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#### **Opinion**

# Dear government, we want to care about the national product and its growth

#### By Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

WITH complete transparency, we say to those in charge that a clear roadmap must be put in place in order to enhance the national product and annual growth rate. Relying solely on oil, foreign investments, and fees collected from citizens and residents is insufficient.

This approach reflects a lack of foresight in terms of the requirements for economic growth and competitiveness in the region and the Arab world.

To be honest, we rely heavily on oil prices to develop our financial policies and annual budgets. This dependence has led to a recurring deficit that accumulates each year, sometimes reaching alarming levels and depleting our financial reserves.

It seems we have not learned from the several crises that affirmed the urgent need to diversify our internal sources of revenues. We must also benefit from Kuwait's strategic location and the model on which it was founded four centuries ago. I am talking about the personal initiatives that saved our society on multiple occasions.

Currently, the majority of the budget is allocated to salaries. If the state continues on this shortsighted path, these costs will rise uncontrollably due to the random hiring practices that encourage complacency. This has contributed to the prevalence of fake certificates, as the focus has shifted toward academic credentials rather than practical skills and technical expertise.

As a result, the job pyramid has become inverted, with an expansion of office jobs while technical positions,

which are essential for long-term development, are dwindling. Planners tasked with boosting societal stability through a strong economy seem oblivious to this reality.

In many countries, especially developing nations and those striving for self-sufficiency, technical institutes and colleges graduate young people who are prepared to enter the labor market to serve the needs of the state and the economy, rather than relying on expatriates. According to the Constitution,

Al-Jarallah

"public jobs are a national service entrusted to those who perform them," and state employees are expected to act in the public interest when fulfilling their duties. The law states that expatriates may only be appointed to public positions in specified circumstances.

Unfortunately, this principle has not been effectively im-

There are reports indicating that salaries and subsidies account for approximately 81 percent of the budget, totaling KD 20.4 billion, while capital expenditures are only eight percent. This suggests that the deficit is likely to worsen.

To handle this, a clear plan is necessary to reduce waste. This plan should include benefiting from the large percentage of young people of working age through vocational training and creating opportunities for personal, national, and other initiatives.

This raises the question - What prevents Kuwait from emulating other Gulf countries that have embraced diverse ideas and minds to benefit from them, with some among them beginning to grant citizenship and others facilitating their residency processes?

Many countries offer various residency categories golden, permanent, and others - that boost stability and encourage residents to spend in those countries instead of transferring funds abroad.

These countries provide entertainment options, visa facilities, and opportunities for property ownership. On the other hand. Kuwait imposes several restrictions on citizens and residents. This regulatory environment has made Kuwait less attractive for both local and foreign investment.

effectively repelling capital.

Residents who are barred from bringing their families or relatives often find themselves with no outlet, leading them to send the majority of their salaries back home, which is a right that no one can dispute with.

Similarly, citizens who cannot find opportunities to enjoy their own country may seek solace in places like the UAE, Saudi Arabia and others, where they can breathe without feeling constrained.

It is evident that officials are overlooking important economic factors, which is reflected in outdated regulations related to industry, residency, trade, and the "BOT" (Build-Operate-Transfer) model, all of which are laden

with restrictions. As we had previously mentioned, Kuwait seems to be a paradise accessible only to those favored by extremists. If laws are not updated and improved, we may remain confined in this locked box

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# **Biometric data impervious** to hacks, cannot be forged

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 12: Brigadier Nayef Al-Mutairi, Director of the Personal Identity Investigation and Automated Search Department at the General Department of Criminal Evidence, has assured citizens regarding concerns about the security of biometric fingerprint data, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

He emphasized that these worries stem from a lack of understanding, stating, "People often fear what they don't know, especially concerning the new technology."

In an interview on Kuwait TV, Al-Mutairi explained that

biometric data is securely stored on local servers managed by the General Administration of Information Systems.

He highlighted that even in the unlikely event of a data breach, the information would be inaccessible, as it would appear as unreadable symbols rather than usable data.

Al-Mutairi further emphasized that biometric data cannot be forged and is crucial for identity verification.

He also mentioned plans to link the biometric database with various government agencies in the future, potentially expanding its use to facilitate certain procedures in both public and private sectors

However, he said, the government agencies will only have limited access to query specific information through fingerprint scans, without the ability to view full personal data.

In other news, the Ministry of Interior clarified recent reports about transitioning to digital driving permits, explaining

**Continued on Page 5** 

# **MoH addresses emergency** readiness amid speculation

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 12, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti Ministry of Health (MoH) underlined on Saturday the significance of getting official accurate information directed to the public to avert raising concerns.

In a news statement, the ministry said it probed into a document and a message circulated on social media regarding the preparations of Ministry's emergency

The ministry revealed that it has made some routine measures in health systems, within the framework of periodical preparations made over the year to make sure of the readiness of emergency plan, the statement noted.

The ministry referred that it is constantly communicating with citizens to inform them about any updates

# VAT, subsidy cuts key for **Kuwait fiscal health: IMF**

'Oil dependency risks economic stability'



Boxes of relief supplies being prepared as part of the International Islamic Charity Organization (IICO) campaign. Six trucks are ready to support families in the Gaza Strip, thanks to funding from the Kuwaiti and Jordan Hashemite Charity Organization (JHCO).

### **PACI deletes 449 addresses**

**By Mohammad Ghanem** Al-Sevassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 12: The Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) has announced the deletion of the residential addresses of 449 individuals, either due to the owner's declaration or the demolition of the building.

These individuals must visit PACI to register their new addresses and submit the necessary supporting documents within 30 days from the date of this announcement to avoid penalties. Failure to comply may result in a fine of up to KD 100, multiplied by the number of individuals involved, as stipulated in Article 33 of Law No. 32/1982.

# 'Israeli attacks on UN peacekeepers breach int'l charters'

**IICO** mobilizes 6 trucks for Gaza relief mission

GENEVA, Oct 12, (KUNA): Nasser Al-Hayen, the State of Kuwait Permanent Representative to the United Nations and other International Organizations in Geneva, has warned that the blatant Israeli aggression, namely the continuous bombardment targeting UN peace-keeping troops, is a flagrant breach of the international charters.

These offensives are also an explicit breach of Lebanon's sovereignty that warrants a firm international stand, Ambassador Alhayen said, in remarks to KUNA at end of the 57th session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva.

He held the UN Security Council and the in-

ternational community responsible for halting these flagrant attacks ,namely the recent offensives on the heart of the Lebanese capital. "Silence vis a vis such crimes undermine the credibility of the United Nations," Al-Hayen warned.

Israeli forces have hit UN peacekeepers' positions in south Lebanon at least twice this week, wounding four of the peacekeepers, and yesterday, their warplanes struck in the heart of Beirut killing 22 people, wounding more than 100 and causing destruction and mayhem in residential districts.

Moreover, Ambassador Alhayen condemned the occupation authorities' campaign against

the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres considering him as "personal non-grata," as well as campaigns against officials of the UN agencies for promoting facts about the tragic conditions in Gaza.

Criticizing the UNHRC, he called for taking "less politicized" and more effective resolutions, in the next sessions, for protecting human rights and bringing offenders to account particularly for the horrendous breaches in Gaza, Lebanon and Sudan.

**Continued on Page 5** 

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 12: The International **Monetary Fund (IMF)** has recommended that Kuwait introduce value-added tax (VAT) and excise taxes as a key measure to increase non-oil revenue, reports Al-Seyassah daily quoting reliable sources.

The IMF has emphasized the need to reduce current spending by rationalizing the public sector wage bill and gradually phasing out the substantial energy subsidies, replacing them with targeted support for vulnerable groups.

In its latest report, the IMF projected a contraction in the Kuwaiti economy for the second consecutive year, forecasting a decline of 3.2 percent in 2024.

The IMF also noted that Kuwait's budget had shifted from a surplus of 11.7 percent in the 2022-23 fiscal year to a deficit of 3.1 percent in 2023-24, as mentioned in a statement published by the Central Bank of Kuwait following the IMF's annual consultations with the country.

The IMF experts warned that Kuwait's heavy reliance on oil exposes its economy to a wide range of global risks, particularly fluctuations in commodity prices, changes in global growth rates, and the intensification of regional conflicts.

These risks, the IMF noted, directly impact Kuwait's economy through shifts in oil prices and production levels.

**Continued on Page 5** 

### **Diplomatic mission voices support for UNAMI**

# Iraq's security crucial to regional peace: Kuwait

UNAMI plays an important role in as-

sisting the Iraqi government and people

address the major challenges that hinder

NEW YORK, Oct 12, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait has reiterated that the stability and security of the Republic of Iraq are integral to the stability and security of the entire region. Diplomatic Attaché of Kuwait's Per-

manent Mission to the United Nations Khaled Al-Sabah emphasized the vital role of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) in his speech at the UN General Assembly meeting of the draft budget for 2025.

Al-Sabah renewed Kuwait's commitment to supporting the efforts of the United Nations, particularly the (UNAMI) mission which has proven effective in improving security and political stability, supporting the electoral process and assisting in reconstruction and development efforts in Iraq.

tarian relief efforts.

Al-Sabah

"The State of Kuwait - as a neighbor

**Business** 

the country's path

towards stability

and development,

the UN's support

provision of tech-

nical and logistical

assistance, pro-motion of human

rights, and coordi-

nation of humani-

Iraq through

Kuwaiti

praised

he argued.

The

diplomat

**Economic outlook dims with** falling oil prices — See Page 8

and sister to the Republic of Iraq - continues to offer all forms of backing to promote the stability of Iraq, whether through financial contributions or humanitarian and development initiatives that contribute to improving the living conditions of the Iraqi people," Al-Sabah said.

He emphasized that the continued effective work of the UNAMI mission requires adequate funding and the necessary resources for the full implementation of its tasks. Al-Sabah, therefore, called on the Member States of the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly at its 79th session to provide UNAMI with the necessary financial support to ensure the continuation of its important work.

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**Features** 

**Nobel Peace Prize boosts** hope for nuke-free world

# Newswatch

# **Kuwait strips five of** citizenship for fraud

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 12: The Council of Ministers has issued a decision, which was published in the official gazette 'Kuwait Today', to revoke the citizenship certificates of five individuals and anyone who may have obtained citizenship through dependency, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This step is based on Article 21 bis A of Amiri Decree No. 15/1959 concerning the Kuwaiti Citizenship Law and its amendments. The article states that Kuwaiti citizenship can be withdrawn if it was granted unlawfully due to fraud, false statements or incorrect certificates. The Council of Ministers shall issue a decision in this regard as per the recommendation of the Minister of Interior.

CAIRO: The Arab League affirmed on Saturday eagerness to discuss preparations for the launch of the key media event regarding Kuwait as the Arab media capital for 2025

In a statement, the league's assistant secretary general for media sector Ambassador Ahmad Khattabi said the league would hold a meeting on October 17 to be briefed on organizing preparations made by concerned bodies on the launch of this event, in the presence of officials from Kuwait's Ministry of Informa-

# **Kuwait commits to advancing** women empowerment, rights

NEW YORK, Oct 12, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait reiterated on Friday its full commitment to the empowerment of women and the promotion of women rights.

Diplomatic Attaché of Kuwait Mission at the United Nation Raheeq Al-Abad said this came while addressing a special session of the Third Committee on Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Affairs

**Continued on Page 5** 



ABK names Alfouz grand draw winner with celebrity flash mob

- Details Page 10

#### **Repairs to trigger power** cuts in Kuwait's six governorates — See Page 2

Local

— See Page 12



Expected weather for next 24 hrs: By Day: Hot with light variable wind to light to moderate south-easterly wind, with speeds of 08-28 km/h.

By Night: Rather hot to mild and relatively humid over coast-al areas with light variable wind

Weather to light to moderate southwesterly wind, with speeds of 06-28

km/h. Station Min Rec Max Exp **Kuwait City** Kuwait Airport 37 Abdaly

Bubyan 22 Jahra Failaka Island 35 Salmiyah Ahmadi Jal Aliyah Nuwaisib



Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah is offered a souvenir by the Church's priest.

# HH Amir's Rep attends St. Paul Church's 75th 'versary function

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 12, (KUNA): Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, attended a ceremony marking the 75th anniversary of the inauguration of St. Paul Church in Ahmadi on Friday. Dr. Michel Mbona, the Church's

priest, gave a speech in which he extolled the State of Kuwait under the leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and the Kuwaiti people's tolerance and peaceful coexistence throughout history. Some souvenirs were offered to His Highness the Amir's Representative on this occa-



One of the under construction projects in north Kuwait.

#### 'Home of a lifetime'

# Kuwait building more homes to provide housing for its citizens

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 12, (Agencies): As the number of newly built and inhabited homes in Al-Mutlaa City rises, more Kuwaiti families are settling into their 'home of a lifetime' in what is projected to be the country's largest city, with an estimated

population of 400,000. This growth is part of Kuwait's broader housing development strategy, aimed at addressing the housing requests of citi-

A report by KUNA indicates that Al-Mutlaa City is just one of three major housing projects currently being spear-headed by the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW).

Alongside Al-Mutlaa, the development of South Saad Al-Abdullah City and South Sabah Al-Ahmad City is rapidly advancing, focusing on the completion of infrastructure and the distribution of residential plots.

Last September, PAHW signed a significant infrastructure contract valued at 90.1 million Kuwaiti dinars with an international company.

This contract covers the construction of 6,568 housing units spread across four residential suburbs in the South Sabah Al-Ahmad Residential City project . It marks the third and final contract for roadworks and infrastructure networks in the area.

Previously, two other contracts were signed for the project's infrastructure -one for 7,623 units across four suburbs and another for 6,189 units across three suburbs -- bringing the total to 20,380

housing units to be served by the completed infrastructure.

The Saad Al-Abdullah City project, Kuwait's second-largest after Al-Mutlaa, reported a completion rate of 7.428 percent by the end of September 2023, surpassing the project's original timeline by

5.148 percent. With 23,551 plots, the city is expected to start operations by November 2023, with full completion scheduled by November 2027. As of August 2023, 4,423 citizens with housing requests dating back to 2007 have been allocated plots in

During August, the number of building permit certificates delivered to citizens in three major residential projects, including South Saad Al-Abdullah City, reached

Simultaneously, 122 public buildings are currently under construction across these projects. Over the past three years, the PAHW has received 20,113 requests for plot allocation within existing residential projects.

This process has been streamlined through the government's "Sahel" app, which has also facilitated the opening of 13,587 files related to housing care ser-

These ambitious projects underscore Kuwait's commitment to addressing the growing demand for citizen housing, ensuring the infrastructure and public services are in place to accommodate this

Audit Bureau to scrutinize issue

# **Power plant privatization on anvil**

**By Mohammad Ghanem** Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 12: The Al-Seyassah Arabic daily has learned that the Council of Ministers has referred the procedures and asset assessments related to the privatization of the North Shuaiba dual-purpose power generation and water distillation plant to the Supreme

Council for Privatization. The matter was then sent to the Audit Bureau for prior oversight and review

before finalizing any contracts. According to informed sources, the allocation of the North Shuaiba plant is a key project that aligns with the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy's development policies.

These policies emphasize the involvement of the private sector in expanding and enhancing the production capacity of electrical energy, as well as fostering a business-friendly environ-

The North Shuaiba plant is one of Kuwait's major facilities for generating

both electricity and water. It produces a total of 875.5 megawatts of electricity through three gas-powered generating units, each with a capacity of 220 megawatts, contributing a total of

660 megawatts. Moreover, the plant operates steam generation capabilities for further energy

#### Forum on mental health issues launched

# Kuwait, UAE share rich history of social, economic ties

ABU DHABI, Oct 12, (KUNA): Secretary-General of the UAE Supreme Council for Motherhood and Childhood Reem Al-Falasi said that Kuwaiti-Emirati relations share a rich history of social and economic ties.

This came in an interview by KUNA with Al-Falasi, on the occasion of launching the second edition of Fatima bint Mubarak Forum for Motherhood and Childhood, which kicked off in Abu Dhabi on Thursday to discuss mental health issues related to motherhood and child-

The Emirati official praised the strength of Kuwaiti-Emirati relations, adding that it has witnessed remarkable development over the past decades and cooperation in various political, economic, commercial and military fields with the wise leadership of the two countries.

She explained that the first edition of the forum, held last year, discussed raising children, while the current edition discussed stability and mental health.

tance of adopting a community approach to raise awareness, provide support and propose solutions to mental health issues.

sions, addressing mental health of mothers, family dynamics and the therapeutic use of expressive arts. The workshops also discussed the role of physical activity in promot-

Al-Falasi pointed out the impor-

She explained that the Supreme Council for Motherhood and Childhood took the initiative last March to organize a series of workshops and discussion sessions, totaling 30 ses-

ing psychological well-being and importance of mental health initiatives in educational environ-

ments, in addition to supporting awareness and empowerment.

Al-Falasi pointed out that this year's forum began with a dialogue session for children in which they talked about

their experiwith ences bullving mental health and illness. stressing the importance that parents must look after their children, monitor their behavior and seek

Al-Falasi

urgent advice if necessary. She added that the post-Covid-19 period has witnessed many family problems and mental health illnesses due to the ban, security controls and health procedures, saying that many children have been characterized by introversion and fear as a result of not mixing with family and society for two full years.

She explained that the child's personality is formed in the first years of his life, urging parents to strengthen their children's personality and enhance their self-confidence.

Fatima Bint Mubarak Forum for Motherhood and Childhood was organized by the Supreme Council for Motherhood and Childhood under the patronage of Sheikha Fatima Bint Mubarak, Chairwoman of the General Women's Union, President of the Supreme Council for Motherhood and Childhood, and Supreme Chairwoman of the Emirati Family Development Founda-

# Repairs to trigger power cuts in Kuwait's six governorates

Wafra station to offset electricity shortage

By Mohammad Ghanem Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Oct 12: The Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) has approved** the request of the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy to directly sign a contract with the Gulf Cooperation Council Interconnection Authority (GC-CIA) for the establishment of two overhead power lines from the new Wafra station to Sabah Al-Ahmad stations Z3 and Z4 at a total cost of \$81.9 million.

According to reliable sources from the ministry, the project is for transferring current from the new Wafra station, which is expected to be completed by December next year, to the aforementioned Sabah Al-Ahmad stations, stressing this will be beneficial to the ministry.

Sources said the Gulf electricity grid will be connected to Iraq through the Wafra station, which links the Saudi and Kuwaiti electrical systems.

Sources confirmed that the operation of Wafra station will increase the electrical capacity of the Gulf interconnection network from 1,000 megawatts to 2,500 megawatts, indicating this will contribute to the Kuwaiti network to address part of the expected power shortage next summer.

In a relevant development, sources disclosed that CAPT accepted 11 bids and rejected one in accordance with Article 45 of the Public Tenders Law. The tender is for the supply and operation of the photovoltaic cell system on car shades in the main workshops and the emergency services department affiliated with the ministry in Subhan, sources

Sources said that during its meeting on Oct 7, CAPT opened the bidding envelopes to refer them to the ministry for review and to prepare a technical recommendation for them, after which the best financial and technical bid will be chosen. Sources revealed the highest bid was KD4.727 million, while the lowest was KD2.229 million.

Sources confirmed this tender is one of the ministry's renewable energy projects, in compliance with the royal directive on introducing renewable energy technology -- 15 percent of the total energy produced by 2030.

Sources said the project will produce about 7,000 kilowatts to supply electricity to the ministry's buildings and facilities through renewable energy; instead of traditional energy produced by using fossil fuels that cost the State

They disclosed the project will also enable Kuwait to reach carbon neutrality in 2060 in line with the global trend towards shifting to clean energy sources and zero emis-

On the other hand, the ministry announced Saturday that various areas in the six governorates will experience power disruptions until Oct 19 due to maintenance of a few secondary transformer stations. It added that maintenance works are being carried out in 19 areas as follows: Jaber Al-Ahmad, Farwaniya, Bneid Al-Gar, Zahra, Salwa, Mubarak Al-Kabeer, Taima, Hadiya, Fahad Al-Ahmad, Dhaher, Qurtobah, Salmiya, Andalus, Ardiya Residential Area, Faiha, Surra, East Taima, Mansouriya and Kaifan.

# Plans to mitigate effects of 'rain crises' discussed

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 12: In a show of leadership and commitment to public safety, Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Hamoud Jaber Al-Ahmad gathered an emergency team at the governorate's general office to discuss vital preparations ahead of the upcoming rainy season, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

During the meeting, he praised the genuine character of the loyal people of Kuwait, highlighting their noble qualities of solidarity and unity in times of crisis and exceptional circum-

Sheikh Hamoud emphasized the importance of concerted efforts and continuous coordination among various official agencies and institutions. He called for the harnessing of all capabilities to serve the nation and develop urgent solutions to ensure security and safety for all citizens.

As representatives from key agencies gathered, the governor and his team engaged in comprehensive discussions aimed at assessing readiness and implementing effective mechanisms for crisis management.

The meeting focused on developing plans to confront potential repercussions of the rainy season and raise public awareness on how to manage and mitigate crises effectively.

Throughout the meeting, Sheikh Hamoud expressed his satisfaction with the security and service plans presented by the representatives of various sectors . These officials provided detailed insights into their respective preparations and capabilities, ensuring that all tasks are met with diligence and

As the rainy season approaches, Sheikh Hamoud's meeting serves as a vital step in ensuring that the Ahmadi Governorate is well-prepared to face any challenges, reaffirming the commitment to safeguarding the community and maintaining a resilient response to emergencies.



Kuwaiti and Turkish delegations during the meeting.

# Kuwaiti investments in Turkiye reach \$2bln; hike eyed in trade

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 12: Mehmet Şimşek, Minister of Treasury and Finance of the Republic of Türkiye, paid a one-day visit to the State of Kuwait on October 10, 2024,

following his visit to Doha, Qatar. During the official meeting between the delegation of the Turkish Ministry of Treasury and Finance headed by Minister Şimşek and the delegation of the Kuwaiti Ministry of Finance headed by Noura Sulaiman Al-Fassam, areas of current and possible cooperation as well as the ways to further enhance the relations between two countries were discussed. The participation of Minister Al-Fassam to the 15th Turkish-Arab Economic Forum, which will be held on 17th of October 2024 in Istanbul was

also discussed. Kuwaiti investments in Türkiye have reached \$2 billion, with 427 Kuwaiti companies, mainly concentrated in finance and real estate sectors. Considering the cultural, historical, and religious ties, there is a strong and shared commitment by the leaderships of both countries to multiply the trade volume in the short term. On the occasion of the visit, Minister

Şimşek made an exclusive presentation at a networking reception held at the Turkish Embassy Residence, hosted by Tuba Nur Sönmez, Ambassador of the Republic of Türkiye. The event was attended by leading Kuwaiti investors and businessmen from various sectors.

This year, Türkiye and Kuwait are celebrating the 60 years of fraternal relations, built on shared values and strong political will. The relations between the two countries further enhanced with the high-level bilateral visits and meetings. His Highness Amir Sheikh Meshal Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah paid an official visit to Türkiye on 7th of May, 2024, marking his first visit out of the region. Moreover, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan of Türkiye met with His Highness Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Hamad Al-Sabah on the margins of the 79th General

Assembly of the United Nations.

# Other Voices

# Devoted use of a bar of soap

# By Ahmad alsarraf

**D**ue to the sensitivity I experience when using liquid soap, I prefer to use solid soap bars, as they tend to be gentler on my skin.

For many years, I've relied on a national product from the "Soap Box"

company, which specializes cleaning and skincare products. This brand has consistently met my needs, but one question has always intrigued me: 'Does the effectiveness of a soap bar decrease as it shrinks or ages



when left unused for a long time?' After doing some research, I found that soap, regardless of its size or age, generally retains its effectiveness. However, certain factors can influence its usability.

The active cleaning ingredients and antibacterial agents within the soap remain intact under normal storage conditions. As the soap is used and becomes

smaller, it continues to effectively remove dirt, oils, and microbes from the skin. The cleaning agents are evenly distributed throughout the bar, ensuring that even the smallest piece retains the same cleaning properties as when it was full-sized.

However, as a bar of soap ages or is exposed to air, it can dry out, becoming hard or brittle. While this doesn't diminish its ability to clean, it can make the soap less pleasant to use.

A very dry soap bar may not lather as easily and can feel rough on the skin. Additionally, when the bar cracks due to dryness, it may break into small pieces, making it harder to handle and less convenient to use.

On the other hand, storing soap in damp or humid environments can have the opposite effect, causing the bar to become soft or melt unevenly. Although the soap remains chemically active, its texture and usability may be compromised.

If the bar sits in water or a moist area for too long, it can become sticky or dissolve more quickly, which might give the impression that it's less effective.

Another consideration is the breakdown of certain ingredients over time. Essential oils, fragrances, and herbs added to enhance the soap may deteriorate or evaporate, especially if the soap has been stored for an extended period.

cleaning abilities, it may alter the sensory experience -- such as the soap's scent leading us to perceive it as "old" or less effective.

While this doesn't affect the soap's

If fragrance is an important part of our soap preference, the loss of scent can be disappointing, though the soap remains functional.

As the soap bar shrinks with use, it may become harder to grip and more prone to slipping from the hand. This not only makes it less convenient to use but can also lead to waste if small pieces break off or dissolve too quickly, creating the perception that the soap doesn't

last as long. In conclusion, even as soap bars become smaller or lose some sensory qualities over time, their cleaning abilities remain intact. If we don't mind a soap bar being rough, cracked, or less fragrant, there's no reason not to continue using it

until the very last bit. 

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# diwaniya 🕈 چيوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

# 'Is Hezb's collapse the end of Iran's influence in Lebanon?'

"THE Middle East is currently experiencing significant geopolitical shifts, with Hezbollah at the center of these transformations," columnist Mohammed Al-Jadae'i wrote for Al-Qabas

daily.
"After years of dominating Lebanon's political and military landscape, Hezbollah now finds itself on the verge of collapse, weakened by a series of strikes and assassinations that have targeted not only its military operations but also its top leadership, including its Secretary-General, Hassan Nasrallah, and his successor,

Safied-Hashem dine. "The assassination of Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, who was a key figure in Iran's influence across

Lebanon and the broader region, dealt a severe blow to Hezbollah. "This event has

Al-Jadae'i

plunged Lebanon into deeper turmoil, with the Lebanese minister of environment referring to the country as a 'land of displacement and

"The Southern Beirut has been emptied of its residents, buildings lie in ruins, and much of the region remains shrouded in darkness.

