomings in protecting the rights of domestic workers comprehensively and to enforce the law strictly against any violations.



KUNA photo

Minister of Justice and Minister of Endowments and Islamic Affairs, Dr. Muhammad Al-Wasmi headed Kuwait's delegation.

Scientific research, endowments discussed at GCC meet: minister

DOHA, Oct 6, (KUNA): Kuwait's Minister of Justice and Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, Dr. Muhammad Al-Wasmi emphasized the significance of participating in the 10th meeting of GCC ministers responsible for Islamic affairs, held in Qatar.

In a statement to KUNA, Minister Al-Wasmi, who headed Kuwait's delegation, noted that the meeting discussed several key issues, including the exchange of scientific research and experiences in the field of endowments among member states.

This exchange was facilitated through interactive seminars conducted via video conferencing, showcasing the latest developments.

The ministers explored the estab-

lishment of an international day for endowments and the creation of a GCC scientific observatory aimed at promoting the true and tolerant image of Islam.

They also discussed a proposal on the role of and Islamic affairs ministries in supporting persons with disabilities, as well as another paper focusing on the importance of preserving historical mosques, alongside other topics of mutual interest.

Minister Al-Wasmi expressed his gratitude to Qatar for hosting the meeting and praised the GCC's General Secretariat for its dedicated efforts to strengthen joint GCC cooperation and concluded by welcoming the GCC delegations to Kuwait for next year's meeting.



KUNA photo

The Director General of Kuwait Municipality and his accompanying delegation at the Gulf Municipal Work Conference in Riyadh.

Kuwait joins GCC counterparts in sustainable development quest

RIYADH, Oct 6, (KUNA): Kuwait's municipal chief Saud Al-Dabbous joined his counterparts from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) for talks on Sunday aiming to bolster efforts to achieve sustainable development within the six-member bloc.

The "Gulf Municipal Works Conference" in the Saudi capital primarily focuses on existential challenges that could encumber municipal development and progress, state-run Saudi Press Agency cited the kingdom's Minister of Municipalities and Housing Majid Al-Hogail as saying amid the talks.

On these challenges faced by Gulf Arab states, the Saudi minister pinpointed rising demand for "quality" municipal services and efforts to bring common aspirations to fruition as chief among them, which include the "proper and diverse" funding of key de-

velopment projects, he underlined.

The bloc-wide gathering was arranged for the purpose of finding "innovative and definitive" solutions to these challenges, while simultaneously looking into the most cutting-edge methods and technologies in a bid to further develop "municipal work," added the Saudi minister.

The minister expected the talks to yield effective methods that would ensure more success in efforts to usher in "sustainable" development across the wider Gulf Arab region, which mainly entail the improvement of living standards, he said.

The three-day gathering also features a slew of workshops and panel discussions that bring together municipal experts and specialists from across the Gulf Arab region.

KOC makes significant strides in long-term energy goals hunt

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 6: Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) has made significant strides in its journey toward achieving its long-term energy goals, particularly the target of reaching 17 gigawatts of power by 2050, reports Al-Jarida daily.

One of the major initiatives under this vision is enhancing energy efficiency, with KOC completing a comprehensive energy audit and developing a roadmap earlier this year, in February.

This effort is part of the company's broader energy transformation plan, which focuses on sustainable practices and reducing operational costs.

An informed source from KOC revealed that a detailed report, following the audit, outlines the scope of work, key findings, and recommendations for improving energy use.

The report highlights quick and cost-effective solutions aimed at optimizing energy consumption and cutting down on operational expenses.

These efforts are aligned with KOC's goal of adopting a comprehensive approach to improving energy efficiency across its various assets, including energy consumption assessments and data analysis.

As part of the company's energy transformation strategy, KOC has also initiated a technical feasibility study to form

a renewable energy portfolio.

This study, conducted with the help of a technical consultant, aims to evaluate the practicality of integrating renewable energy technologies such as wind and photovoltaic (solar) energy.

The ultimate goal is to generate one gigawatt of clean energy, contributing to KOC's own electricity needs while advancing Kuwait's broader energy diversification agenda.

In addition to energy initiatives, KOC has made notable progress in environmental rehabilitation, particularly in northern Kuwait's Sabriya oil field.

The company has successfully removed nearly 7 million square meters of unexploded ordnance and contaminated soil, remnants of the Gulf War in 1990.

Over the past year, more than one million tons of contaminated soil have been treated and rehabilitated.

This cleanup operation has freed up land for further development and enhanced the quality of the Kuwaiti environment, underscoring KOC's commitment to sustainability and environmental responsibility.

These efforts reflect Kuwait Oil Company's ongoing dedication to both energy transformation and environmental stewardship, as it prepares for a more sustainable and resilient future in line with the nation's long-term goals.

Surge seen in contracts

KOC implements key organization changes

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 6: The executive presidency of the Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) has initiated significant organizational changes within the company.

Mohammad Al-Maraghi has been appointed as the Director of the Business Development Group, and will report to the Deputy CEO for Exploration and Drilling.

Additionally, Bader Yassin Haidar has been named Head of the Commercial Compliance and Systems Team, reporting to the Director of the Business Development Group.

These changes are part of a broader restructuring effort at KOC, which has seen the largest campaign of appointments and promotions this year.

KOC plays a critical role in exploring, developing, and producing oil and gas within Kuwait, managing three types of oil and natural gas. The company also focuses on community development and meeting its commitments to partners in a safe and efficient manner.

Meanwhile, the oil sector has witnessed a surge in contract signings in recent years as Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) signed 71 contracts with local and international companies in August with a total value of KD1.03 billion, reports Al-Anba daily.

This remarkable increase in the number of signed contracts is in line with the Kuwait 2035 vision that includes a strategy to boost oil production and reflects the political leadership's commitment to expedite the completion of projects, implement reforms and enhance the operational efficiency.

These efforts have accelerated the completion of contracts and major development projects; marking a crucial step toward realizing the growth objectives of the oil sector, amid global challenges associated with the transition to renewable energy.

Sources revealed that new drilling rig contracts constituted 72 percent of the total number of agreements signed in August -- 51 out of the 71 contracts are related to this field.

Plan to build, repair roads in East Riqqa gets impetus

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 6: The Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) has approved the request of the Ministry of Public Works (MPW) to endorse the list of companies that met the tender conditions and to schedule a negotiation session on Oct 14 with the prequalified bidders for the construction and maintenance of roads, rainwater drains and other services in East Riqqa. This decision was taken last Wednesday.

According to reliable sources, only five bidders have fulfilled the tender requirements, while four were disqualified for failing to renew their initial insurance and two others for non-compliance with the requirements.

Sources said the tender includes the development of infrastructure in blocks One and Three in East Riqqa with a project area of 35,781 square meters. Sources revealed the project includes the construction of service roads, infrastructure that could accommodate all service ministries, networks for sewage and rainwater drainage, parking lots for mosque and public park visitors, and to address the traffic congestion problem in the surrounding areas.

On the other hand, sources from the ministry confirmed that the Maintenance Engineering Sector continues to clean rainwater collection sites in many areas. Sources disclosed such cleaning work begins in August each year and it continues until the end of the rainy season.

Sources said the most significant issue encountered by the cleaning teams is the presence of all types of waste from restaurants, car wrecks and agricultural debris. Sources added illegal connections to the sewage and rain networks are among the burdens during rainy season.

Sources explained that the sites are first cleaned by hand, then by equipment, and finally they are photographed and documented to be used as reference whenever the need arises.

Sources also stated that the ministry's teams deal with violations, especially the illegal connections to the network, by notifying the Environment Public Authority (EPA) to take the necessary action against violators.

Kuwait, Uzbekistan joint effort eyed

Empowering women tops talks

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 6, (KUNA): Sheikhha Fadia Saad Al-Abdullah, President of the Kuwaiti Federation of Women's Associations, welcomed the Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Kuwait, Dr. Ayubkhan Yunusov, to discuss avenues for collaboration in empowering women and enhancing their roles in society.

The meeting focused on exchanging ideas and strategies to develop women's capabilities in both countries, promoting their contributions to community development.

Sheikhha Fadia emphasized the importance of sharing innovative practices that support women and adopting comprehensive policies to build their skills.

She highlighted the need for international cooperation in fostering women's creative talents across various fields and learning from successful global experiences. A key point of discussion was the exchange of best practices to enhance women's participation in leadership roles across different sectors.

Sheikhha Fadia also stressed the importance of ongoing collaboration between the Kuwaiti Federation of Women's Associations and relevant Uzbek organizations.



KUNA photo

Sheikhha Fadia Saad Al-Abdullah, Uzbek Ambassador to Kuwait Dr. Ayubkhan Yunusov exchange minutes of the discussion.

This partnership aims to provide mutual support in protecting women's rights, in line with the laws of both nations.

She reaffirmed that such cooperation will significantly contribute to empowering women and boosting their leadership capacities in both countries.

Bank funding for financial bodies sees mixed trends in August 2024

By Mahmoud Shinde

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 6: In August 2024, the value of bank financing for financial institutions (excluding banks) increased on a monthly basis, rising by 28.3 million dinars (or 34.3 percent) to reach 110.8 million dinars.

This marks a notable recovery from 82.5 million dinars in July 2024. However, compared to the same month last year, financing decreased significantly by 62.3 million dinars (or 36 percent), down from 173.1 million dinars in July 2023.

Overall, the total financing provided by banks to financial institutions in the first eight months of 2024 amounted to approximately 818.6 million dinars.

A detailed monthly breakdown reveals that financing directed to financial institutions saw various trends throughout the year. It started at 165.6 million dinars in January, slightly decreasing to 165 million dinars in February. March recorded a significant drop to 69.8 million dinars, followed by 58 million dinars in April.

This trend continued until May, which saw 61.5 million dinars, then increased to 105.4 million dinars in June, before reaching the recent figure of 110.8 million dinars in August.

Additionally, the cumulative balance of financing provided to financial institutions by local banks (both residents and non-residents) experienced a 1.4 percent decrease, falling by 35 million dinars from 2.383 billion dinars in July 2024 to 2.348 billion dinars in August.

Despite this monthly decline, there was an annual increase of 19.7 percent, or 387 million dinars, compared to 1.961 billion dinars in August 2023.

Data released by the Central Bank of Kuwait indicates that total loans granted to residents and non-residents during the first eight months of 2024 increased by 1.85 billion dinars, bringing the cumula-

tive balance of credit facilities to 55.4 billion dinars by the end of August.

This reflects a growth rate of 3.5 percent compared to the 53.55 billion dinars recorded at the end of December 2023.

The rise in loan volume this year has coincided with increased lending across various economic sectors. Notably, housing loans, which are long-term personal loans for purchasing, building, or renovating residences, reached 16.29 billion dinars by the end of August.

This represents an increase of 279.9 million dinars (or 1.7 percent) from 16 billion dinars at the end of December 2023.

Consumer facilities granted during the first eight months of 2024 totaled approximately 77.3 million dinars, resulting in a cumulative balance of 2.04 billion dinars. The total balance of personal facilities at the end of August reached 19.08 billion dinars, increasing by 321.8 million dinars (or 1.7 percent) since December 2023.

Loans directed towards purchasing securities also saw growth, recording a total of 3.59 billion dinars by the end of August, up from 3.5 billion dinars at the end of December 2023, reflecting a 2.7 percent increase, or 93 million dinars.

In terms of deposits, the Central Bank's data shows that deposits in Kuwaiti banks, both from residents and non-residents, increased during the first eight months of 2024, reaching 53.3 billion dinars compared to 53 billion dinars at the end of 2023. This represents an increase of 299 million dinars (or 0.6 percent).

The increase in deposits was primarily driven by a rise in private sector deposits in dinars, which reached 37.4 billion dinars, up from 36 billion dinars (a 3.7 percent increase or 1.33 billion dinars).

However, private sector deposits in foreign currencies declined by 1.01 billion dinars, bringing the balance to 3.6 billion dinars by the end of August.

'Building solidarity against the looming threat of war'

"FOLLOWING the initial Iranian airstrike on Israel last April, which was in response to Israel's bombing of the Iranian consulate in Damascus, a notable retired Kuwaiti ambassador entered a bustling Diwaniya while discussions about the attack were ongoing," columnist **Prof. Dr. Abdul Latif Bin Nakhi** wrote for **Al-Rai** daily.

"After being greeted by the host and attendees, I asked for his opinion on the matter. He responded, as he often does, with a measured observation: our approach to such incidents must prioritize national interests, even if our analyses and classifications of the involved parties differ.

"He emphasized that prior to the strike, and even more so afterward, it was evident that Iran has advanced missile technology and capabilities -- concerns that Western nations have frequently raised.

"However, he noted that Israel and its allies maintain a technical and military superiority over Iran and its partners. In the unfortunate event of direct conflict -- God forbid -- he warned that Iran might target military bases in proximity to its borders. Consequently, he stressed the necessity of preparing for this perilous scenario through various means, with national unity being paramount.

"As I have articulated in previous articles, I believe that the discrepancies, contradictions, and extremism in our perceptions of local and regional events stem from media extremism. This phenomenon drives us to uncritically accept everything reported by news channels aligned with a specific media narrative, while simultaneously discrediting and dismissing opposing sources.

"In light of the ambassador's invitation, which resonates with my own conviction about fortifying our national fabric against repeated attempts to undermine it -- especially given the rising tensions in the region -- I encourage both myself and others to reassess the differing viewpoints on past and present regional events, particularly the armed conflict in Syria that erupted in 2011.

"This exercise is not about validation or refutation, but rather about recognizing that our differences arise from the varying media narratives we each trust. Therefore, these differences should not justify tearing apart our national unity.

"I also urge everyone to explore investigative reports and objective journalistic inquiries, whether in whole or in part, wherever they may appear. This is essential to unearth documented facts regarding pressing current events, such as Israel's ongoing military operations. One pertinent report is titled "Has Israel done enough to stop incitement to genocide?" conducted by the BBC and published on its Arabic website on August 27.

"This investigation scrutinizes numerous statements from Israeli officials, politicians, and clerics that advocate for a religious doctrine associated with the "mitzvah" war, which promotes the idea of "not leaving a soul alive. Today a child, tomorrow he will be a boy, a warrior."

"The findings of this investigation, which reflect poorly on Israel, are particularly credible for two reasons: first, the BBC is not known to be hostile towards Israel, and second, the information aligns with the substantial evidence submitted by South Africa to the International Court of Justice.

"This led the court to order Israel last January to take necessary measures against incitement and calls for genocide against the people of Gaza.

"Thus, it is unreasonable for us to remain engaged in inflammatory media disputes regarding the nature and circumstances of the armed conflict in Syria -- debating whether it was a popular revolution or a conspiracy against the resistance axis -- when we should be focusing on a looming, clearly defined threat, such as the genocide currently perpetrated by Israel.

"At the very least, we must transcend our disagreements over past regional events to cultivate targeted national unity in the face of ongoing atrocities and the potential for war between Israel and Iran. May we be guided to recognize the truth and possess the courage to follow it."

Also:

"The paramount concern for Arabs and Muslims today lies in the unwavering belief that the true enemy of both the Arab world and humanity at large is the criminal Zionist occupier, along with those who support its transgressions and injustices," columnist **Dr. Mohammed Hussein Al-Dallal** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"This occupier has spread corruption across the earth, devastating both land and lives. The threat posed by the Zionist project has evolved from a mere security issue into a fundamental matter of identity and existence for Arabs and Muslims.

"The survival of their identities, their homelands, and the safety of their peoples is intricately tied to the fight against the schemes of this adversary, whether in the forms of warfare, normalization, or submission. It is imperative to hold on to the conviction that God's promise will ultimately lead to the downfall of the children of Israel in the sacred land; any foundation built on falsehood is destined to crumble.

"History offers invaluable lessons. The strategies of silence and appeasement toward the Zionist enemy, as well as normalization with it, have contributed to the division among Arabs and Muslims. This fragmentation has not only weakened the Palestinian cause but has also allowed Zionist enemies to realize their nefarious objectives in Palestine and across the Arab world.

"Moreover, the absence of cohesive Arab-Islamic project and the decline in unified strategic actions have historical roots, tracing back to the first Gulf War in the 1980s, which set the stage for Iraq's brutal invasion of Kuwait in 1990.

"The lack of a consolidated stance among Arabs and Muslims created a void that was seized by Iran, which pursued an expansionist agenda in neighboring Arab nations. This vacuum, coupled with fragmented ranks and divergent priorities, has led to the deterioration of conditions in several Arab countries like Iraq, Syria, Yemen, and Lebanon.

"The region has since splintered into factions, undermining our unity and strength. As stated in the Holy Quran, 'And obey God and His Messenger, and do not dispute and [thus] lose courage and your strength departs' (Al-Anfal: 46).

"Recognizing this priority compels Arabs and Muslims to take individual responsibility for preparing themselves and their resources. It is crucial to understand that we are not proponents of war or oppression, yet we must be ready to defend our homelands and protect our peoples.

"As the Quran advises, 'And prepare against them whatever you are able of power and of steeds of war by which you may terrify the enemy of God and your enemy' (Al-Anfal: 60).

"This call to action is more urgent than ever, as we witness the rising drums of war and intensifying regional and international tensions. It is essential that we set aside our differences to fortify our internal unity, safeguard our external security, and refrain from actions that undermine our collective strength.

"As Arabs and Muslims, we must firmly believe that the solutions and power lie within our hands, through the will of our peoples and our diligent planning for the present and future.

"Sole reliance on allies from the West or the East has not delivered the stability or quality of life we seek. In fact, some of these allies are among the fiercest supporters of the Zionist entity, and their backing has often extended beyond mere protection to destabilizing our nations for their self-serving agendas.

"With the conflicts in Palestine and Lebanon now spilling into other Arab territories, the role of Iran -- located in the Arabian Gulf -- has become increasingly significant. The presence of Iran's allies in Iraq and Yemen adds complexity to the ongoing wars, affecting us all. Given Kuwait's geographical position, we stand on the front lines of these conflicts and must be prepared for the potential fallout.

"This leads to crucial questions regarding our readiness for regional warfare. Do the Gulf states share a unified strategic approach to address the ramifications of these conflicts?

"Specifically, does Kuwait possess the necessary defenses against the threats of war? Are there adequate shelters and fortified sites to protect citizens and residents according to international standards?

"Are there government plans in place to shield the populace if Iran's nuclear facilities are compromised? Do we have safeguards against cyber-attacks that could disrupt state functions or services?

"Are contingency plans adequate to ensure the food security of our citizens and residents? Can we effectively respond to any security or military incursions from northern Kuwait or the Arabian Gulf? Is the health care system prepared for the potential risks associated with war?

"These questions -- and many others -- demand urgent and resolute answers. There is a pressing need for the government to establish a dedicated crisis management team, transforming its approach to prepare for any escalation of conflict within Kuwait.

"We reiterate our call for the formation of a specialized and independent agency to address crises and risks, similar to initiatives undertaken by many nations globally. It is imperative for the government to act swiftly to safeguard the homeland, its citizens, and residents. May God protect Kuwait and all Arab, Islamic, and human societies from the ravages of war."

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes

Colonel Wahab represents Kuwait Fire Force at int'l event

KFF joins OCHA meeting on search and rescue in Geneva

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 6: The Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) recently participated in a high-level international meeting hosted by the International

Advisory Group for Search and Rescue, under the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Geneva. The Ku-

wait Fire Force was represented by Colonel Ayman Abdel Wahab, Head of the Search and Rescue Center and Political Liaison Officer.

During the meeting, the group called on all nations to continue advancing their search and rescue systems, emphasizing the importance of saving lives during disasters and earthquakes. It stressed the need for enhanced international cooperation in training and developing human resources to meet the minimum global standards for these critical operations.

The KFF highlighted the significance of prioritizing search and rescue efforts, especially in light of recent natural disasters that have underscored the urgency of coordinated international responses. The meeting concluded with the adoption of several key recommendations aimed at overcoming obstacles and improving the effectiveness of search and rescue teams worldwide. Among these was the establishment of a joint search and rescue coordination cell between participating countries to streamline future efforts.



Colonel Ayman Abdel Wahab in a group photo during the meeting.

KUNA photo

Expat critical after being stabbed during fight in Al-Naeem scrapyard

Domestic worker allegedly pushes 3-year-old from 3rd floor

By Jaber Al-Hamoud, Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 6: The Court of Cassation will soon close the biggest money laundering and real estate fraud case; in which the number of victims is about 360, including some citizens of Qatar, who were swindled by a former member of Parliament, a former president of a bank and a businessman from a Gulf State who owns multiple hotels in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The defendants sold apartments and real estate outside Kuwait to the plaintiffs, defrauding them repeatedly. They took the money and concealed it through the accounts of exchange companies and engineering offices.

The court sentenced the foreign plaintiffs to three up to seven years in prison with hard labor, while exonerating the former member of Parliament of money laundering through the sale of fictitious real estate.

The court decided to postpone its ruling on the case until Oct 20.

The Public Prosecution had earlier charged the defendants with real estate fraud and money laundering estimated at millions through the sale of fictitious real estate.

□ □ □

Case tied to football match: The Criminal Court has decided to refer the case filed against Haif Al-Daihani, Ahmed Aqla, and Salah Al-Qanaei, against the backdrop of the events of the match between the Kuwaiti and Iraqi national teams, to the court head for assignment to a different panel, while the accused remain in detention.

During the trial session involving the President of the Kuwait Football Association, his Deputy, and the Secretary-General in the State Security case, Haif Al-Daihani denied the charge of broadcasting false news and harming Kuwait's reputation. He said, "Bashar Abdullah informed me to allow 200 Iraqi fans to attend the Kuwait-Iraq match."

Both Ahmed Aqla and Salah Al-Qanaei also denied the allegations of poor organization of the match and harming Kuwait's reputation and national interests.

□ □ □

Wanted man detained: A young man, who was wanted by the Drug Control General Department (DCGD), was taken into custody by police officers, who also issued him a traffic ticket.

According to a security source, the officers were patrolling near a mall in Abu Halifa when they stopped a motorist for violating traffic laws and issued him a ticket. Upon checking his information, they discovered that he was wanted by the DCGD, which prompted them to detain him and refer him to the appropriate authorities.

□ □ □

Expat critically injured in fight: An expatriate was admitted to Jahra Hospital after an unidentified person stabbed him in the stomach at Naeem scrapyard, reports Al-Anba daily.

A security source revealed that the Operations Unit at the Ministry of Interior received a report about a bloody fight between two people in Naeem scrapyard, and that one of them was stabbed. Immediately after receiving the report, rescue patrols and an ambulance were dispatched to the scrapyard. Due to the seriousness of the injury, the emergency medical technicians requested the use of an ambulance to administer first aid, while the detectives were instructed to arrest the perpetrator, pending the hospital's report about the victim's condition, the source added.

On the other hand, a citizen filed a report at Sulaibikhat Police Station, stating that a domestic worker pushed his three-year-old niece from the window of his sister's dining area on the third floor of their house in Doha. The complainant also presented a medical report from Sabah Hospital, indicating that the child is in a critical condition. The deputy public prosecutor ordered the registration of a criminal suspicion case.