"These events, coupled with ongoing human, military, and economic losses, have led to deterioration in Lebanon's relations with Iran, leaving Hezbollah more vulnerable and isolated than ever

"While the party's collapse is not yet certain, its continued weakening will depend on unfolding regional and international developments, as new alliances and strategies could reshape the balance of power between Hezbollah's survival or demise.

"At the same time, Iran is in an unprecedented defensive position, having suffered a series of major setbacks in Gaza, southern Lebanon, and Syria, including the assassination of Ismail Haniyeh within its borders.

"These incidents signify more than just isolated military strikes -- they represent a broader decline in Iran's regional influence, forcing Tehran to reconsider its alliances. Iran's muted and limited responses to these regional challenges indicate its waning capacity to assert itself as a dominant power.

"These developments suggest not merely a momentary weakness but a deeper structural collapse in the alliance system Iran has maintained for decades.

"Hezbollah's relationship with Iran is based on more than just military cooperation; it is also grounded in ideological and financial ties. Once the pride of Iran's revolutionary project, Hezbollah has now become a burden, exacerbated by economic pressures on both Iran and Lebanon.

"International sanctions and Lebafurther strained Hezbollah, turning it into a financial liability that Tehran

struggles to support. "As a result, Iran now faces a critical choice: either retreat into isolation or transition from a revolutionary state to a more traditional one, as Henry Kissinger predicted, moving 'from revolution to state' -- a return to the global order

and a respect for neighboring countries. "Amid these seismic changes, new opportunities are emerging for Gulf states to reshape the regional order and prevent Lebanon from being left behind in the face of political instability and escalating military conflict.

"After years of being distanced from its Arab neighbors, Lebanon now has the chance to reclaim its regional role and reintegrate into the Gulf and Arab fold, free from Hezbollah's control and Iran's influence

"The inevitable changes sweeping the region present Lebanon with a historic opportunity for renewal. Hezbollah, once a symbol of Iranian resistance. is now fading. Iran, which once sought to export its revolutionary ideology, faces existential challenges both domestically and abroad, leading many in the region to reconsider their strategic calculations, knowing that the current status quo will not last much longer.

"These are historic times that call for careful, strategic action. Great opportunities are rare, and this is one such moment. The future holds the promise of radical transformations, and all parties must prepare for a new regional order -- perhaps a "new Middle East" but in a very different form than imagined be-

fore.
"We may even witness a surge in liberal thought, with conservative regimes in Mashhad, Tehran, and perhaps southern Iraq being replaced by more state-centric governance, moving from revolutionary ideals to the rule of law and statehood.

"This could signal the end of the era of revolution and the beginning of a new era of stability and cooperation."

#### Also:

"Just as Islamic history has marked pivotal years like the 'Year of Sorrow', the 'Year of Delegations', and the 'Year of Ashes', we now witness the 'Year of the Flood', a transformative moment that reignited and revitalized the bonds of Islamic brotherhood and human solidarity worldwide," columnist Dr Khaled Al-Saifi wrote for Al-Jarida

"This flood stirred the hearts of millions, rekindling a passion for the Palestinian cause -- a cause that had been sidelined or forgotten by many.

"A flood of emotions, fueled by a sense of triumph and joy at breaking the Zionist oppressors' dominance, tore down the idol of fear and defeatism that once loomed over the Palestinian peo-

"However, this overwhelming tide of unity was met with a deep sense of betrayal and disillusionment from official international responses.

"The global powers, in their most extreme form of aid, offered mere humanitarian relief to Gaza and weak statements of sympathy or condemnation for the crimes committed by the invaders.

"In stark contrast, the free peoples of the world -- Muslim and non-Muslim alike -- left no stone unturned in their efforts to support Palestine.

"They explored every avenue and knocked on every door of opportunity to rally for justice, their consciences continuously haunted by the unforgettable image of the great resistance, even as they witnessed the sorrow and devastation inflicted by the invaders.

"The defenders of Gaza ignited a spark of pride and dignity that spread like wildfire across the globe, exposing the false narratives of the occupiers. The invaders' carefully crafted image of invincibility crumbled, revealing their brutal and arrogant nature.

"The flood of resistance shattered their usual arrogance, laid bare their shame, shook the very foundation of their existence, and exposed to the world the hypocrisy of international

"The double standards of the West became impossible to ignore, revealing their ideological backing of the occupying entity and its role as a spearhead in the heart of a suffering nation.

"One of the critical lessons of this year is the understanding that truth cannot prevail without power, and power cannot be achieved without leaders who wholeheartedly believe in the justice of their cause

"These leaders are the ones willing to sacrifice their lives, wealth, and resources in the defense of their faith and sacred sites. They craft their own weapons, forge alliances, and master the art of navigating the competitive landscape, using every legal and strategic avenue available to them in defense of religion and the sanctity of the land.

"As the Year of the Flood came to an end, it left behind a fierce and widespread intensification of conflict on all fronts against the invaders.

"Their economy began to collapse, their northern and southern settlements lay in ruin, and the settlers who had once flocked to their cause started to reverse migrate. All of this would have been unimaginable without this pivotal moment -- the event that marked the beginning of the end for the invaders'

project.
"No matter how long it takes or how many details remain, the collapse is inevitable, thanks to the legendary resilience of the people of Gaza, whose endurance seems miraculous by any materialistic standard.

"This steadfastness was only possible because of the men who kept their promises to God -- some who have already sacrificed their lives and others who continue to stand ready, awaiting either victory or martyrdom.

"These defenders and resisters, year after year, live in a state of honor, victory, and empowerment, ever closer to their ultimate goal. Victory and glory

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes

# **Kuwait ups efforts against human trafficking**

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 12: Minister of Justice, Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Dr. Mohammmad Al-Wasmi chaired the meeting of the Permanent National Committee for Combating Trafficking in Persons and Smug-

gling of Migrants on Thursday.

The Ministry of Justice revealed that the meeting tackled the most important international issues and questions that the State of Kuwait is currently facing; especially in the field of combating trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants, and the mechanisms for responding to such issues in a way that ensures the unification of national efforts and presenting them clearly in view of the approaching international classification of Kuwait in the field of combating trafficking in persons.

The committee was also briefed on the latest developments in the memorandum of understanding that will be concluded soon to activate its role at the international level.

It reviewed the draft national law on combating trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants, and its explanatory mem-

Al-Wasmi issued a directive to continue following up the work of the advisory group in the committee. He said the group's main task is to amend National Law No. 91/2013 regarding the prevention of trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants, and related laws.

On the names of committees concerned with combating human trafficking in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, the minister decided to amend the name of the committee to Permanent National Committee for Combating Human Trafficking

and Smuggling of Migrants. Meanwhile, Vice-Chairman of the Committee and acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Justice Tariq Ali Al-Asfour presided over the committee meeting with acting Assistant Undersecretary for Legal Affairs Raya Khaled Al-Rashidi, Monitor of International Agreements and Cooperation Requests in the International Relations Department Ahlam Al-Awadhi, and representatives of Kuwait Trade Union Federation – Nasser Al-Azmi and Mohammad Al-Arada in attendance.

# Syrian national and his father detained for fraudulently acquiring Kuwaiti citizenship

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 12: The Citizenship Investigations Department has referred to the relevant authorities a case related to a Syrian national who is accused of obtaining Kuwaiti citizenship through forgery, reports Al-Rai daily quoting informed sources.

They explained that confidential information was received about an expatriate of Syrian nationality who acquired Kuwaiti citizenship approximately a year after the Iraqi invasion.

A review of the files had revealed suspicions about the sudden inclusion of the Syrian national in the citizenship file of a deceased Kuwaiti citizen, which complicated the investigation.

Intensified search and investigation efforts in the case led to the identification of an elderly Syrian expatriate who was still residing in Kuwait. He was summoned for questioning, and upon confrontation, he admitted to entering his son into the citizenship file of a deceased Kuwaiti friend.

He explained that he had approached his Kuwaiti friend shortly after the Iraqi invasion, and asked him to register his son in the citizenship file without any compensation. His intention was to secure a better future for his son, as he would be able to complete his studies, join the firefighting corps, and benefit from various advantages granted to Kuwaiti citizens, until he reached the age that would allow him to retire early.

The sources revealed that the presence of the Syrian father in the country played a crucial role in uncovering the incident and its complex details.

They went on to explain that the officials investigating citizenship files are making significant efforts to follow up every case and thoroughly

After completing the necessary procedures, authorities secured permission to arrest the forger. He was apprehended in an operation while attempting to finalize early retirement procedures, and confessed to obtaining Kuwaiti citizenship through his father's connections with the deceased citizen. He confirmed that he is Syrian, not

The father admitted during questioning that adding his son to the Kuwaiti citizenship file was not for a fee but was based on their friendship with

Investigators seized the original documents confirming both the father and son's Syrian citizenship. They have been referred to the concerned authorities for further investigation and necessary

# Mol officer among six held in major alcohol trafficking bust

Police raids residency forgers ring

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

**KUWAIT CITY, Oct 12:** The Ministry of Interior announced on Friday that the Drug Control **General Department for Combating Drugs and** Alcohol succeeded in arresting two citizens, one of whom is an officer in the Ministry of Interior, and four Asians involved in promoting a large quantity of imported alcoholic beverages, reports KUNA.

A press statement said the operation resulted in seizing about 3,000 bottles of imported alcohol, hashish, and cash of money in the national currency and the US dollar.

items is estimated at 200,000 Kuwaiti dinars The ministry has stressed that no

The market value of the seized

one is above the law that will be applied to everyone without exception.

**Residency forgers ring busted:** Kuwait has cracked down on a gang of residency brokers of two Arab nationalities, along with several companies, on charges of residency malpractices, the Ministry of Inte-

rior (MoI) said, reports KUNA. The move came at the behest of First Deputy Prime Minister, Defense Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Al-Sabah as part of ongoing security forces to bust residency brokers, said the ministry in a press release

The defendants are charged with recruiting workers for an unnamed company in return for sums of money ranging between KD 700 and KD 1,000 per laborer, it added. Legal action was consequently taken against all those involved, it said, underlining that security forces are on high alert for any wrongdoing.

Egyptian dies after hit by car: An Egyptian expatriate died after being hit by a vehicle while cross-

# **Interior minister on inspection tour of Central Prison**

# 'Kuwaiti prisons model of humanitarian standards'

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 12: First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef conducted an inspection tour of the Central Prison Friday, reports Al-Seyassah

Accompanied by Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights Affairs, Ambassador Sheikha Jawaher Ibrahim Al-Duaij Al-Sabah, the touring party reviewed the progress of the 'Sandhom' initiative, which focuses on rehabilitation and construction projects within Kuwait's correctional facilities.

According to a Ministry of Interior statement, the 'Sandhom' initiative was launched with the involvement of the Ministry of Interior, the National Human Rights Bureau, and the Human Construction Society for Social Development.

During the visit, Minister Al-Yousef inspected various facilities, including prison workshops, educational centers, and the Sharia retreat

The minister praised the initiative's achievements in rehabilitating inmates and improving their condi-

ing the Airport Road. His body has been sent to the Forensic Medicine Department.

According to a security source, when the Operations Room of the Ministry of Interior received information about the accident on the Road No. 55 between Khaitan and Farwaniya, securitymen and paramedics rushed to the location and discovered that the man had died. An investigation has been launched into the accident.

Drunk expat arrested: An intoxicated Asian expatriate was arrested in Riggae in possession of a liquor

According to a security source, Farwaniya securitymen were on a routine patrol in Riggae when they noticed a man walking in a haphazard manner. They stopped him for checking and discovered that he was intoxicated and was in possession of Mol photo Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad during an inspection tour of one of the prison cells He emphasized the commitment of the Ministry of Interior to ensure that correctional institutions uphold the highest humanitarian standards and support reintegration of inmates into the society.

Sheikh Fahad highlighted that

Kuwaiti prisons have undergone significant improvements in terms of facilities and health services, positioning them as a model of compliance with international treaties.

The tour comprised representatives from the ministries of Education and Awqaf, the Kuwait University, and the Union of Charity Societies, alongside key officials from the correctional sector.

Sheikh Fahad expressed his pride in the security personnel, acknowledging their crucial role in maintaining the safety and security of the

a liquor bottle. He was arrested and referred to the concerned authorities for necessary action. 

Top-level hospital eyed: Director General of Correctional Institutions Brigadier General Fahad Al-Obaid announced the establishment of an excellent high-level internal hospital at the Central Prison with the cooperation of the Ministry of Health.

In an interview, he revealed that a new facility for rehabilitation and addiction treatment will also be established with a capacity of 500 individuals

Brigadier General Al-Obaid said the Kuwait Association for Needy Families is developing a building with 12 hotel apartments designed to accommodate full families, not just spouses. He highlighted the ongoing projects to expand prison facilities and construct internal schools in collaboration with the Ministry of



Drug smuggling bid foiled: The Control General Department have thwarted an attempt to smuggle 51 kilograms of narcotics into the country, with an estimated market value of around 150,000 Kuwaiti dinars. reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The daily quoting security sources said, the department received precise information about the operation regarding the smuggling attempt through Kuwait's territorial waters following which a trap was set for the suspects and the team members conducted thorough surveillance and monitored the suspicious activities. The daily added, the arresting party comprised of members from the Maritime Security Department and the local Anti-Narcotics Depart-

## GTD issues 48,793 citations. seizes 118 vehicles last week

**By Munif Naif** 

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 12: Traffic campaigns held last week resulted in the issuance of 48,793 traffic citations, seizure of 118 vehicles, and the referral of 40 juveniles to Juvenile Prosecution for driving without a license. In addition, 97 motorcycles were impounded, and 46 vehicles were sent to the traffic police

According to the weekly statistics issued by the General Traffic Department, a total of 1,350 collision accidents were reported, including 272 that resulted in injuries. The campaigns also resulted in the seizure of 72 vehicles

wanted by the judiciary, and the arrest of 41 individuals whose residency had expired or had absconding cases filed against them. These individuals were referred to the concerned au-The Ministry of Interior's sectors, such as Special Security,

Public Security, Traffic, and Operations, conducted an extensive security campaign in Jahra, which resulted in the issuance of 2,000 traffic citations, the seizure of 19 wanted vehicles and the arrest of six individuals in possession of narcotics, 14 residency law violators, 13 individuals with pending cases against them, four juveniles for driving without a license, four individuals in an abnormal state, and nine people with absconding

The campaign was launched in the evening and continued into the early hours of dawn, in the presence of senior officials including the Assistant Undersecretary for Special Security Affairs Major General Abdullah Safah, Assistant Undersecretary for Traffic and Operations Affairs Major General Yousef Al-Khudda, Assistant Director of Jahra Security Directorate Brigadier Hussein Dashti, Director of the General Traffic Department Brigadier Jamal Al-Foudari, Director of the Security Media Department Colonel Othman Al-Gharib, and Director of Traffic Awareness Sector Colonel Fahad Al-Essa, along with other senior security leaders and women police.

The campaign is a continuation of the security campaigns launched two weeks ago in Jabriya and Hawally areas, progressing through Khaitan, Farwaniya, and Jleeb before reach-A security source indicated that these campaigns will con-

tinue in all areas in a surprising manner, targeting all governo-

rates to apprehend wanted individuals and maintain law and

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# Housing care rules amended

Key changes streamline grants and swaps

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

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 12: The Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) has updated housing care regulations, incorporating some amendments that included the conditions for registering housing grant applications, provisions of the rent allowance, allocation controls, lottery procedures and distribution of plots.

The newspaper obtained a copy of the amended regulations; the most important of which is the revision of Article 87 that prohibits replacement or relinquishment of housing units for those covered by the law on those who sold their houses in East Taima and East Sabah Al-Ahmad.

The amended article states that with the approval of the concerned committee and for reasons it deems appropriate, the beneficiaries of housing units in East Taima and Sabah Al-Ahmad are allowed to swap houses only once.

The regulations stipulate that the beneficiary accepts the replacement housing unit in its condition without any reservations; and that the PAHW is not obligated to carry out repairs, construction works, additions, restorations, modifications, etc. The authority is not obligated as well to pay financial dues or compensation for repairs made to the housing unit.

The authority retained some articles of the regulations, most notably the stipulation on its right to distribute plots on the plans; according to the relevant procedures and controls.

It retained as well the article on the application of the regulation to Kuwaiti families entitled to housing care and residing permanently and continuously in the State of Kuwait. This also applies to Kuwaiti families residing abroad; that is, if the head of the family or his wife is delegated by the State or with its approval in accordance with the established systems and rules.

It affirmed there are several ways to demonstrate a family's long-term and stable residency in Kuwait; such as the head of the family starting a job in any of the ministries, agencies or institutions and have been working there for at least two years; his children enrolled in a school in the country and has been there for two academic years; unmarried children who are part of the family whose head is working in any of the ministries, agencies, or institutions; and a certificate from the Ministry of Interior's Ports Department documenting the family's entry and exit movements. The authority may also request the head of the family to submit any document it deems necessary to prove the family's permanent and continuous residence in Kuwait.



KUNA photo

Kuwait relief delegation members.

#### Kuwaiti delegation visits refugees in Jordan

A Kuwaiti relief delegation visited on Thursday the Syrian and Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan, to determine their living conditions and support them.

This initiative comes under an ongoing humanitarian effort by the International Islamic Charity Organization in Kuwait.

The participants of the delegation, representing the Kuwaiti volunteer teams participating in the "Gaza Relief" campaign, provided needed aid and gifts to children living in the

This visit among others is part of the Gaza relief convov campaign organized by the International Islamic Charity Organization with the Jordan Hashemite Charity Organization (JHCO), launching in Amman next Friday.

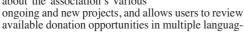
The campaign includes equipping six trucks with food, health parcels, winter clothes, and shoes, to meet the needs of afflicted and distressed families in Gaza, providing them with a helping hand. (KUNA)

# Al Najat Charity launches Al donor platform

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 12: In a pioneering move that underscores its commitment to development and innovation, Al Najat Charity Association is preparing to launch a new smart platform that uses artificial

intelligence (AI) technologies. This initiative aims to provide an effective and innovative communication service for donors, reports Al-Rai daily. Head of Resources, Public

Relations, Media, Programs, and Projects Sectors at the association Abdullah Al-Shahab said, "This interactive platform represents a huge advancement in donor services. It enables immediate responses to inquiries about the association's various



He stressed the importance of this step in enhancing communication with donors, stating, "The association aims to keep pace with the latest technological developments and use them in the service of charitable work. Our new smart platform embodies this trend by providing a distinguished interactive experience for our valued donors, and allowing for easy and convenient communication.

es. This will help expand the base of supporters and

enhance transparency in the association's operations.

Al-Shahab said the smart platform will save time and effort for the association's employees, enabling them to focus on developing charitable projects and creating innovative strategies for resource develop-

He indicated that the platform offers comprehensive and clear information about the association's initiatives, allowing donors to easily and transparently select the projects they wish to support, and track the impact of their donations on the ground

#### **Crown Prince, PM extend wishes**

# Kuwait HH Amir congratulates Spanish King on National Day

(KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Saturday sent a cable of congratulations to Spain's King Felipe VI on the occasion of his country's National

In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished him everlasting health and further progress and prosperity for Spain and its

friendly people.

His Highness the Crown

Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah on Saturday sent a cable of congratulations to Spain's King Felipe VI on the occasion of his country's National Day, wishing him everlasting

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on Saturday sent a cable of congratulations to Spain's King Felipe VI on the occasion of his country's National

Tenders range from KD 25.69m to KD 44m

# **CAPT** greenlights 14 bids for SAB's new northern building

**By Mohammed Ghanem** Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 12: According to reliable sources, the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) accepted 14 bids during its meeting on October 7 for the project to construct the new northern building for the State Audit Bureau.

The Construction Projects Sector of the Ministry of Public Works is expected to oversee the project on behalf of the State Audit Bureau, which is referred to as "the beneficiary.'

CAPT confirmed that it had opened all the bids and did not reject any. The lowest bid was KD 25.690 million, and the highest bid

was KD 44 million. CAPT plans to award the contract to the best bidder based on both technical and financial evaluations, after referring the bids to

the Ministry of Public Works for

review and the preparation of a technical recommendation within 30 days.

The project site is located in Shuwaikh, and covers an area of 10,000 square meters, with a total construction area of 80,000 square meters. It involves the construction of a new northern building similar to the current State Audit Bureau

The new facility will consist of eight floors and two basements, along with two additional floors on the existing parking structure adjacent to the headquarters. A bridge will also connect the current building to the new northern building.

The sources affirmed the ministry's commitment to meeting the cost requirements of the beneficiary, with the aim of achieving the primary objectives of the building, which include providing a suitable work environment for employees and using the latest construction technologies.

## 14 complex surgeries conducted

# Retinal surgery workshop at Jahra Hospital sees successful outcomes

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 12: Head of the Ophthalmology Department at Jahra Hospital Dr. Ahoud Khalifa announced the hosting of Professor Dr. Marwan Abu Amma from King Saud University Hospital in Saudi Arabia who is a specialist in retinal surgeries. This initiative is part of the Ministry of Health's program to invite visiting physicians, reports Al-Anba daily.

In a press statement, Dr. Khalifa explained that the retinal and vitreous surgeries workshop, organized by the Ophthalmology and Surgery Department at the new Jahra Hospital, was success-

fully completed with the participation of the visiting physician. During the workshop, 55 consultations were conducted, including 14 complex cases in-

volving retinal and vitreous diseases, all of which were successful.

Dr. Khalifa

Dr. Khalifa affirmed that the Ophthalmology Department at Jahra Hospital provides exceptional health services, utilizing the latest techniques for the early diagnosis of various eye diseases, adding that the department is equipped with state-of-the-art surgical devices and tools for all specialized eye surgeries.

She expressed gratitude for the support of the Ministry of Health, particularly Minister Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi, as well as Head of the Jahra Health Zone Dr. Jamal Al-Duaij, Hospital Director Dr. Ahmed Khajah, Head of the medical authority Dr. Abdulrahman Al-Shammari, and head of the Ophthalmology Departments Council Dr. Ahmed Al-Foudari for their efforts in overcoming challenges and providing the best possible medical care to patients and visitors.

KCDC hosts delegation of int'I public health experts

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 12, (KUNA): The Kuwait Center for Disease Prevention and Control (KCDC), affiliated with the Ministry of Health (MoH), received a delegation of international experts, including the President of the International Federation of Public Health Institutes (IFPH), Professor Duncan Selbie, and the CEO of the Gulf Center for Disease Prevention and Control (GCDC), Professor Pasi Pantinen.

The Ministry of Health stated in a press release on Wednesday that the visit aimed to review the center's establishment and development plans and to enhance international cooperation in the field of public

It added that during the visit, the experts exchanged views and international experiences on managing infectious diseases and developing prevention methods. They also discussed the importance of preparing for future health challenges, particularly epidemics, by improving health infrastructure and developing early warning and rapid

response systems. The Ministry explained that this international cooperation reflects Kuwait's commitment to advancing its capabilities in public health and ensuring a safe and sustainable health environment for society. It noted Kuwait's dedication to being a leader in adopting best international practices and enhancing readiness to face growing health challenges at both regional and international levels.



**By Mohammed Ghanem** Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 12: The State Audit Bureau recently approved the request of the Ministry of Public Works to contract with a company for the construction of a rainwater drainage system in Southwest Abdullah Al-Mubarak at a total cost of KD 4.488 million for a duration of 365 days.

According to informed sources, the ministry received approval from the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) to award the contract to the company, in accordance with the regulations and guidelines outlined in the Central Tenders Law. These projects are important for addressing the challenges posed by floods and

heavy rainfall during the winter season. They involve construction of a concrete drainage system to drain rainwater by linking the collection tank of the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) to the rain network for the West Abdullah Al-Mubarak

This system will link at the intersection of the Seventh Ring Road with Kabd Road and the main rainwater network at the intersection of the Seventh Ring Road with

\$147.47 mln deal for reforestation

# **KOC** awards 3 firms with contracts to restore northern and southern fields

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 12: Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) has awarded the contract for the reforestation of the northern and southern fields, which were affected by the oil pollution resulting from the brutal Iraqi invasion, to three companies for a total value of \$147.47 million as part of the United Nations program to address the environmental pollution issue, reports Al-Anba daily quot-

Sources said the first stage of the contract is valued at \$34.96 million, the second at \$52.8 million and the third at \$59.7 million. They indicated that the required reforestation work includes purchasing and delivering plants, planting and planning procedures, irrigation, aftercare and maintenance. This project is aimed at planting 9.46 million local desert plants, sources added.



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# Kuwait HH Amir congratulates Equatorial Guinea on Nat'l Day

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 12, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, sent a congratulatory cable to President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo of Equatorial Guinea on Saturday, celebrating his country's National Day. In his message, His Highness wished the President enduring health and continued progress and prosperity for Equatorial Guinea and its friendly

Similarly, His Highness the Crown Prince, Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, also sent a message of congratulations to President Mbasogo, expressing wishes for his good health and well-being.

Additionally, His Highness the Prime Minister, Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, extended his own congratulations to the President on this significant

# **Kuwait Petroleum Int'l Corp** wins best Gulf Co-op Award

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 12, (KUNA): Kuwait Petroleum International Corporation won on Thursday an Award for Best Gulf Cooperation for the year 2024 on Al-Duqm Refinery Project from The Energy Year Magazine in London, UK.

In a statement, the corporation said that Group Manager Quality Assurance Fouad Qabazard received the award on behalf of the CEO Shafi Al-Ajmi during the ceremony held in Kuwait.

According to the statement, Qabazard said that Al-Duqm Refinery Project is one of the most important strategic partnerships in the field of



**Duqm Refinery Project** 

refineries in the region, it is the largest investment project between two Gulf countries in the refinery and petrochemical sector.

The project is considered a step forward towards achieving economic integration between the brotherly countries, Kuwait and Oman, as it is the fruit of the partnership between Kuwait Petroleum International Corporation (Q8) and Oman Oil (OQ).