A security source said the 35-year-old domestic worker was subjected to investigation and is now detained, pending the completion of investigations and the update on the child's condition.

□ □ □

Paramedic in drug pills trading: The Criminal Security Sector at the Interior Ministry succeeded in ending the illegal activity of a paramedic who was caught in the act of selling narcotic pills near Amiri Hospital, reports Al-Anba daily.

Securitymen also discovered 1,500 Lyrica and Tramadol pills in the apartment of the accused in Salmiya

A security source revealed that the Capital Investigations Department received information about a person who trades in narcotic pills and promotes them through social media, and that most of his customers are women.

Accordingly, securitymen arranged an entrapment, through which they asked an undercover woman to buy five narcotic pills from the suspect; who agreed to sell the pills to her and specified the place of delivery -- a cafeteria near Amiri Hospital.

A case was registered and the suspect was referred to the Public Prosecution for trafficking in narcotic substances.

□ □ □

Expat held with narcotics: Mubarak Al-Kabeer security patrols referred an expatriate to the Drug Control General Department (DCGD) at the Interior Ministry after he was arrested in Qurain Markets Area, just a few meters away from the DCGD building, for the possession of narcotics, reports Al-Anba daily.

While patrolling the area, the officers got suspicious of the expatriate, who was walking near a famous restaurant, because he fled upon sensing police presence. The officers chased and searched him, leading to the discovery of a bag containing narcotics.



Fire force personnel sealing one of the shops.

KFF photo

KFF administratively shuts 20 shops

The Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), through its Prevention Sector, carried out an administrative closure campaign on Thursday that resulted in the closure of 20 shops and facilities in many governorates, reports Al-Jarida daily.

According to KFF's Public Relations and Media Department, these

closures were implemented because the owners had not obtained fire licenses and failed to comply with safety and fire prevention requirements. The inspectors had previously warned the closed sites about these violations, but the owners did not heed the warnings.

PAAET and GCC officials collaborate on educational events ahead of Gulf meet

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

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 6: Director General of the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) Dr. Hassan Mohammed Al-Fajjam met with Director General of the Joint Program Production Institution for Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Countries Sheikh Mubarak Fahad Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah at his office in the headquarters of the authority in Shuwaikh.

During the meeting, they discussed a number of proposals and topics on organizing educational and developmental events, in conjunction with the State of

Kuwait hosting the Gulf Summit in December and the 26th Gulf Cup at the end of this year. The two parties also talked about ways to enhance cooperation to achieve common goals that serve Kuwaiti youths.

The visiting delegation then made an inspection tour of the sports facilities at PAAET to look into the possibility of benefiting from them by cooperating with the authority. Al-Fajjam confirmed that the authority's management is fully prepared to cooperate and support everything in the interest of Kuwait and highlight the honorable side that raises its status in all fields.

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KM adds 4 new activities to list of public shops

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 6: Kuwait Municipality Director General Eng. Saud Al-Dubous recently issued a decision to add new activities to the list of public shops, reports Al-Anba daily.

The decision stipulates the following activities, which were approved by the committee tasked to assess additional activities that could disrupt the comfort or pose health risks to the public:

1. International communications service: permitted as a shop in commercial buildings, in accordance with the applicable systems and regulations.
2. Car or motorcycle rental: permitted as

a shop in service, craft and industrial areas; as per the conditions and regulations set by the organizational sector and the structural plan.

3. Aviation service: permitted as an office in commercial buildings, according to the applicable systems and regulations.

4. Light and heavy equipment and machinery rental services: permitted as a shop in service, craft and industrial areas; as per the organizational sector's conditions and the structural plan.

These additions aim to enhance service offerings, while ensuring compliance with regulatory standards.

Parking expansion pending

Capital Committee set for critical municipal meeting

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 6: The Capital Committee will hold a meeting on Monday, October 7, headed by Dr. Hassan Kamal, to review the following:

■ The Ministry of Communications' to transfer the allocation of the Bus Departure Center site in Jiwan to the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation.

■ A proposal submitted by the Municipal Council Chairman Abdullah Al-Mahri to use Al-Tabari Garden in Faiba Block 1 as a public park.

■ A proposal submitted by member Munira Al-Amir for establishing different mechanisms for the Kuwait Municipality to preserve the appearance of Capital as a facade for Kuwait

■ A proposal submitted by Dr. Hassan Kamal for designing longitudinal parking lots for the Dasma Cooperative Branch in Block 5.

■ A proposal submitted by member Abdullah Al-Enezi for constructing a pedestrian bridge linking Sulaibikhat and Nahda.

■ The Ministry of Justice's request to reallocate the sites of the Constitutional Court and the Capital Markets Court in Granada, Block 3.

■ A letter from the mayor of Mansouriya regarding the uprooting of trees and the area's visual degradation.

Meanwhile, in response to the proposal submitted by the Municipal Council member Fahad Al-Abdul Jader for increasing the number of multi-storey parking spaces at Amiri Hospital, the municipality stated, "The requested parking space is located within the boundaries of Amiri Hospital. Therefore, the Ministry of Health must submit the architectural plans for the parking building through an accredited engineering office to initiate the licensing procedures according to the relevant regulations."

The municipality further said the Deputy Director General for the Organization and Structural Planning Sector had addressed the Ministry of Health in October 2023 to inquire about the measures being taken to provide and expand the necessary parking spaces at Amiri Hospital, in light of Al-Abdul Jader's proposal.

In November of the same year, the Ministry of Health reported that the Engineering Affairs Department of the Capital Health Zone had studied the proposal and affirmed the urgent need for a multi-storey parking building at Amiri Hospital, with a capacity of 1,000 car spaces.

In response, the municipality emphasized the necessity for the Ministry of Health to submit architectural plans for the proposed parking building through an accredited engineering office for enabling the site to be licensed in accordance with applicable controls and requirements.



Al-Seyassah photo
Dr. Hassan Kamal

MoE to form committees to oversee smooth distribution of exam papers

Financial rewards offered for members

By Abdulrahman Al-Shammari

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 6: Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education Mansour Al-Daihani has issued a decision to form committees for the transfer of exam papers from each educational zone to the printing presses in preparation for the 2024/2025 academic year. This decision aims to enhance the organization and management of exams.

The directors of the educational zones will oversee the operations at the printing presses, ensuring adherence to the plan and the mechanisms for withdrawing and distributing question papers.

According to the decision, the



Al-Seyassah photo

Mansour Al-Daihani, Acting Undersecretary of the Kuwait Ministry of Education.

work of these committees will continue until the end of the academic year. Financial rewards will be allocated to the committees, and any previous conflicting decisions on

this matter will be annulled.

Meanwhile, Al-Daihani issued a decision to assign members to the confidential printing press in the educational zones, with imple-

mentation starting from the 2024-2025 academic year. Any conflicting previous decisions will be canceled.

In his decision, Al-Daihani specified that the confidential printing press will consist of 15 members selected from the educational and administrative staff. The Director General of the educational zone will oversee the overall work system in the printing press.

The printing press operations will be led by the Director of the Educational Affairs Department in the area, who will monitor the approved work plan and procedures.

Members will be chosen for their distinguished skills and experience in order to ensure that the printing press focuses on setting exams for the intermediate level, adult education, literacy, and the second round, as well as for receiving and delivering question papers for all stages according to the established regulations and guidelines.

90% fiber optic coverage planned over 50 years

RFP issued for Kuwait's telecom overhaul

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 6: The Public-Private Partnership Projects Authority (PPP), in collaboration with the Ministry of Communications, has invited qualified companies and consortiums to submit their requests for proposals (RFP) for the development of Kuwait's fixed telecommunications network, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This project is a major initiative aimed at significantly enhancing the country's telecom infrastructure.

In a statement released to the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), the PPP Authority announced

the names of eligible participants for this project -- Bahrain Telecommunications, E& International Holding Limited, Tamm - S.P.A., and Brookfield Corporation.

Partnership

These companies have been pre-qualified based on their expertise and capabilities to implement such large-scale telecommunications infrastructure projects. The partnership contract will be established between the Ministry of Communications and the project company, in accordance with the provisions of Law 116/2014, which gov-

erns partnerships between the public and private sectors in Kuwait.

The agreement will span a total of 50 years, including both the construction phase and the operational management of the necessary sites for the network's development.

The project's primary goal is to provide a high-speed telecommunications network with an initial capacity of 10 gigabits per second. It also aims to expand the fiber optic network to cover at least 90 percent of homes across Kuwait, ensuring that the country meets modern industry standards and enhances connectivity for its residents.

MPW seeks nod for 18 tenders

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 6: The Ministry of Public Works has requested the approval of the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) regarding its recommendation for the comprehensive maintenance tenders for Kuwait's roads and expressways in order to award the contracts to the winning companies, reports Al-Rai daily.

According to informed sources, the ministry, after obtaining approval from CAPT to settle 18 road maintenance tenders, will seek the approval of the State Audit Bureau (SAB) for the winning companies. It is expected that the prior control department in CAPT will complete its review of these tenders within two weeks.



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Al-Seyassah photo
Participants pose for a group photo during a seminar on Algorithmic Trading.

Hands-on training with EIKON tools

Capital Markets hosts insightful seminar on algorithmic trading

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 6: The Capital Markets Authority, in collaboration with the Union of Investment Companies and SMARTLINE GLOBAL, organized a specialized seminar on Algorithmic Trading, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The event was led by Kyprianos Kyprianou, an expert in technical analysis and trading, who guided participants through the fundamentals and strategies of algorithmic trading.

The seminar focused on introducing participants to key aspects of algorithmic trading, including how algorithms operate, network structures, and the basics of machine learning.

A special emphasis was placed on utilizing input and output skills within networks to construct efficient trading algorithms. Kyprianou also discussed advanced trading methods, such as the Failure Swing method, using the Kplus approach.

Practical demonstrations were conducted, utilizing platforms like EIKON to

analyze various global markets, including the Euro, British Pound, Dow Jones, and Bitcoin. Participants were taught essential concepts such as money management, entry and exit strategies, and the application of automated trading systems.

Abdul Wahab Al-Banna, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Financial Markets Association, highlighted the association's commitment to enhancing the professional level of its members.

He noted that the seminar was part of the association's annual training plan, held in partnership with the Union of Investment Companies to elevate scientific and technical competencies in Kuwait's financial sector.

Fadwa Darwish, Secretary General of the Union of Investment Companies, emphasized the importance of this collaboration, stating that the joint efforts aim to integrate expertise for the benefit of the financial and investment community and to support the broader national economy.

Farwaniya Governor engages with KEPS chair on sustainable projects

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 6: The Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Al-Naser received the Chair of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Environment Protection Society (KEPS), Dr. Wajdan Al-Aqab, in his office at the governorate to discuss frameworks for joint cooperation, reports Al-Jarida daily.

In a press statement issued after the meeting, Dr. Al-Aqab affirmed the governor's commitment to activating many aspects of joint social responsibility.

She said the discussions included supporting the society's request to establish a permanent headquarters to continue its charitable activities, particularly as it celebrates its golden jubilee this year, marking 50 years since its founding in 1974.

Dr. Al-Aqab highlighted during the meeting the society's achievements over the past 50 years at local, regional, and international levels. This included its annual initiative titled "International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the En-



Al-Jarida photo
Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Al-Naser with Dr. Wajdan Al-Aqab, Chair of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Environment Protection Society.

vironment in War and Military Conflict," as well as its educational awareness program titled, "Green Schools" which has been running for 14 years, targeting school and university students, educational bodies, and supervisors.

She also emphasized on the society's series of documentary programs on wildlife in Kuwait.

China maintains lead as region's top trading partner accounting for 16% of overall trade

Arab merchandise exports nosedived by 13.4% to \$1.42 tln in 2023: Dhaman

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 6: The Arab Investment & Export Credit Guarantee Corporation revealed that Arab trade in goods and services plummeted by 3.7% to hit \$3.4 trillion in 2023, due to the drop in exports by 9.2% to \$1.8 trillion and the hike in imports by 3.3% to \$1.6 trillion.

The Corporation explained in a press release on the occasion of issuing its second quarterly bulletin of 2024 that the drop in the value of merchandise trade by 7.2% to \$2.61 trillion was due to the decline in merchandise exports in the region by 13.4% in 2023 to hit \$1.42 trillion, while Arab merchandise imports grew by 1.6% to \$1.2 trillion. The surplus of the merchandise trade balance consequently dropped by 50.8% to hit \$232.1 billion in 2023.

The bulletin's data showed that the share of Arab merchandise trade fell to 5.4% of the global total, and to 12.9% of developing countries' total merchandise trade. In terms of merchandise distribution, raw materials of all kinds continued to make up the largest share of Arab countries' merchandise exports by more than 74%, as fuel exports alone accounted for 58% of the total. Manufactured goods continued to represent the largest share of Arab countries' merchandise imports with a share of more than 63% in 2023.

The Corporation noted that the geographical concentration of Arab merchandise trade continued in 2023, as four Gulf countries, Egypt and Iraq accounted for 78.5% of the total Arab merchandise trade, with the UAE alone having had more than 35% of the total.

As for trade partners, the bulletin's data showed that the region's top 10

exporting countries to the region accounted for about 55% of the total merchandise imports of Arab countries, while its top 10 importing form the region markets accounted for more than 57% of Arab merchandise exports. China maintained its lead as the region's top trading partner accounting for 16% of overall Arab merchandise trade.

The Corporation explained that the value of intra-Arab merchandise trade rose by 4.1% to \$223.2 billion during 2023, making up 8.5% of the total Arab merchandise trade, and being concentrated in four Gulf countries and Egypt with a share of more than 81% of the total.

Regarding the trade performance indicators during 2023, the bulletin indicated a decline in the performance of Arab countries in trade openness, propensity to export, export diversity and terms of trade with growing reliance on imports. But it advanced in the indicators of export concentration, the merchant fleet, and the liner shipping connectivity during the same year.

Given UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) estimates that global trade in goods and services is expected to grow to approximately \$32 trillion in 2024, Arab trade in goods and services is forecast to rise by 2.6% in 2024, based on IMF estimates, buoyed by expectations of a hike in imports by 6.1% and an Arab GDP growth rate by 2.6%. Taken into account the continued concerns about security risks in the Red Sea and the impact of the conflict in Middle East and Europe on the trade volume and global shipping costs.

Amid the escalation of political tensions in 2024 over the situation in Gaza, Lebanon, Yemen and Sudan, together with the continued reflections of the Russian-Ukrainian war, climate change and its effect on productive capacities, the Corporation emphasized that Arab countries' trade benefits are contingent upon available opportunities of intra-Arab trade. They also hinge upon the countries' ability to diversify their exports, cut their sectoral concentration in primary commodities, especially fuel products, curtail their geographical concentration in a limited number of business partners, and seek to open new markets.

In this context, the Corporation whose operations will hit \$32 billion by the end of 2024 underlined that it would pursue its policy of promoting and backing efforts to boost Arab merchandise exports, and strategic and capital goods imports to the region's countries through its various insurance services offered to exporters from the region and financial institutions that fund Arab trade, buoyed by its high credit rating, robust financial position and exceptional financial liquidity.

Based in Kuwait, the Arab Investment & Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (Dhaman) was established in 1974 as a multilateral institution that comprises all Arab countries and four joint Arab financial institutions. It provides specialized insurance services against credit and political risks with a view to facilitating the inflow of foreign direct investments into Arab countries and promoting Arab exports and imports.

\$17.5 tln investment plan outlined

OPEC reaffirms commitment to global growth, energy security

VIENNA, Oct 6, (KUNA): Secretary General of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Haitham Al-Ghais stressed on Saturday that effective leadership in the energy sector requires managing future energy demands, while maintaining energy security, and lowering emissions.



Al-Ghais

In a statement by OPEC, this came about during Al-Ghais's speech in the 20 Country Group Energy Ministerial Meeting held last Friday in Foz do Iguacu, Brazil, representing the organization and its member states.

The Paris climate agreement aims to reduce emissions, rather than discriminate between different energy sources, he noted.

OPEC adopts a comprehensive and equitable approach, adopting all future energy technology that can suit people's and country's needs, recognizing that there is no unified path that suits all countries, taking into account their capabilities and conditions without exception, he pointed out.

Al-Ghais said that energy demands may rise by 24 percent, in the period leading to 2050, due to population and global economy growth, noting that investments required in the oil industry amounts to USD 17.5 trillion until 2050, to ensure sustainability.

He praised Brazil's role as this year's G20 leader, on its comprehensive approach to coordinate global efforts, adding that working together we can achieve Brazil's vision of a just world, and a sustainable planet.

He added, that the success of this meeting and reaching to a consensus between the G20 regarding the final statement is a great achievement, adding to Brazil's diplomatic credit.

MoJ to establish e-platform for real estate rental cases

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 6: Minister of Justice and Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Dr. Mohammed Al-Wasmi announced that the Ministry of Justice is working on establishing an electronic platform for real estate rental cases. This platform will include the storage of contracts, rulings, and executive documents related to these cases, reports Al-Jarida daily.

In an interview, Dr. Al-Wasmi said the recent legislative amendments facilitate the development of this platform with the aim of streamlining dispute resolution and enforcement, which will ultimately enhance commercial practices in this area.

He also confirmed the implementation of a recent legislative amendment to the Criminal Procedures and Trials

Law, which changes the deadline for appealing misdemeanor and felony cases to 30 days, effective immediately. Previously, the deadline for appealing rulings before the Courts of Appeal was set at 20 days.

Dr. Al-Wasmi explained that, after the amendment was published in the official gazette, judicial investigation authorities, including the General Department of Investigations, the Public Prosecution, and criminal courts, can now notify and summon parties in criminal cases electronically. This includes attendance at investigation sessions and court hearings via approved methods outlined in the Law of Litigation and Electronic Announcement, such as the "My Identity" application.

Kuwaiti banks 'strengthen' financial indicators amid robust growth in '24

Total assets surge to KD 88.58 billion

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 6: Recent banking data has highlighted the ongoing strengthening of Kuwait's local banks, reflecting sustained growth across various operational sectors. In the first eight months of 2024, total assets in Kuwaiti banks surged by approximately 4 billion dinars, marking a 4.8 percent increase. This growth brought the



Al-Seyassah photo

Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah with Ahmed Freij and the delegation of the Union of Cooperative Societies during the meeting.

Minister urges union to enhance efforts for shareholder approval

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 6: The Minister of Social Affairs, Family, and Childhood Affairs, Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah, met with Musab Al-Mulla, Chairman of the Union of Consumer Cooperative Societies, along with an accompanying delegation, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The meeting was also attended by Assistant Undersecretary for the Cooperative Sector, Ahmed Freij, and various Ministry employees.

During the discussion, key topics were addressed, including Kuwaitization, pricing strategies, wedding halls, strategic inventory management, and the obstacles hindering cooperative operations.

Minister Al-Huwailah emphasized the importance of improving the aesthetic appearance of cooperative societies and urged the union to intensify its efforts to secure the approval of shareholders.

total assets to KD 88.58 billion, compared to KD 84.55 billion during the same period in 2023, reports Al-Jarida daily.

This impressive expansion of total assets can be attributed to several key factors:

Foreign Assets Growth -- One of the most significant drivers was the rise in foreign assets, which grew by KD 3.01 billion (13.3 percent), reaching a total value of KD 25.61 billion. This indicates that Kuwaiti banks have been strengthening their international presence and investments.

Private Sector Demands -- There was a notable increase in the demands on the private sector, which rose by KD 1.86 billion (4.2 percent), pushing the total to approximately KD 46.53 billion. This shows that local businesses are continuing to expand and rely on bank credit, a crucial indicator of economic vitality.

Growth in Other Assets -- Other assets, too, saw growth, increasing by KD 0.24 billion (8.3 percent) to reach KD 3.11 billion. This category often includes non-traditional investments and diversified holdings, which reflect the banks' risk management strategies.

Private Sector Dominance -- As of the end of August 2024, claims on the private sector comprised about 52.5 percent of total bank assets, underscoring the sector's vital role in the country's financial landscape.

Foreign Assets -- Foreign assets accounted for 28.9 percent of total bank assets by the end of August, up from 26.7 percent in the same period in 2023. This increase signifies the strategic importance Kuwaiti banks place on global investments, as they continue to diversify beyond domestic borders.

In line with this, the growth in foreign assets can be attributed to a 37.8 percent rise in credit facilities granted to non-residents, an 18.1 percent increase in foreign investments, and an 11.1 percent rise in other foreign assets.

However, this growth was somewhat tempered by a 7.5 percent decline in loans to foreign banks and a 2.2 percent decrease in deposits in foreign banks.

These trends illustrate a delicate balance in the financial strategies of Kuwaiti banks. On the one hand, they are increasing international exposure and expanding credit to foreign businesses, a move that can be compared to Kuwaiti companies investing in prime international real estate or stocks.

On the other hand, they are pulling back on less profitable or riskier avenues such as foreign bank loans, signaling a cautious yet calculated approach to overseas growth.

This overall expansion not only strengthens Kuwait's banking sector but also reflects broader economic resilience, as businesses, particularly in the private sector, show continued demand for credit and capital.

The results could be seen as a positive sign for Kuwait's Vision 2035 plan, as a robust banking system is essential for fueling growth in various sectors, including real estate, infrastructure, and small and medium enterprises (SMEs), all of which are key pillars of the national development strategy.

Dear government,

Continued from Page 1

We had previously stated that numerous prominent global companies specialize in services like electricity generation. These companies can provide this service at a lower cost than what public finances currently bear, making them valuable partners in this sector. They are also involved in constructing logistical areas along borders and developing free trade zones.

To achieve this, we must eliminate the constraints of outdated legislation that hold us back. Kuwait has endured enough hardship over the past five decades, and it is time to move forward effectively.

Innovation takes

Continued from Page 1

highlighted the renewal of the partnership between the Al-Saad Foundation and UNESCO until 2029, emphasizing the international recognition of their efforts in education and sustainability.

Dr. Abeer Al-Amiri, the scientific coordinator of the forum, stated that the event aims to deepen understanding of future education, focusing on innovation and sustainability. "We aspire to unite bright minds and pioneering ideas from the Arab region to redefine education and create transformative solutions," she said.

Dr. Al-Amiri also emphasized the Kuwaiti leadership's commitment to enhancing the educational system through strategic developments, including curriculum updates, technological integration, and advanced educational facilities.

The forum will feature dialogue sessions addressing the sustainable digital future, digital transformation standards, data governance, and the skills needed for effective sustainable education. Challenges related to technological investment and sustainable education will also be discussed.

Dr. Salem Al-Malik, President of the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, participated via Zoom, commending Kuwait for its long-standing dedication to future generations. He pointed to the establishment of the Future Generations Fund 50 years ago, underscoring Kuwait's proactive approach to preserving wealth for future youth.

Dr. Al-Malik concluded by reiterating the interconnectedness of education and upbringing, advocating for family involvement in the educational process. He stressed the need to prepare children for a future dominated by artificial intelligence, calling for curricula that align with the evolving labor market.

Ministry of

Continued from Page 1

which have contributed to improving the efficiency of financial spending and accelerating workflow, along with taking necessary measures to recover the ministry's dues.

They said these ongoing efforts have enhanced transparency and integrity in operations, emphasizing that there will be zero tolerance for any financial violations.

In addition, the sources reported that financial controllers praised the ongoing financial reforms, stating that a total of KD 7 million was recovered during the current year alone.

They stressed that efforts are ongoing to reclaim more funds that were unjustly spent, as part of the state's reform initiatives.

Kuwait reaffirms

Continued from Page 1

In a statement, the GCC Chief said that after a full year since the start of the military operations of the Israeli occupation forces in the Gaza Strip, the humanitarian, security and economic situation in the Strip has further deteriorated, which requires the international community to take urgent steps and immediate measures to stop the brutal Israeli crimes against the Palestinian people and end the military escalation.

He also stressed the need to provide protection for civilians, including relief and humanitarian workers who face grave risks while carrying out their humanitarian duties.

Al-Budaiwi expressed the GCC countries' firm and supportive position on the Palestinian cause and support for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state within the borders of June 4, 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with the Arab Peace Initiative and relevant United Nations resolutions.

Elsewhere, an Israeli strike on a mosque in the Gaza Strip early Sunday killed at least 19 people, Palestinian officials said, as Israel intensified its bombardment of northern Gaza and southern Beirut in a widening war with Iran-allied militant groups across the region.

Israel is still battling Hamas a year after the group's Oct. 7 attack on Israel, and has opened a new front in Lebanon against Hezbollah, which has been trading fire with Israel along the border since the war in Gaza began. Israel has vowed to strike Iran itself after Tehran launched a ballistic missile attack on Israel last week.

The widening conflict risks further drawing in the United States, which has provided crucial military and diplomatic support to Israel. Iran-allied

militant groups in Syria, Iraq and Yemen have already joined in with long-distance strikes on Israel.

A stabbing and shooting attack at the central bus station in the southern Israeli city of Beersheba left one person dead and 10 wounded, according to first responders. Police did not identify the assailant but said they were treating it as a terror attack.

The attack came as Israel is on high alert ahead of memorial events marking the Oct. 7 attack, which set in motion a year of violent escalation across the region.

Amir receives

Continued from Page 1

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received on Sunday His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Crown Prince also received First Deputy Prime Minister, Interior Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah.

Amir congratulates

Continued from Page 1

In the cable, His Highness the Amir commended the Egyptian Armed Forces during the battle to liberate the Egyptian territory, remembering that Kuwaitis had stood side by side with Egyptians during this war, which embodied the historical ties between the two countries and peoples.

His Highness the Amir also wished the Egyptian president good health and Egypt further progress and prosperity.

Similarly, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations on Sunday to Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, on the occasion of the 51st anniversary of the October 6 War victory.

In the cable, His Highness the Crown Prince hailed the historical relations between Kuwait and Egypt, wishing President Al-Sisi good health and to Egypt more progress and prosperity.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent a similar cable of congratulations on Sunday to Egyptian President El-Sisi on the 51st anniversary of the October 6 War victory.

First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah extended heartfelt congratulations to Lieutenant General Abdul Majeed Saqr, the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces and Minister of Defense and Military Production of the Arab Republic of Egypt, on the occasion of the 51st anniversary of the October 6 War victories, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

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POWER IS NOTHING WITHOUT CONTROL



Members of 'Colla Joves Xiquets de Valls' form a 'Castell' or human tower, during the 29th Human Tower Competition in Tarragona, Spain on Oct 6. (AP)

'As you can see I am not just MAGA – I am Dark MAGA'

Elon Musk makes first appearance at Trump rally with dire words

WASHINGTON, Oct 6, (AP): Billionaire tech executive Elon Musk cast the upcoming presidential election in dire terms during a Saturday appearance with Donald Trump, calling the Republican presidential nominee the only candidate "to preserve democracy in America."

The CEO of SpaceX and Tesla who also purchased X, Musk joined Trump in Butler, Pennsylvania, where the former president survived an assassination attempt in July. He warned "this will be the last election" if Trump doesn't win and, clad in a black-on-black cap bearing the "Make America Great Again" slogan of Trump's campaign, appeared to acknowledge the foreboding nature of his remarks.

"As you can see I am not just MAGA - I am Dark MAGA," he said.

The appearance marked the first time Musk joined one of Trump's trademark rallies and represented the growing alliance between the two men in the final stretch of a competitive presidential election. Musk created a super PAC supporting the Republican nominee that has been spending heavily on get-out-the-vote efforts in the final months of the campaign. Trump has said he would tap Musk to lead a government efficiency commission if he regains the White House.

Trump joined Musk in August for a

rare public conversation on X, an overwhelmingly friendly chat that spanned more than two hours. In it, the former president largely focused on the July assassination attempt, illegal immigration and his plans to cut government regulations.

Before a massive crowd on Saturday, Musk sought to portray Trump as a champion of free speech, arguing that Democrats want "to take away your freedom of speech, they want to take away your right to bear arms, they want to take away your right to vote, effectively." Musk went on to criticize a California effort to ban voter ID requirements.

Saturday's rally took place at the same property where a gunman's bullets grazed Trump's right ear and killed his supporter, Corey Comperatore. The shooting left multiple others injured.

Several members of Comperatore's family, as well as other attendees and first responders from the July rally, returned to the site on Saturday. Also appearing with the former president were his running mate Republican Ohio Sen. JD Vance, son Eric Trump, daughter-in-law and RNC co-chair Lara Trump, along with Pennsylvania lawmakers and sheriffs.

Trump returned on Saturday to the Pennsylvania fairgrounds where he was nearly assassinated in July, urging

a large crowd to deliver an Election Day victory that he tied to his survival of the shooting.

The former president and Republican nominee picked up where he left off in July when a gunman's bullet struck his ear. He began his speech with, "As I was saying," and gestured toward an immigration chart he was looking at when the gunfire began.

"Twelve weeks ago, we all took a bullet for America," Trump said. "All we are all asking is that everyone goes out and votes. We got to win. We can't let this happen to our country."

The Trump campaign worked to maximize the event's headline-grabbing potential with just 30 days to go and voting already underway in some states in his race against his Democratic opponent, Vice President Kamala Harris. Vance got on stage and reflected on the events that day while severely criticizing Democrats for calling Trump "a threat to democracy," saying that kind of language is "inflammatory."

"You heard the shots. You saw the blood. We all feared the worst. But you knew everything would be OK when President Trump raised his fist high in the air and shouted, 'Fight, fight!'" said Vance, who was chosen as his vice presidential nominee less than two days later.



Republican presidential nominee former US president Donald Trump listens as Elon Musk speaks during a campaign rally at the Butler Farm Show on Oct 5 in Butler, Pa. (AP)



Participants attend a demonstration organised by the Hungarian opposition Tisza Party against public media at the MTVA headquarters in Budapest, Hungary on Oct 5. (AP)

Protest organized by Magyar

Hungarians demand media freedom

BUDAPEST, Hungary, Oct 6, (AP): Thousands of protesters gathered outside the headquarters of Hungary's public media corporation on Saturday to demonstrate against what they say is an entrenched propaganda network operated by the nationalist government at taxpayer expense.

The protest was organized by Hungary's most prominent opposition figure, Péter Magyar, and his upstart TISZA party, which has emerged in recent months as the most serious political challenge for Prime Minister Viktor Orbán since he took power nearly 15 years ago.

Magyar, whose party received nearly 30% of the vote in European Union elections this summer and is polling within a few points of the governing Fidesz party, has been outspoken about what he sees as the damage Orbán's "propaganda factory" has done to Hungary's democracy.

"What is happening here in Hungary in 2024, and calling itself 'public

service' media, is a global scandal," Magyar told the crowd in Budapest on Saturday. "Enough of the nastiness, enough of the lies, enough of the propaganda. Our patience has run out. The time for confrontation has come."

Both Hungarian and international observers have long warned that press freedom in the Central European country was under threat, and that Orbán's party has used media buyouts by government-connected business tycoons to build a pro-government media empire.

Media watchdog Reporters Without Borders estimates that such buyouts have given Orbán's party control of some 80% of Hungary's media market resources. In 2021, the group put Orbán on its list of media "predators," the first EU leader to earn the distinction.

On Saturday, Balázs Tömpe, a protester that traveled several hours to attend the demonstration, called the state media headquarters a "factory of lies."

"The propaganda goes out at such a level and is so unbalanced that it's

blood boiling, and I think we need to raise our voices," he said. "It's nonsense that only government propaganda comes out in the media that is financed by the taxpayers."

A retired teacher from southern Hungary, Agnes Gera, said dissenting voices were censored from the public media, limiting Hungarians' access to information about political alternatives. "It's very burdensome and unfortunate that the system works this way where the public only hears from one side and don't even know about the other side," she said.

Magyar demanded the resignation of the public media director, and echoed complaints from many opposition politicians that they are not provided the opportunity to appear on public television to communicate with voters.

He called his supporters to another demonstration on Oct 23, a national holiday commemorating Hungary's failed revolution against Soviet domination in 1956.

Russia unleashes deadly drone wave on Ukraine

KYIV, Ukraine, Oct 6, (AP): One person has died after Russian forces attacked Ukraine overnight with 87 Shahed drones and four different types of missiles, officials said Sunday.

A 49-year-old man was killed in the

Kharkiv region after his car was hit by a drone, said regional Gov. Oleh Syniehubov. A gas pipeline was also damaged and a warehouse set alight in the city of Odesa, Ukrainian officials reported.

Ukraine's air force said in a statement that air defenses had destroyed 56 of the 87 drones and two missiles over 14 Ukrainian regions, including the capital, Kyiv. Another 25 drones disappeared from radar "presumably as a result of anti-aircraft missile defense," it said.

The barrage comes a day after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Saturday that he will present his "victory plan" at the Oct 12 meeting of the Ramstein group of nations that supplies arms to Ukraine. Zelenskyy presented his plan to US President Joe Biden in Washington last week. Its contents have not been made public but it is known that the plan includes Ukrainian membership in NATO and the provision of long-range missiles to strike inside Russia.

In a statement Sunday, the Ukrainian leader paid tribute to the country's troops, which he also described as "preparing (for) the next Ramstein."

"They demonstrate what Ukrainians are capable of when they have enough weapons and sufficient range," he said in a statement on social media. "We will keep convincing our partners that our drones alone are not enough. More decisive steps are needed - and the end of this war will be closer."



US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, left, listens to Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy during a meeting at Ramstein Air Base in Ramstein-Miesenbach, Germany on Sept 6. (AP)

America

Harris pledges fed support: Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris pledged ongoing federal support and praised the "heroes among us" as she visited North Carolina on Saturday in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene, her second trip in four days to the disaster zone.

The vice president was in Charlotte one day after a visit to the state by Republican Donald Trump, who is spreading false claims about the federal response to the disaster.

Harris opened her visit by attending a briefing with state and local officials, where she thanked "those who are in the room and those who are out there right now working around the clock."

She promised federal assistance would continue to flow and added praise for the "strangers who are helping each other out, giving people shelter and food and friendship and fellowship."

Despite Trump's claims that the federal response in the state has been "lousy," Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper said the state was "deeply grateful for the federal resources that we have. FEMA has been on the ground with us since the very beginning," he said, referring to the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

After her briefing, Harris helped pack

toiletries into aid kits at a distribution center, where she met Angelica Wind from hard-hit Asheville, who was there to volunteer with her daughter and a friend even though Wind said her own family was still without power and people were "just surviving." (AP)

Ex-NY governor assaulted: Former New York gov David Paterson and his stepson sustained minor injuries when they were assaulted on a Manhattan street by four men and a woman as they went for an evening walk, police said Saturday.

The 70-year-old former governor, a Democrat, and his 20-year-old stepson, Anthony

Sliva, were walking on an Upper East Side street about 8:30 p.m. Friday when they were attacked, the New York Police Department and a spokesperson for Paterson said.

Both were treated at a nearby hos-

pital for minor injuries to the face and were released early Saturday, authorities said.

Paterson, who is legally blind, also sustained minor injuries to his body.

In a statement, police labeled the attack a "gang assault" and sought help from the public to learn more about the assault. Paterson served as governor from 2008 to 2010, assuming the post after Gov. Eliot Spitzer resigned in a prostitution scandal. He was the state's first Black governor. (AP)

Officer fatally shoots man: A California officer fatally shot a man who wounded him with a knife outside a city police headquarters in what authorities called "an unprovoked attack."

A man in his 30s approached the male officer outside the front doors of the Santa Monica Police Department around 5:20 p.m. Saturday. The man was told he would need to wait while the officer finished speaking to a resident, the department said. "Without warning, the individual attacked the officer while pulling a knife from his clothing. The suspect slashed and stabbed the officer," the department said in a statement posted on social media. (AP)



Paterson

Outsiders question their relationship

China and North Korea mark 75th anniversary of diplomatic ties

SEOUL, South Korea, Oct 6, (AP): The leaders of North Korea and China marked the 75th anniversary of their diplomatic relations on Sunday by exchanging messages that expressed hopes for stronger ties, as outsiders raised questions about their relationship.

The message exchange came as North Korea and Russia have been sharply expanding their cooperation while China apparently keeps its distance. Experts say that the level of exchanges and commemorative programs between North Korea and China in the coming months will provide a clue to the exact status of their ties.

In a message sent to Chinese President Xi Jinping, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said his government will "steadily strive to consolidate and develop the friendly and cooperative relations" between the two countries, according to North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency.

Xi, in his message to Kim, said that China is ready to jointly pro-

vide "the stable and further advance of the socialist cause in the two countries," KCNA said.

Since North Korea and China established diplomatic ties on Oct. 6, 1949, their relationship has often been described as being "as close as lips and teeth." China, North Korea's biggest trading partner and main aid provider, has been suspected of avoiding fully implementing U.N. sanctions on North Korea and sending clandestine aid shipments to help its impoverished neighbor stay afloat and continue to serve as a bulwark against U.S. influence on the Korean Peninsula.

But many observers say China is reluctant to form a three-way, anti-West alliance with North Korea and Russia as it prefers a stable regional security environment to tackle numerous economic challenges and maintain relationships with Europe and its Asian neighbors.

North Korea and Russia have moved significantly closer to each other amid widespread outside suspicions that North Korea has sup-

plied conventional weapons to Russia for its war in Ukraine in return for military and economic assistance. During a meeting in Pyongyang in June, Kim and Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a pact stipulating mutual military assistance if either country is attacked, in what was considered the two countries' biggest defense deal since the end of the Cold War.

North Korea is locked in confrontations with the U.S., South Korea and their partners over its advancing nuclear program. Kim has said he was forced to expand both nuclear and conventional capabilities to cope with U.S.-led security threats.

On Sunday, KCNA reported that Kim oversaw a live artillery firing drill by cadets of a military academy. After watching the drill, Kim said training programs at the military academy must focus on "the guerrilla war tactics to wipe out the enemies through rapid mobile and surprise operations," according to KCNA.



In this photo released by China's Xinhua News Agency, visiting Chinese President Xi Jinping, (left), and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un wave from an open top limousine as they travel along a street in Pyongyang, North Korea, on June 20, 2019. (AP)



South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol, (center), boards the USS Theodore Roosevelt aircraft carrier at the South Korean naval base in Busan, South Korea on June 25. (AP)

North Korea wants US attention by showing off nuke might, says Yoon

SEOUL, South Korea, Oct 6, (AP): North Korea's recent disclosure of a nuclear facility was likely an attempt to grab U.S. attention ahead of next month's presidential election, and the North will likely stage major provocations like a nuclear test explosion and a long-range missile test, South Korea's president says.

President Yoon Suk Yeol shared his government's assessment on the recent moves by North Korea with The Associated Press, before he leaves Sunday for a three-nation trip that includes a stop in Laos for summits with Southeast Asian and other world leaders. At Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)-related meetings, Yoon says he'll emphasize that North Korea's nuclear disarmament is essential to regional peace.

"At the upcoming ASEAN-related summits, I will stress the importance of denuclearization of North Korea,

which is a prerequisite for realizing a free, peaceful and prosperous Indo-Pacific region," Yoon said in written responses to questions from the AP.

"This will serve to send a clear message that the international community will never condone North Korea's reckless actions," he said.

Concerns about North Korea have grown in recent weeks, with the country unveiling a secretive uranium-enrichment facility, vowing to build more nuclear weapons and continuing its provocative missile tests. Last week, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un threatened to destroy South Korea with his nuclear weapons, if provoked.

Many foreign experts say North Korea eventually hopes to use an expanded nuclear arsenal as leverage to win outside concessions like sanctions relief, after a new U.S. president is elected. They say Kim likely thinks a win by Republican candidate Donald

Trump, whom he engaged in high-stakes nuclear diplomacy in 2018-19, would increase his chances to get what he wants than Democratic candidate Kamala Harris. During campaigns, Trump boasted about his personal ties with Kim, while Harris said she won't "cozy up to tyrants and dictators like Kim Jong Un who are rooting for Trump."

The Sept. 13 disclosure of the nuclear site showed Kim's defiance of U.S.-led efforts to eliminate his advancing nuclear program. It was North Korea's first unveiling of a facility to produce weapons-grade uranium since the country showed one at its main Yongbyon nuclear complex to visiting American scholars led by nuclear physicist Siegfried Hecker in 2010. Hecker said the centrifuge hall shown in the recent North Korean photos was not the same one that he saw in 2010.

Survivors grapple with aid cuts a year after massive Afghan quake

KABUL, Afghanistan, Oct 6, (AP): People had just seconds to flee their homes when the terrifying sound of earth cracking open reverberated across western Afghanistan's Herat province.

Nobody knows for sure how many people died in a 6.3 magnitude earthquake on Oct. 7, 2023, or in the strong aftershocks that followed. The Taliban government estimated that at least 4,000 perished. The UN gave a far lower figure of about 1,500. Survivors stopped counting, exhausted after digging through dirt to save their loved ones or bury them.

It was the deadliest natural disaster to strike Afghanistan in recent memory. It was also another major challenge for the Taliban since they seized power in 2021, a test of their readiness to lead a country beset by economic hardship, isolation, devastation from decades of war, and vulnerability to shocks like earthquakes and climate change.

"At that time, the government really cooperated in transporting patients and the dead," said Ismatullah Rahmani, from the quake's epicenter in Zinda Jan district, where every home, usually built of mud and timber, was levelled. His brother and nephew were killed,

and he spent hours trying to free his wife from under 1 1/2-meter (60 inches) of soil. She survived.

"They opened hospitals and provided water and food to people for free," he told The Associated Press from his new home in Zinda Jan. He said the Taliban went to camps and helped survivors over several months, a blessing ahead of the harsh Herat winter.

"After that, our aid stopped," said Rahmani.

Charities had stepped in to build housing for survivors. But the accommodation they built lacks walls so there is no privacy, while the poor design leaves them vulnerable to storms or heavy rainfall. Houses either have no bathrooms or the bathrooms don't have a roof.

Rahmani's village, Naib Rafi, still doesn't have a health clinic or a school. Instead, children are learning in tents. The government didn't provide financial assistance, he said. Senior officials and Islamic scholars visited communities a few times, listened to people's problems and left.

Ahmadullah Muttaqi, spokesman and member of the Herat Earthquake Commission, said authorities worked with charities and nongovernmental

groups to provide shelter and medical assistance.

"People's problems haven't been solved, of course, but the first necessity is building houses until they stand on their own feet. They have been given food and hospitals are still working," he told AP. He said they were still working to rebuild mosques, schools, madrassas and parks.

He did not answer questions about authorities' preparedness for future disasters.

Afghans were already struggling with displacement, food insecurity and poverty before the quake struck, and the tragedy put further pressure on public services. Aid agencies, which have been propping up Afghan health care and education for the past three years under the Taliban, became even more thinly stretched.

The International Rescue Committee set up feeding corners after the earthquake so mothers could safely breast-feed children and get nutrition counseling. The relief agency said it also fixed water systems, provided emergency cash, hygiene kits, medical and mental health support to tens of thousands of people.



Survivors gather around a water tanker to get potable water in Zinda Jan district, of Herat province, in western Afghanistan on Sept. 28, 2024 following a 6.3 magnitude earthquake on Oct 7, 2023. (AP)



A part of the Negro River is dried up at the port in Manaus, Amazonas state, Brazil on Oct 4 amid severe drought. (AP)

Severe drought hits Amazon's Negro River

One of the Amazon River's main tributaries has dropped to its lowest level ever recorded, Brazil's geological service said Friday, reflecting a severe drought that has devastated the Amazon rainforest and other parts of the country.

The level of the Negro River at the port of Manaus was at 12.66 meters on Friday, as compared with a normal level of about 21 meters. It is the lowest since measurements started 122 years ago. The previous record

low level was recorded last year, but toward the end of October.

The Negro River's water level might drop even more in coming weeks based on forecasts for low rainfall in upstream regions, according to the geological service's predictions. Andre Martinelli, the agency's hydrology manager in Manaus, was quoted as saying the river was expected to continue receding until the end of the month.

Water levels in Brazil's Amazon

always rise and fall with its rainy and dry seasons, but the dry portion of this year has been much worse than usual. All of the major rivers in the Amazon basin are at critical levels, including the Madeira River, the Amazon River's longest tributary.

The Negro River drains about 10% of the Amazon basin and is the world's sixth-largest by water volume. Manaus, the biggest city in the rainforest, is where the Negro joins the Amazon River. (AP)

Africa

Tunisians vote: Polling stations in Tunisia opened their doors, Sunday, for voters in the presidential elections, Independent High Authority for Elections of Tunisia (ISIE) said.

The number of registered voters is estimated at more than 9,753,000 who will vote in 9,669 polling stations across the country, ISIE added.

The elections are being contested by the outgoing president Kais Saied, who is seeking a second term, head of "People's Movement" Zuhair Al-Maghazi, and head of "Azmour Movement" Ayachi Zemel, who has been in prison for more than a month and sentenced to prison for electoral cases.

These elections come amid an economic crisis that Tunisia is experiencing, which has led to an increase in the cost of living for Tunisians, which poses a challenge to the elections authority regarding the participation rate.

Two days ago, ISIE head Farouk Bouasker said that the announcement of the preliminary results of the presidential elections would be no later than October 9. (KUNA)

'Enhance security in schools':

Teachers in Cameroon's Anglophone regions on Saturday called for more efforts to strengthen security measures for teachers, students and schools in the regions where an armed separatist conflict is underway.

"Many of us are threatened, kidnapped, tortured and some have even been killed -- for the simple fact that we are teachers," the All Anglophone Teachers Trade Union said in a statement marking World Teachers' Day, which is celebrated on Oct. 5 annually.

Teachers in the troubled regions

marked the day with parades and conferences to reflect on how to improve their working conditions.

Cameroon's two Anglophone regions of Northwest and Southwest have been plagued by violence since 2017. Teachers and students have been regularly attacked in the regions after separatist fighters warned government schools not to operate. (Xinhua)

24 militants killed:

The Somali army on Saturday killed 24 militants in an operation against Al-Shabaab group in the

Lower Shabelle region, according to local media reports.