Al-Duqm Refinery was co-inaugurated by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tareq of Oman in Feb-

Al-Duqm Refinery produces a robust refining capacity of 230,000 barrels per day, 65 percent of which for Kuwait, the other 35 percent for

In 2020, The Oil and Gas Year (TOGY) became The Energy Year, with an aim to report on key markets cover oil, gas, clean fuels and renewables as well as social and environmental governance. (KUNA)



Group photo during the commemoration of 'Mazingira Day'.

#### Kenyan envoy advocates for green initiatives

# FAIPS' tree planting marks Kenya's 'Mazingira Day'

**By Mohamed Wangengi** Special to the Arab Times

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 12: The Ambassador of the

Republic of Kenya to Kuwait H.E. Halima Abdille Mahmoud delivered an inspiring speech during a tree planting event held at the Fahaheel Al-Watanieh Indian Private School (FAIPS) to commemorate "Mazingira Day" (Environment Day).

The ambassador began her speech by expressing gratitude to the attendees, including CFO of Al-Rayan Holding Company Arun Choudhary, Principal of FAIPS Ravi Ayanoli, Head of UN-Habitat Mission in Kuwait Dr. Ameera Al-Hassan, and the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps in Kuwait His Excellency Zubaydzoda Zubaydullo Najo. She also thanked the school's management and the UN-Habitat for their excellent collaboration in planning and organizing the event. Ambassador Mahmoud affirmed the significance of environmental conservation, stating, "Conserving the environment is not only at the heart of our existence but is also key to improving our natural habitats and quality of life.

She described the tree planting exercise as an important step taken by the school for encouraging positive actions related to environmental protection.

Regarding the importance of the occasion, the ambassador explained that October 10 is celebrated as Mazingira Day in Kenya. It is a public holiday dedicated to various activities related to the protection of the environment as one of the national obligations of Kenyans. As a part of the endeavor, Kenya's President has launched a nation-wide campaign this year to plant 15 billion tree seedlings with a goal of increasing the

nation's forest cover to 30 percent by 2032.

Ambassador Mahmoud highlighted the global environmental crises, including climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution, stating, "Trees play an important role in mitigating these challenges. They are vital for our survival and well-being, as they ab-

breathe." She urged everyone to continue their efforts in environmental preservation.

sorb carbon dioxide and provide fresh air for us to

Ambassador Mahmoud concluded by saying, "The Embassy of Kenya in Kuwait is honored to be a part of this important tree planting exercise as a way of advocating and promoting the cause of preserving our environment and making our world a better place to live in. I encourage each of you to take a small step toward improving our environment.

#### Port expansion at top of agenda

# Municipal Council 5th regular session set

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 12: The Municipal Council will hold its fifth regular session of the third term on Monday, headed by Abdullah Al-Mahri to discuss a number of items on its agenda, the most important of which are:

■ The project for expanding the land allocated to the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port for the total area to be 11,616 hectares (116 million square meters), which is an increase of 10 times the area previously allocated for the port.

■ Two requests submitted by the Ministry of Social Affairs:

1. Amendment to the decision for allocation of a miniature central market in Hadiya Block 1. 2. Allocation of a walkway, three

playgrounds, children's games area, lighting, landscaping, and an irrigation network in Fahaheel Block 4. ■ The request submitted by members

Nasser Mardhi Al-Jadaan and Nassar Al-Azmi for the allocation of a walkaway in Fahaheel Block 1. ■ The request submitted by Kuwait

National Petroleum Company for the allocation of a site for fuel station No. 49 in Mahboula Block 3. ■ Two requests submitted by the Pub-

lic Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART) 1. Allocation of basins, water chan-

nels, and a connection network for collecting and discharging rainwater in Maqwa to serve Ahmadi and Manqaf,
2. Allocation of ten basins and seven

water channels as well as an earthen barrier to collect and drain rainwater in Sabah Al-Ahmad and South Sabah Al-Ahmad

■ The request submitted by Kuwait Fire Force for the allocation of a site



Al-Mahri

istry of Finance to cover the actuarial deficit of the Public Institution for Social

in Saihed Al-

Awazem, north

of the Seventh

Ring Road, as

to the site relin-

quished in Al-

Rai for the Min-

alternative

Security. ■ The Cabinet's Resolution No. 269/2024 regarding the Government Performance Follow-up Agency's report on providing strategic storage areas to establish warehouses and depots for food storage purposes and others.

■ The proposal submitted by member Munira Al-Amir for the development of mechanisms to enhance the capital's appearance as a facade for Kuwait by Kuwait Municipality.

■ The response of the executive body

to the question submitted by Dr. Hassan Kamal on studies and approvals for implementing entrances and exits to Sabah Al-Salem.

■ The proposal submitted by member Farah Al-Roumi for the preparation of sustainability regulations and guide-lines for the rehabilitation and preservation of archaeological sites and his-

the local market.

■ The proposal submitted by member Abdullatif Al-Daai regarding the addition of a register of construction contractors, engineering offices, and consulting firms accredited by the municipality to the municipality's web-

a joint committee to ensure compliance with accessibility requirements for people with disabilities as well as her proposal to prevent delivery bikes from using sidewalks.

Utilities Company for renewing temporary surface parking licenses in various areas of Kuwait.

Behbehani regarding a vision for tourism in Kuwait from a scientific per-

percent of students and researchers in

the fields of science, technology, engi-

neering and mathematics in Kuwait are

ticipate effectively in decision-making

processes at various levels: in execu-

tive and legislative institutions, includ-

ing ministries and municipal and legis-

She indicated that 88 female public

prosecutors and 19 female judges were

appointed this year and in a precedent-

setting move in Kuwait, four women

were appointed as directors of the Pub-

of Foreign Affairs had 144 female dip-

lomats, about 22 percent of the total

Al-Abad revealed that the Ministry

She went on to say that women -

proudly and efficiently - constitute

54 percent of the workforce in the oil

sector - the country's main economic

artery - and in the military sector,

women occupy 47 percent of manage-

attaché noted that the number of fe-

male police officers has risen to more

than 900. In addition, the Amir Guard

has recently recruited 19 women for

the central role of the UN in promoting

gender equality worldwide through its

efforts and the global standards it has

The Kuwait diplomat commended

In the security sector, the diplomatic

rial and supervisory positions.

lative councils, she boasted.

lic Prosecution departments.

diplomatic cadre.

Moreover, Kuwaiti women par-

women and girls.

# **Kuwait, Hungary push for** investment, trade growth

Al-Munaifi highlights key sectors for collaboration

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 12, (KUNA): Kuwait's Undersecretary of Ministry of Finance Aseel Al-Munaifi on Friday met with Hungarian Minister of Economy and International Affairs Tut Tibor in Budapest, the Hungarian capital.

The purpose of the meeting was to engage in a detailed discussion about the current economic developments, their potential impact on the growth rates, and the future challenges that both countries may

The Ministry of Finance said in a press statement that the meeting was held on sidelines of the two-day fifth session of the Kuwaiti-Hungarian Joint Committee for Economic and Technical Cooperation.

The press release mentioned that the two sides broached plans for diversification of sources of income, a host of economic and financial topics.

The Kuwaiti officials were briefed about Hungary's achievements in the sectors of renewable energy, information technology and food security.

The fifth session of the Kuwaiti-Hungarian Joint Committee for Economic and Technical Cooperation, held in the Hungarian capital Budapest, concluded on Friday. Aseel Al-Munaifi, led the Kuwaiti

delegation and confirmed in a press statement the joint governmental efforts aimed at strengthening bilateral relations to achieve the country's developmental vision.

Al-Munaifi added that this year marks the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Kuwait and the Republic of Hungary

According to the statement, Discussions were held with officials in Hungary regarding available opportunities in various sectors, including information technology, water treatment, energy, and the participation of the private sector in both countries forums to



Kuwait Undersecretary of Ministry of Finance Aseel Al-Munaifi meets with Hungarian Minister of Economy and International Affairs Tut Tibor in Budapest.

KUNA photos

Kuwait-Hungarian joint economic committee session.

explore real investment opportunities and increase trade exchange.

Al-Munaifi mentioned the upcoming opening of a direct flight route between Kuwait and Hungary, as well as the outcomes of the fourth session of the Kuwaiti-Hungarian Joint Committee, which aims to encourage and

mandate of the international fact-

protect mutual investments between the two countries.

The session was attended by Hungarian Deputy Minister of Defence Tamas Varga, who led the Hungarian delegation, along with representatives from various government insti-

Organization (JHCO) funding. In a statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) by Kuwait's Am-

heartedly standing with the Palestinian people and aids them constantly. Kuwait continues its continued material and moral support for the Palestinian people, until the end of the Israeli Occupation, and the formation of

bassador to Jordan Hamad Al-Marri

said in regards to the relief convoy,

that Kuwait is a country that is whole-

a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital, he affirmed. Kuwait's government and people

will not leave the Palestinian people to their fate, and will continue meeting the needs of the people in Gaza, he For his part, Office Manager of the

IICO in Jordan Dr. Mustafa Al-Awwad said that this aid will reach Gaza, carrying with it about 3,453 food, health, winter clothes parcels, to meet the needs of the afflicted families in Gaza.

This convoy comes in cooperation with a group of Kuwaiti volunteer teams and charitable institutions representing many Kuwaiti teams.

## **VAT, subsidy**

#### **Continued from Page 1**

Domestically, the IMF highlighted that Kuwait's ability to diversify its economy away from oil depends on the successful implementation of financial and structural reforms.

These reforms are essential to enhancing the economy's resilience and stimulating private investment. The experts also praised Kuwait's exchange rate policy, which ties the Kuwaiti dinar to a basket of currencies, as a stable anchor for the country's monetary policy. This system has helped keep inflation low and stable for many years.

Regarding labor market challenges, the IMF stressed that economic diversification will require significant labor market reforms.

The IMP pointed out that in order to encourage Kuwaitis to seek employment in the private sector, there needs to be better alignment of compensation and working conditions between the public and private sectors. Improving the quality of education and aligning it with the needs of the private sector would also enhance productivity and support economic diversification.

The Fund mission welcomed the Kuwaiti government's plan to expand corporate income tax to include all

large domestic companies. They also highlighted the importance of establishing a medium-term fiscal and macroeconomic framework, which would strengthen the government's ability to analyze and forecast fiscal policy, including setting a public debt ceiling and a budget balance target for the non-oil sectors.

Finally, the IMF delegation emphasized the urgent need to pass a law governing public liquidity and government financing ("public debt law") to ease the funding of public finances.

The delegation members noted that the Kuwaiti authorities are committed to implementing reforms to transition to a dynamic and diversified economy. Achieving this goal, however, will

require significant fiscal adjustments

on both the public spending side and the non-oil revenue side.

#### **Biometric data**

#### **Continued from Page 1**

mits for specific categories, not driving licenses, as some have misunderstood.

These categories include taxi drivers, on-demand fares, driving instructors, and public bus operators, who will now use electronic permits via the Ministry's digital wallet.

He underlined the importance of continued cooperation between the United Nations and the Republic of

main an essential tool to support Iraq's stability and ensure the well-being of the Iraqi people.

He reiterated Kuwait's full commitment to supporting the UNAMI in its journey towards achieving peace and development and to pursue the key issues of the recovery of missing Ku-waitis, Kuwaiti National Archives and Kuwaiti properties.

# **Continued from Page 1**

of the UN General Assembly on the advancement of women.

She pointed out that Kuwait has enacted numerous laws and regulations that guarantee women's social, economic and political rights in accordance with the constitution.

"Proves of this, is perhaps the percentage of women in the total national labor force: over 58 percent in the public sector and 48 percent in the private sector," she said.

Al-Abad added that more than 70

torical buildings.

■ The proposal submitted by member Sherifa Al-Shalfan for preparing regusives buildings based lations for dismantling buildings based

on a field study of building types and

■ The delay in responding to member Alia Al-Farsi's proposal for forming

■ The letter submitted by the Public

■ The letter submitted by Dr. Khalifa

that the change applies to driving per-

## **Iraq's security**

#### **Continued from Page 1**

He added that the UNAMI would re-

#### set to achieve this goal. **Kuwait commits** 'Israeli attacks

## **Continued from Page 1**

the first time.

He affirmed the adherence at the state level to the instructions by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah to maintain the relief air bridge with Gaza, Sudan and the states afflicted

He underscored the eminent diplomatic role that the State of Kuwait has played to stop the genocide in Gaza

and confront the occupation-based power to transform Lebanon into "another Gaza.' Ambassador Alhayen has held

meetings with the Director General of the World Health Organization Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the Human Rights Higher Commissioner Volker Turk, the Chairperson of the International Committee of the Red Cross Mirjana Spoljaric, and Executive President, Secretary General of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) Jagan Chapagain and the UN Higher Commissioner for Refugees Filippo

These meetings were part of the diplomatic efforts, partly with the Arab Group and the other GCC states, for boosting global cooperation and addressing humanitarian crises. The UNHCR has endorsed in its

current session a number of resolutions announced on Friday that six relief for boosting human rights in Yemen, Somalia, Congo, the Central Republic of Africa, in addition to decisions for renouncing racial indiscrimination.

The council renewed the year-long

finding mission for Sudan, extended term for some experts and rapporteurs namely those tasked with human rights issues in Afghanistan. Moreover, Mazna Al-Omair (Saudi Arabia) was elected member of the council consultative commission, representing Asia and the Pacific. The UNHRC session had kicked

off on September 9th. Mandate of Kuwait's membership in the council expires in January 2026. The council, formed in 2006 ac-

cording to a resolution by the UN General Assembly, groups 47 states. Each member is elected regularly for a three-year term and resolutions are taken by either unanimity or voting. Non of the member states enjoys veto Meanwhile, the International Is-

trucks to support afflicted families in the Gaza Strip are ready, as part of the Gaza relief convoy campaign. The IICO worked in tandem with Kuwaiti and Jordan Hashemite Charity

lamic Charity Organization (IICO)



Democratic presidential nominee US Vice President Kamala Harris leaves Bacanora restaurant during a campaign stop on Oct 11 in Phoenix. (AP)

#### Cruz, Allred wage another Senate fight

# Harris' doctor reports she's in 'excellent health'

WASHINGTON, Oct 12, (AP): US Vice President Kamala Harris is in "excellent health" and "possesses the physical and mental resiliency" required to serve as president, her doctor said in a letter released Saturday that summarizes her medical history and

Dr. Joshua Simmons, a US Army colonel and physician to the vice president, wrote that Harris, 59, maintains a healthy, active lifestyle and that her most recent physical last April was 'unremarkable.

She "possesses the physical and mental resiliency required to successfully execute the duties of the Presidency, to include those as Chief Executive, Head of State and Commander in Chief," he wrote in a two-page letter.

Harris' advisers hope to use the moment to draw a contrast with Republican Donald Trump, who has released only limited information about his health over the years, and raise questions about his fitness to serve, according to a campaign aide who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss sen-

sitive matters.

Trump has released very little health information, including after his ear was grazed by a bullet during an assassination attempt in July.

Trump, 78, eagerly questioned President Joe Biden's health when the 81-year-old president was seeking reelection. Since Biden was replaced on the ticket with Harris, who is 59, Trump's own health has drawn more

Last November, Trump marked Biden's birthday by releasing a letter from his physician that reported the former president was in "excellent" physical and mental health.

The letter posted on Trump's social media platform contained no details to support its claims - measures like weight, blood pressure and cholesterol levels, or the results of any test.

Meanwhile, attack ads on every TV break. Campaign money pouring in. And on a sunny Saturday, a crowd stretching out the door for a campaign rally at Tulip's, a popular Fort Worth nightclub - this time for Democratic

US Rep Colin Allred, a former NFL linebacker trying to unseat Republican Sen. Ted Cruz.

Texas is having one of those Octobers again.

With Democrats defending twice as many Senate seats as Republicans, Allred's bid could be their best chance to flip a seat next month and preserve their thin Senate majority. Cruz is imploring Republican supporters to take the challenge seriously, six years after his narrow victory over Beto O'Rourke revealed fault lines for Republicans after decades of dominance in Texas.

But Allred, who would become Texas' first Black senator, is doing things his own way. Out for more than the moral victories Texas Democrats have settled for since 1994 - the last time they won a statewide election - Allred has run to the center and away from O'Rourke's barnstorming and breakthe-rules blueprint. The different look has frustrated some Democrats, but amid signs of a competitive race with less than a month to go, Allred is sticking to the script.

Former US president slams Democrats

# Trump drives his anti-immigration message in Aurora and Colorado

AURORA, Colo., Oct 12, (AP): Donald Trump detoured from the battleground states Friday to visit a Colorado suburb that's been in the news over illegal immigration as he drives a message, often using false or misleading claims and dehumanizing language, that migrants are causing chaos in smaller American cities and towns.

Trump's rally in Aurora marked the first time ahead of the November election that either presidential campaign has visited Colorado, which reliably votes Democratic statewide.

The Republican nominee has long promised to stage the largest deportation operation in US history and has made immigration core to his political persona since launching his first campaign in 2015. In recent months, Trump has pinpointed specific smaller communities that have seen large arrivals of migrants, with tensions flaring locally over resources and some longtime residents expressing distrust about sudden demographic changes.

Aurora entered the spotlight in August when a video circulated showing armed men walking through an apart-ment building housing Venezuelan migrants. Trump has claimed extensively that Venezuelan gangs are taking over buildings, even though authorities say that was a single block of

the suburb near Denver, and the area is again safe.

Ignoring those denials from local authorities, Trump painted a picture of apartment complexes overrun by "barbaric thugs" and streets unsafe to travel, blaming President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris, Trump's Democratic rival

"No person who has inflicted the violence and terror that Kamala Harris has inflicted on this community can ever be allowed to become the president of the United States," Trump added.

Trump often used dehumanizing language, referring to his political rivals as "scum" and to migrants as " animals " who have "invaded and conquered" Aurora. The town is "infected by Venezuela," he said. "We have to clean out our country,"

Trump said. And he reprised the first controversy of his career in politics, when he launched his 2016 campaign by saying migrants are rapists and bring drugs and crime. "I took a lot of heat for saying it, but

I was right," Trump said Friday, repeating the false claim that other countries are emptying their prisons and mental institutions and dumping their worst criminals in the United States

To thunderous applause, he called for the death penalty "for any migrant



Republican presidential nominee former US president Donald Trump gestures to supporters during a campaign rally at Grand Sierra Resort and Casino in Reno, Nevada, on Oct 11. (AP)

that kills an American citizen or a law enforcement officer."

Later Friday in Reno, Nevada, Trump insisted the US is "an occupied country," and added, "I make this vow to you: Nov. 5, 2024, will be liberation day in America. Liberation day.'

Trump announced in Colorado that as president he'd launch "Operation Aurora" to focus on deporting members of the Venezuelan gang Tren de Aragua, or TDA. The violent gang traces its origins more than a decade to an infamously lawless prison with hardened criminals.

Trump also repeated his pledge to invoke the Alien Enemies Act, a 1798 law that allows the president to deport any noncitizen who is from a country that the U.S. is at war with.

In July, the Biden administration issued a sanction against the gang and offered \$12 million in rewards for the arrest of three leaders. Aurora resident Jodie Powell, 54,

was among the attendees at Trump's Friday event. She said it's "not the case" that Venezuelan gangs have taken over the city, as Trump claims. Still, Powell said she's seen an increase in crime she associates with newcomers, citing a police chase that ended at a store where she was shop-



The oil tanker Annika, which was wrecked in the Baltic Sea after a fire, is towed to Rostock, Germany on Oct 12. (AP)

#### Fire on board an oil tanker off Baltic Sea extinguished

A fire that broke out on board an oil tanker off Germany's Baltic Sea coast has been extinguished, authorities said Saturday. The blaze didn't spread to the ship's load.

The maritime rescue service was alerted to the fire on board the German-flagged Annika on Friday morning, and shortly afterward took all seven crew members off the vessel. Black smoke from the tanker, which was carrying about 640 metric tons of oil, could be seen from the coast.

The fire appears to have broken out in the engine room or in a storage room for paint and spread across the stern of the ship. On Friday afternoon, experts determined that the ship's condition was stable and authorities decided to have it towed to the port city of Rostock to continue fighting the blaze. (AP)

# It has been a rocky ride

# British Premier Starmer marks 100 days in office

LONDON, Oct 12, (AP): British Prime Minister Keir Starmer marks 100 days in office Saturday with little cause for celebration. Starmer's center-left Labour Party

was elected by a landslide on July 4. sweeping back to power after 14 years. But after weeks of stories about feuding, freebies and fiscal gloom, polls suggest Starmer's personal approval rating has plummeted, and Labour is only slightly more popular than a Conservative Party that was rejected by voters after years of infighting and scandal.

"You couldn't really have imagined a worse start," said Tim Bale, professor of politics at Queen Mary University of London. "First impressions count, and it's going to be difficult to turn those around.'

Starmer won the election on promises to banish years of turmoil and scandal under Conservative governments, get Britain's sluggish economy growing and restore frayed public services such as the state-funded National Health Service.

His government argues it has made a strong start: It has ended long-running strikes by doctors and railway workers. set up a publicly owned green energy firm, scrapped the Conservatives' contentious plan to deport asylum-seekers to Rwanda and introduced bills to strengthen rights for workers and renters.



Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer speaks during a visit at a factory in Chester, England on Oct 4. (AP)

## America

1 dead, 12 hurt in Okla shooting: A shooting at a party held at an Oklahoma event center left one person dead and wounded 12 others, police said.

A disturbance led to multiple shots being fired inside and outside the private venue in southwest Oklahoma Čitv around 12:30 am Saturday, Capt. Valerie Littlejohn of the Oklahoma City Police Department said in an email.

Littlejohn could not immediately provide information about the victims other than that at least two were in critical condition at a hospital.

Suspects haven't yet been identified but several people were detained after the shooting and investigators were interviewing witnesses, Littlejohn said. (AP)

2 held in killing homeless man: Two men were arrested on manslaughter charges Friday in the beating death of a homeless man who was accosted while sleeping in a supermarket parking lot in Brooklyn, police said.

The suspects were awaiting arraignment, and it wasn't clear whether they had attorneys who could comment on the allegations.

Police said Cos Jervis Jonas Ajpuac, 38, and another man were pummeled with metal pipes and a baseball bat around 7 pm Sept 18, police said. Ajpuac succumbed to his injuries Oct 2. The other man, a 42-year-old, survived.

The assailants "just attacked them while they were sleeping," store security worker Stephen DeGrasse told the Daily News, saying he had seen security footage of the beating.

He said the victims and the suspects all frequented the same ShopRite supermarket to redeem the five-cent deposit on bottles and cans they had collected.

They were friends, he said, and would drink beer together after cashing the bot-

There was no immediate information from police about what sparked the attack. (AP)

Floridians clear storm debris: Florida residents slogged through flooded streets, gathered up scattered debris and assessed damage to their homes on Friday after Hurricane Milton smashed

through coastal communities and spawned a barrage of deadly tornadoes. At least people were

dead, and rescuers were still saving people swollen from rivers, but many expressed

**DeSantis** lief that Milton worse The hurricane spared densely populated

Gov. Ron DeSantis warned people to not let down their guard, however, citing ongoing safety threats including downed

Tampa a direct hit, and the lethal storm

surge that scientists feared never materi-

power lines and standing water that could hide dangerous objects.

"We're now in the period where you have fatalities that are preventable, DeSantis said. "You have to make the proper decisions and know that there are hazards out there."

As of Friday night, the number of customers in Florida still without power had dropped to 1.9 million, according to poweroutage.us. St. Petersburg's 260,000 residents were told to boil water before drinking, cooking or brushing their teeth, until at least Monday.(AP)

**2 dead in Texas refinery leak:** Two employees killed when hydrogen sulfide leaked at a Houston-area oil refinery were employees of a subcontractor performing maintenance work, the director of Pemex, Mexico's state-owned oil

company that operates the plant, said The two "were in the zone directly affected, and who received the direct impact of the gas," Pemex Director Victor Rodriguez said during a news briefing in Mexico City. Both bodies have been

recovered. Mexican Energy Secretary Luz Elena Gonzalez said "there is no longer any risk" as a result of the leak and that the cause of the leak is under investi-

Pemex previously said in a statement that operations had been "proactively halted" at two units of the oil refinery with the aim of mitigating the impact.

#### BERLIN, Oct 12, (AP): German Chancellor Olaf Scholz has announced that Germany, together with Belgium, Denmark, and Norway, would deliver another military

aid package worth around 1.4 billion euros (1.53 billion U.S. dollars) to Ukraine by the end of the

Scholz made the remarks during Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's fourth visit to Germany since the beginning of this year.

The aid package will include air defense systems, battle tanks, drones, and artillery ammunition, among others.

At a joint press conference, Scholz said that Germany has also pledged an additional 170 million euros to help Ukraine repair damaged energy infrastructure and restore heating before winter.

Zelensky expressed his gratitude for Germany's support and called for continued international assistance to Ukraine.

The two sides also exchanged views on the upcoming second peace summit and plans to achieve peace. Zelensky said he wishes to end the conflicts by 2025.

Zelenskyy said Friday it's important that allies' aid to Ukraine

doesn't decrease next year as he re-

ceived a pledge of a new weapons

package from Scholz on a European tour meant to win backing for his "victory plan" aimed at ending the war with Russia.

Germany announces new military aid to Ukraine

Zelenskyy arrived in Berlin after stops Thursday in London, Paris and Rome on a tour arranged after a planned summit Saturday with U.S. President Joe Biden and other allied

leaders was de-

railed by Hurri-

The Ukrain-

ian leader has

yet to publicly

detail his pro-

posals for "vic-

tory." But the

timing of his

efforts to lock

cane Milton.



European in support appear to have the looming U.S. election

in mind. Former President Donald Trump has long been critical of US aid to Kyiv. Ukraine's stretched and shorthanded army is currently under heavy pressure in the country's

eastern Donetsk region. Russian forces recently pushed it out of the Donetsk town of Vuhledar and are now in control of about half of nearby Toretsk. To stop the losses, Zelenskyy needs to secure more help.

In Berlin, he said that Ukraine

"would want to end the war no later than in 2025.

"This plan is a bridge to hold a productive peace summit that will truly put an end to the war," he said, adding that Ukraine can only strengthen its position against Russia through cooperation with Western partners.

Earlier Friday, Zelenskyy had a 35-minute meeting with Pope Francis at the Vatican. He also met the Vatican's secretary of state, Pietro Parolin.