The operation targeted several key areas in the region, being regarded as strongholds for the militant group, the operation's commander Ahmad Gashaan

was quoted by the country's state-owned news agency as saying.

The operation is part of a broader strategy by the Somali National Army to combat insurgency and stabilize the region, he added. Somalia's president is Hassan Sheikh Mohamud

The Somali has recently managed to retake several areas in central and southern Somalia from Al-Shabab militants who have been waging insurgency against the Somali government for years. (KUNA)

'S.Africans satisfied with GNU':

Most South Africans are satisfied with the performance so far of the country's coalition government, also known as the Government of National Unity (GNU) which was formed after this year's general elections, according to a new poll.

The Social Research Foundation (SRF), a South African think tank, published its survey report on Friday. Of the 1,204 people who voted in the May elections and were surveyed by the SRF in September, nearly 60 percent believed the GNU is working well and will succeed.

The GNU was formed by the African National Congress (ANC) and nine other political parties, including the Democratic Alliance (DA), after the ANC lost its parliamentary majority for the first time since 1994 in the May elections.

According to the survey, 18.5 percent of participants thought the GNU is performing "very well," with 39.4 percent saying it is doing "quite well." The figures also indicated that 58.7 percent of respondents believed the GNU "will succeed." Only 29.6 percent believed the coalition government "will fail."

When asked "if general elections were taking place today, which party would you vote for," 45 percent said they would vote for the ANC, which won 40.2 percent of the vote in the May elections, and 24 percent for the DA, which won 21.8 percent.

Meanwhile, 12 percent named the uMkhonto weSizwe Party, which garnered 14.6 percent of the vote in the May elections, and the Economic Freedom Fighters, which won 9.5 percent, was only mentioned by 6 percent of participants in the survey. (Xinhua)

Business

Boursa sees 1% drop in general index

Market closes at 6,965.71 points

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 6, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait ended Sunday's trading session with the general index falling by 70.37 points, or 1 percent, closing at 6,965.71 points.

A total of 458.8 million shares were exchanged in 24,374 transactions, with a total value of KD 129.7 million (USD 395.5 million). The main market index decreased by 39.28 points, or 0.63 percent, to settle at 6,215.38 points, as 212.8 million shares were traded through 10,139 transactions, worth KD 22.9 million (USD 69.8 million).

Meanwhile, the premier market index dropped 82.02 points, or 1.08 percent, closing at 7,500.93 points, with 245.9 million shares traded through 14,235 transactions, totaling KD 106.7 million (USD 325.4 million).

WIW 2024 aims to boost financial literacy globally

Boursa Kuwait celebrates fourth year of World Investor Week 2024 participation

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 6: For the fourth consecutive year, Boursa Kuwait joined over 100 stock exchanges around the world to raise awareness of financial literacy as part of World Investor Week (WIW) 2024, a week-long global campaign by the International Organization of Securities Commissions (IOSCO) and the World Federation of Exchanges (WFE).

This year's WIW, which begins on Monday the 7th of October and concludes on the 13th, aims to disseminate key messages that support investor education, investor protection and financial literacy as well as foster learning opportunities for investors. Additionally, WIW aims to strengthen collaboration between WFE and IOSCO member states and drive awareness around trending issues impacting investors worldwide.

"As a member of the World Federation of Exchanges (WFE) and an affiliate member of the International Organizations of Securities Commissions (IOSCO), Boursa Kuwait is pleased to join stock exchanges from around the world in the eighth edition of World Investor Week, marking the fourth year in a row for the Kuwaiti stock exchange. This participation stems from our commitment to promoting financial literacy in the Kuwaiti capital market and expanding the knowledge base of its participants as we firmly believe that investing in financial awareness contributes to the development of capital markets and enhances the ability of investors to make informed decisions, which is in line with Boursa Kuwait's vision to strengthen its position as a reliable and sustainable investment destination," said Boursa Kuwait's Chief Executive Officer Mr. Mohammad Saud Al-Osaimi.

The principal themes for this year's World Investor Week include Technology & Digital Finance, Crypto Assets, and Sustainable Finance, which will be complemented with discussions and workshops on Fraud and Scam Prevention, Investor Resilience, and the Basics of Investing. IOSCO's Committee 8 agreed upon these themes, which conducts its work on retail investor education and financial literacy and includes 38 members from established and emerging markets. Participating members can choose any week in October and November to organize initiatives related to World Investor Week.

Mr. Jean-Paul Servais, Chair of IOSCO's Board, and Chairman of the Financial Services and Markets Authority, Belgium, said: "Last year's World Investor Week saw the involvement of 118 jurisdictions and reached almost 730 million individuals. We have to keep the ball rolling as with technological advancements and increased use of AI, new challenges arise. We also see how fractional trading, gamification and copy-trading are trending. I am confident that WIW 2024 will build on the success of previous years to drive greater investor awareness of these issues and look forward to contribute to its success."

IOSCO believes the need for investor education and financial literacy has never been greater than today. As the financial marketplace continues to evolve and innovate, investment products are becoming increasingly complex and financial services increasingly diverse. A greater understanding of key financial concepts is required on the part of retail investors to understand and evaluate the choices available to them and to avoid financial fraud.

As part of World Investor Week, IOSCO is holding webinars on technology and digital finance and navigating the new economy on October 7 and 8. These webinars are available on the World Investor Week website with free registration for everyone.

"The Bell" initiative to raise financial literacy Boursa Kuwait launched "The Bell" initiative in collaboration with the Union of Investment Companies, The Kuwait Financial Center (Markaz), the CFA Society, Kuwait University, and the Kuwait Credit Information Network (CINET). This initiative reflects Boursa Kuwait's longstanding commitment to educational programs that empower individuals and strengthen the community, ultimately contributing to Kuwait's economic development. By fostering financial awareness and literacy,

Boursa Kuwait aims to solidify its position as a leading regional and international exchange.

The initiative's title, "The Bell," is symbolic on multiple levels. It evokes Boursa Kuwait's crucial role in signaling market changes and investment opportunities to investors, much like a bell announces important events. Additionally, it alludes to the bell ringing that signifies the start of trading sessions, emphasizing the importance of being prepared and knowledgeable when making investment decisions. Throughout the month, the initiative will delve into a wide array of investment trends from the growing influence of artificial intelligence to the rise of digital finance.

Al-Osaimi added: "Today, we launch "The Bell" initiative to promote financial literacy, which contains training programs, workshops, seminars, and panel discussions, organized in collaboration with experts in the capital markets industry and the financial sector. I would like to thank our partners in this initiative and look forward to more fruitful collaborations in the interest of the Kuwaiti capital market in the future."

The initiative is packed with workshops, seminars and educational events, including a seminar for university students organized in collaboration with CINET focusing on financial management and a seminar by Dr. Fahad Waleed Al-Mudhaf, Associate Professor in the Department of Finance at the College of Business Administration at Kuwait University who will explore the intersection of technology and digital finance. Additionally, Boursa Kuwait will organize a virtual workshop with UIC which delves into the importance of sustainable development and a workshop with Markaz, which aims to provide valuable insights into the complexities of mergers and acquisitions and examine bonds and sukuk as an alternative way of financing.

In addition to these engaging events, Boursa Kuwait is also planning to revamp its Boursa Academy online financial education portal, which aims to enhance capital market knowledge for both novice and seasoned investors. Boursa Kuwait's partners in this initiative will also be enriching Boursa Academy's content with a whitepaper from Markaz on sustainable finance in the GCC, a podcast on utilizing artificial intelligence finance and investments from the CFA Society, and educational videos that shed light on the basics of investing from UIC.

Union of Investment Companies Chairman Mr. Abdullah Hamad Al-Terkait spoke about UIC's involvement in "The Bell", saying "The Union of Investment Companies (UIC) is proud to collaborate with Boursa Kuwait in this initiative, which coincides with World Investor Week. This partnership reflects the commitment of both organizations to educate Kuwaiti society, from students to financial institutions, about the importance of financial knowledge, responsible investing, and adhering to best practices within the financial market. I would like to thank Boursa Kuwait for its efforts in putting this initiative together and look forward to more collaborations in the future."

The Union of Investment Companies was established to contribute to the development of Kuwait's investment market. By advocating for revised economic legislation and proposing solutions tailored to the diverse needs of Kuwaiti investment companies, the Union plays a key role in driving economic growth and development in Kuwait. Its efforts are focused on fostering a thriving investment environment and creating innovative financial tools that will position Kuwait as a leading financial center in the region.

Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz" CEO Mr. Ali Khalil also hailed Boursa Kuwait for this initiative, saying: "At Markaz, we firmly believe that financial literacy is fundamental to empowering individuals and communities, paving the way for a more sustainable society. This belief underpins our commitment to corporate social responsibility, where we prioritize sustainable economic development and good governance. By promoting financial knowledge and responsible investment practices, we aim to equip investors with the tools to make responsible investment decisions based on fundamental factors that enable the right companies to attract capital, grow and prosper, contributing to the country's economic growth. I applaud Boursa Kuwait for their commendable initiatives and efforts aimed at building a more financially aware and empowered Kuwait."

Established in 1974, Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz" is one of Kuwait's leading asset management and investment banking institutions with a presence in 13 countries and a total of KD 1.38 billion in assets under management.

Additionally, CFA Society President Mrs. Aminah Abotalaf spoke about the Society's collaboration with Boursa Kuwait, saying, "The CFA Society is proud to partner with Boursa Kuwait in all initiatives that seek to raise financial literacy levels and awareness in Kuwait. Both entities have a shared goal of empowering individuals, from students to seasoned professionals, to invest with confidence through effective and innovative financial literacy programs. Together, we are committed to building a more financially aware future for Kuwait."

The CFA Society Kuwait is an association of local investment professionals, consisting of portfolio managers, security analysts, investment advisors and other financial practitioners, that has served CFA charterholders and CFA Program candidates locally since 2008.

Boursa Kuwait entered a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the CFA Society in October 2018, aiming to educate the public on the fundamentals of investing through the Boursa Academy Online platform and collaborating to organize training programs and seminars.

"Technology has removed geographical barriers, allowing everyone to access financial services and expanding their scope, in addition to promoting financial inclusion and reducing the digital divide. Digital finance offers tremendous opportunities in a rapidly changing world, but that requires keeping pace with technological and regulatory developments. I extend my sincere thanks to Boursa Kuwait for their efforts in organizing this initiative, and I look forward to more fruitful collaborations," said Kuwait University Associate Professor of Finance Dr. Fahad Waleed Al-Mudhaf.

Commenting on CINET's participation, company CEO Mrs. Mai Bader AlOwaish stated, "Credit information and credit score services are among the most important indicators for improving and developing financial systems worldwide. They contribute to creating efficient systems with added value through the collection, request, and analysis of credit information, which in turn enhances the efficiency of financing operations and the granting of credit facilities in all forms. Therefore, we must raise awareness in the community and provide society with the necessary knowledge and skills to be fully aware of their credit rights and obligations. I extend my sincere thanks to Boursa Kuwait for this initiative and look forward to further cooperation in the future."

The Kuwait Credit Information Network (CINET) is the sole and leading provider of credit information and credit scores in the State of Kuwait, operating under the supervision of the Central Bank of Kuwait. The company aims to assist the financial and banking sectors in making informed and sound decisions, helping the entities it serves facilitate financing processes, increase the collection rates of customer loans, and reduce non-performing loans. Additionally, CINET contributes to facilitating individual transactions and reducing credit and financing risks.

"The Bell" initiative forms part of Boursa Kuwait's efforts to develop and educate market participants as well as create a lasting meaningful impact on the communities where it operates. Part of the company's Corporate Sustainability (CS) strategy, they are in line with Goal 4 - Quality Education - and Goal 17 - Partnership for the Goals - of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Boursa Kuwait's support of World Investor Week comes from the company's Corporate Sustainability (CS) strategy, which stipulates ensuring initiatives apply and fall in line with the company's corporate social responsibility (CSR), industry best practice standards and investor expectations, creating strong and sustainable partnerships that ultimately achieve success and allow it to leverage the capabilities and strengths of other companies or organizations that have experience in different fields, and integrating sustainability efforts with the company culture, in order to achieve longevity and an ongoing impact that is carried on and instilled in the day-to-day operations of the stock exchange.

Job openings surge to 8.04 mln in Aug

Fed Chair Powell indicates gradual interest rate cuts

By National Bank of Kuwait

United States

Fed Chair Powell Speaks

Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell stated that interest rates will be lowered gradually, emphasizing that the U.S. economy remains strong. He expressed confidence that inflation will continue to move toward the Fed's 2% target. Powell mentioned that economic conditions support further easing of price pressures, but policy adjustments will be based on incoming data rather than a fixed course. While the Fed's current rate is still restrictive, Powell indicated potential quarter-point cuts in the next two meetings, though decisions will depend on new information. He also noted that while the labor market is still solid, it has cooled over the past year.

JOLTS Job Openings

Over in the US, the number of job openings increased by 329,000 to 8.04 million in August, surpassing market expectations of 7.64 million. Significant job openings growth occurred in construction (+138,000) and state and local government, excluding education (+78,000), while other services saw a decrease (-93,000). Regionally, job openings rose in the Northeast, South, Midwest, and West. The number of hires remained steady at 5.3 million, as did total separations at 5.0 million. However, job quits fell to 3.084 million, the lowest level since August 2020, down from 3.243 million in July.

ISM Manufacturing & Services PMI

In September, U.S. manufacturing stayed weak but showed some positive signs. New orders improved, and the cost of raw materials dropped to its lowest level in nine months. These changes, along with falling interest rates, suggest that manufacturing might pick up in the coming months. The Institute for Supply Management (ISM) reported that its manufacturing index stayed at 47.2, still below 50, meaning the sector is shrinking. However, this marks the sixth month of contraction, though the overall economy continues to expand. Despite the weak survey results, real data like factory output and durable goods orders showed the manufacturing sector is holding steady. Manufacturing output grew by 2.6% in the second quarter, up from 0.2% in the first, and more growth is expected after the Federal Reserve's recent interest rate cuts. Moreover, US services sector activity hit its highest point in 18 months, driven by a strong increase in new orders, indicating that the economy remained stable in the third quarter. The Institute for Supply Management (ISM) reported that its non-manufacturing PMI rose to 54.9, up from 51.5 in August, marking continued growth in the services sector, which makes up over two-thirds of the economy. This growth aligns with positive data on consumer spending and a reduced trade deficit, suggesting the economy maintained momentum from the previous quarter.

Unemployment Claims

The number of Americans filing for unemployment benefits increased slightly last week, though disruptions from Hurricane Helene in the Southeast and strikes at Boeing and ports may impact the labor market soon. According to the Labor Department's report, the job market remained stable at the end of the third quarter, which could give the Federal Reserve little reason to rush into significant interest rate cuts. Another report showed that the services sector reached its highest level in over 18 months, driven by strong new orders. Economist Christopher Rupkey noted that the labor market appears steady, making it unlikely the Fed will cut rates aggressively unless conditions worsen. Initial claims for unemployment benefits rose by 6,000 to 225,000 for the week ending September 28, slightly above expectations. Unadjusted claims dropped by

just over 1,000 but were below the anticipated decline, causing seasonally adjusted claims to rise. Despite this, claims remain low, indicating a stable labor market with few layoffs. However, this calm may be disrupted by Hurricane Helene, which caused widespread destruction in six southeastern states, leading to a long and costly recovery process.

Non-Farm Payrolls

U.S. job growth in September saw its largest increase in six months, with 254,000 new jobs added, and the unemployment rate dropped to 4.1%. This points to a strong economy that likely won't require major interest rate cuts from the Federal Reserve this year. In addition to the job gains, wages rose steadily, and the economy added 72,000 more jobs in July and August than initially reported. Recent data revisions have also shown the economy is performing better than expected, with upgrades in growth, income, savings, and corporate profits. Fed Chair Jerome Powell acknowledged this positive outlook and signaled no rush to cut interest rates significantly. The unemployment rate's drop from 4.2% in August was due to a rise in household employment, which more than offset the number of new workers entering the labor force. Although the jobless rate has risen since April, it has been influenced by factors like temporary layoffs in the auto industry. Average hourly wages rose by 0.4% in September, following a 0.5% increase in August, and were up 4.0% compared to the previous year. This strong wage growth makes it less likely that the Federal Reserve will implement a large interest rate cut at its November meeting. Financial markets now predict a 91% chance of a smaller quarter-point rate cut in November, up from 71.5% before the report, while the likelihood of a larger half-point cut dropped to 9% from 28.5%.

The US Dollar index closed the week at 102.520

Europe

Eurozone CPI

The annual inflation rate in the Eurozone fell to 1.8% in September 2024, its lowest since April 2021, down from 2.2% in August and below forecasts of 1.9%. Inflation is now below the ECB's 2% target. Energy prices dropped significantly (-6% vs -3%), and inflation for services eased slightly (4% vs 4.1%), while prices for food, alcohol, and tobacco rose marginally (2.4% vs 2.3%). Core inflation also eased to 2.7% from 2.8%. Inflation slowed in major economies like Germany, France, Italy, and Spain. The ECB anticipates inflation to rise later in 2024 due to previous sharp falls in energy prices dropping out of the annual rates, with a gradual decline toward 2% expected by the second half of 2025.

The EUR/USD currency pair closed the week at 1.0976.

Asia Pacific

China Manufacturing PMI

China's factory activity contracted for the fifth month in a row in September but exceeded expectations with a reading of 49.8, up from 49.1 in August. The manufacturing sector continues to face challenges due to an ongoing economic slowdown, a property crisis, and Western export restrictions, particularly on electric vehicles. In response, the Chinese government has taken steps to stimulate economic growth, including cutting the reserve requirement ratio by 50 basis points and reducing the seven-day reverse repurchase rate by 20 basis points. These measures led to a significant rally in Chinese equity markets, marking their best week in nearly 16 years.

The USD/CNY currency pair closed the week at 7.0176.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti Dinar

USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30540.



Mohammad Al-Osaimi



Abdullah H. Al-Terkait



Jean-Paul Servais



Ali Khalil



Aminah Abotalaf



Mai Bader AlOwaish

Currencies	Previous Week Levels				This Week's Expected Range		3-Month Forward
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	
EUR	1.1157	1.0950	1.1208	1.0976	1.0800	1.1200	1.1125
GBP	1.3366	1.3066	1.3422	1.3116	1.2800	1.3400	1.3114
JPY	142.23	141.63	149.00	148.71	144.00	151.00	146.89
CHF	0.8407	0.8398	0.8607	0.8580	0.8300	0.8550	0.8491

ABK Capital partners with Blackstone, largest asset manager in 'alternative investments'

Bid to promote private credit and private real estate to investors in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 6: ABK Capital, the asset management arm of Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait, and Blackstone, the world's largest alternative asset manager, have partnered to promote leading private market investment solutions in Kuwait within the private credit and real estate markets.

Blackstone is recognized as the leading alternative asset manager globally, with USD 1.1 tn in Assets Under Management. Blackstone's credit platform manages USD 418 bn in assets, and the firm's global real estate portfolio is valued at USD 603 bn, with approximately 12.4 thousand real estate assets.

Private credit has attracted significant investor interest around the world in the past few years as it offers attractive risk-adjusted returns. The asset class has grown rapidly in recent years as it offers borrow-



Dr. Husayn Shahrur

Dr. Husayn Shahrur: This is a strategic partnership for the company and a cornerstone for our commitment to our clients and investors



Rashmi Madan

Rashmi Madan: We are pleased to partner with ABK Capital to enable their clients with access to Blackstone's solutions



ABK Capital logo

ers flexible, quick, and customized access to capital while offering investors a higher income with lower volatility and historically lower default rates.

On top of that, the direct lending strategy, which this partnership will focus on, adds an additional layer of risk mitigants by focusing on senior-secured lending with tighter covenants. In this space, Blackstone is considered one of the largest direct lenders globally, with a private credit platform focused on senior direct lending and opportunistic credit among other credit strategies. Meanwhile, ABK Capital has been a

pioneer in offering private credit solutions in the local market, availing a strategy of well-diversified senior secured lending exposure with an opportunistic approach to other credit strategies.

Private real estate has historically delivered a good combination of capital growth and income with relatively lower volatility. Its relatively lower correlation to other asset classes adds another diversification component to the investor's portfolio. Blackstone's real estate platform provides access to global real estate opportunities benefiting from the firm's scale, knowledge, and breadth. While the common approach in the local market is to invest in single assets or a selection of clubbed assets, ABK Capital will continue delivering real estate solutions based on an open-ended funds approach, offering a well-diversified exposure within the real estate asset class in terms of number of properties, markets, and sectors.

The partnership with Blackstone on private credit and real estate will

bolster ABK Capital's approach in the space and enable it to provide such solutions to a wider client base, offering greater access to private markets. On this occasion, Dr. Husayn Shahrur, CEO of ABK Capital, said, "Our partnership with Blackstone is a cornerstone to our promise of delivering leading investment solutions for local and regional investors. It is a manifestation of our commitment to bringing the finest of the world closer to our clients. Building on Blackstone's track record, ABK Capital will be advising investors on private market solutions that should meet the investment goals and needs of a wide base of investors."

Rashmi Madan, Head of EMEA for Blackstone Private Wealth Solutions commented, "We see strong demand for private markets from individual investors wanting to diversify their portfolio into asset classes previously reserved for institutional investors. That's why we are pleased to partner with ABK Capital to bring their clients access to Blackstone's private real estate and private credit strategies."

Extreme weather to blame

Global food prices see largest 1-month surge since '22: FAO

ROME, Oct 6, (Xinhua): Global food prices surged to their largest one-month increase since 2022 in September, driven by extreme weather that put upward pressure on major food commodity categories, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) reported on Friday.

The FAO said its broad Food Price Index rose by 3 percent compared to August levels, marking the largest month-on-month increase since March 2022, when food prices spiked due to energy and supply disruptions related to the start of the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

This time, various factors contributed to the price hike, primarily concerns about severe weather. This led to a 3-percent increase in prices for grains and cereals, the largest component of the overall index, reversing a three-month trend of decline.

Unusually wet conditions in Canada and the European Union drove wheat prices higher, while low water levels in Brazil and the United States affected corn production, the FAO

reported.

Meanwhile, sugar prices surged by 10.4 percent due to dry weather and wildfires in Brazil, the world's leading producer. India's decision to lift limits on sugarcane used for ethanol production also contributed to the price surge, according to the FAO.

Meat prices increased by 0.4 percent due to trade factors, including higher demand for Brazilian poultry and reduced demand for ovine meat from China. Dairy prices rose by 3.8 percent due to stronger demand from Asia, which offset higher production levels in Oceania. Prices for vegetable oil increased by 4.6 percent, reaching their highest level in 18 months. The FAO noted that vegetable oil prices were driven up by reduced output in Asia and the United States.

With increases across all major sub-indices, the broad FAO Food Price Index was 2.1 percent higher than its level a year ago, though it remained 22.4 percent below the all-time high reached in March 2022.

First increase in 7 weeks

Average rate on a 30-year mortgage in the U.S. ticks up to 6.12 percent

NEW YORK, Oct 6, (AP): The average rate on a 30-year mortgage in the U.S. rose to 6.12% this week, the first increase in seven weeks.