"The discussions were dedicated to the state of the war and the humanitarian situation in Ukraine, as well as the ways in which it could be brought to an end, leading to just and stable peace in the country," the Vatican said, adding that "some matters relating to the religious life of the country were also examined."

Since the first Russian attack on Kyiv, there have been multiple contacts between Francis and Zelenskyy, through visits, letters and phone calls.

The pope sparked some criticism from Ukrainian leaders in March when he suggested they should have the courage of the "white flag" negotiating an end to the war with Russia, in what was interpreted by many as a call to surrender.

#### Seoul denies allegation

# **N.Korea accuses South of flying drones to capital**

SEOUL, South Korea, Oct 12, (AP): North Korea has accused rival South Korea of flying drones to its capital to drop anti-North Korean propaganda leaflets and threatened to respond with force if such flights occur again. South Korea issued a vague denial of the al-

North Korea's Foreign Ministry said in a statement Friday that South Korean drones were detected in the night skies of Pyongyang on Oct. 3 and Wednesday and Thursday this week.

The ministry accused the South of violating North Korea's "sacred" sovereignty and threatening its security, and described the alleged flights as a "dangerous provocation" that could escalate to an armed conflict and even war. It said North Korean forces will prepare "all means of attack" capable of destroying the southern side of the border and the South Korean military, and respond without warning if South Korean drones are detected in its territory again.

"The safety lock on our trigger has now been released," the ministry said. "We will be prepared for everything and will be watching. The criminals should no longer gamble with the lives of their citizens.

Asked about the North Korean claims during a parliamentary hearing, South Korean Defense Minister Kim Yong-hyun told lawmakers, "We have not done that." He said he was still trying to assess the situation and didn't elaborate further.

It wasn't immediately clear whether Kim was referring to South Korean military drones, or also drones possibly operated by South Korean civilians. The South's Joint Chiefs of Staff later said in a statement that it couldn't confirm whether the North's claims were true, without elaborating why. The joint chiefs warned the North to "exercise restraint and not act recklessly."

"If the safety of our citizens is threatened in any way, our military will respond with stern and thorough retaliation," it said. North Korea is extremely sensitive to any outside criticism of the authoritarian government of leader Kim Jong Un and his family's dynastic rule over the country.

Since May, North Korea has sent thousands of balloons carrying paper waste, plastic and other trash to drop on the South, in what it described as retaliation against South Korean civilian activists who flew balloons with anti-North Korean propaganda leaflets across the border. South Korea's joint chiefs said in a separate statement that the North was again flying balloons toward the South Friday evening and warned civilians to beware of objects falling from the sky.

South Korea's military responded to the North's balloon campaign by using border loudspeakers to broadcast propaganda and K-pop to North Korea.

The psychological warfare campaigns have further escalated tensions created by Kim's weapons tests and verbal threats of nuclear conflict against Washington and Seoul. The allies have responded by strengthening their combined military exercises and expanding three-way cooperation with Japan, while also upgrading nuclear deterrence plans built around U.S. stra-



South Korean army soldiers patrol along the barbed-wire fence in Paju, South Korea, near the border with North Korea on Oct 10. (AP)

#### **Ramaphosa survives scandal**

# S. Africa prez won't be charged over hidden cash

CAPE TOWN, South Africa, Oct 12, (AP): South African President Cyril Ramaphosa won't face criminal charges over a hidden cash scandal that was revealed more than two years ago and led to an investigation by a special police unit, prosecutors said.

A former national security chief laid a criminal complaint against Ramaphosa in June 2022, accusing him of kidnapping, bribery and other crimes in relation to the theft of \$580,000 in US banknotes that was stashed in a couch at the president's ranch.

The former security boss, Arthur Fraser, alleged that Ramaphosa had been keeping the cash hidden in furniture at his ranch to evade South Africa's foreign currency laws when it

Instead of reporting the theft, Ramaphosa tried to cover it up by having members of his presidential protection unit track down the thieves, kidnap them and then bribe them to keep quiet about the existence of the money, Fraser said in the affidavit filed with police.

The theft happened at Ramaphosa's game farm in rural northern South Africa in early 2020 and had been kept quiet until Fraser's allegations. It forced Ramaphosa to admit the theft took place and threw his presidency into turmoil ahead of a crucial party leadership vote.

He survived the scandal and was



Africa President Ramaphosa addresses the 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly on Sept 24. (AP)

reelected as South African leader this June, while the criminal investigation had been ongoing. Ramaphosa, 71, was also accused of money laundering, tax evasion and breaching foreign currency laws over the cash.

He denied wrongdoing and said the

cash came from the legitimate sale of buffaloes at his Phala Phala game

Ramaphosa said he reported the theft to the head of his police protection unit, though he didn't explain why the money was hidden in the couch.

Prosecutors said in a statement that the decision not to bring any charges against Ramaphosa or anyone on his security detail came after "a comprehensive investigation process."

The scandal, at times referred to as "farmgate" in South Africa, led to opposition parties bringing an impeachment motion against Ramaphosa in Parliament. His African National Congress party used its majority to block the motion in late 2022, while Ramaphosa was also cleared by the reserve bank and an independent watch-

Two men and a woman, one of whom was reportedly a worker at Ramaphosa's farm, were arrested last year and charged with breaking and entering and theft.

The allegations against Ramaphosa were seen by some to be politically motivated, with Fraser a close ally of former South African President Jacob Zuma. Zuma stepped down in 2018 while facing allegations of corruption and was replaced by Ramaphosa, who was his vice president. Zuma and Ramaphosa have since become fierce political foes.



Asian Nations (ASEAN) Summit in Vientiane, Laos, Friday Oct 11. (AP

# **US worried about China's 'dangerous'** actions in disputed sea, says Blinken

VIENTIANE, Laos, Oct 12, (AP): US Secretary of State Antony Blinken told Southeast Asian leaders Friday that the U.S. is concerned about China's "increasingly dangerous and unlawful" activities in the disputed South China Sea during an annual summit meeting, and pledged the U.S. will continue to vital sea trade route.

His comments at a meeting with the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations' drew swift condemnation from Beijing, which blamed U.S. and other military presences from beyond the region for instability in the waterway, which Beijing claims almost in its

China has overlapping claims with ASEAN members Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei, as well as Taiwan. About a third of global trade transits through the sea, which is also rich in fishing stocks, gas and oil. A series of recent violent confrontations between China and Philippines as well as Vietnam have fueled concerns that China's increasingly aggresive actions in the sea could spiral into a full-scale conflict.

Beijing has refused to recognize a 2016 international arbitration ruling by a U.N.-affiliated court in the Hague that invalidated its expansive claims, and has built up and militarized islands it controls.

"We are very concerned about China's increasingly dangerous and unlawful activities in the South China Sea which have injured people, harm vessels from ASEAN nations and contradict commitments to peaceful resolutions of disputes," said Blinken, who is filling in for President Joe Biden, in his opening speech at the U.S.-ASEAN summit.

"The United States will continue to support freedom of navigation, and freedom of overflight in the Indo Pacific." The U.S. has no claims in the South China Sea, but has deployed navy ships and fighter jets to patrol the waters in a challenge to

China's claims. In Beijing, Chinese Foreign Min-U.S. and other military presences from outside the region were the main source of instability in the sea.

"The increasing military deployment and activities in the South China Sea by the U.S. and a few other non-regional countries, stoking confrontation and creating tensions, are the greatest source of instability for peace and stability in the South

China Sea," Mao said Chinese and Philippine vessels have clashed repeatedly this year, and Vietnam said last week that Chinese forces assaulted its fishermen in the disputed sea. China has also sent patrol vessels to areas that Indonesia and Malaysia claim as exclusive economic zones.

The U.S. has warned repeatedly that it's obligated to defend the Philippines - its oldest treaty ally in Asia - if Filipino forces, ships or aircraft come under armed attack, including in the South China Sea. Philippine President Ferdinand

Marcos Jr. complained to summit leaders on Thursday that his country "continues to be subject to harassment and intimidation" by China's actions, which he said violated international law. He has called for more urgency in ASEAN-China negotiations on a code of conduct to govern the South China Sea. Officials have agreed to try and complete the code by 2026, but talks have been hampered by sticky issues including disagreements over

whether the pact should be binding.

In another firm message to China, Blinken said the U.S. is also committed to help protect stability across the Taiwan Strait. The U.S. has in recent years stepped up support for Taiwan, including new military financing last month that sparked protest from China, which laims the self-ruled island as its own territory.

Blinken also attended an 18-nation East Asia Summit, along with the Chinese premier, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, and leaders from Japan, South Korea, India, Australia and New Zealand.

ASEAN has treaded carefully on the sea dispute with China, which is the bloc's largest trading partner and its third largest investor. It hasn't marred trade relations, with the two sides focusing on expanding a free trade area covering a market of 2 billion people. Blinken said the annual ASEAN summit talks were a platform to address other shared challenges including the civil war in Myanmar, North Korea's "destabilizing behavior" and Russia's war aggression in Ukraine.

The Middle East crisis was also raised, with pro-Palestine Muslim countries like Malaysia and Indonesia repeating calls for an immediate Israeli ceasefire as the war marked its one-year anniversary on Mon-

Blinken also said Israel's escalated campaign in Lebanon against Hezbollah has "clear and legitimate" reasons, but said the U.S. is trying to find a diplomatic solution to the war. He said it was also important that civilians are protected during the fighting in Lebanon and Gaza, adding that not enough humanitarian aid is reaching north Gaza and other areas



Injured men receive treatment at a hospital in Quetta, Pakistan on Oct. 11, 2024, following Thursday's attack by gunmen in Balochistan province. (AP

### **Gunmen kill 21 miners in Pakistan**

Gunmen killed 21 miners and wounded six others in Pakistan's southwest, a police official said Friday, drawing condemnation from authorities as a search was launched for the assailants.

The latest attack in the restive Balochistan province came days ahead of a major security summit being hosted in the capital.

The gunmen stormed the accommodation at a coal mine in Duki district late Thursday night, rounded up the men and opened fire, police official Hamayun Khan Nasir said. He said the attackers also fired rockets.

lobbed grenades at the mine and damaged machinery before fleeing. Most of the casualties were from Pashto-speaking areas of Balochistan. Three of the dead and four of the wounded were Afghan. Angered over the violence, local shop owners pulled their shutters down to observe a daylong strike against the killings.

One of the critically wounded miners died later at a hospital, increasing the death toll to 21, Nasir said. However, he said the families of the killed miners for hours refused to bury them and staged a sit-in at the site of the attack in Duki. (AP)

#### Kenya to deploy 600 additional officers

# 'Boost support for peacekeeping mission in Haiti'

NAIROBI, Kenya, Oct 12, (AP): The leaders of Kenya and Haiti have urged international partners to honor their commitment to the UN-backed peacekeeping mission in Haiti, saying the mission needs more resources and that its budget will run out in March 2025.

Kenya, which leads the mission to quell gang violence in the Caribbean nation, has sent nearly 400 officers. They are joined by nearly two dozen police officers and soldiers from Jamaica, but the numbers fall significantly short of the 2,500 pledged by various countries, including Chad, Benin, Bangladesh and

Barbados, for the mission. Kenyan President William Ruto, who met with Haiti Prime Minister Garry Conille in Nairobi on Friday, said Kenya would deploy 600 addi-

tional officers next month. The UN has \$85 million in pledges for the mission, of which \$68 million has been received.

"We have a window of success that is evident from the operations that have been carried out already," Ruto

Conille asked international partners to send the officers they'd pledged to ensure the "contingent from Kenya has the resources they need." Conille said his regular meetings with the Kenyan commander were filled with words of encouragement that the fight against Haiti's gangs "is winnable."

The gangs in Haiti have grown in power since the July 7, 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moïse and are now estimated to control up to 80% of the capital. The surge in killings, rapes and kidnappings has led to a violent uprising by civilian vigilante

A UN Security Council voted unanimously in early October to extend the mandate of the Kenya-led multinational force, after brushing off a call from Haiti to start talks on transforming it into a UN peacekeeping mission.

Meanwhile, gunmen invaded another town north of Haiti's capital on Thursday, shooting at people and setting homes on fire, just a week after a massacre killed at least 115 people in the country's central region. The number of

casualties was not immediately known. Residents in the coastal town of Arcahaie called radio stations pleading for help and asking that police come and save them.

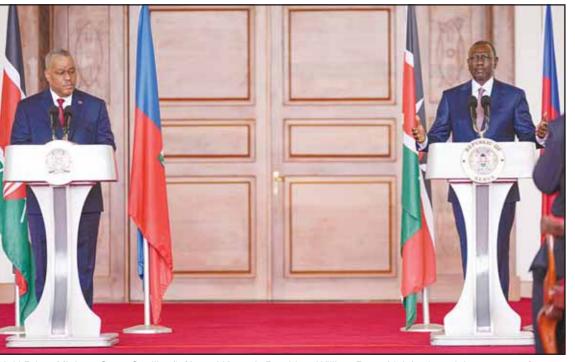
Lionel Lazarre, deputy police spokesman, told Radio Caraïbes that officers were on site and that authorities were taking several measures to strengthen their presence."The police heard the people of Arcahaie shouting for help," he said.

Radio Télé Monopole reported that gunmen attacked the town before dawn, opening fire and wounding multiple people as they set fire to homes, especially those in the Vigner and Bercy communities.

Several radio stations reported that the attack was launched by the gang in the area of Canaan known as the Taliban. The gang has around 200 members and operates mostly in the northern part of the Port-au-Prince capital.

Arcahaie is located between Haiti's capital and the central town of Pont-Sondé, where another gang, Gran Grif, is accused of killing more than 115 people last Thursday.

While most of the gang violence is centered in Port-au-Prince - which is 80% controlled by gangs - it has spread north of the capital in recent years, especially the central Artibonite region.



Haiti Prime Minister Garry Conille, (left), and Kenya's President William Ruto, (right), give a joint press conference at State House in Nairobi, Kenya on Oct 11. (AP)

#### In an interview with Arab Banker Magazine

# KFH targets wider capital pool and diversified funding for global expansion

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 12: In an interview with Arab Banker Magazine, Kuwait Finance House (KFH) Acting Group Chief Executive Officer, Abdulwahab Iesa Al Rushood said that the landmark cross-border acquisition of Ahli United Bank - Bahrain is one of the largest deals in the region. He noted that it is considered a significant milestone in the history of the Kuwaiti banking sector, setting the stage for a new era led by KFH.

He added that the motivating factor behind the acquisition and merger, the largest-ever merger in Kuwait's banking sector, was the ambition to enhance the position of the Group regionally and globally.

"This strategic step brings several benefits. It has created a stronger financial institution that can support various sectors of the economy through an increased financing capacity of more than KWD 500 million(\$1,6 bn) for a single client, investment in new projects and further support for small and medium enterprises. All of which will benefit Kuwait's economy", AlRushood noted.

He pointed out that the acquisition of AUB- Bahrain not only strengthens the banking sector, but also plays a vital and crucial role in advancing Kuwait's broader economic and development objectives through the potential it creates to provide funds to various projects and businesses both directly and indirectly.

The recent acquisition and merger with AUB are another significant milestone, solidifying KFH's position as both the largest bank in Kuwait in terms of Market Cap and the world's second-largest Islamic bank by assets. This strategic move marks a new chapter in KFH's growth trajectory and is a key historic achievement. "It is worth mentioning that KFH is a full-service bank offering retail, corporate, treasury and private banking and



Acting Group CEO — Abdulwahab AlRushood

wealth management services. The Gorup currently operates in 12 countries around the world," he said.

#### **Digital transformation**

Speaking about KFH's Digital Transformation strategy, AlRushood indicated that Tam digital bank is the first Sharia-compliant digital bank in Kuwait launched in

He explained that the initial strategy of Tam was to cater to the youth demographic with services and products compatible for their lifestyle and needs. Currently, Tam allows customers starting from 15 years of age to onboard end-to-end digitally and automatically issue a digital debit card upon account opening. This enables users to easily send and receive money.

Al Rushood mentioned another product KFH offers which is the Tam digital prepaid card. "Users can start to enjoy the benefits instantly," he remarked "Various other innovative products and services, such as credit cards and



KFH Headquarters

personal financing, are also in the development pipeline as we expand the business line to cater for the salaried demographic. Tam has biometric facial recognition built into it and we are also considering leveraging AI to further personalize our digital offering to our customers."

#### **Larger funding base**

With regards to the Sukuk programme, AlRushood indicated that in January KFH announced the successful issuance of a 5-year Senior Unsecured Sukuk of US\$1 bn, which was extremely popular and more than three times oversubscribed, attracting orders exceeding \$3.45 bn.

He mentioned that the aim of this issuance was to enable KFH to access a wider pool of capital, diversify its funding base, support international expansion plans and enhance its brand recognition. Additionally, it gives KFH the opportunity to increase its investment capabilities and support Kuwait's infrastructure projects and other sectors in the country, as well as help corporate customers with their expansion plans both regionally and globally.

AlRushoodstressed the Bank's goal of becoming a 'top 100 global bank', "Our ambitious vision created by KFH's Board of Directors is targeting a place among the top 100 global banks within the next decade.

AlRushoodsaid that the future of global banking in 2025 is likely to be shaped by digital transformation, collaboration, and regulatory changes. While there are bright spots in terms of technological advancements and customer-centric services, banks will need to navigate through various challenges to stay competitive and adapt to the evolving landscape.

'Overall, the outlook for global banks remains steady. This resilience is largely due to solid capitalization, improved profitability, and still sound asset quality." he re-

# **Kuwait's trade surplus soars** 1.25 pct yoy amid import dip

Imports drop by 6.27 pct

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 12: Kuwait's trade surplus experienced a 1.25 percent increase year-on-year in the second quarter of 2024, reaching 3.25 billion dinars (approximately \$10.62 billion), compared to 3.21 billion dinars (\$10.49 billion) during the same period in 2023, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This positive trend was primarily attributed to a notable decline in imports, as reported by the Central Administration of Statistics (CAS).

The data revealed that imports decreased by 6.27 percent in the three months ending June 30, totaling 2.69 billion dinars compared to 2.87 billion dinars in the second guarter of 2023. This reduction in imports significantly bolstered the

However, Kuwait's export performance faced challenges,

with total exports in the second quarter amounting to 5.93 billion dinars, marking a 14.31 percent decline from 6.08 billion dinars in the same quarter last year.

The contributing factors to this decline included a 4.07 percent drop in oil and its derivatives exports, which fell to 5.42 billion dinars, and a 3.21 percent decrease in exports of national origin, amounting to 5.73 billion dinars.

Overall, Kuwait's total trade exchange decreased by ap-

proximately 3.69 percent in the second quarter of 2024, totaling 8.62 billion dinars compared to 8.95 billion dinars in the same quarter of the previous year.

For the first half of 2024, the trade exchange volume reached 17.83 billion dinars, reflecting a 3.52 percent decline from 18.48 billion dinars during the first six months

As Kuwait navigates these fluctuations in trade performance, the combination of decreased imports and challenges in export volume illustrates the complex dynamics influencing the nation's economic landscape.

# Global Wealth Awards 2024

A group photo of the honorees with Ahmad Al-Fuwaires in the center.

Bank focuses on cultivating young affluent clientele

# **Gulf Bank achieves Best Next-Generation Offering Award at Global Wealth Awards 2024 in Singapore**

KUWAIT CITY, OCT 12: Gulf Bank has received international recognition for its outstanding banking services by winning the Best Next-Generation Offering Award at the 2024 Private Banker International Global Wealth Awards ceremony held in Singapore. This award highlights the bank's success in effectively expanding its offerings to attract the next generation of affluent clients.

The award criteria highlighted that Gulf Bank's wealth management division achieved exceptional growth and accomplishments over the past year, reinforcing its position as a leading bank in providing wealth management services in the region through innovative offerings and products tailored for private banking clients and their families.

Following the award presentation, Ahmad Al-Fuwaires, Gulf Bank's Investment Manager, stated that the bank has strategically focused on private banking services, which provide quality programs and initiatives targeting young affluent individuals and future investors. He emphasized the bank's ongoing efforts to cultivate a loyal customer base, which is expected to drive growth in the coming years.

Al-Fuwaires noted that Gulf Bank's wealth management division, estab-



Ahmad Al-Fuwaires receiving the award.

lished in 2010, is committed to delivering quality services tailored to clients' needs and lifestyles, enabling them to conduct their banking transactions smoothly and easily. This commitment contributes to attracting more highnet-worth individuals seeking distin-

guished banking services. He affirmed that the bank offers a variety of financial alternatives and distinctive investment solutions by creatively developing these solutions and focusing on low-risk investments that align with global market fluctuations.

One of Gulf Bank's key objectives is to preserve clients' wealth, provide secure investment alternatives, achieve greater geographical diversity in global markets, and offer the best financing services and financial tools to meet clients' needs through wealth management.

Al-Fuwaires highlighted that each private wealth management client is assigned a personal account manager who oversees all their banking needs and provides them with financial and investment solutions to achieve their goals, maintain their wealth, and contribute to its growth. The account manager is always ready to communicate

with the client and visit them regularly. Additionally, clients receive an ATM card granting access to airport lounges, along with discounts on travel and hotel bookings. They can also obtain a credit card (Visa Infinite or Mastercard World) that provides comprehensive accident and travel insurance, airport lounge access, the Dine & Fly service for restaurant discounts, local concierge services, the Gulf Bank rewards program, and many other benefits.

# Non-oil growth rebounds 4.7% in Q1 2024

# Economic outlook dims with falling oil prices

#### By National Bank of Kuwait

eading indicators point to an economy growing at a Subdued pace but possibly not far off a cyclical upturn. Admittedly, non-oil GDP growth was surprisingly strong in Q1 but this was skewed upwards by a base effect in the oil refining sector. By contrast, consumer spending growth remained soft in Q2 while the PMI gauge of private sector activity similarly slowed in both Q2 and Q3, albeit still indicating firms' output rising. Project awards and real estate sales were affected by the seasonal lull in Q3, though the signs are that momentum could quicken in the final quarter of the year. An acceleration in bank credit growth in Q3, especially in business lending, was positive for the overall macro picture, and further gains in household and business lending might be expected with the Central Bank of Kuwait having begun its interest rate cutting cycle in September.

Q3 also saw rating agency Fitch re-affirm Kuwait's sovereign credit rating at AA- with a stable outlook on the back of strong external balances and the sizable reserve assets, though did identify elevated current spending and high oil dependency as risk factors that require structural reform and diversification initiatives to address. More details on these and other measures are expected in the government's economic framework, expected shortly.

Non-oil GDP growth rebounds in Q1 2024

Provisional CSB data showed non-oil GDP growth rebounding in Q1 2024 to 4.7% y/y from Q4 2023's contraction (-2.3%). (Chart. 1) The improvement was driven by strong growth in the manufacturing sector (including oil refining), which rose 20% compared with a decline of 8.8% the previous quarter, and in other services (mostly real estate), which rose almost 7%. On the other hand, oil sector GDP saw a steeper decline in Q1 of 9.8% compared with -6.4% in Q4 2023, reflecting OPEC-led supply cuts. Total GDP growth stood at -2.7%, a less steep decline than in Q4 2023 (-4.4%).

Oil prices slump in Q3 amid demand concerns

Oil prices dropped more than 15% in Q3 amid China driven oil demand concerns and worries over excess supplies in Q4 2024 and through 2025. Local marker Kuwait Export Crude (KEC) settled at \$74.3/bbl (-15.5 q/q) at September's end, while Brent futures closed lower at 71.8/bbl (-16.9% q/q). OPEC+'s decision in September to delay unwinding 2024's voluntary supplycuts (of 2.2 mb/d) by two months to December did little to arrest the decline. By the close of Q3 and through early October, prices began to respond positively as the Gaza-Israel conflict spilled over into Lebanon, drawing in Hezbollah and Iran (Brent touched \$74/bbl on 3 October). Current market fundamentals point to sizeable stock builds in 2025, but Saudi Arabia has hinted that it may not backstop price falls anymore by withholding supply while several OPEC+ members flout quotas and fail to honor their compensatory cut obligations.

Kuwait, for its part, held crude production steady through both Q2 and Q3 at 2.41 mb/d. Output of refined products, however, surged to a record high (1.39 mb/d) as more crude destined for export markets was diverte to local refineries to satisfy European and Far Eastern demand for gasoil and low Sulphur fuel oil. In fact, refined products exports exceeded crude exports for the first time ever in both volume and value terms in Q2, a significant milestone. Looking ahead, as per the OPEC+ production schedule, Kuwait's output could rise by 135 kb/d to 2.55 mb/d by the close of 2025.

PMI weakens, turns briefly negative in Q3

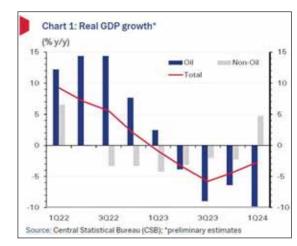
Non-oil private sector activity continued to slow in Q3. with the headline PMI ending the quarter lower at 50.3 compared to the reading of 51.6 at the end of Q2. Activity also briefly dropped below the 50 no-change index level in August. Nevertheless, growth in output, new orders and employment, the three largest components of the PMI, has visibly slowed through 2024 amid softer local and external demand conditions, as has the output price inflation component of the PMI data. Firms remain optimistic about year-ahead prospects, though.

Consumer spending growth back on moderating

Cards data for Q2 confirmed the now three-year long moderation in consumer spending growth. Growth in local spending eased to 4.8% y/y from Q1's pick-up to 5.9%. This is the slowest rate of growth in local spending since the height of the pandemic in Q2 2020. In contrast, spending abroad accelerated by 17%. In total, card spending rose by 5.4% to KD12.1 billion.

Real estate activity slips in Q3 on lower commercial

Property sales declined by 0.8% q/q in Q3 2024 to KD847 million, largely on a fall in commercial sales (-50% q/q) from Q2's strong performance. Sales were up almost 25% y/y in Q3 (46% y/y in Sept), however. The residential property sector logged its best quarterly growth rate since Q2 2021 at 14% q/q (8.2% y/y) to reach KD384 million. Investment sales also witnessed strong growth during the quarter at 42% q/q to KD317.1 million. Looking ahead, ongoing sluggishness in the residential segment highlights supply shortages, high valuations and



weak demand challenges. However, lower borrowing costs could support demand going forward as the new government looks to stimulate the market.

Project activity momentum eases in Q3

Project activity remained fairly solid in Q3, relative to recent years, with the value of awarded projects coming in at KD580 million. In line with the seasonal trend, activity fell 19% q/q (-16% y/y) but Q2 was a strong quarter. The power & water sector was the most active in terms of awards in Q3, accounting for three quarters of total market activity. The Ministry of Electricity and Water pressed ahead with tenders to develop and upgrade existing substations including Doha and Subiya. The near term outlook remains solid, with activity likely to pick up in the power & water, construction and energy sectors in line with government development plan priorities. MEED Projects has penciled in KD3.3 billion worth of awards for Q4 2024 and a further KD5.3 billion in H1

**Inflation softens marginally in August** 

CPI inflation in August softened only fractionally to 2.9% y/y from 3.0% in June and July. Inflation in the food & beverages (+6.0%) and miscellaneous (+5.3%) categories has been especially persistent and was substantially higher in August than at the start of the year. Core inflation, which excludes food and housing, edged up to 3.2% in August (July 3.1%), spurred by price rises for clothing (+5.8%) as well as the miscellaneous component. Nevertheless, inflation is expected to continue to trend lower and remains on track for an average annual increase of 3.0% from 3.6% in 2023.

Population growth rate at 7-year low, outside pan-

The latest PACI data showed that Kuwait's population reached 4.92 million as of June, growing by a slower 2.0% y/y compared to the 2.6% recorded at end-2023. Outside of the Covid-19 pandemic years, when expatriate numbers fell significantly, this is the slowest rate of growth since 2017. The Kuwaiti population increased by 1.9% to 1.56 million and the expat population by 2.0% to 3.36 million, pushing up the share of the latter fractionally to 68.3%. (Table 1.) However, the population is still more than 0.5 million smaller than it would have been had pre-pandemic growth rates been maintained. Meanwhile, growth in total employment almost halved to 2.7% y/y in June from 5.0% at the end of 2023, on the back of slowing expatriate employment growth (+2.6% y/y). Kuwaiti employment gains were stronger at 3.2%, though again these were predominantly public sector led; private

sector employment continued to decline. Improving business and household credit growth Domestic credit growth continued to strengthen,

standing at a relatively decent 2.2% YTD through August (+3.5% y/y). Business credit growth has been stronger than household, improving to 3.2% YTD (+3.8% y/y), buoyed by a solid August. (Chart 8). The construction and trade sectors remained in the lead, in line with 2022-2023, up 15% and 8.1% YTD, respectively. The last four months have showed some recovery in household credit, with an annualized growth of 4.1% over that period while the y/y increase remains a limited 2.4%. Looking ahead, lower interest rates should support credit growth, but Q4 is historically weak for business credit. The nascent recovery in household credit can be sustained, however.

Similarly, resident deposits stood higher by August's end ( $\pm 2.6\%$  ytd;  $\pm 5.1\%$  y/y), supported by private-sector deposits (+3.6% ytd) and government deposits (+9.8% ytd) while public-institution deposits were down (-8.1% ytd) despite posting two consecutive months of gains.

Monetary easing cycle commenced in September Following the US Fed's lead, the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) loosened monetary policy in September, cutting its benchmark discount rate by 25 bps to 4.0%. In a continuation of its more measured approach to rate changes, the CBK cut by less than the 50 bps of the Fed and other GCC central banks. The CBK explained that its decision was informed by local and international economic developments, banking and monetary conditions as well as local consumer price inflation.

# Warba arranges Sukuk Issuances for Riyad Bank and AerCap

Bank acted as Joint Lead Manager and Joint Bookrunner

**KUWAIT CITY, Oct 12:** Warba Bank announced Riyad Bank's USD 750 million perpetual additional tier 1 capital sukuk offering, which found both regional and global success. Warba Bank acted as Joint Lead Manager and Joint Bookrunner on the transaction which was led by HSBC, Kamco Investment Company, Merrill Lynch International, Mizuho International plc, Morgan Stanley & Co. International, Riyad Capital, SMBC Nikko Capital Markets Limited, Standard Chartered Bank as Joint

Lead Managers and Book-

Books opened on Thursday, September 26th, 2024, and closed on the same day, received great interest from regional and international market participants, as the order book reached USD3.6 billion, more than four times the issuance size.

Warba Bank said in a press statement that the USD 750 million "Non-Callable in 5 years" perpetual sukuk was successfully issued with a fixed profit rate of 5.5% which will be reset in 5.5 years from the issuance date if the sukuk don't get called by then. The sukuk were listed on the International Securities Market (ISM).

Warba Bank also announced the successful issuance of AerCap's debut sukuk offering via USD 500 million,



Thuwaini Al-Thuwaini

5 Year senior unsecured sukuk with a fixed profit rate of 4.50%. The issuance

#### Al-Thuwaini:

■ The strongparticipation on both transactions reflects investors' confidence in debt capital market capabilities.

■ Warba's expertise in sukuk has garnered global attention whichfirmly establishes its position as aprimary institution for Islamic debt instruments for investors and issuers, alike.

was priced at a discount, with a reoffer price of 99.338% to yield 4.65%. The transaction was successfully led by Bank ABC, Dubai Islamic Bank, Emirates NBD Capital, HSBC, J.P. Morgan and KFH Capital as Joint Lead Managers & Bookrunners with Warba Bank supporting the transaction as Co-Lead Manager. The sukuk were listed on the Global Exchange Market of Euronext Dublin and generated and order book of USD 1.375 billion, more than two

and a half times the issuance size.

The strong demand for the sukuk was evident through its diverse allocation, which saw significant participation from a wide range of institutional investors across the globe.

In this context, Thuwaini Khaled Al-Thuwaini, Chief Investment Banking Officer at Warba Bank, said, "With the confidence of the market in hand, we succeeded in closing the sukuk issuance amid excellent market participation and reaction, which is a testament to Warba Bank's strategic foresight and collaboration. It is a victory that reflects not only the strength of the offering but also the pulse of the market's confidence and enthusiasm."

Al-Thuwaini pointed out the importance of Islamic financing tools and their role in strengthening global financial markets, which is evidenced by the level of demand and interest of global investors in recent sukuk issued by regional corporates and banking institutions. He underscored Warba Bank's path to remain a significant player in the debt capital markets for years to come by continuing to focus on growth and expansion as Warba Bank aims to extend its reach and services to both institutional and individual investors through its commitment to ethical banking and innovative strategies.

# Company's role in empowering local energy sector recognized

# Zain named Digital Transformation Enabler of the Year

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 12: Zain was named Digital Transformation Enabler of the Year during the book launch event and awards ceremony of The Energy Year, the prestigious magazine specializing in the oil, gas, and renewable energy industries. The recognition highlighted Zain's ongoing efforts to empower the local energy sector to embrace digitization.

The event was held at the Grand Hyatt Kuwait, attended by executives, leaders, and experts from K-companies and organizations working in the oil and gas industry. In attendance were also representatives from local, regional, and global energy firms along with public and private sector officials.

The event's program featured a special excellence awards ceremony to recognize companies that contributed to the development of the local energy sector.



Abdullatif Al Kandari receives Zain's award.

Zain's award was received by Zain Kuwait Government Segment Department

Manager Abdullatif Al Kandari, with Chief Corporate Affairs and Relations Officer Waleed Al Khashti delivering Zain's opening speech.

This recognition highlights the company's ongoing strategic efforts to drive digital transformation within the local energy sector, positioning it at the forefront of leading digital service providers that have empowered national institutions to adopt digitization and enhance operational efficiency.

Zain's support to this event for the second year running underscores the company's belief in the role such insightful gatherings play in driving innovation within the energy sector in Kuwait. The event also presented an opportunity for Zain to reflect its belief in the pivotal role that technology plays in driving sustainable growth across oil, gas, and renewable energy sectors.

Over the past years, Zain has further

accelerated its efforts to support Kuwait's oil and gas sector with cuttingedge digital solutions. As one of the world's leading oil producers, Kuwait's economy relies heavily on this industry, and the company remains dedicated to supporting its continued growth.

Zain continues to harness the power of advanced technology like 5G networks, cloud services, digital applications, AI, IoT, data analytics, drones, cybersecurity, and more to empower national institutions to embrace digitalization and optimize their operations.

The company's partnerships with industry leaders, both in the public and private sectors, have grown to include new projects that harness the potential of these technologies, which are transforming the energy landscape, and Zain is committed to ensuring Kuwait remains a global leader in this arena.



Waleed Al Khashti delivers Zain's opening speech.

#### Bid to expand nationwide

# Burgan Bank opens its new branch in Al-Da'iya

KUWAIT CITY, Oct12: In line with its commitment to offering the best banking experience that fulfills its customers' varied needs, Burgan Bank opened its newest branch in Al-Da'iya under the patronage and in the presence of His Excellency the Capital Governor Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, joined by Mr. Fadel Mahmoud Abdullah, Chief Executive Officer—Kuwait, and Mr. Manaf Al-Menaifi, Acting General Manager—Retail Banking Depart-

ment at Burgan Bank, and Mr. Salem Al-Ostath, Chairman of the Board of Directors at Da'iya Cooperative Society, in addition to senior executives and officials from the Bank and



Manaf Al-Menaifi

the Capital Governorate. With the opening of the new Al-Da'iya branch, the Burgan Bank network grew to 29 branches in Kuwait and 125 branches in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), which comes as part of the Bank's dedicated strategy for expanding its suite of services and products domestically and globally.

On this occasion, HE Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah expressed his delight about the Al-Da'iya branch opening and praised the efforts exerted and the central role played by Burgan Bank in providing top-tier banking services and products that meet customers' needs and aspirations across the Capital Government and Kuwait. He further underscored the vital role of the Kuwaiti banking sector in achieving a sustainable nationwide economic and development renaissance, which effectively contributes to realizing Kuwait's Vision 2035. HE the Capital Governor extended his thanks to the Bank's Kuwait - CEO and Senior Management for the committed efforts exerted toward opening the new branch, wishing them the best in remaining abreast of the latest in the banking industry.

"Stemming from our promise to be 'Driven by You', we are delighted to announce the inauguration of our latest branch in Al-Da'iya neighborhood, which brings us closer yet to our customers and key demographics," said Mr. Al-Menaifi. "Guided by its robust strategy, Burgan Bank continues to uphold its commitment to the growth and development of its services. The opening of the Al-Da'iya branch marks our eighth branch in the Capital Governorate alone. This reflects our success in expanding our network of branches, facilitating customers' access to our complete suite of products and services across Kuwait. Furthermore, it cements our commitment to offering the best-in-class banking service that keeps pace with customers' evolving aspirations

and the global banking industry trends."

Al-Menaifi added: "The new Al-Da'iya branch stands out for its modern design and comprehensive services, which enable customers to open accounts, request loans, apply for credit cards, and other transactions including cash transfer, withdrawal and deposit, as well as currency exchange. Equipping the branch with the latest technologies was also central to its design, allowing us to offer our customers a banking experience that is in line with the rapid developments reshaping the banking sector. We also sought to integrate ourselves into the local community as a concerned corporate citizen even before opening. That is why as part of our environmental, social, and governance (ESG) commitment and efforts to spread environmental awareness about the importance of green spaces among members of society, we spearheaded an initiative to greenify and beautify a nearby park area in Al-Da'iya. The park provides a safe and engaging community space, complete with a kids play area, further enriching the quality of life for local residentsand overall contributing to a more sustainable environment."

He further pointed out that the Burgan team at the new branch was a major point of consideration during the construction process: "The branch is managed by a fine selection of our most experienced and efficient employees to guarantee that our customers are offered the best services and products possible. Our commitment to providing modern and advanced services and facilitating banking procedures and transactions is a core aspect of the unique banking experience that we seek to offer our customers, which we continue to deliver through a wide range of efficient and highly secure solutions."

It is worth noting that the Al-Da'iya branch operates throughout the week between 8:30 am and 3 pm to provide the best services and products to the residents of Al-Da'iya and the surrounding areas. Outside of these hours, Burgan Bank's advanced digital services are available 24 hours a day on the website, the Burgan Mobile application, and via SMS and WhatsApp, with the ability to open a Kanz account in less than a minute through the application.

With Burgan Bank's extensive network of branches and innovative digital services, we aim to serve all members of society sustainably and provide our customers with the ability to choose where and how to complete their banking transactions in a manner that suits their requirements and adds ease and convenience to their banking experience.

For more information on the Bank's branches, products and services, call the Burgan call center at 1804080, or log on to the Bank's website www.burgan.com.



HE the Capital Governor and Mr. Fadel Abdullah at the branch opening ceremony alongside senior executives and officials from the Bank and the Capital Governorate.



HE the Capital Governor and Mr. Fadel Abdullah cutting the cake alongside Mr. Manaf Al-Menaifi and senior executives and officials from the Bank and the Capital Governorate.



Mr. Fadel Abdullah, Chief Executive Officer – Kuwait at Burgan Bank, and Mr. Manaf Al-Menaifi, Acting General Manager – Retail Banking Department, presenting a plaque to HE the Capital Governor.

# Recognized for excellence

# Markaz reaps 7 awards

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 12: Showcasing its sustained excellence and innovation in the financial sector, Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz" has been honoured with seven prestigious awards within the first nine months of 2024 from EMEA Finance, MEED, Euromoney, and Global Finance. These accolades are testament to Markaz's unwavering commitment to providing exceptional financial services and innovative solutions to its clients throughout the Middle East. The winners are selected based on a set of criteria used by the industry experts, including the company's performance, number and size of deals, efforts to address market conditions, innovation, and market reputation.

Reflecting on these achievements, Markaz's Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Ali Khalil, expressed his pride in the firm's ongoing success. "Marking 50 years of leadership in the industry, these awards reflect our strategic commitment to innovation and excellence. Our teams consistently develop forward-thinking investment solutions that are not only tailored to meet our clients' needs but are also designed to harness emerging market trends and opportunities. This recognition reaffirms our role as a trusted partner in driving sustainable, long-term growth for our clients.At Markaz, our vision of being 'Your partner in wealth creation' is at the core of everything we do, and these honoursreflect the trust and confidence our clients place in us."

Earlier this year, Markaz was recognized at the EMEA Finance Middle East Banking Awards, where it was presented the "Best Asset Manager Award" and the "Best Local Investment Bank Award" for 2023. These accolades were presented during a high-profile ceremony and demonstratedMarkaz's outstanding performance and leadership in the asset management and investment banking sectors. The awards highlight the firm's strategic vision and ability to deliver flagshipinvestment solutions, reinforcing its position as a key player in the region's financial landscape and cementing its position as a trusted industry leader.

Markaz's success continued with the MENA Banking Excellence Awards (MEED), where the firm was celebrated for its "Excellence in Real Estate Investment" and "Excellence in Investment Advisory". These recognitions reflect the dedication and superior expertise and in-depth knowledge



Ali Khalil



of Markaz's teams, allowing them to provide clients with top-tier advisory services in investment management.

Further enhancing its reputation for innovation, Markaz was awarded the 'Best for Digital Solutions" by Euromoney. This accolade acknowledges the firm's commitment to leveraging technology to drive financial innovation, and integrating digital tools into its operations, ensuring its clients benefit from the most efficient financial services. Markaz was awarded with another prestigious recognition from Euromoney for "The Most Innovative Securities House in Kuwait". This award is a testament to Markaz's continued legacy of excellence in the financial and investment sectors.

Moreover, Markaz's pioneering investment product, the GCC Momentum Fund, earned the firm the "Best Momentum Fund Innovation" award from Global Finance. As the first momentum fund of its kind in Kuwait and the GCC, this recognition is a significant milestone, celebrating the success of the fund in its inaugural year, which also received recognition as part of "Top Financial Innovations" in Global Finance magazine, further highlighting its impact on the investment landscape.

Markaz will continue its relentless efforts to gain the trust of finance and investment experts in the region, confirming its keenness to fulfill clients' goals.

## S. Korea's cbank cuts 'policy' rate

SEOUL, South Korea, Oct 12, (AP): South Korea's central bank on Friday cut its policy rate for the first time in more than four years as pressure to revive a sluggish economy outweighed concerns about the country's level of household debt.

The Bank of Korea lowered its key interest rate by a quarter percentage point to 3.25% following a meeting of its monetary policy committee, in its first move to lower borrowing costs since May 2020, when the economy was weathering the COVID-19 pan-

The bank raised the rate by a quarter percentage point in August 2021 over concerns about inflation and soaring household debt, driven in part by skyrocketing house prices, and then froze

rates for over three years.

The bank said in a statement that do-

mestic demand is making a slow recovery, bogging down the pace of economic growth. It said there was room for a rate cut because inflation is showing signs of stabilizing and household debt is also increasing more slowly as the housing market in the greater Seoul area cools down.

At a news conference, central bank Governor Rhee Chang-yong said there's still capacity in the economy for additional cuts, pointing out that house prices in the capital area grew by two thirds less in September than in August. The country's consumer price inflation also eased to 1.6% in September, below the policy target of 2%.

However, Rhee said it's still too soon to conclude that the country's financial situation is stabilizing and indicated that the bank would be conservative about further rate cuts.

# What's On

## **Every deposit brings you closer to your dreams: Johair Marafi**

# ABK announces Alfouz grand draw winner with surprise celebrity flash mob at Assima Mall

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 12: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) delighted customers and visitors over the weekend with an unforgettable surprise event at Assima Mall, marking the latest announcement in the highly anticipated Alfouz grand draw. The event featured a spectacular musical artistic flash mob show headlined by Kuwait's renowned superstars, including Shujoun Al-Hajri, Mohammed Al-Hemely, and Daffy. The show captivated audiences, bringing a vibrant atmosphere that mirrored the excitement of winning the Alfouz draw.

During the event, Sharaf Akbar Bahay was announced as the winner of a KD 5,000 monthly salary for 10 years, marking the third individual to win the annual grand draw prize and experience the life-altering Alfouz offering. This incredible achievement adds to the growing pool of winners who have benefitted from this exciting initiative. On this occasion, Johair Marafi, General Manager



Johair Marafi

of Retail Banking at ABK, congratulated the winner and wished all customers the best of luck in the upcoming draws, which promise worthwhile rewards as a form of gratitude for their ongoing loyalty and trust in ABK as a banking partner.

She added, "We strive to develop our continuously product and service offerings in order to meet the needs of customers from across all seg-

ments. We endeavor to raise to their expectations at all times as a pioneering and responsible financial institution that remains abreast of industry changes through our diligent research efforts with multiple entities.

Marafi expressed her happiness stating, "We are very pleased to see our customers at our grand annual draw event. This account has witnessed great success and continues to attract various customer segments to benefit from the worthwhile draws.

She continued, "We wanted to announce our winner in a distinctive manner and are pleased at the lively atmosphere our flash mob managed to create featuring noteworthy artists. This is all in an effort to reaffirm our dedication to innovation that allows us to remain a strong competitor in the banking industry."

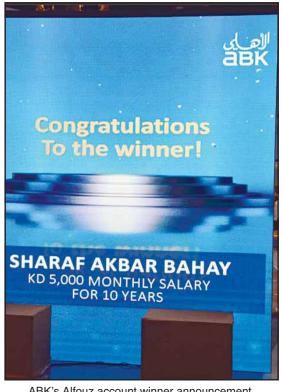
Marafi encouraged everyone to open an Alfouz account and join in on the thrill of winning. "With a chance for as little as KD 10, each deposit brings you closer to



ABK officials during the event.



Flash mob creates a vibrant atmosphere at Assima Mall.



ABK's Alfouz account winner announcement.



Five winners each receive 3,000 reward points from KIB

## **Pioneering sustainable luxury watchmaking**

# KIB unveils monthly draw winners IWC Schaffhausen reveals new of 'Win with KIB Rewards' campaign boutique at 'Salhiya Complex'

ternational Bank (KIB) has announced the draw winners of its 'Win with KIB Rewards' campaign for the month of September. Running monthly until the end of the year, the campaign aims to reward customers who use KIB's Banking App to open an Al Dirwaza account, issue a Multicurrency prepaid card, or open a deposit investment of any kind. The fifth batch of winners who won 3,000 reward points each are Faisal FadhelAlKout, Amro Yahya Mohammed, Mohammad Fathi Aino, Entesar Salem Bin Hulais and Muneerah Hussain AlDashti.

Commenting on the occasion, Nawaf Al-Khrayef, Assistant General Manager of the Retail Banking Department at KIB, said: "We are delighted to congratulate the fifth group of winners in this exceptional campaign, which is a great opportunity to reward our customers for their loyalty. We will continue our efforts to provide innovative banking solutions that meet their aspirations and fulfill all their needs, enhancing their overall banking experience and lifestyle, in line with our 'Bank for Life' slogan." He added: "At KIB, we remain committed to adopting a comprehensive strategy aimed at providing the best banking benefits, particularly with regard to the KIB Rewards Program, in addition to encouraging all customer segments to use our digital platforms to complete their financial transactions with utmost convenience and ease.

Customers can qualify for and participate in the draws by using the KIB Banking App to open an AlDirwaza account, issue a Multicurrency prepaid card, or open a deposit investment of any kind. Winners can redeem their reward points on KIB's rewards online market platform, which features an ex-



KIB's Nawaf Al-Khrayef

tensive list of participating outlets, including electronics services, retail products, and e-vouchers, and much more.

In addition to this and numerous other campaigns, KIB offers a wide variety of products with unparalleled benefits. Those who open an Al Dirwaza account can enjoy weekly and monthly draws, with one chance to enter the draw for every KD 1 deposited, culminating in a Mega Draw. The Multicurrency prepaid card offers a great deal of flexibility, allowing customers to use six currencies simultaneously and choose from a total of 12 currencies. Additionally, deposits starting from KD 1,000 are given com-

petitive profit rates. The Bank encourages its customers to stay informed about the campaign's latest developments and news, as well as to learn more about the KIB Rewards Program, by following its social media accounts and visiting its web-

It is worth mentioning that KIB spares no effort in launching initiatives and campaigns that reward its customers, while continuously striving to enhance the quality of its banking products and services. The Bank aims to elevate its banking experience by complementing digital financial solutions with attractive rewards, maintaining its leading position as a reliable

partner in the market. About KIB

Kuwait International Bank (KIB) is a bank that operates according to the Islamic Shari'ah, based in the State of Kuwait. Incorporated in 1973, and originally known as Kuwait Real Estate Bank, KIB made the transition to its current Islamic operating model in 2007. In 2018, KIB embarked on a new phase of its journey full of innovation and development. As part of its new strategic direction, the Bank focuses on offering a next-level customer experience under the slogan: "Bank for Life".

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

Today, KIB has taken concrete steps in implementing its new strategic objectives. The Bank has cemented its role as a key player in the local banking industry and has continued to maintain its strong financial performance; enabling it to be globally recognized for its strong credit rating and financial KUWAIT CITY, Oct 12: IWC Schaffhausen opens a new boutique in Kuwait City, offering a chance to explore the celebrated collections and experience IWC's watchmaking

heritage.

IWC Schaffhausen opens a new boutique in Kuwait City located in Salhiya Complex, a premier shopping destination. Occupying 71.1 square metres in the heart of Kuwait City, guests can experience IWC's craftmanship through its different collections, such as the Portugieser, Pilot's Watch and Portofino while enjoying the boutique's warm ambiance.

The collections showcase sophisticated engineering, using innovative materials and timeless design, representing more than 150 years of watchmaking expertise. Boutique advisors will be on hand to offer personalised consultations, ensuring every customer finds their perfect timepiece.

This boutique promises an unparalleled experience blending sophistication and hospitality, allowing guests to choose from a curated selection of coffee and Arabic sweets to enhance their shopping experience. With its signature modern aesthetic and interior, the boutique invites visitors to fully immerse themselves in the artistry of IWC Schaffhausen's watchmaking.

Boutique location: IWC Schaffhausen, Salhiya Complex Boutique opening hours: 10am - 11pm

Stay tuned for the grand unveiling of the new IWC Schaffhausen boutique in Kuwait City this September. **IWC SCHAFFHAUSEN** 

IWC Schaffhausen is a leading Swiss luxury watch manufacturer



IWC Schaffhausen opens boutique in Kuwait City

based in Schaffhausen in the northeastern part of Switzerland. With collections like the Portugieser and the Pilot's Watches, the brand covers the whole spectrum from elegant to sports watches. Founded in 1868 by the American watchmaker and engineer Florentine Ariosto Jones, IWC is known for its unique engineering approach to watchmaking, combining the best of human craftsmanship and creativity with cutting-edge technology and processes.

Over its more than 150-year history, IWC has earned a reputation for creating professional instrument watches and functional complications, especially chronographs and calendars, which are ingenious, robust, and easy for customers to use.

A pioneer in the use of titanium and ceramics, IWC today specialises in highly engineered watch cases manufactured from advanced materials, such as coloured ceramics, Ceratanium®, and titanium aluminide.

A leader in sustainable luxury watchmaking, IWC sources materials responsibly and takes action to minimise its impact on the environment. Along the pillars of transparency, circularity, and responsibility, the brand crafts timepieces built to last for generations and continuously improves every element of how it manufactures, distributes, and services its products in the most responsible way. IWC also partners with organisations that work globally to support children and young people.

"Our focus remains on automat-

ing our operations through robot-

ics. We have more than 155 digital

workers/bots aiding our employees

in reducing response times and

ensuring accurate services. The

digitization efforts have yielded

significant benefits, saving approx-

Panel discussion highlights generative Al's impact on banking

# National Bank of Kuwait participates in Google Cloud's 'Cloud Day 2024'

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 12: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) participated in the 'Cloud Day 2024' hosted by Google Cloud discussing the ways to collectively contribute to accelerating Kuwait's digital transformation journey. The event was attended by Mr. Kuwait's Minister of State for Communication Affairs Omar Al-Omar, and witnessed the participation of Mr. Mohammad Al-Kharafi, COO -Head of Group Operations and Information Technology at NBK as a panelist in an insightful panel around the Generative AI impact in every industry.

The panel shed light on how Generative AI can help NBK strengthen its fraud detection mechanisms and enhance security

measures in financial transactions. Al-Kharafi said he believes that the future of banking is very exciting, as Generative AI brings huge potential for delivering highly personalized, tailor-made financial advice and this will revolutionize how banks engage with their cus-



Photos during the event.

"Human oversight is also critical. There should always be a pilot behind the wheel," he emphasized.