The rate ticked up from 6.08% last week, mortgage buyer Freddie Mac said Thursday. A year ago, the rate averaged 7.49%.

Last week, the average rate slipped to its lowest level in two years, boosting home shoppers' purchasing power as they navigate a housing market with prices near all-time highs.

Borrowing costs on 15-year fixed-rate mortgages, popular with homeowners seeking to refinance their home loan to a lower rate, increased again this week. The average rate rose to 5.25% from 5.16% last week. A year ago, it averaged 6.78%, Freddie Mac said.

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 on the 10-year Treasury was at 3.82% Thursday, up from 3.78% last week.

The average rate on a 30-year mortgage is down from 7.22% in May, its 2024 peak. Rates have been mostly declining since July in anticipation of last month's move by the Federal Reserve to cut its main interest rate for the first time in more than four years.

Fed officials also signaled they expect further cuts this year and in

2025 and 2026. The rate cuts should, over time, lead to lower borrowing costs on mortgages.

Setting aside this week's rise in the average long-term rate, Freddie Mac Chief Economist Sam Khater painted a more optimistic picture for prospective homebuyers.

"Zooming out to the bigger picture, mortgage rates have declined one and a half percentage points over the last 12 months, home price growth is slowing, inventory is increasing, and incomes continue to rise," Khater said. "As a result, the backdrop for homebuyers this fall is improving and should continue through the rest of the year."

The average rate on a 30-year mortgage rose from below 3% in September 2021 to a 23-year high of 7.8% last October. That coincided with the Fed increasing its benchmark interest rate to fight inflation.

When mortgage rates rise they can add hundreds of dollars a month in costs for borrowers. The housing market has been in a sales slump since 2022 as elevated mortgage rates discouraged many would-be homebuyers. Sales of previously occupied U.S. homes fell in August even as mortgage rates began easing.

Economists generally expect mortgage rates to remain near their current levels, at least this year. Fannie Mae projects the rate on a 30-year mortgage will average 6.2% in the October-December quarter and decline to an average of 5.7% in the same quarter next year.

Markaz: GCC and Global equity markets up

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 6: Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz" released its Monthly Market Review report for September 2024. Kuwait continues to be one of the best performing markets in the GCC on a year-to-date basis in 2024, only behind Dubai. GCC and Global equity indices ended positive for the month, supported by investor optimism following the interest rate cut by U.S. Fed. However, escalating geopolitical tensions in the Middle East and weak oil prices limited the upside for GCC markets.

Kuwait's main market index continued to outperform the Premier market index, registering a year-to-date gain of 12.7%. Kuwait's All Share index posted a 4.7% increase on a year-to-date basis, despite a monthly decline of 0.6% in September. The 25-bps reduction of discount rate to 4% by Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) following U.S. Fed's 50 bps rate cut in September lent support to the markets. Since Kuwait Dinar is pegged to a basket of currencies that includes U.S. dollars, the Central Bank of Kuwait could deviate from the rate cut trajectory of U.S. Fed. The Kuwait banking index recorded a decline of 1.4% for the month. All banking stocks, except NBK ended the month in red while NBK registered a marginal gain of 0.6%. Gulf Bank has signed an agreement with Boubyan Bank on the potential merger that will create a single Shariah-compliant entity and has obtained the Central Bank's approval to hire consultants for feasibility study. Among Premier market stocks, Arzan Financial Group for Financing and Investment gained the most at 14.4% for the month. The company received additional shares from a related party's capital increase, which will reflect in its Q3 2024 financial results.

Kuwait's domestic credit grew at 2.8% y/y (1.8% YTD) in July, a notch lower when compared to 2.9% y/y in the previous month, weighed down



Markaz logo

by the plunge in lending to banks/financial institutions. Household credit growth remained strong at 2.5% y/y and business credit grew 1.9% y/y. Kuwait real estate sales in August declined 12% y/y to KD257 million. The decline was driven by the residential segment, which fell 32% y/y to KD88 million. The investment segment sales ticked up slightly to KD108 million despite a decline in transaction volumes. Commercial sector sales amounted to KD61 million, continuing to register growth on a yearly basis.

GCC markets except Oman ended positive during the month, with S&P GCC composite index registering an increase of 1.3% in September. GCC equity indices rose after the central banks in the region cut their key interest rates mirroring the moves of U.S. Fed. However, equity market gains were stunted by rising geopolitical tensions in the Middle East. Dubai and Abu Dhabi equity indices gained 4.1% and 1.5% respectively during the month. The CBUAE projects UAE economy to grow at 6% in 2025 as momentum in the non-hydrocarbon sector is likely to continue, while hydrocarbon production is forecast to pick up. ADNOC Drilling Company rose 7.5% during the month after the announcement of interim dividend of AED 1.285 billion (USD 350 million) for the first half of 2024 following strong financial results. Real estate stocks Emaar Properties and Aldar Properties rose 3.3% and 2.5% during the month driven by the positive sentiment following interest rate cuts. The GCC real estate index has surged 18.4%

in the first nine months of 2024 compared to 1.3% rise in the S&P GCC composite index during the period. Saudi equity index gained 0.7% during September driven by the mixed performance of blue-chip stocks. ACWA Power posted a gain of 17.4% in September driven by China stimulus-led optimism as well as being shortlisted for five large-scale wind energy projects in Oman. Qatar equity index gained 4.0% for the month, driven by sharp surge in natural gas prices.

Global and U.S. markets were positive for the month, with MSCI World and S&P 500 indices increasing by 1.7% and 2.0% respectively. The start of the U.S. Fed monetary policy easing cycle coupled with reports of softening inflation supported the gains in global equity markets. The U.S. Fed reduced the target range for the federal funds rate by 50 bps, from 5.25 - 5.50% earlier to 4.75 - 5.00% in its September FOMC meeting, the first time since 2020. The U.S. core (less food and energy) personal consumer expenditures (PCE) price index, rose only 0.1% m/m in August, following a 0.2% m/m rise in July. The index climbed 2.2% y/y, close to the Fed's 2.0% long-term inflation target and the lowest since February 2021. The Bank of England (BOE) held its key interest rate steady at 5.0% in its September meeting following its initial rate cut in August. The policymakers insisted on gradual easing of monetary policy given persistent inflation pressures. The MSCI EM index gained 6.4% for the month driven by the 17.4% surge in Chinese equity markets. Chinese stocks rose after Beijing unveiled a slew of measures to aid the economy. The People's Bank of China (PBOC) cut its reserve requirement ratio by 50 bps for most banks and reduced its seven-day reverse repo rate by 20 bps to 1.5%. According to Reuters, China plans to issue special sovereign bonds worth about 2 trillion yuan

(USD 284.43 billion) this year as part of fresh fiscal stimulus.

The 10-year U.S. Treasury yield stood at 3.81% at the end of September, 10 bps lower than the close of previous month. During the month, the 10-year treasury yield touched a low of 3.63% on Sep 16th, before the Fed meeting. However, yields have mildly increased since then as Fed's shift in focus to protecting the labor market from beating inflation has instilled worries of a rebound in price pressures in the U.S. bond market. The yield on the 2-year U.S. Treasury note declined by 25 bps during the month closing at 3.66%.

Oil price settled at USD 71.8 per barrel, registering a decline of 8.9% during the month of September. Oil prices were weighed by concerns about weaker global demand coupled with prospects of growing oil supplies from Saudi Arabia. The OPEC revised its world oil demand forecast to 2.03 million barrels per day (bpd) in 2024, down from previous forecast for growth of 2.11 million bpd. A report by FT suggested that Saudi Arabia is committed to increasing oil production later this year, even if it results in lower prices for a prolonged period to regain the market share.

Markets are expected to focus on key data releases such as inflation and employment payroll to price in their expectations of the size of interest rate cut in the upcoming FOMC meeting to be held on Nov 6-7th. The Fed has projected further cuts amounting to 50 bps by the end of 2024, but it is unclear whether the cuts will be front-loaded in November with a single 50 bps cut or if it would be split into two 25 bps cuts each in the November and December meetings. Additionally, the start of Q3 earnings season for GCC blue chips, oil price and developments on geopolitical front could influence further market movements in the GCC.

Chinese modernization serves as model for Pakistan to promote economic development

ISLAMABAD, Oct 6, (Xinhua): The unique Chinese modernization serves as a model for Pakistan to promote economic development, Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said, extending congratulations on the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China.

China has made remarkable achievements, and Pakistan desired to revamp its economy by emulating China's path of progress, which offers new opportunities for countries around the world, including Pakistan, Sharif said in an interview with Chinese media.

China believed in inclusiveness and multilateralism, a recipe for en-

hanced peaceful global interaction, bringing more understanding between various nations with enhanced economic cooperation, trade, investment and people-to-people exchanges, the prime minister said.

He said that 14 Palestinian factions have lately held a reconciliation dialogue in Beijing under the mediation of China, a testimony to China's positive role in promoting regional and world peace and development.

Speaking highly of Pakistan-China time-tested friendship, Sharif said that the friendship, based on mutual trust and respect, is exemplary in the world.

The two countries have always

supported each other and have worked closely on the international stage to jointly strengthen the forces that promote regional and world peace as well as stability, he said.

Talking about the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a flagship project of the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative, the prime minister said that the project promotes socio-economic development of Pakistan.

Launched in 2013, the CPEC is a corridor linking the Gwadar Port in southwest Pakistan's Balochistan province with Kashgar in northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, which highlights en-

ergy, transport, and industrial cooperation in the first phase.

Issues of road connectivity and electricity that greatly hindered Pakistan's economy in the past were resolved in the first phase, Sharif said, noting the CPEC has successfully entered a new phase of high-quality development, which focuses more on strengthening cooperation with China in such fields as agriculture, information technology and mining.

The prime minister underscored that Pakistan and China would continue to work together to further enhance economic cooperation and lift their unshakable and unique friendship to new heights.

More Sri Lankans seek jobs abroad in September

IMF pledges continued support for Sri Lanka's economic reforms

COLOMBO, Oct 6, (Xinhua): The International Monetary Fund (IMF) said on Friday that it will continue its close engagement with Sri Lanka's economic team to set a date for the third review of the IMF-supported program.

An IMF team, led by Krishna Srinivasan, director of the Asia Pacific Department, visited Sri Lanka from Oct. 2 to Oct. 4.

Srinivasan met with Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake, Prime Minister Harini Amarasuriya, other senior officials and stakeholders.

At the end of the visit, Srinivasan said in a statement that they held productive discussions with Dissanayake and Sri Lanka's economic team on the economic and financial challenges fac-

ing the Sri Lankan economy.

He said both sides agreed on the importance of continuing to safeguard and build on the hard-won gains that have helped put Sri Lanka on a path to economic recovery since entering one of its worst economic crises in 2022.

Srinivasan added that the IMF is encouraged by the authorities' commit-

ment to continue the reform efforts.

He said the IMF remains a steadfast partner in supporting Sri Lanka and its people and stands ready to assist the country in achieving its economic reform goals.

In other news, Sri Lankan departures for foreign employment increased 10 percent in September, compared with the corresponding

month of 2023, according to the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment on Friday.

The agency said 28,344 Sri Lankans sought foreign jobs in September 2024, up from 25,716 reported in the same month of 2023.

During the first nine months of this year, over 240,000 Sri Lankans sought foreign jobs. Of the total,

70,396 were skilled workers. Saudi Arabia was the largest recipient of migrant workers from Sri Lanka during the period.

Sri Lankan workers remitted 3.71 billion U.S. dollars in the first seven months of 2024, a 10.3 percent increase over the same period last year, according to the country's central bank.

Within 'NBKConnect' program to increase students' awareness about required majors in banking sector

NBK launches 'Tech Majors' workshop in collaboration with Kuwait University

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 6: Underscoring its leading role in supporting educational initiatives to upskill the Kuwaiti youth and open future horizons for them to be active players in society, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) organized a workshop titled "Tech Majors" for Kuwait University students majored in IT and Data Science within "NBKConnect" program.

These workshops that run for 7 days from October 2nd to 9th, aim to increase participants' awareness about the required majors in the banking sector, especially with the rapid digital advancement and the banking industry's reliance on cutting-edge technologies and AI.

The first workshop was held at the Faculty of Science for students with a passion for technology and digitization. It will enable students to identify the necessary skills that need to be developed to increase their opportunities in the labor market, by providing them with detailed information about jobs requirements in the banking sector.

On this occasion, Mr. **Emad Al-Ablani**, GM –Head of Group Human Resources at National Bank of Kuwait said: "This workshop aims to familiarize students with technology uses in banking, including digital banking systems, AI, Big Data, IT Security, Robotics, Programming, and Cybersecurity, as these majors are the future of the financial services industry, making them essential for students seeking to build a thriving career."

Al-Ablani explained that such initiatives reflect NBK's vision and keenness to keep pace with the rapidly changing requirements of the digital era, as well as its awareness of



Emad Al-Ablani

Al-Ablani:

- We seek to contribute to the development of national professionals who will add value to the Kuwaiti economy
- We aim to open future horizons for the Kuwaiti youth to meet the challenges of the changing labor market
- The workshop aims to familiarize students with the required majors in banking
- Kuwait has a talented and promising generation with high skills and capabilities in technology and digitization

the crucial importance of developing and nurturing highly skilled talents in areas like information systems, data, computer science, and cyber-



Group photo of participants during the workshop.

security. "Kuwait has a talented and promising generation with professional skills and abilities in technology and digitization," he noted.

"This workshop is a valuable opportunity for students to engage in effective discussions with industry experts, enabling them to gain a deeper understanding of the nature of work in financial institutions," he emphasized.

"We are always keen to attract, train and upskill high-caliber national talent, and qualify them to join the banking sector. We are also dedicated building outstanding cadres who can take on leadership roles in the future and add value to NBK, the banking sector and the Kuwaiti economy in general," he added.

NBK seeks to prepare a generation of national cadres who can con-

tribute to the development of the Kuwaiti economy and providing innovative solutions in the banking industry, as such workshops represent an important step towards motivating students to explore their career options and providing them with the knowledge and skills tools needed to face the challenges of the labor market in the future.

NBK is committed to attracting,

training and upskilling high-caliber national talent and qualifying them to join the banking sector, in line with New Kuwait Vision 2035 which aims to promote Kuwaitization in the private sector. In addition, the bank has highest employee recruitment and retention rates, and the private sector employer of choice for Kuwaiti fresh graduates.

Campaign promotes social responsibility and voluntary work among employees

Warba organizes blood donation campaign for its employees

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 6: Warba Bank organized a blood donation campaign for its employees, to highlight its permanent commitment to serving the community. The campaign received great interaction from the Bank's employees, who flocked to donate and expressed their commitment and humanitarian duty towards all patients and those in need of blood.

Ayman Salem Al-Mutairi, Director Marketing and Corporate Communications, explained that this campaign is not the first one organized by Warba Bank to support the Blood Bank. Warba Bank has been organizing continuous campaigns on an annual basis, expressing the spirit of social participation and believing in its effective role in serving the community. It will continue to organize similar campaigns, expressing the spirit of social participation and community responsibility.

Al-Mutairi added that Warba Bank is constantly striving to provide various means of support to institutions providing healthcare services in Kuwait, in addition to its continuous organization of multi-purpose awareness activities and campaigns aimed

Al-Mutairi:

- The campaign is not the first that Warba organizes to support the Blood Bank, and it is an annual initiative
- "Warba" is keen to spread the concept of voluntary social work among its employees by inviting them to participate in many humanitarian and charitable events

at enhancing health awareness and encouraging healthy behaviors and habits among members of society.

Al-Mutairi stated that Warba Bank is keen to spread the concept of voluntary social work among its employees by inviting them to participate in many humanitarian and charitable events, including blood donation campaigns, as the Marketing and Corporate Communications Sector sent messages to employees to participate in this campaign. These messages contributed significantly to enhancing employees'

awareness about the culture of blood donation and consolidating the principle of community partnership for the Bank and its cooperation with national institutions, including the Kuwait Central Blood Bank and its efforts to maintain the provision of blood units to be ready for those who deserve them from needy patients.

Al-Mutairi concluded his statement by thanking the officials of the Kuwait Central Blood Bank who took the initiative to send nursing and medical teams that showed high cooperation and professionalism in examining those wishing to donate blood, extending his thanks to the Bank's employees who did not hesitate to respond to the invitation and flocked to donate, which undoubtedly contributed to the success of this campaign and translated the noble humanitarian and social motives of Warba Bank's staff.

The Blood Bank team praised this kind and pioneering initiative, mentioning the activities carried out by Warba Bank that serve the charitable and humanitarian fields in Kuwait, based on the Bank's clear direction aimed at serving the Kuwaiti society.



Al-Danah Account

100 winners to be announced in Oct

Gulf Bank declares 10 winners of KD 1000 in September draw

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 6: As part of its commitment to rewarding customers, Gulf Bank announced the 10 winners of the September monthly draw, each receiving a prize of KD 1,000. The winners are:

- Arfat Khurshid Alam
- Hajar Ayyad Sulaiman Al-Azmi
- Fahad Abdulla Omer Al-Asfour
- Bader Hamad Huwedi Al-Deferi
- Rajaa Mahdi Habib
- Nabihah Abdulrahman Mesfer
- Ahmad Ramadan Gotb
- Turki Majiah Ali Saleh
- Manal Ali Mandani Haider
- Mohammed Ahmad AbdulRaheem AbdulRahman

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

World Records as the largest cash prize tied to a bank account globally. With these updates, the Al-Danah Millionaire Account draw schedule, which began in 1998 and is now in its 26th consecutive year, has been revised. Moving forward, two millionaires will be crowned annually through two major draws. The grand prize for the annual draw is KD 2 million, and the semi-annual prize is KD 1 million. Each month, 10 winners are selected, with each receiving KD 1,000. A special draw for KD 100,000 was held on April 18, 2024. The next special draw, scheduled for October 17, 2024, will award KD 1,000 to 100 winners. The deadline to participate in this draw is June 30, 2025.

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

Account offers over 400 prizes annually

Kuwait Finance House announces KD 250,000 Al-Hassad draw winner

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 6: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has announced Mohammed Abdullah Al-Otaibi as the winner of Al-Hassad quarterly draw, winning KD 250,000 in the 2024 quarterly draw.

Al-Hassad is based on the Wakala investment principle, in which the Bank invests the entire account balance at an expected profit rate agreed upon in advance with the customer. Al-Hassad offers weekly, monthly, and quarterly draws, a total of more than 400 prizes.

The draws offer KD 1000 weekly, for 10 winners, KD 100,000 monthly and KD 250,000 quarterly in addition to the year-end profits distribution. The account meets the aspirations of a wide segment of customers who wish to invest their funds through a multi-featured banking account.

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

As for the eligibility criteria, the customer must hold the balance for a period of 15 days for an opportunity to enter the draws. The customer will have one chance for every KD 50. If



KFH Al-Hassad winners.

the balance is held for 90 days before the draw date, the customer will get two chances for every KD 50, and three chances for every KD 50 if the balance is held for a period of 180 days prior to the draw date. Accordingly, KFH will deposit the value of prizes in the winning customers' accounts.

Al-Hassad represents an excellent addition to KFH's comprehensive suite of financial products, offering a unique opportunity for customers in which the deposited amounts are invested in Al-Hassad based on the Wakala principle.

As part of its continuous support of the 'Let's Be Aware' campaign

KIB launches financial literacy booth at Council of Ministers

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 6: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced the setup of a special booth at the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers with the aim of raising banking awareness and financial literacy among community members. This effort aligns with KIB's ongoing and dedicated initiatives to support the directives and recommendations of the "Let's Be Aware" (Diraya) financial awareness campaign, launched by the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) and the Kuwait Banking Association (KBA) in cooperation with local banks. It also comes as part of KIB's commitment to its leading role in guiding customers, helping them make sound financial decisions, and protecting the security of their banking data.

Commenting on the occasion, Yaqoub Ahmad Ashkanani, Area Manager of Retail Banking at KIB, said: "Our initiative at the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers reflects our commitment to fostering a financially literate community in Kuwait. When customers and numerous individuals are armed with essential banking knowledge and skills, we empower them to make informed decisions that enhance their financial well-being."

Ashkanani added: "Being present at the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers provided an in-



KIB booth at General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers.

valuable opportunity for our staff to engage directly with a large audience. They offered detailed insights on the safest ways to use banking cards and protect their accounts, while also discussing customer rights, banking responsibilities, and how to avoid fraud and phishing. Additionally, they emphasized the importance of building a culture of investment and savings,

highlighting the key role of banks in financing, especially Islamic financing. Community members were also introduced to KIB's diverse and innovative products and services, designed to enhance their experience in the rapidly advancing financial and banking sector."

It is worth noting that KIB is committed to its leading and effective

role in raising community awareness, which is considered an essential part of its comprehensive social responsibility strategy. The Bank constantly strives to launch initiatives that broadly enhance financial literacy and to participate in events that support the goals of the "Let's Be Aware" campaign, embodying its main slogan, "Bank for Life".

Music

Musician finds comfort in Audre Lorde's essay

Orion Sun explores self-discovery in new album

LOS ANGELES, Oct 6, (AP): Amid a creative spiral, Orion Sun found comfort among the words of the late Audre Lorde's essay "Poetry is not a luxury." The poet's writing provided a mental redirection for the musician while working on her new album, "Orion."

Lorde wrote that poetry is a pathway for women to process long-forgotten feelings and ideas, and use the art form as a tool for revolutionary change. "She wrote that for me," says the recording artist and producer. "But she never knew me. She doesn't know all of the people that she's helped. And I swear she left like guidebooks."

For Orion, poets like Lorde, Pablo Neruda and Maya Angelou "understand life in the way that she wants to understand." She admires the duality they tapped into as they acknowledge the weight of the world while pushing themselves to find joy and create works not only for themselves but also for others - a lesson that Orion has embraced within her own creative process.

"That alone made me be like, 'Okay, no matter what, I'm releasing my music,'" she said. "I don't care what anyone says. If this helps someone understand something about themselves, like poetry does for me, that's my job. That's success to me."

She quickly established her name among indie music lovers in

the early days of the coronavirus pandemic with popular indie soul and alternative R&B singles like "Dirty Dancer," "Concrete," "Anecdote" and more. She opened for Daniel Caesar on his Superpowers World Tour in 2023, has written for artists like Bryson Tiller and was featured on tracks with Fred Again.. and Serpenthwithfeet.

"Orion" was released on Sept. 20, created as the Los Angeles-based artist poured over journals and began to reflect on the last two years of her life during studio sessions.

"I am just writing to stay sane," she said. "Sometimes it's a journal entry; sometimes it's me walking down the street, and I'm eavesdropping."

Orion says she purposefully self-titled the album as it's an intimate look into who she is.

"The album is called 'Orion,' even though my name is Orion Sun but I become Orion Sun when you make it to the end of the album," she said.

The album also pays homage to the resilient women who raised her, including her grandmother, who has her own dedicated song, "Gannie."

"When I can't do it for myself, I do it for my family. 'Gannie'

represents my family and my friends. And that's the sun in my life," she said. "I think a lot of people in my life are the sun, and I feel more like the moon because I'm just reflecting all the love that I get."

While exploring the duality of love and pain, Orion continuously found her focus in poetry and nature.

"I think it's really important to just not forget that Earth is a resource for us," she said. "It always brings me back to just being grateful for the day whenever I'm outside, or I get to see the sunset. Being able to even notice those differences are really important for me and help me stay grounded. ... Earth is the greatest muse. Earth is the most inspirational; Earth is my home."

To celebrate the release of her album, Orion is embarking on a North American headlining tour Oct. 20 through the end of November, providing what she hopes will be a sacred space for her audience.

"When you come through the doors of the venue, anything that you're going through, you left it out there, whether you knew it or not," she said. "Because when you're in here, we deserve at least an hour or two of just joy, laughter, tears."



Orion Sun poses for a portrait on Friday, Aug. 30, 2024, in Los Angeles. (AP)

Obituary

Greek music icon Plessas dies at 99

ATHENS, Greece, Oct 6, (AP): Mimis Plessas, a beloved Greek composer whose music featured in scores of films, television shows and theatrical productions and who provided the soundtrack to millions of Greeks' lives, has died just a week shy of his 100th birthday.

His death was confirmed Saturday by his wife, Loukila Carrer.



Plessas

Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis paid tribute to Plessas, writing, "A leading composer, a great scholar and a kind man has left us."

Born in Athens on Oct. 12, 1924, Plessas began his musical journey at a young age. He became a piano soloist at state radio before entering international piano competitions while still in his 20s. His gift for composition would cement his legacy.

Plessas became a constant presence on Greek television, his mild manner and singalong melodies endearing him to generations. Often seated at the piano, accompanying renowned Greek stars, he was a fixture of musical moments and celebrations for decades, his music becoming intertwined with the nation's cultural fabric. His 1969 composition, "O Dromos" (The Street), remains one of the highest-selling albums in Greek history.

He collaborated with a constellation of Greek music icons, including Nana Mouskouri, Vicky Leandros, Giannis Pouloupoulos, Marinella, and lyricist Lefteris Papadopoulos, shaping the landscape of Greek music. His work defied genre, blending traditional Greek music forms with elements of jazz and classical, creating an easy-on-the-ear signature sound - softer than the hard jangle of many of his contemporaries.



Keanu Reeves walks in the garage area following a GR Cup Series auto race. (AP)

Reeves spins out

Hollywood star Keanu Reeves made his professional auto racing debut on Saturday in an event in which "The Matrix" star spun out at famed Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

Reeves spun into the grass without a collision on the exit of Turn 9 a little more than halfway through the 45-minute race. He re-entered and continued driving, signaling he was uninjured.

Reeves, who qualified 31st out of the 35 cars, ran as high as 21st and successfully avoided a first lap crash in Turn 14. Reeves finished 25th.

Reeves, who is 60 years old, is competing at Indianapolis in Toyota GR Cup, a Toyota spec-racing series and a support series for this weekend's Indy 8 Hour sports car event. He has a second race Sunday.

Reeves is driving the No. 92 BRZ-RKR car, which is promoting his graphic novel "The Book of Elsewhere." He is teammates with Cody Jones from "Dude Perfect." (AP)



Kate McKinnon arrives at the 74th Primetime Emmy Awards on Monday, Sept. 12, 2022, at the Microsoft Theater in Los Angeles. (AP)

Books

Weird Barbie inspires McKinnon's new book

Middle-grade magic with McKinnon

LOS ANGELES, Oct 6, (AP): If you find it odd that Kate McKinnon chose her first book to be for middle-grade kids, the former "Saturday Night Live" star says, think again.

"I find sketch comedy and middle school to be very similar," she said recently over Zoom. "There can be an unabashed silliness in middle grade that I have found only in sketch comedy."

"The Millicent Quibb School of Etiquette for Young Ladies of Mad Science," now available, follows the three Porch sisters, Gertrude, Eugenia, and Dee-Dee, who feel that they don't fit in their hoity-toity town. They live with their snooty aunt and uncle and equally snooty seven cousins - all named Lavinia. When the Porch girls are kicked out of school, they find a new mentor in an outrageous scientist with worms in her hair named Millicent Quibb.

In a Q&A, McKinnon spoke about her childhood and "The Millicent Quibb School of Etiquette for Young Ladies of Mad Science," which she wrote mostly from her bed. "I ended up staying in bed for a year, basically," she laughed. The plan is that this is book No. 1 in a series.

Answers have been edited for clarity and brevity.

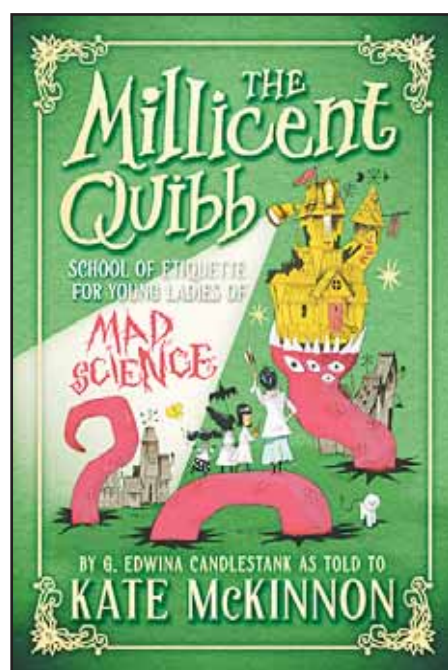
AP: Some themes in this book are about identity. It would be fitting if you wrote this while filming "Barbie." Did you?

McKinnon: I started writing this before "SNL," and worked on it throughout, whenever I had a moment, and picked it right back up after I left. I like weirdos. I am a weirdo. I like playing weirdos, and I like reaching out to fellow weirdos. And this was just another venue for doing that.

AP: What was it like going from the hectic, repetitive pace of "SNL" to writing fulltime?

McKinnon: I was surprised by how much it felt like performing. I felt like I was improvising. It felt like sitting in a room and writing a sketch for "SNL," but then you just have a lot more time to revise. I absolutely love it. I'm an introvert, so writing by myself does not bother me. As much as I miss my colleagues, it suits me in some way.

AP: In the book, the Porch sisters find a true mentor in Millicent who encourages them



This cover image of 'The Millicent Quibb School of Etiquette for Young Ladies of Mad Science' by Kate McKinnon. (AP)

to be who and how they want. Who was your Millicent growing up?

McKinnon: I had parents who celebrated my weird, little activities and let me take the clamshells home when we had linguine and clams at a restaurant. They bought me little archaeological kits and just really fostered whatever esoteric interest I had. I also had teachers who helped me and supported me. Sometimes a magical adult swoops in and fosters the gifts you were born with that other people are telling you are bad.

AP: The book is silly and funny. Did you ever make yourself laugh while writing?

McKinnon: I do. I enjoy names. I think funny names are a whole art in and of itself. I was proud of the names I came up with.

AP: Talk about narrating the audiobook.

McKinnon: That was some of the most labor-intensive performing I've ever done. I've done plenty of voice overs, but you're doing every line. When writing, the first thing I had to do was come up with voices for all of the characters. With anything I'm like, "What's the voice?" I have to start with that. Then you decide the hair and the clothes and that's all you need to know. I knew what all of the characters sounded like going in.

AP: Will you go on a book tour and meet your readers?

McKinnon: I am going on a cross-country trek and I am so beyond excited. At 12, I was getting messages from the culture and from some of my peers that I was not OK the way I was. To have someone look at you and say, "Hey, the thing that you think is weird about you, that's actually what's going to save you as a grown up. And that's actually what's going to help the world-at-large." To give that to someone else would be the honor of my life.

Variety

MUSCAT: A top Chinese troupe concluded its performances of the Italian opera classic "Un Ballo in Maschera" on Saturday evening at the Royal Opera House Muscat in Oman.

Produced by the National Center for the Performing Arts of China (NCPA), the opera was staged on Thursday and Saturday, drawing an audience of approximately 2,000.

Additionally, on Friday, the center hosted a special "Chinese Night" concert, offering local residents the chance to experience traditional Chinese melodies.

Wang Ning, president of the NCPA, emphasized that these performances demonstrate the organization's commitment to promoting cultural exchanges and cooperation through opera and music.

Umberto Fanni, general manager of the Royal Opera House Muscat, highlighted the significance of the event, noting that it not only reflects the artistic collaboration between Oman and China but also acts as a bridge for unity among diverse cultures and regions through the arts. (Xinhua)

NEW YORK: Chilean journalist **Eva Vergara**, who in her four decades at The Associated Press covered stories including the first protests against the dictatorship of Gen. **Augusto Pinochet** and revealed key information about abuses by members of the Catholic Church, died Tuesday. She was 68.

Vergara died as a result of a recently diagnosed cancer, said her son **Camilo Torres Vergara**.

As a correspondent in Chile, Vergara reported extensively on the end of the Pinochet era and the country's transition to democracy in 1990. She covered the many human rights violations and the thousands of missing people after the military coup against President **Salvador Allende** in 1973. She also reported on the gripping rescue of 33 trapped miners in the **San Jose** mine in 2010. (AP)

ALGIERS: The 16th edition of the Algiers International Comics Festival concluded here on Saturday after five days of activities and exhibitions focused on the theme "Algerian Stories."

Artists and authors from 15 countries, including **Japan**, **France**, **Italy**, the **United States**, **Egypt**, and **Tunisia**, participated in the festival, engaging with comic enthusiasts and leading conferences and debates, according to **Jaoudet Guessoum**, the festival's artistic director.

Participants of the festival paid tribute to pioneering artists who used their works to raise public awareness during the Algerian War of Independence, which lasted from 1954 to 1962.

The festival featured a display of publications, panel discussions on the comic book industry, and cosplay contests. (Xinhua)

NEW YORK: **Steven R. Hurst**, who over a decades-long career in journalism covered major world events including the end of the **Soviet Union** and the **Iraq War** as he worked for news outlets including The Associated Press, NBC and CNN, has died. He was 77.

Hurst, who retired from AP in 2016, died sometime between Wednesday night and Thursday morning at his home in Decatur, Illinois, his daughter, **Ellen Hurst**, said Friday. She said his family didn't know a cause of death but said he had congestive heart failure.

"Steve had a front-row seat to some of the most significant global stories, and he cared deeply about ensuring people around the world understood the history unfolding before them," said **Julie Pace**, AP's executive editor and senior vice president.

"Working alongside him was also a master class in how to get to the heart of a story and win on the biggest breaking news." (AP)

Deaf audiences to see new films before release

LONDON, Oct 6, (AP): For once, deaf audiences are being prioritized at UK cinemas.

Paramount Pictures UK will be showing their movies with captions the day before general release, meaning deaf and hard of hearing cinemagoers across the country will be able to watch them first.

The distributor is starting with the robot animation "Transformers One" on Oct. 10. Subtitled screenings of Paramount's upcoming films, "Gladiator II," "Sonic the Hedgehog 3" and "The Smurfs Movie," will follow over the next few months.

Rebecca Mansell, chief executive of the British Deaf Association, called the initiative groundbreaking. Deaf, deafened and hard of hearing audiences have been struggling to attend the few available subtitled film showings because they are often scheduled at inconvenient times, she said.

"It fits in with the cinema's needs, but not necessarily when the Deaf community want to go," she said. "The deaf community always feel that they are the last ones to know, the last ones to watch something, the last ones for everything. And now we're going to be the first. It's definitely a really

exciting moment."

Around 18 million people in the UK are registered as deaf, deafened or hard of hearing, according to the association.

Paramount has also been running deaf awareness training with cinema managers and staff in UK cities so that they can better communicate with customers.

Yvonne Cobb, a TV presenter and celebrity ambassador for the British Deaf Association, was running the training at a large cinema in central London's Leicester Square Wednesday.

9-day event draws thousands of spectators

'Magical' flotilla of hot air balloons take flight at int'l fiesta

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M., Oct. 6, (AP) — A flotilla of hot air balloons ascended into a clear desert sky on Saturday to kick off a colorful mass ascension at the 52nd annual Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta.

The nine-day gathering draws hundreds of thousands of spectators and pilots to New Mexico each fall for the rare opportunity to be within arm's reach as the giant balloons are unpacked and inflated.

Balloons took flight to screams of delight after a brief weather delay and were spirited away by a gentle breeze. Propane burners roared and hundreds of balloons — from traditional globes to cartoonish figures — rose to speckle the sky with color.

"The mass ascension is just magical, unlike anything in the world really that I've seen," said Paul Kluzak, of Phoenix. He has come twice before and arrived this year wearing a foot-tall hat resembling a hot-air balloon, with a camera slung around his neck. "Seeing them all at once is



Hot air balloons take off during the mass ascension at the 52nd Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta in Albuquerque, N.M., on Saturday, Oct. 5. (AP)

just really, really cool."

Companion Heather Kluzak said that words can hardly express the thrill of the event.

"We just like to be a part of it," she said. "It's fun to be out on the field" where the balloons inflate and depart.

This year's fiesta includes 106 balloons in special shapes, 16 of which will be making their fiesta debut. That includes Mazu, modeled after the sea goddess of the same name who is deeply rooted in Taiwanese culture and traditions.

Ordinarily, cool morning temperatures at dawn can help pilots stay in the air longer, or carry more weight. But the morning air was unusually warm on opening day, with many spectators stripping down to T-shirts.

Morning lows and afternoon highs are expected to be above average for days in a city that on Monday recorded its hottest temperature this late in the year, at 93 degrees Fahrenheit (33.8 Celsius), according to the National Weather Service.

Globally, things have been trending hotter too. It's likely this year will end up as the warmest humanity has measured, the European climate service Copernicus reported in early September.

Typically, when the mornings are cool, less fuel is needed to get the balloons to rise. Fiesta veterans explain it is all about generating lift by heating the air inside the envelope to temperatures greater than what is on the outside.

Still, ballooning happens year-round in many places, including in the simmering Phoenix area, which has seen its share of record-breaking temperatures over recent months.

Troy Bradley, an accomplished balloon pilot who has been flying for decades, shrugged off the warmer weather in Albuquerque.

"These are really non-issues from a spectator's standpoint," he said. "I don't see any difference other than they won't be freezing in the pre-dawn hours."

Animation



A statue of the animated character Po, from the 'Kung Fu Panda' films, stands on the DreamWorks Animation campus, Wednesday, Sept. 25, 2024, in Glendale, Calif. (AP)

DreamWorks at 30:

Painting a bright future with 'The Wild Robot'

LOS ANGELES, Oct. 6, (AP) — Filmmaker Chris Sanders had finally cracked "The Wild Robot."

Peter Brown's middle-grade book, about an intelligent robot living in the wilderness, had been sitting on the shelf at DreamWorks Animation for a bit. No one had quite figured it out. Then Sanders, the man behind beloved animated features from "Lilo & Stitch" to "How to Train Your Dragon," came along.

His vision, however, was different from the norm: The story started without zippy dialogue and didn't follow traditional beats. He also wanted to embrace a more illustrated style that melded analog warmth with computer-generated imagery capabilities, which was finally technologically possible. Before he got too deep, he needed to make sure the studio was on board.

"They said, 'That's the reason we bought the book. We want to do something different,'" Sanders said. "One of the great strengths of DreamWorks is they're willing to try new things. To everybody's credit, they stayed the course."

And it's already paying off. "The Wild Robot" opened No. 1 in theaters nationwide this weekend, riding in on a wave of critical acclaim. Sanders didn't know it at the time but something bigger was at play too: "The Wild Robot" would be released coinciding with the studio's 30th anniversary.

It wasn't so long ago that DreamWorks was the new kid on the block. The upstart, founded by Jeffrey Katzenberg, Steven Spielberg and David Geffen, was in October 1994 the first new studio in 60 years. Since their first animated release ("Antz," in 1998), DreamWorks Animation has released 49 feature films that have grossed more than \$17 billion at the box office. They have major franchises, including "Shrek," which became the first best animated feature Oscar winner, "Kung Fu Panda" and "How to Train Your Dragon," originals and Emmy-winning television series.

Animation continues to be a major force at the box office. This year there are already three animated films in the top 10 global earners: Disney and Pixar's "Inside Out 2" (\$1.6 billion), Illumination's "Despicable Me 4" (\$953.3 million) and DreamWorks' "Kung Fu Panda 4" (\$549.1 million). Post-theatrical, too, animated movies are regularly among the top performers on streaming services. Their wildly popular preschool series "Gabby's Dollhouse" was the sixth-most-viewed streaming original series in 2023.

"Every studio has its ups and downs, but their franchises really spoke to me," said Margie Cohn, who was named DreamWorks Animation president in 2019. "They never spoke down to kids, they were movies that were made for the entire family. And they respected animation not as a genre, but as a theatrical

experience."

A veteran of Nickelodeon, Cohn was recruited by Katzenberg in 2013 to build the DWA Television department where she saw opportunities in groundbreaking partnerships with streaming companies like Netflix. Three years into her tenure, DWA, then essentially an independent studio, was acquired by NBCUniversal, a division of Comcast Corp., for \$3.8 billion. Universal also has the animation studio Illumination under its banner. DWA and Illumination (think "Minions" and "Despicable Me") mostly operate separately, with "Shrek" as the one crossover. In her new role, Cohn oversees both film and television properties.

Build

"You don't come to the studio and then suddenly you have a slate. You have to build the slate, and it takes years," Cohn said. "We just needed to get back to those roots."

"The Wild Robot" is a key part of that equation, different visually and thematically from what came before and what's coming. Next year has three films on the schedule: "Dog Man," based on Dav Pilkey's graphic novels about a police officer and dog who become one after an injury, "The Bad Guys 2" and "Gabby's Dollhouse: The Movie." Then, in July 2026, they plan to release the first new Shrek movie in over 15 years.

The diversity of the slate, the appeal to different audience segments from pre-school age on up and the lack of house style, Cohn said, are a great signifier of the ambition of the studio.

"It's still an event for a family to go to the movies, but you have to give them a reason to go," Cohn said. "The bar for theatrical has gotten higher, but that makes us better. It raises the bar for us too."

Critics and audiences have noticed the care taken with "The



This image released by Universal Pictures shows a scene from DreamWorks Animation's 'Wild Robot.' (AP)



DreamWorks employees walk past statues of animated characters Shrek, from the 'Shrek' franchise, (right), and Po, from the 'Kung Fu Panda' franchise. (AP)

Books

Mythical feast

Civil War lessons in 'A Day in Sept'

NEW YORK, Oct. 6, (AP) — About 57,000 books have been published on the American Civil War so what possibly could be left to explore?

Quite a bit, it turns out, particularly regarding the bloodiest battle of the war and in American history, Antietam. In one day of savage fighting, Sept. 17, 1862, an estimated 6,500 soldiers were killed and at least 15,000 wounded.

In 291 brisk, fact-stuffed but engaging, thought-provoking pages, "A Day in September" by Stephen Budiansky examines how ill-prepared we as a nation were for war, but more significantly, what we learned and how those advances led to better military training, rapid improvements in battlefield medical care and the beginnings of a reconciling of the differences in North and South society, values and beliefs.



Budiansky

Some key American institutions at the outbreak of the Civil War were astonishingly primitive and Antietam revealed just how bad. Pre-Civil War, for example, most graduates of the US Military Academy were well-schooled in math and engineering, much less so in military tactics.

Many soldiers lacked even rudimentary training such as target shooting. Militias often behaved like fraternal organizations or a mob, Budiansky writes.

Medical care was primitive. For example, most doctors of the Civil War era did not understand how disease was transmitted. Treatment of the wounded at Antietam typically was chaotic; drivers charged with taking wounded to field hospitals often were drunk, the book observes.

What might have made the book even more engaging would be to carry the lessons learned from these failings to the present day.

For example, can we resolve our current differences peacefully?

This is an absorbing, illuminating, compelling book that calls on us to consider the advances in military strategy, medical care and diplomacy that Antietam gave us at horrific cost.

Salvador Dali hires a young artist with a striking similarity to the goddess Proserpina to model for him in the Sacro Bosco, a mystical garden almost as surreal as Dali himself. But the beautiful Julia Lombardi quickly finds there's more tying her to the legends of Greek and Roman myths than just her looks.

"In the Garden of Monsters" is a Gothic reimagining of the Persephone myth set in Italy shortly after WWII and written delectably by Crystal King, who flexes her historical research and mouthwatering food writing skills.

And when I say mouthwatering, I mean it. King takes full advantage of the pomegranate's role in the story to craft amazing meals, inspired in part by Dali himself.

The novel is a confluence — of art and surrealism, mythology and modernity, ghosts and monsters, sex and romance, history and mystery — that's as surprising and satisfying as the astounding flavor combinations in the dishes described within.

As soon as Julia arrives at the castle near the Sacro Bosco along with Dali; his wife, Gala; a young Italian man to take photographs; and a strapping American to tote around the painting supplies, otherworldly things start happening. And the whole place is somewhat disquieting, what with the unnaturally blank servants and an uncanny glow that sometimes emanates from the garden below.

Wild Robot," which is already in the Oscar conversation. Sanders collaborated more closely with his actors than ever before, including star Lupita Nyong'o, who had the difficult task of voicing a robot, ROZZUM unit 7134, or Roz for short, who has an emotional arc.

"There's a timelessness to it and I loved the core message of kindness being a survival tactic and that sometimes you have to go beyond your programming," Nyong'o said. "But I wanted to know that he was looking for a collaborator not an executor."

Sanders is certain the film wouldn't be nearly what it is without the thoughtfulness she applied to "deconstructing the architecture of Roz's mind."

Animation technology also allowed more human involvement on the project than he's had since "Lilo & Stitch," which came out 22 years ago.

"Every square inch of this film is painted by a matte painter: Every tree, every ground plane, every rock, every flower is a stroke made by a human being," Sanders said. "I started in animation when everything was hand-drawn and painted, and then CGI came along and we got so many wonderful things, including the ability to change lenses and move the camera in space."

But then we lost touch with a lot of the analog warmth we used to get. Now we put all that stuff back and kept all the wonderful things that we got along the way. It's a very exciting time."

Another interesting thing happened to those involved with "The Wild Robot." Nobody wanted it to end.

"Usually, even if you love the movie, you're proud of it, you're ready to be done after three or four years. But that wasn't the case in this instance," Sanders said. "Everybody went into this forest and fell in love with it and fell in love with the characters and the story."

While no sequels have officially been announced, "The Wild Robot" is a three-book series and Sanders is eager to jump back into the forest. Animation, he said, has come out of a tunnel where they're freer to maneuver stylistically than they have been for decades; He's extremely optimistic about the possibilities. DreamWorks Animation is as well.

"We are really proud of where we are today at our 30th anniversary, and we have enormous hope for the future," Cohn said. "We're excited about the originals still and we hope and believe that audiences will be, too. So, we're going to forge forward with originals as well as wildly imagined franchises and hopefully it'll take us into another 30 years."

The Conversation

Early screening vital

Gut microbe may predict autism, ADHD risk: study

By Angelica P. Ahrens and Eric W. Triplett, University of Florida, and Johnny Ludvigsson, Linköping University

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

Early screening for neurodevelopmental disorders such as autism is important to ensure children have the support they need to gain the essential skills for daily life. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that all children be screened for developmental delays, with additional screening for those who are preterm or have a low birth weight.