Al-Kharafi stated that NBK created an "AI Control Function" Working Group, which includes experts from different parts of the bank ... control, technology and strategy areas of the bank who's purpose to work through different scenarios from cloud to on premise, Machine Learning and LLM's to ensure NBK maximizes the AI opportunity safely and securely.



does not utilize Gen AI yet, but it is algorithm based and offers very personalized financial advice, and sonalized finance, as Al-Kharafi it creates a custom investment mentioned,"At NBK, we have portfolio for the customer based on our SmartWealth Robo Advisory their aspirations and risk appetite. app, which has been launched and Very intuitive, straight forward available for a few years now. It and simple to use."

imately 200,665 working hours for our employees and reducing transaction processing time by up to 90.4%,"he explained. "NBK Group Operations and

IT organizes a quarterly program titled "Innovation Lab", which serves as provides an incubator to help stimulate employees' creativity to provide innovative solutions for challenges simulating their work nature in the bank. At the end of the program, the participant with the best idea is named and honored," he highlighted.

"RPA has a crucial role in banking operations, as it improves efficiency, simplifies operations, and propels the industry to higher levels of innovation," he concluded.

# Features



**Docu explores the complex life of Christopher Reeve** 

# Reeve's kids wanted to be honest, vulnerable in 'Super/Man'

NEW YORK, Oct 12, (AP): Christopher Reeve's children say they made a point to include all the complexities of their father's life - his strengths and weaknesses - in the new documentary "Super/Man: The Christopher Reeve Story" - because that's what he would have wanted.

The film includes family home videos, mixed with interviews and movie clips of Reeve, who famously played Superman in four films, in addition to other acting and directing roles later in his career. Reeve's three children, Matthew, Alexandra and Will Reeve, say there were no restrictions on topics or video used in their father's story.

"He wouldn't have wanted to be viewed through rose-colored glasses. He would want art and cinema and factual, comprehensive storytelling and that's what he got," Reeve's youngest son, Will told The Associated Press. "It's important to us to be honest and raw and vulnerable and give a 360-degree view of a very human life, of a very human family

Known as the Man of Steel, Reeve an avid athlete, sailor, skier and horseman - was nearly killed in a 1995 horse-riding accident that left him paralyzed for the rest of his life. He used his platform to become an advocate for people with disabilities, starting a foundation in his name.

Directors Ian Bonhôte and Peter Ettedgui were able to access some never-before-seen home movies of the Reeve family before and after the accident. "When we started to make the film, one of the things they were adamant (about) is that they will share everything. They will share the archive, but they will share their emotional states ... everything," Bonhôte said. "That was the first time they were going to do it, and they were going to go all out.'

#### Memoir

Reeve had recorded audio of his memoir before he died in 2005, so his narration is used in parts, adding to the film's intimacy. The actor became a father to Matthew and Alexandra with his first partner, Gae Exton, and the family was living in the U.K. before Reeve decided he needed a break and moved back to the U.S. alone. Exton, who is interviewed in the film, shares compelling memories of that time, and Matthew and Alexandra admit their father was not around regularly during their childhood.

Other interviews include Susan Sarandon and Glenn Close, who befriended Reeve after he graduated from the Julliard School and started taking on acting roles in New York. Close suggests in the film that Reeve and Robin Williams - Julliard classmates and close friends - had a deep connection and that if Reeve were still alive, Williams likely would be too.

Reeve's kids say the process of go-

ing through their archives and being interviewed for the film gave them a new perspective and appreciation of their dad. Will Reeve was only 12 when his father died. His mother, Dana, was diagnosed with cancer and died less than 18 months later. Now an ABC News correspondent, Reeve says he was fortunate to have had family and close friends help raise him and considers himself "pretty well-adjusted."

"There's a scenario in which things could have turned out differently," Will Reeve said. "But because of the values instilled in us by our parents, because of the way that they let us into their lives, the good and the bad, the joyous and the tragic ... that prepared us for life's difficulties and life's joys."

One thing that impressed the directors most in their research was Reeve's commitment to help others even after he was physically limited in his own life. After becoming a quadriplegic,



Matthew Reeve, (from left), Alexandra Reeve Givens, and Will Reeve, children of the late actor Christopher Reeve, appear at the premiere of 'Super/ Man: The Christopher Reeve Story' at the Museum of Modern Art in New York on Sept. 18, 2024. (AP)

Reeve and his family were shocked at the lack of resources for people with disabilities and started the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation to help improve quality of life and fund research for a cure for people with spinal cord injuries.

"He allowed him(self) to have 10 or 15 minutes of self-pity, and then he was on a mission to change the world. And I think that's very, very inspiring because ... the family as a whole.

Dana and the kids, they faced a huge amount of difficulties, you know, 24hour care, the cost," Bonhôte said. "So he would fight for those that are less privileged than him."

Alexandra Reeve Givens has kept up the advocacy in the family, working on the foundation and as a Washington attorney and CEO of the Center for Democracy and Technology. She said reflecting on her father's life was

powerful.

"To see those elements of his character that stayed constant throughout his life: the commitment, the intensity, the passion, the strength," she said. "Those things changed after the accident and manifested in new ways. That strength suddenly meant something totally different. It was a strength to get

up every day."

The film is being widely released Friday to coincide with the 20th anniversary of Reeve's death this month.

Matthew Reeve- a writer, producer and director -says the film reemphasized lessons the family learned from their par-

ents, including the fragility of life.
"I think what it also instilled in us very early on was this deep sense of gratitude of everything, from being thankful that he survived the accident to an enduring gratitude that tomorrow is not promised and that you have to really value the present," he said.

**'NCIS: Origins'** 

# Stowell is moved to portray Gibbs

LONDON, Oct 12, (AP): Once again, Austin Stowell is having the best day ever - all thanks to him winning the role of legendary TV character Leroy Jethro Gibbs in "NCIS:

"Since I got this job, it has just been day after day after day of the greatest day of my life," says Stowell, smiling.

The actor has his shoulders back and chest up to portray the ex-Marine-turned-naval investigator, set 25 years before audiences first met "NCIS" star Mark Harmon.

Harmon and his son Sean are behind the idea of this origin story of the special agent, who was on-screen for 19 seasons from 2003 to 2021, solving crimes for the Naval Criminal Investigative Service in Virginia.

Stowell says he'll be doing his best to live up to the role Harmon made famous and give viewers a new perspective on "how the hero was born."

Harmon, who narrates and pops up occasionally in the show, has been very supportive of Stowell, making himself available to chat about life, visiting the set and even texting (something technophobic Gibbs would never)

"Mark and I talk a lot about what it means to be the leader of a team, about what it means to be a leader of this set and crew," he says. "Those conversations have been invaluable to me because I don't know what it's like. I've never been No. 1 on a TV show before.

The lessons he's learned: be on time, be kind, respectful

He's also studied up on the "NCIS" universe, something he knew about but wasn't yet a super fan.

In a pop quiz Stowell correctly names all the franchise's four spin-off shows and only stumbles when it comes to rule three of Gibbs' famous guidelines: "Never believe what you

As for the enduring audience appeal of Gibbs, Stowell reckons it comes down to his humanity.

"Gibbs doesn't wear a cape. He just has to use his brain and use his heart. I would argue that that makes him the most super of the heroes because it's real. It's something that we can all accomplish.'

#### Franchise

"NCIS: Origins" isn't just the procedural that people know and love, says Stowell, despite it having all the crimesolving and fun banter of the franchise.

"This is much more in the vein of a 'True Detective' or, you know, a darker crime piece. And that creates some, what could be uncomfortable situations on set. Very often I find myself kind of in a dark corner.'

His co-stars and fellow NIS investigators (the C hadn't been added in 1991 when the show starts) include Mariel Molino as Lala Dominguez and Caleb Foote's Randy.

It's Gibbs' first job since leaving the Marines. He's got personal trauma and a big reputation, but he's also got the sniper focus and built-in lie detector needed to be an integral part of this mystery solving team based at Camp Pendleton, headed up by Kyle Schmid's charismatic Mike Franks.

"I just got to play this for the first time ... the other night where I look at a character and I just go, 'You know, don't you?' And just get to bury them in my eyes," Stowell says,

Those eyes have been enhanced by special contact lenses to provide the correct "Mark Harmon crystal blue.

'NCIS: Origins," which debuts Monday on CBS, has been shooting for three and half months. In that time Stowell has come to realize the parallels between himself and Gibbs, a character who mistrusts technology, loves nature and spends years building a boat in his basement. When he got the call about getting the part, Stowell was

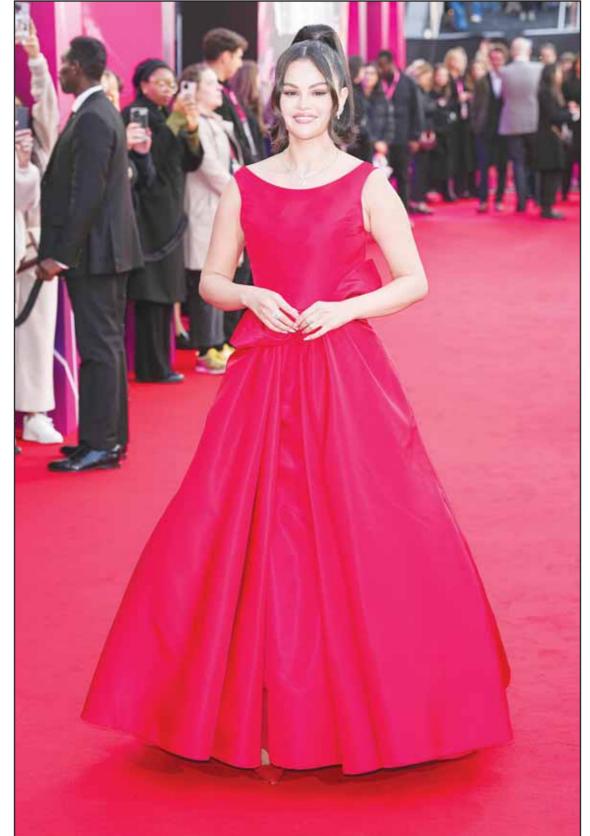
'I'm very much an analog person, so I'm very comfortable in this 1991 world where the reliance is on conversations and relationships as opposed to Siri and Alexa.

Has Stowell learned to trust his gut, Gibbs' style? "I read the pilot and immediately connected with who this guy was. And so my gut has told me that this is where I've

been meant to be from the start," he says, on the verge of tears. "There is something that has awoken inside of me, almost like it was the character I've been waiting to play my whole



Actor Austin Stowell poses for a portrait in Los Angeles on Oct. 7. (AP)



Selena Gomez poses for photographers upon arrival at the premiere of the film 'Emilia Perez' during the London Film Festival on Friday, Oct. 11, in London. (AP)

#### Variety

SANTA CRUZ, Calif.: A founding member of the experimental rock band Mr. Bungle was found guilty Friday of first-degree murder in the killing of his girlfriend after prosecutors in California found an audio file the victim recorded on her phone as she fought for her life.

A jury in Santa Cruz deliberated for a day before finding Theobald "Theo" Lengyel guilty of first-degree murder in the killing of his girlfriend Alice "Alyx" Kamakaokalani Herrmann on the night of Dec. 4. 2023, inside her Capitola home, KS-BW-TV reported. Lengyel faces life in prison and is set to be sentenced in November.

Lengyel, 55, was arrested in January after investigators found Herrmann's remains in a wooded area of Tilden Regional Park in Berkeley. Herrmann was reported missing the previous month after she didn't show up to a family gathering in Hawaii.

On Oct. 1, prosecutors played an audio recorded on Herrmann's phone begging for her life as her boyfriend strangled her to death,

KRON-TV reported. It is unclear if Herrmann, 61, intentionally recorded the audio or if the app inadvertently recorded it.

**ROME:** British designer **Kim Jones** 

is stepping down after four years from his role as artistic director of womenswear and couture at Fendi, parent fashion group LVMH an-

nounced late Friday Jones, 45, succeeded the late Karl Lagerfeld in



Jones

designing Fendi haute couture, ready-towear and fur in September 2020. He said he will now concentrate fully on his role as artistic director at Dior Men's.

The designer has made a significant contribution to Fendi's creative legacy, "seamlessly integrating his modern and cross-cultural aesthetics with Fendi's historical heritage."LVMH said.

"Under his leadership, the Maison reinvented its ready-to-wear and couture collections, offering an inclusive and innovative approach to fashion that constantly renewed Fendi's Italian codes," it added.

Bernard Arnault, Chairman and CEO of LVMH, praised Jones as "a highly talented designer who has brought his unique and multicultural vision to Fendi over the past four

Fendi made no mention of his

successor, but added that "a new creative organization" for the brand will be announced in due time. (AP) 

PERTH, Australia: A British YouTuber and rapper known as Yung Filly has been charged with raping and choking a woman in a hotel room following an Australian music performance.

The 29-year-old, whose real name is Andres Felipe Valencia Barrientos, was freed on bail when he appeared Thursday on several charges in a court in Perth, the west coast city where police allege his crimes were allegedly committed on Sept. 28.

His bail conditions include that he remain in Western Australia state, doesn't contact his alleged victim and doesn't post about the case on social media. He was ordered to surrender his

passport and to report to police daily. His surety was set at 100,000 Australian dollars (\$67,400).

Prosecutors had opposed bail because of a risk that he would flee the state. His lawyer, Seamus Rafferty, did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Friday.

Barrientos is currently touring Australia and was arrested in the east coast city of Brisbane on Tuesday, a police statement said. The Colombia-born entertainer, who has 1.8 million followers on YouTube, was extradited back to Perth on Wednesday. (AP)

Sangare's rise

# **Immigrants struggle** in 'Souleymane's Story'

PARIS, Oct 12, (AP): A few months ago, Abou Sangare was an anonymous, 23-year-old Guinean immigrant lacking permanent legal status in northern France and, like thousands of others, fighting deportation.

Now a lead actor in "Souleymane's Story," an awardwinning feature film that hit French theaters this week, his face is on every street corner and in subway stations, bus stops and newspapers.

The film and Sangare's sudden success are casting light on irregular migration in France just as its new government is taking a harder line on the issue. It is vowing to make it harder for immigrants lacking permanent legal status to stay and easier for France to expel

Sangare plays a young asylum-seeker who works as a Paris delivery man, weaving his bicycle through traffic in the City of Light. In a case of life imitating art, Sangare's future also hangs in the balance. Like the character he portrays, Sangare is hoping to persuade French officials to grant him residency and abandon their efforts to force him to leave.

"When I see Souleymane sitting in the French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons, I put myself in his place, because I know what it's like to wait for your (identification)

papers here in France, to be in this situation - the stress, the anxiety," Sangare told The Associated Press in an interview. "Like me, Souleymane finds

himself in an environment that he doesn't know.'

Sangare says he left Guinea at age 15 in 2016 to help his sick mother. He first went to Algeria, then Libya, where he was jailed and treated "as a slave" after a



failed crossing attempt. Italy was next, and he eventu-

ally set foot in France in May 2017. His request to be recognized as a minor was turned down, but he was able to study at high school and trained as a car mechanic - a skill in demand in France. Recently, he was offered full-time employment at a workshop in Amiens, a northern French town that has been his home for seven years and which, incidentally, was French President Emmanuel Macron's hometown,

#### Deportation

But Sangare cannot accept the job because of his illegal status. He's unsuccessfully applied three times for papers and lives with a deportation order over his head. Critics say deportation orders have been increasingly used by successive governments.

"We are the country in Europe that produces most expulsion procedures, far ahead of other countries," said Serge Slama, a professor in public law at the University of Grenoble.

But their use - more than 130,000 deportations were ordered in 2023 - is "highly inefficient," he added, because many of the orders aren't or cannot for legal reasons be carried out.

Interior Minister Bruno Retailleau says about 10% of people targeted for deportation end up leaving.

Retailleau, appointed in France's new government of conservatives and centrists last month, is making immigration control a priority.

He wants more immigrants lacking permanent legal status to be held in detention centers and for longer periods, and is leaning on regional administrators to get tough.

He also says he wants to reduce the number of foreigners entering France by making it "less attractive," including squeezing social benefits for them.

Mathilde Buffière, who works with immigrants in administrative detention centers with the nonprofit Groupe SOS Solidarités, says officials are spending "less and less time" reviewing immigrants' residency applications before holding them in detention

centers. In Sangare's case, his life took a turn last year when he met filmmaker Boris Lojkine. Several auditions led to him getting the film's lead role.

Sangare won Best Actor at the Cannes Film Festival's "Un Certain Regard" competition this year.

But a more meaningful prize might be on the horizon: After Cannes, government officials emailed Sangare, inviting him to renew his residency application.

Responding to AP questions, French authorities said the deportation order against Sangare "remains legally in force" but added that officials reexamined his case because of steps he's taken to integrate.

"I think the film did that," Sangare told AP. "You need a residency permit to be able to turn your life around here. My life will change the day I have my papers," he said.

#### Japanese atomic bomb survivors celebrate win

# Nobel Peace Prize boosts hope for nuke-free world

TOKYO, Oct 12, (AP): For many Japanese survivors of the US atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and their relatives, Friday's awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to a Japanese organization against nuclear weapons gives them hope for a new momentum to push for a nuclear-free world - starting from getting their own government to sign the nuclear weapons

Nihon Hidankyo, an organization of survivors of the two US atomic bombings, became the first Japanese recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 50 years since the late Prime Minister Eisaku Sato was honored in 1974 for his contribution to regional stability and Japan's signing of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Toshiyuki Mimaki, the organization's Hiroshima branch executive, was standing by at the city hall for the announcement. He cheered and teared up when he received the news. "Is it really true? Unbelievable!" Mimaki screamed, pinching his cheek with his fingers to make sure he was not dream-

"I believe the Nobel Peace Prize will give us more power to promote our cause toward achieving a world with-out nuclear weapons," said Mimaki, who was exposed to atomic bombing at age 3 in Hiroshima, his father's hometown, where he evacuated after

surviving the US air raid in Tokyo on March 10, 1945.

#### Contribution

The group's honor comes seven years after the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons won the peace prize in 2017 for their contribution to the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Hidankyo members have helped collect more than 3 million signatures in favor of the treaty, and demanded the reluctant Japanese government sign it and do more to lead the nuclear disarmament as the world's only country to have suffered atomic attacks.

Former Prime Minister Fumio

Kishida has been criticized by survivors for refusing to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapon. He has argued that the pact is unworkable because no nuclear-armed state has

Japanese leaders have repeatedly promised to serve as a middle ground between nuclear and non-nuclear states and stressed the need for dialogue toward nuclear disarmament, but refused to join the treaty even as an observer.

Atomic bombing survivors, or hibakusha, say Japanese leaders are only making hollow promises because Japan relies on the U.S. nuclear umbrella for protection and has been rapidly expanding its military.



Terumi Tanaka, a Nihon Hidankyo executive speaks during a press conference in Tokyo, Saturday, Oct. 12, a day after Nihon Hidankyo, or the Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations, won the Nobel Peace Prize. (AP)



A riveting portrayal of Trump, Cohn in election year

# Strong, Stan know the risks with 'Apprentice'

111111111111111

This image released by Briarcliff Entertainment shows Maria Bakalova, (left), and Sebastian Stan in a scene from

the film 'The Apprentice.' (AP)

NEW YORK, Oct 12, (AP): Even in an election year, most seem to agree on one aspect about Ali Abbasi's muchdebated Donald Trump film "The Apprentice": Sebastian Stan is a remarkably good Trump and Jeremy Strong is chillingly riveting as the New York power broker Roy Cohn.

One reviewer recently wrote that Strong's portrayal of Cohn is "uncanny in its accuracy." The critic? Long-time Trump adviser Roger Stone.

Since its debut at the Cannes Film Festival in May, after which the Trump campaign pledged legal action, "The Apprentice" has been hounded by controversy. Its makers have had to fight to secure a theatrical release, which, in opening Thursday, comes just weeks ahead of the election. The Trump campaign has called it "election interference by Hollywood elites.

"We're way out on a limb," Strong

says.

The movie, about Cohn's mentorship of a young Trump in the greedsinp of a young Trump in the greed-is-good 1980s, is a dramatic election-year provocation. It's an origin story of the Republican nominee beginning with Cohn, the ruthless attorney whose tactics of deny-deny-deny made him a sought-after fixer for the mafia, chief counsel for Sen. Joseph McCarthy's communist witch hunt and a guru to Trump when he was trying to make a name for himself in New York real



"His defiance of reality, and his denial of reality, to me are the signature components of what he instilled in his star pupil," Strong says, noting that Cohn's boat was named Defiance. "It's a legacy of mendacity and lies and denialism and the aggressive pursuit of winning as the only moral measure."

"The Apprentice," directed by the Iranian-Danish filmmaker Abbasi and scripted by Gabriel Sherman, puts the Cohn-Trump relationship at its center, and in doing so, gives Strong and Stan two of the best roles of their careers. Strong calls Cohn "probably the single most fascinating person I've ever studied and interrogated and attempted to inhabit.'

For two much-satirized figures, the performances are uncommonly humanistic. Cohn has a rich tradition of portrayals, including Al Pacino in Tony Kushner's "Angels in America." But Strong's Cohn is uniquely authentic and camp-free. Trump, of course, has been mostly played with "Saturday Night Live"-style parody. But Stan's Trump is a blank-slate striver, eager to be molded by Cohn. Abbasi says, "I still don't know exactly how he did it."

Most actors wanted nothing to do with playing Trump. But Stan signed up, and stuck with the production over several years.

"I went on the ride," Stan says. "It's very easy to just keep doing things that you feel you've gotten good at. Then something comes along and it feels like such a crazy mountain to climb." That may go doubly for "The Ap-

shaped the real estate mogul's worldsona visible in Trump's presidential campaign.'

Strong had first been drawn to playing Cohn several years ago for a project that ultimately didn't happen. But it got Strong thinking about the intriguing paradoxes of Cohn. If finding a character means finding their pulse, Strong says, "in this case, it's a sort of reptilian pulse."

"In terms of a sociological, anthropological study, I find him to be a completely fascinating character," says Strong. "My own judgments have to be into the heart of darkness." Reaction (cross head)

For the two actors, "The Apprentice" posed a particular challenge in balancing judgment and empathy. The film has engendered a spectrum of reaction. Abbasi has claimed Trump might not dislike the film and invited him to see it. Others have criticized the movie for bringing any degree of sympathy to its lead characters.

"The only way we can learn is through empathy," Stan says. "We have to protect empathy and continue to nourish it. And I think one way of nourishing empathy is showing what

it's exact opposite can be."

"(Cohn) didn't believe in showing vulnerability," says Strong. "He was only interested in projecting strength, and I find that very tragic.'

Ultimately, the makers of "The Apprentice" argue that all of the tools of drama serve a vital role in bringing a deeper understanding to even the most polarizing political figures.

Strong and Stan find themselves in the unlikely position of being scorned by the potential future president for a movie that had to resort to seeking money via Kickstarter. (The campaign has collected more than \$400,000.) As much as they're far out on a limb, both are seen as in contention for their first Academy Award nominations.

"Do I think it's going to change people's minds? I'm not sure," says Strong. "Do I think it will help anyone who sees this movie have a great understanding of the origins of where we are now? Yes, I do. And do I think it could infinitesimally move the needle in a direction that I hope we move in?



Muni Long poses for a portrait on Monday, Sept. 9, 2024, in New York.

## 'Peace is her goal'

# Long says 'Revenge' is sweetened by success

Long is keenly aware of the preciousness of time and its unpredictability. In some ways, the weight of the concept is intertwined within her music with songs like "30s," "Time Machine" and her megahit "Hrs & Hrs." Life can move at an unforgiving pace, so the Grammy winner works as if her career is on borrowed

"Years ago, I had an opportunity to work with Kendrick (Lamar) and I was working with another artist. And so, I just kept pushing it back, like 'Can we move that session?' This was before he had 'Swimming Pools' ... and then, he blew up," recalled the Grammy-winning songstress. "I understand what that feels like to feel like you missed out on something or feel like you won't get an opportunity like that again... I will never forget that, ever.'

Carpe diem is always top of mind for Long who recently released her latest project, "Revenge," the follow-up to her 2022 debut "Public Displays of Affection: The Album," which earned a best R&B performance Grammy for "Hrs & Hrs." Her newest work has defied sophomore slump. "Made for Me," the viral, tenderhearted ballad, ambiguously inspired by her baby son, reached No. 20 on the Billboard Hot 100 and stayed at No. 1 on the R&B/ Hip-Hop Airplay for seven weeks. (Long revealed last week that the massive hit isn't eligible for Grammys consideration due to the timing of its release.)

#### **Emotions**

As R&B has experienced a mainstream resurgence, Long is recognized as one of the genre's flagbearers fueling its comeback.

"I definitely can tell the impact that I have on culture ... and it's not just a certain demographic. It's children. It's older women. It's Christian groups - sometimes they don't be listening to secular music like that, (but) they listen to mine," said Long. "They even sing in the pulpit sometimes: 'I could praise you for hours.' It's incredible - even 'Made for Me' as well."

Cutting through the present era of vibey, party-first R&B and the dominant melodic rap climate with a more back-to-basics, emotions-onyour-sleeve sound, many fans and critics believe the 14-track project, which includes writing from industry titans like The Dream, Jermaine Dupri, Bryan-Michael Cox and Tricky Stewart, and a feature from rap star GloRilla, is one of the best R&B releases of the year. Long believes it, too.

NEW YORK Oct 12 (AP): Muni "We really put a lot of effort into this music. We were intentional about the instruments, about the lyrics. This is one of the first times I went back and tweaked lyrics," said Long, whose "Make Me Forget" hit No. 1 on Billboard's adult R&B airplay chart and "Ruined Me" entered the top 10 of that chart this week. "People gravitate towards light and love... I believe in fairy tales.

But not all fairy tales result in happily ever afters. While rolling out the album, Long revealed that her nearly decade-long marriage to husband and business partner Raysean Hairston was rocky. Her marital woes, along with proving to industry naysayers that her viral hits and talent are not flukes, set the tone for the project - opting for happiness over bitterness - making it even more personal than her first album.