However, the US Preventive Services Task Force has called for more research into the effectiveness of current autism screening practices. Primarily based on milestone checklists and symptoms, autism diagnoses also currently rely on observations of behavior that often manifests after crucial developmental stages have passed.

Researchers and clinicians are working to develop simple, reliable tools that could identify early signs or risk factors of a condition before symptoms are obvious. While early screening can lead to the risk of overdiagnosis, understanding a child's developmental needs can help guide families toward resources that address those needs sooner.

Autoimmunity

We are researchers who study the role the microbiome plays in a variety of conditions, such as mental illness, autoimmunity, obesity, preterm birth and others. In our recently published research on Swedish children, we found that microbes and the metabolites they produce in the guts of infants - both found in poop and cord blood - could help screen for a child's risk of neurodevelopmental conditions such as autism. And these differences can be detected as early as birth or within the first year of life. These markers were evident, on average, over a decade before the children were diagnosed.

Biomarkers are biological indicators - such as genes, proteins or metabolites in blood, stool or other types of samples - that signal the presence of a condition at a certain point in time. There are no known biomarkers for autism. Efforts to find biomarkers have been largely hindered by the fact that autism has many potential pathways that lead to it, and researchers tend to ignore how these causes may work together as a whole.

One potential biomarker for neurodevelopmental conditions such as autism are gut microbes. The connection between the gut and brain, or the gut-brain axis, is an area of considerable interest among scientists. Gut microbes play significant roles in health, including in immunity, neurotransmitter balance, digestive health and much more.

A lot of work has been done around mapping what a "typical" microbiome looks like based on age and organ system. Researchers have shown that the microbiome is personalized enough that it can distinguish two people or two households even better than genetics, with differences in colonization starting very early in life.

The microbiome undergoes immense changes during childhood. It

shapes and is shaped by the immune system and influenced by life changes and events. It is also influenced by factors like genetics, environment, lifestyle, infection and medications.

Gastrointestinal symptoms such as diarrhea, pain and constipation are common in children with autism and ADHD, with as many as 30% to 70% of autism patients also diagnosed with functional gastrointestinal disorders. Untreated GI issues can also lead to additional sleep and behavioral disorders among these children. A small pilot study found that children with autism showed improvements in gastrointestinal and autism-related symptoms after having healthy microbes transferred into their guts, with some benefits lasting up to two years.

Most studies on the microbiome and neurodevelopmental conditions, however, are restricted to people who are already diagnosed with ADHD, autism or other conditions, and these studies often show mixed results. These limitations raise an important question: Does the microbiome play a direct role in the development of autism and other neurodevelopmental conditions, or are changes in microbiome composition a consequence of the conditions themselves?

Some investigations have proposed that the microbiome has little or no association with future autism. However, these studies have a notable limitation: They don't examine microbial imbalances prior to diagnosis or symptom onset. Instead, these studies focus on children already diagnosed with autism, comparing them to their siblings and unrelated neurotypical children. In most cases, dietary data and samples are collected several years after diagnosis, meaning the study cannot test for whether microbial imbalances cause autism.

We wondered whether studying the bacteria residing in small children before they are diagnosed or show symptoms of autism or other conditions could give us a clue into their neurodevelopment. So, we examined the cord blood and stool collected at approximately 1 year of age from participants of an ongoing study called All Babies in Southeast Sweden, which follows the health of approximately 17,000 children born between 1997 and 1999 and their parents. We have followed these children since birth, nearly 1,200 of whom were later diagnosed with a neurodevelopmental disorder by age 23.

We found significant differences in bacterial composition and metabolite levels that developed before symptoms of neurodevelopmental conditions - such as gastrointestinal upset, crankiness and sleep problems - as well as formal medical diagnoses. These differences spanned many conditions, including autism, ADHD and speech disorders.

Next, we linked bacteria to neurotransmitters - chemical signals that help brain cells communicate - and vitamins such as riboflavin and vitamin B in the child's stool. Given previous research on children and adults already diagnosed with a neurodevelopmental disorder, we expected to find differences in the microbiome composition and health between those with and without neurodevelopmental conditions. (AP)

Virus nearly fatal for 88% of victims

Rwanda to test Marburg shot as deaths rise

KIGALI, Rwanda, Oct 6, (Agencies): Rwandan health authorities will begin a vaccine study against the Marburg hemorrhagic fever, officials said Sunday, as the East African country tries to stop the spread of an outbreak that has killed 12 people.

Rwanda, which received 700 doses of a vaccine under trial from the US-based Sabin Vaccine Institute on Saturday, will target health workers and emergency responders as well as individuals who have been in contact with confirmed cases, according to the Health Ministry.

Health Minister Sabin Nsanzimana told reporters Sunday that the Rwanda Biomedical Centre had reviewed the vaccine shipment.

There is no authorized vaccine or treatment for Marburg.

Like Ebola, the Marburg virus is believed to originate in fruit bats and spreads between people through close contact with the bodily fluids of infected individuals or with surfaces, such as contaminated bed sheets. Without treatment, Marburg can be fatal in up to 88% of people who fall ill with the disease.

In a statement, Sabin Vaccine Institute said it had "entered into a clinical trial agreement with the Rwanda Biomedical



In this Oct. 8, 2014 photo, a medical worker from the Infection Prevention and Control unit wearing full protective equipment carries a meal to an isolation tent housing a man being quarantined after coming into contact in Uganda with a carrier of the Marburg virus, at the Kenyatta National Hospital in Nairobi, Kenya. (AP)

Centre, the trial sponsor, to provide investigational doses" for the study.

The Rwandan government said there were 46 confirmed cases, with 29 of them in isolation. Health authorities have identified at least 400 people

who came into contact with confirmed cases of the virus.

Rwanda declared an outbreak of Marburg on Sept. 27 and reported six deaths a day later. Authorities said at the time that the first cases had been

found among patients in health facilities. There is still no confirmation of the source of the outbreak.

Symptoms include fever, muscle pains, diarrhea, vomiting and, in some cases, death through extreme blood loss.

In Rwanda, most of the sick are health workers in six out of the country's 30 districts. Some patients live in districts bordering Congo, Burundi, Uganda and Tanzania, according to the World Health Organization.

Rwandans have been urged to avoid physical contact to help curb the spread. Strict measures include the suspension of school and hospital visits as well as a restriction on the number of those who can attend funerals for Marburg victims. Home vigils aren't allowed in the event a death is linked to Marburg.

The U.S. Embassy in Kigali has urged its staff to work remotely and avoid visiting offices.

Marburg outbreaks and individual cases have in the past been recorded in Tanzania, Equatorial Guinea, Angola, Congo, Kenya, South Africa, Uganda and Ghana, according to WHO.

The virus was first identified in 1967, after it caused simultaneous outbreaks of disease in laboratories in Marburg, Germany and Belgrade, Serbia.

Tech for aging independence

MAMA conference spotlights remote care for aging adults

WASHINGTON, Oct 6, (AP): The Medical Alert Monitoring Association (MAMA) successfully concluded its annual conference held in Washington D.C. Sept 24 and 25, bringing together industry leaders, healthcare professionals, and advocates for aging adults. The two-day event focused on advancing technology to support the independence and safety of older Americans.

Key discussions and presentations engaged with senior healthcare leaders, including Dr. Jean Accius, CEO of Creating Healthier Communities, who highlighted trends in senior tech innovation and care at home. Susan Janeczko, Deputy Director of Outpatient Care at the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), shared insights into evolving CMS reimbursement policies. Additionally, Martha Roherty, Executive Director of Advancing States, spoke to the latest trends in Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS) and the expanding use of Personal Emergency Response

Systems (PERS) within Managed Care Programs.

The conference brought together industry experts to exchange ideas, share innovative solutions, and collaborate on creating an environment that supports the safety, independence, and well-being of the growing senior population.

"This year's conference demonstrated our industry's commitment to both technological advancement and advocacy for aging adults," said MAMA President Geoff Gross. "As our aging population becomes one of the largest demographics in the U.S., the need for innovative monitoring solutions and strong policy support becomes increasingly crucial."

Gross, founder and CEO of Medical Guardian, was named president of MAMA this year, marking a new chapter for the organization as they place a greater emphasis on advocacy in healthcare for aging adults, individuals with disabilities, and those with chronic conditions.

'Awareness is power'

Functional fitness key to prevent, combat cancer

AUSTIN, Texas, Oct 6, (AP): F45 Training, a global leader in community-based group fitness, is teaming up with the American Cancer Society (ACS) - a leading cancer-fighting organization with a vision of ending cancer as we know it, for everyone - to bring increased awareness around cancer, the potential benefits of functional fitness as preventative care, and the importance of community for those affected through the launch of its 45-day initiative.

According to the ACS, approximately 18 percent of all cancers and roughly 16 percent of cancer-related deaths in the US are contributed to a number of preventative factors - including excess body weight, physical inactivity, alcohol consumption and/

or poor nutrition. To help raise awareness for these alarming statistics and help support the important work of the ACS, F45 members nationwide can register and participate in the annual F45 Challenge beginning October 7.

As part of the initiative, from October 21-27, F45 will take it's awareness and educational efforts up a notch by partnering with Battle Cancer - an organization that raises awareness and funds for cancer charities through epic fitness experiences - to offer members the chance to participate in and donate to a special . As a global F45 team, members will work together to hit a combined 20-million-point target, representing the 20 million people who are diagnosed globally with cancer each year.



A nurse prepares to administer a vaccine against mpox, at the General hospital, in Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo Saturday, Oct. 5. (AP)

Drive targets only adults

Mpox vaccinations begin in Congo to slow spread

GOMA, Congo, Oct 6, (AP): Congolese authorities Saturday began vaccinations against mpox, nearly two months after the disease outbreak that spread from Congo to several African countries and beyond was declared a global emergency by the World Health Organization.

The 265,000 doses donated to Congo by the European Union and the US were rolled out in the eastern city of Goma in North Kivu province, where hospitals and health workers have been overstretched, struggling to contain the new and possibly more infectious strain of mpox.

Congo, with about 30,000 suspected mpox cases and 859 deaths, accounts for more than 80% of all the cases and 99%

of all the deaths reported in Africa this year. All of the Central African nation's 26 provinces have recorded mpox cases.

Although most mpox infections and deaths recorded in Congo are in children under age 15, the doses being administered are only meant for adults and will be given to at-risk populations and front-line workers, Health Minister Roger Kamba said this week.

"Strategies have been put in place by the services in order to vaccinate all targeted personnel," Muboyayi Chikaya, the minister's chief of staff, said as he kicked off the vaccination.

At least 3 million doses of the vaccine approved for use in children are expected from Japan in the coming days, Kamba said.

Sudan gets 1.4m cholera shots

KHARTOUM, Oct 6, (Xinhua): Sudan's health ministry said on Saturday it has received 1.4 million doses of cholera vaccine from international organizations, as the country grapples with an outbreak that has infected over 20,000 people.

Health Minister Haitham Mohamed Ibrahim said in a statement that 1,407,200 doses were provided

by the Global Vaccine Alliance, World Health Organization, and UNICEF.

The vaccines will be distributed to three states - River Nile, Kassala, and Gedaref - to immunize 1,058,545 people aged one year and older, Ibrahim said, adding that efforts to supply vaccines to other affected areas would continue.

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'I want to push myself as much as I can...'

Pereira wins by TKO over Rountree Jr. to retain UFC crown

SALT LAKE CITY, Oct 6, (AP): Alex Pereira retained the UFC light heavy-weight crown by beating Khalil Rountree Jr. by TKO with 28 seconds left in the fourth round at UFC 307.

It was the fourth straight title bout for Pereira (12-2) and his third consecutive successful title defense.

"I want to push myself as much as I can. I'm 37 and I want to take advantage of time but I do need to take a break," Pereira said on fighting four bouts in a less than a year.

Rountree (14-6) showcased his speed early and delivered several hard strikes. At one point, in the second round, he ducked under a roundhouse kick and countered with a strong hook to the face. But Pereira showed more accuracy and consistency in landing blows during the early rounds.

"You knew it was going to be a badass fight," UFC CEO Dana White said.

Stamina favored Pereira in the fourth round. He found his range and

timing and put Rountree on his heels. Pereira forced him to repeatedly cover his face to block strikes and eventually backed him against the fence. He rained blows on Rountree and dropped him to his knees, leading the referee to stop the fight.

"When (Pereira) started calf kicking him, he was destroying that leg," White said. "He was having trouble putting pressure on it and he was having trouble with his punching power, his movement, everything. He systematically just started picking him apart."

Pereira's victory headlined five main card fights on Saturday night.

Juliana Peña defeated Raquel Pennington via split decision (48-47, 47-48, 48-47) to reclaim the women's bantamweight crown in a bout billed as the co-main event. Peña originally held the crown after defeating Amanda Nunes at UFC 269 in 2021 and then lost it to Nunes in a rematch at UFC 277 in 2022.



In this file photo, Alex Pereira fights against Israel Adesanya in a middleweight title match during UFC 287 at the Kaseya Center in downtown Miami. (AP)

Peña (13-5) fought her first UFC bout in two years. She was originally scheduled to challenge Nunes for the

title again at UFC 289 but pulled out a month before the fight after suffering broken ribs during training. The loss

snapped a five-fight winning streak for Pennington (16-10) extending back to 2020.

"I am the true Ultimate Fighter," said Peña, referencing how both fighters competed on Season 18 of The Ultimate Fighter TV show earlier in their careers. "I am the last woman standing."

Peña dominated the early rounds. She dragged Pennington to the canvas in the second and scored a repeat takedown after sweeping her leg in the third. Both times, Pennington struggled to free herself from her grasp.

Pennington briefly shifted momentum with a fourth-round knockdown off a vicious right hook. She was the better striker through five rounds, but it wasn't enough to prevail.

"I know that I am tough," Peña said. "I know that I am durable, and I know that I'm never out of the fight. I'm never going to give up on myself, so you're literally going to have to kill me in there to get me to stop."

Kayla Harrison defeated Ketlen Vieira by unanimous decision (30-27, 30-27, 29-28) in the other women's bantamweight bout. Harrison (18-1) made a big statement while outlasting Vieira (14-4), who entered the bout as the No. 2 ranked bantamweight fighter. She bulldozed Vieira to the canvas in the first round and again in the third and kept her shoulders pinned to the floor in the third round until the final horn.

The win opens a door for Harrison, ranked No. 3 before the bout, to challenge Peña for the title. She has made a steady climb since becoming an MMA fighter after winning a pair of Olympic gold medals in judo for Team USA in 2012 and 2016.

Roman Dolgiz (14-3) beat Kevin Holland by TKO in the middleweight bout, his sixth victory in eight bouts. Holland (26-12) bowed out before the start of the second round after suffering a rib injury and walked away with a loss for the third time in his last four bouts.

Galaxy closes in on West top seed

Inter Miami dampens Toronto postseason hopes



Sporting Kansas City defender Joaquin Fernandez, left, and Los Angeles FC attacker Olivier Giroud (9) battle for the ball during the first half of an MLS soccer match in Kansas City, Kan. (AP)

CARSON, Calif., Oct 6, (AP): Dejan Joveljić scored the go-ahead goal in the 76th minute, Gabriel Pec became the second Los Angeles player to score in four straight matches this season and the Galaxy moved closer to wrapping up the top seed in the Western Conference with a 2-1 victory over Austin FC on Saturday night.

Sebastián Driussi evened it in the 55th minute for Austin (10-14-9), but it wasn't enough as it was eliminated from MLS postseason contention.

Joveljić and Pec both have 15 goals this season for the Galaxy (19-7-7), who are six points ahead of Los Angeles FC and on the verge of finishing first in the Western Conference for the first time since 2011.

LAFC has one game in hand due to advancing to the Leagues Cup final earlier this season. It will have its rescheduled match at Vancouver on Oct. 13.

Leo Campana took a pass from Luis Suárez and scored in the third minute of second-half stoppage time, 38-year-old goalkeeper Oscar Ustari had seven saves and a clean sheet in his first start in the league, and Inter Miami put a

damper on Toronto FC's playoff hopes with a 1-0 victory. Lionel Messi, coming off a two-goal effort in Inter Miami's win over the Columbus Crew on Wednesday, entered in the 61st minute. He has 17 goals and 15 assists in 18 appearances this season.

Campana scored for the eighth time this season for Inter Miami (21-4-8), which has already wrapped up the Supporters' Shield and the top seed in the



Charlotte FC forward Patrick Agyemang, center, scores a goal past CF Montréal goalkeeper Jonathan Sirois (40) as defender Joel Waterman (16) looks on during the second half of an MLS soccer match in Charlotte, N.C. Charlotte FC won 2-0. (AP)

postseason that comes with it. Suárez notched his seventh assist to go with 18 goals after subbing into the match in the 71st minute.

Pedro Santos opened the scoring in the third minute, Golden Boot leader Christian Benteke scored his 23rd goal, and D.C. United beat the New England Revolution 2-1.

Benteke tied Raúl Díaz Arce's record from 1996 for the most single-

season goals in club history.

D.C. United (10-13-10), which is still alive for a playoff spot, has a two-week break from regular-season play before returning for Decision Day on Oct. 19.

Alexey Miranchuk scored on a penalty kick in the 75th minute and he added an assist on Tyler Wolff's stoppage-time goal as Atlanta United kept its playoff hopes alive with a 2-1 victory over the New York Red Bulls. Atlanta (9-14-10), which came into the match in 12th place in the Eastern Conference, avoided getting eliminated from playoff contention. Atlanta concludes the regular season against Orlando on Oct. 19.

Albert Rusnák scored a goal in the 48th minute, Stefan Frei had three saves and the Seattle Sounders beat the Colorado Rapids 1-0.

Seattle (16-9-8) has 56 points, third most in the Western Conference and just two behind second-place Los Angeles FC. The Sounders have won three games in a row - all shutouts - and have five wins during their current six-game unbeaten streak.

Colorado (15-13-5) has lost three games in a row and four of its last five. The Rapids are sixth in the Western Conference with 49 points, a point behind the Houston Dynamo and a point ahead of seventh-place Minnesota United.

Sinner, Alcaraz advance

Gauff wins China Open

BEIJING, Oct 6, (AP): Coco Gauff won her second title this season with a lopsided 6-1, 6-3 victory over Karolina Muchova in the final of the China Open on Sunday.

Aged 20, the sixth-ranked U.S. player became the youngest China Open champion in 14 years. She is also the second American champion in Beijing, following Serena Williams' title runs in 2004 and 2013.

"Honestly, it means a lot when I saw that the last American woman to win this was Serena Williams," Gauff said. "Anytime my name is mentioned in whatever sentence hers is, it's a huge honor."

It was Gauff's eighth career title. She improved her record in tour finals to 8-1 and has now a 7-0 record in hard-court finals, a feat never achieved before in the Open Era.

"That's pretty cool," Gauff said. "I hope somebody else breaks it. I think records are meant to be broken, honestly."

Gauff, who defended her Auckland title earlier this season, wasted no time and took the opening set in just 31 minutes. She dropped just five points on her first serve, hit 24 winners and broke Muchova five times.

Gauff's win in Beijing improved her chances of qualifying for the WTA Finals featuring the eight top players for the third consecutive year. With her title, she will overtake Jessica Pegula to take the No. 5 spot ahead of the final WTA 1000 tournament of the season, the Wuhan Open starting Monday.

Top-ranked Jannik Sinner overcame a one set deficit to rally to a 6-7 (3), 6-4, 6-2 win against Tomas Martin Etcheverry at the Shanghai Masters.

A night after winning his 250th career match with a straight-sets victory, the 23-year-old Italian faced a much sterner third-round examination against the No. 37-ranked

Argentine under the roof inside Qizhong Forest Sports City Arena that hosted play due to rain.

Sinner will next play either No. 16-ranked Ben Shelton, who beat the Italian here last year, or Roberto Carballes Baena of Spain.

Etcheverry produced the shot of the night with a stunning drop volley to bring up set point in the first set tiebreak, which he converted to take the lead.

Sinner began to better find his range in the second and after trading breaks midway through the set, the Italian found another opportunity to level the match.

The momentum was all with Sinner in the third as he broke Etcheverry twice more to advance in 2 hours, 39 minutes under a retractable roof on the Qizhong Forest Sports City Arena. Due to heavy rain, play was restricted to the main court with all matches on outside courts postponed to Monday.

"It was a very tough match, physically (and) mentally, so I am very happy to get through this one," said Sinner, who is chasing a seventh title this year.

Fifth-ranked Daniil Medvedev also came from behind for a 5-7, 6-4, 6-4 victory against Matteo Arnaldi to book his fourth-round berth against either 12th-ranked Stefanos Tsitsipas or Alexandre Muller.

The 28-year-old Medvedev was forced to dig deep to level the match after the Italian took a tight first set.

In the deciding set, Medvedev's experience and composure came to the fore as he clinched a vital break in the ninth game and held firm to close out the match in 2 hours, 44 minutes.

Second-ranked Carlos Alcaraz, who won the China Open on Wednesday for his fourth title of the year, defeated Chinese player Wu Yibing 7-6 (5), 6-3.



Coco Gauff of the United States celebrates with the championship trophy after defeating Karolina Muchova of Czech Republic in the women's singles final match at the China Open tennis tournament at the National Tennis Center in Beijing. (AP)

Lin and Sun win all-Chinese finals

BEIJING, Oct 6, (Xinhua): Sixth seed Lin Shidong and top-ranked Sun Yingsha claimed men's and women's singles titles respectively to round up China's clean sweep of titles at the World Table Tennis (WTT) China Smash here on Sunday.

19-year-old Lin faced six-time Olympic champion Ma Long in a thrilling seven-set battle, securing a 4-3 victory (11-4, 7-11, 5-11, 13-15, 11-4, 11-5, 11-8). With this trophy, Lin took his first WTT Grand Smash singles title and third WTT Series singles title this season.

"First, I want to congratulate Lin, he played excellently in recent matches, and I hope our young Chinese players like him can get more attention from the audience. I'm proud of how I fought in the tournament and have no regrets. It's a moment I will cherish," Ma noted, expressing his gratitude towards his supporters.

"I think Captain Ma deserved all the applause today. We both fought hard and tried our best to win. This trophy means a lot to me," Lin said.

In the women's draw, 23-year-old Sun continued her impressive form by overcoming second seed

Wang Manyu 4-2 (11-6, 12-14, 11-4, 6-11, 11-8, 11-7). Sun's skill was especially on display in the third set, as she came back from 2-0 down and bagged ten consecutive points to extend her lead.

"Today's match was tough and also excellent. Whenever I compete against Manyu, it is quite fierce because we are very familiar with each other," said Sun, whose win was her first WTT Grand Smash singles title of the season and second in her career.

"As this is the first WTT Grand Smash event in Beijing, I am pleased to have made such good memories here," Sun reflected. "I'm grateful for the support of spectators and hope to see you next time." The 11-day WTT China Smash, the third and final WTT Grand Smash event of 2024, features a prize pool of two million U.S. dollars, with champions in each of the five events earning 2,000 ITTF world ranking points.

Beijing has been selected to host the China Smash from 2024 to 2028 at Shougang Park in the city's western suburbs, where the 2022 Winter Olympic venue, Big Air Shougang, is located.

3-match series to kick off in Multan today

England aiming to challenge 'struggling' Pakistan with new-look attack in 1st test

MULTAN, Pakistan, Oct 6, (AP): England is aiming to challenge struggling Pakistan with a new-look pace attack in the opening test of a three-match series, starting in the searing heat of Multan on Monday.

Fast bowler Brydon Carse will make his test debut with Gus Atkinson set to play his first overseas test after his impressive home season against the West Indies and Sri Lanka.

All-rounder Chris Woakes was penciled in to the starting XI after Ben Stokes was ruled out for the fourth successive test match due to ongoing rehabilitation on his injured hamstring. Woakes will be playing his first match in two-and-a-half years and it will be his first test in Asia since 2016.

Carse's pace gave him the edge over Olly Stone and Matthew Potts for the tour of Pakistan and England hopes the Durham pace bowler will challenge the batters by regularly clocking over

90mph.

England will be led by Ollie Pope, who guided the team to a 2-1 home series against Sri Lanka in the absence of the injured Stokes. The England captain sustained his hamstring injury during the Hundred and might return to lead the side in the second test, also in Multan.

"I was kind of just learning on the job," Pope said. "Obviously my first time captain abroad. Ben's going to be around as well... so I can listen to the voices around me but still keep doing things in my way."

England flattened Pakistan 3-0 through its high-risk, high-reward "Bazball" approach during the 2022 tour when it played at Multan, Karachi and Rawalpindi.

They were scheduled to play at the same venues this time around, but renovation work at the National Bank Stadium in Karachi for next year's

Champions Trophy forced the Pakistan Cricket Board to organize back-to-back tests at Multan with Rawalpindi set to host the third test on Oct. 24.

England also named spinners Jack Leach and Shoaib Bashir in the playing XI in anticipation of the pitch flattening out in temperatures of 40 degrees Celsius that are expected over the next week in Multan. Leach was the second highest wicket-taker in the last series in Pakistan with 15 wickets.

"Everyone's so happy to have Leach in and around the squad for this series," Pope said. "We obviously saw how well he bowled last time here on pitches that (are) always offering a great deal... and he's worked closely with Shoaib Bashir throughout his Somerset career and those guys go really well."

Pakistan has strengthened its batting line-up by including all-rounder Aamer Jamal for the first test after be-

ing routed 2-0 by Bangladesh at home in the last series. Shan Masood has lost all five test matches since he was elevated to red-ball captain.

Masood lost 3-0 to Australia in his debut series as test skipper when Jamal took 18 wickets and came in handy as a batter down the order. Jamal missed the series against Bangladesh because he was undergoing rehabilitation on a back injury.

"We have got an edge with the return of Aamer Jamal," Masood said. "He also bats down the order and picked up 18 wickets. We have (leg-spinner) Abrar and (off-spinner) Salman to give us spin options."

Pakistan has a woeful record in home test matches and hasn't won at home since beating South Africa 2-0 in early 2021, while losing to England, Australia and Bangladesh. New Zealand also came close, but Pakistan managed to draw the series 0-0.

Real bounces back from Champions League loss

Carvajal confirms ligament injury

MADRID, Oct 7, (Agencies): Real Madrid rebounded from its first loss in nearly 10 months by beating Villarreal 2-0 at the possible cost of injured right back Dani Carvajal in La Liga.

Federico Valverde and Vinicius Júnior scored for the defending champions four days after they lost at Lille 1-0 in the Champions League to halt a 36-game unbeaten streak in all competitions.

Madrid remains unbeaten in 41 consecutive Spanish league games. Beating third-placed Villarreal gave Madrid the same 21 points.

Real Madrid are likely to be without Spain international right back Dani Carvajal for the remainder of the season, after he injured his cruciate knee ligament during Saturday night's 2-0 win at home to Villarreal.

The defender had to be carried off the pitch in clear pain after a collision with Villarreal's Jeremy Pino in injury time and later posted on social media in the early hours of Sunday morning that: "serious cruciate ligament injury confirmed, I'm going to have to go through surgery and be off the field for a few months."

"Already looking forward to starting recovery and coming back like a beast," added the 32-year-old.

Real Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti had previously admitted that he was "worried" for Carvajal in his side's seventh game inside four weeks.

"Something happened that happens a lot, because of the calendar, and it happened to a very, very important player for us," added the coach.

Carvajal's injury leaves Real Madrid with only Lucas Vazquez as their only right back specialist in the first team squad.

The defender had been included in Luis de la Fuente's Spain squad for forthcoming games against Denmark and Serbia, while De la Fuente will presumably now look for a replacement.

Ancelotti also explained that Vinicius Jr, who scored Real Madrid's second goal in the win has also damaged his neck and is a doubt for the upcoming international break with Brazil.

Valverde scored in the 14th minute with a long-range shot that deflected off a defender. Vinicius struck from outside the area in the 72nd into the top corner.

Celta Vigo striker Iago Aspas was sent off in a 1-0 win at last-placed Las Palmas after being issued consecutive yellow cards for protesting.

He complained about the referee's decision to show a red card to teammate Ilaix Moriba and received the first yellow in the 54th minute. Aspas' second came in the 56th. The striker was seen briefly asking his teammates to leave the field after he was sent off.

Celta held on despite playing two men down to the end of the match. Borja Iglesias scored a 28th-minute winner in the visitor's only attempt on goal. The result ended a three-game winless streak for Celta.



Real Madrid's Luka Modric, left, and Villarreal's Alex Baena fight for the ball during the La Liga soccer match between Real Madrid and Villarreal in Madrid, Spain. (AP)



Players fighting for the ball during Al-Hilal and Al-Ahli match.

Al-Hilal continues perfect run in Saudi league

RIYADH, Oct 6: Al-Hilal staged a comeback to secure a 2-1 victory over Al-Ahli Jeddah in the marquee clash of the Saudi Roshn League's sixth round. This marks Al-Hilal's sixth consecutive win, tying a historic achievement for the second time.

Al-Ahli Jeddah initially took the lead through Spaniard Gabriel Vega,

who scored in the 12th minute. However, Al-Hilal turned the match around with two goals from Serbian striker Aleksandar Mitrovic in the 56th and 78th minutes.

This victory brings Al-Hilal to a perfect 18 points from six matches, repeating a similar streak from the 2018-2019 season under Portuguese coach Jorge Jesus, when the team

won nine consecutive matches.

In another match, Cristiano Ronaldo and Sadio Mane led Al-Nassr to a commanding 3-0 win over Al-Arabi, bringing Al-Nassr's total to 14 points and placing them in third. Al-Arabi remains with seven points in 11th place.

Al-Taawoun secured a 2-0 win against Al-Fateh.

Tashkent on track for Asian Youth Games: Al-Musallam

TASHKENT, Oct 6: Captain Hussain Al-Musallam, Director General of the Olympic Council of Asia, conducted an inspection tour of the Olympic Village in Yashnabad, Tashkent, Uzbekistan, which is set to host the 2025 Asian Summer Youth Games.

During his visit, Al-Musallam reviewed the latest progress in the development of the sports facilities that will be used for the upcoming competitions.

Expressing his satisfaction, Al-Musallam stated that he was pleased with the progress at the Olympic Village, noting that preparations are on track to ensure the facilities are ready well ahead of the Games.

He highlighted that the sports venues, including the cycling arena, football stadium, athletics track, swimming pool complex, and other facilities, are being built according to international sports standards. Al-Musallam emphasized the importance of the "Tashkent 2025" Asian Youth Games as a qualifying event for the Youth Olympic Games in



Captain Hussain Al-Musallam inspecting Tashkent facilities.

Dakar, Senegal, in 2026.

Furthermore, he pointed out that these newly developed facilities will play a crucial role in

Uzbekistan's sports future, positioning the country as a potential host for larger international events and championships.

England hand Bangladesh second straight loss at World Cup

Indian women notch cautious win over Pakistan

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates, Oct 6, (AP): India notched a cautious six-wicket win over its sub-continent archrival Pakistan for its first points at the Women's T20 World Cup on Sunday.

Pakistan was stifled by fast bowler Arundhati Reddy (3-19) and off-spinner Shreyanka Patil (2-12) to score a modest 105-8 on a slow wicket at the Dubai International Stadium with seasoned Nida Dar top-scoring with 28 off 34 balls.

India, which lost its first group A game against New Zealand by 58 runs, reached 108-4 in 18.5 overs as captain Harmanpreet Kaur made a calm 29 off 24 balls before retiring hurt late in the chase.

With only two needed for victory Kaur briefly lost her balance but regained her ground as wicketkeeper Muneeba Ali missed a stumping opportunity. Kaur clutched the back of her neck as she walked back to the dug out before Sajeevan Sajana reached the target with a boundary.

Despite the win, India is still fourth in the group with a poor net run-rate of -1.217 behind third place Pakistan, which beat Sri Lanka in its opening game and has a net run-rate of 0.555. New Zealand and Australia occupy the first two spots after winning their respective opening group games.

India had squeezed Pakistan to 7-71 in the 15th over despite Asha Sobhana dropping two easy catches off Muneeba Ali (17) and captain Fatima Sana (13). Muneeba's struggling knock of 26 balls finally ended when she got stumped off Patil's wide ball.

Sana smashed two boundaries but was brilliantly snapped by wicketkeeper Richa Gosh, who plucked a one-handed catch over her head behind the wicket to give some consolation to leg-spinner Sobhana (1-24) for her early lapse in the field.

Dar held the innings together in the death overs with a 28-run partnership with Syeda Aroob Shah,

who scored 14, before Reddy had Dar clean bowled in the final over.

India's batting powerhouse was over-cautious against Pakistan's spin heavy bowling attack in their run-chase. Shafali Verma, who top-scored with 32 off 35 balls, successfully overturned a leg before wicket decision against her through television referral early in her knock but India's top-order batters struck only five boundaries in their entire run-chase.

Sana (2-23) picked up two late wickets off successive balls when Jemimah Rodrigues (23) and Gosh both were caught behind. Sana came close to have Deepti Sharma lbw in her final over but the on-field decision was overturned by the third umpire when TV replays suggested the batter had got a thick inside edge.



India's Jemimah Rodrigues plays a shot during the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2024 match between Pakistan and India at Dubai International Stadium, United Arab Emirates. (AP)

England defeated Bangladesh by 21 runs, handing the tournament host a second straight group loss and sending it to the verge of falling out of semifinals contention.

Danielle Wyatt-Hodge led England by scoring 41 off 40 in their 118-7. Bangladesh could make only 97-7 despite Sobhana Mostary's 44 off 48.

Maia Bouchier gave England a good start with 23 off 18. She hit three fours and put on 48 off 40 balls for the opening stand with Wyatt-Hodge.

Bangladesh's spinners went to work and leg-spinner Fahima Khatun grabbed 2-18 in four overs, and left-armer Nahida Akter 2-32.

They removed the opening duo and Nat Sciver-Brunt for 2. Ritu Moni bowled Heather Knight for 6 and England was 76-4.

When Wyatt-Hodge, who struck five fours, fell in the 13th over - stumped off Aktar - England's batting was unable to kick on.

Only Amy Jones (12) also reached double figures as England scored 42 runs off the last 47 deliveries.

Mostary's second 35-plus score in consecutive games propped up Bangladesh's innings. She hit a four and a six.

But only one other batter reached double figures, Nigar Sultana's 15 off 20 balls. Her run out in the 12th over changed their course.

Sultana and Mostary rebuilt the innings from 17-2 in the fifth over by putting on 34.

Mostary held one end together and was last out, lbw, in the 19th over, but Bangladesh had already lost momentum in its chase.

Juventus held by Cagliari in front of watching Pogba

MILAN, Oct 6, (AP): It was another chaotic day for Juventus on Sunday.

A late Razvan Marin penalty saw visitors Cagliari rescue a 1-1 draw in Serie A.

That was the first goal Juventus had conceded in the league this season. To add insult to injury, Juventus winger Francisco Conceição was sent off moments later following a second yellow card.

Juventus nevertheless became the only unbeaten team in Serie A after Empoli lost 2-1 at Lazio.

It had been a drama-filled week on and off the field for Juventus, which fought back from 2-1 down with 10 men to win 3-2 at Leipzig in the Champions League on Wednesday.

Much of the talk before the match had been about midfielder Paul Pogba's four-year ban for doping being reduced to 18 months on Friday.

Juventus sporting director Cristiano Giuntoli didn't seem too keen to welcome the France World Cup winner back when asked about Pogba before the match.

Pogba, who will be free to resume his career in March, was watching from the stands.

Juventus took the lead in the 15th minute when Dusan Vlahovic drilled a penalty into the bottom right corner after Cagliari defender Sebastiano Luperto was adjudged to have handled the ball.

The Juventus players rushed to the touchline to celebrate by holding up Gleison Bremer's shirt following their teammate's serious injury midweek.

Just as it seemed Juventus was heading for the win, the visitors were awarded a penalty of their own after Bianconeri midfielder Douglas Luiz collided with Cagliari forward Roberto Piccoli.

Marin struck the spotkick into the top left corner to level the game with two minutes remaining.

Less than a minute later Conceição went down in the penalty area after feeling Adam Obert's hand on his shoulder. He was immediately shown a second yellow card for simulation and dismissed.

Cagliari almost completed the fight-back in the fifth minute of stoppage



Lazio's Mattia Zaccagni celebrates after scoring his side's first goal during the Serie A soccer match between SS Lazio and Empoli at the Rome's Olympic stadium, Italy. (AP)

time but Obert's strike came off the near post.

Lazio missed a penalty but still fought back to become the first team to beat Empoli this season for a fourth straight win in all competitions.

Mattia Zaccagni headed Lazio level in first-half stoppage time to cancel out Sebastiano Esposito's early goal and it seemed as if the home side would turn the match around immediately after the interval when Empoli defender Giuseppe Pezzella tripped Boulaye Dia in the penalty area.

However, Devis Vásquez parried Taty Castellanos' spot kick and the forward nodded the rebound over.

Lazio scored what was to prove the winner six minutes from time when substitute Pedro raced onto Castellanos' through ball and thumped it in off the underside of the crossbar from a tight angle.

Bologna was held to a 0-0 draw by Parma despite the visitors playing most of the second half in 10 men after defender Woyo Coulibaly was shown a straight red card for a dangerous tackle.



Indian fans cheer as Pakistan lost its first wicket during the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2024 match between Pakistan and India at Dubai International Stadium, United Arab Emirates. (AP) — See Page 15

Sports

Kuwait wraps Dubai camp, eyes first win against Oman

By Khaled Al-Enezi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff
UAE, Oct 6: Kuwait wraps up its training camp in Dubai, UAE, with a final practice session today before heading to Muscat for a crucial clash against Oman this Thursday in the third round of Group Two of the 2026 World Cup qualifiers. The camp, which began last Monday, saw Kuwait's Argentine coach Juan Pizzi working diligent-

ly to prepare his squad for its first win in the qualifiers. After draws against Jordan (1-1) and Iraq (0-0) in the opening two rounds, Pizzi is focusing on securing a much-needed victory. Sultan Al-Anzi is expected to join Kuwait's squad after fulfilling his contractual obligations with Dhofar, with whom he signed last Wednesday. FIFA regulations allow professional players 72 hours before a match to join their nation-

al teams. Meanwhile, the Palestinian national team, under Tunisian coach Makram Daboub, has arrived in Basra and is preparing for its upcoming fixtures against Iraq and Kuwait in the third and fourth rounds of the 2026 World Cup qualifiers. Daboub announced a 27-player roster, with notable returns including goalkeeper Amr Kadoura, defender Mohammed Saleh, and striker Alaa El-Din

Hassan. Goalkeeper Rami Hamada will miss the matches due to an injury sustained before their previous match against Jordan. The team will face Iraq on Thursday before flying to Doha to take on Kuwait at Jassim Bin Hamad Stadium on October 15. Palestine currently sits fifth in the group with one point from two matches, trailing group leaders Jordan by three points.



The technical staff led by Pizzi give instructions to the players.

Al-Gharib stars as squash championship concludes



Winners pose with officials on the podium during the closing ceremony.

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 6: Yarmouk's under-19 player, Jassim Al-Gharib, was crowned champion of the 16th National Squash Championship, held at the Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah International Center in South Surra.

Al-Gharib staged an impressive comeback, overturning a one-set deficit to secure a 3-1 victory over Khaithan's Qadir Gul. Throughout the match, Al-Gharib showcased technical prowess and composure in handling high-pressure situations. Gul finished as runner-up, while Khaithan's Abdulrahman Al-Sanea claimed third place, and Al-Qurain's Abdulrahman Al-Maghribi took fourth.

Following the final match, trophies and medals were awarded by the Vice President of the Federation, Khalid Al-Habib, and General Secretary Hamed Al-Omran, Assistant Secretary Hamad Al-Daghim, and Federation members Omar Al-Qudaibi and Ahmed Al-Adwani.

In other categories, Qadir Gul of Khaithan won the general title, while Abdulrahman Al-Sanea, also of Khaithan, took first place in the under-17 category. Issa Al-Najada of Al-Arabi claimed the under-15 title, with his teammate Abdullah Hassan securing the under-13 title. The under-11 championship went to Khaithan's Fahad Gul, and in the women's category, Al-Arabi's Basmala Al-Shami finished first.

Man United extends winless run

Kuwait Club & Al-Arabi ready for high-stakes Federation Cup final

By Khaled Al-Enezi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff
KUWAIT CITY, Oct 6: The final match of the 56th edition of the Handball Federation Cup, postponed from the 2023-2024 season, will take place this evening at 6:30 pm at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Complex Hall. The showdown features reigning champions Kuwait Club and Al-Arabi, with a match to determine third and fourth place between Al-Salmiya and Kazma scheduled at 5:00 pm.

Kuwait Club secured its spot in the final by defeating Al-Salmiya 30-24 in the semifinals, while Al-Arabi advanced after overcoming Kazma 27-22. Coached by national coach Haitham Al-Rashidi, Kuwait Club is aiming to complete a "treble" this season, having already claimed the league and Super Cup titles, along with the Arab Clubs Championship last month. The club has dominated the Handball Federation Cup for the past decade, winning 10 consecutive titles and seeking their 11th straight victory tonight.

On the other side, Al-Arabi, under the guidance of Coach Dr.

Ahmed Foulad, is determined to end their title drought. Its last major win was the Premier League title in the 2011-2012 season, and its most recent Handball Cup victory came in 2009-2010. Having lost to Kuwait SC in the cup finals of 2018-2019 and 2019-2020, Al-Arabi is eager for revenge and aims to break Kuwait Club's stronghold on local championships since 2013-2014. Al-Arabi once dominated the Handball Federation Cup, winning 10 titles since the competition began in 1966-1967, but Kuwait SC has since surpassed them with 13 titles, including the last 10 in a row.

Other clubs with notable Handball Federation Cup victories include Al-Salmiya and Kazma with eight titles each, Al-Qadisiya with seven, Khaithan with four, Al-Fahaheel with three and Al-Sulaibikhat with two. Kuwait Club and Al-Arabi both earned their places in the final of the 56th Handball Cup. Kuwait Club triumphed over Al-Salmiya for the third time in 20 days, having previously beaten them twice during the 39th Arab Clubs Championship held recently in Kuwait. Kuwait Club player Saif Al-Adwani was named the best player in the semifinal match.

Meanwhile, Al-Arabi surprised Kazma with an impressive performance, widely regarded as one of their best in recent years. Al-Arabi goalkeeper Ahmed Al-Farhan shined, and player Ali Naseer was awarded the best player of the match, a prize sponsored by the sons of the late Muhammad Zaid Al-Otaibi.

Kuwait Club's head coach, Haitham Al-Rashidi, emphasized that finals are about winning, not just playing. He stressed the importance of maintaining focus from the first minute until the final whistle, saying, "We aim to win the title and represent Kuwaiti handball in the best possible way."



Players battling for the ball.

Ten Hag future up in the air as Chelsea held

LONDON, Oct 6, (AP): Manchester United's winless run in all competitions extended to five games after a 0-0 draw at Aston Villa in the Premier League on Sunday, leaving manager Erik ten Hag's position uncertain heading into a two-week international break.

Ten Hag arrived at Villa Park under huge pressure with United having lost three of its six league games and the club's minority owner, Jim Ratcliffe, failing to say he had faith in the Dutch coach when asked specifically on Friday.

However creditable gaining a point at Villa is, it might still not be enough for Ten Hag - especially with United's new leadership having two weeks to weigh up his future before the team's next game. United is in 14th place in the 20-team league.

Playing in front of Ratcliffe and the



Manchester United's head coach Erik ten Hag gives instructions to his players during the English Premier League soccer match between Aston Villa and Manchester United, at Villa Park in Birmingham, England. (AP)

rest of United's hierarchy, the visitors came closest to scoring when Bruno

Fernandes struck a free kick against the crossbar in the 68th.

"We are all on board, together, on one page," Ten Hag said of his relationship with the club's leadership. "We know what we are working toward - it is a long-term project and we have to keep improving the process."

Villa mostly dominated, four days after beating Bayern Munich in the Champions League.

Since a chastening 3-0 loss to Tottenham last weekend, United has earned draws at Porto in the Europa League and now at a revitalized Villa.

"We proved in two tough away games that this is a team," Ten Hag said. "You saw the preparedness, the spirit but also the belief and the faith they have."

Chelsea drew 1-1 with Nottingham Forest thanks to Noni Madueke's equalizer in the 57th minute at Stamford Bridge.

Forest took the lead eight minutes earlier through Chris Wood and had to play with 10 men from the 78th after James Ward-Prowse's sending-off after a second yellow card for diving on the ball with his hands to stop Nicolas Jackson launching a breakthrough.



Chelsea's Noni Madueke and Nottingham Forest's Murillo, right, fight for the ball during the English Premier League soccer match between Chelsea and Nottingham Forest at Stamford Bridge in London. (AP)

Best of the Rest

Azul maintains lead: Cruz Azul maintained their four-point lead at the top of Mexico's Liga MX standings on Saturday with a 3-0 home victory over Necaxa.

Alexis Gutierrez and Carlos Rotondi scored first-half goals before Lorenzo Faravelli completed the rout with a 63rd-minute strike.

The result leaves Cruz Azul with 28 points from 11 outings, four points ahead of second-placed Tigres UANL, who edged to a 1-0 home win over Puebla earlier in the day. (Xinhua)

Weverton in, Alisson out: Palmeiras goalkeeper Weverton was called up to Brazil's squad on Saturday for World Cup qualifiers against Chile and Peru.

Weverton has been capped 10 times for Brazil. The 36-year-old replaces Alisson Becker, who withdrew from the squad after suffering a hamstring tear in Liverpool's 1-0 victory at Crystal Palace in the Premier League on Saturday.

Brazil will meet Chile in Santiago on October 10 and Peru in Brasilia five days later. (Xinhua)