#### **Talent**

"There's some songs I just can't sing and are very difficult to listen to even. The first time I ever cried in the studio when I was making something was on that album, and I didn't like how it felt, so I didn't do it again," said the 36-year-old, reflecting on her debut. "Through therapy and counseling and prayer and meditation, all those things, I've developed tools to help me feel my feelings and sit with issues that I may be having - trauma and drama as I like to call it - and process it. And this album is a way for me to process. Long recently wrapped up select

dates on Chris Brown's 11:11 Tour and is working through her marriage woes. Peace is her goal, she said, adding that her lupus diagnosis is not conducive to stress. Long points out that she hasn't used the term divorce, but "when you talk about ending something, there are so many different ways that people have done that." The talented singersongwriter spent more than 15 years behind the scenes as Priscilla Renea, penning hits for powerhouses like Mariah Carey, Rihanna, Ariana Grande and Kelly Clarkson before rebranding herself as Muni Long in 2020. Yet, growing frustrated with industry politics and unsure if solo success would be hers, Long nearly walked way.

"At the end of the day, it's about not quitting. It's about not giving up. Eventually, time will show you that the reason why you're getting these things is because you were prepared," said Long. "In the beginning, I was entitled. I thought that because I was talented, people should give me things. And now, on the other side, I work for every-



Jeremy Strong, (from left), Sebastian Stan and Maria Bakalova pose for a portrait to promote the film 'The Apprentice' on Tuesday, Oct. 8, 2024, in

gether financing and struggled to find distribution before Briarcliff Entertainment stepped forward this fall. Sherman first began writing it in 2017. He had covered the 2016 Trump campaign for New York magazine and took note when a Trump associate commented on Trump employing Cohn's strate-

Trump, who first met Cohn in 1973 and remained close friends until Cohn's death in 1986, has spoken about his admiration for him. "Roy was brutal, but he was a very loyal guy," Trump told author Tim O'Brien. 'He brutalized for you." Politico's Michael Kruse in 2016 detailed the relationship, writing: "Cohn's philosophy view and the belligerent public per-

left at the door. But it was like peering

# Nobuyo Oyama, voice actor

TOKYO, Oct 12, (AP): Nobuyo Oyama, best known as the raspy voice of Doraemon, the beloved cartoon robotic cat from the future, has died. She

Oyama, who voiced Doraemon for more than a quarter century, died of natural causes on Sept. 29, her agency, Actors Seven, said Friday.

Oyama performed the voice of the blue-and-white robotic cat from

1979 to 2005. Created by cartoonthe cartoonist Fujiko F. Fujio in 1970, Doraemon and the story of his friendship with Nobita, a goodhearted but somewhat lazy

boy, became hugely popu-

lar. The manga and anime series have been read and watched by millions of fans in Japan and across the world and have been translated into dozens of

Oyama

In the series, Doraemon arrives from the 22nd century and helps Nobita in difficult situations, often with gadgets from the future such as an "anywhere door" and "take-copter.

Born in Tokyo in 1933, Oyama was an aspiring actor and debuted in a 1956 drama on Japan's NHK public television. She had her first voice acting role in 1957 in the dubbed version of the TV drama series "Lassie."

Oyama's raspy voice quickly gained her popularity in anime and children's programs. She was the voice of one of three piglets in a popular children's puppet show in the early 1960s and of teenage boy Katsuo in the family anime series "Sazaesan" prior to "Doraemon.'

Oyama retired as Doraemon in March 2005 as part of a renewal of the voice actors for the main characters. "I hope Doraemon will still be a beloved character in the distant future," Oyama

In 2015, Oyama's husband disclosed that she had developed dementia. Even so, as head of a sound arts school, Oyama was known to always succeed on the first try when she was asked to perform in her Doraemon

Oyama's agency said her funeral was held privately by her relatives. Noriko Ohara, the voice of Nobita,

**Variety** 

LOS ANGELES: Taylor Swift has donated \$5 million to Feeding America to support relief efforts in the aftermath of Hurricanes Helene and Milton.

The nonprofit announced the pop star's donation Wednesday with a "Thank You" graphic resembling a friendship bracelet, a favorite accessory that

Swift's fans trade at her concerts. Feeding America "incredibly grateful" for the donation, CEO Claire Babineaux-Fontenot said in a statement.

"This contribution will Swift

help com-munities rebuild and recover, providing essential food, clean water, and supplies to people affected by these devastating storms," the statement continued.

**NEW YORK:** Jason Mott's first novel since "Hell of a Book" is a kind of meta-sequel to his awardwinning meta-narrative about a

Black author's haunting promo-

tional tour.

The Penguin Random House imprint Dutton announced Thursday that it has reached a deal with Mott for "People Like Us," in which a "prize-winning Black author" embarks on a global book tour that finds him experiencing everything from invisibility and time travel to sea monsters and peacocks. "Hell of a Book," published in 2021, won the National Book Award for fiction and was chosen for Jenna Bush Hager's "Today" show book club. "People Like Us" is scheduled

for release next fall. (AP) 

BRENTWOOD, N.H.: A bestselling mystery writer who was arrested this summer in New Hampshire for alleged possession of child sexual abuse materials has been formally indicted on six felony

A Rockingham County grand jury returned the indictments against Brendan DuBois, who has been detained since he turned himself in to Exeter police in July, according to court documents. A lawyer for the 65-year-old DuBois did not respond to a request for comment Thursday.

He is due to be arraigned Oct.

DuBois' website says he is a New York Times bestselling author who has written 29 novels. He cowrote several of those with James Patterson, including "Cross Down," "Count Down," "The Summer House" and "Blowback." (AP)

# **Beloved robotic cat**



#### 'Platform's tools to limit screen time for kids ineffective'

# TikTok was aware of risks to kids on its platform

NEW YORK, Oct 12, (AP): TikTok was aware that its design features are detrimental to its young users and that publicly touted tools aimed at limiting kids' time on the site were largely ineffective, according to internal documents and communications exposed in lawsuit filed by the state of Kentucky.

The details are among redacted portions of Kentucky's lawsuit that contains the internal communications and documents unearthed during a more than two year investigation into the company by various states across the country.

Kentucky's lawsuit was filed this week, alongside separate complaints brought forth by attorneys general in a dozen states as well as the District of

Control and Prevention (Africa CDC).

cent, Nsanzimana emphasized the

importance of reducing fatalities and

curbing further transmission. "We

want to keep the case fatality rate as

low as possible, while also stopping

new transmissions. That is why inten-

sifying testing is a key strategy along

with contact tracing," he said.

The health minister said the country.

in collaboration with the Africa CDC

and other partners, is working hard to

contain the virus through enhanced pre-

ventive measures across health facili-

ties. This includes providing supportive

treatment for patients and enhancing screening protocols, particularly for those traveling outside the country.

**Transmission** 

Rwanda on Sept. 27, we immediately

put together all our efforts to respond

and stop this outbreak before it spreads to other places," Nsanzimana said, stressing the need for public awareness

about the transmission of the Marburg

of the Marburg virus disease, which

coincides with the country's ongoing

response to a multi-country outbreak of

Kaseya, on his part, praised Rwan-

da's efforts in responding to the out-

break, as he also called on other coun-

tries to refrain from implementing

travel bans or movement restrictions

almost zero-risk for Rwanda to spread the disease out of the country. With the

mechanism they put in place in follow-

ing the contacts, no contact can fly out

under control and travel bans targeting

the East African country are unneces-

health agency said Thursday

sary, the head of Africa's top public

and Prevention on Monday updated its

travel advisory for Rwanda, requiring

screening of travelers who have re-

cently been to Rwanda. The updated

guidelines urge people to reconsider non-essential travel to Rwanda.

The US Centers for Disease Control

An outbreak of Marburg fever is

"From what I saw in Rwanda, it's

following the outbreak.

of Rwanda," he said.

This marks Rwanda's first outbreak

virus disease.

"Since the outbreak was declared in

With a case fatality rate of 22 per-

Columbia. TikTok is also facing another lawsuit from the Department of Justice and is itself suing the Justice Department over a federal law that could ban it in the US by mid-January.

The redacted information - which was inadvertently revealed by Kentucky's attorney general's office and first reported by Kentucky Public Radio - touches on a range of topics, most importantly the extent to which TikTok knew how much time young users were spending on the platform and how sincere it was when rolling out tools aimed at curbing excessive use.

Beyond TikTok use among minors, the complaint alleges the short-form video sharing app has prioritized "beautiful people" on its platform and

has noted internally that some of the content-moderation metrics it has publicized are "largely misleading."

The unredacted complaint, which was seen by The Associated Press, was sealed by a Kentucky state judge on Wednesday after state officials filed an emergency motion to seal it.

When reached for comment, TikTok spokesperson Alex Haurek said: "It is highly irresponsible of the Associated Press to publish information that is under a court seal. Unfortunately, this complaint cherry-picks misleading quotes and takes outdated documents out of context to misrepresent our commitment to community safety."

"We have robust safeguards, which include proactively removing suspect-

ed underage users, and we have voluntarily launched safety features such as default screentime limits, family pairing, and privacy by default for minors under 16," Haurek said in a prepared statement. "We stand by these efforts."

The complaint alleges that Tik-Tok has quantified how long it takes for young users to get hooked on the platform, and shared the findings internally in presentations aimed at increasing user-retention rates. The "habit moment," as TikTok calls it, occurs when users have watched 260 videos or more during the first week of having a TikTok account. This can happen in under 35 minutes since some TikTok videos run as short as 8 seconds, the complaint says.



People look at their phones while waiting to cross an intersection in the rain at the Taikoo Li Sanlitun shopping center in Beijing, July 30, 2024. (AP)

#### Tips to secure phone data

# What you need to do before, after phone is stolen or lost

LONDON, Oct 12, (AP): Phones hold so much of our digital lives - emails, social media and bank accounts, photos, chat messages and more - that if they ever get stolen or go missing, it can cause major disruption beyond just the loss of a device.

In some places, phone thefts have surged so much it's now an every-day problem, with thieves on electric bikes snatching them out of pedestrians' hands, swiping them off restaurant tables or pickpocketing them on the subway.

Here are steps you can take before and after your phone goes missing: There are things you can do to make it less painful if your phone

make it less painful if your phone is stolen. Because some of these features are more technical in nature, people often overlook them.

Lock down as much as you can.

Lock down as much as you can. At a minimum, require a password or biometric scan to unlock the device. You can also add similar requirements to important individual apps - like your banking account, WhatsApp or Signal - to protect your finance or chats from thieves.

#### **Feature**

Also, activate the find my device feature, which is available for both iOS and Android. Samsung also offers its own service called Smart-Things Find.

You'll probably have lots of precious photos saved on your camera roll. It's a good idea to back them up, along with contacts, calendar items and other files. Google and Apple offer cloud-based backup services, although the free versions have limited storage space. You can also back up your files to an external hard drive, memory card or a lanton.

memory card or a laptop.

Some police forces and phone companies advise turning off message previews, which prevents thieves trying to break into your accounts from seeing reset or login codes when the phone is locked. To do this on an iPhone, for example, go to the Notifications section of your settings menu and tap Show Previews. You can also scroll down the app list to turn previews off for individual apps but leave them on for less risky ones like news or weather.

Recent iOS and Android updates include a number of new functions designed to make thefts less attractive.

IPhone users can turn on Stolen Device Protection, which makes it a lot harder for phone thieves to access key functions and settings. Many thieves will want to wipe the data off and reset so they can resell it, but with this feature on, they'll need a face or fingerprint scan to do so. Apple also recently updated its "activation lock "feature to make it harder for thieves to sell parts from stolen phones.

Android phones, meanwhile, can now use use artificial intelligence to detect motion indicating someone snatched it out of your hand and is racing away on foot or a bike, and then lock the screen immediately. And there's a feature called Private Spaces that lets you hide sensitive files on your phone.

Take note of your phone's serial number, also known as an IMEI number. It can link you to the phone if it does eventually get recovered. Call it up by typing (asterisk)#06# on your phone's keypad. If you've already lost your phone you can also find it in other places like the box it came in.

#### Message

If you're unlucky enough to have your phone stolen, notify police. Call your insurance company if you have a policy that covers the device. Inform your phone company so they can freeze your number and issue a replacement SIM card or eSIM. Notify your bank so they can watch out for suspicious transactions.

Try to locate your phone with the find my device feature. For iPhones, go to iCloud.com/find from a web browser while Android users should head to www.google.com/ android/find. Samsung also has its own service for Galaxy phones.

These services will show your phone's current or last known location on a map, which is also handy if you've just lost track of it somewhere in the house. Apple says even if a phone can't connect to the internet or has been turned off, it can use Bluetooth to ping any nearby Apple devices using the same network behind its AirTags tracking devices. Google says newer Pixel phones can be located "for several hours" after they've been turned off using similar technology.

lar technology.
You can get the phone to play a sound, even if it's on silent. You can also put the phone in lost mode, which locks it and displays a message and contact details on the screen for anyone who finds it. Lost mode on iOS also suspends any Apple Pay cards and passes.

If the device shows up in an unfamiliar location on the map, and you suspect it has been stolen, experts say it's better to notify police rather than trying to get it back yourself.

Cybersecurity company Norton says, "Confronting a thief yourself is not recommended."

If you can't find your phone, there are some final steps to take.

Log yourself out of all your accounts that might be accessible on the phone, and then remove it from your list of trusted devices that you use to get multifactor authentication codes - but make sure you can get those codes somewhere else,

#### 'Under control' **Marburg cases in Rwanda reach 58** ADDIS ABABA, Oct 12, (Agencies): The number of confirmed Marburg virus disease cases in Rwanda has risen to 58, with 13 deaths, Rwanda's Health Minister Sabin Nsanzimana announced, urging countries not to impose travel bans or movement restrictions in response to the outbreak. "As of today, we have 58 confirmed cases of Marburg virus disease. Unfortunately, we have lost 13 people, and we have also 12 people who have recovered from this disease, which is good news," Nsanzimana said Thursday during an online media briefing alongside Jean Kaseya, director-general of the Africa Centers for Disease

The Northern lights glow in the night sky above a road in Lietzen, eastern Germany. (AP)

#### The Northern lights shine farther south than usual

Another in a series of unusually strong solar storms hitting Earth produced stunning skies full of pinks, purples, greens and blues farther south than normal, including into parts of Germany, the United Kingdom, New England and New York City.

"It was a pretty extensive display yet again," said Shawn Dahl, a space weather forecaster at the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Space Weather Prediction Center. He said the center has gotten reports of northern lights sightings as far south as New Mexico. "It's been a wonderful year." There were no immediate reports of disruptions to power and com-

munications.

NOAA issued a severe geomagnetic storm alert on Wednesday after after an outburst from the sun was detected earlier in the week.

Such a storm increases the chance

of auroras - also known as northern lights - and can temporarily disrupt power and radio signals.

NOAA's Friday forecast shows continued higher-than-normal ac-

tivity, but the chances for another overnight show are slim farther south of Canada and the northern Plains states.

The sun sends more than heat and light to Earth - it sends energy and charged particles known as the solar wind. But sometimes that solar wind becomes a storm. The sun's outer atmosphere occasionally "burps" out huge bursts of energy called coronal mass ejections. They produce solar storms, also known as geomagnetic storms, according to NOAA. (AP)

#### Polio cases spike in Pakistan

# Philippines sees rise in advanced HIV cases

MANILA, Oct 12, (Xinhua): The Philippines' Department of Health (DOH) on Friday expressed concern over the rising number of newly diagnosed advanced

HIV disease (AHD) in the country.

The latest data from DOH showed that there have been 40,934 reported cases of AHD in the country, representing 30 percent of all cumulative cases since 1984.

Health Assistant Secretary Albert Domingo said the number of AHD cases "indicates late detection, posing severe health risks."

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines AHD as "CD4 cell count 200 cellsmm3 or WHO stage 3 or 4 in adults and adolescents." CD4 cell count is a laboratory test that measures the number of CD4 T-cells.

The DOH also said that 464 HIV deaths had been recorded from January to August 2024, of which 28 occurred in August alone.

The majority of the deaths occurred among males aged 25 to 34 years old, with 53 percent of them being caused by complications due to being immunocompromised or having AHD.

According to the DOH, late diagnosis has contributed to the rising HIV deaths, totaling 8,246 deaths cumulatively since 1984.

Recent DOH data showed that the

Philippines has experienced the fastest-growing HIV epidemic in Asia and the Pacific region.

In 2023, the DOH said there were

48 newly diagnosed cases daily, a significant increase from 13 daily cases in 2013.

"This number went to as high as 58

"This number went to as high as 58 per day in the second quarter of 2024," the DOH added.

Furthermore, the DOH noted that diagnosed HIV cases are getting younger, with the predominant age group shifting from 35-49 years old in

2002 to 2005 to 25-34 years old starting 2006 onwards.

**Polio:** Pakistan has witnessed a spike in new polio cases since March, officials said Wednesday, in a troubling sign as the government seeks to eradicate the disease in the country.

The nation has recorded 32 new

of the National Emergency Operation Center for Polio Eradication. Haq expressed optimism that the situation will improve in the coming months after Pakistan launches a new

cases since March, said Anwarul Haq

months after Pakistan launches a new nationwide anti-polio campaign starting Oct. 28 that aims to vaccinate 32 million children.

"We are conducting joint case investigations, preparing to implement

high-quality vaccination rounds and

providing high-risk communities with

integrated health services to build chil-

dren's immunity," he said.

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#### Stokes might be ready for return in second test

# Dar joins Pakistan cricket selection panel after England defeat

ISLAMABAD, Oct 12, (AP): After a disastrous innings defeat to England, the Pakistan Cricket Board has revamped its selection committee ahead of the second test.

The PCB appointed former international umpire Aleem Dar, ex-test fast bowler Aqib Javed, former test captain Azhar Ali and analyst Hasan Cheema to the selection committee with voting rights. The committee already includes Pakistan captain Shan Masood and head coach Jason Gillespie.

The immediate task of the committee is to finalize the squad for the second test against England, starting Tuesday at Multan.

The PCB said in a statement that committee members held their first meeting in Lahore on Friday and will meet with the captain and coach in Multan on Saturday before the squad is named for the second test.

There are also four non-voting members on the selection panel, including assistant coach Azhar Mahmood and Bilal Afazal, an adviser to the PCB chairman.

Dar resigned from ICC's elite panel last year, but has been supervising in domestic matches, including international games at home. Last month, Dar said he will quit umpiring at the end of the domestic season in 2025.

England captain Ben Stokes looks to be ready to make a return to the team for the second cricket test against Pakistan.

Stokes missed England's remarkable victory in the first test in Multan, which was sealed on Friday, after failing to recover from a torn hamstring sustained in August.

Talking after the match to British broadcaster Sky Sports, Ollie Pope - who stood in again as captain for Stokes - discussed which players were likely to be in contention for the second test starting Tuesday back in Multan and said Stokes "is looking to come back." When asked specifically if Stokes will play in the second test, Pope smiled and said sheepishly: "I'm actually not 100%. He's been training really well this week. He's as keen as ever to get playing again, so fingers crossed he's all good." Stokes played in all three tests in the series against the West Indies that was won 3-0 by England in July, but missed the entire series when England beat Sri Lanka 2-1 over August and Sep-



England's Jamie Smith removes bails to stump out Pakistan's Naseem Shah during the fifth day of the first test cricket match between Pakistan and England, in Multan, Pakistan. (AP)

# **New Zealand stays in race for** Women's T20 World Cup semis



Australia's captain Alyssa Healy bats during the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2024 match between Pakistan and Australia at Dubai International Stadium, United Arab Emirates. (AP)

## Australia on cusp of Cup last 4

SHARJAH, United Arab Emirates, Oct 12, (AP): New Zealand stayed in the race for a semifinals spot after thumping alreadyeliminated Sri Lanka by eight wickets at the Women's T20 World Cup on Saturday.

Opener Georgia Plimmer led the chase with 53 and Amelia Kerr was brilliant with an unbeaten 34 and two wickets. New Zealand reached 118-2 with 15 balls remaining after limiting Sri Lanka to 115-5.

Asian champion Sri Lanka crossed the 100-run mark for the first time in the tournament but rounded off its below-par campaign with four straight losses in Group A.

Unbeaten group leader and defending champion Australia has all but secured one semifinal berth. The other spot depends on if India beats Australia on Sunday then New Zealand's last group match against contending Pakistan on Monday.

In an intense heat of 38 degrees, Sri Lanka captain Chamari Athapaththu made 35 off 41 balls with five fours, but once Kerr bowled her in the 14th over, Sri Lanka struggled to hit boundaries in the death overs. New Zealand struck through

spinners Kerr (2-13) and Leigh Kasperek (2-27).

Plimmer's second T20 fifty came off 44 balls. Her and Suzie Bates (17) shared a 49-run opening stand. Plimmer holed out in the outfield and gave Athapaththu a consolation wicket.

Kerr scored better than a run-aball 34 with three boundaries, and captain Sophie Devine knocked off the winning runs with the only six of the game.

Defending champion Australia crushed Pakistan by nine wickets to all but qualify for the Women's T20 World Cup semifinals .

Reaching 83-1 after dismissing Pakistan for 82 cost Australia. however, as fast bowler Tayla Vlaeminck dislocated her shoulder and skipper Alyssa Healy retired hurt with a suspected pulled calf muscle.

Australia's 14th consecutive win - three at this tournament - kept it atop Group A with one more group



Pakistan players walk from the field after their loss against Australia during the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2024 match between Pakistan and Australia at Dubai International Stadium, United Arab Emirates. (AP)

game left on Sunday against India. India, New Zealand and Pakistan were vying for the other semifinal

The Aussies opted to field and off-spinner Ashleigh Gardner took 4-21 after left-arm spinner Sophie Molineux got rid of stand-in skipper Muneeba Ali for 7. Annabel Sutherland and Georgia Wareham took a brace each.

Vlaeminck didn't bowl. She hurt her shoulder in the first over while trying to stop a boundary. Her shoulder was put back in but her future in the tournament was in doubt.

Only four Pakistan batters reached double digits; Aliya Riaz top-scored with 26. They were all out in 19.5 overs.

Gardner's burst in the 19th over she grabbed three wickets in five balls - prevented Pakistan from making a late dash to 100.

In reply, Australia's batters finished off things in a hurry. Healy led the way with 37 off 23 balls, including five fours, before retiring.

Healy charged through the powerplay, putting on 36 for the first wicket with Beth Mooney, who scored 15.

Healy also added 33 off 30 balls with Ellyse Perry, who was 22 not out off 23 balls, including two fours. Australia raced across the finish line with nine overs to spare.

#### **Muddled tactics**

# Concerns raised about Carsley after England's 'shocking loss'

LONDON, Oct 12, (AP): His tactics were muddled, and his comments afterward were just as confusing.

The enormity of being the coach of England's soccer team might just be hitting Lee Carsley after a night when his performance in the dugout and then in front of the media left many scratching their heads.

Carsley is filling in as interim coach following the departure of Gareth Southgate after England's loss to Spain in the European Championship final in July, and his tenure began impressively with back-to-back 2-0 wins over Ireland and Finland in the Nations League last month.

Doubts are now swirling regarding Carsley's suitability for the job after he picked an exciting yet experimental lineup - featuring no striker and a bunch of attacking midfielders against Greece on Thursday and saw England lose 2-1 in a sloppy and occasionally shambolic display at Wembley Stadium.

"I never at any point thought I'd got it cracked," Carsley said after the game about his tactics and approach that were widely criticized - albeit after the match rather than before. "It was a case of, let's try something different."

Adding to the confusion were Carsley's later comments on whether he wanted to stay in the job on a permanent basis, with the English Football Association currently conducting a search for Southgate's successor. The unassuming Carsley, who was

in charge of England's under-21 team before being asked to temporarily take control of the senior side, was being talked up as a strong candidate to replace Southgate after last month's double-header of wins when his style of play was praised. 'I was quite surprised after the last

camp in terms of (people saying), 'the job is mine' and 'it's mine to lose' and all the rest of it," said Carsley, who has been told he will also be coach for the Nations League games in November,

"My remit has been clear from the

start. I'm doing three camps. There's three games left and then hopefully I'll be going back to the under-21s.

However, later in the news conference, Carsley - asked if he wanted the senior job - responded: "I said at the start that I wouldn't rule myself in or out, and that's still the case, I am more than comfortable in my position.'

There is a lack of obvious contenders to replace Southgate as the person who might lead England's men's team to a first major title since the 1966 World Cup.
Former Liverpool manager Jurgen

Klopp might have been one of them, but it was announced this week he will begin a new role as head of global soccer at Red Bull from January, overseeing its international network of soccer clubs. Newcastle manager Eddie Howe has

also been linked with the vacancy, but he hasn't declared his interest in it, at least publicly. Former Chelsea and Brighton manager Graham Potter might be in the

frame after saying last month he was ready to return to management - a year and a half after leaving Chelsea. However, he did suggest club soccer would be his preferred destination, telling The Daily Telegraph: "I like the

day-to-day and the building process of club management. International management is a different rhythm and there are pluses for that. It's more intense when it's on, but you've got a bit more breathing space in between. "It's nothing that I've ruled out, but at the same time, I do like the day-to-

day bit of working with the players and being in at the club and trying to build and make a difference.' With Harry Kane set to be fit to start

against Finland on Sunday, normality may yet be restored to Carsley's lineup and the Greece game might be consigned to overthinking and an experiment gone wrong. He has two more Nations League

games next month, against Greece and

# **Forest fined almost \$1 million**

LONDON, Oct 12, (AP): An inflammatory post that got more than 46 million views on social media has proven very costly for Premier League soccer team Nottingham For-

Forest was fined 750,000 pounds (\$980,000) after being found to have questioned the integrity of match officials in an "irresponsible" post on X in April.

Forest said it would appeal the decision.

The post in question was published soon after Forest's 2-0 loss to Everton last season, criticizing the officials for three overruled penalty calls in the match between two teams fighting relegation. It claimed the video assistant referee (VAR), Stuart Attwell, was a fan of rival club, Luton, which was also fighting for survival in England's top division.

"Three extremely poor decisions three penalties not given - which we simply cannot accept," read the post on Forest's official X account, which went viral. "We warned the PGMOL (English soccer's referees body) that the VAR is a Luton fan before the game but they didn't change him. Our patience has been tested multiple

As well as imposing a fine, the independent panel also warned Forest about its future conduct.

While the sanction is big, the English Football Association (FA) wanted it to be even bigger. The governing body was seeking a fine of upwards of 1 million pounds (\$1.3 million) to "reflect the seriousness of the misconduct."

Forest said it was "particularly concerned" about the FA's desire for such a large fine to be imposed.

The panel said Atwell had written a statement describing his "stress, distress, fear and embarrassment" following the post.

The panel cited Forest's "reckless disregard to the consequences or impact of the post."

It also noted a lack of apology from Forest or the removal of the post as "evidence of a lack of genuine remorse" from the club.

"This is relevant to the level of the financial penalty which we assess is necessary and proportionate in this case," it said in its findings.

Forest said the fine and the FA's request for it to be greater was "wholly disproportionate".



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# Atletico Madrid and Lazio sanctioned by UEFA

# Real defender Carvajal undergoes surgery on his right knee

MADRID, Oct 12, (AP): Spain defender Dani Carvajal has undergone surgery on his right knee, his club Real Madrid said Friday.

The Spanish club called the surgery successful and said the player would start his recovery process in the coming

Carvajal suffered his likely season-ending injury during a Spanish league game last weekend. He was diagnosed with a ruptured anterior cruciate ligament, a ruptured external collateral ligament and a ruptured popliteus tendon in his right

Shortly after his injury, the club said it had agreed with the 32-year-old right back to extend his contract until June 2026. Carvajal helped Spain win the European Championship

Atletico Madrid and Lazio were sanctioned by UEFA on Friday for the racist and/or discriminatory behavior of their

The 11-time Spanish champion Atletico was fined 30,000 euros (\$32,800) and given a suspended ban from selling tickets to supporters for one away match in UEFA competitions. The ban was suspended for one year.

European soccer's governing body said there had been racist and/or discriminatory behavior from Atletico's supporters during the Champions League game against Benfica at the start of the month.

Lazio has been fined and ordered to close sections of its stadium for what UEFA described as the "racist conduct of its supporters.'

The two-time Italian champion was ordered to pay 45,000 euros (\$49,200) because of the behavior of its fans during a Europa League game against Nice this month.

UEFA said it had enforced a suspended disciplinary measure dating back to December 2023 to close two sections of Lazio's Stadio Olimpico for its next home game in the Europa League against Porto on Nov. 7.

A court in South Korea has fined Son Woong-jung, the father of English Premier League star Son Heung-min, 3 million won (\$2,200) for violating child welfare law at his soccer academy.

The Chuncheon District Court notified prosecutors on Friday that it issued such a ruling on Son Woong-jung, director of the Son Football Academy in Chuncheon city, according to a local prosecutors' office.

The academy opened in 2021, with much of the estimated cost of \$15 million funded by Son Heung-min, the Tottenham and South Korea star.



Qarabag's Julio Romao, left, and Tottenham's Son Heung-min fight for the ball during the Europa League soccer match between Tottenham and Qarabag in Lon-

# Sinner, Djokovic reach Shanghai Masters final

Sabalenka rallies past Gauff at Wuhan

SHANGHAI, Oct 12, (AP): Top-ranked Jannik Sinner will chase his seventh ATP title of the year in the Shanghai Masters final after beating Tomas Machac 6-4, 7-5 on Saturday.

Victory ensured Sinner will be the ATP year-end No. 1 and the first Italian to achieve that feat.

His 64th match win of the year set up a final against Novak Djokovic, who overcame physical discomfort to beat seventh-ranked Taylor Fritz 6-4, 7-6 (6) and move closer to a 100th career title and a record-extending fifth at Shanghai.

The 24-time Grand Slam champion also improved to 10-0 in his career matches against Fritz, who blew a 5-3 lead in the second-set tiebreaker and a set point at 6-5 up.

Djokovic was clearly struggling for mobility and balance with his left knee heavily strapped, but U.S. Open runner-up Fritz could not take advantage.

He lost a long rally at 6-6 and succumbed on the first match point when Diokovic stabbed a volley at the net and the American flicked it just long at full stretch.

Djokovic leads 4-3 overall against Sinner, who has won the last two including in the Australian Open semifinals

Earlier, Sinner weathered a nearly two-hour baseline storm from No. 33-ranked Machac, who beat No. 2 Carlos Alcaraz in the quarterfinals.



Novak Djokovic of Serbia plays a backhand return against Taylor Fritz of the United States during the men's singles semifinals match in the Shanghai Masters tennis tournament at Qizhong Forest Sports City Tennis Center in Shanghai,

The Italian has a shot at his third Masters title in 2024 following victories in Miami and Cincinnati, to go with his wins at the Australian Open and U.S. Open.

"I just tried to stay there every point, to see what was going to happen," Sinner said. "Just playing every point with the maximum intensity I could, so I'm very happy about that. I'm happy to be back in a final again.

"I'm just looking forward to (the final), to try to find a solution somehow ... and hopefully it's going to win the match." Sinner fired 10 aces and 28 winners, against only seven unforced errors, in a characteristically efficient performance.

Second-ranked Aryna Sabalenka rallied from a slow start to beat an inform Coco Gauff 1-6, 6-4, 6-4 in the semifinals to advance to her third straight Wuhan final and preserve her perfect record at the tournament.

Sabalenka will face seventh-ranked Zheng Qinwen in the final. The Paris Olympics champion beat No. 51-ranked Wang Xinyu 6-3, 6-4. Sabalenka will be bidding for her fourth title of the season, which includes the Australian Open and U.S. Open.

The Belarussian's 16th straight victory at Wuhan ended Gauff's own recent win streak at nine, including the China Open title last week. But it looked anything but certain for Sabalenka as she crashed 6-1 in the opening set.

"In the first set she was just crushing it," Sabalenka said. "Whatever she was doing, everything was flying in. Everything was so aggressive. I didn't have much opportunities." In a fight between the last two U.S. Open champions, Gauff led by a break early in the second but Sabalenka responded to pull level at 4-4 and saved a break point on serve to take a 5-4 lead.

Serving to stay in the set, Gauff was broken as Sabalenka hit a lunging forehand volley to force a decid-

The Belarussian carried her momentum into the third, extending her streak to seven games for a 3-0 lead. Gauff fought back to level at 4-4, but Sabalenka held strong to halt

Sabalenka broke once more after Gauff hit her season-worst 21st double fault on match point, ending the 2 1/2-hour match.

"I know what she's going through. This is really difficult," said Sabalenka, who had issues on her serve in the past. "But I know that if she'll be able to overcome this serve situation, I'm pretty sure she's going to be one of the greatest players.



Jannik Sinner of Italy plays a backhand return against Machac of the Czech Republic during the men's singles semifinals match in the Shanghai Masters tennis tournament at Qizhong Forest Sports City Tennis Center in Shanghai, China. (AP)

#### Sons of Duke standout Carlos Boozer following father's footsteps

# George scores 23 points in preseason debut

DES MOINES, Iowa, Oct 12, (AP): Paul George's scoring touch was on display in his preseason debut with the Philadelphia 76ers on Friday night.

George made 8 of 15 shots and scored a team-high 23 points in a 121-111 loss to the Minnesota Timberwolves.

George logged 26 minutes, hit four 3-pointers and added six rebounds and two

His exhibition debut continued a stretch of new faces in new places during this preseason, along with the likes of Karl-Anthony Towns in New York, Chris Paul in San Antonio, DeMar DeRozan in Sacramento and Klay Thompson in Dallas.

The 76ers - who signed George to a four-year, \$212 million contract as a free agent this summer - are his fourth team, after seven years with Indiana, two with Oklahoma City and the last five as part of the Los Angeles Clippers. He's a ninetime All-Star, six-time All-NBA selection and has averaged 20.8 points over his first 14 NBA seasons.

The game in Iowa was a homecoming for 76ers coach Nick Nurse. He's an Iowa native, coached Minnesota's G League team when it was Iowa, and is the previous head coach at NAIA member Grand View University - located in Des Moines. Nurse was the youngest college coach in the country when he took that job at 23.

Cameron and Cayden Boozer are following in the path of father Carlos Boozer

in playing basketball for Duke. The twin brothers, both ranked as five-star prospects, announced their commitment Friday in a video posted on The Players' Tribune.

Cameron is a 6-foot-9 power forward who is ranked the No. 2 college prospect in the ESPN top 100. Cayden is a 6-5 guard ranked No. 17 by ESPN

The Boozer brothers are Duke's first commitments to the class of 2025. The two continue a strong run of recruiting success for third-year Blue Devils coach Jon Scheyer, who took over for five-time national champion coach Mike Krzyzewski after the 2021-22 season.

The Blue Devils signed the country's No. 1 rated class for this season headed by the No. 1 recruit in 6-9 Cooper Flagg, considered the top pick in next year's NBA draft should he choose to leave college.

Along with Flagg, Scheyer added 6-7 Isaiah Foster (No. 15 rated prospect, according to ESPN), 6-5 Kon Knueppal (No. 19), 6-10 Pat Ngongba (No. 26) and 6-4 Darren Harris (No. 31).

The Boozer brothers' dad, Carlos, played at Duke from 1999-2002 and was part of the Blue Devils' national championship team in 2001.

He was a first-round pick in the 2002 NBA draft by Cleveland and spent 13 seasons in the league with the Cavaliers, Utah, Chicago and the Los Angeles Lakers. Boozer told ESPN he was proud of his sons.

"They made the best decision for them. Me and Mom couldn't be any prouder," the elder Boozer said. "It's going to be a fun journey."

# **World Cup tickets investigation of former** FIFA official Valcke closed after 9 years

GENEVA, Oct 12, (AP): Nine years into a World Cup black market tickets investigation, the case against former FIFA official Jérôme Valcke was finally closed.

The Swiss attorney general's office said on Friday it has decided to end the criminal proceedings into an alleged tickets deal proposed for the 2014 World Cup in Brazil.

Other criminal cases that once implicated Valcke in a sprawling Swiss investigation of FIFA business also have been closed, though one is ongoing at appeal after he was found guilty on some charges and acquitted of others at two trials.

Proceedings against "among others, Jerôme Valcke, in connection with the award of media rights are still pending in front of the Federal Supreme Court," said the federal prosecution office which, like Valcke separately, has appealed against the second trial verdict from June

That case, which revealed how Valcke got use of a Qatari-owned vacation home on an Italian island, also involves Nasser al-Khelaifi, the Paris Saint-Germain president, who was twice acquitted in 2020 and 2022 of inciting the FIFA official.

In the tickets case, Valcke was suspended from his job as FIFA secretary general in September 2015 because of allegations made by businessman Benny Alon. FIFA fired him four months later and banned him from soccer.

"This acknowledgement of Mr. Jérôme Valcke's full innocence is the outcome that was always expected," his lawyers in Geneva, Patrick Hunziker and Elisa Bianchetti, said in a statement.

Valcke worked from 2007-15 alongside long-time FIFA president Sepp Blatter until both were ousted in fallout from United States and Swiss federal investigations of international soccer officials.

Federal proceedings, later closed without charges being brought, related to payments directed toward former FIFA vice president Jack Warner of Trinidad and Tobago: A \$10 million payment channelled through FIFA from South Africa, the 2010 World Cup host; and a \$1 million loan in 2010 later waived.

Prosecutors in Zurich also closed a criminal complaint filed by the current FIFA management relating to its soccer museum in the city that opened in 2016.

The 64-year-old Valcke remains banned from soccer by FIFA through 2032.



Philadelphia 76ers guard Eric Gordon (23) drives past Minnesota Timberwolves guard Nickeil Alexander-Walker (9) during the first half of an NBA preseason basketball game in Des Moines, Iowa. (AP)

## 'This is what we have been working three years for'

# NZ takes 2-0 lead over Britain in America's Cup first-to-seven final

BARCELONA, Spain, Oct 12, (AP): Team Emirates New Zealand won the opening two races of the America's Cup final against INEOS Britannia in their first-to-seven-wins series on Sat-

New Zealand led the first race from the start and finished 41 seconds and more than 400 meters ahead. The second race was closer until Taihoro found more wind midway through, crossing 300 meters and 27 seconds in front.

New Zealand is trying to win the Auld Mug, the oldest trophy in international sport, for a third straight time. The Brits have never won it in its 173-year history.

"This is what we have been working three years for," New Zealand helmsman Nathan Outteridge said after winning the first race. "We have been a long time in preparation watching everyone else racing, so it was great to get a fantastic start and control that race. Let's just keep our eyes focused forward.'

The Kiwis participated in the initial round-robin even though their results didn't count since, according to America's Cup custom, they had a guaranteed spot in the finals

as the defender.

But they sure didn't show any rust in their first competitive race in a month.

New Zealand got a haka sendoff from supporters and shore crew and was accompanied out of port by an ornamentally carved Maori waka (canoe). The team headed by Grant Dalton is aiming to become the first syndicate to ever win three consecutive times. As a nation, New Zealand has won four times (1995, 2000, 2017, 2021).

The British are participating in their first final in six decades. Britannia impressed in the challengers regatta as it bested four other boats from Italy, the United States, Switzerland and France. It set an America's Cup speed record of 55.6 knots (64 mph/102 kph) last week.

Britannia is backed by billionaire Jim Ratcliffe and has a partnership with the Mercedes Formula 1 team, with which it shares design, engineering and performance teams. That contrasts with the in-house design team of New Zealand, which is credited with revolutionizing sailing with its design of the AC75 monohull foiling yacht. Britannia had a battery issue

before the start of Race One, but skipper Ben Ainslie said the loss was more about the flawless execution of their rivals.

"It wasn't that we did it all wrong, they just sailed a better

race," Ainslie said. "This is the America's Cup game, it is all about moving forward. Don't worry, we will keep pushing.'



Ineos Britannia and Emirates Team New Zealand race during the Louis Vuitton 37th America's Cup race in Bar-

#### **Luna Rossa wins 1st Women's Ams Cup**

BARCELONA, Spain, Oct 12, (AP): Italy's Luna Rossa Prada Pirelli won the first ever Women's America's Cup after beating Britain's Athena Pathway on Saturday.

Luna Rossa led from the start and won the six-leg match race off the Barcelona beach front eight seconds ahead of the British boat.

America's Cup organizers said they launched this all-women competition as a platform to get more women into the elite sailing event. Women have sailed in previous America's Cups but none are on the crews of this edition of the 173-year-old regatta.

The event included 12 teams, six sponsored by the America's Cup teams and another six teams that were invited.

The teams sailed AC40 foiling boats, which were also used in the youth competition, that seat four sailors compared to the larger AC75 boats with their eight crewmembers used in the America's Cup.



Germany's Tim Kleindienst, front, and Bosnia's Nikola Katic fight for the ball during the Nations League soccer\_match between Bosnia and Germany in Zenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina. (AP)

# Sports

# Germany's new cycle thrives Al-Nasr overcomes Al-Qadsiya in strong start to Handball League

#### Netherlands held to 1-1 draw by Hungary

#### MUNICH, Oct 12, (AP): Germany's rebuilding appears to be on the right track.

Denis Undav scored twice and the four-time World Cup winners extended their unbeaten record in the Nations League to three matches after a convincing 2-1 win at Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Reduced to 10 men, the Netherlands managed a 1-1 draw in Hun-

Following the retirements of Manuel Neuer and Toni Kroos, Germany started a new cycle and their clean and fluid display against a spirited Bosnia side bodes well for the future.

The Germans top their group after also thrashing Hungary 5-0 and drawing in the Netherlands 2-2.

In the absence of several stalwarts, the Germans played with confidence, developed complex attacking moves, and gave the impression of enjoying themselves. They had plenty of chances to score more and had a couple of goals disallowed for offside.

The only downside was the de-

an unexpected back pass to Unday, who calmly finished the move.

Hungary's Roland Sallai celebrates

after scoring the opening goal during the Nations League soccer match between Hungary and the

Netherlands at the Puskas Arena in

Budapest. (AP)

fensive lapse when Hungary's

Edin Dzeko pulled one back 20

The visitors took the lead in

the 30th minute after a move that

showcased Florian Wirtz's clev-

erness. The unmarked midfielder

collected a lofted pass in the box

and, instead of trying his luck, cut

minutes from time.

Unday, who scored a goal in his first start for Germany against the Netherlands, was clinical on Fri-

His Stuttgart clubmate Maximilian Mittelstädt was the provider six minutes later with an excellent cross, and Undav doubled Germany's lead with a clean tap-in from close range.

Bosnia's Ermedin Demirovic, another Stuttgart player, hit the woodwork in the 35th, but Dzeko scored in the 70th with a header from a corner, his 67th goal for the national team.

The Dutch's unbeaten run was almost stopped at Puskas Arena.

The Netherlands won all nine previous meetings with Hungary and enjoyed most of the possession in the first half. But it could not find an edge to get past the staunch Hungarian defense. Roland Sallai put the host in the driver's seat in the 32nd with a close-range finish

from Zsolt Nagy's cross.

The Dutch looked set for a dreadful evening when defender Virgil van Dijk was sent off for a second yellow card but Denzel Dumfries earned a point for the visitors with a header from Cody Gakpo's curled free kick in the

Germany opened a two-point lead over the Netherlands at the top of the A3 Group. Hungary was third ahead of Bosnia.

Georgia's unbeaten record was ended by Ukraine in Group B1.

Georgia, the surprise of this year's European Championship, won its first two games and remained at the group's top despite the loss. Mykhailo Mudryk scored the winner for Ukraine, earning the war-torn country its first points in the tournament.

The Czech Republic won against Albania 2-0.

Iceland erased a two-goal deficit to draw with Wales 2-2. Brennan Johnson scored in a seventh consecutive game for club and country, as the Tottenham winger put Wales ahead with the opener. Turkey defeated Montenegro 1-0 in the other Group B4 game. In League C, Estonia won against Azerbaijan 3-1, while Sweden drew with Slovakia 2-2.



Players fighting for the ball during the league match.

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

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 12: Al-Nasr secured a strong and positive start in the 58th edition of the "Merge" Handball League by defeating last season's runner-up, Al-Qadsiya, with a score of 30-26 in the final match of the opening round. This victory earned Al-Nasr its first two points in the competition. The opening round also saw Al-Salmiya claim a 35-30 win over Al-Sulaibikhat, while defending champion Kuwait Club triumphed over Al-Qurain 33-29. All matches were held at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Complex

The Handball League standings after the first round are as follows: Khaitan leads the table with two points, edging Fahaheel, who sits

in second place, on goal difference. Kazma holds third place, followed by Salmiya in fourth, Kuwait Club in fifth, Al-Nasr in sixth, and Al-Arabi in seventh. Burgan remains without points in eighth place, followed by Al-Qadsiya in ninth, Al-Qurain in tenth, Al-Sulaibikhat in 11th, Yarmouk in 12th, Al-Sahel in 13th, and Al-Tadamon at the bottom in 14th place.

The second round of the league kicks off tomorrow, Monday, with Fahaheel facing Burgan, Khaitan taking on Al-Arabi, and Yarmouk squaring off against Al-Nasr. On Tuesday, Salmiya will meet Al-Sahel, while Al-Qurain will battle Al-Sulaibikhat. The round concludes on Wednesday with a match between Al-Tadamon and Kazma, and the highly anticipated clash between Kuwait Club and Al-Qadsiya.



Stefan De Vrij of the Netherlands jumps for the ball with Hungary's Bendeguz Bolla, right, during the Nations League soccer match between Hungary and the Netherlands at the Puskas Arena in Budapest. (AP)

## Pereira earns Brazil call-up for World Cup qualifier

# Peru upsets Uruguay, ends winless run

LIMA, Peru, Oct 12, (Agencies): Peru won its first match in South American World Cup qualifying by beating Uruguay 1-0 on Friday.

Miguel Araujo scored the only goal with a header in the 88th minute, and Peru moved out of last place in the South American standings.

Peru was winless in eight matches in qualifying, but beat Uruguay in a qualifier for the first time since 2017.

The Peruvians rose above lastplaced Chile.

Uruguay remained third after nine matches, four points behind leader Argentina and one behind second-placed Colombia. The first six teams secure a berth in the 2026 World Cup in North America and Mexico.

Uruguay wasted opportunities in the first half, with Federico Valverde, Darwin Núñez and Maximiliano Araújo stopped by Peru goalkeeper Pedro Gallese.

Peru took control in the second half. "I honestly feel responsible, due to the players we had in the midfield and in the offense, for such a small proportion of goal chances we created in the second half," Uruguay coach Marcelo Bielsa said.

Uruguay next hosts Ecuador on Tuesday, the same day Peru faces fourth-placed Brazil. Uncapped Cruzeiro midfielder

Matheus Pereira has been added to Brazil's squad for their World Cup qualifier against Peru, the Brazilian Football Confederation said on Friday. The 28-year-old replaces West Ham's

Lucas Paqueta, who is suspended due to an accumulation of vellow cards. Pereira has scored nine goals and provided 13 assists in 48 games across

all competitions for Cruzeiro this year.

Brazil and Peru will meet at the

Mane Garrincha stadium in Brasilia on Tuesday.

Five-time world champions Brazil are currently fourth in the 10-team South American zone standings with 13 points from nine qualifiers, seven points ahead of ninth-placed Peru.

Bolivia continued its remarkable run of recent form while Brazil registered a much-needed victory in South America's World Cup qualifiers.

In El Alto, near Bolivian capital La Paz, Miguel Terceros scored a stunning second-half goal as 10-man Bolivia edged to a 1-0 home victory over Colombia.

"I'm very happy to have been able to help the team with my goal," Terceros said after the match. "It was a difficult contest and we have to celebrate this victory because we deserve

it." The game was mostly played at a pedestrian pace as the rarefied air of Estadio Municipal - located more than 4,000 meters above sea level - made breathing difficult for both sides.

The hosts were reduced to 10 men in the 20th minute when Hector Cuellar was shown a straight red card for an ugly challenge on Roger Martinez.

Colombia proceeded to dominate possession but lacked precision in the final third. Jhon Cordoba saw his close-range attempt rebound off the left post and Luis Diaz's dangerous effort was saved by goalkeeper Guill-

ermo Viscarra. Bolivia emerged from the halftime break with renewed vigor as Colombia began to tire. Terceros put his team ahead by running onto Robson Matheus's pass and dribbling around



Uruguay's Darwin Nunez, left, is challenged by Peru's Jesus Castillo during a qualifying soccer match for the FIFA World Cup 2026 at National Stadium in Lima, Peru. (AP)

two defenders before rifling a 20-yard effort into the far corner.

The hosts maintained control thereafter to secure their fourth win in their past five qualifiers. The Verde now have 12 points from nine outings and are four points behind Colombia in the 10-team South American zone standings.

In Santiago, substitute Luiz Henrique scored late as five-time World Cup champions Brazil recovered from a goal down to beat Chile 2-1. Veteran winger Eduardo Vargas

gave the hosts an early lead at Estadio Nacional with a looping header into the far corner after Felipe Loyola's diagonal cross.

Brazil equalized through debutant Igor Jesus, who sent a glancing header beyond the reach of goalkeeper Brayan Cortes after Savinho's pass from the right wing. The game looked headed for a draw

before Henrique, a 68th-minute replacement for Savinho, combined with Bruno Guimaraes and angled a 16yard drive into the bottom left corner a minute from time.

The result leaves Brazil fourth in the group with 13 points, six points behind leaders Argentina. Chile are ninth with just three points so far.

In the northeastern Venezuelan city of Maturin, Salomon Rondon struck a second-half equalizer as the Vinotinto salvaged a 1-1 home draw with Argen-

Nicolas Otamendi opened the scoring for the visitors by firing home from the edge of the six-yard box after Venezuela goalkeeper Rafael Romo punched away Lionel Messi's free-kick.

Rondon put his side on level terms iust after the hour with a powerful header following Yeferson Soteldo's cross from the left flank.

# **OCA** president praises Kuwait role in supporting Asian Olympic movement

dent of the Olympic Council of Asia, mote sports and youth development Raja Randhir Singh, expressed gratitude to the State of Kuwait for the warm reception he received during his visit. He thanked His Highness Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the Crown Prince His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah for their hospitality.

Singh noted that he has visited Kuwait several times since his first visit in 1983, shortly after the Olympic Council moved its headquarters from India to Kuwait in 1982. His visits continued until they were interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

He expressed appreciation for Kuwait's agreement to continue hosting the Olympic Council of Asia's headquarters, which has been based in the country for 42 years. This decision was unanimously approved by the General Assembly of the Council, comprising 45 member countries, during their meeting on May 11,

OCA President emphasized that Kuwait's support over the past four decades has been instrumental in strengthening unity and development within the Asian Olympic movement. This was reflected in the recent meetings held in Bangkok and New Delhi, as well as in the participation of Asian countries in the upcoming 2024 Paris Olympics.

He highlighted that OCA was es-

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 12: The Presi-tablished in 1913 in Manila to proacross Asia, noting that sports can play a significant role in enhancing diplomatic relations between nations through "sports diplomacy." This concept uses sporting events to foster understanding and cooperation among Asian peoples.

Singh also expressed gratitude to the Crown Prince for hosting OCA, hoping for further cooperation in the future, with plans for the General Assembly meeting to be held in Kuwait in 2025.



Hussain Al-Musallam receiving the President of the Olympic Council of Asia Singh.

#### **Uganda defeats South Sudan in qualifiers**

KAMPALA, Oct 12, (Xinhua): Uganda defeated visiting South Sudan 1-0 in a Group K match of the 2025 CAF Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) qualifiers played at Mandela National Stadium in Kampala.

Cyprus-based defender Bevis Mugabi finished off well with a well-timed rebound to give Uganda the lead on 47 minutes after the South Sudan defenders failed to clear their lines off a corner.

The Uganda Cranes continued to pile pressure on the South Sudan team with substitute Allan Okello bringing more life on creativity, but the home side still failed to find more goals.

The win takes Uganda to seven points after they drew with South Africa 2-2 and beat Congo Brazzaville in the group's earlier matches.

"It is always good to get a win at home, but we also created more chances and did not utilize them well. We need to work hard before the return leg away in South Sudan next week," Uganda coach Paul Joseph Put said.

Uganda captain Khalid Aucho told Xinhua that it was not an easy game against South Sudan. "We played a team that was very defensive, but we are happy to finally get a win," he said.

South Sudan coach Nicolas Dupuis said that they conceded the goal because of a defending error, but added that they will also be determined to collect three points in the return leg in Juba. "We are going back to prepare well for our match when we host Uganda in Juba that we must also try to pick a win," he said.

# ARAB® TIMES

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